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PAPERS

FOR HOME READING.

BY THE

REV. JOHN HALL, D.D

PASTOR OF THE FIFTH AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

TEN years ago the churches in Ireland felt the influence of that revived religion which had already attracted notice in America. The result was seen in the fresh examination of many truths that had been accepted without inquiry so long as little interest was felt in them, and also in occasional divergence of earnest but imperfectly instructed people from the old paths.

At the same time the relations of the churches to the state, and to one another, became the topic of lively discussion; and it was easy to foresee the need of intelligence, self-reliance, and a definite policy at no remote future.

Impressed by these facts, the writer of the

following pages was led to issue a magazine for the discussion of purely moral and religious questions. Offers of pecuniary aid were declined, so that it might be wholly under his own control, for the examination of such subjects, and in such style, as were adapted to the times and the people addressed. The serial continues to render good public service under the able editorship of the Rev. T. Y. Killen, Belfast.

From the editorial contributions to its pages the following papers are selected, not because they possess any peculiarity of view or attraction of style—for in all of them adaptation to the readers was more thought of than literary finish—but because it is believed that there is yet room for such a volume, a chapter of which, complete in itself, could be read aloud in a family, or by an individual, in one of those brief intervals where a continuous work would not be entered upon.

The means of home-happiness; the perils from intemperance, mammon-worship, and neglect of the great salvation; the definite and saving truths of which Christ is the center; the facts of true religious experience; the future of the soul, and of the church; these are the topics touched upon, by no means exhaustively or ambitiously, but it is

hoped intelligibly to those who read and think upon such momentous affairs.

With the single exception of "How she kept the Fifth Commandment," which the editor of the *New York Ledger* thought likely to do good to his readers, and reprinted with acknowledgment of its source, none of these papers have appeared in America. They are meant to urge the common truth and the common interests without denominational peculiarity.

It is impossible, however, that they should be without traces of the region in which they were first issued, and the conditions of mind to which they were addressed; but the writer remembers with lively satisfaction how many of his countrymen in America will recognize these very features, and recall the memories of a land that can never be forgotten by its children.

The "Scotch-Irish"—to whom, had it not been presumptuous, he would gladly have dedicated the collection—have learnt to value Christian truth and duty; and the writer, glad to be identified with them, wishes no better reward than that some of them should say to their children, "These are the truths we learnt at home; may they ever guide you as American citizens."

It is only added, in conclusion, that ten years' study of the Bible and intercourse with men have not modified any of the views here presented, but rather deepened the conviction that for substance they are true, and vital to the best interests of men, on either side of the Atlantic.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

In issuing the sixth edition of "Papers for Home Reading," the publishers call attention to the three additional articles added to the volume.

They have been here reprinted through the courtesy of the editors of the "Intelligencer" and "Independent," in which papers they originally appeared.

NEW YORK, *May 1st*, 1873.

PAPERS

FOR HOME READING.

TEMPER AT HOME.

TO reside on a volcano-side, not well knowing but that you may be thrown up, or thrown down some early morning, is not pleasant to think of, though some do it, as the ramblers by Vesuvius and Etna will tell you. A few years ago a ship of war found the sea heaving in a most indecorous manner round her anchorage, and the town close by swinging about in a surprising way, till at length the throes of the scene ended in the upheaval of a few black patches of rock in the bay, and the sailors

began to fear that their ship might be left high and dry on the bare back of one of these baby-islands. Like unto these experiences, but in another way, is the life of many persons who *might* have very happy homes. There are smouldering volcanoes in the temper of father or mother, or other important member of the house, and the most trifling circumstances bring them into startling activity. As, when the carving knife at dinner is a little blunt and the gentleman sweeps off into a magnificent generalization to the timid occupant of the opposite chair: "Well, Jane, I never get a sharp knife in *this* house!" as if all other houses were furnished with the most perfect cutlery that never needed an edge, and as if she, the gentlest of wives, had purposely blunted that very knife just before dinner! Storms purify the outer air, but they desolate and destroy within the dwelling, and there are many storms short of tumbling the tea-things in a broken heap off the table, or leaving the family meal in a torrent of tears; storms of short fitful blasts, sharp, bitter words, ill-natured and re-

sentful reflections, tormenting and vexatious fault-finding that provokes children and servants to wrath; all which wise, not to say pious, Christian people, ought to watch, strive, and pray against, for their own, their children's, their neighbors' sakes, and above all for Christ's sake.

