THE

BIBLE CHRISTIAN:

A VIEW OF

Doctrinal, Experimental, and Practical Religion.

BY THE REV. JOSEPHUS ANDERSON.

EDITED BY THOS. O. SUMMERS.

'IF YE KNOW THESE THINGS, HAPPY ARE YE IF YE DO THEM.'

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DEDICATION.

TO THE

Ministers of the Virginia Conference,

AND PARTICULARLY TO

LEROY M. LEE, D.D.,

THIS WORK

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

Contents.

Part the Third.

PRACTICAL RELIGION.

Preface.

In the midst of an interesting season of revival in his pastoral charge, some twelve months since, the author was taken away from the labors of the pastorate by disease; and has not since been able to return to his duties, with the exception of a few occasional efforts. Earnestly desirous of doing good, and anxious, in some way, to glorify his Divine Master, it occurred to him that he might possibly do some good by his pen. Having been for years in the habit of writing almost daily, he at once began to employ his pen, more for the purpose of improving his own mind, and preparing himself for greater usefulness in the future, should God, in mercy, permit him again to enter the field of

ministerial effort, than with any other view. He was persuaded and urged, however, by a friend, on whose judgment he relied, to prepare a work for the press. After much thought, and prayer for direction, the plan of the following work was fixed upon, and the work commenced. It appeared to him that there was a desideratum in religious literature, in that there is no work presenting religion as a whole, a *unity*, all the parts of which are intimately related to each other and promotive of each other, and all together constitute one undivided whole, no part of which, in its proper identity, can exist separately from the other parts. There is no such work; nor is there any work presenting full and clear views of the parts of true religion. There is no work on Doctrinal Religion, save those on systematic theology, which are only designed for ministers and students of divinity. There is scarcely any work, if any, on Experimental Religion, which gives a full and extended view of the subject in all its phases. There are many

works on Practical Religion, but very few giving a clear and systematic view of its duties and bearings.

Then, again, most of these works are denominational in their character, more or less; and tend to develop a denominational rather than an evangelical Christianity.

The present work is designed to meet this desideratum; or, at least, to call attention to it. It is written professedly for the people; and is, therefore, in plain language. It would be easy to write several volumes on the subjects embraced in this; but the author aims to present thoughts, rather than words; and awaken reflection, rather than delight with figure and flourish. He has purposely allowed the standard religious authors of all ages and churches to speak on the subjects embraced in this work, that it may be seen that he presents Christianity, as such, and not denominationalism. To secure this object required no little labor. All has been cheerfully done, and with many prayers and tears for the blessing of God upon his labors.

Such as it is, he offers it to God and to his Church, in the name of Jesus Christ, praying that the blood of atonement may sprinkle, and the Spirit of grace attend it. Amen.

RICHMOND, Va., January 1, 1855.

Introduction.

RELIGION! Providence! an after-state!
Here is firm footing: here is solid rock!
This can support us: all is sea besides—
Sinks under us, bestows, and then devours.
His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.

YOUNG.

SECTION I.—IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION.

THE salvation of the soul! The human mind, in its utmost reach, is utterly unable to comprehend the vastness of the importance of salvation. It is infinite in its importance. Men see but little of its importance; and, therefore, make but little exertion to secure it for themselves. Had we any thing like a full view of its worth, we could never be satisfied with a state of indifference, either with respect to our own safety, or the salvation of others. The very imperfect idea of the importance of salvation to which our minds can attain, has produced the most self-sacrificing devotion, the most careful piety, and

the most sublime examples of submission to sufferings, ever known among men. The rich, and learned, and great, will give up wealth, and ease, and fame, and live in poverty, disgrace, and banishment, rather than part with salvation. The timid female, cradled in prosperity, and nursed in the lap of luxury, will give up the dearest of earthly connections, and the sweetest of temporal enjoyments, and submit cheerfully to the most painful death that hellish malice can invent, sooner than part with her hope of salvation. The young man, who has lived in ease and pleasure, surrounded by a large circle of loving relatives and friends, will give up his pleasures, bid adieu to parents and friends, leave his native land, and, among savages, toil day and night, through privations, wants, sickness, and persecution; and die there, away from home and friends—all to persuade and induce others to secure their salvation.

Angels have a better idea of the value of salvation than we; and hence, though not connected with our race by a common nature, or like circumstances, they deeply sympathize with us. They sang together in their matin songs at the creation of man; they rejoice with exceeding joy in the presence of God over the repentance of a single sinner, and no other event produces a like amount of joy in heaven: they cheerfully become ministering spirits, to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation; and they are the retained orchestra for the celebration

of the great consummation, when all the redeemed shall together triumphantly enter heaven, to go out no more for ever, when, as they listen to the swelling music of the "new song," they shall pour forth the sublime refrain: "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

The fallen angels manifest their high appreciation of the importance of human salvation, by the most general and complete combination, and the most vigorous, earnest, and unwearied exertions, to prevent its accomplishment. God is not so much opposed in any of his plans, as in those for man's salvation. In opposition to these,

> "Devil with devil damn'd firm concord holds."

God the Father gave up his only-begotten Son, calls into exercise the most astonishing patience, forbearance, long-suffering, and mercy, and orders the whole economy of his moral government and his providence—all to secure, if possible, the salvation of man! God the Son left the glory, society, and happiness of heaven, became incarnate in this sin-stricken world, was born in a stable, cradled in a manger, learned the trade of a carpenter, wandered about without a place to lay his head, was reviled, persecuted, and slandered, was betrayed and scourged, wore a crown of thorns, and was finally crucified between two thieves—all for the salvation of man!

God the Holy Ghost comes to the darkened intellect, the seared conscience, the hardened heart, of the vile sinner, convicts, presents truth, persuades, and strives with him: he enlightens, bears with the follies of Christians, and by all means seeks their sanctification—all for the salvation of man!

The whole universe is engaged in seeking and promoting the salvation of man, except hell, which is combined to prevent it.

To obtain a clear and full idea of the value of salvation, we must ascertain the exact depth and amount of God's love to man, the value of the sufferings of Jesus, the measure of angelic sympathy, and the extent of exertion made with respect to it in heaven, earth, and hell. Go, find out the amount of the ever-increasing and infinite happiness of heaven, the extent of suffering in hell—measure the capabilities of the soul for happiness and misery, and then number the years of eternal duration. When you have done this, you will have some idea of the importance of salvation. Eternity alone will disclose the full worth of salvation to man.

SECTION II.—GENERAL IDEAS RESPECTING THE WAY OF SALVATION.

Such a view of the importance of salvation must invest with intense interest the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" That man in his natural condition is not in a state of salvation—

that something must be done in order to salvation, is the universal opinion of men, and the conviction of our consciousness. That man is fallen, depraved, and not prepared for the holy pursuits and pleasures of heaven, is not only taught in the Bible, demonstrated by reason and history, but felt, and everywhere, in some form, recognized by man. There is no truth in morals capable of more abundant proof and clearer demonstration than this; and few in any age have had the folly or the hardihood to deny it. About the way of salvation there is less agreement; and yet sufficient to indicate the great system or plan of recovery. All men, everywhere, and in every age of the world, seem to fix upon the ideas of substitution and sacrifice, as in some way essentially contributing to their salvation. These ideas, in some modification, enter into almost every form of religion ever known, and form the ground of all hope of redemption. Without them, there appears to be no possible ground of hope for any man. If no one, or no thing, can be substituted and sacrificed in our stead, in what conceivable manner can we hope to escape the punishment due us for our sins? There is not a man living who has not sinned; and, far more, there is not one who can possibly be certain that he has not sinned; and if we have sinned, how can we escape the penalty? If God fail to punish sin in one case, why not in another—in all? If he do not punish one, he cannot punish any; and so there must be an end of his moral gov

ernment. If he do not punish sin, he does violence to his moral attributes and perfections, denies himself, and ceases to be God. If he do not punish sin, he cannot enforce obedience to any law; and the universe is no longer safe, but must crumble to atoms, or rush into one vast chaotic ruin. God is then, without some expedient, compelled to punish sin.

SECTION III.—ATONEMENT OF CHRIST: ITS NECESSITY, EXTENT, AND FULNESS.

REPENTANCE merely is no ground for pardon; for it is only a confession of guilt, extorted by the fear of punishment, and gives no ground whatever for the satisfaction of the divine justice and holiness, the vindication of the divine glory, the honoring of the law, and exhibiting the exceeding enormity of sin. How then can man be saved? What ground for mercy is there? The universal judgment of humanity is, that substitution and sacrifice afford the only possible ground: the law admits the idea; and Christianity develops, defines, and sanctifies it. Among enlightened men, no religion can bear the examination of true reason and science but the Christian; and those who reject Christianity have never given any reasonable scheme of salvation in its place; so that, rejecting Christianity, they give up all hope of salvation, and when they die, according to their own acknowledgment, they "take a leap

in the dark." It is eminently worthy of consideration, that infidelity has no system of religion, and the infidel is confessedly "without hope and without God in the world." We may then safely say that Christianity, as revealed and taught in the Sacred Scriptures, is the only ground of hope to enlightened humanity. In the further discussion of the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" we must, therefore, turn to the Bible, and abide by its decisions. There we shall find God's plan of redemption, his messages of mercy, and the terms of salvation, in his own language. What does the Bible teach? We have here, as the great central truth of the Christian system, around which all other truths cluster, the doctrine of atonement—that the Son of God, being of sufficient dignity of person, as God, became man, by taking on him our nature; and thus, equally related to both God and man, substituted himself, and offered up himself on the cross, as a sacrifice, a sin-offering for us; and so made a way of salvation for all men. Thus, the justice, truth, and holiness, of God were fully satisfied; and, together with his wisdom and mercy, were beautifully exhibited: the law was more honored than if the full penalty had been visited on man; and the infinite evil of sin was abundantly displayed. Thus, an expedient was provided by which God can exercise the fulness of his clemency toward the sinner, on proper conditions, in perfect harmony with his character and his law, and with entire safety to his

moral government. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." "There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "God made him sin" —a sin-offering—"who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so also by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life." "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." These passages, together with many others of like import, plainly teach that salvation is through the vicarious atonement made by Jesus Christ, a full and sufficient satisfaction to God for the sins of the whole world. It is evident to all that man must receive salvation, if at all, as a free gift at the hand of another; for he can never procure it for himself; and from the passages just quoted, it appears that Jesus Christ

has made provision for the salvation of all men, irrespective of circumstances, and offers mercy freely to every one. No man is left unprovided for in this atonement. It embraces all men everywhere. There is, and there can be, no exception. If an exception were possible, it would be in the case of some man who had no sin to be atoned for; but as there are none such, every man may avail himself of its provisions and secure its benefits. The declarations and invitations of Christ, who made the atonement, and of God, who accepted it as such, and of the Spirit, who applies its provisions, all clearly show that every man may become savingly interested in it; and we do violence to the truth, justice, and goodness of God to believe otherwise. "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he turn and live." "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." It is not easy to mistake the meaning of these passages; and we quote them to show the exceeding fulness and freeness of the atonement, its unlimited extent, and,

through it, the undoubted sincerity of the offer of salvation without restriction to every man. "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." Christianity thus offers a way of salvation, perfect, secure, legitimate, and free for all men. "Therefore he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." Here then is hope, and hope for every man. If any man is lost, it is because he will not be saved; for "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." No man can ever lift his hand in hell, and charge his damnation upon God.

SECTION IV.—GENERAL VIEW OF THE CONDITIONS OF SALVATION.

If Jesus Christ made sufficient atonement for men, how are the benefits of that atonement secured to the individual sinner? In view of the atonement, "what must I do to be saved?" Salvation is not forced upon men, nor is given unconditionally; for if so, it will not be appreciated by them, and must utterly fail of its end, the destruction of sin. Indeed, salvation unconditionally bestowed is not salvation at all; for the principal element of salvation is deliverance from sin, which cannot possibly be effected without, in some way, the coöperation of man; unless, indeed, the moral agency of man be denied. Salvation unconditional does not arrest the power or progress of sin—does not magnify the law—

does not vindicate the divine glory; but does violence to every moral attribute of God; destroys his moral government; and must ruin the universe. It is clearly perceived, then, that man as a moral agent cannot be saved unconditionally, irresistibly, against his will; but that something must be done on his part, expressive of his need, his desire, his appreciation of salvation, and his purpose to obtain it, which constitutes the condition of salvation. What is it? What must the sinner do to be saved? We answer unhesitatingly, in general terms, Embrace the Christian religion. But what is implied in embracing Christianity? An entire reliance upon the Christian system for salvation, to the exclusion of every other—the taking of the Christian religion as our religion, our way to heaven, our only ground of hope. Such, in general terms, are the conditions of salvation. But, to proceed farther: What is the nature of Christianity? What constitutes the religion to be embraced? A general view of the nature of Christianity will divide it systematically into *doctrinal*, corresponding to the *intellect* of man, being things to be *believed; experimental*, corresponding to the *sensibilities*, being things to be *experienced* or *felt;* and *practical* religion, corresponding to the *will and conscience*, being things to be *done*. The terms of salvation, then, apply to the *whole man*, and imply an *entire change* in the moral nature. The understanding must receive the truths: the sensibilities must receive the impressions, and

feelings, and principles; and the will must obey the precepts of Christianity. "If ye *know* these things, *happy* are ye if ye *do* them." Thus, to become a Christian is to become a new creature, to be changed, to be born again; and the change is a continued progress towards completion for ever. It involves an endless study, or an endless giving up of error, and an endless reception of newly discovered truths; and, associated with this, an endless correction, improvement, and cultivation of impressions, feelings, and principles; and, associated with both these, an endless correction and improvement of conduct, in obedience to the requirements of Christianity.

SECTION V.—REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

HERE, then, is a general, and somewhat definite, view of the condition of salvation; and we design presenting it at large in this volume. But the subject demands a more particular consideration. "How shall I begin this work? How shall I enter upon this change? What are the first principles of religion? I desire to be a Christian, and wish to enter upon this great change: how shall I do it?" This is just the point; and we gladly proceed to answer. To become a Christian implies, in the very lowest sense, in its first incipiency, the determined purpose to abandon the former manner of life, and lead a different life, conformed to the requirements

of religion; and, as far as time allows, the actual carrying out of this purpose. This involves the conviction of mind that our life has been sinful, and also a deep sorrow for the wickedness of our course, expressed in the humble confession of guilt to God, and the penitent supplication for mercy. If we have not such a conviction attended with such a contrition, it is impossible to form the resolution to change our conduct by ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. This, in the Bible, is called "repentance." St. Paul calls it the "first principle" in the "foundation" of Christian character. He also declares that his manner of preaching was the "testifying repentance towards God" as the very first condition of mercy to man. Christ himself says: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "And he called the twelve, and began to send them forth. . . . . And they went out and preached that men should repent." We have said that a determined purpose of mind, implying a conviction of guilt and a sorrow for it, to lead a different life, conformed to the precepts of Christianity, is repentance. Some think that repentance is only a sorrow for sin; and hence are exceedingly anxious to be overwhelmed with mental anguish, and unsatisfied, because, forsooth, they cannot "feel enough." Such persons evidently mistake the nature of repentance. Repentance is not sorrow; nor is sorrow repentance.

They are not convertible terms. Sorrow for sin is only connected with repentance incidentally, as the result of the conviction of guilt. It enters only in part into the process of the mind in repentance. A man, by studying the law of God, and examining his own conduct, becomes convinced by the comparison that he is a sinner, and has lived all through life in sin: he studies the character of God, and discovers his justice, truth, goodness, love, wisdom, and the manifestation of these perfections in all his dealings with him, and the infinite compassion exhibited in his efforts to save him, and his surpassing forbearance and long-suffering towards him; and this discovery produces in him a sorrow, a deep regret for having sinned against such a God; and this leads him to study the plan of salvation, where, finding there is mercy for the guilty, he determines to change his manner of life, and henceforth be a servant of God. Such is the process of the mind in repentance. If there be sufficient conviction of guilt, and sufficient sorrow for sin, to induce you deliberately to resolve, in the strength of grace, to sin no more, but to devote yourself for ever to the service of God, then your sorrow is sufficient. Sorrow for sin is only a small part of repentance. According to the temperament or mental constitution will the sorrow be greater or less, and expressed in one way or another, or only felt, and find no outward expression. One will cry aloud for mercy, another will weep bitterly, and a third will not be

able to shed a single tear, and yet all truly repent.

But what is next to be done? Just nothing at all; but simply to throw the whole soul in full reliance on Jesus Christ and his atonement for salvation, trusting the safety of the soul to him, and expecting salvation through him. This is *faith*. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "Whosoever believeth . . . . . shall be saved." "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, and not by works." "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that believeth not shall be damned." Here, then, the penitent is shut up to faith. The alternative is faith or damnation. How else can you be saved? Will you trust in your works? There is no merit in works; for we can possibly do no more than is our duty; and duty is not merit, but the payment of a debt. If we commence at any period of life, and thenceforth do our whole duty to the end, this will be no more than we are under the most solemn obligations to do, and therefore constitutes no ground for the pardon of the past sins. These still remain, and must

ever remain, against us. Allowing it, therefore, to be possible, which we by no means do, that we may commence and do our whole duty without faith in Christ, we have still our past sins remaining against us, and without faith in Christ cannot get clear of them. If we are justified by works, one single sin will ruin us; and there is no man living that hath not sinned. The good works of a man are not the condition or means of his salvation, but only the evidences of the sincerity of his repentance and faith. He trusts entirely in Christ for salvation; and the love which he feels for Christ, and the hope he enjoys of heaven through him, induce him to do every thing in his power to please God. You may have difficulties in seeking salvation; but the only real difficulties are with yourself, and are found in your unwillingness to give up all sin, to resolve upon a life-devotion to religion, and to trust in Christ. There are no other difficulties than these. True, Satan will tempt you to believe that you are not predestinated to eternal life, that you are too great a sinner to be forgiven, that Jesus did not die for you, that you have committed the unpardonable sin, that you have sinned away the Holy Spirit, and that there is time enough for this work yet. But these are only temptations of your "adversary the devil, who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Give place to him, no, not for a moment; for "he is a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies." He tempted Christ in the wil-

derness by quoting Scripture to sustain his positions; and thus will he tempt you. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Go, reader, to God: confess to him your faults: give away yourself, soul, body, and all you have, for ever to God: solemnly vow to serve God while you live; and pray and wrestle for salvation, humbly trusting in Jesus. Consider yourself as for ever devoted to God; and look to Christ for mercy and salvation. Believe, and be saved. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." "Lord, I believe: help thou my unbelief." Finally, gentle reader, this matter concerns you *now:* it is not a matter of *to-morrow.* "Learn that the present hour is man's alone." There is a fatal snare in the syren sound, *to-morrow.*

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death."

Think not, then, of to-morrow,

> "That fatal mistress of the young, the lazy,
> The coward, and the fool."

Attend to this great work while it is called *to-day: to-morrow* may bring death, and the judgment, and hell.

Part the First.

DOCTRINAL RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINAL RELIGION.

"By ignorance is pride increased:
Those most assume who know the least:
Their own self-balance gives them weight,
But every other finds them light."—GAY.

IT is sometimes said it is a matter of little importance what a man believes. To this we cannot assent; and we beg leave to present our dissent in most unqualified terms. And we do this the more heartily because we fear that Christians generally do not feel sufficient interest in the matter of belief—do not have sufficient care to search out what is presented to their faith in the sacred volume. It is a matter too much underrated. There are very many who make no effort to learn the teachings of Christianity farther than to listen to the preached word—very many who content themselves with an occasional reading of

select portions of Scripture—very many who only *read* the word of truth, and do not *study* its teachings; while there are but very few who use all diligence to become thoroughly acquainted with every doctrine and every fact and every bearing of religious truth. Now there is duty involved in all this. The man is culpably negligent who gives not diligent attention to doctrinal religion. It is vastly important in all its relations and bearings—not less so perhaps, as we shall see, than any other part of religion.

The influence of the creed, or what is believed, is by all conceded to be very great. It is through the intellect that the sensibilities and will and conscience are reached and affected. The mind is the door to the heart and the will. The belief regulates the feelings and the conduct. A change of mind is followed by a change of feeling and practice. This is true in every department of life, and admits of a thousand illustrations. It has all the force of an axiom: it is self-evident. The farmer's agricultural creed regulates his feelings towards his employment and the manner of carrying it on. And so of every class of persons. There is no truth in philosophy or morals more evident than this. It is a part of the philosophy of the mind universally received. Men act upon

it in all matters, and illustrate it in all their acts. It is of universal application. To change the feelings, to produce any given emotion, to modify the feelings, to increase the feelings, we must operate through the mind. To change the purpose, to produce any given determination, to modify the purpose, we must operate through the mind. So also with respect to the conscience. The conscience of the Jew will condemn him if he labor on Saturday; while the conscience of the Christian permits him to labor on Saturday, but condemns him if he labor on Sunday. The conscience of the Christian will condemn him if he take more than one wife; while the Mussulman feels free to have several. The conscience of the Protestant will condemn him if he worship the Virgin Mary or pray to the saints; while the conscience of the Romanist condemns him if he omit either. The conscience of the Unitarian will condemn him if he worship Christ as God; while the Trinitarian incurs the disapprobation of his conscience if he neglect the worship of Christ. Why is this difference? It is the influence of the creed on the conscience. How vastly important, then, that the conscience be influenced by a correct belief! An error here produces the most widespread mischief. An error in the mind

must have its influence on the heart, and, to the extent of the importance attached to it in the mind, must for evil modify the feelings; and also affect the will and the conscience for evil. Any error or defect in doctrinal religion must therefore produce an error or defect in the whole extent of religion. How forcibly does the history of ancient times, and, indeed, of our own times, illustrate this position! It is astonishing to trace the exact correspondence between the ancient idolatrous creeds and systems of philosophy and the habits and character of the people. The one was a counterpart of the other. So is it at the present day among all nations: the creed represents the character of the people.

The fullness and clearness of the revelation of God's will is only to be accounted for from the fact of the influence of the belief on the heart, and will, and conscience. The third chapter of the Gospel by St. John is sufficient for the salvation of all, if the creed is not designed to have influence on the heart and life. Why have we so large a volume, every sentence and word of which is pregnant with meaning? Why have we "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little?" Why does Christ command us to "search the Scriptures?" Why does

St. Paul warn us to "give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip?" It is because the belief influences the heart and life. It is because experimental and practical religion depend on doctrinal religion. It is because if there be errors in our doctrinal religion, there will be errors in our experimental and practical religion. Therefore it is that the Bible furnishes a full and enlarged creed—a creed containing every thing necessary for life and godliness. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The gospel ministry, in its object and duty, is based on the influence of the belief. What are ministers of Jesus to do? "Preach the word," and "feed the flock of Christ." "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God." "I shunned not to declare the whole counsel of truth." "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine." Now why a ministry? And why all this attention to the faithful instruction of the people in Christian truth? Because that truth is designed to have an influence, through their minds, on their hearts

and consciences. The salvation of the soul depends upon the reception of the truth.

The connection of the belief with the experience is very intimate; and this connection shows the relation of doctrinal to experimental religion. We have already said that the sensibilities are operated on through the intellect. The most sublime truths, if not understood, do not affect the heart; and if understood, but not believed, do not affect the heart otherwise than with dislike or disgust. According to the nature and importance of a truth will be its influence. If a man discovers and believes any thing advantageous to him, he will experience joy; if any thing promising good, hope; if any thing threatening evil, fear and dread; if any thing affording relief in trouble, comfort; and the feelings will be graduated by the importance of the truths believed. A painting not understood produces but little if any effect on the feelings, but if fully comprehended will produce admiration and delight, or terror and dread, pity and sympathy, or hatred and contempt, according to its design and manner of execution. This is also true in religious matters. "The connection between cause and effect," says Dr. Plumer, "in the moral world is as close as in the physical. Error will give trouble to the traveller

to a distant city. May it not be fatal to the traveller to eternity? Though mere intellectual belief is not saving faith, yet, by the laws of the human mind, the former is a necessary foundation for the latter." There can be no religious experience where there is no religious belief; and the experience must necessarily be governed by the belief. If a man believe not in the existence of God, he cannot fear God; if he believe not in the mercy and goodness and holiness of God, he cannot love him; if he believe not in the doctrine of atonement, he cannot trust in Jesus; if he believe not in a future state of rewards and punishments, he cannot feel the hope of heaven or the dread of hell. Nothing can be plainer than this. There is great reason, therefore, for the warning, "Take heed *what* ye hear." St. John was fully alive to the importance of this subject when he gave the cautionary advice, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God." If our experience depends upon our belief, it is important that our belief be correct and embrace no errors. If our experience depends upon our belief, it is important that our belief embrace all that God has revealed, and therefore that we study the Scriptures to ascertain the whole truth, in order that our experience may be full and complete, "perfect and entire,

wanting nothing." "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may *grow thereby*." "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. More to be desired are they than gold; yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." These passages clearly show the influence of the word of God on the experience of those who believe it. It can have no influence on those who do not believe it. The word of God is the food and nourishment of the soul, by which it grows—the means of its happiness, affording inexpressible delight—and the instrument of its sanctification. But it can be neither where it is not believed. To secure its proper influence on the heart, it must be fully and heartily believed in all its teachings. Every truth revealed is important to the proper development of religious experience, and should be embraced in our belief. Every truth that is revealed in the Bible and not embraced in our belief is just so much a deficiency in our experience, for it requires a full and complete creed to produce a full and complete experience.

The relation of doctrinal to practical religion

is equally worthy of consideration. Dr. Plumer says, "'As a man thinketh in his heart so is he,' is a maxim not only of revelation, but of all judicious men. Take away the fear of punishment, and present the occasion to him who believes that swindling or stealing are justifiable, and no man of sense is surprised that the belief rules the life. It is said that the great mass of convicts in our prisons believe themselves to have been justified in the perpetration of their crimes. So long as they thus believe, every orderly citizen knows that they are dangerous to society. A man is known to believe that doctrine of devils that the end justifies the means. Does any wise man confide in him? Will he not lie whenever it is convenient to do so? As it is his creed, so you shall find it his trade to deal in falsehood. No merchant will employ a young man who is known to believe that he may without guilt procure his pleasures at the cost of his master, and without his consent. A man's creed embodies his moral principles. To publish his creed is to make known his principles. If he who believes viciously acts correctly, it is owing to causes foreign to his real character: it is to dispute his principles, and there is no proper ground of praise. No respectable code of morals admits of cases of

fortuitous or unintended virtue. A man heard that the legislature of his State had abolished capital punishment. He committed murder, and under the gallows said that he would not have shed innocent blood if at the time he had believed that the penalty was death. His erroneous belief on this one point made him a murderer. May it not be as mischievous to disbelieve God when he says, 'The soul that sinneth it shall die?' Forsaking truth and embracing error, angels shrunk into devils. Forsaking error and grasping truth, sinners rise to the dignity of saints and to the companionship of angels." Does the creed of the Friend with respect to the sacraments and the ministry have nothing to do with his refusal of the sacraments and non-recognition of the ministry as a distinct order in the Church? The Universalist believes in the final salvation of all men, and hence neglects prayer, the means of grace, and the duties of religion. Saul of Tarsus, while unconverted, believed that Christianity ought to be put down by all means, and therefore he "persecuted the Church of God." Roman Catholics believe that heretics should be destroyed by the sword and fire, and always when in power they have acted accordingly.

Gentle reader, would you have a full experience

and a correct practice? Let your creed be full and free from error, and allow it, unchecked, its full influence on your heart and life. Receive the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

But the Christian is not only to do no evil, but to do good, to be useful in his day and generation, to be always abounding in the work of the Lord. He will esteem it a great privilege to be able to do any thing for Him who suffered and died for his salvation. His greatest desire will be to do much in the cause of Jesus, and his deepest regret that he is able to do so little. His religious knowledge will generally define the circle of his influence and the measure of his usefulness. He who is but little acquainted with religious truth is qualified for but limited usefulness. He can do but little for religion who knows but little of religion. For extensive usefulness we must have extensive knowledge of religious truth. The soldier can do but little in close combat without a sword, and the truth is the sword of the Christian. It requires much and familiar acquaintance with doctrinal religion in order to meet the skeptic, to instruct the ignorant, to comfort and encourage the weak, to defend the doctrines of Christianity, and save many souls.

CHAPTER II.

DOCTRINES ESSENTIAL.

How much of truth is essentially necessary to be received in order to the salvation of the soul? This is a very important point, and merits attention. Great vital and practical questions are to be decided by the answer. Our own personal salvation, the safety of others, and the fellowship of large classes as Christians, are all in the scale, and are settled to a great extent by the solution of this difficulty. Great caution must be exercised in determining this matter. We must guard equally against extending the creed essential to minor points, about which there may be entire ignorance or difference of opinion without necessarily a forfeiture of saving interest in Christ; and against omitting any doctrine, respecting which to be ignorant or to mistake would be fatal. These are great landmarks by which we are to be directed, and we must not lose sight of them for a moment, for we tread on perilous ground. It is true the Bible is given us, and it

is essential that we believe what it teaches. But then it is equally true that many persons cannot read the Bible; that many who do read cannot understand the whole of it; and that many have but few advantages of studying its teachings. If these be required to believe every thing taught in the Bible or perish, then it is plainly certain that they must all perish. Again: such is the constitution of the human mind, such are the habits of thought, and such are the circumstances affecting men, that very few investigate truth in the same way, occupy the same stand-point, give the same weight to the same evidence, and consequently can arrive at the same conclusions. While the human mind is constituted in all cases on the same principles, there is yet as great difference and diversity in minds as in faces. Every man has habits of his own, and, in some respects, peculiar to himself; and so has he habits of mental action peculiarly his own. No two men, perhaps, ever have been, or ever will be, placed in circumstances in all respects precisely similar. Thus it is plainly impossible in matters of mental investigation, where doubt is admissible, for all men to think or believe alike. All will understand alike in heaven, because there doubt and question will not be admissible, for "we

shall know even as we are known." But here we "see through a glass darkly," and at best know but "in part." It is not surprising, then, that in the interpretation of portions of the Bible there should be different opinions conscientiously held among Christians. It is what we should expect. If every part of the Scripture were perfectly clear, we should not have the important and necessary task of studying and searching it, nor should we feel, as now, our dependence on God for the illumination and assistance of his Spirit. God has consulted our own good in presenting the truth just as it is in the Bible. In heaven a sunbeam will point out every truth. Here we must patiently study, and pray that the Spirit will "take of the things of God, and show them unto us," and "guide us into all truth." We may not then exclude every person from heaven who does not believe just as far as we do, and cannot properly pronounce our "Shibboleth." We may not divorce from our warm Christian love every one who dissents from some article of our creed. We must not turn away our sympathies, and counsels, and good deeds, and prayers, and coöperation from all who do not belong to our theological school. While our hearts lie upon the altar of Christ, they must beat in holy love towards every

other heart that lies alongside ours on that altar, whether its possessor subscribe to the tenets of our sect or not. Denominational lines should never define the limits of brotherly love.

But, on the other hand, there is danger of admitting too great a latitudinarianism—of opening too wide the door—of destroying the great distinguishing doctrines of Christianity—of losing all that is distinctive in our glorious system of salvation. While we may safely differ on minor points, there are points on which to differ is fatal. There are doctrines about which, in their essential features, we are damned if we err. They hold humanity suspended above damnation, and they alone can lift the soul to heaven. They are the great rallying points around which cluster the hopes of our race. Give up these, and we give up all hope, and are lost. Give up these, and we give up all that is distinctive and saving in our religious system. Give up these, and we pull down the pillars on which the glorious fabric of Christianity rests. Give up these, and we take away the foundation and remove the corner-stone of our temple. Give up these, and we cut loose the human soul from its moorings, to drift for ever without sail, helm or anchor, amid storms and tempests, exposed to the winds and lightnings

of heaven, a miserable wreck and ruin. What then are these great essential doctrines? The atonement of Christ; justification by faith in Christ; a future state of rewards and punishments; sanctification by the Holy Spirit: these are the great distinctive doctrines of Christianity. These all appear to be foundation principles, fundamental ideas, in religion. God hath joined them together in a perpetual union, hath solemnized the rites of an indissoluble wedlock, and we separate them at our peril. Take away any one of these, and we virtually render the whole null and void. The late Dr. Olin, who was admired not more for his towering genius than for his lovely and catholic spirit, once said, at an anniversary meeting of the American Bible Society, "There are a few gospel truths which, wherever they are faithfully inculcated, result in the production of evangelical piety, and without which, whatever else is taught, souls are not converted and sanctified. Justification by faith; redemption by the blood of Jesus; sanctification by the Holy Spirit: these are the doctrines that save, that God owns and honors. They are the heroic remedies of the gospel pharmacopœia, sufficient, and alone sufficient, for the soul's maladies. And, thank God, they are the doctrines by eminence of all

our evangelical churches. Go where you will in town or country, in log meeting-houses or Gothic cathedrals, be the sermons or prayers read or extemporized, if the preacher be pious and faithful, no matter what his sect, his learning, or the grasp of his intellect, you shall listen to the same doctrines—a little diversified it may be in theological technology, a little alloyed it may be by peculiarities of system, but always, if there be no blinding influence present, nothing to be lost or won by proselytism, substantially the same doctrines, 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' Sir, I have wandered much in the length and breadth of this land, and heard men of all names, and all varieties of education and intellect, and this is my testimony: substantially and in the main they are one in faith. The few months which I was permitted to spend in the ministry in early life, were much devoted to an immense congregation of slaves. I mingled freely in their religious meetings and exercises, and even they were one with the Church catholic in all the truths of the cross. Sad work they made of tropes and figures; reckless they were of the graces and artistic unities of discourse; but in all the matters of sore repentance of sin, and humble confession and childlike faith in

Jesus' blood, I never knew their betters. Sir, I have indicated a basis of union. These fundamental truths, without which all others are nothing worth, and with which no others can be essentially pernicious—these may be a creed for our charity—at least, they may be adopted as articles of peace."

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTIAN CREED.

"Knowledge leads to obedience; obedience produces pleasure; pleasure tranquillizes the mind; and tranquillity is an inward heaven: but ignorance leads to sin; sin produces suffering; suffering inflames the passions; and inflamed passions are an inward hell."—EDMONDSON.

EVERY one must feel desirous of possessing the whole truth, and thus have the advantage of a complete creed. A partial, imperfect, and incomplete creed must occasion difficulties if not dangers, must present obstacles if not positively retard the progress of the Christian in his way to heaven. Other things being equal, the more complete the creed the more complete will be the Christian, and the greater will be his facili-

ties for improvement and usefulness. Dr. Cumming says, "Wherever there is doctrinal error in the head, there will be generally practical corruption in the life. To be sound in doctrine is not second, but rather superior, to being correct in conduct and practice. The man who has a creed without truth, will generally be found to have a life without consistency and holiness." "Now this notion," says Archdeacon Hare, "that slight errors and defects and faults are immaterial, and that we need not go to the trouble of correcting them, is one main cause why there are so many huge errors and defects and faults in every region of human life, practical and speculative, moral and political." With this agrees the Bible. The Scriptures connect the completeness of the creed with the perfection of Christian character, and the progress in religion with the progress of the mind in religious knowledge. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." That was a pathetic complaint, and very significant: "My people is destroyed for lack of knowledge." David beautifully expresses the importance and value of a perfect knowledge of religious truth, of a full creed: "Thy word have

I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." "Give me understanding and I shall keep thy law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart." St. John taught this truth in very strong language: "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you." We have written thus much on this point, if possible, to impress on the minds of Christians the importance of a full and complete creed, or an extensive and thorough acquaintance with religious truth. It is we fear but too little thought of, and knowledge, as an important means of grace and religious improvement and usefulness, is unknown among Christians generally. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Religion is light acting upon the natural darkness of man's moral nature. "Therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." "Search after knowledge as for hid treasure." Alas! how few Christians are there who think of all this. O for an enlightened Christian piety pervading all classes of professing Christians!