A handful of snow is a beautiful thing, soft, or sparkling, as the case may be, outside; but very damp and disagreeable by the fireside. And there are domestic snow-balls—soft as wool, or sparkling as gems outside—"pleasant-spoken, nice men;" who leave all that aside as they wipe their feet (if they do *that*), at their own door; and who become cheerless, cold, and depressing the moment their shadow falls on their own hearth. The poor mother instantly goes "on her good behaviour;" the children cease to be natural and put on their humble looks, the dog and cat retire to the corner farthest from *him* with an expression which, rightly interpreted, says plainly, "It's all up, now!" Surely this is the way to unmake happy homes. Come now, my dear friend, let me talk to you. If there

is a pleasant word in your mouth in the twenty-four hours, do say it to that hard-working woman whom you vowed to "cherish"—to *cherish,* mind, not only to provide for and all that, but to CHERISH. And those little boys and girls that are hungry for "petting" and affection from you, cannot you make out any little manly pleasantry for them? They are not culprits, of whom you are the jailor. Why, they are your own children, with young hearts in their bosoms, to whom HOME ought to be the dearest place, and father the best man in the whole world—"father," the name and the object by which their child's heart ought to climb up to the notion of our Father in heaven! If you had trouble and toil outside—as who has not? which gathered your brows and set your lips during the day, lay off the load when you lay off your coat, and let your presence make a little holiday in the dwelling. You are the strongest, most commanding person there—the husband or house-band knitting all together. Well, bind them together not with the cold hard grip of iron, but with the silken cords of human love. Brighten up; and

speak cheerily: very lean wit will be applauded in a good-humored circle: and your kindly speech will awaken kindly echoes all through the dwelling. Then the house will miss you when you are out, and every living thing in it will welcome your return. You will give a happy, healthy, lively tone to the whole circle, and save tears, time, and medical attendance.

It has been said that great men speak of things, little men of persons. Certainly gossipping, slander, and scandal are more likely to occur where persons are under discussion than on the other plan. There is a process of education constantly going on in any dwelling which care and thought can make an unspeakable advantage, and, at the same time, contribute to make a happy home. To keep objects of pure and high interest before the children's minds, in a natural and suitable way—to have them supplied with such books as will occupy and interest—to talk not so much *to* them as *with* them about objects—to take note of and encourage any advance they make, and to direct the flow not of a part of—

but of the *whole* of their life—physical, mental, moral, without apparent interference or violence; this happy art—to be sought, prayed for, labored for—under God's blessing goes far to make a happy home. Neither wealth nor high education is needed to do this. The tastes of children are naturally simple. Your child's wooden gun, cut with your own hand, perhaps, and made a link of connection between your little boy and you, may be more to him, more influential over his character, more potent in binding his heart to you while living, his memory to you, when you are dead, than a costly gift, that had nothing to say to *you*, but that you ordered it at the store. And when you, living a loving, natural life before your children, and with them, bend the knee in their midst and speak to God of them, and of yourself, and of the friends they know to be in joy or sorrow, there is a most blessed education going on—there is a powerful restraint being put on natural evil, there is a pleasant type of heaven where the whole family that is named after Jesus shall be gathered together

We would not willingly convey the impression that all the good feeling is to be on the side of the father, for much might be said to wives and others on the influence of temper and tone in making home happy. Meantime my fancy roams through dwellings into which I have peeped, into quiet "parlors" where the carpet is clean and not old, and the furniture polished and bright; into "rooms" where the chairs are deal and the floor carpetless; into "kitchens" where the family live, and the meals are cooked and eaten, and the boys and girls are as blithe as the sparrows in the thatch overhead, and I see that it is not so much wealth, nor learning, nor clothing, nor servants, nor toil, nor idleness, nor town, nor country, nor rank, nor station—as tone and temper that make life joyous or miserable, that render homes happy or wretched. And I see, too, that in town or country, in Ulster or Leinster, in Europe or America, God's grace and good sense make life what no teachers, or accomplishments, or means, or society, can make it, the opening stave of an everlasting psalm, the fair beginning of an

endless existence, the goodly, modest, well-proportioned vestibule to a temple of God's building, that shall never decay, wax old, or vanish away.

"THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN."

(A STUDY OF PROVERBS XXXI. 10–31.)

OF the two contributions to Inspired Writ from females, one is a song and the other an acrostic. Over the beaten foe and the headless general sang Deborah her song, after the manner of the time. And with true motherly care was Lemuel counselled, as you read in Prov. xxxi. 10–31, and the ideal of a true godly woman—true woman and true saint—sketched for him. And after the manner of Him who gave us the Bible, with its variety, human character, and life likeness, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, both the one and the other become good teachers, and their words are put here for our encourage-

ment and guidance. Not that modern matrons are to drive spikes into the heads of hostile leaders. That was according to the fashion of the time, as it was in Lemuel's days for them to buy flax and wool and manufacture them with their own fair hands. An intelligent reader of this beautiful ode will know how to distinguish between the outward and circumstantial which belongs to the time, and the real and essential which belongs to all time.

A sad puzzle has this "virtuous woman" been to many. "It is the Spouse of Christ," cries Ambrose; and the more sensible Augustine nearly agrees with him. "It is the Virgin Mary," says the Spaniard; though it requires a long attachment to Mariolatry to make out the resemblance to her whose bosom a sword was to pierce through, and whose husband was a carpenter. The truth is, this chapter is sorely controversial and decided against his system. Its "virtuous woman," whose price is above rubies, is not a lady abbess, nor a "Sister of Mercy," nor a recluse of any kind whatever, but a good, true wife, a pru-

dent mistress in her own house, and the mother of boys and girls who will rise up and call her blessed.

Asceticism has no place here. See this type of womanly worth among the common duties of daily life. Sensible, judicious, and painstaking, she fills her place adequately—nothing is forgotten or marred in the doing. Her husband's mind is at ease about her part of the business. He leaves his door with a light heart, for all will be right in his absence. He is strong abroad for he is happy at home; and when he returns, her words and ways are a continual feast. She is a blessing to him while she lives. He has no need to stoop to mean shifts and dishonest tricks to keep things going. The candle is not burning at both ends. While he is working, she is not wasting. "He shall have no need of spoil."

"Man must work," says our great poet. Why, she is as industrious as he is! Her skilful hands have deftly shapen the goodly garment and the costly ornament, and the produce of them is on his table. Early morn finds her at her post, and her domestics have

each a place and a work for the day, and each knows her work. As for the men-servants, that is his affair — she minds her maidens. Not that she cannot look outside her dwelling, for she has thorough sympathy with her husband in all things. There is a field just bordering their inheritance, and she hears it will soon be in the market. She keeps the thing to herself till the right time, and then proposes to her husband to buy it. But where is the money? She has a modest store, the quiet savings of years, and she sees where the balance of the price can be saved, and the glad husband buys the field. Pass by it in a few years, and it is turned into a smiling orchard, at once the ornament and the wealth of the place. But this does not interfere with her womanly tasks. Her hands ply the needle and cut the garments for her household. You may see the twinkle of her candle in the window by night, as she puts things in readiness for to-morrow's labors. No dignity is lost amid these mechanical home-toils. Did not Alexander the Great show with pride to the Persian princesses

the garments his queenly mother had made? Did not Augustus wear the clothes his own family had fashioned? Did not Lucretia spin among her maidens? And Catherine of Arragon and Catherine Parr, are not the works of their hands to be seen to this day? Could we not name the man, old and white-headed now, indeed, who went forth to fight the battle of life in a *toga virilis*, which, from the woo. to the wearing, was home-made? These were the natural employments of the olden time (when the wool was not Berlin, nor the needles crochet), that exercised the skill of tender maidens and of prudent matrons.

Is this a strong-minded, bustling woman, merely doing well for her family? No. Feminine energy without feminine softness is not lovely. But the virtuous woman has a breast to pity and a hand to help. To see her testing her merchandise—for she will do her own business, and not depend on others—you might think her hard. But follow her to the Dorcas Society, or, better still, at home on a forenoon, when the house has been settled up,

as she gives audience to her poor friends, and with gentle, clever wisdom, helps them with their little difficulties, and you shall see how soft she is to pity, and how skilful to aid and soothe. "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea she reacheth forth her hand to the needy." Hers is no stately munificence to be put in the newspapers, but gentle, timely, kindly charity, that wins the heart as it warms the limbs. For no one can charge her with ostentatious bountifulness, or sneer at her, and say that "charity begins at home." Her household are provided for. Winter may come when it pleases, for them. She has made timely provision for the snow, and can lay her hand on the ready warm clothing when it is wanted.

No wonder her servants love her. You might think her indeed severe and stern among them, for "she looketh well to the ways of her household;" and they are all the better and the happier for her oversight. There would be fewer bad servants if there were more good mistresses; and you might hear young girls say as they spoke of

her, "She was like a mother to me." She was firm, it is true; but she was never harsh. Her tongue spoke what her heart felt, and "the law of kindness ruled it." Hers was no mere impulse of good-nature. People had not to watch for the humor to ask the coveted favor. She was not "rough spoken, and uncertain, but a kindly creature at heart." The "law of kindness" was obeyed by her as much as the law of gravitation by the moon. Calm and quiet, gentle in manner and firm in duty, she rejoices in the hopes of the future. Hers is no sluggish and torpid life, buried in the cold narrow grave of the present. A light burns in her heart and kindles in her eye that throws its radiance over all the future—the rest of *her* life—the life of her children and her children's children; and away beyond these, that endless life whose joy and rest, believing, she can balance against the cares and sorrows of the world of duty.