But what is the proper Christian creed? We do not offer any system of religious truth framed by man as the proper and full Christian creed, for there is no such system that in all respects

answers the purpose. The water that falls from heaven may be pure, but when it passes through the earth it partakes of the qualities of the earth through which it passes. So every system of doctrines framed by man is to some extent erroneous, and necessarily imperfect and defective. We refer the Christian to the Bible, the whole Bible, as containing all things necessary for life and godliness, and forming in itself a complete Christian creed. In some good sense the Christian must be a man of one book. "The Bible, I say, the Bible *only*, is the religion of Protestants," was the immortal saying of Chillingworth. It is clearly evident that Jesus Christ designed the *study* of the Bible to be one of the chief duties of religion. "Search the Scriptures," was a command unrestricted in its application. It is not intended that ministers alone should study the Scriptures, but that every one should study them for himself, and be "fully persuaded in his own mind." The word of God is the sword of the Spirit, which every Christian must take and use as he hopes to overcome his spiritual foes. But if he understand it not, how can he handle it readily and easily, and against the weakest points, and at the proper time? Some will excuse themselves because they are ignorant

and unlearned. But this constitutes no excuse whatever and forms no apology for neglect of a plain duty and a glorious privilege. The Scriptures in the general are not hard to be understood, but written in plain language, sufficiently simple for the understanding of all. A child can understand them. Many have professed religion at an advanced age, and have learned to read amid every discouragement, that they might study the Scriptures for themselves. If no other inducement can prevail on men to learn, to study, the fact that to study the Scriptures is one of the great duties of Christianity, and one of the greatest privileges that God gives, should be abundantly sufficient to lead them at once to begin, though it be at the lowest step and with great difficulty, and learn to read, though very slowly and imperfectly. It is deeply affecting, and not without a lesson and a rebuke to those more privileged and favored, to see, as we often do, the poor slave, after a day of hard labor, sitting by the firelight and slowly spelling out the words of his old and well-worn Bible, or sitting in the sweet sunshine of the Sabbath morning engaged in the same difficult but to him delightful employ. In the present age of learning, and general diffusion of knowledge, and

cheapness of books, no man who is not an idiot is excusable for not learning to read the Bible, and studying its sacred truths. It is a high and solemn duty. The great Head of the Church has enjoined upon all his members that they "search the Scriptures." It is, as we have already intimated, no excuse that the Bible is above the comprehension of many, and requires more study and learning than they are able to devote to its pages. That there are mysteries in the Bible, and things hard to be understood, is true; but that the whole or the greater part is difficult to be understood, is not true. "The unlearned reader," says Dr. Pond, "after hearing so much in these days about exegesis and criticism, may feel that the Bible is a sealed book to him. The Bible is for the most part a plain book: it was intended for common use, and it is to be interpreted on the same principles as other books intended for common use. You can understand your neighbor when he comes to you on an errand: you can understand your correspondent when he writes to you on business: you can understand your minister when he preaches to you a plain discourse; and, if properly disposed to receive the truth, you can just as well understand the plain preaching of Christ, and the

plain writings of his apostles and evangelists." Study the Bible. God has said, "Blessed is he that readeth." It is a precious treasure, and contains in all its pages brilliant gems, more valuable than diamonds. Search for these: find them out. Every Bible truth you discover will be a beautiful star shining upon you with its silvery light in the midst of your darkness. How brilliant and beautiful you may make your sky by searching out the truths of religion and clustering them as splendid stars around the star of Bethlehem, and filling your sky with those sparkling gems! Blessed Bible! Clasp it and bind it to your heart for ever! It contains words of your Heavenly Father addressed to his children. How can you be satisfied to lose a single word, or a single idea? "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."

CHAPTER IV.

PLAIN DIRECTIONS FOR THE PURSUIT OF DOCTRINAL RELIGION.

THE reader has been instructed to take the Bible as his creed, and to study the teachings of the Bible so as to ascertain all that the Bible contains. There is nothing in the Bible that is useless or unimportant. It is all true: it is all profitable: it all contributes to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. No part of the Bible should be neglected. But in the interpretation of the Scripture the plain Christian is often troubled and confused by the great differences that prevail among divines. One class proves one system by the Scriptures; another class proves another and different system; another class proves a system diverse from either of these; and a fourth class proves a system altogether opposed to the systems of all others. In these systems each is claimed to be the true and scriptural one. The unlearned and plain Christian is confounded and perplexed. All cannot be right; and yet each claims on the au-

thority of the word of God to be right. If these differ, what is he to do? How is he to judge? He feels the importance of some plain and well-established rules which he can use for his own benefit in the study of Scripture, and by which he may be prepared to interpret and understand properly the sense of the word. He has no use for books on Sacred Hermeneutics and Biblical Criticism and Scripture Exegesis, for the simple reason that he is unlearned, and therefore can sooner understand the Bible itself than the books written to assist him in understanding it. The plain and simple reader desires plain and simple directions. To encourage private Christians in the study of religious truth, we give a few hints toward assisting in the understanding of the Sacred Scriptures.

And, above all things, carry to the study of the Bible no preconceived opinions and prejudices. Do not seek to bend the Bible to your system or views. While studying the word of God, be as docile and teachable as a child, and thus sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of him. The want of attention to this rule has filled the world with heresies. Men embrace errors elsewhere, or conceive them, and then go to the Bible to see if they cannot make it countenance and teach them.

In this they rarely fail. An ingenious mind can easily bend and torture a writing to mean almost any thing. The Bible has been sadly abused in this way. Had men gone to the Bible with no preconceived opinions or prejudices, and only to learn what it teaches, there would have been but few and small differences in religious systems. "Now what we wish is, that men would go to the Bible divested of all selfish and interested motives, having no end in view but simply to understand it."

While studying the Bible, pray to God for divine instruction and illumination. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he shall guide you into all truth." The sainted Childs, one of the holiest men of the nineteenth century, for many years spent an hour, and often more, every morning, in studying the Bible *on his knees.* On the blank leaf of a Bible belonging to a pious minister who died some years since, was written, "*Read through eleven times on my knees.*" God is his own interpreter: apply to him for aid. He will pour light upon the sacred page.

In studying the Bible, you must not forget

that it often explains itself. "There is," says Dr. Lee, in an admirable paper on Pulpit Hermeneutics, "a remarkable unity in the sacred writings. Numerous as are their authors, they are the product of one spirit. Many passages resemble each other in language, structure and object. Parallels are found sometimes in the same writer; then in different writers remote from each other. These may be compared with one another." There are many places where one part professedly explains another; and many passages suggest the ground of the explanation of others. These passages must be carefully examined and compared with each other.

It will be well in studying the sacred writings to search out their great principles, their most prominent doctrines, about which there can be little mistake or doubt, and form these into a system, thus constituting its great outlines first, and afterwards filling up these and completing the picture. This will enable you the better to detect any error in your subsequent studies, as the Bible is harmonious, and no part contradicting another. It is perfectly consistent in all its teachings; and if any two doctrines drawn from it, really contradict each other, it is abundant evidence that one or the other is not scriptural.

"The whole record, or the record as a whole, must be consistently interpreted. The whole subject must be grasped. The truth may not be exhibited by fragments. It is exceedingly unwise and unsafe to insist upon the deduction of a theological truth of universal authority, affecting the whole subject of man's duty and accountability, because a particular text, separately construed, seems to favor or warrant such a deduction. There is no plainer and easier exegetical theorem, than that a special or particular inference must give way before a more general and enlarged deduction, when the two are in real conflict." "In Scripture inquiries," says Dr. Dickinson, "we may certainly believe that to be a doctrine of God's word, which is contradicted by no other declaration, and accords with the whole tenor of its teachings."

It is important that you bear in mind, in this connection, that no doctrine of consequence is to be deduced from or based on a seemingly obscure and difficult passage merely. All the important truths of revelation are enunciated in plain language, and generally often repeated in different places. "It is," says Harbaugh, "precarious to build a positive doctrine on prophecy when there is no literal scripture to be its foun-

dation and support." It is worthy of observation, that all the prominent doctrines of religion, about which there has been so much controversy, may be safely based on plain and easy passages of Scripture, sufficiently numerous and obvious in their meaning, without calling in the aid of difficult and controverted passages. It is doubtful if the calling in of such passages to support a doctrine is not a disadvantage, by provoking suspicion and doubt, and a spirit of controversy.

The Bible is to be interpreted according to the common principles of interpretation applied to the ordinary language of men. "The Bible is a revelation of the will of God, conveyed to us in the language of men: its sense, therefore, is to be determined by the same rules that we employ in ascertaining the meaning of men. If the Bible is not to be interpreted by the common principles of language, it cannot be interpreted at all, except by inspired men;" and as the days of inspiration are past, it is no *revelation* at all unless so interpreted.

"Of any particular passage," says Mr. Horne, in his admirable Introduction, "the most simple sense—or that which most readily suggests itself to an attentive and intelligent reader, possessing competent knowledge—is in all probability

the genuine sense or meaning." Dr. Pond, in an excellent article in the Theological and Literary Journal, says, "The Bible was written not for the benefit of the learned and critical only, but of the plain and common reader. It was made, therefore, (with some few exceptions,) a plain book, and was designed to be interpreted in a plain, common-sense way, according to the ordinary use of terms." Dr. Dwight quotes Dr. Doddridge with approval on this point: "And let it be remembered as a very just and a very important remark of Doddridge, that the plain sense of Scripture, or that which naturally strikes the minds of plain men as the real meaning, is almost of course the true sense."

A passage is not to be considered as figurative unless it has a figure in it, that is, "if, literally understood, the subject and the predicate would not harmonize, or because a literal sense would be frigid, unmeaning, or inappropriate." When a passage is figurative, it is not therefore to be considered obscure or doubtful in its sense, but is to be interpreted according to the known laws of figurative language. These laws are too many to be introduced into a work of this character. They are, however, easily ascertained and understood. These hints are sufficient for the plain

reader of the Bible, and if followed will lead almost invariably to the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures. We would add that in the study of the Scripture we may derive much assistance from the use of commentaries. A good commentary is invaluable. Every Christian should if possible possess a good commentary, and use it frequently.

We would not, however, be understood by any means as teaching that the Christian has no use or need of any other books, but of the Bible only. We desire to have every man a Bible Christian, and thoroughly familiar with the "word of truth;" but those who can should pursue an extensive course of religious reading and study. Every department of religious literature should be examined, and made familiar to the mind of the Christian. We have no pleasure in religious controversies, nor would we encourage Christians to engage in them; but we would have every Christian able readily and intelligibly to give "an answer to him that asketh a reason of the hope that is in him;" to defend and explain the doctrines of religion, to instruct and encourage in holy things, and to exercise a wide and powerful influence in the world. Christian intelligence is greatly needed among professors of

religion. Knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity, of the evidences of Christianity, of the duties of Christianity, of the history of Christianity, of the lives and actions of eminent Christians, of the denominations of Christians, their histories, doctrines, and customs, of the spread and diffusion of Christianity, of the wants and necessities and duties of the Church, and of the enterprises, instrumentalities, and agencies of the Church—such knowledge seems to be demanded in all earnest Christians who have the means of informing themselves. It is a solemn duty they owe to God, to themselves, to the Church, and to the age. The Church and the age alike demand intelligent Christians, who shall be "master workmen" and "wise master builders." If there be no other excuse but want of time, it must be attended to. The requirements of God and the work of religion are infinitely above every other consideration. Read, then: study: catch every unoccupied moment: devote time to this work; and become a well-informed Christian, prepared to labor effectively in the cause of Christ, to appreciate the enterprises of Christianity, to give liberally and bountifully to every good work, to scatter religious light and knowledge around on every side, and to do good

among all classes and on all occasions, in the most effectual and successful manner. Such Christians are greatly needed in every Church and in every community. It is the duty of every Christian to labor and study to prepare himself for the widest sphere of usefulness, for the best possible manner of serving God and doing good in the Church and in the world. The time has come when ignorance in every department must be given up, when light and knowledge must take its place; when the Church must no longer rely altogether upon the preaching and labor of her ministers; when every individual member of the Church must recognize in himself a soldier of Christ, bound to go to the war and fight and die upon the battle-field, and when the whole Church must put forth her united and utmost strength in order to gain the victory. Six hundred millions of perishing souls are in the world "without God and without hope." The Church is charged to carry them the bread of life and the water of life, and to lead them to the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." To do this, the whole Church must not only go to work individually and collectively, but every member must prepare himself for the greatest amount of use-

fulness which he is capable of performing. The requirement of God is only limited by the utmost extent of his capabilities. That he might be extensively useful to others, Christ came and suffered and died, and rose again and intercedes and sends his Spirit and orders his providence concerning us. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

Part the Second.

EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

RELATION OF EXPERIMENTAL TO DOCTRINAL RELIGION.

"Once enthroned as the supreme arbiter of human pursuits, the word of God is able completely to harmonize the soul's jarring, conflicting impulses, and to bring the emotional and moral nature of man into fraternal alliance and coöperation with the understanding."—OLIN.

EXPERIMENTAL religion is the legitimate result of doctrinal religion. The influence of the understanding on the heart is developed and illustrated in every department of human life, and results from the constitution of the human mind. If a man is assured of a truth, so that he firmly believes it and perceives its bearings, he must be correspondingly affected in his feelings by it, according to its nature and importance and relation to him. A man is made to believe that a child is born to him, that a beloved parent has just died, that he is made heir of immense

wealth, that he is suddenly overwhelmed in adversity, that his life is in imminent peril. Any such thing fully believed cannot but affect the sensibilities, and give rise to an experience of the feelings naturally awakened by such things. So it is in religious matters. The religious belief will affect the heart in some manner and to some extent; and that extent will be in proportion to the nature and extent of the belief. The heathen creed teaches the existence of a god, or rather of "gods many," but gives no satisfaction as to the manner of acceptably serving him or them, and no assurance as to ultimate favor and salvation. Hence the peculiar characteristic of the heathen experimental religion is superstition, a perpetual and indefinable dread. The Mohammedan creed gives ample promise, to the faithful followers of the prophet, of a paradise of sensual pleasure. Hence, where that creed is fully believed, the characteristic of their experimental religion is hope. The Roman Catholic faith teaches the principal doctrines of Christianity in so corrupt a form, and so mixed up with superstition—and withholds the Bible from the people, and in its place substitutes the miserable trash of tradition and the schools—as that little satisfaction can be gained, either of the acceptable service of

God, or the peace of the soul after death. Hence the characteristic of the Roman Catholic experience is a slavish fear and dread. Protestant Christianity teaches a beautiful, consistent, simple system of truth, revealing God in the most lovely character, the atonement of Jesus Christ as the ground of pardon, acceptance and salvation, faith in the atonement as the condition of securing the benefit of its provisions, the Holy Spirit freely offered to every one, as the agent of sanctification and holiness, and everlasting happiness after death to every believer. Hence the experimental religion of Protestant Christianity is characterized by an entire change in the moral feelings, producing love, joy, faith, peace, hope, and a rich experience of holy feelings and pleasures. Thus we perceive the influence of the belief on the experience. The experience is the legitimate result of the creed, and takes its character from the nature of the things believed.

There is also a reflex influence by which the experience acts upon the belief. Experimental religion begets a hungering and thirsting after the word of God, creates a burning desire after religious knowledge, inspires a holy delight in Scripture truth; so that it becomes pleasant, precious, and a source of the sweetest pleasure.

Thus David said, "I delight in thy law as much as in all riches."

Moreover, experimental religion throws great light upon doctrinal religion. No one can fully understand the doctrines of religion, or comprehend aright the meaning of the Scriptures, who is not acquainted with experimental religion. Each throws light upon the other. There is a beauty, a sweetness, a richness, a fullness, a power in the truths of revelation, altogether unperceived and unappreciated by him who is without experimental religion. He is altogether unprepared to understand all this. It is so hidden that he cannot perceive, save by actual experience. And the more extensive the religious experience, the greater the ability to understand the word of God, the greater the light reflected on the sacred page. Experimental religion is God shining into the human heart, and the beautiful rays of light reflecting on the sacred volume, and forming a heavenly bow of light around each truth. Hence those most devotedly pious find more beauties in religious truth, more pleasure in the doctrines of religion, and more enjoyment in divine revelation. They are better prepared and qualified for the study of religious truth. There is a sympathy between them and the truth, that gives them

great advantage in seeking it out, because they can thus more easily perceive and recognize it. They love the truth: they are familiar with it; it has entered into them and conformed their natures to its character; and, therefore, they are better able to know it at first sight. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant."

CHAPTER II.

RELATION OF EXPERIMENTAL TO PRACTICAL RELIGION.

"The heart unwarmed within,
Prayer is mere babbling, sanctity is sin."
JAMES SCOTT.

WITHOUT experimental religion, practical religion is an impossibility. If the understanding does not affect the sensibilities in a given matter, the will is not reached. If the creed does not affect the heart, it is not strong enough to control the will. If what a man professes to believe does not interest his feelings, it is obvious that it can have no influence on his practice. If the new views adopted by a man are not strongly

enough believed to change the feelings, they cannot change the conduct, but the feelings remaining as before, the conduct will be unchanged. To produce a change in the life or conduct, the understanding must be so thoroughly convinced as to change the feelings, and thus act upon the will. Without a change of heart, therefore, there can be no change of conduct. The intellect, which is the seat of doctrinal religion, acts upon the sensibilities, which are the seat of experimental religion, and combined they act upon the will and conscience, the seat of practical religion. The Holy Spirit operates by means of the truth in the mind, upon the heart, thus producing a change in the feelings, and through the heart upon the will and conscience, thus producing a change of practice. This corresponds with the experience of all Christians. The sinner under conviction of sin is likely to do every thing in his power and try every expedient to gain the favor of God and peace of mind, sooner than submit to be changed by the Spirit in believing. Hence many for a time turn legalists, and try by keeping the commandments of God to secure his favor. They endeavor to practice religion before they experience it. But they soon find it impossible in their unchanged state to keep the law of God.

It is holy, and they are unholy. There is no sympathy between them and the law of God. They resolve to do what is commanded, but have scarcely formed the resolution before some temptation is presented, and they yield and sin. They resolve again, and soon again find the barriers too weak: they give way and sin. At every step sin meets them face to face. It is a body of death fastened to them, and they find themselves utterly unable to rid themselves of the loathsome, putrefying presence. Turn which way they will, it is there: effort after effort is made, but still it is there. Many a poor sinner has refused to go to the cross and seek a change of heart; and hence has "resolved and re-resolved, yet died the same" unchanged sinner. The experience of St. Paul, given in his own language, is both affecting and instructive. It is conclusive on this point. He believed the law of God to be holy, himself a sinner; and, without seeking first a change of heart by the Holy Spirit, he sought after peace, by endeavoring to keep the commandments of God. He found it, however, an impossibility. "For that which I do, that I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I do, that I would not. Now if I do what I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwell-

eth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He then adds, expressing the power of faith in Jesus to change the heart, and thus subdue the power of sin and enable the believer to keep the law: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Can any thing be more expressive of the power of sin in the unchanged heart to prevent obedience to the law of God; and of the destruction of that power by the Holy Spirit in changing the heart, so giving power to obey the law freely and heartily? Moreover, this is called a "law." It is all in accordance with the established laws of the mind. The constitution of the human mind would have to be changed, and its laws altered, before a sinner could keep the law of God with

an unchanged heart. So the Bible represents it. The inspired writers speak of all practical goodness as the result of divine grace operating on the heart. "By the grace of God I am what I am." "I can do all things, through Christ strengthening me." "I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was in me." "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Moreover, the Scriptures declare the impossibility of obedience to the law without a change of heart: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." A kingdom is a state governed by a king. The kingdom of God is the government of God over his intelligent creatures who obey his laws and submit to his authority, whether they be in heaven or on earth. From a rebel, to become a subject of the kingdom of God, where we are bound to obey his laws, we must be changed, or born again. The change must take place, else we cannot obey the laws of his kingdom. They are spiritual, we are carnal: they are holy, we are sinful: they are pure, we are corrupt: they are heavenly, we are earthly: they are love, we are selfish. There must there-

fore take place a change in our hearts before we can obey these holy laws. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that 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." Here, to be changed by the Holy Spirit confers the power of becoming sons of God; that is, in order that the believer may be adopted into the family of God and exercise filial love and obedience, he is born again by the power of God, regenerated, changed. "Without faith it is impossible to please him." In this passage Paul declares plainly that obedience is impossible without faith. Now we know that the faith that produces obedience belongs to experimental religion. "For with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness." "As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." "Without me ye can do nothing." "The carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can be*." The being "in" Christ, and having Christ "in" us, cannot belong to practical religion, for, whatever they mean, they must precede obe-

dience, or the bringing forth of fruit. They must belong to experimental religion, and must be secured before obedience can be practiced. The carnal mind, or the minding of the flesh, or the disposition of the natural and unconverted man—either of which expresses the sense of the original—can never by any possibility become subject to the law of God, and therefore must be subdued and taken away by the Holy Spirit in conversion before we can hope to yield obedience to the will of God. "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

CHAPTER III.

IMPORTANCE OF EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

"There are blest inhabitants of earth,
Partakers of a new, ethereal birth—
Their hopes, desires and purposes estranged
From things terrestrial, and divinely changed:
Their very language of a kind that speaks
The soul's sure interest in the things she seeks."

COWPER.

WE have already shown in part the importance of experimental religion in the preceding chapter. But it has a much wider scope and bearing in the Christian system than we have yet assigned it.

It is easy to see from what has already been said that it is regarded as a great necessity—as indispensable to true religion. No man can be a Christian without it. Whatever else he may possess, without the religion of the heart, he is no Christian. *Without it there can be no salvation.* "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." It is evident from what the apostle says in this connection that charity embraces the whole of Christian virtue as springing from love, as its foundation and source. Without charity, or love—which is the same, and the proper translation of the original—there can be no claim to pure religion, whatever else we have or do. The greatest of natural and extraordinary gifts and endowments, the most self-sacrificing acts of benevolence, and even martyrdom itself, will all avail nothing, if, with all these, there is no love in the heart. There can be no salvation without this. The heart of the natural, the uncon-

verted man is a stranger to this holy love. The moralist knows nothing of it. The unrenewed heart must undergo a change, in which it becomes filled with charity—in which the "love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, given unto us." Heaven is a place of love. "God is love." "Jesus is full of love." The Holy Spirit is a "Spirit of love." Angels are pure and loving spirits. The spirits of the just made perfect are "perfect in love." An atmosphere of love pervades all heaven. A brilliant bow of love surrounds the throne of God. A language of love is the only medium of communication known in paradise. The sublime music of heaven is the music of love: all its songs and hymns are outbursts of holy love: its employments are all influenced and characterized by love: its pleasures and enjoyments are "feasts of love." Who can ever hope to enter such a place with a heart unchanged—a heart with all its selfish feelings, and purposes, and hopes, and aspirations—a heart devoid of holy love? All heaven would rise in opposition and rebellion, did God permit an unchanged, an unloving spirit to enter there. Were the spirits of those who never tasted the fullness of redeeming and sanctifying love to enter heaven, it would be no longer heaven: they would change the place into confusion, contention,

strife and war. Heaven would become a place of hate—a hell. No: there must be a change in us, a complete renovation of the heart; and love, the love of God, the love of man, the love of holiness, and the love of goodness, must be shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, or we cannot, dare not enter heaven. Heaven, with all its love and joy, would be no place of happiness, without a spirit congenial to the place. The unchanged heart is utterly out of sympathy and harmony throughout, with all the circumstances and arrangements and realities of heaven. It would prove a hell to the unrenewed and unsanctified sinner, for ever to behold God, all love, Jesus Christ, all love, the Holy Spirit, all love, angels, all love, redeemed spirits, all love—for ever to be suffocated by an atmosphere all love, for ever to listen to the swelling strains of music all love, and not feel a single sympathetic chord of love in his own heart: to find not a single thing in sympathy with his own feelings and desires; to find not a single pleasure for which he has the least relish; to find not a single inhabitant but will shrink away affrighted from his unrenewed spirit, and not a single employment that he is qualified to pursue to give relief to his restless and miserable soul! To him hell would be a paradise compared with

heaven. In the absence of divine love, the sinner carries within his own breast the elements of a hell, and sooner or later they will be let loose upon him. The essential nature of damnation is not in any inherent or imparted characteristic of any mere place, as such, but in the unfitness and incapacity of the unholy soul for the enjoyment of God—in the internal discord of the spirit—in the want of harmony between the soul and God and the universe of good, whereby the soul is driven out from God, at war perpetually with all existence, at war with itself, and scathed and shattered by the thunderbolts of divine wrath, a miserable wreck and ruin!

Heaven is a holy place. All its bright and blest inhabitants are pure and holy: all its pleasures are holy: all its employments are holy: every thing connected with it is holy. But the unconverted man is a sinner, is depraved, is unholy. Every man's consciousness and every man's conscience testify to this fact. The Bible everywhere declares it. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one. They have all gone out of the way." "If we say that we have not sinned, we lie." "Thou wast altogether born in sins." "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." "All

we like sheep have gone astray." No man can say that in all his life he has never in any respect violated the perfect law of God. Every man stands guilty before God of innumerable sins. They are written with the iron pen of eternity against him. God knows their number and remembers their guilt. How then can any man, unpardoned and unsanctified, hope to enter heaven, that place of holy beings? How could he stand in the presence of God, conscious of his unforgiven sins? How could he face the blazing records of eternity, and see before all the holy inhabitants of heaven the stained and blackened history of his wickedness? What could he do in heaven? With whom could he associate? What pleasures could he enjoy in that holy place? The deepest confusion would cover him: he would be shunned and left desolate and alone, amid all the holy light and scenes and associations of heaven, a prey to the deepest remorse and the most terrible self-condemnation, such as would make heaven twice a hell.

Heaven is a place of spotless purity. But every unregenerate man is depraved. There are feelings, and passions, and desires, and tempers, and principles, and affections that are not pure, not holy, but infinitely removed from it.

No man requires any proof of the existence of these things in his own heart. He feels them: he knows they are there: he is conscious they are wrong. Hence the Bible gives no proof of human depravity, but simply addresses the declaration of the fact to every man's consciousness. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." "The carnal mind is enmity against God." If heaven be pure and the unconverted man depraved, how can he enter there? Where in heaven will you place the depraved sinner? Will he stand before the "great white throne," in immediate view of the unsullied purity of God, and his intense hatred of sin? Can he stand amongst the pure, bright cherubim and seraphim, and the host of angelic worshippers? Can he stand with the company of the redeemed, who have "come up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb?" "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Humanity feels this in its consciousness. There must take place a great moral change somewhere, and in some manner, and at some time. It is the universal sentiment of men. All expect to pass

through some purifying process before they enter heaven. Hence the Papists have invented a *purgatory*, where the action of fire, it is hoped, will change their moral natures, burn out the sin, and purify them. Hence also the Restorationists have thought, or pretended to think, that after suffering a while in hell, the punishment will produce a moral change from depravity to purity and from sin to holiness. How silly to believe that material fire can have a moral and purifying action on the soul—that punishment for sin can destroy the existence of the sin itself, obliterate the stains of depravity, and force the poor sinner to love perfectly the God who punishes him! The Universalist feels the necessity of a change, and, therefore, expects death to purge away his sins, destroy his depravity, and purify his soul—absurdly supposing that death, which merely separates the soul from the body, and cuts loose the tie that connects man with this world, can have any positive moral influence, or that the mind in the sufferings of the death-agony is prepared to go through any great moral change. There must be a change, a moral change, a spiritual change, a change of the heart, in which moral instrumentalities are used

by spiritual agencies—a change effected by the word and Spirit of God.

Such is the constitution of the moral nature of man, that a change is demanded in order to his happiness. The moral constitution of man's nature contemplates holiness. God could not have constituted the moral nature of man otherwise than as contemplating holiness. There must be harmony between the creatures of God and God himself, otherwise there would be perpetual war between God and his creatures. There could be no obedience, no order, no law, no government, were there no harmony. But God is holy, infinitely holy. Therefore, that his intelligent creatures be in harmony with him, they must be holy. In fixing the constitution of their moral natures, he could therefore only fix it as contemplating holiness in them. He could not have made them otherwise. To have done so, would have been to have made a class of outlaws, and organized an eternal warfare against himself and his universe. To have done so, would have been to have made them out of harmony with himself, so that to return into harmony with him would be to war eternally with the laws of their own constitution, and

thus be perpetually miserable. It is certain, therefore, that the constitution of the human mind contemplates holiness—is fixed in all its laws upon the supposition that man will be holy. If, therefore, man is not holy, he violates the constitution of his own nature, creates a perpetual discord within him, throws himself out of harmony with God, and thus becomes to God and to himself an outlaw, warring against God and himself also. The moral government of God outlaws him, and the constitution of his own nature outlaws him also. God condemns him, and by the laws of his own mind he is forced to condemn himself. It is not necessary, therefore, for him to be sent to any particular place in order to find a hell : he carries all the elements of a hell about him, in the opposition of his character to God and the laws of his mind. There only needs the season of his probation to close, that he feel all the severity of divine condemnation superadded to the terribleness of an awakened self-condemnation, which will constitute the most fearful hell imagination can picture or the soul can endure. To escape this, the sinner must be changed by the Spirit of God, and thus return into harmony with God and the laws of his own being. Thus changed, he will have

the approval of God and of the laws of his own nature, and will be happy. Unchanged, he must for ever be condemned of God and condemn himself, and thus, wherever he is, be always miserable. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. The wicked are like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."

——"Me miserable!
Which way I fly is hell! myself am hell!"

Poor unchanged, unsanctified man! God condemns and disowns him, the universe condemns and disowns him, and he condemns and disowns himself! "The heart knoweth its own bitterness."

"Divines and dying men may talk of hell,
But in my heart her several torments dwell."

Once more: The Bible represents religion as a matter of experience, and having its seat in the heart of man. "He is not a Jew, that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision that is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, that is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the spirit and not of the letter." "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul." "I will circumcise thy heart and

the heart of thy seed, to keep the law of the Lord, thy God." "I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." These passages need no comment. They plainly show that religion must dwell in the heart, and work a great moral change there. We must be "converted," "born again," "renewed in the spirit of our mind," and "sanctified by the Spirit of God."

CHAPTER IV.

RELATION OF EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION TO THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

"O thou who driest the mourner's tear,
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We could not fly to thee!" MOORE.

THE various parts of God's government of the whole universe, from the solar systems to the merest atom, from the highest archangel and principality of heaven to the feeblest creature of earth, are constructed on the same principles, and

forms one entire and united system. The whole system is characterized by the most perfect harmony, and all the parts act in the sweetest unison. Law is impressed on every atom in the universe, and every thing moves in heavenly order. But the whole system is necessarily in harmony with God, the great Creator and Ruler; and, as such, is subordinated to one great end, the promotion and perpetuation of holiness, by displaying the glory of God, and, if sin exists, its infinite evil. This is the end of all God's government. Thus only could the universe be in harmony with God. If any part of the universe did not display the glory of God, and exhibit the infinite evil of sin, there would be a want of sympathy and harmony with God, the universal Ruler, which we cannot for a moment suppose that God would permit. God must and would instantly degrade from its position that part of the universe which would dare to rebel, by manifesting any want of harmony with him. Thus Satan and the fallen angels were degraded from their position in heaven, and are kept in chains under darkness, "reserved unto fire and the judgment of the last day." Thus man would have been degraded to eternal death but for the atonement of Christ, on the ground of which he is given a probationary sea-

son, and offered pardon and a return to holiness, which if he accept he shall be saved, but which if he neglect he shall be damned. Thus it is that the whole universe constitutes one grand united system of government, subordinated to the promotion of holiness. So every part of the universe promotes the holiness of angels. They sang together at the creation. They come on visits of mercy to its inhabitants. They rejoiced at the birth of Jesus. They shout together in the presence of God over the repentance of a sinner. The people of God are said to be a "spectacle to *angels* and to men." The Church is the school of angels: into the mysteries of redemption they "desire to look." So the whole universe is designed to promote the holiness of men, and especially the providence of God over the affairs of men. For this purpose Jesus "ever lives to intercede" in heaven, the Spirit enlightens, and strives, and sanctifies—angels become ministering spirits, and build their camp around the good—suns shine, planets move, seasons come and go, and "all things work together for good." Jesus Christ represents his intense anxiety for their holiness and salvation, as displayed in every event of providence. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice

and open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me." In every event of providence, therefore, Jesus comes to our hearts, and knocks for full admittance. In the mercies and blessings of providence he knocks gently, and calls in soft, sweet, silvery tones of music; and in its judgments he calls in thunder-tones, still intensely anxious for the holiness and salvation of the soul. If the sweet music-tones of Jesus cannot open the heart, he will speak with a voice of thunder. Many listen to the voice of God in the judgments of his providence, who refuse the soft pleadings of mercy. The design of Divine Providence is to promote our holiness.

The providence of God contemplates holiness in all intelligent creatures. If any sin, they throw themselves out of harmony, not only with God and the laws of their own being, but also with the providence of God. The providence of God is necessarily in harmony with God, and as such is out of harmony with the sinner. True, it is employed to induce him to repent, and sometimes seems to favor him in his wickedness, but is nevertheless out of harmony with him, as he himself often feels, and as will be terribly revealed when the restraints laid upon the operations of providence by the gracious probationary season

shall have been removed, and it shall operate freely in harmony with God against the sinner unchanged and unsanctified. The sinner deeply feels this at every step in life. There is an indescribable uneasiness, a restless anxiety, a burning desire after something which he has not obtained and cannot obtain; for every acquisition made leaves him with the same feeling, and all the pleasures and honors and wealth of earth cannot satisfy it. It is the soul out of harmony with God and the universe feeling the want of reunion to and harmony with God, and finding that the whole universe is against its happiness in its present moral position. In the events of providence this is sensibly felt. Trouble is the portion of man in his probationary state, and is abundant evidence of the opposition of every law in the universe to the sinner against God, even while in a probationary state, and an earnest of the uncompromising and dreadful opposition of those laws to him when probation shall have ended. "Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." We come into the world amidst the pains and cries of violent expulsion, and leave it with the sufferings of the death-agony. At every step through life, trouble of some nature will interfere with our enjoyments, and oftentimes

overwhelm the soul with distress. In our journey to the grave we have many a cloudy day: many a dreadful storm passes over us: many a sorrow darkens our brow: many a sigh escapes our lips: many a tear steals from our eyes: we often pass through deep waters and through the fires; and we see many days when we can say, we have no pleasure in them. In the midst of life, thus circumstanced, the sense of human weakness and dependence, the desire of some higher support, and the consciousness of not being in harmony with God and the government of the universe, is deep and irresistible. There must be a change, a change of heart, that will place man in harmony with God and the universe, and will bring to him the support and comfort of divine approval and love, and the hope of final and complete redemption. No man can be happy without this change. The experience of divine acceptance and favor, and the hope of heaven, alone can render man happy in this world. What can comfort the torn and bleeding heart of the fond mother as she stands by the grave of the idol of her heart, her dear, departed child, but the sweet hope of meeting that child in heaven, a bright, blooming seraph? What can cheer the sufferer on the bed of sickness and disease and pain, but the precious

love of Jesus and the glorious presence of God? What can support the soul in the adversities, disappointments, sorrows, cares, and anxieties of life, but an inward peace, and a strong faith in God? What can console the aged while passing through the cold evening of life, but the smile of God upon the soul? What can sustain the heart amid the agony of dying, but to lay the head on Jesus' breast, and breathe the life out sweetly there? What is life without the religion of Jesus Christ? Without this, man is a poor friendless wanderer, disowned and condemned of God, disowned and condemned by himself, and disowned and condemned by the universe: God rejects him, heaven rejects him, the universe rejects and wars against him, and he condemns himself!

"O, who could bear life's stormy doom,
Did not thy wing of love
Come swiftly wafting through the gloom
Our peace-branch from above!
Then sorrow touched by thee grows bright
With more than rapture's ray:
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

CHAPTER V.

RELATION OF EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION TO THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST.

"The peculiar doctrine of Christianity is that of a universal sacrifice and perpetual propitiation. Other prophets proclaimed the will and the threatenings of God: Christ satisfied his justice."—DR. JOHNSON.

IN the preceding pages we have incidentally indicated the relation of experimental religion to the atonement; but the subject deserves to be brought more fully and clearly to the attention and understanding of all. We must bear in mind that man is a sinner; that is, as a subject of God's moral government, he has transgressed the law, a law perfect and just and good; and therefore must be punished, or all law and government and order given up, and chaotic ruin drive her ploughshare through creation. There can be no law, if that law be transgressed with impunity; and no government, if transgressors be not punished; and no God, if he deny himself and do violence to the attributes of his own nature. However much he might desire to do otherwise,

God is therefore compelled to punish the sinner in the very nature of the case. The question then is: How can man be saved from punishment and again become holy, and, at the same time, the law and government and character of God be saved from dishonor and ruin? This can only be done by means of an atonement which may satisfy the claims of justice, exhibit the evil of the offence, display the wisdom and goodness of God, and honor the law. Such an atonement the law admits, when it can be provided, as it answers all the ends of punishment, and at the same time affords ground for the exercise of clemency and mercy toward the offender. "Atonement," says Jenkyn, "is any expedient introduced into the administration of a government, instead of the infliction of the punishment of the offender—any expedient that will justify a government in suspending the literal execution of the penalty threatened—any consideration that fills the place of punishment, and answers the purposes of government as effectually as the infliction of the penalty on the offender himself would, and thus supplies to the government just, safe, and honorable grounds for offering and dispensing pardon to the offender. Let this definition of atonement be fairly tried by the usage of the

world in the administration of civil justice; and let it be compared with the sense of all the passages of Holy Scripture in which the word or the doctrine of atonement is introduced. It will not wrest one text of Scripture: it will not torture one doctrine of Christian theology. In the administration of a government, an atonement means something that may justify the exercise of clemency and mercy, without relaxing the bands of just authority. The head of a commonwealth, or supreme organ of government, is not a private person, but a public officer. As a private person, he may be inclined to do many things which the honor of his public office forbids him to do. Therefore, to reconcile the exercise of his personal disposition and of his public function, some expedient must be found which will preserve the honor of his government in the exhibition of his clemency and favor. For the want of such an expedient, a public organ of government must often withhold his favors." The reader will readily call to mind, as illustrating this, the case of Darius, who "set his heart on delivering Daniel," who had become an offender against government by the violation of a public law, and for this purpose he "labored until the going down of the sun," but could find no expedient by which

to save the offender, and at the same time preserve the honor of the government; and the case of Zeleucus, king of the Locrians, who made a law that all persons guilty of a certain crime should lose their eyes, and whose son was the first offender. To save his son and yet preserve the honor of the law and the integrity of the government, he put out one of his own eyes, and required but one of his son's. "By this means the honor of his law was preserved unsullied, and the clemency of his heart was extended to the offender."