Her bearing like her raiment befits her station. Her character is daily growing stronger, and habits of goodness are daily becoming fixed; her influence is daily extending, and it

is all for good. Her voice follows her husband along his path, and her smile remembered lights up his way. He is a stronger man for her—a "two-handed man," as the far-away Islanders called the married missionary; and any one who has eyes may know as he does his business on the Exchange, in the Bank, or the market that he is a well-to-do, comfortable, and prosperous man, who has a prudent helpmate at home, a strength and honor to her husband, a queen in her own domain, but to him at once a faithful counselor and a true ally: and when the bloom has gone from her cheek and the silver threads are all through her hair, her children rising up and feeling the value of her love and care, when, going away to their own battle of life they miss them, will bless her dear name; and her happy husband, as he hears of their prosperity, will say, "Under God's blessing they owe it all to their mother." She was not without beauty. Her step had grace, and her voice, as it is still, was soft and sweet; but not these now—not these, but love and gentleness, and meek wisdom, and self-denying energy have

been her womanly attractions, and have laid the foundations of her credit. "Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain;" how often has it fled before the small-pox! "But a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised."

Yes, that is the root of the whole matter. Describe a tree and you may begin at the thousand fibres that suck life from the soil and send it creeping upward by a thousand channels, and till it oozes out in buds and leaves, blossoms and blushing fruit; or you may begin with the glossy leaves and radiant blossoms, and go downward through spreading branches and stately stem till you come to the root again. The latter is the plan of Lemuel's mother, as she outlines this "tree of righteousness." The "fear of the Lord" in the heart—that is the root; and all this energy and tenderness, all this patient doing of duty, all this gentle and unselfish love, all this quiet, seemly, home-labor, all this occupying of the station that the Lord gave, are the true and proper development, the expression and manifestations, of that life kindled by God in the heart. "Who

can find a virtuous woman?" Who searches for her? Beauty, accomplishments, wealth, and connections—these are sought and found; but such quiet, unpretending goodness as this makes no sensation, creates no stir, attracts no common admirers. To be somebody in the gay world or—abominable ambition!—in the religious world; to dazzle or to charm the public eye; to overwhelm with splendor and magnificence: these are objects of common enough ambition to one sex, and of common enough attraction to the other. Not thus would Lemuel's mother have her son settled; and not thus will any wise woman, mother or daughter think of determining the future. "If woman would learn," says an old bishop, "what God will plague them for, let them learn the third chapter of Isaiah; and if they will learn what God willeth them to do, and be occupied withal, though they be of the best sort, let them read the last chapter of Proverbs."

"Thus," says Matthew Henry, "is shut up this looking-glass for ladies, which they are desired to open and dress themselves by;

and, if they do so, their adorning shall be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

HOW SHE KEPT THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

Y! you're a nice one to talk to me of being respectable! I'm disgracing you, am I? You were respectable! Your drunken father was glad I took you off his hands. You respectable!"

"Oh! George, have some feeling—if not for me, or yourself—for the children!"

"Feeling! Give me some money—let me have a good hand-over—and then talk to me of feeling. Where is the money?"

"George, I cannot give you more money. It would be sinful to ——."

"No cant—get me the money or I'll ——." And the half-mad brute raised his hand; but Millie put her arms round him with—"Dear

Father, don't, please don't;" and the poor heart-broken wife and mother glided from the room.

There was a painful contrast between the scene without and the scene within that pretty cottage. It was summer evening — the end of June. Standard roses sprung from the smooth, green turf, and geraniums in the richest bloom grew around. The little gravel-walk, bordered by the hedge of sweetbriar, was without a weed, and the briar-roses peeped out in rare beauty. All was as tranquil as an infant's sleep, and the dappled clouds overhead were as still as the green fields below. But there was no repose within those walls. There had been many a scene of sorrow and bitter mortification while Mrs. Lumsden lived in town. Many a time, as people came to do business, and saw how she screened the worthless sot to whom she was married, they wondered she bore as she did. But she had the strongest motive to effort. Her children must starve if her energy did not keep up the business. And she did keep it up, and her children were now growing

into womanhood. In the hope that the temptations might be less powerful, as they would be less frequent, she had taken this pleasant country spot, going in daily to the store, and trusting to the girls to amuse and occupy their father. But it was of no avail. Daily and nightly the same scenes of fury, violence, and sottishness were re-enacted. Money was borrowed; at first in pounds, then half-crowns, and then shillings, and many a poor man — for Mr. Lumsden was mean enough to borrow from even a laborer — lost his money rather than ask it from the suffering and struggling wife. Things had now become no longer endurable. First, threats, and then actual and repeated violence had been used to his wife. Promises had been made to Mr. Reid, her brother, and broken, or kept only in word; for when rum or brandy was not swallowed, mad intoxication was produced by spirits of wine, stolen out of his own store. Mr. Reid again interfered, after a scene such as we have just witnessed, and declared he should have him deprived of everything, if he did not take an allowance