Thus it is that the atonement of Christ "is a public expression of God's regard for the law which has been transgressed; and it is an honorable ground for showing clemency to the transgressors. The simple and unbending language of the Scriptures speak of Christ as an atoning Mediator 'whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins through the forbearance of God, to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of them which believe in Jesus.'" This view Dr. Sartorius maintains as correct. "Thus it is in the epistle to the Hebrews, 'Christ having become a High Priest of good things to come,

hath entered once into the holy place, and hath obtained an eternal redemption; not by the blood of goats or calves, but through his own blood, even the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit hath offered himself to God without spot, will purge our conscience from dead works, so that we may serve the living God:' and 'Christ, when he had made an offering for sin eternally worthy, sitteth now at the right hand of God.' This eternally-worthy offering for sin and the merit of it, is as much greater than the sin and guilt of humanity, as God is greater than the world." The atonement, the death and sufferings of Christ, is an honorable ground for offering and dispensing pardon to sinners. It is a sufficient expedient by which God can, as the moral Governor of the universe, exercise his clemency and mercy toward guilty man. The sinner can therefore apply to God for pardon and peace with some good hope of success. God has manifested his desire to save man, by admitting such an expedient as the death of his own, his only-begotten Son; and there can therefore be no longer any doubt as to his willingness and anxious desire to pardon and save. Thus considered, the atonement of Christ forms an abundant ground of encouragement to the sinner to plead and hope for

pardon, and all other spiritual blessings. It stands as an eternal monument of God's infinite compassion and mercy to man, a perpetual and infinitely abundant assurance of his willingness to bestow all spiritual blessings, and an everlasting rebuke to those who doubt his willingness to save them. "If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" If God so desired the salvation of man, that he freely gave up his own Son, to provide for it, how can he, with such a disposition, withhold any favor pertaining to that salvation from those who humbly seek it? If he gave the greatest and best of all gifts for our good, how can he withhold any smaller gift, particularly since the gift of his Son was to enable him to bestow these smaller gifts? The atonement thus becomes the ground on which God offers and gives all things, and the fact that excludes all doubt as to his disposition to give all things. "Ask, and ye shall receive: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will do it." "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "Christ in you the

hope of glory." "Christ is all and in all." "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." There is abundant sufficiency and fullness in the atonement for all the wants of the soul; and every blessing of a spiritual as well as temporal character must come through the atonement. All the parts that make up experimental religion, come through the atonement, as *freely* offered and *freely* bestowed to all who seek them. "I am the way, the truth, the life." "The water that I shall *give him* shall be in him a well of water." "The *gift* of God is eternal life." "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life *freely*." "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." Every part of experimental religion comes through the atonement as a free gift, a gratuity; not on account of any thing in us or any thing we can do, but because Christ died for us. Whatever we desire, then, or feel that we need in our religious experience, God will freely grant as a free gift. He does not sell or barter pardon and peace and holiness, but he graciously offers all as a free gift to the poor undeserving sinner.

But while, through the atonement, God mercifully offers all spiritual influences and blessings,

he does not and will not confer them without respect to the disposition of the sinner, that is, unconditionally and indiscriminately. "In the atonement God consulted not alone the sinner's good, but preëminently *his own glory;* but an indiscriminate pardon, dispensed without any regard to the disposition of the sinner, would be inconsistent with the wisdom of the divine government, and the public justice which in this provision sought the good of the whole commonwealth. To deliver captives who despise their deliverer and their deliverance, cannot be wise; and to ransom criminals, only to make them lawless, cannot be good." Therefore some condition on the part of the sinner must be complied with. We have already sufficiently discussed these conditions, and have shown that the sinner must repent and believe the gospel, or he cannot be saved. On the one hand, he must feel that he is sinful, that he is guilty, that his course is wrong, and resolve henceforth to serve God, regretting deeply the folly of his past life, and humbly confessing his great wickedness; and on the other, he must embrace Jesus Christ as his Saviour, rely implicitly and altogether upon his death for pardon, and trust to him for all mercy and hope. All the changes and enjoyments and privileges of experi-

mental religion come by faith in the atonement of Christ. "All the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus."

"Whate'er we ask, by faith we have."

"According to your faith, so be it unto you."

"To him that in thy name believes,
Eternal life with thee is given:
Into himself he all receives
Pardon and holiness and heaven."

CHAPTER VI.

RELATION OF EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION TO THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

——"That He, the third
In the Eternal Essence, to the prayer
Sincere, should come, should come as soon as asked,
Proceeding from the Father and the Son,
To give faith and repentance, such as God
Accepts." POLLOK.

THE Bible represents man, unaided by divine assistance, as utterly unable to change his heart and restore himself to holiness. Man in his natural and unconverted state is "blind," and diseased from "the crown of the head to the sole of the foot," and covered with "wounds and bruises and putrefying sores," and having "the whole head sick and the whole heart faint," and bound to a

"body of death" from which he cannot free himself, and "dead," "dead in trespasses and sins." "Without me ye can do nothing." "No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him." A more fearful picture of human depravity and helplessness cannot be given. Nothing could more clearly and fully express the totally depraved and helpless condition of man. "Alas!" says Doddridge, "you know not what difficulties you have to break through: you know not the temptations which Satan will throw in your way: you know not how importunate your vain and sinful companions will be to draw you back into the snare you may attempt to break; and, above all, you know not the subtle artifices which your own corruptions will practice upon you, in order to recover their dominion over you. The corrupt desires of your own hearts, now perhaps a little chained down, and lying as if they were dead, may spring up again with new violence, as if they had slept only to recruit their vigor; and if you are not supported by a better strength than your own, this struggle for liberty will only make your chains the heavier, the more shameful, and the more fatal. What, then, is to be done? Is the convinced sinner to lie down in despair?" No. The sinner is utterly fallen, depraved, and help-

less, but there is no occasion for despair. The whole Godhead is deeply interested in the salvation of man. The Father discovers an expedient by which man may find mercy, gave up his own Son freely for all, and actually dispenses pardon and grace: the Son "gave his life a ransom for all," and became "the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him," and now "ever liveth to make intercession for us;" and the Spirit freely works by enlightening, convincing, striving with, renewing and sanctifying the helpless sinner. "The first thought that will occur to every reflecting mind," says Buchanan, "in perusing our Lord's address to his disciples immediately before his departure, is that the work of the Spirit is, in its own place, as needful and as important as the work of Christ himself. We are too apt in modern times to overlook the necessity or to underrate the value of the Spirit's grace: we talk much of the Saviour, but little of the Sanctifier; yet a consideration of the words which Christ addressed to his disciples in the immediate prospect of leaving them, should teach us that the agency of the Spirit is so essential and important that his advent would more than compensate for the departure of the Saviour. "It is *expedient* for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will

not come unto you." "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "The carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Such passages show that man's opposition to holiness is so strong and inveterate and woven into his nature, that nothing can subdue it but the influences of the Holy Spirit. Pascal says, "But to disenthrall the soul from the love of the world—to tear it from what it holds most dear—to make it die to itself—to lift it up and bind it wholly and for ever to God, can be the work of none but an all-powerful hand." Divine influences are represented as fitted to meet the case of man, depraved and helpless. "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and will cause you to walk in my statutes." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." All the changes of experimental religion are made by the influences of the Spirit. He convicts the sinner and shows him his sins. "He shall reprove the world of sin." He draws, strives with, and

invites to Christ. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." He changes the heart of the penitent believer. Hence the phrases, "born of the Spirit"—"born of God"—"created anew of God in Christ Jesus"—"the renewing of the Holy Ghost"—"the baptism of the Holy Ghost." He communicates to the believer the knowledge of acceptance with God, and inspires the hope of heaven. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." He imparts the love of God to the heart. "For the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us." He is the agent in the work of sanctification. It is called "sanctification through the Spirit," and he is called the "Sanctifier of the faithful."

Moreover, the Scriptures represent the influences of the Spirit as being fully sufficient for all the spiritual necessities of man, and abundantly accessible to all. God is ready to bestow them bountifully upon all. "When he shall come, he shall reprove the *world* of sin." "My Spirit shall not always strive with *man*." "That is the light, which *lighteth every man* that cometh into the world." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come;

and *whosoever* will, let him come and take of the water of life *freely*." "If ye, being evil, know how to give good things unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit *to them that ask him*." "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?" No: "ye are straitened in yourselves." "No hearer of the gospel can ever persuade himself that he perishes because divine influences are not accessible to him." "It is an animating and consoling thought that the promised grace of the Spirit has respect to every duty which we can be called to discharge, and to every change that can possibly exist in the condition, the temptation, and the trials of his people."

But God does not force the sinner to receive the Spirit. He may be resisted. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." The calls and strivings of the Spirit may be unheeded, and then they will be withdrawn. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." "Because I called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." The Spirit may be grieved away from

us. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed." "Quench not the Spirit." "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." It appears, therefore, that there are means to be used in order to secure and retain the influences of the Spirit. "No man will become religious as a stone gets warm in sunshine, or wet in a shower of rain. He must be an agent as well as a subject. He must use the appointed means." We are not therefore, because we cannot by ourselves and of ourselves work out our salvation, to fold our arms and lie down in despair, or wait for God to do every thing. We must act, and act by using all the means of grace, particularly prayer and reading the Scripture. Dr. Cumming, speaking of the conversion and sanctification of the believer, says, "The Holy Spirit, in making these changes, does not destroy all freedom of action. One class of men deify human effort, another class degrade the human soul: one party would make man his own saviour, another party would make him a mere brute machine. He is neither. Man is a free and responsible being: he works willingly what he does: the freedom of his will is not crushed by the influence of the Holy Spirit of God. I appeal to every Christian. The Spirit has touched

your heart, has changed your affections, he has altered your whole man; but you were so little conscious of any coercive power exercised by his presence, that you did not know that he had changed your heart until you beheld the magnificent and blessed results that follow. It is not the Holy Spirit that repents or believes—it is we that repent—it is we that believe; and yet, while we repent and believe, the Holy Spirit has all the glory of that grace and the honor of its development. The presence and operation of the Holy Spirit does not paralyze human effort. The apostle evidently supposes that he who leans mostly upon the Spirit of God is just the man who will be most characterized by active and strenuous exertion; for he says, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.' The world draws the inference—'The Spirit of God does all, therefore we must do nothing:' the apostle draws the inference—'The Spirit of God does all, therefore we must do much.' A farmer knows that unless there are rains, and brilliant suns, and blue and cloudless skies, there will be no golden harvest: let him sow as he pleases, and till and watch and weed as he pleases, he knows that it is absolutely

impossible that there can be any good result if the sun should suspend his beams, or the clouds withhold their raindrops; and yet because he knows this he does not sow the less diligently, nor plough the less laboriously, nor weed the less carefully. God's law is this in the temporal and spiritual providences both—terrestrial effort to the utmost, and yet a celestial blessing, without which all is vain. God's great law is, that we shall toil as if all depended on human strength, and yet we shall look and lean and pray as if all absolutely depended on a celestial blessing."

CHAPTER VII.

CONVERSION.

"One day, after praying, as he had done for weeks beneath the spreading branches of a large tree, still known among his friends as the memorable spot in his history, he had risen from his knees with a heart pressed down by insupportable agony. When the answer came from above, the darkness passed away, and a new and heavenly light shone around. The change was sudden and powerful."—LIFE OF STEPHEN OLIN.

WE come now to the nature of experimental religion. The sinner desires to know through what changes he must pass in order to full ex-

perimental acquaintance with the life of holiness. He wishes to make no mistake here. He desires that every step in the great process of conforming the heart and life to the divine likeness may be well defined. On this point we do well to be "not deceived." To define these glorious changes as best we may, according to the light of revelation, shall be our aim. The change which passes upon the penitent believer in entering into and beginning the Christian life is variously termed, according to its different stages or parts, but as a whole passes under the popular and scriptural name of conversion. It is called justification, signifying, according to Mr. Wesley, "what God does for us," that is, the act of pardon, by which the sins of the party are all forgiven, and he is freely accepted through the merits of Christ. It is called regeneration, implying "what God does in us" in the renewal of our natures, by changing our affections and dispositions, and making us "new creatures in Christ Jesus." The new birth is the same. It is called adoption: by which is meant, that we are not only forgiven and renewed, but also adopted into the family of God, and thus made "children of God."

These terms, taken separately, do neither of them express fully the nature of the change

through which the penitent believer passes in entering upon the Christian life, but only parts or stages of that change; and they, if used to express the change, are calculated to mislead those not fully informed upon the subject into the idea of different changes taking place at distinct and separate periods. They together constitute one change; and, so far as the Christian consciousness is concerned, the believer experiences but one change. He believes, and is forgiven, renewed, and made a child of God in an instant, in a moment. It is all one glorious and blessed change. The Scriptures represent it as one change, and call it conversion.

At what point may the penitent expect to experience conversion? There is a point of time, or rather a stage of religious concern, at which, and at which alone, the sinner may expect to experience a change of heart and pass to the joys of the "new creation." It is when, in utter despair of saving himself by his own efforts, he throws himself altogether in humble trust upon the merits of Christ, and believes in him and him alone. "He that believeth *hath* the witness in himself." "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life." "*This is* eternal life, that ye believe in the Son of God." Here there is an

identifying of the exercise of faith in Christ, and the giving of spiritual life, as existing or taking place at the same moment of time. Where faith exists, eternal life is possessed. When faith is exercised, eternal life is imparted. There is no perception in the Christian consciousness of any interval coming between the two. The penitent no sooner believes in Jesus, chooses Christ as his only Saviour and hope, and relies entirely upon him, than he instantly experiences a change, softening his feelings, subduing his will, and pouring the sweet stream of holy love into his heart. He believes, and is converted. When he believes, he is changed. "He may have been troubled in his conscience before, and moved in his affections, and to a certain extent instructed in the things of God; but till now he hesitated, delayed and doubted: the bargain was not struck, the covenant was not subscribed, the decisive act was not done; but now he is brought to a point —the business long in negotiation is about to be finally settled: he sees the magnitude of impending ruin—the fearful hazard of an hour's delay; and hearing that Christ, and Christ only can save him, he believes, and he comes to Christ deliberately and solemnly to commit his soul into his hands, and to embrace him as his Saviour

Let the sinner close with Christ in his Scripture character; in other words, let him have a clear apprehension of Christ as he is revealed in the Gospel, and cordially believe in him, and choose him as his Saviour in all the fullness of his offices, and he is really from that time a converted man."

What is the nature of this change? What is conversion? The general idea of conversion is that of a *change*. But every change is not spiritual conversion. Baptism is a change, but it is not conversion. If baptism were conversion, then all who are baptized would be converted. But this is not true. Simon Magus was baptized, but not converted, for after his baptism he was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity," and was earnestly exhorted to "repent" of his "wickedness." Many have in every age of the Christian Church been baptized who never experienced evangelical conversion; and many have been converted who have not been baptized. Nor is conversion confined to baptism, as that it can only be experienced in baptism, in the act of submission to baptism. Many, as has been said, have been truly converted to God who have died without baptism. Can we believe that there have been no persons converted whose health has prevented them from being baptized? Can we

suppose that no persons have been converted who have been unable to secure the services of a minister to administer to them the ordinance of baptism? Who will say that among the Friends, who do not believe in water baptism, and do not therefore practice it, there have never been any true converts? According to the Bible, conversion frequently, nay, generally, precedes baptism. Cornelius and the jailor, and their families, and the three thousand, and many others, were converted before they were baptized. There is no evidence sufficiently strong to prove that the apostles, the twelve, were ever baptized. Baptism, then, is not evangelical conversion. There may be, and often is baptism, where there is no conversion. They are not by any means inseparable, the one from the other.

Conversion is a supernatural change, a change "*from above,*"* a change made by the Holy Spirit of God. In the language of revelation, to be converted is to be "*born of the Spirit*"—"*born of God*"—"*renewed of the Spirit*"—"*created anew of God in Christ Jesus.*" It is not therefore in the power of any man to convert himself: he is to be changed, if at all, by the

* Original, *ἄνωθεν*—from *above, superne.*

Spirit of God. There is, indeed, a modified sense, in which the coöperation of the sinner with the divine Spirit in producing this change is called a self-conversion; as when, in one or two instances, persons are exhorted to "convert" themselves, thereby meaning that they should comply with the terms on which the Spirit operates, and thus secure their conversion. But the uniform language of Scripture represents conversion as the sole work of the Holy Spirit, operating in answer to the prayer of faith and penitence. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." "Repent and be converted." Conversion is called a "new birth," a "new creation," a "renewing." These all give the idea of a passive yielding or submission, on our part, to the Spirit of God as the renewing agent. Such is the experience of the believer. He seeks after peace in every conceivable way: he tries the efficacy of tears and prayers and fastings and reformation, and all to no avail; and as a last resort, in utter despair of making himself any better, he throws himself at the feet of Jesus, and yields to the influences of the Holy Spirit; and, in a moment, he who sought for months to change his own heart, sits with tears of joy beneath the cross of Christ, all happy in redeeming love.

"I cannot wash my heart
But by believing thee,
And waiting for thy blood t' impart
The spotless purity."

But more particularly, the nature of the change itself. In the Bible, conversion is not particularly and specially defined, and yet is so spoken of as to leave little if any doubt as to its nature. It is called a "new birth," the being "born again." Now, there must be some appropriateness in the analogies of the term to express the nature of the work, else it would not be used. It implies that there is an analogy between the natural and the spiritual birth. In the natural birth there is a passing from darkness into light—an introduction to life in its proper conditions—a coming into the world, and into active contact with its realities—a commencement of the pleasures and enjoyments of life—a weakness and babe-state at the time of birth giving way very gradually to strength and activity—a beginning of the struggle for life and happiness—a passiveness in being brought into the world—and a mysteriousness about the manner of the transition, of the change from one state and condition and mode of existence to another and different state. There are analogous points in conversion to all these. In conversion, the sinner passes

from the darkness and spiritual blindness of his natural state, to the glorious light and peace of a religious and spiritual life—is introduced from his spiritually dead state, and his support of that state by sin, to a new life and its sustenance by the means of grace—he comes into the spiritual world, and into active contact with its realities, by which he is, in part, personally acquainted with. God as his Father, Christ as his Elder Brother, the Spirit as his Comforter, angels as his ministering spirits, and fallen spirits as his foes—he is introduced to spiritual society, into "fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ," and to "communion with the Holy Spirit"—he commences the pleasures of the spiritual life, it may be, owing to the weakness of his faith, in no greater measure than the new-born infant the pleasures of life—he begins the struggle for spiritual life and happiness; for Satan will oppose him with all his power at every step—he is weak and slowly gains strength, often falling in his attempts to walk, and always needing some one to walk beside him, direct his way, and assist him in his feeble efforts—he is passive, yielding himself to be born of the Spirit of God—and the change that passes upon him is a mysterious one, the manner of which he can

no more comprehend than the change that passes upon the infant in the natural birth, by which it is brought into a different state altogether and a different mode of existence, for "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The fact he is certain of, the manner of it he understands not. The adaptation of the child for this life shows him to have been designed for it; and the adaptation of man for the spiritual life shows him to have been designed for that; but the manner of the transition of the one is as strange and mysterious as that of the other.

Conversion is also called a "*new* creation," and the believer is said to be "created *anew* in Christ Jesus," and to become thereby a "*new creature;*" and the change is universal, affecting "all things," and making "*all things new.*" "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature:* old things are passed away, and behold all things are become *new.*" The believer is himself changed, so that he becomes a "*new creature.*" Not that he has any less or greater number of faculties or powers after than

before conversion: he has the same faculties and powers of body and of mind that he had before, and in this respect is unchanged. Still in some sense he is the subject of a great change. He enters upon a new state, begins a new life, occupies a new position, enjoys new happiness, entertains new views, is endued with new affections, feels new desires, possesses new hopes, and is conscious of a new experience. He enters upon a new state. Before, he was in a state of wrath; for "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness;" and he felt himself exposed to that wrath—now God's "anger is turned away," and he feels in his heart a sweet peace inexpressibly precious. Before, he was at enmity against God, and hated him in his heart—now he is "reconciled to God," and he "loves God because he first loved him." Before, he was in imminent danger, "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath," and being "without hope and without God in the world"—now he "rejoiceth in hope," and is assured that against him "there is now no condemnation." He begins a new life. Before, he was dead, "dead in trespasses and sins"—now he feels the pulsations of a new life, is conscious that he lives, "the love of God is shed abroad in his heart,"

the light of God's countenance is lifted upon him, the darkness is passed away from his mind and the "true light now shineth," and he delights to do the will of God, hearkening to the voice of his word, and running in the way of his commandments. He is confident that if he continues in the leading of this new life he shall live for ever. He occupies a new position. Before, he was a rebel, a traitor to the moral government of God, a child of wrath, and condemned already—now he is brought nigh by the blood of sprinkling, adopted into the family of God and made a child of God; and "if a child, then an heir, an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ," to an "inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." He enjoys new happiness. Before, he was without "peace," under condemnation, and feeling the wrath of God "abiding on him," having no hope, but a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation"—now he loves God, loves all, is at peace with God and the world and himself, feels the joys of pardon and hope, and is sweetly conscious of the divine favor. He entertains new views—"new views of himself, his nature, his character, his sins, his duties, his trials, his

proper business, his everlasting prospects—new views of life, its vanity, its shortness, its uncertainty, its real nature and momentous importance, as the only season of preparation for eternity"—new views of God, his character, and his government—new views of Christ, his purity, his goodness, his compassion, and his sufferings—new views of sin, its heinous deformity and exceeding sinfulness—new views of heaven and hell—new views of the earth and its beauty. He is endued with new affections, or, rather, the direction of his affections is changed. Before, his affections were withdrawn from God and fixed upon himself, upon the world, upon wealth, upon pleasure, upon honor, fame, upon sinful practices, upon sensual gratifications—now he loves God, and the people of God, and the service of God, and the word of God, and his "affections are placed on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." He feels new desires. Before, he desired wealth, fame, pleasure, sensual delights, and only things of a worldly character—now he desires above all things to enjoy Christ, to please God, to do good, to see the Church prosper, to have sinners converted, to die in peace, and to enjoy "everlasting life after death." He possesses new hopes and pros-

pects. Before, his hopes were all of earthly and sinful objects—now he possesses a "good hope through grace of eternal life in heaven." He is conscious of a new experience. He never before felt as he feels now. There is a change of some kind in his feelings. His experience is different from any thing he ever felt before. He is certain that he has passed through a change in his feelings different from any thing he ever experienced. What change is it? If it agrees with what we have said above, it is conversion, and the man is a Christian. This new experience will also take the form of a development of a spiritual conflict or warfare. "There is a conflict of which an unconverted man may be conscious—I mean the conflict betwixt sin and the conscience; but a new conflict arises when he is born again, and that is a conflict betwixt sin and the will. The difference betwixt the two lies entirely in the position of the will. This may be said to be the characteristic difference betwixt the converted and the unconverted: both are subject to an inward conflict, but the one is willing to side with conscience, the other is willing to side with sin. When the will is made to change its position—when it is brought off from its alliance with sin, and ranges itself on the

side with conscience and God—the great change is wrought: there may be, there will be a conflict still; for 'there is a law in the members warring against the law of the mind,' and our whole life must be a warfare." If any man thinks he will, after conversion, have no evil tempers and desires and dispositions to subdue, and no temptations and doubtings to resist, he is greatly mistaken. When a man enters the Christian life, he declares war against all sin and the kingdom of Satan, joins the Christian army, puts on the Christian armor, and wages a life-long warfare, fights "the good fight of faith," and comes off gloriously victorious through him that hath loved him, and the last enemy, death, is put under his feet. No man shall wear the crown of righteousness and bear the palm-branch of victory in heaven, who will not "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

What is the length of time employed in the process of the change? Buchanan says, "Conversion *admits of no degrees.* A man may be more or less wicked in his natural state, and he may be more or less holy in his regenerate state; but it cannot be more or less converted or unconverted—regenerate or unregenerate—alive or dead. There is no medium. Every man who is not con-

verted is a mere natural, unregenerate man, however rational, moral, and amiable he may be in the common relations of life." This is eminently worthy of consideration. There may be longer or shorter preparatory exercises, as the sinner may feel his guilt and danger and need of a Saviour in a greater or less degree, and exercises a stronger or weaker faith; and the evidence or consciousness of the change may be clearer and stronger and more marked, or doubtful and indistinct, as faith in Christ and the interest felt in the subject is stronger or weaker. But the change itself is instantaneous; just as, after the preparatory process is passed, the child is born in a moment—just as God said, "Let there be light, and light was." The conversions mentioned in the New Testament, such as the conversion of the Apostles, of the three thousand, of the five thousand, of Cornelius, of the jailor, of the many under Paul's ministry, were all instantaneous. There is no long process to be gone through in conversion. It is simple, because there is nothing for man to do but give up his sins and give himself away to Christ. Many are long seeking after pardon, but the cause is in themselves. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." The sinner goes with all his burden to the cross: he looks, and lives. He

throws himself at the feet of Jesus, and is at once in his arms, and "the best robe" is on him. He believes with all his heart, and in the twinkling of an eye he is made a "new creature." It is for God to "speak and it is done"—to "speak the word only, and he is made whole." The prayer of the penitent thief, and the soul-renewing and hope-inspiring answer of the Crucified, require but a moment. Believe and live—look and be saved.

What are the circumstantials of conversion? "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." "The varieties that may occur in the experience of true converts are almost infinite. Some are suddenly converted, as soon as their thoughts are arrested and fixed on divine truth: others are carried on gradually along a protracted course of preparatory instruction. Some are visited with deep convictions of sin and terrible alarms of conscience: others no sooner see their sins than they are enabled to rejoice in the remedy. Some are excited and agitated even to the disturbing of the bodily functions: others meekly receive the engrafted word, and drink in the dew of heaven quietly as the silent flower." Some there are who cry out with loud and bitter cries for mercy, and

are converted with shouts of rejoicing and songs of praise. Some pour out tears of penitence day and night, and when converted could sit and weep themselves away in tears of joy. Some would give the world to be able to weep, and when converted sit calmly at the feet of Jesus, "clothed and in their right mind," but so still and calm that no one would know of the change. Some at conversion laugh immoderately, and many by their joy-beaming countenances tell the gladness felt within. Some there are who are never much excited on the subject, are never very powerfully convicted of their guilt and danger, get their own consent to become Christians very slowly, are long in fully trusting in Christ, and when they are converted their experience is not strongly marked, for they only "see men as trees, walking"—are very doubtful of being converted, and only at intervals feel any of the sweet, refreshing joys of pardoning love, but are all the while fully resolved to press on and seek to the last the favor of God. It matters little, however, about the circumstantials of conversion. The question, and the only question in this connection of practical importance, is, Am I converted? am I *now* converted? Let us settle this point each for himself, and leave circumstantials to God, for the "time is short."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

CAN I know that my sins are forgiven? Is it possible for me to be assured of my acceptance with God? and if so, *how* may I know it? What is the nature of the evidence? These are not unimportant questions, as every Christian and every weeping penitent will testify. We propose to answer them.

It is the privilege of the Christian to have an evidence, a knowledge of his acceptance with God. We might argue this from the goodness of God. "God is love." But if so, will he withhold from his people aught that is necessary to their peace and comfort of mind? By no means. But if he gives not his people a knowledge of their acceptance, he withholds from them that which is above every thing necessary to their happiness, and leaves them in darkness and uncertainty, to pursue, with doubts and fears and gloomy forebodings, a way dark and chilly and cheerless to the skies. Is this consistent

with the goodness of God? But if the Christian has no evidence of his acceptance with God, it is impossible that he should experience peace, or joy, or hope. The sinner cannot have peace, joy, or hope, simply because he is a sinner. The knowledge of the fact that he is a sinner must necessarily prevent him from enjoying either. The Christian before he is assured of pardon and favor feels himself to be a sinner, and, as such, cannot enjoy either peace, or joy, or hope. He feels that he is a sinner, exposed to the wrath of God, already under condemnation, and only kept by the slender thread of life out of perdition; and he cannot feel otherwise, with all his sins gathering around him and fresh before his mind, until he is assured of pardon and divine acceptance and love. Now, we know that the Christian possesses "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," a peace that sometimes "passeth understanding"—"joy in the Holy Ghost," oftentimes "unspeakable and full of glory"—and "a good hope through grace of eternal life," a hope that "maketh not ashamed." We therefore conclude that the Christian possesses an evidence, an assurance of his acceptance with God. But we have a more sure word of prophecy. We turn to the Bible.

Under the Old Testament dispensation, which is characterized as the "*darker* dispensation," it was the privilege of God's people to possess a knowledge of their acceptance with him. "Enoch walked with God, and had this testimony, that he pleased him." Job, while under the most trying and embarrassing circumstances ever thrown around a man, suffering the loss of all his property, and all his children taken away at a stroke, the greatest bodily sufferings continually pressing upon him, and friends forsaking and reproaching him, triumphantly exclaims, "I know that *my* Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, *whom I shall see for myself, and not another.*" He was not uncertain or doubtful about his acceptance: he *knew* it. From the record of their lives, the cheerful piety, the deep and full gratitude of their hearts to God, the firm and powerful faith, the lively confidence, the burning love, the inspiring hope, "big with immortality," it is evident that the Old Testament saints generally experienced a good persuasion of peace with God. We cannot otherwise account for the type of their experience. The book of Psalms is a good exponent of their religious ex-

perience, and it presents it generally as peaceful, cheerful, confident, and hopeful. It is inspiring and encouraging, truly *refreshing*, to read the tone of religious experience presented in the Psalms. The New Testament is a "more glorious" dispensation, and under it we should naturally suppose that religious experience would take a more cheerful and confident type, by "reason of the glory that excelleth." In this we are not mistaken. There is a degree of holy assurance, certainty, and confidence in the experience of the New Testament saints that fills the reader with admiration and awe. There is no hesitation, no doubting amongst them. They speak boldly of the "hope that is in them." "We *know* that we are of God. "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life." "We are *always confident.*" "We *know* that if this earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Such are a few expressions out of many which indicate the character of the religious experience of the early Christians. They were "always confident" and "rejoicing in hope." They possessed an abiding evidence, such as they needed in their trials and sufferings, and such as we need in our

trials, temptations, and afflictions. Nor can we think that their experience was peculiar to themselves; for it was "written for our learning" and "hope:" religion is the same in all ages; and we have, as far as means are conducive to this end, greatly the advantage over all previous times. It is therefore beyond doubt that the Christian may be fully persuaded of a saving interest in Christ, and even attain to the "full assurance of hope." Not that every one at conversion possesses the same amount of evidence, or enjoys the same degree of persuasion, or is alike in this respect throughout the subsequent religious experience. Men are born into the spiritual life, as well as into the natural, under various circumstances, and with different degrees of consciousness at the transition, and with various manifestations of consciousness. No one can infer, therefore, that he is not born at all, because he was not born under the same circumstances, with the same degree of consciousness of the change, nor exhibited the same manifestations of his consciousness of the fact, as some others. This would be absurd in the extreme. Some of God's children may be born with a consciousness of the change so very faint as to be in doubt whether indeed they are born again; but

their doubt and uncertainty does not invalidate the fact: it only shows the weakness of their faith. "According to your faith, so be it unto you."

This evidence, which it is the Christian's glorious privilege to have in conversion, and enjoy increasingly through all subsequent experience, is in the Bible called the "witness of the Spirit." Not that there is no other evidence; for practical obedience is a very important evidence of regeneration. But the principal evidence is the "witness of the Spirit." The evidence furnished by obedience is only an *inferential* and *corroborative* testimony, and cannot be certainly conclusive to our own hearts if there be no other evidence; because our consciences may not be sufficiently purified, quickened, and enlightened, to give an impartial judgment respecting the correctness of our life; and much time must also elapse before we can be fairly confident of the quality and extent of obedience. Nor can we be properly qualified to judge certainly of our conversion by our obedience, as every one is biased in his own favor, and is disposed to put the most favorable construction on his own conduct. To have no other evidence would involve us in perplexing doubts

and fears on the one hand, or in pharisaic presumption and self-deception on the other. Therefore "God hath provided some better thing for us," which, in connection with practical obedience as an inferential and corroborative evidence, places us beyond the reach of doubt and perplexity, if we are careful to secure both. The Spirit of God is the only competent witness in this matter. Imagine a case. A sinner is brought to feel his guilt and danger, and humbly seeks forgiveness through the atonement of Christ. He repents. He throws himself upon the mercy of God, trusting in Jesus. He is pardoned. But how can he know it? The act of pardon is an act of God—an act that passes in the Divine mind; and "who knoweth the mind of the Lord save the Spirit of the Lord?" The Spirit of God alone knows what passes in the Divine mind. If so, who but the Spirit can communicate the act of pardon to the penitent sinner, and assure him that God is reconciled? And it is very obvious that the evidence, to answer its purpose, must be *authoritative* and *abiding*. Were an angel to communicate the knowledge of acceptance and pardon, we must ascertain his authority for so doing, we must see his credentials, we must know that he is properly accredited to do this office. So also of a

fellow-man. What credentials, what evidence of authority could these furnish to satisfy our minds? If they produced no credentials, their testimony would be nothing worth, for it would not free us from doubt or from deception. Satan sometimes "transforms himself into an angel of light." But an evidence coming through an angel, or a fellow-man, would be only for the present, and could not be a permanent, abiding witness, such as we need in the ever-varying circumstances, trials, and afflictions of life through which we pass. None but a divine being, and thus an unerring and ever-present being, can be properly qualified to furnish the evidence we need. We need the promised "*Comforter*," even the "*Spirit of truth, who shall abide with us for ever.*" This is the privilege of every Christian, and no less than this can keep off perplexing doubts and fears. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." But how do we know this? Paul says—read on to the fifth verse—"Because he hath given us the earnest of the Spirit, therefore we are always confident." "And *hereby* we

know that he abideth in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." "Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." "He that believeth on the Son of God *hath the witness in himself.*" What "witness" is it? Certainly not that of our works, for they are not "*in*" us. The apostle himself answers: "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." These passages are plain and simple, involving no figures, and are therefore to be understood in their plain and obvious sense. They teach no more nor less than the simple truth that the Spirit of God is the agent that first, and continually, communicates the knowledge of divine acceptance and love to the heart or consciousness of the penitent believer. This appertains to his office as Comforter of the people of God. We know nothing experimentally of the love of God, nor can know, until that love is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us."

But what is this witness of the Spirit? It does not consist of sights, or voices, or dreams. These an overheated imagination may suppose to be the word of God, the voice of Jesus, assuring us

of peace and pardon; but it is all delusion, the work of the imagination merely. "Such testimony," says Bishop Morris, "may serve to flatter the consciences of carnal professors, but never can impart 'the knowledge of God in the remission of sins.'" It is indeed true, that in some cases such is the deep distress of the penitent, and so sudden and powerful the impression made by the Spirit in testifying of pardon, in communicating the knowledge of acceptance to the soul, that it may occasion the imagination that a voice was heard, or a vision seen. Voices and visions and dreams may and oftentimes do deceive us; not so, however, the Spirit of God. He is the "*Spirit of truth,*" and never deceives.

Mr. Wesley defines the witness of the Spirit thus: "By the 'testimony of the Spirit,' I mean an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God—'Jesus Christ hath loved me and given himself for me,' that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God. After twenty years further consideration, I see no cause to retract any part of this." It is thus defined to be an "impression" made on the soul, or a strong persuasion, which is about the same. It is not a voice, not a vision,

not a dream; but the Spirit makes the heart feel a change, a sweet, delightful change. Sometimes the impression or persuasion is as sudden and distinct as if a voice were heard. Hence it is compared to a voice, a "small, still voice," hushing the tumult and tempest of the soul, and producing "a great calm."

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear:
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear:
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And, Father, Abba, Father, cry."

This is in accordance with the experience of many Christians—perhaps of most Christians. The darkness suddenly and entirely retires, passes away, and heavenly light springs up, the bright shining of the Sun of righteousness rising upon the soul, and the heavy and oppressive burden of sin is at once all removed, and the soul is light and joyful in the sweet relief.

But there are many Christians, equally sincere, whose experience of conversion, and the evidence imparted to them, was not thus suddenly distinct and powerful. They were certainly converted at once, but they did not perceive the evidence of the change in so marked, distinct, and sudden a manner. The light of heaven gradually arose

upon them, scattering their darkness by degrees, and giving them slowly "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The light which first gave evidence to them of the dawning of day upon their souls, was like the light which Bunyan's pilgrim saw when he started for the celestial city—a light in the distance, dimly shining at first, as a candle flickering in its socket, scarcely discernible, ready to die out at times, and anon flashing up a little, but increasing as he went forward in brilliancy and power, until at last it enlarged to the full blaze of heavenly glory. The "day of small things" is not to be despised. We must "hold fast" that we have, for "to him that hath"—improves what he has—"shall be given, and he shall have abundance." Such an experience as this latter appears to have been Mr. Wesley's. His own account of his conversion tells us that it took place while "one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans," when the only evidence given was that he felt his heart "strangely warmed;" and after struggling with doubts, his own conclusion was, that "as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the

counsels of his own will." This was certainly not a very marked experience, and he seems not to have been himself at once satisfied that it was conversion, but was afterwards abundantly satisfied that then and there he was converted to God; and so his followers have thought.

Again: the witness of the Spirit consists in the very change itself, which cannot but more or less distinctly and clearly impress upon the consciousness the fact that a change has taken place, and in the same way indicate the nature of the change. Man is not without his natural consciousness in conversion, and therefore, when the Spirit changes his heart, he is more or less conscious of the change—feels more or less distinctly that he is the subject of a spiritual change; and thus through the consciousness the work of the Spirit is its own testimony. This is the more evident, from the fact that the distinctive nature of the change is also a matter of consciousness, and is appealed to as constituting a part of the Spirit's testimony, and of the evidence of acceptance. In connection with the change, the consciousness reports the nature of that change. The converted man is conscious of relief from an oppressive burden—of a sense of softened, subdued feeling—of a strange warming of heart before God—of a sweet love,

now first felt, to God, to Christ, to all Christians, and to everybody—of a beauty in religion, before unseen—of a calm trust and confidence in God—of a desire to please God above all things. All this in some degree more or less distinctly the consciousness reports. It is the change made by the Holy Spirit upon the heart, and which, therefore, the Spirit in the very change itself reports to and through the consciousness. It is thus that the Spirit "bears witness *with our spirit.*" In renewing the heart the Spirit cries, "Abba, Father," and the consciousness reports the words whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

"'Save, Lord, or we perish!' was their fearful cry,
While glancing upwards to the angry sky:
It was enough:—the Saviour gently rose,
And kindly bade his followers calm their woes:
'Peace, peace, be still!'—the rolling waves were stayed,
The storms were over and the winds allayed.
Peace, troubled soul! the Saviour bids thee rest,
And calm the tumult raging in thy breast:
Into thy heart let his sweet smile descend,
For He will be thy Brother and thy Friend."

CHAPTER IX.

RELIGIOUS DOUBTS.

"For all thy rankling doubts so sore,
Love thou thy Saviour still:
Him for thy Lord and God adore,
And ever do His will.
Though vexing doubts may seem to last,
Let not thy soul be quite o'ercast:
Soon will he show thee all his wounds, and say,
Long have I known thy name—know thou my face alway."
KEBLE.

THERE are few Christians who escape altogether the power of "Giant Despair," and gain no personal knowledge of "Doubting Castle." Many Christians of weak faith are almost always inmates of "Doubting Castle," and under the power of the "Giant Despair." They give way to doubts and fears until they lose all enjoyment of religion, and are unfitted for the pleasures of life. Some are all their days subject to this distressing bondage. There are few, indeed, who are entirely free at all times from religious doubts. They will come, though unbidden and unwelcome guests, and are not easily driven away. Many have been the warm tears shed, and the sighs

breathed, and the fervent prayers uttered, and the earnest efforts made, over religious doubts and fears. Many a day has been made dark, and many an hour dreary and sad, by distressing doubts of acceptance and salvation. Religious doubts may be classed into three different categories. There are doubts respecting the fact of our conversion. Such doubts frequently arise very soon after conversion, and we have known persons made *miserable* by them for a day or more immediately after professing conversion. Satan comes after the first emotions of religious joy have gradually subsided, and asks, where now is the change and its joys, and suggests that perhaps they were deceived, and were not really converted. They are but little acquainted at that time with the "devices" of Satan, and know but little of religious experience, and, therefore, such doubts are peculiarly distressing, and for a season almost unmanageable. Some, alas! too readily believe the "father of lies," and at once conclude they were deceived, and give up all profession of Christianity, and all effort after holiness. Many carry these doubts through life, and seem never able to satisfy themselves that they are truly born of God. With them the fact of their conversion becomes a

"standing doubt:" they are never able to speak confidently of their interest in Christ, or cheerfully and hopefully of their home in heaven: their piety becomes gloomy and melancholy, or pharisaic and censorious.

There are many Christians, who, being satisfied of the fact of their having been converted, are yet disturbed by doubts of present acceptance. These are fully confident that they have been renewed, that they have been "enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;" but they are not certain of the present favor of God, and cannot now confidently call God their Father, and Christ their Saviour. They remember with sorrow of heart the "peaceful hours," the "sweet refreshing views of Jesus and his word," the "heavenly hours," the "visions so sublime;" but they are gone—those sweet, delightful moments, all gone, long since gone; and though they have not given up their profession of Christianity, and their place in the assembly of the saints, there is no spiritual joy, no strong confidence in Christ, and no sure and certain hope of a blissful immortality. Poor man, or

woman! the heart is fixed on the things of the world, and they have taken the place of the Saviour. Blessed Jesus! thou art still rejected of men!

There is still another class of Christians troubled by religious doubts. These go farther in religious experience than either of those we have been describing. They have no doubts respecting either their conversion or their present acceptance. They believe in Christ, and have peace. They love God and rejoice in his love. They do good and glorify God, and experience large measures of comfort and joy. They walk in the fear of God, and are "joyful through hope." But they have doubts and fears peculiar to themselves. These doubts are occasioned by the circumstances surrounding them. They are in great and sore temptations, and fear and doubt if God will impart sufficient grace, or make a way of escape for them. They have some peculiarity of temperament, which gives rise to the fear of death in its worst forms, and they doubt if God will support them in a dying-hour. They are in persecution, and doubt if God will deliver or support them. They are in poverty and deep distress, or in adversity's more general and sore troubles, and doubt if God be-

friends, and will deliver them from actual suffering. They are in great affliction and near to death, and doubt if God will prove the "Husband of the widow and the Father of the fatherless." There are many things which give rise to doubts, many things favorable to a state of doubting, many predisposing causes. There are persons of a timid, fearful, distrustful spirit, who are ever ready to doubt, unwilling to be confident, and easily induced to fear. There are many of a melancholy, gloomy disposition, ever disposed to magnify difficulties, and to look exclusively at the dark side of every picture. In some, this disposition amounts to a kind of monomania, a morbid melancholy. Such a state was that of the poet Cowper. It is indeed a sad condition; but much of it arises from habitual distrust, and a love of melancholy scenes and associations. It may be resisted, especially in its incipiency, and ought to be. There are persons who pass through great and sore afflictions and sufferings, and permit these things to weaken their faith, by giving way to sorrow and prolonged grief, and thus doubts and fears are induced and strengthened. There is a want of faith in the goodness and wisdom of God's providence, and in the promises of the Bible. Doubting is the opposite of faith:

where there is but little faith there will be many doubts; and where there is but a weak faith there will be strong doubts. Doubts are frequently caused by defective religious experience. Those who profess religion without experiencing a change of heart must necessarily be exposed to many doubts, if they be not confirmed in self-deception, or presumption. Those who enter the Christian communion, supposing themselves to have been regenerated in baptism, and those trusting to a mere speculative faith, and those relying on their good works, soon experience the rottenness of their foundations and the weakness of their hopes, and consequently have let in upon them a flood of doubts and fears. In the majority of cases, however, Christians get into "Doubting Castle" by leaving the right way to the Celestial City. While in the straight way to heaven, the Sun of righteousness shines continually on the soul. The light of heaven streams down the narrow path that leads to heaven, and while in that path no darkness overshadows us. But the light shines only down the pathway to heaven: while in it all is light; while out of it all is dark. Many Christians have an experience that resembles a cloudy day in which alternately the sun shines out beautifully and brightly,

and then is hid behind dark, frowning clouds. Sin is the only cloud that can shut out the light of life from the heart of the child of God. "Your sins," says Isaiah, "have separated between you and God." We lose our "first love," and grow doubtful, and walk in darkness by actual transgression, neglect of duty, or unbelief. Sin is a disease that will weaken the soul and shut out the light of heaven, and induce spiritual decay. Sin is a moral leprosy, a plague-spot on the soul, a gangrene tending to putrefaction and death. By sin we leave the path of light and life, and enwrap our souls in darkness. "It is of essential consequence," says Dr. Wardlaw, "for us to be impressed with the conviction that if we are destitute of peace and joy, *the cause is in ourselves—uniformly and exclusively in ourselves.* It is not that God has withdrawn from us, but that we have withdrawn from God." Doubts are injurious, and in most cases sinful, if not in all. If they arise from unbelief or want of faith, that is undoubtedly sinful, and perilous, for no greater insult can be offered to God than deliberately to disbelieve or doubt his word; and sooner or later unbelief will damn the soul. "He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me." If want of confidence,

weakness of faith, be the cause of doubts, then faith is the remedy. "Have faith in God. If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, be thou removed and be thou cast into the midst of the sea, and it shall obey you." No difficulty is too great for faith to overcome. If doubts arise from a defective religious experience, the defect must be supplied by a correct evangelical experience. These rotten foundations must be forsaken. We must build upon a living faith in the atonement of Christ, producing a thorough change in heart and life. If Jesus Christ be not formed in us the hope of glory, we have no well-grounded hope, and are wrapping around us a cloak of self-deception, or presumption, which will fall off in death, and expose our nakedness and guilt. If these doubts arise from sin, either of transgression or neglect, or unfaithfulness in the discharge of duty, it is but tautology to say that they are sinful. Whatever sins we are guilty of, must be given up, given up at once and entirely. They may be long-cherished sins, besetting sins, sins we delight in; but they must be renounced, or they will hide the Saviour from our eyes, destroy the comforts of the soul, and ultimately ruin it for ever. "No man can serve two mas-

ters." Christ and sin cannot dwell long together in the same heart. The human heart is too small to contain both. Sin must be given up, or God will leave the heart. A sad day that, when God takes his departure from the heart!

Sad work these religious doubts make. They present religion in an unattractive, repulsive light to others, who know nothing of its power, and tend to discourage those who are weak in faith. They cripple the energies of the soul, weaken faith, destroy religious enjoyments, hinder communion with God, retard religious progress, produce a gloomy, melancholy state, or a careless indifference, and finally result in apostasy and ruin. Who can enjoy religion or move forward with any confidence in the path of duty with the idea harassing him that he is not accepted of God?

Is it possible that the Christian can be free from doubts and fears, and enjoy a state of religious assurance, and confidence, and hope? After what has been said in the preceding chapter, we can hardly regard this as a question. Since the Bible is so full of encouragements and promises; since God is so abounding in mercy and grace; since Jesus is mighty to save and strong to deliver, and ever liveth to make intercession for us; since the Holy Spirit is our special

Comforter, to abide with us for ever; since angels are our ministering spirits, building their camps around us by day and by night; since all things work together for our good; since eternal glory is the reward of our faith and patience, who can say that we may not, should not be fully assured in our minds, and live in the strongest confidence and hope, without a disturbing doubt, or a single disquieting fear? Wherefore should we doubt? God is all love, Jesus all-powerful, grace all-sufficient, and heaven all-glorious. Whom should we fear? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" What should we fear? "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God." "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only, makest me to dwell in safety." "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth." "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, and sing for joy." "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." "Rejoice evermore." Such is the language of the Bible. In this there appears no room for doubts or fears: all is cheerful confidence, undoubting assurance, and lively hope. No distressing doubts, no moping melancholy, no long-faced sadness belongs of necessity to evangelical Christianity. "It is plain," says President Edwards, in his work on the Affections, "that it was a common thing for the saints that we have a history or particular account of in the Scriptures, to be *assured*." The Confession of Faith of the Congregational churches, adopted

in 1680, says, "Such as believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall not make them ashamed." Dr. Upham, in his Life of Faith, says, "A few years since, an elder of a Presbyterian church in Ohio died at a very advanced age. His long life had been distinguished for its blameless innocence, its strong faith, its meek and humble devotedness to God. And he was enabled with thankfulness to the divine grace, which he had experienced, to assure his pastor, in the course of this conversation, (on his dying-bed,) that during the seventy years which had intervened since his conversion, 'he had never had a dark hour.'" Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers says in a letter to a friend, who inquired if she had doubts, "Blessed be God, I have not the shadow of a doubt." Dr. Wayland says of Dr. Judson, in his Memoir of that distinguished Baptist missionary, "From the moment of his conversion, he seems never, through life, to have been harassed by a doubt of his acceptance with God. The new creature was so manifest to his consciousness, that in the most decided form he had

the witness in himself." This is surely a blessed state of religious experience, and thousands have enjoyed it. It is within the reach of every one. "Nothing spectral in appearance, nor sepulchral in tone, nor ascetic in habit, nor cynical in spirit, should characterize a Christian: he is a child of light, and should live and act as such: he should be like one of the sons of the morning, dropped from paradise, and bending his way back to it again, and bearing the trials of earth with the recollection of his happy destiny and the prospect of his future glory: he should have something of the bliss of heaven, but withal much of its seriousness too."

But how may such a state be enjoyed? By faith in Christ and consistency of conduct.

> "Believe, and show the reason of a man,
> Believe, and taste the pleasures of a God,
> Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb."

"Believe much," says Archbishop Leighton, "and you shall love much."

> "I sat me down in earth's benighted vale,
> And had no courage and no strength to rise:
> Sad, to the passing breeze I told my tale,
> And bowed my head and drained my weeping eyes.
> But Faith came by and took me by the hand;
> And now the valleys rise, the mountains fall:
> Welcome the stormy sea, the dangerous land!
> With faith to aid me, I can conquer all."

CHAPTER X.

TEMPTATIONS.

"What war so cruel, or what siege so sore,
As that which strong temptation doth apply
Against the fort of reason evermore,
To bring the soul into captivity?"

SPENSER.

AN important part of religious experience consists of the conflict with temptation. "Every man is tempted." No Christian is, or can be, while in this world, entirely free from temptation. Jesus Christ, while on earth, was frequently tempted, and Satan only left him at any time "for a season." The best and holiest of men have struggled hard with divers temptations. We cannot be free from them in this life. There is no state or position in religion which exempts the Christian from temptations while on earth. Our first parents, in all the purity and holiness of their paradisiacal state, when they enjoyed the presence and favor of God, were subject to temptation. Our probationary condition implies the possibility of temptation. We are on trial, and

may stand or fall; or rather, may recover our position in the favor of God, or continue in our fallen and ruined state. God has placed us here not only as probationers, but also as free agents, and as such we are exposed to temptations from without and within.

> ——"I made him just and right;
> Sufficient to have stood, yet free to fall:
> Such I created all the ethereal powers,
> Both them who stood and them who fail'd:
> Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.

If man were not free, he could not be tempted. Every free agent, not unchangeable and impeccable, may be tempted; but man is such a free agent; therefore he is liable to be tempted. The moral position of our world is such, that man is open to influences from without, influences out of himself, spiritual agencies from other worlds. "This world of ours," says Trench, in his Notes on Miracles, "stands not isolated, not rounded and complete in itself, but in living relation with two worlds—a higher, from which all good in it proceeds—and this lower," the kingdom of Satan, "from which all evil." This world stands in such relation to heaven and to hell, that both God and Satan have free access to it—God as to a rightful province of his dominion, and Satan as the great adversary of God and man, invading

the territory of God, and seeking the ruin of man. Thus all that is good in man is ascribed to the agency of the Spirit of God "working in us to will and to do;" and all evil to Satan, who "goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Nor does this destroy the responsibility of men. It is still *their* good and *their* evil. It is *theirs*, since it is an act of their will which alone gives it leave to enter, and adopts it. To each man the key is committed and the task given to keep closed the gate of his soul "to his enemy, and open to the Spirit of God." Satan may approach his soul. This is no sin in the man. He may seek to enter, knock at the door, ask for admittance. This is no sin in the man. But if he stop to reason with Satan, if he open the door, if he indulge the temptation, this is sin: here it begins. It is no sin to be tempted; but to indulge temptation, to yield to it, is sin. Christ, who was "without spot, and blameless," and "knew no sin," was often tempted, but never overcome of temptation.

Satan is a real being. "Of the real personality of this dreadful being," says James, "there can exist no well-founded doubt to any one who with meekness and docility submits his understanding to the teaching of God's word. To

resolve what is there affirmed of his varied attributes and actions into mere orientalisms, and to conceive that nothing more is intended than a bold personification of the evil principle, goes far to turn the whole gospel history into fable, and requires but another and more adventurous step in the interpretation of Scripture to convert even the Saviour himself into an ideal character, and to make him only the personification of virtue. Of the history of Satan we know but little, except that he is an apostate spirit, a fallen angel, preëxistent to man, cast out of heaven for his sin, and now in some unknown manner employing himself in seducing others to sin." "The devil," says Sartorius, "as the Scripture teaches, is no superstitious story, no child-fearing spectre, no corporeal monster, but a spirit which, according to our Saviour, continues not in the truth, in which and to which it was created; but one which, falling into the deceit of selfishness, becomes a liar, denies the love of God, is the first liar, the father of lies, and the father of all wickedness." He is called the "devil," which signifies a slanderer and accuser—the "wicked one," implying that his whole character is made up of intense wickedness, without the least admixture of good—the "tempter," because he is

constantly engaged in seducing others to sin—a "liar, and the father of lies," because he was the first to lie, and his trade is to lie and deceive—the "old dragon and serpent," signifying his dreadful and malignant character, and identifying him as the archfiend who deceived our first parents. Such is Satan.

He is not, however, the only spirit engaged in seducing men to sin. When his fall took place in heaven, he was not alone in the great defection. He carried with him a vast number of the angels—a "third part of the stars of heaven." He is the head and leader of these, and all are engaged in one vast combination for the ruin of man.

"Devil with devil damn'd firm concord holds."

Hence we read of one possessed of a "legion of devils;" of a woman, out of whom Christ cast "seven devils;" and the parable of a man, out of whom a devil was cast, which returned to his house whence he came out, and finding it "swept and garnished, goeth and taketh to himself seven other devils, and they enter into him and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Charles Wesley speaks of them as innumerable:

"Angels your march oppose,
Who still in strength excel:
Your secret, sworn, eternal foes,
Countless, invisible:
From thrones of glory driven,
By flaming vengeance hurl'd:
They throng the air, and darken heaven,
And rule this lower world."

Thus the Christian, as is every man, is exposed to a countless multitude of spiritual foes and their insidious snares.

"Ah me! how many perils do enfold
The righteous man, to make him daily fall!"

"In what *manner* Satan tempts men to sin is a deep mystery." But it is no deeper mystery than the access of the Spirit of God to our hearts, and his influence upon them. We can no more describe the manner of the one than of the other: both are mysterious to us at present; and we cannot deny the one without denying the other also. Satan does tempt men to sin. We know the fact: it is a matter of revelation, of experience, of consciousness. We are not concerned about the matter of explaining the *how* of these temptations. It is enough for us to know that they exist. But we are not altogether "ignorant of his devices." He tempts men in various

ways. He makes use of our passions, appetites, desires, propensities, tempers and dispositions, to lead us into sin. He excites and increases them, stirs them up, wakes them into clamorous callings for gratification, until the man is led away into sin—and again and again, until his passions have the mastery over him, and he becomes a slave tc his own evil nature. He makes use of our minds, our intellects, suggesting doubts, evil imaginings, blasphemous thoughts, self-accusations, wanderings of mind in devotional exercises, and leading them into impure and erroneous trains of reflection. In this way he greatly annoys Christians. He makes use of our circumstances. If poor, he will suggest hard thoughts of God, doubts of acceptance with him, gloomy despondency, doubts of the fulfilment of the promises, and will tempt to robbery, theft, fraud, overreaching, deception, or some form of dishonesty, and will excite envy, hatred, malice, and such like. If rich, he will excite pride, haughtiness, oppression, persecution, ambition, emulation, strife and contention. If afflicted and distressed, he will accuse of sin, suggest doubts of divine favor, and of the goodness of God. He makes use of associations. If a drunkard be near spirituous liquors, he will be strongly tempted to

drink: if a licentious person be in a favorable position, he will be tempted to vice; and so with all who are placed near the objects of unlawful desire. He makes use of companions, and by means of others leads men to sin. This is a frequent and successful way of temptation. Few are firm enough always to resist the persuasions and entreaties of friends and relatives. He makes use of the world as a means and an occasion of temptation. The society, the habits, customs, maxims, fashions, pleasures, amusements, and opinions of the world, all give rise to various temptations. It is difficult to resist the pleadings of worldliness, and be denounced as singular, unfashionable, and mad. There are particular sins to which Satan is attached, and which he delights to induce men to commit: such as falsehood, pride, ambition, envy, malice, wrath, revenge, discontent, murmuring, and resistance of God's will. These are points in which the wicked are very like to Satan, in which they imitate him. Satan thus tempts men in every possible way. When he cannot succeed by one method, he tries another. When one devil cannot get into the heart, he takes with him seven other devils more experienced than himself, and together they seek entrance. At times he comes suddenly by way

of surprise as a "roaring lion," and would take the soul by storm. At other times he approaches gradually, and seeks to lead off the soul by degrees, slowly and almost imperceptibly, from God and holiness; and the man is led on, step by step, persuaded that all is right, until he is "clean gone" from all that is right. The usual persuasives of Satan in such cases are, that there is no harm in it; that no one will notice it; that it is so very little a thing; that other Christians do the same thing or worse. These are Satan's old and patent arguments—his plausible lies. To accomplish his fiendish purposes, he "transforms" himself "into an angel of light;" and, armed with Bible arguments and precedents, and passages of Scripture, he goes forth to deceive the "very elect." Thus Milton represents him as having deceived Uriel,

> ———"One of the seven
> Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,
> Stand ready at command."

To do this successfully,

> "A stripling cherub he appears,
> Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
> Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb
> Suitable grace diffused, so well he feigned."

In this character, as an angel of light, he works

in all religious controversies; in all church quarrels, difficulties and divisions; in all religious strife and persecutions for conscience' sake; in all bigotry, exclusiveness, and want of union and coöperation.

> "Oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
> The instruments of darkness tell us truths—
> Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
> In deepest consequence."

Such is the Christian's adversary, and such some of his ways of seducing to sin. "The very idea that we have to combat with such a foe—a foe that had the courage to attack the Son of God—a foe the more dangerous from the cloud of mystery that hangs about him and conceals his movements from observation—a foe that actually subdued our first parents, notwithstanding their perfect innocence and paradisiac situation—a foe whom success has made bold and experience sagacious in ruining souls—a foe that may be near us at any moment, unseen, and therefore unnoticed, and may be preparing some new kind of attack—is indeed sufficient to alarm us far more than it does, and to put us upon the best means of averting the danger. There seems about too many professing Christians a careless confidence, and an air of unwarranted security, which their

situation of extreme peril does not justify, and which is quite opposed to the solemn warnings contained in the word of God." Thus it is that we "work out our salvation with *fear* and *trembling*," and "rejoice with *trembling*."

How may we best meet and resist temptation? In answer to this, the Scripture gives abundant encouragement and instruction. Satan is now a vanquished foe; for Jesus, our Mediator, met him in the wilderness, and thrice defeated him; and on Calvary he met all the combined powers of hell, and gained a complete victory over earth and hell. "He conquered when he fell." God promises protection, strength and victory to all who, trusting in him, perseveringly "resist the devil." The Holy Spirit is promised and offered to all for direction, support and assistance. The assurance is given, that "no temptation shall befall us but such as is common to men," but "such as we are able to bear," and that God "will, with the temptation, make a way of escape." For all this we cannot be too thankful, nor too diligent in the use of the means provided. Those means will avail us nothing if we do not use them.

We have first of all the exhortation to "be sober and vigilant, because our adversary, the

devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Sobriety is to be exercised. It means "not merely a restraint upon our fleshly appetite, so as not to be intoxicated with strong drink, but also a restraint upon the lusts of the mind, so as not to have the soul intoxicated with the love of the world. Many a man has a drunken soul who never had a drunken body in his life. Beware of spiritual *inebriety*." "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be *overcharged* with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life." "What can an intoxicated man do against a roaring lion? He can neither fight nor flee." We must exercise *vigilance*. "Who that is asleep can defend himself against a lion? How cautiously, how circumspectly should we walk, if we were in a country where wild beasts were common, and saw the footprints and actually heard the roar of a lion! Such is our situation. See to it, then, that ye *do* walk circumspectly: looking all round, watching every object, lest it conceal the enemy: your trials, your comforts, your occupations, your tastes, your pleasures, your desires, your besetting sins; and especially watch your hearts with all diligence. An unwatchful Christian is sure to be an unsuccessful one." Prayer must be

added to watchfulness. "Watch and *pray*, that ye enter not into temptation." Sobriety, vigilance and prayer constitute the great safeguards against temptation. Those who employ these properly and constantly, surround themselves with an atmosphere almost impervious to Satanic influences. Prayer is the approach of the soul to the immediate presence of God, and Satan cannot stand in the presence of God. Satan fears nothing so much as fervent prayer.

> "And Satan trembles when he sees
> The weakest saint upon his knees."

"We never *feel* so strong, we never *are* so strong, as when we are bowing down before the throne of God. Satan has little hope of the man whom he cannot draw away from his closet. He regards him in that refuge as in an impregnable fortress." "Lead us not into temptation." We should avoid all occasions of temptation.

> "They that fear the adder's sting, will not come
> Near her hissing."

It is wilful presumption for us to go where we may expect to be tempted, and is likely to prove fatal to our virtue.

> "How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
> Makes ill deeds done."

We must keep out of the way of temptation.

We have enough to do to resist Satan when he comes to us, without going where he is. He that runs into danger is not wise.

> "We see, we hear with peril: safety dwells
> Remote from multitude."

After all, temptations will come, oft and many. When they do come, we are to *resist* them. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." We may not turn and fly: we are to face the foe, and face him as a foe—not to dispute, reason or parley, but to fight and conquer. He cannot stand proper resistance: he will flee. To resist him successfully, God has provided an armor, which is to be worn and used on all occasions. We may not put off our armor. The Christian soldier sleeps in arms. What is that armor? St. Paul describes it, when he says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take to you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with *truth;* and having on the breast-plate

of *righteousness;* and your feet shod with the *preparation of the gospel of peace;* and, above all"—over all—"taking the *shield of faith,* wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation"—"the *hope of salvation*"—"and the sword of the Spirit, which is the *word of God; praying always* with *all prayer, and supplication* in the Spirit, and *watching* thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "Whom resist steadfast in the faith."

In a short time we shall be beyond the reach of temptation. Satan has for ages been shut out of heaven, and can find no entrance there. "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Heaven is for ever closed to every tempter, and to every tempting influence. No fear, no doubt, no falling into sin can be known there. Who enters there closes his warfare, rests from his labors, puts away his armor, and receives a crown, a palm of victory, and a harp of gold; henceforth honor, triumph and joy are his for ever. Who enters there, goes out "no more for ever."

CHAPTER XI.

RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

"Nature knows no pause in progress and development, and attaches her curse on all inaction."

GÖETHE.

"Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day."

LONGFELLOW.

RELIGIOUS experience is a progressive work. It is a race; and the goal is at the end. It is a warfare and spiritual conflict; and the last enemy is death. It is a journey and pilgrimage; and the resting-place and home is heaven. It is a growth, in which the young convert is a "babe" in Christ, and must grow in the knowledge and love of God. It is a work, in which we are to leave the foundation, and proceed with the superstructure until the whole building is complete. It is a learning, in which we are to leave the first principles, the rudiments, and go on toward the higher branches of perfect knowledge. It is a purifying process, in which "the Lord sitteth

upon his people as a refiner of silver," until he beholds the full development of his own image in them.

This is in accordance with the great law of progression that pervades and governs all things. Progression is a law of the universe. God alone, the eternal Creator and Ruler of all things, is unchangeable. Of him, and of him alone, can it be said, "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God: the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." There is not an atom, a planet, a sun, or an existence of any form in the whole universe that is unchangeable. Every sun and every system and every form of being are moving, changing, progressing. Heaven is not exempt. Perpetual progress reigns in heaven. "Come up higher," is for ever sounding from the throne of God. Knowledge for ever developing, glories for ever unveiling, and joys for ever increasing, constitute the experience of angels and sainted spirits. Heaven is one eternal day, whose light is always increasing, and yet always perfect. It is one continued ascent, enlarging the view, opening and disclosing the scenery, and increasing the light and glory. This law is in force in hell. Hell is a "bottomless pit," where the sinner sinks lower and lower, yet finds no bottom. It is a lake that

"burns with fire and brimstone," where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." That which continues to burn must increase in heat, and hell burning for ever must ever increase in torment. There despair grows deeper and darker, and becomes the "blackness of darkness for ever"—darkness changing into blackness for ever. "There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth;" and as the sympathetic chord of our nature increases suffering by contact with the sufferings of others, the sufferings of hell must grow in intensity for ever. As there is not a "drop of water to cool the parched tongue" while "tormented in the flame," the tongue must become more and more parched, and the torment greater and greater.

This law is applicable to man in his religious character and relations. He cannot be stationary, cannot occupy any one fixed position in spiritual attainments. He must "go forward" or backward. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection." "They go from strength to strength." "But this one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forward to those

which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." "I write unto you, little children.—I write unto you, young men.—I write unto you, fathers."

Nor is this spiritual growth, this progress in religious experience confined to this life, or limited to the season of human probation. The Christian does not cease to live when he dies: the scene of his existence is then only changed from earth to heaven, from time to eternity. He continues to live when he is dead; and continues to go forward, increasing in growth and improvement. He is for ever approximating the infinite, yet never reaching it. "The period will come," says the Rev. Abel Stevens, "when the feeble child, whose intelligence scarcely reaches the limits of its nursery, will stand forth somewhere in the universe, mightier in mind than the tallest archangel that shines amidst 'the excellent glory.'

It may never reach that angel, for he also will advance for ever; but it will reach his present position, and pass it, and leave it in the distance behind as a fading point of light. The time will come when that new-born spirit, now unequal in intelligence to the insect that perishes, will mount up as on eagles' wings, will range through unknown worlds, will bow itself amidst the light of God's own throne, and may even transcend the present capacity of all created intelligence. Only God is infinite: all other intelligence in the universe has therefore a present limit; but there is no limit to the capacity of that dawning spirit."

This gives some idea of religious growth and improvement. It is a great necessity. It is perpetual and without limit. The Christian begins the spiritual life, but is never to reach in it any fixed position, where he may safely stand. At every step in his pathway there comes sounding across the waters of time the warning voice of God, "Delay not in all the plain;" and at every point in religious experience that same voice comes repeating, "Go forward." No difficulties may excuse him in delay. While the "mark of the prize" is before him, he must "stretch every nerve and press with vigor on." From youth to old age he must "urge on the restless strife,"

and, dying, pass to a better land, where he can improve more rapidly in purity and joy. He must "walk and not faint, run and not be weary, mount up on wings as eagles:" his peace must "flow as a river, and his righteousness as the waves of the sea." The Christian starts out to be like God and to enjoy God; and, as God is infinite, eternity cannot suffice for him to arrive at perfection in knowing, becoming like, and enjoying God. Such is religious progress. It is a growth in knowledge, virtue and happiness for ever, without a limit or an end. "We know not what we shall be."

All of this applies to religious experience. It is progressive. There is the "babe in Christ." He is weak, tries to walk, but stumbles, falls, rises—stumbles, falls again; and it may be many times; but he gradually gains strength as he leans on the arm of Jesus for support: by degrees the fibres and muscles and tendons grow strong, and the bones harden, and he can walk with ease: then he can walk rapidly, and even run, and not be weary. He thus grows to be a "young man" in Christ, and is "strong." He goes forward still in religious advancement, his judgment becomes mature, his habits are fixed, his heart is enlarged, and he becomes far advanced in godliness. He

is a "father" in Christ. It is as a man ascending a high mountain from a deep, dark valley. The first day his vision becomes somewhat enlarged; but often he is in darkness and amongst the clouds, and his legs are tired, and his feet are swollen and sore. The next day is, perhaps, still more trying to his feet and legs, and the clouds are nearer and somewhat darker around him. Another day his feet become more accustomed to the walking and climbing, and improve, and at night he is not so weary as before; and then the view begins to enlarge and increase in loveliness. Still another day comes, and he gets on scarcely regarding weariness, hardly slipping, as formerly, seldom falling, as he had so often done; but he is charmed with the unbounded prospect opening around him on every side. The fifth day he runs forward with delight, and is eager and happy to get higher and higher, in order to view to greater advantage the beautiful scenery. And so it continues till he reaches the top, whence he can see all the plains, and valleys, and the hill country, and the "grand old woods," and the beautiful land beyond the river. Thus is it with the Christian. His strength and peace increase the farther and farther he goes. For a while he may suppose that as he is weak, slips

and falls so often, and is so hidden from the light, he can never reach the top. But these difficulties are increased by delay, and overcome only by pressing on. God provides one who will take him by the hand and lead him in the right path; and, if necessary, will carry him in his bosom as a feeble lamb of the flock, and will assist him in weakness and defend him in danger. The enjoyments of religion greatly increase as we go forward. The sweetest grapes, and the largest, richest clusters, grow farther and farther on along the way to heaven. The light shines more and more, the view enlarges, the prospect widens, the scenery becomes more beautiful, the sun shines with more warmth, the birds sing more sweetly, the flowers are more lovely and fragrant, the air is purer, as we get higher and higher up the mountain. Presently we reach and pass beautiful arbors, shade-trees and vines, flowers and fruits, singing birds and zephyr breezes and rich perfumes. Presently we pass above the clouds, and look down to see the red lightning, to hear the muttering thunder, and view the storm passing beneath us. Passing on, we see the beautiful river rolling majestically in the distance; and soon get sight of the fertile plains, the trees and bowers and fruits and flowers beyond the river

Anon the view enlarges, and we see the towers and tops of the palaces of some great city beyond the river. We pass on, and see plainly the pearl-built gates, and diamond walls, and golden streets, and magnificent houses, and the great Temple of the city. Onward still we press, and then there come across the river indistinct sounds of sweetest music, and we begin to see shining forms of bright and blest ones. Soon the full notes of heavenly music fall upon our ears, and we recognize the forms of "loved and lost" ones in "white raiment," with harps of gold and crowns of righteousness, shouting the rapturous new song. A while longer, and we cross the river and join them in glory everlasting. Richer glories, sweeter delights, and more heavenly joys await the Christian farther and farther on in his heavenly way. He goes from "strength to strength," and from "glory to glory," newer, fresher, brighter. His path shines "more and more unto the perfect day." The young Christian scarcely dreams, cannot conceive of "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Far on in Christian experience, there is "full assurance of hope unto the end;" "joy in the Holy Ghost, which is unspeakable and full of glory;" "peace that passeth all understanding;" "love that passeth know-

ledge;" "sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" "fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ;" and "heaven on earth begun."

The progress of the Christian in experimental religion may be more or less rapid, and in this respect will depend upon his own exertions and his faith in Christ. Some Christians go forward gradually and rapidly; others very slowly; others by starts and long pauses; and others go forward steadily and constantly, and without being overcome of any difficulty or hindrance; running "with patience the race set before them, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." "And when I look around upon those," says Caroline Fry, "we believe from an apparent change in their principles to be the children of God, and see some advancing rapidly in the way of holiness, becoming more and more like their Lord, and more conformed in all things to the Father's will; while others seem to rest where they began, still conning their first principles, wishing and hoping, but nothing the happier, nothing the holier for their hopes; when I consider this, and together with it those parables in which our Lord spoke of an unequal distribution of rewards, by some measurement of pre-

vious service, I cannot divest myself of the thought that the place of each one in the Redeemer's kingdom may depend upon the progress he has made in this life: I do not mean upon his works that he has done—that is impossible; 'for we are all unprofitable servants,' and can earn no preference; but upon his character—what he is—his fitness to be employed in the higher offices of the kingdom, and to sit nearest to the King. I do not pretend to know by what rule these unequal honors will be distributed: 'there are first that shall be last;' but it seems certain that those shall sit nearest to the Lord who shall be found most like him." "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us; and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

"Awake, my soul! stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on:
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown."