— barely enough for a maintenance — and leave his wife and children, of whose life he was the dark shadow, and the home of which he was the curse. Mrs. Lumsden had no choice. It was a bitter grief to her. Many a sad talk she had with Millie — now so much a woman as to be companionable — about her duty in it, and many a vague fear lest she was putting away from her the cross her Heavenly Father ordained. But she had no choice. Mr. Reid took the responsibility — there was no other way to save them all. He probably knew more than even she did. He would not allow her to see him again: and so George Lumsden, the clever medical student, the brilliant tenor singer, the promising young physician, after breaking down as a doctor, and being set up again as a druggist and apothecary, now become mean, false, brutal, and helpless, is to have the means of life from his wife's honest toil, on condition that he keep out of the kingdom! Over many a desolate scene intemperance has stalked in ghastly triumph, but rarely have its victories been more complete than

here. Alas, for the worse than widowed wife! alas, for the children who blushed for their father! and alas, for the poor, haggard ruin of a man who stole away to hide himself, crushed and mortified, in the wastes of life that heave to and fro in the east end of London!

CHAPTER II.

THE young ladies of Greenwill, Hope, and Co.'s, West End Ladies' Outfitters, live, some within the house, and some in lodgings. They commence business at eight o'clock in the morning, and some of them, in the busy season, work till nine or ten o'clock, and then walk to their lodgings. In the house there is the usual tendency to grouping into knots, and canvassing each other's habits and ways. Blame not these poor girls—shut out from the common and free joys of life—if the attentions of friends of the other sex often came under discussion, and if the striking points of such as had been noticed in the Sunday walk were sometimes the subject of mutual rail-

ıery. The energy and quiet resolution of one of these young women, known in the house as Miss Millicent, had raised her to the head of her department. She had been there only two years and a half, but she had gained the entire confidence of the partners; and when Mr. Greenwill had to dismiss poor Miss Smith for taking porter to her room, and all but burning the house, he intimated with con siderable parade that Miss Millicent should have the place, and that his mind would be easy regarding its duties being thoroughly done. We hope this circumstance did not quicken the attention with which she was observed. Her predecessor slept in, but she was still permitted to sleep out. No one had been to her lodgings. They could not be near the house, for she seemed to have a long walk to and fro. No one knew her friends; and no one ever called on her. Yet she was not friendless. She had been noticed with a companion who did not seem to court observation, and she sometimes carried books from the library provided for the young people, which she could hardly be supposed to

read. Her reserved and quiet dignity, however, put all questioning aside, and Miss Millicent went on her way, calm, cool, and regular, like a star.

Let us follow her home this evening. It is late when she can leave, and an omnibus in the Strand carries her through Temple Bar and the City. Then through a maze of streets, through a small, obscure square, off which runs a crooked line of mis-shapen dwellings, erected by a prosperous builder, who, to perpetuate his own distinguished name and taste, called this abortion Jones' Crescent. The end house of Jones' Crescent was let off in tenements, and the door swung freely "and recked not of a foe." Miss Millicent pushed it open, and knocked at the two-pair front drawing-room door. It was opened by a slight and stooping figure, in garments of gentlemanly cut and texture, but much worn and somewhat behind the current style. A faint smile welcomed her. "Well, father, and how has work gone on to-day? Got the paper finished? I have got off so early, and we shall have the walk, sha'n't we?"

"As you like, dear; I have finished the Electricity,' and it is to be in to-night; could you walk so far?"

"Of course, and much farther; it will be capital." And in a few minutes the table was arranged, a frugal tea was made; Miss Millicent, with great care, buttoned her father's greatcoat, rallied him on his despatch with the paper, and his growing fame as an author, and set out on the walk, taking his arm as proudly as if Jones' Crescent were all her own private property, and now, while they enjoy their walk, and leave the manuscript on "Electricity" at the office of the "People's Own Gazetteer," let us go back over two years and a half.

Millie could think of no better plan than for her father to be sent away. Oh! how she sobbed and struggled ere she could pro nounce those words! But she could not rest when he was gone. She knew her mother could do nothing more, and that bread must be earned for her younger sisters. She must do something herself.