CHAPTER XII.

HOLINESS—SANCTIFICATION—PERFECTION.

"O tell them to preach *holiness*—holiness is the principal thing—preach holiness, holiness, holiness—God enable you to preach holiness."—*Dying words of* REV. GEORGE PICKERING, *reported in Stevens's Memorials of Methodism.*

THE importance of an advanced stage of religious experience, a high standard of religious life, more than ordinary piety, is recognized by all Christians. It is everywhere insisted upon in the Bible. No one will say, after carefully reading the Bible, that it does not require and offer as the privilege of all a high standard of religious advancement. Beyond a doubt there is broadness enough in the law of God, fullness enough in the provisions of the gospel, and beyond all measure light and power and comfort in the influences of the Spirit and the grace of God, for all the purposes of a holy life. "The gospel evidently contemplates in the case of every individual," says Dr. Upham, "a progress from the incipient condition of mere forgiveness and acceptance, immensely important as it is, to the higher state

of interior renovation and sanctification throughout." "Holiness," says Bishop Janes, "is the greatest good—the highest destiny of the militant Church, and the most precious interest of the race." Albert Barnes says, "A man who has been redeemed by the blood of the Son of God should be pure. He who is an heir of life should be holy. He who is attended by celestial beings, and is soon—he knows not how soon—to be translated to heaven, should be holy. Are angels my attendants? Then I should walk worthy of my companions. Am I soon to go and dwell with angels? Then I should be pure. Are these feet soon to tread the courts of heaven? Is this tongue soon to unite with holy beings in praising God? Are these eyes soon to look on the throne of eternal glory, and on the ascended Redeemer? Then these feet, and eyes, and lips should be pure and holy, and I should be dead to the world and live for heaven." "And now," says Flavel, "let me persuade all for whom the dear Son of God came from the blessed bosom of the Father, assumed flesh, and laid down his life a ransom for their souls—for whom he lived, died, rose, ascended, and lives for ever in heaven to intercede—*to live wholly to Christ*, as Christ lived and died for us. The redeemed of the Lord are

under the highest obligations to be holy: they are assisted to a life of holiness; and God intends to make great use of their lives for the conviction and conversion of others."

In respect to this subject, it becomes us, then, calmly to examine how much religious experience is interested in it; and what the Scriptures teach as the extent of religious improvement in this life. The Bible alone must be our guide in this investigation. We may not follow systems framed by man; for while, according to the profound maxim of Cousin, "There is truth in every system," there is also error in every system of man's devising. Holiness, sanctification, and perfection, are terms employed frequently in technical theology to express one and the same doctrine, at other times to express different doctrines. These terms are used by the sacred writers, but not synonymously. There are certain terms used which have been correctly rendered by "holiness." Holiness is from the Saxon *hälig*, and means integrity, wholeness, entireness of character. It implies the single and fixed purpose of heart to glorify God—a living and abiding principle in the soul; and, according to the degree of its perfection, a consistency of conduct with this purpose. This meets the idea of integrity, entireness, wholeness of character, when

applied to man. It gives the inward singleness of purpose, and the outward consistency of life, thus presenting a wholeness, an entireness, an unbroken unity of character. In this sense holiness is a great duty, and, under the gospel, a glorious privilege. In this sense holiness is a progressive work, and the believer is required to employ the whole of life in "*perfecting* holiness in the fear of God," and in following "after holiness." The Christian after conversion is said to be holy, because he has commenced the life of holiness—has formed the purpose to glorify God in all things, and has begun to bend his conduct into consistency with that purpose. Holiness is set forth as the great object of constant pursuit. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." "For ye are not called unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." Holiness is the great duty and the great work of the Christian's life. "Follow after peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." We see, then, that the Scripture idea of holiness is a progressive and life-work of conforming the whole heart and life to an entire and perfect consistency with a single and fixed purpose to do the will of God, and thus to form a wholeness of character.

How are we to accomplish this great end, and not only become holy, but also "perfect holiness?" It is evident that we can do nothing of ourselves; and the gospel, we rejoice to know, does not demand that we, alone and unaided by divine grace, should "perfect holiness." It has "provided some better thing for us." What is that by which we are to be assisted, or, rather, with which we are to co-work, in seeking after holiness? This brings us to consider the meaning of sanctification. Sanctification is the means of holiness, or the process by which we become holy. "Sanctification," says Dr. Snodgrass, "is not synonymous with holiness—it is not the state of one who is made holy—but it is the act by which the state is produced." With this agrees Dr. Summers, in his work on Holiness. He says, "*Holiness*, from the Saxon *halig*, means wholeness, entireness, integrity of moral character and conduct:—sanctification, from the Latin, *sanctificacio, sancio*, implies the process by which this moral perfection is realized." We see, then, the difference between holiness and sanctification. Holiness is the great object of the Christian's life-pursuit: sanctification is the act, process, means by which we become holy. We must be sanctified in order to become holy; in other

words, to become holy we pass through the process of sanctification. What, then, to be more particular, is the process of sanctification? When used with reference to persons, it implies a double act or process. The individual sanctifies himself, and is sanctified by the Spirit of God. The idea is that of *setting apart, or consecration*, to a particular purpose or use. In this sense it is used by Christ. "For this cause I sanctify myself." In this sense John the Baptist was "sanctified from the womb." This sense, in some of its modifications, is always the sense of the word whenever used in the Bible. In this sense sanctification is the work of the person: he consecrates himself to God and his service for ever—sets himself apart from every other purpose and aim, and devotes himself to the one work of glorifying God—lays himself an offering upon the altar of God. In this sense somewhat modified, sanctification is the work of the Spirit of God, who is called the "Sanctifier of the faithful." He is sent to accept and sanction and seal the sanctification or consecration of the believer, and, by his influence upon the heart, to make a real consecration or setting apart of the person, by taking away his sins, impressing upon his act of consecration the seal of God's acceptance, imparting

strength to carry out the design of the consecration, and thus to make a real and actual sanctification, which the person only had power to do in intention and form. Here is a double act of consecration, making one act of sanctification—the person consecrating himself to God, and the Spirit acting with him and making real his consecration. The man consecrates himself in intention and form, and the Spirit consecrates him in fact. This is the Scripture idea of sanctification. It is a consecration on the part of the person attended by a baptism or outpouring of the Spirit. We see, then, how sanctification is the means of holiness. The believer desires holiness and sets himself apart to the work of becoming holy, and the Spirit of God is given to assist him—to make him holy. Sanctification is one continued process necessary through all the work of "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." It begins when the man first truly feels the need and the desire of holiness, and fully sets himself apart to the work of following after it. Then the Spirit is first given—the first baptism or outpouring then takes place—and thenceforth the Spirit continues the work of sanctification as long as the person continues the sanctification on his part. While the man regards himself as set apart and

consecrated to the work of becoming holy, the Spirit dwells in him, and assists him, and gives him power, and works holiness in him. Sanctification, then, begins at conversion: conversion itself is but the beginning of the process, the time when the Spirit first enters the heart and sets apart the man for God. The man is enslaved by sin and Satan: he desires to be devoted to God: he solemnly offers himself in consecration to the work of holiness; but in his slavery he has no power to carry his consecration into effect. Therefore, as soon as he consecrates himself to God and to holiness, the Spirit of God comes into his heart, claims him for God, overpowers and drives out Satan, and gives strength and power to carry out the consecration, thus making an actual consecration of the man. This is conversion, the beginning of the sanctifying process, which is carried on as long as the work of perfecting holiness continues; that is, through life. Speaking of conversion, Dr. Snodgrass says, "This differs from sanctification as the beginning of a thing differs from its continuance. And the relation of one to the other is clearly set forth by an apostle, when he says, 'He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Christ

Jesus.'" "Sanctification is the work of the Spirit," says Buchanan, "and the commencement of it in the soul is to be dated from the time of the sinner's conversion." "The first sanctifying act of the Spirit," says Dr. Dwight, "is employed in regenerating the soul. Successive acts of the same nature are employed in purifying it through all the successive periods of life. All these acts are, I apprehend, of the same nature, and differ from each other in no other respect, except that *the regenerating act is first*, and the sanctifying acts, as they are termed, *are successive to it.*" Sanctification begins at conversion; but it does not end there. It continues to "the day of Christ Jesus," a steady, onward work. St. Paul reminds the Thessalonians of the continued nature of this work, and reproves them for neglect of attention to it. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." These Thessalonians had, it would seem, fallen into the great error of modern Christians—the neglect of their consecration to God after conversion, forgetting that religion is not one isolated act of consecration to God, but

one continued and ever-repeated act, by which spirit, soul, and body are laid upon the altar, and kept there all through life. Hence the apostle reminds them of their error, and the nature of sanctification, and desires of them such a full and entire consecration as will embrace "spirit, soul, and body," and will be a perpetual and continued consecration, such as will secure for them a baptism of the Holy Spirit that will be permanent, and will enable them to remain "blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Sanctification will go forward more rapidly and more thoroughly in proportion to the entireness, and earnestness, and continuance of the individual consecration. If at conversion, or at any other time, there be a full and entire and earnest consecration of all to God, together with a full reliance upon the Spirit through the atonement, and that consecration and that reliance be continued and increased as developing circumstances may require, there will doubtless be, on the part of the Spirit, a corresponding sanctification, followed by its legitimate effect upon the work of perfecting holiness, by which the believer would be "preserved blameless." "According to your faith, so be it unto you." We may therefore believe confidently that the Christian may so live

in entire and full and earnest consecration to God, and reliance upon the grace of God in Christ Jesus, always continued as one perpetual act, so that the Spirit will dwell in him richly, in all his fullness, and will enable him to live without sin. This is certainly a high state of sanctification. It is not higher than the gospel provides for. To such a blessed state Paul referred the Thessalonians. His language can mean no less than that a state of entire sanctification is attainable in the present life—a state in which we may continue by the grace of God and be "preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." To make the matter sure, he adds, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." It is no objection to this great truth that few experience it. Some do experience it. Dr. Judson, in a letter, says, "What degree of sanctification is attainable in this life? Freedom from actual sin." Many experience it, but, neglecting the continued consecration of themselves, and the constant exercise of an ever-increasing faith in Christ, they do not retain it. The consecration must be always continued. The faith must be always exercised and increasing in strength. If not, the sanctifying process will not go on. Sanctification is *gradual* in those who do not by a complete and

full and earnest consecration, and the exercise of a powerful faith in Christ, seek an entire removal of guilt and sin; and it may be *instantaneous* when sought by an unreserved consecration of ourselves and our all to God, and a full confidence in the blood of Christ and the power of the Spirit to sanctify. It is no objection to this that to the sanctified the blood of Christ is of no further value. By the blood of Christ we are cleansed from all unrighteousness: by the blood of Christ we are kept in the favor of God: by the blood of Christ we are preserved blameless and enabled to sin no more: by the blood of Christ our virtues are cultivated and improved, and our capabilities are developed, and our hearts are enlarged, and our enjoyments increase: by the blood of Christ we are sprinkled and every day accepted: by the blood of Christ our feeble efforts and unworthy actions are sprinkled and accepted. There is no man free from the need of the blood of Christ. It is no objection that sanctification is an end to religious progress. Is there no progress where there is no sin to be removed? Is there no other progress than that of overcoming one sin after another all through life? Is there no progress in the cultivation of holy tempers, desires, thoughts, feelings? Is there no progress in the

growth of the Christian in knowledge, virtue, temperance, faith, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, joy, hope? Sanctification is gradual—may be instantaneous, and will be, when the conditions are complied with; and is progressive in all cases towards an infinite purity for ever. Let us seek an instantaneous and entire sanctification, and seek a rapid progress in that sanctification.

"'Tis done! the great transaction's done!
I am the Lord's and he is mine:
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.
High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear;
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear."

Sanctification, if carried on rapidly and continually, will produce a ripe, a full, a mature religious experience. This brings us to consider the meaning of "perfection." The terms "perfect" and "perfection" are used in Scripture as applicable to Christians. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection." These terms as applied to Christians cannot be taken in their absolute, unqualified, unlimited sense, as in this they

are applicable to none but God. They must be used in a relative, limited sense: they cannot be used otherwise. It is not difficult to understand what that sense is, because the terms have not lost or changed their signification in time, and are now in common use among men. The Bible was written for the people, and was written in plain language, and is intelligible to the people; and its plain and obvious sense is therefore the true sense. What is the general, universal understanding of the meaning of "perfect" and "perfection?" These terms have not a precise and definite import in common usage, and do not imply a fixed, particular, and definite standard; but are employed to denote a high degree of excellence, a high degree of accomplishment, without designating thereby any fixed standard. When applied to men, they imply a ripeness, an advanced state, a maturity of excellence. This is the almost invariable sense of these words in common language. It is the sense of the words when applied to Christians in the Bible. Baily, in his *Dictionarium Britanniaicum*, defines "moral perfection" to be "an eminent degree of virtue." Dr. Adam Clarke paraphrases the passage, "Let us go on unto perfection," thus: "Let us never rest till we are *adult* Christians." Mr.

Fletcher says, "Did Cicero speak intelligibly when he called *accomplished* philosophers *perfectos philosophos*, and an *excellent* orator *perfectum oratorem?* Did Ovid expose his reputation when he said that 'Chiron *perfected* Achilles in music,' or 'taught him to play on the lute to perfection'? We give the name of 'Christian perfection' to that *maturity* of grace and holiness which *established adult* believers attain to under the Christian dispensation; and we thus distinguish that *maturity of grace*, both from the ripeness of *grace* which belongs to the dispensation of the *Jews below us*, and from the ripeness of *glory*, which belongs to *departed saints above us*. Hence it appears that by 'Christian perfection' we mean nothing but the cluster and *maturity* of the graces which compose the Christian character in the Church militant." Neander, in his exposition of the Epistle of James, speaking of the passage, "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," says: "By completeness is not meant an absolute perfection, nowhere to be found in the Christian life on earth; but, as often elsewhere in the Scriptures, all which belongs to Christian maturity, to what Paul terms Christian manhood—as by wholeness ('entire') is meant

the exclusion of whatever would mar the Christian life." And in his work on the Epistle of John, referring to the passage, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear," he says, "The apostle then characterizes the habitual temper of mind where this abiding in the love of God has reached its *maturity*."

Perfection in Christians is therefore the maturity of the Christian character and its completeness, not surely in one respect only, for that would not be a full maturity or a completeness, but in all that legitimately belongs to the Christian character. The Christian character is a beautiful and harmonious unity, which God has constituted a unity, and man dare not separate but at his peril; every part of which unity depends on and mutually promotes every other part; and this unity consists of knowledge, experience and practice. Perfection, then, it plainly appears, when it is applied in Scripture to Christians, means the ripeness or maturity of religious knowledge, of religious experience, and of religious practice. It cannot, without doing violence to the plain meaning of the Scripture, mean any less than this.

Christian perfection is the maturity of the Christian in religious knowledge. We have in this work abundantly shown the importance of

religious knowledge. It is intimately connected with all religion. It belongs to the Christian character; and the perfection of that character must embrace a perfection of religious knowledge. Dr. M'Knight, referring to the passage, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection," says: "The apostle calls the knowledge of the doctrines and promises of the gospel, as typically set forth in the covenant with Abraham, and darkly expressed in the figures and prophecies of the law, *τελειότης, perfection:* either in allusion to the Greeks, who termed the complete knowledge of their mysteries *τελειότης*, or *τελείωσις, perfection;* or in allusion to what he had said in chap. v. 14, that strong meat belongs to *τελείων, full-grown men.*" "Perfection here," says Dr. Peck, "unquestionably implies an advanced state of knowledge." Dr. Whitby, in his comment on Heb. vi. 1, "Let us go on to perfection," says, "That to be perfect signifies to be fully instructed in the principles of the Christian faith, see note on 1 Cor. ii. 6"—which note reads thus: "'Among them that are perfect,' *i. e.*, fully instructed in the principles of the Christian faith: that this is the sense of the word 'perfect' here, appears from the opposition of those that are 'perfect' to the 'babes in

Christ;' as in those words, 'You have need that one teach you which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not strong meat. For every one that useth milk is *unskilful* in the word of righteousness; for he is a *babe*. But strong meat belongeth to such as are of *full age*, (*i. e.*, *perfect men*,) those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.'" "Two things in general," says Bishop Hopkins, "are required to perfect a Christian: the one, a clear and distinct knowledge of his duty; the other, a conscientious practice of it, corresponding to his knowledge; and both are equally necessary." "And I myself am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are *full* of all goodness, *filled with all knowledge*, able also to admonish one another." "And this I pray, that ye may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in

all wisdom and spiritual understanding." "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him." "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge." "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him in all utterance and in all knowledge."

Christian perfection is the maturity of the Christian in religious experience. The perfect Christian is not a "novice" in experience. He knows what is meant by the passage: "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us." He is "able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." He is mature and strong in his love, and his doubts and fears are gone, and he rejoices in "full assurance of hope," with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." His mind is at rest in the exercise of a strong faith in the power of the atonement, the all-sufficiency of divine grace, and the wisdom and goodness of divine providence; and he enjoys the fullness of a

"peace that passeth all understanding." Day and night he "walks with God," and possesses the abiding "testimony of a good conscience," and the constant witness of the Holy Spirit; and his "fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." He is crucified with Christ; nevertheless he lives, yet not he, but Christ Jesus lives within him; and the life that he now lives is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him and gave himself for him. He "walks by faith and not by sight," and is "led by the Spirit of God."

Christian perfection is the maturity of the Christian in religious practice. Our Lord, after enumerating a great many duties, says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Mr. Watson, in his Exposition, says on this passage, "It is the divine perfection of love which we are to imitate in its principle and in its acts. 'God,' says Augustin, 'is perfect in mercy, both in pardoning and in conferring benefit: so be ye perfect both in forgiving wrongs and in conferring your favors and benefits upon such as need them.'" "If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come follow me." To be perfect, here, evidently means the completeness or ma-

turity of practice; for Christ had referred the young man to the moral law, which he said he had kept from his youth up; upon which Christ directs him to sell all that he has, to give the proceeds to the poor, and then to follow him, which would be to complete or mature his practice. He tested the young man's sincerity by requiring a complete or mature religious practice. "Walk before me and be thou perfect." "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." In these passages there can be no doubt as to the meaning: perfection here has an unquestionable reference to practice. "Job was said to be perfect," says Albert Barnes, "not that he was sinless, for he is afterwards reproved by God himself; but because his piety was proportioned, and had a completeness of parts. He was a pious father, a pious magistrate, a pious neighbor, a pious citizen. His religion was not confined to one thing, but extended to all." "He was consistent everywhere. This is the meaning in Matt. v. 48: Be not religious merely in loving your friends and neighbors, but let your piety be shown in loving your enemies: be perfect; imitate God; let the piety be *complete*, and *proportionate*, and *regular*. This every Christian *may be:* this every Christian *must be.*"

Such a "perfection" is the privilege and the duty of every Christian, and the legitimate result of religion influencing the man, and carrying him forward in the continued and perpetual growth of the religious life. Such a "perfection" is contemplated by the Scriptures; but is not the immediate result of any one act or exercise of faith. It is necessarily a progressive work; and is so represented in the Bible. We are to "go on unto perfection;" to "forget the things which are behind, and reaching forward to those which are before, press toward the mark of the prize;" to "add to our faith virtue," and all the Christian graces; to "grow in grace and in knowledge;" to "lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and to run with patience the race that is set before us." To be a perfect Christian is to have the kingdom of God fully established in our hearts; and the "kingdom of God is like a woman which hid leaven in three measures of meal, till all was leavened:" the "kingdom of heaven is as if a man should cast seed in the ground; and should sleep and rise up day and night, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of itself: first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Let us bear in mind that holiness is the life-work of the Christian, and to perfect holiness his constant aim; that sanctification is the means of becoming holy, and consists in the personal consecration of the believer, and the influences of the Spirit abiding and operating in his heart; and that perfection is the maturity to which the Christian character may and should attain in the present life in the pursuit of holiness, by the means of sanctification. And let us also bear in mind that as the whole work of religion is progressive, so all its parts are and must be; that holiness and sanctification and perfection are each eminently and always progressive; and yet that sanctification is instantaneous in its beginning, and may be so at any state of the process—not, however, that it is at the same time to end the process, but to make it more complete, and more rapidly progressive, by a more powerful and thorough baptism of the Spirit; and that a state of entire sanctification is attainable in which we may live without sin, and in the enjoyment of the full assurance of hope unto the end, and this may be also instantaneous.

CHAPTER XIII.

DIVINE GUIDANCE.

"Mankind are all pilgrims on life's weary road,
And many would wander astray
In seeking eternity's silent abode,
Did not Mercy point out the way."

G. P. MORRIS.

MAN is not only fallible and liable to err, but, according to the Scriptures, is ignorant and blind in spiritual matters; and therefore, without divine enlightenment and guidance, is sure to err. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked—" In matters pertaining to the salvation of the soul, the possibility and the probability of error and mistake is very clear, because of the unacquaintance of man with the things of the Spirit, and the influence of sinful tastes, habits, desires, associations, and associates, and the seducing power of Satan. It

is easy to see that man, surrounded by all these difficulties, and in a way with which he is totally unacquainted, must certainly go astray. Who would venture alone in that way? Who would even trust a fellow-being to lead him in that way?

> "Can I trust a fellow-being?
> Can I trust an angel's care?
> O thou merciful All-seeing,
> Shine around my spirit there."

The young convert, in the full joy of his first love, and the untried confidence of his renewed spirit, feels that he can surely go forward easily and safely; but he soon experiences that it is not in man to direct his way. He feels the need of a guide. The way to heaven is "*plain*," so plain that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." But it is plain because God as the Guide of his people makes it plain before them, by opening their eyes and giving spiritual sight. The plainest path is not at all plain to the blind man: he needs some one to lead him. The way to heaven is in itself a plain path, but at every step Satan has a path leading sometimes directly off, and again running almost parallel with the "right way," diverging little and little by degrees; and many of these paths are nearly as narrow, and some perhaps narrower

when they turn off than the right way. The blind man cannot walk safely in the way of life, neither can the man of good sight, without a guide. The Christian needs a guide at every step, and as a confiding child he prays:

> "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
> Pilgrim through this barren land:
> I am weak, but thou art mighty!
> Hold me with thy powerful hand."

It is the privilege of the sincere Christian to experience from day to day divine direction, the leading of the Spirit in all matters, and fully to know his duty on all occasions. God is the leader of his people. He led the children of Israel through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Beautiful symbol of the constant guidance he vouchsafes to his people in all ages! The Old Testament saints were accustomed to inquire of the Lord, touching any matter either of a spiritual or temporal character, and with the expectation of certain success. In our dispensation, which is "more glorious," we are abundantly encouraged to ask at all times and in all matters, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." "The Lord God is a sun and

shield—no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "He will be our guide even unto death." "I will send my angel before thee, to prepare thy way whither thou goest." "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest." "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." "A good wife is from the Lord." These passages show that it is the privilege of the Christian to receive divine direction in all the duties of life. How often is the Christian in doubt and perplexity, and uncertain what to do! In such a case he may go to his Father and seek direction. He may commit his way to God, and, with no confidence in himself, pray for and expect to be led by the Spirit of God all through life. God guides his people by his word. He has made a revelation of his will, has clearly discovered to men his law, and the principles of his government; and has thus marked out the way to heaven so plainly that the simplest can understand it. A little child can easily understand it. But, that the way might be more clearly defined, he has given many examples of piety in the his-

tories of religious persons. These are all given for "our instruction." These Bible biographies and memoirs of holy men of all ages are designed to show the practical and experimental working of true religion, and the hindrances and difficulties and dangers of a life of piety. They are for our "learning and warning," that we may copy their virtues, and beware of their errors. In this way God has rendered the way to heaven very plain. The vision is so plain that "he may run that readeth it." The Bible also contains an account at large of the life and conduct of One who was "holy, harmless, and separate from sinners," and who "knew no sin;" and thus furnishes a perfect example of holiness embodied in the life and conduct, following which we cannot err. Besides all this, it contains profound maxims of self-government applicable to all times and occasions, and such as if followed will not lead astray.

God guides his people by his Spirit. "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." "He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." "We learn from the Scriptures," says Dr. Upham, "that those who are the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God. And woe is expressly de-

nounced against those 'foolish prophets that follow *their own spirit.*' The facts of individual experience in relation to the subject of a divine guidance abundantly confirm the truth of the Scriptural declarations. 'Though this secret direction of the Almighty,' says Sir Matthew Hale, who was distinguished as a Christian, as well as a scholar and a judge, 'is principally seen in matters relating to the good of the soul; yet even in the concerns of this life, a good man, fearing God and begging his direction, will very often if not at all times find it. I can call my own experience to witness that even in the temporal affairs of my whole life I have never been disappointed of the best direction, when I have in humility and sincerity implored it." We are not to suppose that to be led by the Spirit of God we must bid adieu to all reason, and give way to be led by every impulsive feeling. The leading of the Spirit is not against all reason, but agrees with the highest reason; and the Christian led by the Spirit is calmly deliberative, "not flighty and precipitate—not prejudiced, onesided, and dogmatical." He reasons calmly, but does not trust to human reason: he reasons calmly, and the Spirit of God pours light upon his mind,

and contributes to the highest exercise of reason. The leading of the Spirit is not by means of visions, or voices, or dreams of the night. It is not by any miraculous interference in any sensible manner. It agrees with reason, and it is so united with the exercises of reason that the consciousness cannot distinguish between the two. Indeed, it is the Spirit working with and by the reasoning faculties, enlightening the mind and persuading the heart, presenting truth in clearer view and stronger light, and giving the proper direction to the acts and exercises of the mental faculties.

God guides his people by his providence. "All things work together for good to them that love God." "In other words, whatever takes place—sin only excepted—is to be regarded as expressive, in some important and positive sense, of *the will of God.* The controlling presence of the Almighty is there. God is in it. Certainly there is abundant foundation for this view. If God clothes the grass of the field, if not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice, if the very hairs of our head are all numbered, how can it be otherwise? It seems to us, therefore, that every true Christian ought to see God providen-

tially and positively present, with the exception which has just been made in the events of every passing moment."

——"There is a Power
Unseen, that rules the illimitable world,
That guides its motions, from its brightest star
To the least dust of this sin-tainted mould."

"Accordingly, every thing which takes place indicates, *all things considered*, the mind of God in that particular thing. And hence we may be said to reach through the divine providence a portion of the divine mind, and to become acquainted with it. We do not mean to say that in respect to that particular thing we possess the whole of the divine wisdom; but we undoubtedly possess a portion of it, which is unspeakably valuable. To some extent certainly, it may be said that God reveals himself; that is to say, he reveals his mind and will." A Christian may therefore see the indications of the divine will in the events of providence, and expect to be led by the providence of God. By his providence God "hedges up our way," or opens the way before us, and points out the path for us to pursue, and sometimes even "thrusts us out" into the right way. We may always expect by prayerful waiting upon God to have all things work

together for our good, and our path clearly indicated.

It is proper to guard the Christian against improperly estimating these means of direction. The Bible is first and above all other means of guidance. It contains God's expressed and plainly revealed will. It is not, therefore, to be set aside, contradicted, its declarations modified, or its principles in any way compromised, by any supposed teaching of the Spirit or of providence. The leading of the Spirit or of divine providence cannot be legitimately interpreted as inconsistent in any way whatever with the plain teaching of the Bible. If they seem to be inconsistent with the Bible, it is because we do not properly interpret them. The Bible is true and the standard of truth. By it we are to be judged in the last day. God does not and cannot really contradict himself. If he leads his people by his Spirit and by his providence, it is in accordance with the Spirit and the letter of his word.

No subject can be of much greater importance to the Christian than this. If he be careful to inquire diligently and prayerfully concerning the will of God, in every matter and at every step of his course, and faithfully follow the divine guidance in all things, his soul will prosper and

be in health. He will preserve a conscience void of offence. He will enjoy at all times the favor of God. He will always be confident, cheerful, and happy. Such a man cannot live too long, nor die too soon. He is ready for whatever God may send; and hails every thing as the will of God. He will always be ready for every good word and work. The careless and self-confident are not so. These stumble and fall at every step, and are easily led astray by the seductive arts of Satan. They are perplexed with doubts and fears, or full of self-will and presumption. They are impatient in trouble and wanting in cheerful resignation. They do good only when it suits their convenience and inclination. Death always comes too soon to such, and never finds them ready. "If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence."

CHAPTER XIV.

RELIGIOUS ENJOYMENT.

"No man is so happy as the Christian!"—BISHOP HALL.

"It is a mistake and a dangerous error to suppose that God intentionally reserves the joy and peace of believing for a death-bed. He is willing to give us grace to enjoy all this peace now. It is our own fault that we are not thus blessed as Christians while engaged in the affairs of this life."—J. A. JAMES.

IT is a matter of interest to the Christian to understand the full extent of his privileges, that he may know what to seek after and expect, and be able fully to appreciate the mercy and grace of God. He may therefore be expected to inquire earnestly about the measure of religious enjoyment which he may attain to and possess in this life. It is important that he possess well-defined and correct views of this subject. An error here will necessarily produce a defect in his experience.

There are many reasons, many things, which render it difficult to show satisfactorily the exact amount of religious enjoyment possible in all

cases. Men differ in temperament, in habits of mind and feeling. It is not to be supposed that the man of warm, ardent, sanguine, cheerful temperament will be altogether like the man who is melancholy and sad, in religious enjoyment. There must therefore be great difference in different persons in this respect. No two persons are alike in their subjective state, and cannot be alike either in the measure, degree, or manifestation of religious enjoyment. In this matter no one should be disappointed or mortified that he is not in every respect like another. It is the thing itself, the glorious reality, that we should seek after; the manner of enjoyment is of secondary importance.

Another reason why we cannot say what is the amount of religious enjoyment is, that we do not know. It is not a matter of revelation. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love him. It is beyond all human conception, and the power of human language to express. It is a matter characterized in the Scriptures as "unspeakable," "passing all understanding," "passing knowledge," and "full of glory." It may be experienced, but not fully understood. It may

be felt in the heart, but not expressed in language.

It is also to be taken into consideration that religious enjoyment is not unconditionally given. "The secret of the Lord is with them *that fear him*, and he will show them his covenant." "*According to your faith*, so be it unto you." "No good thing will he withhold from them *that walk uprightly*." Eminent favors and honors are for eminent piety. Great devotion to God secures great happiness in God. Much usefulness insures much enjoyment. A strong faith brings a large amount of divine favor and blessing, while a weak faith is a vessel too small to contain much. An inconsistent Christian is an unhappy and doubting Christian. The character of the piety has also an influence upon the enjoyment of religion. There is a self-righteous piety, that works much, and confides but little in Jesus, and enjoys but little. There is a cheerful piety, that believes much, and labors much, and enjoys much. There is a gloomy, melancholy piety, that trusts much in forms and works and but little in Christ, and enjoys but little. There is a fitful, excitable piety, that believes and works at times, and ceases to do either to any extent during long intervals, and enjoys much

only at times, and then is cold and lifeless. To enjoy much religion there must be eminent piety, made up of great faith in Christ, a consistent course of conduct, and a life abounding in every good word and work.

Again: the circumstances surrounding Christians somewhat affect and modify their religious enjoyment. There are deep afflictions, sore trials, disappointments in life, loss of confidence and friendship, times of trouble and sorrow, seasons of overwhelming grief and anguish, and great and violent and strong temptations of Satan. These things come to almost every Christian; perhaps none are exempt. There are few, if indeed there be any, who are not called upon at some time or other to "walk through deep waters" and "fiery trials," to experience the "baptism of fire," and to have conflict with "manifold temptations." These may produce "heaviness for a season." To the untried, afflictions, persecutions, and sufferings, especially if they be protracted and of long continuance, will come with a sad weight, and the cheerfulness and joy of the heart will give place to "heaviness," and fears, and distressing thoughts and feelings. There are times when the Christian is left to faith alone for comfort and joy—times when outward circum-

stances are all seemingly unfavorable, and there is nothing left to encourage the soul but the bare faith in God—times when all without is dark and dreary everywhere we roam, and we can find nothing to lean upon but a naked faith—times when we can no longer "walk by sight," but are left to "walk by faith" alone. If the faith at such times is not strong, and the confidence in God is not great, there must be a great modification, a great decline in religious enjoyment. But if faith is strong and unwavering at such times, there will be joy, and peace, and confidence, and hope. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities." In the case of Job, we have a beautiful example of the power of a naked faith to comfort and cheer the heart in times of deepest affliction and bereavement and trouble. When his heart was rent with anguish, and all around was thick with darkness, his faith gave forth the triumphant exclamation, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" The power of faith can give "songs in the night." Paul and Silas made their prison walls ring with their songs of gladness and praise at midnight!

After these explanatory observations, we say

that the gospel provides great religious enjoyment for the people of God. We gather from the teaching of the Scripture that the Christian may realize abundant consolation and joy in the service of God. "Great peace have they that keep thy law." "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope." "My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee, and my soul which thou hast redeemed." "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." "Rejoice evermore." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also." "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom believing, though now ye see him not, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "These things have I spoken unto you, that in

me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." Who can doubt all this, since, to the Christian, God is a "Father" and the "God of all grace and consolation," Jesus Christ is a "Brother," a "Friend," and the "Prince of Peace," the Spirit is a "Comforter," angels are "ministering spirits," the gospel is the "gospel of peace," and "all things work together for good"? Surely, if there be happiness in the universe, it is enjoyed by the faithful Christian!

The Christian may enjoy the abiding consciousness of acceptance with God. In a previous chapter we have endeavored to prove this. How great must be the pleasure, the delight, the happiness arising from this consciousness!

> "The opening heavens around me shine
> With beams of sacred bliss,
> If Jesus show his mercy mine,
> And whisper I am his."

The Christian may have the constant enjoyment of peace with God. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Peace is the opposite of war, of conflict, of strife. It is a calm serenity of mind, a freedom from the warring, conflicting emotions of the sinner's heart. The enmity against God is gone: love takes its place;

and the heart is in sweet harmony with God, the universe, and itself. The heart at peace with God is a well-tuned instrument, that gives out no discordant note, but pours forth the sweetest melody. This peace at times "passeth all understanding." It is a "heavenly calm within the breast," that is sweet and blissful.

The people of God experience "joy in the Holy Ghost," a joy that is sometimes "unspeakable and full of glory."

"Christ had his joys—so hath he
Who feels his Spirit in his heart,—
Who yields, O God, his all to thee,
And loves thy name for what thou art!"

When Jesus unveils his lovely face, when God in mercy smiles, when the full sense of redeeming love is felt, when the consciousness of pardon is strong, when faith takes firm hold on the divine promises, when love kindles into a flame, when hope grows big with immortality, when we can stand on Pisgah's top and view the promised land, joy springs up and overflows the heart.

"To take a glimpse within the veil,
To know that God is mine,
Are springs of joy that never fail,
Unspeakable, divine.
These are the joys that satisfy
And sanctify the mind;
Which makes the spirit mount on high,
And leave the world behind."

The Christian possesses a "good hope through grace" of eternal life in heaven. This is his "helmet" and his "anchor." Satan may cast his darts and throw stones at his head, may attempt to injure, derange, or disturb his mind, but he cannot harm him: he wears "as an helmet the hope of salvation." Storms may rise and tempests may toss his little bark, but they can neither wreck nor sink him: he possesses a hope that is "an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast." Blessed hope! Beyond all price is the hope of glory! Well may the saints "rejoice in hope of the glory of God!" Who can estimate the wealth of the man who possesses a title to heaven? Who can fix the value of the honor conferred upon him who is made an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?

"O, who would heed the chilling blast
That blows o'er time's eventful sea,
If doomed to find its perils past
The bright wave of eternity!
And who the sorrows would not bear
Of such a transient world as this,
When hope displays beyond its care
So bright an entrance into bliss!"

The child of God experiences "fellowship with God and with his Son Jesus Christ," and the

"communion of the Holy Ghost." "Enoch walked with God." Fellowship with God! companionship with Jesus! communion with the Holy Ghost! How great the blessing! To have God our Friend—a "friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" a friend always near us, always interested in us, always perfectly understanding us and our circumstances, always ready to sympathize with us and comfort us, always smiling on us—must be the greatest of all happiness! "I suppose there is no earthly solace like this." We have three divine Persons always with us, and may by faith hold sweet communion with them. We cannot be driven where God will not be present and befriend us, and manifest himself to us, and commune with us.

"Should fate command me to the utmost verge
Of the green earth, to distant, barbarous climes—
Rivers unknown to song—where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on th' Atlantic isles—'tis naught to me:
Since God is ever present, ever felt
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes there must be joy."