She could go to business. She might open

a way for the younger children; she could get a position in London. The thing seemed absurd, but she talked her mother into familiarity with the plan, and one fine morning Millie found herself on board the Holyhead boat, the only being she knew in sight being the slight figure draped in black, that feebly waved good-bye to her from the Kingstown jetty. A few turns of the paddle-wheels, the pier-head was rounded, her mother out of sight, the sea and the sea of life open before her. She had in her pocket the address to which Mr. Reid remitted her father's allowance — how she got it we need not explain. That was her only introduction. She had found her father, had twined her daughter's arms round his neck, had entreated him, watched with him, cheered him, amused him, found him books to read, and at length interested him in some of his old studies by seeking explanations in the different museums they visited together. It was a long struggle with the old enemy, and sometimes seemed well-nigh hopeless. But she hoped on, and when the minister in the little chapel in the

Square, prayed one Sabbath evening, for any "who were only struggling out of despair," she took that to herself, and felt as if the Lord had had her case that night laid before Him, and not in vain. It was moonlight. Father and child paced round and round the Square, now silent, now speaking, each thinking how far the heart might be bared to the other without risk of misconception. At length she told him that she was just so, "struggling out of despair." Conceive her joy when he exclaimed, "No, Millie; that was for me and me only, none but me; struggling out of despair—that is just it. Oh! Lord, do not let me quite sink; deliver my soul out of the lowest hell." He stopped short; it was his first audible prayer. Millie had no word, no lecture, no admonition—nothing to do but love him and pray to God. She had hope from that night.

An advertisement of Greenwill, Hope and Co.'s brought her to their place; her experience was nothing, but her manners were good, and her appearance everything. She was tried, and the result we have seen. Miss

Millicent, as she chose to be called was mysterious and silent, but perfectly lady-like, and a first-rate hand, and that was about as much as Messrs. Greenwill, Hope and Co. wanted, or paid for. They were quite satisfied.

CHAPTER III.

Not so Mr. Henry Greenwill, son of the senior partner, and now filling a subordinate place in the house, until "something better offered." That something was definite enough to the eye of Mr. Greenwill, senior. What should his son do but succeed his father?

Mr. Greenwill, junior, conceived an irresistible desire to know Miss Millicent's whereabouts. He became quite alarmed about the length of her walks, feared she came too far; but no word of hers told her address. He thought she was looking ill; should she not have a holiday? Would she like to go to her friends for a fortnight? Had she railway all the way, or was her family in Ireland? No syllable of hers told where they were. Then he became deeply interested in her religious

views. Had she heard Mr. Spurgeon, or had she been to the People s Cathedral Service, or seen Mr. Bellew? No; Miss Millicent was impervious. These well-meant efforts were made at intervals, and the last of them was followed by a distinct request to be allowed to accompany her homeward. "No; she was grateful, but it was quite unnecessary," and when Miss Millicent *said* that, she made it clear that she meant that.

Mr. Greenwill's business led him into her department, and made some conference necessary. He begged to be allowed to speak to her, in a manner so perfectly sensible, that there was nothing for it but explanation. But her words were prompt and frank—"Mr. Greenwill, I am here in your father's employ, and I wish to do my duty. You have always been very kind to me, and I am very grateful, and I shall always be so. Nothing more is to be thought of, and I beg you to consider it so." Would she not consider—give some explanation? say was the gentleman with whom she was seen walking anything to her? "Yes, Mr. Greenwill, he is everything to me;" and

so the conference ended, leaving the Chief of the Bonnets and the Buyer of Ribbons intently occupied in the study of the mystery, while it was gravely whispered between Shawls and Opera-cloaks—both extremely tall, stately, and imposing persons—that Miss Millicent must have got a terrible wigging about her accounts, for she had been as pale as a sheet for hours after.

CHAPTER IV.

THE geraniums are under that bit of glass that stretches itself against the south end of Mrs. Lumsden's cottage. The frost lies white around, and the keen east wind is cropping the sweet briar, and hissing rather spitefully through the shrubbery; but there is joy within and unwonted peace. Some correspondence had taken place between Uncle Reid and Millie, which was followed by some more correspondence between George Lumsden and Mr. Reid, which was followed again by some correspondence between George Lumsden and Mrs. Lumsden, the result of

which was, that, in the end of December, the slight figure, now draped more cheerily, stood on the Kingstown jetty, and waved a handkerchief as the paddles of the "Leinster" slowed, and the great placid, smooth-skinned monster crept up kindly to the side of Carlisle Pier. A gentleman-like man in middle life, on whose arm leant a happy and—even Shawls and Opera-cloaks must have owned—good-looking young woman, stepped on the pier and began to contend, in a quiet but earnest way, for the slight figure that waved the handkerchief; and all that Christmas time was a very happy one, for Dr. Lumsden had, as every one knew, returned, and, it was quietly hoped, had come to himself. Millie had somehow grown immensely in all eyes; parents and sisters, even Uncle Reid, deferred to her in a way that was quite astonishing, and declared to his own children that she was a good girl, and a pious girl, and a very clever girl, with so much unnecessary vehemence that a stranger might have thought he was clearing her of some serious charge.