There is much enjoyment experienced in doing good. Every good deed is as the lightning that pierces the cloud and lets out the rain upon the thirsty land: it pours back upon the soul a refreshing from God. Every good act as it goes

forth catches some of the rays of divine glory, and concentrates and reflects them back upon the soul, and ever stands throwing back the beautiful rays of heavenly light upon the mind. Every good act is a rod that smites the rock, from which pours forth a stream of love and joy into the heart. Good deeds are sacred remembrancers, beautiful flowers planted along life's pathway, that render the journey pleasant by their loveliness and fragrance. Good deeds are pleasant friends that attend us all through life, and, gathering round us in the dying-hour, bear us company to heaven.

> "A Deity believed is joy begun;
> A Deity adored is joy advanced;
> A Deity beloved is joy matured:
> Each branch of piety delight inspires."

Every doctrine of the Bible is an inestimable source of enjoyment. These doctrines are treasures hid in earthen vessels; and as soon as faith can break those vessels, the precious treasure is enjoyed. They are cups full of sweetest honey, and faith may enjoy a constant feast. These doctrines are all "very full of comfort." One who was much experienced in holy things writes, "The Bible, hitherto a sealed book, was now a river of water to my thirsty soul. I was astounded at its contents. As I turned over its pages, wonder

upon wonder ravished my delighted heart. I felt that I would care to live only for the sake of reading it. It was a glorious light. At times its heavenly rays would subdue me into a mellow and peaceful benignity; at others rouse me into ecstatic bliss." Dr. Vinet says, "Another sky, and one as magnificent as the azure vault stretched over our heads, is revealed to us in the gospel. Divine truths are the stars of that mystic sky, and they shine in it brighter and purer than the stars of the firmament." Every truth of revelation is a wellspring of joy to the Christian.

> ——"Therein thy dim eyes
> Will meet a cheering light; and silent words
> Of mercy breathed from Heaven, will be exhaled
> From the blest page into thy withered heart."

An "earnest of his inheritance" is frequently enjoyed by the holy and experienced Christian. There are times when they enjoy a "heaven on earth begun." "In whom, also, after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all

spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." "It is, therefore," says Harbaugh, "the Christian's happy privilege, though he still lives under the conditions of sense and faith, to live also

'Quite on the verge of heaven.'

From that mysterious border-land of faith, where earth merges into heaven, he sees in blissful tremblings of hope, from the spiritual orient, the glad beams of the eternal morning.

'Heaven comes down his soul to greet.'"

"The heirs of Christ are said to receive part of their inheritance in this life. The part which they receive is called the 'first fruits of the Spirit.' What were first fruits? They were the same in kind as the harvest. They were the first that ripened—a part of the harvest, and a pledge of the rest. So the first fruits which the Spirit ripens in the hearts of the saints on earth are the same in kind as those of the full and final har-

vest, which he will ripen in the complete perfection of the heavenly life." How delightful must be the enjoyment of such fruits!

"The men of grace have found
Glory begun below:
Celestial fruit on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.
The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets
Before we reach the heavenly fields
Or walk the golden streets."

But the "best of all is, God is with us." The abiding consciousness of the divine presence is the privilege of the Christian, and the sweetest and most permanent of all his joys. "I will dwell in them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." "Fear not, I am with thee: be not dismayed, I am thy God." "I will not, never, no, never leave thee nor forsake thee." "Know ye not that ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" Robert Phillip, in his Devotional Guides, says, "What a lasting impression would it leave in your heart and home were He to enter your door, saying, 'Peace be with you;' and then to take your children in his arms and bless them; and then to inquire kindly into all your trials and temptations, and counsel you; and then to draw you into free conversation

about your soul and salvation, and explain to you the way of escape from the wrath to come; and then to leave you with a solemn, sweet assurance that if you would believe all he said you would not perish, but have eternal life? You would be equally astonished and gratified by such unmerited condescension and sympathy." But great as this might be, there is something better than this. God's constant presence is what Wesley, on his dying-bed, called "the best of all." Speaking of seasons of religious joy, Caroline Fry says, "Joyful above measure as these moments are, they are not those moments which he values most. It is the abiding—the sitting down—the perpetual consciousness of God's presence he values above these evanescent joys. The Lord is to his people an abiding portion. He does not, like some friends of earth, come in at distant periods, give us a fond embrace, and go away. He makes his abode with us. He sits down as it were at our right hand, to be ready for our need of him." When Mungo Park was perishing for want of water in the great desert of Africa, and fainting through fatigue and utter exhaustion, he threw himself down upon the burning sand to die; but as he lay in despair, he saw a little flower blooming there away in the

desert; and that flower suggested the idea of God's presence so forcibly that he rejoiced, and was so strengthened by it that he arose and went on.

It must be remembered that religious enjoyments are connected with faith and piety, and increase as the Christian grows in grace and holiness. The light that shines upon the Christian's heart is a "shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The light becomes very great as he nears the "perfect day." "It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light." It is this idea that Pollok embodies in verse when he compares the Christian to the

——"morning star which goes
Not down behind the darken'd west, nor hides
Obscured amid the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven."

The same idea is given by Tupper:

"For I saw him after many days, when the time of his release was come,
And I longed for a congregated world to behold the dying saint.
As the aloe is greener and well liking at the last best summer of its age,
Then hangeth out its golden bells to mingle glory with corruption,
As a meteor travelling in splendor, but bursting in dazzling light,
Such was the end of the righteous: his death was the sun at his setting."

Such is the experience of the Christian. The light grows brighter and larger the nearer he goes towards heaven.

> "And all his prospects brightening to the last,
> His heaven commences ere the world be past."

And as the long experienced servant of God draws near to heaven, how soft and sweet the brilliant light that falls upon his spirit! He enters the land of Beulah, on the borders of the heavenly Canaan, where he hears "continually the singing of birds;" and beholds "the flowers appear in the earth;" and "the air is sweet and pleasant;" and he is "within sight of the city;" and has "more rejoicing than in parts more remote from the kingdom." He beholds by faith the bright company of sainted spirits "beyond the river," and hears the notes of heavenly music; and to his weary spirit there comes across the waters in music-tones the heavenly wooing,

> "Come to this happy land,
> Come, come away."

He is near his home, and only waits the voice of the Master calling him "up higher." To such, "how sweet it is to die!"

> ——"The last end
> Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit!
> Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground,
> Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft."

How calmly and sweetly did Payson die! "I seem to be swimming in a river of pleasure that is carrying me on to the great fountain." "Watchman, what of the night?" asked an aged member of his Church. "I should think it was about noonday," was the triumphant reply of the dying saint. Beautiful, nay, sublime, was the death-scene when the pious Janeway passed away to heaven. "O the glory! the unspeakable glory that I behold! My heart is full, my heart is full: Christ smiles, and I cannot but smile."

"When the good man yields his breath—
For the good man never dies—
Lo! bright beyond the vale of death
The land of promise lies."

Part the Third.

PRACTICAL RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

RELATION OF PRACTICAL TO DOCTRINAL RELIGION.

"Thus faith and works together grow,
No separate life they e'er can know:
They're soul and body, hand and heart:
What God hath joined, let no man part."
HANNAH MORE.

DOCTRINAL religion implies practical, and cannot well exist without it. A man cannot, in the full sense of the word, believe a doctrine without acting upon the supposition of its truth, and thus aiding in the confirmation of his faith in it. There may be the tacit acknowledgment of a doctrine, but the full persuasion of its truth, the firm and settled conviction of mind, comes not without acting upon the previous stage of belief

All doubt is not removed without receiving the doctrine into the practice. A shadow of doubt will remain so long as the doctrine is not acted upon. Hence the safest and quickest way to get an individual to believe any doctrine fully and firmly, is to induce him to act upon the supposition of its truth. This is a fact of universal application. It is based upon the philosophy of the mental constitution. The intellect may be partially convinced of the truth of any particular doctrine, but will not fully admit that doctrine to belief without the concurrence of the will. The lingering conviction of its truth may remain in the intellect, and may exercise some little influence on the feelings, but the doctrine will not be incorporated into the creed, will not find a place in the faith of the mind, until the will concurs.

> "A man convinced against his will
> Is of the same opinion still."

It is universally known that it is an easy matter to convince men agreeably to their wishes; and that they readily believe what they desire to be true. When the will favors any doctrine, it is easily believed; but little evidence satisfies the mind. This is recognized in the Scripture as

true: "If any man *will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.*" A man will not fully and firmly embrace the doctrines of religion, unless he has to some extent practically recognized their truth. We venture the assertion that few men, if any, are thorough and firm believers in the teachings of the Bible who do not, to some extent at least, regulate their conduct by those teachings. When this matter is tested in the experience of any man, as it is when he is under deep conviction of sin, he finds great strugglings of an infidelity he never once suspected that he possessed; and he ascertains, what he never dreamed of before, that he does not fully believe with all his heart in the doctrines of Christianity. A tacit acknowledgment of divine truths is frequently mistaken for faith in them. Even the Christian has frequently to struggle hard with unbelief, and often finds many doubts of either the truth of the whole system, or of particular parts. Every man who is not in some good sense a practical Christian, is to some extent infidel. It is known how greatly the practical acknowledgment of truths aids in strengthening our faith, our belief in them. He who would be "strong in faith" must be holy in life.

He who would be free from unbelief, from all doubts respecting Christianity or its doctrines, must be diligent and faithful in practice, must do the will of God. The willing and obedient Christian will "*know* of the doctrine whether it be of God." Those who are "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine" are not those who live in the regular and faithful performance of duty, and in cheerful obedience to the will of God. Those who "err concerning the faith," are those who err in practice. A practical error will either produce a doctrinal error, or strengthen one already held.

We would be understood in this matter. The mind must be convinced, or there will be no change of conduct, no thorough change, no permanent change. But the mind will not be thoroughly and permanently convinced if the will does not yield, does not consent. As soon as the will consents, there is a change of conduct, the will recognizing the truth of the doctrine presented to the mind. The will recognizing the truth of the doctrine before the mind, the conviction of the mind is increased and strengthened. How many are "almost persuaded to be Christians," but yet never become such, because the will is in the way; and they relapse easily and speedily

into skepticism! How many are never firmly established in the faith of the Gospel, but are "wavering," and "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine," because the will is in the way, the practice does not recognize fully the truth! How many, by neglect of duty, and actual transgressions, come to "forget that they were purged from their old sins," and "deny the Lord that bought them!"

CHAPTER II.

RELATION OF PRACTICAL TO EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

"Love, true love to God, is a love of his truth, of his holiness, of his entire will: true love is that which is reflected in obedience—that which renews and purifies the conscience."—DR. VINET.

PRACTICAL religion is the result and the evidence of experimental religion. One cannot exist without the other. "Faith without works is dead." "Hereby we know that we love him, because we keep his commandments." "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a

corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." There can be no practical obedience where there is no experience of saving grace, and no experience of saving grace without a corresponding change in the conduct.

> ——"All our actions take
> Their hues from the complexion of the heart,
> As landscapes their variety from light."

"If any have the notion of grace," says President Edwards, "that it is something put into the heart, there to be confined and dormant, and that its influence does not govern the man throughout as *an active being;* or if they suppose that the change made by grace, though it indeed betters the heart itself, yet has no tendency to a corresponding improvement of the outward life, they have a very wrong notion." In this light our Saviour viewed this subject: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." So St. Paul taught: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" St. John uses very strong language with respect to this matter: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." Thus the legitimate result and

proper external evidence of a changed heart is a changed life. These go together, and no man can separate them.

Moreover, practical religion exerts an influence on experimental religion. The conduct has an influence on the feelings. The sensibilities, as well as the intellect, are somewhat under the control of the will; and to be effected extensively in any given direction, must have the consent and the direct effort of the will in that direction. To effect a change in the heart, the will must be subdued and brought over and engaged actively in the matter—not that the will can of itself, and by itself, change the heart; but that the will must not only consent to the proposed change, but also seek the change. When the will consents to, and shows the evidence of its consent by seeking the change of heart, the change will take place, and not till then. Here is, therefore, the connection between the change of the heart, or conversion, and the change of the conduct, or obedience. They mutually influence each other. The heart must be changed before the conduct can be conformed to the will of God; but the heart will not be changed until that change is consented to and sought after. This agrees perfectly with all the Scripture require-

ments and exhortations addressed to the sinner and the penitent.

So, after conversion, the progressive work of sanctification will not go forward without the consent of the will and the effort towards it. The conduct has this influence on the experience. God will not sanctify, will not bestow spiritual blessings upon those who do not consent, who do not desire to receive them, and who do not seek them, thus evidencing their consent and desire. Man is a free moral agent. Religion does not destroy, but rather strengthens man's moral agency. God will not, therefore, and, we may venture to say, cannot sanctify, cannot continue his love and his approval and his Spirit to those who do not desire to have them, and give the strongest of all proof of the want of the desire of them by their conduct. It is clear that we cannot, then, progress in the work of sanctification, or even continue in the love of God and in favor with him, if we do not desire it, and do not continually manifest that desire by a course of conduct consistent therewith. Thus it plainly appears that, by inconsistency of conduct and ungodliness of life, we may not only not grow in grace, but may lose the favor of God and his love out of our hearts, and become guilty sinners, even

as others, "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath." Such is the plain teaching of the Bible: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." In these passages the conditions are plainly intimated and expressed. There can be no question about their meaning. But there are stronger passages still, if possible: "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." "If thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." "I will be with you while ye be with me." "If the righteous forsake his righteousness, and commit iniquity, he shall even die thereby." "I keep my body under, lest, after I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away." Let these passages suffice. They prove most conclusively that the want of

attention to practical religion, or of obedience to the requirements of religion, will not only check the progress of inward piety, but cause the loss of all religion. By such a course of inconsistency, neglect, and sin, a spiritual disease and weakness will supervene, which, if undisturbed, will inevitably end in spiritual and eternal death. To neglect the comfort of the body, and cease to attend to its wants, will induce disease, and eventually death; and so, to neglect the constant nourishment and proper exercise of the spiritual life, will not only injure the health, but bring on disease, and finally death, to the soul. There are many now in all the churches who are "weak and sickly, and many sleep;" and the cause is to be found in the great inattention to practical religion. "Wherefore work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

A holy life, as the best evidence of our sincere desire of a rapidly progressive inward sanctification, is attended with the influences of the Spirit upon the heart, purifying and making it holy.

"Walk in the light! and sin, abhorred,
Shall ne'er defile again:
The blood of Jesus Christ, the Lord,
Shall cleanse from every stain.

"Walk in the light! and thou shalt find
Thy heart made truly His,
Who dwells in cloudless light enshrined,
In whom no darkness is."

A life of consistent practical piety is also abundantly blessed in the gift of a rich experience of the divine favor and love, the peace of God, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and the hope of glory. An ever-brightening light from the Sun of righteousness shines into the heart of that man who ever strives to do good and glorify God in all things.

"What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy,
Is virtue's prize."

Those who are most faithful in obedience to God enjoy more of God and are happier. The way of holy, active consecration to God is the path of light and peace.

——"Angels
Are happier than mankind, because they're better."

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

CHAPTER III.

IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICAL RELIGION.

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"—JESUS CHRIST.

WITHOUT practical religion, salvation will be denied to man. Salvation in sin is no salvation at all. Salvation is deliverance from sin. Sin itself is the evil from which man must be delivered. Sin is the cause of all evil. Every evil is a consequence of sin. The effect must remain until the cause is removed. The cause and the effect are inseparable. It is plainly impossible to save men from the effects of sin while they remain in sin. If men are to be saved at all, they must be saved from sin; and thus the cause being removed, the effect will be removed also. Heaven is a place of happiness because there is no sin there. If there were sin in heaven, it would be a place of woe and suffering, a hell. Angels are happy because they are holy and obey God. If angels were sinful, they would be miserable. Where there is sin there is no salvation; for the cause remains, and the effect must remain also.

Sin is the transgression of the law of God. The opposite of sin is obedience to the law. A state of deliverance from sin is therefore a state of obedience to the divine law. Practical religion consists of obedience to the law of God. Without practical religion, therefore, there can be no salvation.

With the present constitution of the universe, the transgressor cannot be saved in his guilt. The whole universe would veto such a measure, were it possible. The constitution of the universe forbids the possibility of any such salvation. Man's relation must be changed; harmony must be established between him and God and the universe, or there can be no salvation. This harmony consists not merely of the purification of the intellect and sensibilities, but also of the will and conscience; not only of the belief of the truth, and the experience of pardon and sanctification, but also of the living obedience to the will of God, which is indeed inseparable from the rest.

This is not salvation by works; but salvation by such a faith in the atonement of Christ as will invariably produce good works, as will lead to holy obedience to the will of God, as its proper fruit and the evidence of its existence. There

can be no obedience where there is not such a faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please him;" and a faith that is saving cannot exist without producing obedience; for "faith without works is dead," and saving faith "works by love." It is evident that such a faith as will produce obedience is the only proper condition of salvation, because it answers all the purposes requisite, having in itself all the elements of obedience concentrated in one exercise of the whole man, and in its development producing invariably a life of obedience to God. It is in this sense that faith is insisted on as the only condition of salvation; and it is in this sense that obedience is required as necessary, because it is concentrated in faith, and will always be developed by faith, if faith be not given up. Where there is true faith, there is obedience. Where there is the saving faith of the gospel, there is at the same moment a consciousness of delight in God, love both to God and man, which is "the fulfilling of the law," the purpose to do the will of God and resignation to God, existing in such connection with faith as to be incapable of separation from it: they came together and exist together, and are inseparable; and *they are one.* Thus faith contains in itself the elements of obedience.

Faith develops and produces obedience. As soon as a man exercises saving faith, he is not only conscious of delight in God and love and resignation, but he actually begins to obey the law of God; and immediately he offers up adoration and praise and thanksgiving and prayer, and makes his vows to God, and proceeds in the effort to please God. Obedience commences in the very exercise of faith, and is inseparable from the exercise of living faith. It is a condition of its life. "Faith without works is dead."

In this sense, therefore, we understand the Bible to say that without obedience we cannot be saved. In this sense the conduct of men, as furnishing evidence of the state of the heart and of the genuineness of faith, is the *data* upon which the decisions of the final judgment will be formed, which settle for ever, and beyond repeal, the destiny of men. "And the dead were judged out of those things written in the books according to their works." "For by thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father." "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do

justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city." Practical religion is everywhere taught in the Bible. From the sin of Adam, in the opening, to the blessing pronounced upon those who "do his commandments," in the close of the sacred canon, the whole volume is full of it. No man can read the Bible carefully and feel that it gives a license to sin in any form, or affords security against the wrath of God to those who disobey his law. It matters not where "ungodliness and worldly lusts" may be, whether in avowed sinners or in professing Christians, the "wrath of God is revealed" against them.

Practical religion is an ornament attractive and influential, exhibiting the beauty and excellence and power of true religion. Morality is different from and has not the beauty of practical religion. The code of the moralist is not that of the Christian: they are diverse the one from the other. There is a hard, stern, melancholy, selfish appearance about morality, that renders it altogether different from holy obedience to God. There is a cheerful, meek, quiet, patient, humble, self-denying, loving, sympathetic, and tender spirit

pervading practical religion, that constitutes a marked difference between it and morality, and invests it with a beauty, excellence and sublimity that proclaim its heavenly origin and connection. When practical Christianity is seen in its consistency and completeness, there is needed no argument to prove the divinity of Christianity, and no pleading to commend it as the want of humanity. It is itself a living, ever-present, ever-speaking demonstration both of the truth of Christianity and its sufficiency for and perfect adaptation to the wants of man. Practical religion is the living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. The most powerful preaching is the silent eloquence of a holy life. Every Christian may effectually and successfully preach the gospel, however humble his position and talents may be, by the powerful "rhetoric of a good example." If practical religion were fully embraced and carried out by the Church; if the Church would array herself in her beautiful garments and arise and shine, there would go forth a stream of evangelical light and love that would speedily cover the whole earth: the morn of Zion's glory would dawn, the orient streaks of a dawning millennium would not only be seen, but would give place to the rising day, and one shout

of victory, as the sound of many waters, and of mighty thunderings, would go up, swelling louder and louder, from mountain and valley and river and ocean and island, the triumph of God's militant host.

God has graciously attached to practical religion abundant rewards. Not that we can by obedience merit any thing, or lay God under obligation to us; but that God has graciously promised to reward those who do their duty. There is no merit in duty: it is the payment of a debt we justly owe; and has no merit in it. Therefore when ye have done all, say "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." But of his infinite mercy and grace God has promised to reward those who do his will; and these rewards are gracious gifts of God. "It is of grace and not of debt." "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "No man hath left father or mother, or friends, or houses, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but shall receive in this life an hundred-fold, and in the world to come everlasting life." "He that giveth a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, he shall not lose his reward." Not the least act of obedience will go unrewarded. O the riches of grace in Christ

Jesus, and the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of peace!

To do good, to obey the will of God, to abound in every good word and work, is the great end of our existence. Fichte, a German writer, says, "Not alone to know, but to *act* according to thy knowledge, is thy destination, proclaims my inmost soul. Not for indolent contemplation and study of thyself, nor for brooding over emotions of piety; no! for action was existence given thee: thy actions, and thy actions alone, determine thy worth." "O immortal beings," says Vinet, "creatures of God! life consists in the employment of all your powers; and you have divine powers. Life consists in the fulfilment of your destiny; and your destiny is heaven! Do not tell me you have lived, you who have a soul to aspire to the infinite, but which you have chained down to finite objects—a heart to love God, whom you have not loved—an intelligence to serve him, but whom you have not served. You have passed through life at the side of those who lived, but you have not lived. To live, my brethren, is to perform a work which lasts. It is to accumulate something more than vain recollections. It is to convert all our present life into the future: it is to be prepared for its death: it is to make it in

advance triumphant, glorious, full of immortality. To live is to act on earth as a citizen of heaven." If this be the end of living, and this be life, then it is time to be engaged in it.

> "Up, Christian, up! thy cares resign!
> The past, the future are not thine!
> Show forth *to-day* thy Saviour's praise,
> Redeem the course of evil days:
> Life's shadow, in its lengthening gloom,
> Points daily nearer to the tomb!"

Let us arise at once and begin our life-work, ere life be gone. To-day we live: to-morrow we die.

> "Catch, then, O catch the transient hour,
> Improve each moment as it flies:
> Life's a short summer—man a flower:
> He dies—alas! how soon he dies!"

CHAPTER IV.

RELATION OF PRACTICAL RELIGION TO THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

"Yet take the bitter cup with both hands, and sit down to your repast. You will soon learn a secret, that there is sweetness at the bottom. You will find it the sweetest cup that you ever tasted in all your life. You will find heaven coming nearer to you."—DR. JUDSON, *writing to Mrs. Boardman, after the death of her husband.*

THE whole universe is constructed into and ruled according to one great system. All is in harmony with God, and every part is in harmony with every other part. "Order is Heaven's first law." The system of providence is in harmony with every other part of the universe, and no single event occurs that is in the least discordant. One vast and perpetual harmony reigns throughout the whole universe. "All thy works praise thee, O God." And as the natural attributes of God are subordinate to his moral perfections, so the government of the physical universe is subordinate to the moral or spiritual. The moral government of God is supported by the government of the universe. The providence of God

will be found, therefore, to be against the wicked, as out of harmony with God, and favorable to the righteous, in proportion as they love God and are holy. This is certainly true. But this view must be somewhat modified with respect to man in his present state. Man in this life is not in a retributive state, but in a state of probation. God has graciously placed man in a state of probation, giving him the provisions and means and appliances of salvation, and time to repent and secure the mercy of God. Such a state must produce a suspension of the regular operation of the laws of providence with respect to man, and an arrangement of those laws in harmony with God's plans and purposes concerning him. Now, we know that God's plans and purposes all look to and aim at the production of holiness in man while in his probationary condition. The providence of God being always in harmony with God, must also in all things aim to produce holiness in man. God plans and provides a way of salvation for man through an atonement: the Son makes that atonement by a life and death on earth, and a resurrection and an ascension to heaven: the Spirit reveals the plan, and comes down to apply its provisions effectually to man: angels become ministering spirits to men in con-

nection with the work of their salvation; and all the events of divine providence are subordinated to the work in which God and the universe are so harmoniously engaged. Every thing is therefore so ordered as to induce men to become religious, and to help them forward in the work of holiness; and when probation closes, which is at death, the suspension of the general operation of these laws will cease, and the whole universe will proclaim eternal peace with the righteous, and declare perpetual war against the wicked. The salvation of the soul is the greatest good, and every event of providence is directed toward its advancement. The whole universe joins together to induce and assist man to work out his salvation. "All things work together for good to them that love God." "Now, no affliction seemeth for the present to be joyous, but rather grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." "Our light affiiction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Thus even adversity and affliction are sent for the purpose of advancing us in the work of our salvation. Charnock says, "God strips good men of the enjoyments of this world that he may wean them from the love of it—

keeps them from idolatry by removing the fuel of it—sends afflictions that he may not lose them, nor they their souls." "No man," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "is more miserable than he that hath no adversity: that man is not tried whether he be good or bad; and God never crowns virtues which are only faculties and dispositions; but every act of virtue is an ingredient into reward; and we see many children fairly planted whose parts of nature were never dressed by art, nor called from the furrows of their first possibilities by discipline and institution, and they dwell for ever in ignorance and converse with beasts; and yet, if they had been dressed and exercised, might have stood at the chairs of princes, or spoken parables amongst the rulers of cities. Our virtues are but the seed when the grace of God comes upon us first; but this grace must be thrown into broken furrows, and twice feel the cold, and twice the heat, and be softened with storms and showers, and then it will arise into fruitfulness and harvests. Softness is for slaves and beasts, for minstrels and useless persons, for such as cannot ascend higher than the state of a fair ox, or a servant entertained for vainer offices; but the man who designs his son for noble employments, to honors and to triumphs, to consular dignities

and presidencies of councils, loves to see him pale with study, or panting with labor, hardened with suffering, or eminent by dangers. And so God dresses us for heaven."

True it is that we may not in all cases be able to trace the connection. But it exists nevertheless. There can be no exception. God doth not "willingly afflict or grieve the children of men." "All things work together for good to them that love God." He who "knoweth all things" and "seeth all things from the beginning," has "declared it." "What I do," says Jesus, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." "Now I know in part: then shall I know even as also I am known."

——"That things to mortals are mysterious
Is not because the things themselves are dark,
But the perceptions through which they are viewed."

The providence of God is designed to promote our piety. It does this variously. It woos and pleads by its mercies: it forces the mind to think of other interests than those of the body and of earth; to feel the need of higher support and of superior pleasures than earth can give; and to see that soon earth must be exchanged for another and a future state. It gives direction to the Christian; encourages in the performance of

duty; gives answers to prayer; affords opportunities of doing good; preserves the Christian from want and suffering; protects and delivers from the hand of enemies; and, at last, bears him triumphantly home. "How is it," asks McCosh, "that God sends us the bounties of his providence?—how is it that he supplies the many wants of his creatures?—how is it that he encourages industry?—how is it that he punishes in this life notorious offenders against his law? The answer is, By the skilful preärrangements of his providence, whereby the needful events fall out at the very time and in the very way required. When the question is asked, How does God answer prayer? we give the very same reply: It is by the preördained appointment of God when he settled the constitution of the world, and set all its parts in order."

CHAPTER V.

RELATION OF PRACTICAL RELIGION TO THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST.

"The Cross presents an economy of motives to be met with nowhere else—motives of tried power and demonstrated efficacy. Without the Cross the lamp of hope burns dim and sickly."—BISHOP BASCOM.

THE atonement is the ground and means of the bestowal of every spiritual blessing, of all intercourse with God, and of all gracious assistance in the discharge of duty. Man of himself is weak, and utterly unable to obey God's holy law. He feels the need of aid, of some power that can work within him, and dispose him to the service of God, and give him to find delight in doing the work of God. Through the cross of Christ spiritual influences are abundantly given; and, by trusting in Jesus Christ, God condescends to enter the heart and dwell there, and "work in him to will and to do of his own good pleasure." Whatever indisposition there may be—whatever

difficulty or hindrance may be felt in the principles, tempers, and affections of the heart—if there be pride, or anger, or malice, or self-will, or lust, or ambition, or any other unholy disposition hard to be overcome, and presenting difficulties in keeping the commandments of God, it or all of them may be removed by trusting in the atonement of Christ. He who goes to Jesus with his difficulties, and confides in him, will not fail to have them all removed. He who carries his heart to Jesus in humble confidence and trust, will not fail to have its hardness removed, its coldness taken away, its indisposition to serve God destroyed, its love of the world displaced, its selfishness consumed, its fear and unbelief changed, and the heart filled with love, humility, faith, and the Holy Ghost.

"He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
And on the sightless eyeballs pour the day:
'Tis he the obstructed paths of sound shall clear,
And bid new music charm the unfolding ear:
The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forego,
And leap exulting, like the bounding roe."

In the performance of his duty, the Christian often feels the need of direction, often desires comfort, often wishes for communion with God and the pure spirits of heaven, and often desires

to walk in the light of God's countenance, with his great smile beaming right upon his spirit. To secure these precious blessings, he has only to go to God in humble prayer in the name of Jesus, and trusting in his death. He who goes to the "mercy-seat," to the "throne of grace," relying on the blood of Jesus with a simple, confiding faith, will find all that he seeks, and infinitely more. The "mercy-seat" is the place of sure retreat from every stormy wind that blows. It is the place

> ——"Where Jesus sheds
> The oil of gladness on our heads;
> And heaven comes down our souls to greet,
> And glory crowns the mercy-seat."

And then, the Christian is conscious of doing many things that should not have been done, and of neglecting many that should have been done. He has often yielded to temptation, has often given way to evil tempers, has indulged some wrong passion. He feels guilty before God. Perhaps, in close self-examination, he finds much for which to condemn himself. What is he to do now? He has once been pardoned. Will God grant forgiveness again? The atonement is sufficient for such a case. "If any man sin, we

have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." No man need despair. "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Then, again, the Christian feels that he is so infinitely unworthy, that God is so exalted in holiness and purity beyond all conception, that every thing he does is so mixed up with human infirmity and imperfection, and so far short of the broad requirement and deep spirituality of the divine law, and his heart is so far removed from the purity and his mind from the spirituality of heaven, that he is almost ready to give up to despair. And well he might give up to despair! After years of struggling and praying and warring against sin, and striving to serve God, what has he, what single deed could he select, what number of acts could he choose, on which to depend for favor with God and admittance into heaven? Is there one that would bear the light of heaven? Is there one that would bear comparison with the purity of God? There is not one. How, then? There is the "blood of sprinkling," which will make us acceptable to

God, and will make our humble efforts to serve him acceptable also. The "blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin;" and thus our transgressions are not only forgiven, but our hearts are cleansed from all sin, and our feeble efforts in his service are also cleansed from all sin, and by the blood of Christ we are accepted ourselves, and our service, unworthy though it be, is also accepted. "We are saved by faith." "By grace are ye saved, through faith." Temptations come to the Christian. The world allures him, its vanities charm him, its votaries plead with him: Satan urges him in various ways to sin; and his own corrupt heart prompts him and excites him to do evil. What shall he do? Let him go to Jesus. Let him trust in Jesus. Let his faith be strong in Jesus. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Faith is the Christian's shield, wherewith to quench all the fiery darts of Satan. Jesus Christ is a strong tower, into which the righteous may always run for shelter, for refuge, for safety. There they are safe. No foe can harm them there. "None shall pluck them out of my hand."

The atonement of Christ is every thing to the Christian, whether living, dying, or rejoicing in

heaven. "Christ is all and in all." He is "made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." He is just such a Saviour as we need, ever-present and all-powerful, full of love and sympathy, our advocate and intercessor in heaven, the Son of God, full of grace and truth.

> "Sweetest sound in seraph's song,
> Sweetest note on mortal's tongue,
> Sweetest carol ever sung—
> Jesus—Jesus flow along."

CHAPTER VI.

RELATION OF PRACTICAL RELIGION TO THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"There never was, nor is, nor ever will be, the least particle of holiness in the world, but what, flowing from Jesus Christ, is communicated by the Spirit, according to the truth and promise of the gospel."—JOHN OWEN, *on the Holy Spirit.*

ONE of the very first lessons learned by the Christian in his religious experience, is that of his own weakness, ignorance, and insufficiency for any good work. He resolves, in the fervor

and joy of his first love, to be henceforth a perfectly consistent Christian, and a worthy example in all good works, and he feels confident that he can be such. He does not imagine it possible that he should ever again fall into sin and be led captive by the devil. But he soon learns that "of himself he can do nothing," and that "all his sufficiency is of God." He stumbles and falls as a little child, mistakes the right way, and begins to feel the need of some one to direct and walk beside him, to lead him and support him. One who was eminent for piety and usefulness says of his early religious experience on this subject, "I perceived what a vitally important part of the work of redemption pertains to the Holy Spirit; and that every change, and each step in the way of holiness, is effected by his agency; and this, too, in compliance with an earnest desire, and in answer to fervent prayer." So the Bible teaches. There the whole work of religion, and the whole glory of our salvation, is ascribed to divine grace. "By grace are ye saved." Doddridge, in beautiful lines, has given the Scripture doctrine of salvation by grace:

"Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps *that* grace display
Which drew the wondrous plan.

Grace taught my wandering feet
  To tread the heavenly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet,
  While pressing on to God.
Grace all the work shall crown
  Through everlasting days:
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
  And well deserves the praise."

We can thus understand the experience of Paul. "By the grace of God I am what I am." "I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was in me." "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." We can thus understand his exhortation to Timothy: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." We can understand why he urged the Hebrews to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." We can understand how man, in his moral inability and weakness, can keep the commandments and glorify God: "My grace is sufficient for thee." At every step, therefore, in the Christian's pathway, he may set up his Ebenezer, and say with truth, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me." Every evening he may sing,

"O to grace how great a debtor
  Daily I'm constrained to be!"

And every morning he may offer up the prayer:

> "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
> Prone to leave the God I love:
> Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
> Seal it for thy courts above."

The grace of God, or the influences of the Spirit, which in this connection mean the same and are used interchangeably, has been distinguished in its operations as preventing, directing, and assisting. It is not necessary for the purposes of godliness to make any such distinctions, for it is the same Spirit in all, and the same work, and only differs in the result to be produced. It may be well, therefore, to say that we are dependent upon the Spirit, to prevent, direct, and assist us in the way of holiness.

The Spirit prevents us in every good work. The original or primary meaning of the word "prevent" is to go before, and conveys in this connection the idea that in all good works the Spirit goes before, leads in the matter, takes the initiative, suggests to and disposes to the work. He works in us "both to will and to do." It is a fact, that we have naturally an indisposition towards the will and law of God. The natural disposition is contrary to duty. There is no natural inclination towards prayer, or love to

God, or resignation, or forgiveness, or self-denial, or humility, or indeed any Christian duty. The Spirit must produce, by his influences upon the heart, the disposition to do what God wills. We are dependent upon the Spirit for the very disposition, the will to serve God. It is therefore no excuse to us that we have no disposition to do our duty, that we have no inclination to any particular good work. The means of procuring the disposition are at hand; and those means are abundant and powerful, and may be had in all their sufficiency for the simple asking. "How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." "My grace is sufficient for thee." No heart is too hard, no will is too stubborn, no temper is too strong, no disposition is too inveterate, no habit is too firmly fixed and powerful for the grace of God. The influences of the Spirit, where they are sought with earnestness and faith, are irresistible. Nothing can be "too hard" for God. How important that we "live in the Spirit," and "walk in the Spirit," and be "in the Spirit," and have the "Spirit dwell in us richly in all wisdom," and "abide with us for ever."

The Spirit instructs or directs in the way of holiness.

——"The Spirit of God,
From heaven descending, dwells in domes of clay:
In mode far passing human thought, he guides,
Impels, instructs: intense pursuit of good,
And cautious flight of evil, he suggests."

"Thus, when the Holy Ghost comes to us," says Tauler, "He teaches us all truth; that is, He shows us a true picture of our failings, and confounds us in ourselves, and teaches us how we are to live singly and purely for the truth, and teaches us to sink humbly into a deep humility, and to cast ourselves utterly down before God, and beneath every creature. He will teach us all things that we can need for a perfect life, and for a knowledge of the hidden truth of God, of the bondage of nature, of the deceitfulness of the world, and of the cunning of evil spirits." "This truth, which the Holy Ghost is to teach them," says Luther, "is—how God's children are to be begotten out of sin and death unto righteousness and everlasting life—how God's kingdom is to be established, and the kingdom of hell destroyed—how we are to fight against the devil and to overcome him—how to cheer, strengthen, and uphold faith." Thus the Spirit shall "guide us into all truth." Thus we are "led by the Spirit."

The Spirit gives aid and strength in the per-

formance of every duty, and sustains in all trial and difficulty. It is the Spirit of God that "works in us both to will and to do," and "works in us mightily unto every good work," and at times proves a heavenly "Comforter, abiding with us for ever." Without his aid we "can do nothing," for we are "not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." If we have not the aid of the Holy Spirit, we cannot perform a single work in the proper manner and from the right motive. We can do the work of God only when he "makes all grace abound towards us, that we, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." "Unless believers," says Dr. John Owen, "have uninterrupted influences of grace, and spiritually vital nourishment from Christ, 'they can do nothing;' that is, nothing which appertains to fruit-bearing. Now, every act of faith and love, every motion of our minds or affections towards God, is a part of our 'fruit-bearing;' and so are all external duties of obedience. Wherefore, our Lord being judge, believers themselves cannot, without new actual supplies of grace, do any thing spiritually good."

"The Holy Spirit accommodates grace to every

faculty," says Polhill, a writer of the seventeenth century: "as the dew is white in the lily, and red in the rose, so the Spirit, in its graces, is light in the mind, liberty in the will, order in the affections. Also it accommodates suitable influences to every grace: it gives such touches upon their holy love, fear, meekness, patience, as makes them go forth into act in a free, spontaneous manner. Further, it accommodates itself to them at every turn: it is a Spirit of grace in their penitential meltings; a Spirit of supplication in their ardent devotions; a Spirit of revelation in their evangelical studies; a Spirit of love in their charities; a Spirit of power in their infirmities; a Spirit of fear in their holy walkings; a Spirit of meekness in their carriage towards others; a Spirit of comfort in their afflictions; a Spirit of glory in their reproaches; a Spirit of holiness in all their converses: it lives, breathes, moves, and aptly operates in them."

A plentiful supply of the Spirit of grace, and sufficient for all the purposes of the life of holiness, will be regularly given to those who "ask of God," and who "believe on Jesus." He is given to them as readily and as cheerfully as a father gives proper gifts to his children, and in such abundant supply as to be like "rivers of

water," and in such power as to be "sufficient for every good work." O how kind and infinitely merciful is God to us! How great are the provisions of the gospel of Jesus Christ for our holiness and salvation! How powerful are the encouragements of the Bible to a life of piety! How we are without all excuse for our unfaithfulness! How infinitely great and aggravated is the guilt of our neglect of obedience and holiness! How sinful must we be if we "quench the Holy Spirit," or "grieve him" away from our hearts! How awful must be our condition if the Spirit of God depart from us, and leave us to our idols!

"If yet the Holy Spirit deigns to dwell
In earthly domes, 'tis not in those defiled
With pride, with fraud, with rapine, or with lust."

CHAPTER VII.

CONDITIONS OF PRACTICAL RELIGION.

In practical religion, which consists in obedience to the will of God in all things, there must be a proper motive. Without this, however exact we may be in externals, we are not truly reli-

gious, we are not holy. Men may and frequently do perform their actions with very different motives and aims. Thus, one goes to the house of worship for his own pleasure, another to please a friend, who requests him to go, and a third because it is the will of God. It is very evident that in this case the morality of the act is not in the outward performance, but in the motive from which it springs. It will not be said that these three persons in the performance of the action in question are equally religious, or that the action as performed by the three is equally acceptable to God. In the first, there is no reference to the pleasure of others, or to the will of God; in the second, there is no reference to the will of God; and in the third, the action was performed simply because it was pleasing to God. One man prays, because his conscience troubles him, and he hopes thereby to get relief; another prays, because in his infancy his mother taught him to do so, and he continues the practice through respect to her memory; and another prays, because God wills it should be done. Here is the same action, but with very different motives. Again, a man gives to missionary purposes at a public meeting, because others do so; another gives, because the speaker stirs up his feelings

of pity; another gives, because he will appear liberal and gain applause; another gives, hoping to gain popularity, and thereby enlarge the circle of his patrons and increase his gains; a fifth gives in the name of God. Thus every act may be performed from different motives; and a man may seem to be religious whose heart is not right with God. Many a man has put on religion as a cloak to hide his real character. Such are religious in appearance, but in reality are hypocrites, whose hopes shall perish. It is the motive that gives complexion and character to the act. If the motive be not a proper one, no matter what the act may be, it is not religious, and does not constitute any part of religion. A man might be a good Christian as far as the outward conduct is concerned, and yet no Christian at all, because his motives are not right. And what is the proper motive, which should influence us chiefly, in all our deeds? No one will question the authority or the ability of Christ to answer this important question. He says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang

all the law and the prophets." Thus, love to God and to man is the great motive in all acceptable service. The law of God is not fulfilled, the commandments of God are not obeyed, if there is not the love of God in the heart constraining us. As far as the letter of the law and the outward conduct is concerned, there may be an exact conformity to the law, when, indeed, the law is not really obeyed at all, because there is an absence of the proper motive of acceptable obedience. St. Paul says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." If this be true, and it is but another form of expressing what Christ said, then, where there is not love to God and to man in the heart influencing the conduct, there can be no "fulfilling of the law," however exact may be the conformity of the outward conduct to the law. It is therefore plain, that love to God and to man is the proper motive in all obedience. There is no acceptable obedience that does not spring from love. So St. Paul says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Here is only a varying of the phraseology, and an application of the principle to "whatsoever ye do, in word or deed." The

idea is the same. Every thing is to be done from a desire to please God. This must be the one motive and aim of our life, the great, and chief, and prevailing principle of all our conduct. This constitutes the great distinguishing difference between the Christian and other men. He does every thing from love to God, from a desire to please God: they do nothing from love to God.

There must also be a proper manner of glorifying and pleasing God. The end does not justify the means. Morality attaches to the means as well as to the motive—both must be proper. Every thing is to be done with an eye single to the glory of God; and nothing is to be done which will not glorify God. God cannot be glorified by our lying, or swearing, or defrauding, or doing any evil work. Every thing we do must be of such a character as will glorify God—such an act as is capable of glorifying God. The motive thus becomes a rule of conduct of universal application, and easily employed in solving doubts respecting the lawfulness of any given act. The application is simple. Can this act be done from love to God? is the act consistent with love to God? will it please God? is it

capable of reflecting his glory? Thus the Christian is furnished with an easy and safe guide to conscience. He aims to glorify God, and he avoids every thing incompatible with his aim. This will produce a consistent religious character. This should be the character of every professing Christian. Archbishop Leighton says, "It is a most unseemly and unpleasant thing to see a man's life full of ups and downs—one step like a Christian and another like a worldling—it cannot choose but both pain himself and mar the edification of others." The whole amount of opposition made to the Church of Christ by earth and hell, by wicked men, governments, infidels, and devils, has never injured it half as much as the inconsistency of its own members. Practical religion embraces the entire conduct of man. Every act of life springs from some motive or principle, and has, therefore, a moral complexion, and goes to make up the moral character of the man. Every act is recorded in heaven by the iron pen of eternity, and will give its testimony and have its weight in the decision of final destiny. Every act must, therefore, spring from the proper motive, and the whole life be one of uniform consistency, no one act contradicting

another, but all constituting a hymn of praise to God. "If any man keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

Practical religion thus defined does not necessarily involve any change in our business employments and avocations, if they be lawful and lawfully conducted. Christianity supposes that every man will have some employment, and be "diligent in business." It also supposes that his business will not be inconsistent with either the law of his country or of God; and that his manner of carrying on his business is also consistent. We may glorify God in any lawful and proper calling honestly conducted. If, however, a man is fully convinced that he is "moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him the office and work of the ministry in the Church of God," if the providence of God permit, he cannot refuse, but at the imminent peril of his immortal interests, to give up his business, however lucrative and prosperous, and "go into the highways and hedges" and call sinners to repentance. If he resist, he resists God. The voice of God is within him and the hand of God is upon him, and he must go, or hazard his spiritual welfare, and probably lose his soul.

Practical religion is a life-work, and when com-

menced is never to be given up. The Christian cannot loose himself, nor can any human authority, nor any power in earth or heaven, loose him from his obligations and vows. He may withdraw from the fellowship of the Church, and renounce his religious profession, but his obligations and vows remain unchanged and unaffected by it, and God holds him responsible. Religion is superior to and infinitely above every thing else, and should be so recognized. Every thing should be subordinated to the duties of religion, and religion placed first and above all. If the Lord be our God, let him be our God. Let us not exalt self, or wealth, or fame, or pleasure, or fashion, or friends above him. Let him be our God always, to-day and to-morrow and for ever When we lay ourselves on his altar as an offering to him, it must be without reservation, and a perpetual offering. Practical religion is a warfare, and the last enemy is death. The Christian's glory is not to conquer or die, but to fall on the field of battle and conquer as he falls. He is a soldier for the war: the Captain of our salvation accepts none other. His discharge is in these words: "The Master calleth for thee," and is sent by the hand of death. The Christian, like his Master, never cries, "It is finished," but with

his last and dying breath. He finishes his work when he dies, and not before. Then, and not till then, he rests from his labors. The voice of God to all his servants is, "Work while it is called to-day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

CHAPTER VIII.

PERSONAL DUTIES—THE MEANS OF GRACE.

"Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts."—MALACHI.

GOD has graciously instituted certain ordinances or means of grace, by the diligent use of which in the exercise of faith in Christ we may receive abundance of grace. They are the ordinary conditions of the bestowal of divine grace, and the channels through which grace is communicated to the soul. Not that the Spirit is confined to these, so that his influences cannot be received otherwise than through them, but that generally and in all ordinary cases he is communicated through them, and his influences

are received in the use of them. The Spirit is never given in his saving influences where he is not desired and sought; and the means of grace are the prescribed conditions of seeking the Spirit. These means are always to be used, and are in some sense necessary, when there is time and opportunity for their use. Some are more commonly used than others. Some are more important than others. They are not in themselves efficacious, nor do they certainly and necessarily convey divine grace to all who use them irrespective of their desire and faith. There is no grace in them, but grace is conveyed through them. They do not benefit any but those who are in a proper subjective condition for the reception of the Spirit, that is, such as desire grace and exercise faith in Jesus Christ. All spiritual blessings come through Christ, from whom cometh down "every good and perfect gift," and can come to none but those who "believe on his name." "He that believeth hath everlasting life: he that believeth not"—whatever else he may do—"shall be damned." While, therefore, the means of grace cannot convey the grace of God to those who do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, they are of great value to every sincere follower of Jesus. No one whatever can

use them with the earnest desire of obtaining divine grace, and exercising faith in Christ, but will receive the grace desired. The grace invariably follows the proper use of the means. These means are the wells into which the Christian often lets down the bucket of faith, and from which he draws a plentiful supply of grace for every time of need. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation." No Christian ought willingly to neglect these means. They are refreshing streams to his thirsty spirit. He goes and drinks, and drinks again, and yet returns again to drink.

The Christian should have regular habits of attendance upon the means of grace. There should be set times and regular seasons for the use of these holy ordinances; and nothing should be allowed to interfere with their use at those seasons. In this way we may form a regular, habitual piety, characterized by strength, consistency, and permanence. This is the best way to secure ourselves against a fitful, excitable, feverish piety, that has its long winters of coldness and barrenness and desolation, and its short summers of scorching sunshine and stormy weather. A regular, habitual attendance upon all the means of grace will produce a calm and bright and

genial summer in the soul, when the sun shines beautifully and warmly, and fragrant flowers bloom, and merry birds sing sweetly, and fruits of holiness ripen in abundance. These means are the tables on which our daily spiritual food is spread in rich profusion, and we are invited to come, and eat, and grow, and become strong, and live for ever. If we eat not regularly, we grow weak and feeble, and disease will overtake us. There are many, alas! who are spiritually consumptive or dyspeptic, who have contracted disease by the neglect of the means of spiritual health. There are many, alas! who are spiritually dwarfs—many, whose parts are not proportionally developed—many, who are spiritually deformed by neglecting the means of spiritual health and growth. What are the means of grace?

Searching the Scriptures is a prominent means of grace. It is not to be neglected by any. "Search the Scriptures" is as imperative a command and as obligatory as, "Pray without ceasing." One of the chief causes of the defective, meagre, and barren piety of modern times is the neglect of the Sacred Scriptures—the neglect of their careful study. Many know nothing more of the Bible than they hear the minister read in

the services of the sanctuary—many read a few chapters on the Sabbath only—many read select portions of the New Testament and of the book of Psalms, and no more—many, without any order, read any portion that comes to hand. Whatever this may be, it certainly cannot be *searching the Scriptures.* It is not a search, nor does it embrace the whole of the Scriptures. Every word of inspiration has a meaning, and a meaning for us, and a meaning bearing on our spiritual welfare, and we are losers if we do not find that meaning. "Blessed is he that readeth," is the declaration of Jesus. The word of God in every sentence and line and word is full of divine blessings, as so many ever-flowing fountains, and it imparts those blessings to the diligent and prayerful student. There is spiritual strength in the word of God, not only as a whole, but in every book, and chapter, and verse, and word; and he who receiveth it into him, receives strength and becomes strong and stronger the more he receives. Prayer is an important means of grace, and a duty which no one can neglect and remain a Christian. "A prayerless soul is a Christless soul." Prayer is the expression of desire to God, and is the language of the heart addressed to its Maker. Prayer that comes not

from the heart is not prayer—it may be formality, or hypocrisy, or mockery; but if we do not approach God with the heart, however eloquently the lips may discourse and the tongue may plead, there is no prayer. God scorns the prayer that does not come warm from an honest and an earnest heart. The true Christian will be careful to maintain a spirit of prayer, by which he prays without ceasing, in the secret, and silent, and hidden communion of the heart with God; but he will also have set times when he can retire to some private place, where undisturbed he can pour out his soul in fervent prayer, unseen by any but the great All-seeing. Prayer being the approach of the soul to God, and its language addressed to him, there can be nothing more absurd than to offer prayer in such affected language as if to please God by the elegancy of our speech. "When you retire to your devotions," says Bickersteth, "lay aside all artifice, all needless form, all distracting anxiety, and express your desires with the utmost plainness of speech." While praying, let us remember that we are but beggars, infinitely unworthy and unholy, and are approaching the high and mighty Ruler of the universe and the Searcher of all hearts, and let us pray in all reverence, humility, and self-

abasement. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." In your petitions to God do not forget that God, who knoweth all things, fully understands your wants, and while you pray confidently for all spiritual blessings, let temporal blessings be asked with entire deference to his will.

"We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the wise powers
Deny us for our good: so find we profit
By losing of our prayers."

As every blessing given to man is on the ground of the atonement, so every prayer should be offered in the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus is the password to the audience-chamber of God, and the key to the stores of grace. Prayer should be frequent, and at fixed times.

"Go when the morning shineth,
Go when the noon is bright,
Go when the eve declineth,
Go in the hush of night:
Go with pure heart and feeling,
Cast earthly cares away,
And, in thy closet kneeling,
Do thou in secret pray."

"There is proof enough," says Dr. James Hamilton, "that no multitude of suppliants can distract Him, and no magnitude of their requests exhaust Him. There is proof enough

that if any prayer be unanswered, it is not because the offerer was too little, nor because he asked too much." God has promised to answer prayer; therefore we should pray in faith, expecting to receive. "The man who cultivates a devotional spirit," says M'Cosh, "is like the earth in its orbit, guided by a central power and illuminated by a central light, and carrying everywhere a circumambient atmosphere with a life-giving and refreshing influence." "A life of prayer," says Henry Ware, Jr., "is the life of heaven." Caroline Fry says, "I never asked a petition of God that sooner or later I did not obtain."

> "Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream
> Of glory on the consecrated hour
> Of man in audience with the Deity."

"I never prayed sincerely and earnestly for any thing," says Dr. Judson, "but it came—at some time—no matter at how distant a day—somehow, in some shape—probably the last I should have devised—it came." Bishop Reynolds says, "There is a kind of omnipotence in prayer. It hath loosed iron chains. It hath opened iron gates. It hath unlocked the windows of heaven. It hath broken the bars of death. Satan hath three titles given him in Scripture

setting forth his malignity against the Church of God: a lion, to note his strength; a dragon, to note his malice; a serpent, to note his subtilty. But none of these can stand before prayer. The greatest malice, the malice of Haman, sinks under the prayer of Esther: the deepest policy, the counsel of Ahithophel, withers before the prayer of David; and the highest army, a host of a thousand thousand Ethiopians, run away like cowards before the prayer of Asa." Fasting is a means of grace. "Those who neglect, and those who pour contempt upon the duty of fasting," says Edmondson, "would do well to consult even the practice of heathens. Their austerities, though carried to excess, put those professing Christians to shame, who, perhaps, never observed a religious fast in their lives. No excuse can be made for the man who pours contempt upon this duty. It is probable that he is under the influence of infidelity and other vile principles: it is certain that his sneers are at variance with the practice of the wisest and best of men of all ages and nations. The advantages of fasting or abstinence are many. By this salutary practice the flesh is mortified; corruptions are weakened; health is promoted; the mental faculties are improved; indolence is checked; the poor are

relieved; divine judgments are averted; choice blessings are brought down from heaven; and on account of its usefulness it is pleasing to God. If we have neglected it till now, it is high time to begin in good earnest: but let prudence be our guide. Some virtues, and this among the rest, may be carried so far as to become vices; and, in my opinion, when men injure their health and unfit themselves for the duties of life by fasting, it becomes sin." The most devoted saints are much given to the practice of fasting. It form a part of the crucifixion of self, and a prominent means of keeping the body under, and bringing it into subjection. It is probable that there are habits and tempers and lusts and dispositions in some persons that cannot be overcome but by fasting and prayer. "This kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer."

Fellowship with the Church of Christ is a means of grace, and an important duty, and a precious privilege of Christians. To unite with the Church of Jesus Christ is the obvious duty of every professing Christian. It has always been so considered by the pious and holy, and the inner consciousness feels it to be a duty. The Church is the institution of God, and designed to protect and benefit all his people. He who

refuses or neglects to join the Church, in so far resists the will and the ordinance of God, and is therefore guilty. He that remains out of the Church, thinking to prove himself and test his ability to stand firm first, and then to join it, acts unwisely and injuriously. He goes unarmed to battle, and stands singly and alone, without the instruction, disciplinary training, support, and protection of the army and its officers, to fight against the combined forces of earth and hell, marshalled under a leader with the experience of six thousand years in the war; and he thinks to join the army after meeting the enemy and proving himself able to stand alone. How foolish! Pride is at the bottom of it. Pride goeth before destruction. It is at the time of conversion, and just subsequent to it, more than at any other period, that the Christian needs the sympathy, and assistance, and counsel, and support which the Church only can give. He is then a babe in Christ, and if separated from the Church, his mother, he will most likely die; or should he live, he will grow up slowly, be a sickly and feeble child, become a diseased and badly developed man, require the constant and diligent and patient care of the Church to keep him alive, and by his poor appearance and

sufferings will injure the cause of Christ. He is then a babe in Christ, and should be carried in the bosom of the Church, his mother, who can nourish him with the sincere milk of the word, and sympathize with him in his weakness, and protect him in danger, and instruct and train him for usefulness, and develop his powers, that by his mother's side he may grow, and become strong, and reach the full development of a perfect man in Christ. But by fellowship with the Church, more is meant than simply joining it. Fellowship is familiar intercourse: it is a walking together in intimate communion and friendship: it is the companionship of loving spirits. In this sense every Christian should seek fellowship with the Church. He needs the sympathy, the love, the instruction, the advice, the reproof, the prayers, the conversation of the pious. He cannot easily dispense with these. He must have them. He must seek them. He must cultivate the proper spirit to secure and to receive them.

"I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode,
The Church our bless'd Redeemer bought
With his own precious blood.
Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise."

The holy sacraments are means of grace. Baptism is not to be neglected, as though it were merely a form and a ceremony. It is nothing more than this to the adult who does not believe in Jesus Christ and repent of his sins; but to the humble penitent and the sincere believer in Jesus it is a means of grace, a channel of spiritual influences, and a medium of divine blessing. He who, not having received the ordinance of baptism, refuses or neglects to receive it, does wrong. It is the ordinance of God.

The Lord's Supper is a lovely service, connected with sad, solemn, and touching associations. It was instituted by our Lord himself, on the evening before his crucifixion, and but a few moments previous to his agony in the garden: it was instituted while the weight of a guilty world was beginning to press upon him: it was instituted in immediate prospect of his betrayal by Judas, his being forsaken by his followers, his trial at Pilate's bar, his scourging, his crown of thorns, his bloody cross, and his ignominious death. To a supper instituted as a memorial of these things, Christ invites his disciples; and leaves as his dying command that they often do this in remembrance of him. Who could refuse to obey a command like this?

"Bow thee to earth, and from thee cast
All stubbornness of human will:
Then dare to drink the sacred cup
Thy God and Saviour died to fill.
Come with thy guilt new-washed in tears,
Thy spirit raised in faith above:
Then drink, and so thy soul shall live,
Thy Saviour's blood—thy Saviour's love."

Blessed privilege! How near we draw to Gethsemane and to Calvary while around the sacramental board! How close we get to the Saviour's cross while we take the bread and wine! How right beneath the bleeding wounds of Jesus our hearts lie while we eat the holy supper! How like the communion of the saints above! What blessed sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!

"For say, can fancy, fond to weave the tale
Of bliss ideal, feign more genuine joy
Than thine, Believer, when the man of God
Gives to thy hand the consecrated cup,
Blessed memorial of a Saviour's love?
Glowing with holy zeal the humble penitent
Approacheth: Faith her fostering radiance points
Full on his contrite heart: Hope cheers his steps;
And Charity, the fairest of the train
Of Christian virtues, swells his heaving breast
With love unbounded."

The public worship of God in the house of God, and with the great congregation, is a means of grace. The house of God is the place where God has promised specially to meet and bless his

people. "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee and bless thee." "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is a sure mark of religious declension when Christians willingly absent themselves from the house of God. The assembling of themselves together is not neglected when the heart is warm with love and full of joyful hope.

———"Some there are
Who hold it meet to linger now at home,
And some o'er fields and the wide hills to roam,
And worship in the temple of the air!
For me, not heedless of the lone address,
Nor slack to meet my Saviour on the height,
By wood or living stream; yet not the less
Seek I his presence in each social rite
Of His own temple: *that* He deigns to bless,
There still He dwells, and that is my delight."

But the Christian must not only attend upon the public worship of God, he must also engage in its exercises. He must hear the word meekly, and prayerfully, and attentively. The house of God is a house of prayer; and he must join the public prayer with the spirit of earnestness and true devotion; and, if selected for that purpose, must lead the public prayer in all simplicity and humility. He must join the voice of singing, and offer public praise to God. "Sing praises

to God, sing praises." "If any individual has no voice for speech and song, and can acquire none, he, and he alone, is allowed always to be a silent worshipper; for where nothing is given, nothing is required. Even such a one, however, is bound to yield the homage of the heart in relation to the exercises, for the duty is absolutely universal."

Meditation is a means of grace. "Meditation is more than reading, it is pondering: it is somewhat more than studying, for this means simply knowing; whereas meditation means revolving what we *do* know, to apply it to the purposes for which it is communicated." "If you are in trouble, meditate on those abundant topics of consolation which are presented in the word of God: if burdened with a sense of guilt, on the mediatorial work of Christ: if rejoicing in the assurance of hope, upon the warnings against spiritual pride: if in prosperity and wealth, upon the unsatisfying and uncertain nature of riches: if tempted, upon the evil of sin, and the consequences of committing it, and also on the intercession, power, and grace of Christ: if afraid of death, upon the promise of Christ to meet you in the dark valley. It will always be profitable to let your meditations run in the channels of your condition."

CHAPTER IX.

PERSONAL* DUTIES CONTINUED.

THE Christian fears God. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, the sum of our duty, and the distinguishing characteristic of the righteous. It is not the superstitious dread of the ignorant heathen, nor the slavish fear of the wicked in times of great danger; but the fear of a child to offend its parent, and proceeds from reverence, humility and love. If we have only reverence, it will produce superstitious dread: if we have only reverence and humility, they will develop a slavish fear; but if reverence and humility be joined with love to God, there will arise a filial fear, a fear of displeasing God. In this sense the Christian fears God; and the more he grows in holiness, the more he fears God. He will be circumspect and careful in all things, lest he sin against his Heavenly Father in any matter. He dreads sin more than hell. He loves God, and therefore he fears to displease him. He

* Personal here refers to what belongs to the individual, as such.

considers the favor of God of infinitely more value than the whole universe, and therefore he would sooner part with life than lose that favor.

The Christian loves God. This he begins to do when the "love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," and he grows and increases in this holy affection, until he "loves God with all his heart," and realizes the blessedness of "perfect love." Dr. Tryon Edwards says, "Love is the first outgoing of the renewed soul to God: 'We love him, because he first loved us.' It is the evidence of a saving work of grace in the soul: 'The fruit of the Spirit is love.' It lies at the very foundation of Christian character: we are 'rooted and grounded in love.' It is the path in which all true children of God are found: they 'walk in love'—the bond of their mutual union: their hearts are 'knit together in love'—their protection in the spiritual warfare: they are to put on 'the breastplate of love'—the fullness and completeness of their Christian character: they are 'made perfect in love'—the spirit through which they may fulfil all the divine requirements; for 'love is the fulfilling of the law'—that by which they become like to their Father in heaven, and are fitted for his presence; for 'God is love,' and heaven is a world of love."

"If we love the Saviour," says Dr. Cumming, "the cross of Christ will be dearer to us than the crown of Cæsar; and any suffering will be sweet, rather than the sacrifice of what we believe to be his mind and will. The path that we tread, however rough, will feel smooth to him, and a wreath of thorns around his brow will be dearer than the brightest diadem: the commandments of Christ, however many, will not be grievous to him; and the cross of Christ, however heavy, will seem light to him. Love smooths the way, illuminates the cloud, and kindles in the midst of the darkest night the bright beams that are the dawn of a sun of glory that shall know no setting. To love the Saviour is to love all that the Saviour loves, alike the promise, the precept, the prophecy, the doctrine—all are loved because Christ is the substance of all, and these all bear his name and imprimatur." "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

The Christian trusts in God. "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength." "Without faith it is impossible to please him." By faith the penitent finds peace with God: by faith he walks with God: by faith he lives in the service of God: by faith he overcomes the world: by faith he resists

Satan, and quenches all the fiery darts of the adversary: by faith he triumphs over death. The Christian without faith is no Christian; for in the highest sense he is a believer, and Christianity makes unbelief a sin. Faith is the condition of acceptance with God, and of every religious enjoyment and blessing. There is no religion without faith; and no retaining of religion without faith; and no enjoying of religion without faith; and no religious improvement without faith; and no victory over sin and Satan and the world without faith. "Faith is the link," says Bridges, "in the chain of moral causes and effects that connects the helplessness of the creature with the omnipotence of the Creator, and encourages the creature to attempt every thing in the conscious ability to do nothing." Faith invests him who exercises it with the glorious attributes of God, and he becomes strong, because faith connects him with an omnipotent God; and wise, because faith connects him with the Spirit of all truth; and holy, because faith connects him with the All-holy. Little faith accomplishes but little, but great faith does great things. Eminent saints are persons of great faith. No difficulty is too great for faith. Mountains cannot stand before it. Faith laughs at impossibilities. "If thou

canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." "Lord, increase our faith." The Christian *denies* himself. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself."

> "Brave conquerors!—for so you are—
> That war against your own affections
> And the huge army of the world's desires."

Self has always been identified with opposition to God and to holiness. It was the hope of exalting self and gratifying self that led Satan to rebel against God: it was a similar hope that led so many angels to join in that rebellion: it was to gratify self that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit and fell: it was to please self that man has gone to war with his fellow-man: it is to please self, and gratify the passions of self, that every sin is committed. Self is opposed to God. The denial of self is identified with holiness and godliness. The boundless love of God, the sufferings of Christ, the mission of the Comforter, the ministry of angels, the missionary character of the Church, all teach that self must be laid aside, that self must be denied. "The aid of self-denial will be absolutely necessary in bodily gratifications; for as many of the passions arise from the temperature of the body, all unnecessary sensual enjoyments should be avoided with the greatest care."

The Christian *examines* himself. "Examine

yourselves whether ye be in the faith." We may have lost our first love, may be defective in our experience or practice, may be declining in spirituality, and yet know it not, because we do not examine ourselves. We naturally think too well of ourselves, are too lenient towards our own defects, are too blind to our own faults, and are in danger of self-deception. We should examine ourselves, therefore. We should examine ourselves often and thoroughly—our hearts and our lives. This examination should be conducted, not by comparing ourselves with others, but by a careful comparison with the Bible standard.

"Let not your eyes the sweets of slumber taste
Till keen, severe reflections you have passed
On the day's actions, thrice, from first to last:
What have I done? Wherein have I transgressed?
What virtue cherished and what vice repressed?
And if on search your actions ill you find,
Let grief—if good, let joy—possess your mind.
This do, this think: to this your heart incline:
This way will lead you to the life divine."

The Christian will cultivate a holy *watchfulness.* "If a tender and delicate tree flourish, it must enjoy the watchful care of the gardener." The Christian is in an enemy's land, and must therefore be always watchful. Satan goeth about, seeking whom he may devour. He may come suddenly upon us. He may steal upon us un-

awares. He may come as an angel of light. Our own hearts are deceitful above all things. The influence of associates and of circumstances may lead us astray. Opportunities of doing good may occur, and pass unnoticed, or find us unfitted for their improvement. Our deeds and our words need watching.

> "Up! 'tis no dreaming time! awake! awake!
> For He who sits on the high Judge's seat
> Doth in his record mark each wasted hour,
> Each idle word. Take heed thy shrinking soul
> Find not their weight too heavy, when it stands
> At that dread bar from whence is no appeal.
> Lo! while ye trifle, the light sand steals on,
> Leaving the hour-glass empty, and thy life
> Glideth away:—stamp wisdom on its hours."

A godly conversation is an important duty of Christian conduct. A Christian conversation is the evidence and result of deep inward piety: "Of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is connected with a holy life: "an upright walk and a godly conversation." It has a great influence on others: it is the "grace of the lips," and "ministers grace to the hearers." It is the mark of heavenly-mindedness, and is connected with the hope of salvation: "for our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." It will be greatly rewarded: "to him that ordereth his

conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." A godly conversation is opposed to idle words, to foolish talking and jesting, to backbiting and tale-bearing, to slandering, to railing, to brawling, to evil-speaking, to speaking evil of those in authority: "For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." "Cease that chaotic hubbub," says Carlyle, "wherein thy soul runs to waste, to suicidal dislocation and stupor: out of silence comes thy strength. 'Speech is silvern, silence is golden: speech is human, silence is divine.'" "I do not say that in all places, and under all circumstances, you should say, 'I am a Christian;' but if you are a child of God, or if the love of the Saviour has a place in your heart, and nestles there as something dearest and most beloved, it will give a quiet, subdued, and consistent tone to all you say and think and do, which will constrain the world to say there is an element within you which they do not possess, and show itself in your harmonious and consistent walk. The opportunity may occur in your contact with mankind, with the highest and the lowest, with the richest and the poorest, when a little quiet word may be dropped, which may be the turning-point of a soul's salvation—when a thought

may be insinuated which shall be a savor of life unto life—when a memento may be dropped, that shall be a living seed deposited in a prepared heart, and shall germinate and bring forth in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some a hundred fold." Blessed is he who living on earth has his conversation in heaven! He is doubly blessed, being a blessing to himself and to others, and angels are his companions. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." "The tongue of the wise is health."

The Christian remembers the Sabbath day to keep it holy. "The Sabbath was made for man." It has respect to a necessity of man's constitution. As at present constituted, we need rest one day in every seven. If we have not this amount of rest, the bodily powers become enfeebled and suffer—the mind is overtaxed and weakened, and the interests of the moral nature are lost sight of in the cares of this life. All this has been abundantly demonstrated time and again. The Sabbath is a mercy to man, and was designed for man. He needs it. God has reserved it for himself, and graciously given it to man for his day of rest and worship. This day is to be sacredly observed as a holy day. God has made it binding by the solemn enactment of divine law

At the creation he made the law: in the moral code of ten commandments he promulgated it: in the Jewish theocracy he gave it prominence, and sanctioned it with terrible judgments: in the Christian system he reäffirmed it among the laws of the moral code: it was explained by Christ, rendered more binding and glorious by his changing it to the day of his resurrection, as, being Lord of the Sabbath, he had all authority to do; and it was observed with all solemnity by the apostles and early Christians. The Sabbath is to be remembered all through the week, that nothing be in a situation, through neglect or otherwise, to require labor on the Sabbath, or to prevent our observing it properly, and that we may ourselves be in a proper frame of mind and outward condition to keep it holy to the Lord. The Sabbath is to be kept holy: no labor is to be done, save works strictly necessary, or of mercy, to those in actual distress or danger; and the day is to be spent in the worship of God. It is a fit time for the lovely exercises of the Sabbath-school, the public worship of God in the great congregation, the reading of the Scriptures, the offering up of praise and prayer, the work of holy meditation, and the sweet enjoyment of religious conversation. "If thou turn away thy foot from the

Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

CHAPTER X.

THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.

"Count life by virtues—these will last
When life's lame-footed race is o'er;
And these, when earthly joys are past,
Shall cheer us on a brighter shore."

MRS. S. J. HALE.

THERE are several virtues or graces without which the Christian character is not complete. Much of the loveliness of the Christian character is in these virtues. They are indeed graces, beautiful ornaments. They are the Christian's mark of character, by which he is distinguished from others: the ornaments with which he shines

forth as the chosen of God, and the child of the King Eternal: the media through which he reflects the glory of God: the means by which he reproves sin: the voices with which he preaches Christ everywhere; and the mystic charms with which he wins souls to God.

Add to your faith *virtue*. Virtue, when applied to a particular quality or moral excellence, signifies moral strength—that quality of mind which enables men to encounter danger and difficulties with firmness, or without fear or depression of spirits—moral courage. Courage is a virtue of great importance to the Christian. He has many duties to perform, many responsibilities and great, many dangers around him, many hindrances in his way, and many enemies set against him. If he be cowardly and fearful, he can neither go forward nor maintain his position.

> "Devote yourself to God, and you will find
> God fights the battles of a will resigned.
> Love Jesus. Love will no base fear endure:
> Love Jesus; and of conquest feel secure."

Have courage to resist temptation, to deny self, to forsake sin, to give up worldly fashions, to do your duty at all events, fearless of consequences, to meet trouble, to brave persecution, to bear reproach, to forgive an injury, to pray for an enemy,

to reprove a friend, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the poor, to attend the sick, to encourage the widow and orphan, to entertain strangers, to give up the society of the wicked, and to win souls to Christ. True it is,

> "The strength of man sinks in the hour of trial:
> But there doth live a Power, that to the battle
> Girdeth the weak."

Temperance is a virtue not possessed in its full sense by many. Temperance is sober-mindedness in all things. It has respect to *eating*. "Strict temperance in the use of food is absolutely necessary in the government of the body. The design of food is the preservation of health and strength; and he who takes more than is necessary to promote this design is intemperate. We cannot fix one standard for all men, either as to the quantity or quality of food; but every man who consults his own constitution, may easily judge what is fit for himself." Addison says, "When I behold a full table set out in all its magnificence, I fancy I see gout and stone, cholic, fevers, and lethargies, lying in ambuscade among the dishes." It has respect to *drinking*. In drinking alcoholic liquors, regard should be had to the fact that they are not designed nor suitable for common beverages. The best medical and chemical au-

thorities say they are not only not necessary, but positively injurious to the system when in a healthy state. This is as true as any deduction of science and experience can be, and is now beyond a question. They should, therefore, be taken not otherwise than as a medicine, with all due caution and prudence.

> "Thou sparkling bowl! thou sparkling bowl!
> Though lips of bards thy brim may press,
> And eyes of beauty o'er thee roll,
> And song and dance thy power confess—
> I will not touch thee; for there clings
> A scorpion to thy side that stings."

It has respect to the *gratification of the senses and passions.* The senses and passions are to be kept within due bounds. The body is to be kept under. It has respect to the *pursuits.* While men should be "diligent in business," they should not become intemperate in any pursuit. Intemperance in any pursuit leads to the neglect of other duties, the overtaxing of the powers, the forcing of the mind too far in one direction, to the neglect of the proper development of all its faculties, and running into temptations and snares. "Young men exhort to be sober-minded."

Patience occupies a prominent position among the Christian graces. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire,

wanting nothing." The Christian is not generally taken up to heaven immediately after conversion. He is left still on earth, sometimes for many years, that his religion may be tried and proved, that his sanctification may advance, and that he may abound in usefulness to others. He is left on earth a pilgrim and a stranger and an exile and a laborer, and a sufferer amidst enemies and dangers and trials, and sorrows and difficulties and discouragements great and many. If he is not careful, therefore, to cultivate a cheerful and patient spirit, he will grow weary and faint, and complain, and wish to die. God knows just what is best for us at every moment, and loves us so as to send it in such measure and in such manner as is best; and he knows just when is best for us to die, and how long is best for us to live, and will order these things aright. He will not send one pain too many, nor allow it to remain a moment too long. He will not send death a moment too soon, nor a moment too late. "Wait upon the Lord, wait I say upon the Lord. Wait on the Lord: trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass, and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday."