And, perhaps, she needed some such de-

fence, when the festivities of New Year's Day were interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Greenwill, Junior, from London, in a most unexpected manner. He had found it necessary to come to Ireland on business. In fact, trade was so bad in Ireland, and a firm in Limerick with which his house did business had been so shaky, that it was imperative he should not lose a minute in looking after it. He had not, however, taken the direct route to Limerick, but probably there was some profound commercial or strategetical reason for that. In fact, two days before, a person from Jones' Crescent had called at the house of Greenwill, Hope & Co., to say that Miss Millie had written for a small parcel that was forgotten, and sent money to forward it, but if anything was going from the house, the parcel could go in that way, and save, etc., etc., after the manner of London lodging-house keepers, who pay impossible rents, and live on rather less than nothing. This excellent person had shed a light upon the mind of Mr. Greenwill, Junior, from whom the information was sought. Mr. Greenwill had brought the little parcel.

But about the Limerick house that was shaky? Well, in fact, Mr. Greenwill, junior, must have used the telegraph and got reassuring replies, for he remained at the cottage for a week. He had several still more lengthened explanations with Millie (she had dropped "Miss Millicent"), and also with her parents. It transpired during one of those early conversations that when Millie alleged solemnly that the gentleman with whom she appeared in public was "everything to her," he had concluded that she was engaged, and, like a true man, held his peace. Now he sees his mistake, and considers and declares himself a most decided goose, which none of the ladies of the family will admit. It is agreed that Millie had better return to London, and make some way for her sisters, particularly as she is to be Mrs. Greenwill, Junior; and Mr. Greenwill, Junior—in consequence, we suppose, of the ability displayed in the settlement of the Limerick difficulty, is to become a partner in the house at the beginning of their financial year; while Dr. Lumsden, having risen to a higher class of literature than the

"People's Own Gazetteer," is arranging for settling in the great metropolis to resume his profession, and continue his contributions to the Medical Press.

Mr. Reid is increasingly vehement to his own children in praise of Millie, and declares that she, having honored her father, "shall have long life and prosperity;" for the Reids, and Lumsdens too, were all Scotch originally, and were well grounded in the Shorter Catechism.

"BE STRONG."

A MOTTO FOR YOUNG MEN.

WEAKNESS and wickedness are closely allied. A man is charged in tones of censure with his act. He is not strong enough to avow and defend it, and he wickedly denies it. He is wicked because he is weak. A youth is invited to a partnership in wrong-doing. His heart misgives him, but he is too weak to say "No," and he is speedily wicked. A rising professional man is invited by the tacit agreement of his circle to a style of living he cannot afford. He has not the courage to say, "I cannot afford it," and he becomes a borrower, and servant to the lender; and then evasive; and then deceitful; and then dishonest; and then ruined. His weakness is the inclined

plane down which he glides, with now and then a spasmodic bootless attempt to recover himself, into wickedness.

There is very good reason, therefore, for our being advised to "be strong." But Christian character has two sides. We cease to do evil. We also learn to do well. But doing well is impossible, if we are not strong. The forces of evil are many and mighty. Life is short. The love of ease is deep-rooted. Unless we are strong we effect nothing. Our lives shall be mere bundles of resolves never effected, collections of impotent wishes that never came to anything. You know very well there are many such well-meaning, weak persons, of whom it is said—"They are very good at talking, but never finish anything."

No wonder, therefore, that this pithy advice should be often repeated in Scripture. Three times the Lord impressed it on the mind of Joshua, and the people re-echoed the counsel in the form of an encouragement. It was David's advice to Solomon, which it had been well for his reputation that he had followed through life. It was Haggai's cry to the

builders of the second temple—to Joshua, to Zerubbabel, and to all the people of the land. The New Testament repeats the sentiment Paul—well entitled to speak on the subject—says to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 13), "Quit you like men, be strong." To the Ephesians he adds a further hint (vi. 10), "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." To Timothy, a young man, he says—"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." And the aged and loving John, writing to young men in his first Epistle, and looking on them with the kindly eye of a mellow old disciple, and rejoicing to think the best of them, says—"I write unto you because ye are strong." (1 John ii. 14.)