Resignation is connected with patience. "The

soul truly loves the arrangements of God, whatever they may be. In regard to whatever is now, and whatever shall be hereafter, its language is, 'Thy will be done.'" No affliction, no suffering can come, but as God sends it; and he sends it, when it comes, because it is the best he could send under the circumstances. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Some of the sweetest songs which the Christian will sing in heaven, next to the song of redeeming love, will be songs of praise to God for those very things that we call afflictions now. Every event of providence is a mercy and a blessing to the Christian, whether he consider it such or not. God is love. Fénélon says, "I glory in my infirmities and the misfortunes of my life, because they serve to cure my mistakes concerning the world and myself. I ought to think myself happy that his merciful afflictions have reduced me to extremities; since therein I shall receive of his strength, I shall be hid under his wings, and environed with that special protection which he extends to his devout children who have no dependence but on him."

"I praise Thee for sorrow, for sickness, for care—
For the thorns I have gathered, the anguish I bear—
For my nights of anxiety, watching, and tears:
A present of pain, a perspective of fears.

I praise Thee, I bless Thee, my King and my God,
For the good and the evil Thy hand has bestowed.
The flowers were sweet, but their fragrance is flown,
They left me no fruit, they are withered and gone:
The thorn it is poignant, but precious to me
As the message of mercy that led me to Thee."

Humility is one of the fairest of the virtues. 'Humility may be defined to be," says President Edwards, "a habit of mind and heart corresponding to our comparative unworthiness and vileness before God, or a sense of our own comparative meanness in his sight, with the disposition to a behavior answerable thereto." Humility is opposed to pride, and vanity, and haughtiness, and scornfulness, and arrogance, and boasting. Humility inclines a person to acknowledge heartily and freely his meanness or littleness before God; to be distrustful of himself, and to depend only on God; to renounce all the glory of the good he has or does, and to give it all to God; to subject himself wholly to God. Humility prevents an ambitious and aspiring behavior amongst men; an ostentatious behavior; an arrogant and assuming behavior; a haughty and scornful behavior; a wilful and stubborn behavior; a disposition to underrate others; a self-justifying behavior. "We have no instance," says Bethune, "of great faith unaccompanied by great humility." "Hu-

mility is a most essential and distinguishing trait in all true piety. It is the attendant of every grace, and in a peculiar manner tends to the purity of Christian feeling. It is the ornament of the spirit; the source of some of the sweetest exercises of Christian experience; the most acceptable sacrifice we can offer to God; the subject of the richest of his promises; the spirit with which he will dwell on earth, and which he will crown with glory hereafter." He that is without humility is without God, for his delight is in the lowly, and his blessing is upon the poor in spirit. He that is not low in his own estimation cannot be high in the favor of God. He that exalteth himself in his own eyes, is hateful in the sight of God; but whoso humbleth himself, God will exalt him, and lift him up for ever. The humble dwell in glory, and are made kings and priests unto God for ever, but the proud are cast down to hell. Lay thyself at the foot of the cross, and dwell beneath its shadow, that thou mayst receive a crown of glory, fadeless and eternal, and dwell amid the excellent glory for ever. Better be humble on earth, and exalted for ever, than proud on earth, and condemned and miserable through eternity. At his best, what is man? Look at the grave, and answer!

Look at God, and answer! Look at eternity, and answer! Look at the cross, and answer! Say, thou tempest-tossed and stricken and sorrowing one, what is man? Say, thou dying mortal, bidding adieu to life, and its scenes and associations, what is man? Say, thou redeemed and blest spirit, what is man? Say, thou spirit, withered and lost for ever, what is man? Man at his best state is but vanity, and less than vanity.

Meekness forms a part of the cluster of Christian virtues. As commonly used, and as we use it, it includes and implies gentleness, forbearance, long-suffering, and forgiveness of injuries. "Blessed are the meek." "He will beautify the meek with salvation." "The fruit of the Spirit is long-suffering, gentleness, meekness." "How often shall my brother trespass against me in a day, and I forgive him? Until seven times? I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven." "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat." These are the lessons of the Bible, and commended by the example of Christ, and of his early disciples, and inspired by

the spirit of our holy religion; and we have no better to give. Our holy Christianity shines out never so beautifully as when it exhibits, in practical life, the gentleness and forbearance and forgiveness of the gospel. We must exercise a strong confidence in the providence of God, and his protecting care, for he has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." Therefore, if "thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Great are the promises of God to those who conduct themselves in all meekness and gentleness: If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye, "for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Charity is the crowning grace. The original word should be rendered "love." James says, "But of what love does the apostle speak? Evidently not of the love of God, as the exercises of it prove; nor of love to our brethren in Christ exclusively, because the acts of it, as described

in the chapter, are as incumbent upon us in reference to the wicked as to the righteous—it is love *to all men*, whether righteous or wicked, friends or foes. It is the same as love to our neighbor: it is, in short, that benevolent disposition or kindness which consists in good-will to all creatures, and which leads us, as we have opportunity, to promote their happiness. God is love, and this is his likeness." St. Clement, one of the early Christian fathers, says, "The height to which charity leads is inexpressible. Charity unites us to God: charity covers the multitude of sins: charity endures all things, is long-suffering in all things. There is nothing base and sordid in charity: charity lifts not itself above others; admits of no divisions; is not seditious; but does all things in peace and concord. By charity were all the elect of God made perfect: without it nothing is pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God. Through charity did the Lord join us to himself; whilst, for the love that he bore towards us, our Lord Jesus Christ gave his own blood for us by the will of God—his flesh for our flesh—his soul for our souls. Ye see, beloved, how great and wonderful a thing charity is; and how that no expressions are sufficient to declare its perfection." "Now abideth faith,

hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

"With such bright guests the Christian mind is stored,
Pledges of truest knowledge, joy, and peace."

CHAPTER XI.

RELATIVE DUTIES—THE CHURCH.

"I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrines and whose life,
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause."—COWPER.

WE take it for granted that the true Christian will at once connect himself with some branch of the Church of Christ. There are various duties growing out of this relationship, some of which we desire to notice. The Christian will *love his pastor*, and conduct himself with the utmost respect and kindness towards him, and be ever ready to manifest his sympathy for him. The pastor is the representative of Jesus Christ, who is the great Shepherd of the sheep, and as such must have the love and respect of his members. The pastor at the call of God leaves

family, and relatives, and friends, and home, and houses, and lands, and worldly hopes; encounters hardships and labors; assumes great responsibilities; and devotes himself and his time for the welfare of the people of God. He is with them in sickness, comforts them in trouble, weeps with them in adversity, rejoices with them in prosperity, baptizes their children, marries them, stands by them in dying, preaches their funeral discourses, and passes in and out before them as a ministering angel. He therefore deserves and needs all the sympathy and kindness and love of his members. Every kind word and deed and look is an encouragement to him, and imparts cheerfulness and strength to his heart. The true Christian will attend regularly upon the ministrations of his pastor. After the pastor has sacrificed almost every earthly consideration in order to serve his interests—after he has studied long and hard in order to supply him with suitable instruction, encouragement, and warning—after he has struggled hard in prayers and tears with God for his blessing upon his labors, is it not wrong for him to defeat all and discourage his pastor by his absence at the hour of worship? The true Christian will coöperate with his pastor in his plans and efforts to do

good and advance the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom among men. Many a pastor has been driven into despair, coldness, and dulness by the indifference of his members to his urgent pleadings for coöperation. The Christian will pray for his pastor. Paul said, "Brethren, pray for us." If Paul needed the prayers of the faithful, how much more those pastors who make no claim to the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit! Pray for your pastor, and you will become interested in him, and God will bless his labors to your soul. Cultivate an acquaintance with him; and, above all, avoid a cold or affected behavior towards him. Make him easy in your presence, and in your house. Let him understand fully your religious experience, that he may know how to instruct you and preach to you. Never listen to or take up vague reports about him. Let his character and reputation be sacred to you. If any thing appears wrong, tell it to him in all meekness and love, and the blessing of the Chief Pastor will be with you. The good Christian will choose his brethren of the Church of Christ as his companions and friends, and will cultivate an intimate and abiding affection for them. They are his *brethren*, of the same family, the same Father, the same Elder Brother, the

same Comforter, the same mother, the same journey, the same trials, the same enemies, the same dangers, the same hopes, the same home. In Jesus Christ they are *one;* in the Church they are *one;* in the world they are *one;* and in heaven they will be *one* for ever. They will therefore love one another. David says, "I am a companion of them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." Christ says, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another." Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, says that when the "beloved disciple," St. John, became so old and enfeebled as to be unable to walk to the place of worship, or preach when there, he was carried and set down, and he every Sabbath repeated to them, "My little children, love one another." This command seems to have been sanctified doubly, and gloriously honored as the one command so prominently before the mind of Jesus about the time of his death, so frequently urged by his apostles, and so touchingly repeated from Sabbath to Sabbath in the assemblies of the saints by the beloved disciple and last surviving apostle of Christ. This love is no mere denominational affection, the offspring of bigotry and sectarian exclusiveness; nor is it a love of certain persons only, who are Christians. It is

as broad as the love of Christ, and embraces all who wear the name of Jesus in their hearts. "God forbid that the time should ever come *when* we shall be so cramped by a headless and heartless bigotry, destitute alike of thought or feeling, that we can see no good beyond our narrow domicil, and have no emotions of brotherly kindness for those of another fold." The good soldier loves his country and his country's cause and his country's army, and every soldier who belongs to that army, no matter to what division or to what department of the army he is attached. The good Christian cannot surely do less.

The Christian will love not in word only, but also in deed and in truth. He will seek opportunities of befriending in every way those who bear his Saviour's name and his Father's image. If they be poor, he will help them; if naked, he will clothe them; if sick, he will visit them; if in trouble, he will relieve them; if persecuted, he will encourage them; if in distress, he will comfort them; if defamed, he will defend them; if dying, he will stand beside them; if dead, he will bury them; if they leave widows and orphans, he will visit and provide for them. How shall we feel in that upper world when

Jesus shall mention our feeble acts of kindness to his saints, and say, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my disciples, ye did it unto me?" What can we do, O blessed Lord, for thee? The Christian will give liberally and cheerfully and prayerfully to the support of the institutions and enterprises of the Church. We owe every thing we have, and all that we are, to the mercy of God. We are his stewards, intrusted with health and strength and minds to labor for the promotion of his glory and the spread of his gospel, and with property to give liberally to his cause. We owe every civil and religious and social privilege and advantage to the Church of Christ and his gospel. But for Christianity, we should be in the darkness and barbarism of savage heathenism, or under a despotic government, with a million of soldiers amongst us to hold fast the chains of slavery and oppressive tyranny. Christianity confers the greatest of all blessings, and with it gives all other blessings; and at the same time it is to the individual the cheapest form of religion known amongst men. There can be no religion that does not cost something. There is not an existing form of religion that is not more costly to the individual than Christianity. The

"treasury" and the "temple" go together necessarily. When a man gives himself to Christ, he gives his property, his all; and if he in after life withholds his money from the cause of Christ, he thereby recalls his consecration vows, and refuses to carry out his own voluntary and solemn engagements with God. What an awful thought! No wonder those who are illiberal and narrow-hearted towards the cause of Christ, are always barren and lukewarm in the service of God. God hath said, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Shall the measure of spiritual influences, of divine grace, of religious enjoyments and privileges, be the same as the measure of our benevolence towards the poor and liberality towards the cause of Christ? Shall God's liberality towards us be in proportion to our liberality to his Church? Then many are in a miserable state. It is a blessed privilege to give our money to advance the cause of Him who gave his life for us. It is lending our money to God, whose rate of interest is in this life a hundred fold, and in the world to come eternal life. It is pouring out water, that is gathered up, increased, and poured back in heavenly streams upon the heart. It is more blessed to give than to receive. It blesseth the heart when

we give; it blesseth those who receive; and it comes back anon to bless the giver again.

The Christian will employ his time and talents to the utmost of his ability, and to the full extent of their capacity, in doing good in the Church and out of it. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." Everywhere around us "the fields are already white unto the harvest." Thousands, millions are dying, rapidly passing to the decisions of the judgment-seat of Christ. They are dying at our side, from our circles of friendship, in our families, all about us. Shall we calmly see them die, and put forth no effort to save them from hell, or cheer them on their way to heaven? Shall we look on unmoved and then pass unconcerned about our business affairs, while our friends and neighbors, and the millions of other lands, are sinking to hell? Have we no love to the Saviour who died for them? Have we no sympathy, no feeling, no pity for them? Have we no prayers to offer up day and night for their salvation? Have we no words to speak to their hearts, no simple language of persuasion and warning and entreaty and invitation? Have we no story of the cross and its Victim to tell them? Have we no Bible to read to them? Have we

no tracts to put into their hands? Have we no religious books to give or lend them? Have we no Sabbath-schools where we can labor for souls? Have we no prayer-meetings to which we can carry them? Does not the voice of God cry to you, "My son, go work to-day in my vineyard?" What shall we answer at the judgment? But the millennium, when will it come? Not until the members of the Church learn that there is work for them to do, that they have their field of labor, that they have a sphere of usefulness, as well as ministers and missionaries.

> "When shall the voice of singing
> Flow joyfully along,
> When hill and valley ringing,
> Join one triumphant song?"

Never! never, while Christians are idle in the service of God! True, the work is God's: it is the Church's also. God does the work, but he works through the Church. God gives the plentiful harvest, but not to the idle farmer. God gives success to the diligent and industrious. God has promised to convert the world, but he has promised to do it through the Church, and the Church is made up of moral agents. The Church is the light of the world, and if the Church does not let her light shine, the world

has no light. The Church is responsible for the effort, the result is with God. The result is pledged to the effort. It is for us to work, regularly, constantly, everywhere, at all times, while life lasts, and for God to give success. If the effort be properly made, success will come. When the *whole* Church shall rise up and go to work, *each in his own place, according to his own ability*, and with faith in God, the millennium will come.

"*Then* shall these tidings roll
The spacious earth around,
And every tribe and every soul
Receive the joyful sound.
Then shall the wanderers meet,
Who now in darkness rove,
And gathered round Immanuel's feet
Sing of his saving love."

CHAPTER XII.

RELATIVE DUTIES—THE FAMILY.

"Around each pure domestic shrine
Bright flowers of Eden bloom and twine:
Our hearths are altars all:
The prayers of hungry souls and poor,
Like armed angels at the door,
Our unseen foes appal." KEBLE.

FAMILY government is an important duty. It cannot easily be over-estimated. It is the first and highest of all human governments. God has placed it next after his throne. "We believe that much of the evil and wide-wasting crime with which the world is cursed, may be traced to the wretched system of government which obtains in so large a portion of the families of the country; and it is our conviction that a reform, to be efficient and extensive, must begin here. All schemes for improvement and reformation which do not begin here, must succeed very partially, because they have neglected the foundation." The government of the family should be affectionate, but firm. If there is no affection manifested by those governing, there may be fear

in the governed, but not love; and that worst of all family evils, the absence of affection, will be the result. If there is no firmness in family government, if rules and regulations are not observed, if threatened penalties are not inflicted, there is no longer any efficiency in the control of the family, and no respect for the authority of the governing party. Let there be rules—let there be a government; and let it be administered in love, and with firmness. Let the government inspire *respect* and *love*. In the government of the family, all the members should unite each in his position and sphere. The husband and wife constitute together the head of the family, and the husband is the head of the wife. To them together belongs the duty of governing and ordering the whole household. In this work they should be united and agreed. When present, the husband should take the lead, but with the coöperation of the wife; and in his absence she should supply his place. In their government no difference of views should be discovered to the family. They must love each other; sympathize with each other; confer with each other with respect to all their affairs; and present the example of mutual love, agreement, forbearance, self-sacrifice for the other's good, and deference

to the other's wishes. The wife must obey the husband when his commands are not contrary to the law of God. But between husband and wife there should be such love and deference to the other's will as to require nothing that could be called obedience. Their conduct should be a loving and harmonious coöperation, without a jarring note. Each should be next after God in the affection of the other, and each should studiously strive by all means to please the other. Let the husband and the wife be one. God hath joined them together. Let them not separate themselves in feeling or in conduct. Let them manage prudently and industriously, that they may enjoy together a comfortable life, while they provide for those under their care without injuring others. They are under the highest obligations to provide for the comfort of the family, without damaging the comfort of others. Those families that live beyond their means are robbing other families, without intending any evil it may be, and without designing to do wrong it may be, but they do it. Years may pass away, perhaps, before it is seen to be so; but after hard strugglings to keep up and go on, a failure comes, and a dozen families suffer; or the head of the family keeps up until death removes him, and

then, when his affairs are settled up, his property does not meet his engagements by half, and many suffer in consequence.

If God has blessed the husband and wife with children, precious "olive-plants round about their table," their responsibilities are greatly increased. "Children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward." They are to receive the love of the parents without stint, and manifested in all their bearing towards them. Whatever pure love requires for them must be given. Love requires provision for their comfort in infancy, their discipline, training, correction, the development of their bodily powers and their mental faculties and their moral characters, their fitness for the labors and duties and trials of life, for the solemnities of dying, and for the glories of heaven. More than this a parent cannot do—less than this he dare not do. It is not wise for parents to spoil their children with indulgences, and the gratification of their childish notions, and the blind oversight of an ill-directed affection. It is not prudent for parents to hoard up wealth for their children, to the neglect of their minds and hearts. It is not best for parents to bring up their children so tenderly and guardedly that they are unfit for bodily labor or suffer-

ings, and unprepared for the hardships of life. It is not right for parents to train up their children with high notions, with proud distinctions, and with aristocratic feelings. Children should be well trained. Love requires it. God requires it. If chastisement is needed, it should be given. The bodily powers should be well and carefully developed, and the child so brought up as to be a man or woman of strength and health, fitted for labor and life, and prepared to continue the name and family in a healthy and noble race of beings. The mind should be carefully trained and stored with sound knowledge, and all its faculties well and proportionally developed, and favored with a liberal education. The heart of the child should not, by any means, be left to grow up with weeds and thorns and briars, and his soul to the evil seductions of Satan; but great and prayerful care should be exercised, to keep down the weeds, to dig up the thorns, to cast out the briars, and to dislodge Satan altogether from the heart, and to present it an offering to God, and train it for immortality. The child should at a very early age learn of God, the great Creator and Father, the sweet story of the Saviour's love, the duties of life, and the great truths of eternity. Let truth grow up in

the mind and heart of the child—it will some day lead him to Christ. Let truth grow up with him—it will lead to heaven. Children must respect and love their parents. The fact that they are their parents, apart from every other consideration, is sufficient to claim their highest respect and their warmest love. Nothing can release the child from the obligation to respect and love his parents; and no consideration whatever can excuse the want of love and respect for them. The child that is wanting in respect and love to a parent will never come to honor—the curse of God and of humanity rests upon him. He bears about him a mark that will brand him with disgrace wherever he goes. "Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing to the Lord." Jesus Christ was an example for all children. He was subject to his parents for thirty years—a subjection of the utmost respect and love and obedience. All through life he cared for and loved his mother with all tenderness after his reputed father was dead. In his dying moments, when he hung upon the cross with the weight of a guilty world resting upon him, he thought of his mother, and with nearly his last breath he made provision for

her comfort after his death. "Son, behold thy mother," said the dying Redeemer to John.

If there be servants in the family, they must be properly treated—not as brute beasts, but as human beings, with kind consideration. Every master is under obligation to provide well for the health and comfort of his servants, by giving a sufficiency of wholesome food, of good clothing, and of warm room, and of time for rest and sleep. He who does not this much deserves not the name of man, and is not worthy of being a master. Kindness should govern every member of the family in their conduct towards the servants. They are not dogs, nor mere automata without feeling; but human beings, capable of appreciating kindness and exercising gratitude for favors. The Sabbath belongs to the servant. God has reserved this day for himself, and has given it to the servant as his day of rest and religious worship. The master has no right to command the time of his servant on the Sabbath. God has expressly said, that on the Sabbath the servant shall rest, and do no work. It is as sinful to require labor of servants on the Sabbath, as it is for us to labor on that day. The same law prohibits both.

Religious instruction, and provision for religious worship, is the duty of the master to the servant. The time and labor of the servant belong to his master. He cannot, therefore, provide the means of religious instruction and worship for himself. It cannot be expected that he should do it. His master has his services, and must therefore make provision for his spiritual welfare. It is a duty growing out of his relation to his servants. God will hold him to account for his neglect of this duty. Let him carefully and regularly instruct them in the Scriptures, and explain their meaning. Let him build them a place of worship, and employ a minister to preach the gospel to them; or, if not able to do this of himself, let him unite with other masters and do it.

Servants must respect and obey their masters in singleness of heart. "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things." "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God be not blasphemed." "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord."

Intimately connected with these duties is that of family religion. The head of every family, whether man or woman, or both united, should see that this great duty is attended to in the family. The Bible should be in every house, and in every room. It should be read and explained to the whole family. It should particularly be read in the hearing of every member of the family every morning and every night; and every member should unite in fervent prayer to Almighty God. A family without prayer! A family on whose doors the blood of sprinkling is not found! A family arising in health and peace and safety at morn, and giving no public thanks to God! A family retiring to rest at night, and offering no prayer to Heaven! A family with children growing up without the instructions of religion! A family with children growing up without hearing the prayers of their parents! No family altar! No place where family mercies are recognized, and family praise is given! No place where family duties are felt, and family prayer for aid is offered up! No place where family responsibilities are told, and prayer is made for family grace! No place where family cares are made known to God, and family blessings are desired! No place where family

afflictions are wept over, and supplication made for family strength to bear them well! No place where family sins are confessed, and family forgiveness asked! No place which lives as a green spot in the memory of children, when far away from the home of youth! No place which throws a chain around the heart, and binds that heart to God for ever! No place whose sacred influence reaches to the grave and leads the soul to heaven!

CHAPTER XIII.

RELATIVE DUTIES—SOCIETY.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—JESUS CHRIST.

THE Christian is in daily contact with others, and must so walk as to have a good report of them that are without. Religion is not to be confined to the heart, but exhibited in the outward conduct—not to be limited to Sabbaths, and sanctuaries, and family altars, but manifested everywhere by an upright walk and godly conversation—not to be shut up in cloisters, but shown openly before

the world. The influence of religion must be seen in the street and in the store, in the market and in the shop, in the office and on the court-green, among friends and with foes, among strangers and with acquaintances, when at home and when abroad, on the cars and in the boat, at the home of a friend and in the public-house. Religion should modify and sanctify our conduct everywhere and at all times—not with the sad and long-faced sanctimoniousness of the whining hypocrite, but with the cheerful piety of the heavenward pilgrim—not with the light and compromitting spirit of the careless professor, but with the Christian dignity of the true believer in Jesus—not with the gilded and secret dishonesty of the vile deceiver, but with the beautiful consistency of the upright Christian. There are certain principles which should regulate every man's conduct towards his fellow-man.

In all his dealings with others, the Christian must be governed by justice and honesty. He must "do justly" in all things. Justice has respect to the bodies of others. It requires that we harm them not, nor cause them to be harmed in any manner whatsoever. It has respect to their property. It requires that we neither oppress, nor defraud, nor cheat, nor overreach, nor

take advantage of them in any way; but that we make fair representations and give fair equivalents in all transactions. It has respect to the character and reputation. The good name of a man is more valuable than silver and gold. He who destroys another's reputation, or injures his character, is worse than the man who burns his barn or robs him of his money. The curse of God rests upon that man who slanders his neighbor. If the vengeance of God ever falls upon the head of an offender, it will fall with crushing weight upon the head of the slanderer. It has respect to obligations. "Pay that thou owest." "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another." It has respect to time. Time is money. To every industrious and diligent man, time is more precious than gold. It is unjust, therefore, to overtax the time of others in our service, or to rob them of time by a want of punctuality on our part. Justice requires us to do no injury to any one in any way, but to "do unto others as we would that they should do unto us." The Christian will go farther: he will "love mercy." It will be his delight to deal not only justly but also mercifully towards all men. The essential element of true religion is *love*. The

rule of Christian conduct is, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith." The law of holy example is, "going about doing good." God is love. His tender mercies are over all his works. He is merciful to the just and to the unjust. He sendeth his rain upon the evil and the good. "He fans the cheek of the sailor as he blasphemes his name." Jesus came from heaven and died for all men. While on earth, he went about doing good. The Spirit of God labors with untiring effort to win our hearts for God, and prepare our souls for heaven. Angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. The Christian is bound, therefore, by the most sacred obligations, to do good as far as he can. He should so live as to die lamented. The poor and hungry and naked should pause at his grave to weep: the afflicted and suffering and bereaved should go at eventide to drop a tear where his body lies: the widow and orphan should go on pilgrimage to his tomb and lay sweet flowers there: his very enemies should bless his memory. Every act of kindness and mercy and forgiveness, however small, should possess a charm and an attraction for him.

"No radiant pearl which crested fortune wears,
No gem that sparkling hangs from beauty's ears,
Not the bright stars which night's blue sky adorn,
Nor rising sun that gilds the vernal morn,
Shine with such lustre as the tear that breaks
For others' woe down virtue's lovely cheeks."

Such goodness is not only lovely—it is godlike. It blesseth all who partake of it, all who see it, all that hear of it, and him that doeth it. Mercy is laden with blessings. There is something refreshing to see it, something inspiring to hear of it, something of grateful joy to receive it, but something heavenly to exercise it.

——"It is twice blessed:
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

Merciful deeds are cherub spirits that gather around us in life's journey, and, ever smiling and ever singing, cheer us on our heavenward way. They come as bright-winged angels with joy-beaming countenances around our dying couch, and bear us company to glory. They entwine around our brow a fadeless wreath of immortal honor in the heavenly land. They are brilliant ornaments that shine for ever. They are stars in our crown of glory to be worn through eternity. They are more precious than diamonds, and more beautiful than flowers, and more valuable than gold, and more durable than time. Do good, and

thou shalt be rich. Do good, and thou shalt be happy. Do good, and thou shalt have true friends. Do good, and thou shalt have fame. Do good, and thou shalt live for ever. Do good, and thou shalt be like God. Thy good deeds will be so many stars in thy sky, and they will shine upon thee in thy darkness, and make thy nights to be light about thee. They will be so many reflecting media pouring full upon thy heart the warm and cheering beams of the Sun of righteousness, and letting in upon thy soul the glorious light of heaven

CHAPTER XIV.

RELATIVE DUTIES—CITIZENSHIP.

"When Antigonus and the Achæan States restored liberty to the Spartans, they could not enjoy or preserve it: the spirit of liberty was utterly extinct; for they were a corrupted people. The liberty of Rome could not be recovered by the death of Cæsar; for it had gone for ever with her virtuous manners."—TYTLER, *in his Universal History.*

THE Christian should feel a profound interest in the welfare of his country and the prosperity of its government, and do all in his power to pro-

mote the one and advance the other. Not that he should be a noisy partisan, or ambitious of public honors. He should be neither. It is greatly injurious to the cause of religion for its professors to be filled with party spirit, noisy about political questions, and contentious about matters of civil government. It is not the spirit of Christ. The Christian must imitate his Master, who quietly and meekly rendered "unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's." It is not for him to seek place and power in the government. If, however, in the providence of God, the people call upon him to serve them in public office, and he can conveniently do it, let him do it in the fear of God, and with an eye single to his glory. But let him take care that in procuring that office he use no improper means, nor allow his friends to employ any for him; otherwise, the office may be a curse to him, and he a curse to the people. "The sun should sooner turn from his course than" a Christian "from the path of honor." Should the Christian be placed in office and have a place among the rulers of the people, let him "govern in the fear of God," "judge righteously," without "respect of persons" and without "fear of the face of man," "defend the poor and fatherless,"

"do justice to the afflicted and needy," "deliver the poor and needy, and rid them out of the hand of the wicked," "execute righteousness and judgment," "do no violence to the stranger, fatherless, nor the widow," "not drink wine nor strong drink," "take no bribes, nor accept any present." Such is God's law with respect to those who rule. The Christian citizen should love his country, keep the "king's commandments," be "subject to the higher powers," not "resist the power," pay "tribute to whom tribute is due, honor to whom honor, and custom to whom custom;" offer to God "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority," and "not curse nor revile the ruler of his people." Thus has God marked out our duty as citizens. He cannot be a faithful Christian who does not make a good citizen. Obey the laws of your country: offer up your prayers for the divine blessing to rest upon it and its rulers: reverence and honor them who are appointed to rule over you. There is an evil in this land. It is the extent to which party prejudice controls the press and the popular expression with respect to public officers. Abuse is unsparingly heaped upon those who may be called to serve the people

in the offices of civil government. It is wrong. It is sinful. "Thou shalt not curse nor revile the ruler of thy people." Speaking "evil of dignities" is classed in Scripture with great sins. Let us beware. Let us cultivate the meekness and quietness and gentleness of the Christian character.

Finally, should the civil authority oppose in any way the law of God, the Christian citizen dare not hesitate to "obey God rather than man." All human authority comes from God. When that authority opposes him, it can be no longer any authority in the matter wherein it opposes him. A law contrary to God's law is therefore no law: it is from that fact null and void, and all the authority of earth combined cannot make it a law. The law of God is the great *constitution*, under which all human authority acts; and that authority can bind the conscience only when it acts in accordance with the constitution. Every law made by human authority contrary to the law of God is therefore unconstitutional, and binding on no one. To determine this, however, the plain and certain sense of the Bible must be taken, and not uncertain inferences and doubtful deductions. It is a serious matter to resist the authority of civil government, or violate the laws of

our country, and should never be done, save in a plain case, where there can be no doubt about the sense of the Bible. Uncertain inferences will not answer. The duty to resist must be very clear to justify so serious a step. It should never be done without the strongest conviction of solemn duty to God, and after much earnest prayer and careful seeking for light upon the subject. There is great need of Christian citizenship in every country. Religion is the best safeguard of a nation. God will destroy wicked nations as well as individuals, and as nations are not known as such in eternity, they are punished in this world. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember Egypt. Remember Carthage, and Greece, and Rome. When a nation resists all the efforts of God to elevate and purify and sanctify it, it has filled up the measure of its iniquity, and is taken away. When the wicked are many and the righteous are few in any nation, the angel of destruction pours upon it the vials of God's wrath, and it is destroyed, scattered and peeled by the vengeance of God. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." God will bear long with

a nation—will send warning after warning and judgment after judgment—will repent of the threatened evil if they repent of their sins and turn to him with full purpose of heart; but if they continue to provoke his wrath, he will visit them in anger and take away their very name from the earth. Where is Carthage? Where is Nineveh? Where is Babylon? Where are the nations who flourished a thousand years ago? Where are those who held dominion twenty centuries ago? The hollow echo of the buried and mouldering past answers, Where are they?

CHAPTER XV.

RELATIVE DUTIES—INFERIOR ANIMALS.

"The Angel of Mercy stoppeth not to comfort, but passeth by on the other side,
And hath no tear to shed, when a cruel man is damned." TUPPER.

THAT is a most deeply interesting account given by Moses in the Book of Genesis of the creation of man. God made him last of all his works, as his crowning work, the master of his works, and the lord of the animal creation. It is said in the

book of Psalms that God "made him a little lower than the angels." Moses says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him—male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." David says, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." Man has thus the whole animal creation placed under his dominion. He is not, however, without restraints upon the exercise of authority over them. God has placed him under his government, and holds him accountable for his conduct to his tribunal. He has fixed a day when he will judge the world by Jesus Christ, and when every man shall stand at his judgment-seat to give an account of himself to God. We may not, therefore, abuse the power and dominion that God has given us over the inferior animals. Of this, our stewardship, we must give an account to him, the Judge of

quick and dead. How important, then, that we be careful in our treatment of the inferior animals. They are dumb and cannot complain, but God is their watchful guardian, and records every act of unkindness to them. They are without the power to revenge their wrongs; but God has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." He will not spare the cruel. They can feel. "These poor animals just look and tremble, and give forth the same indications of suffering, that we do. Theirs is the distinct cry of pain. Theirs is the unequivocal physiognomy of pain. They put on the same aspect of terror on the demonstrations of a menacing blow. They exhibit the same distortions of agony after the infliction of it." They have no reasoning powers by which they can fortify themselves, and draw comfort in their wrongs. They have none of the hopes and consolations of religion, to give comfort in their sufferings. "There is but room in their mysterious economy for one inmate, and that is, the absorbing sense of their own single and concentrated anguish." They can, perhaps, derive no comfort from the sympathy and condolence of others; and if they could, there is seldom any to offer them to the injured animal. Theirs is an unmitigated and an unexplored depth and intensity of suffering.

How heartless must be the wretch who can inflict injury upon poor animals! "The righteous man regardeth the life of his beast; but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." God requires that the law of kindness and gentleness govern us in all our conduct towards the inferior animals. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." In this God has given us an example that we should imitate him, the source of all excellence. "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them." "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God." "These all wait upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season." "His tender mercies are over all his works." Let us therefore be careful to avoid all kinds of cruelty to the inferior animals; and let us act the part of the righteous, who regardeth the life of his beast; and imitate God, whose tender mercies are over all his works. Let love dwell in our hearts and reign there. Let mercy shine out in our lives. Let pity and compassion always move us. And let consistency unite all our acts together as a beautiful and harmonious whole.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

"Hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."—SOLOMON.

DEAR reader, we have passed together over the ground of religious duty, and now we are about to part company. Before we bid you adieu, permit us to ask, in all kindness and earnestness, Are you a Christian? This is an important matter—far more important than any worldly consideration can be. It is a matter that pertains not so much to the body as to the undying soul. It is not a matter that pertains so much to this life as to the great future beyond it. It is not a matter of life and of death merely, but also of *eternal* consequence. It affects you and me for ever. There is something startling, there is a thrilling interest in that word "*forever.*" It does not mean a day, nor a month, nor a year, nor an age, nor a million of ages; but is through endless ages still the same "*forever.*" It has no end. In view of it, time shrinks to an insignificant

point, and human life appears a dream! O how infinitely important that our "forever" be a blessed one! It will matter very little a hundred years hence whether we have been rich or poor, honored or unknown in this world. But our *eternal* happiness or misery will depend on whether we are Christians or sinners here. Heaven and hell are now before us which to choose, and death closes the time for choosing heaven. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "There is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." There is then no time to be wasted. Who sports now, sports with the grave open to receive him, and eternity before him. Death comes we know not when. It may be the next year, or to-morrow, or *to-day*. For aught we know, another day may introduce us to the society of angels in heaven, or the companionship of devils in hell. Fearful issue! We travel in the dark with pitfalls beneath our feet, and we know not at what step we shall fall to rise no more. We walk around the edge of a frightful precipice, with but one step between our path and the awful steep, and how soon we may take that step no one can tell. No one is expecting death when he makes his appearance. He enters some secret door, and approaches

when the face is averted, and the first warning is the icy touch of his cold hand. O if that hand were laid upon your heart *to-day*, if that skeleton reaper were to appear *now*, could you welcome him? Is your heart right with God? Does conscience whisper, All is well? Does the Bible approve your heart and your life? Does hope point with steady finger to the New Jerusalem? Does faith rest upon the cross of Christ, and lay hold upon the exceeding great and precious promises of God, and look for a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? If not, my dear reader, go—fly to Jesus Christ. His wounds for thee stand open wide Haste thee: the storm is gathering, the cloud is rising: it grows darker and darker still: the thunders begin to roar; the lightning flashes above you. Soon that storm will burst upon your head. Its darkness turned to the blackness of darkness will for ever surround you. Its thunderbolts will crush your spirit. Its lightnings will scath and peel your heart. And you will stand amid that eternal and pitiless storm a wretched and ruined spirit, undone for ever. Fly then to Jesus. The only leaf of the book of life on which your name may be written is not yet turned—to-morrow it may be: then haste to

the Saviour *now*. God has not yet set his seal to the sentence of destiny your conduct has written out for you; and you may change that sentence before the seal is placed upon it. *To-morrow* death may come, and God may take the great seal of eternity and stamp upon the sentence of damnation which your own actions have written out against your name in eternity, So be it, and so it will be for ever, unchanged and unchangeable. Go then at once to Jesus. Embrace Christianity. Believe its truths. Seek a matured religious experience. Obey from the heart all its requirements. Live on earth the life of heaven. Walk by faith. Live by faith. Live in the Spirit. Pray always. Abound in every good word and work. Be ready for death.

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect: be of one mind: live in peace; and the God of peace shall be with you. Amen.

THE END.

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