All these words surely suggest that strength is a valuable element in Christian character, and several of them suggest it as desirable, especially in young men. Receive, then, from one who would still wish to be young in hope, and zeal, and in the eager desire to learn, a a few hints on this subject.

Aim at *strength* of *convictions*. Convictions are opinions deliberately formed after a care-

ful survey of the proper evidence. John Locke said that not so many people were wrong in their opinions as was thought, for much of what they held was not opinion at all. All kinds of truth have their proper evidence; mathematical truth has mathematical evidence; moral truth has moral evidence. Historic truth has historical evidence. Spiritual truth has spiritual evidence, namely, the revealed will of God, which is the evidence whereon faith builds. An example will illustrate this. A gentleman holds Oliver Cromwell to have been a conscious hypocrite, and he calls it his opinion or conviction. On what does it rest? On something he read from Goldsmith's England when at school, and on certain loose partisan talk he has heard since from other readers of Oliver Goldsmith or his authorities. Did he ever examine the proper evidence? Never. Then he can have no opinion or conviction on the point.

You announce a spiritual truth to a person —as for example that Christ's righteousness is a sufficient plea for a sinner and a sufficient basis for assurance. Without any examination

for himself of the proper evidence on the subject, he declares his conviction of the impossibility of such a thing. He has no conviction; he can have none till he has weighed the proper evidence, namely, the Word of the Lord. He may have a presumption, or a collateral consideration, or an imagination, or a prejudice, but he has no conviction. For there are many persons strong in prejudice; many are strong in passion; many are strong in resolution, and have an indomitable will; but what I commend to you is to have strong convictions.

You may imagine I make a great demand on you, when I limit conviction to what we have thought out for ourselves. It is so; but not greater than Paul makes—"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." This will likely limit the number of your opinions; but that is no evil. Your shallow and superficial people have opinions and convictions on all subjects. The really great are aware that on a multitude of subjects they can be but learners and inquirers, till they see things by and by in the light of the perfect

day; and so they are modest and silent, where others are fluent and confident.

Be strong in *good sense*. Now I anticipate that you will say in your minds that the "wisdom of this world" is foolishness with God. Quite true. But it is not the wisdom of this world I am recommending. *It* is not good sense. There is a wisdom that is not of this world, and is enjoined on Christians; and the want of which defeats many a fair scheme, and alienates many a hopeful inquirer. Our Lord must have meant something when He said—"Be wise as serpents." So must Paul when he made it a matter of prayer that the Philippians might "approve things that are excellent." Moderation is a much abused and now an ill-omened word, but it meant something when the same apostle urged on the same believers, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." (iv. 5.)

There are impetuous good people; fickle good people; unwise good people; let us say it out, foolish good people, who lack wisdom and do not know that they lack it. A certain sober judgment ought to mark Christians,

They should be like the needle in the mariner's compass, not like the pendulum which, within its limited range, is always going from one extreme to another. I do not agree with all the views of John Wesley, or William Penn, but I think they were two of the greatest men the world ever had, and I consider that much of the strength that enabled them to do so much lay in the force of their convictions and the sobriety of their judgments. They do not startle people with paradoxes, nor banish all confidence in them by the wildness with which they unfold their ideas to minds quite unprepared.

I am aware that this appears to many a timid, feeble, almost time-serving type of character. But one is safe in following Paul, who had as much chivalry as any Christian. Let any objector study the course Paul adopted at Jerusalem, when communicating his plans privately to the leading people at Jerusalem, lest his work should be hindered by rash and heady people when the subject came to be openly discussed.

I know that some may say—"I don't care

what the world thinks; its opinion is sure to be wrong." Well, Paul was of a different mind when he advised the Colossians (iv. 5) to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without."

Strength of love, strength of hope, and especially of faith, which is the measure of every other grace, is urgently needed; but I dwell not on these aspects of Christian character because they are being constantly urged in sermons and elsewhere. Less frequently, however, are the foregoing thoughts urged from the pulpit, and in an age which affects "broad thinking," and in which superficial people are often marring the good they intend by want of wisdom, it is important to seek strong convictions, and good sense that effect may be given to them.

"THE BARS OF A CASTLE."

IT was a dull cold day on which I set out to visit an aged and dying man. The country roads were muddy, and the fields in a sticky paste, that made walking a disagreeable exercise. Yet I could hardly say I was glad when I reached my destination. I had a painful duty before me. In the same village with the dying man was an aged brother, and between them and their families a long enmity had subsisted. Could I connive at this dying man passing into eternity without being reconciled to his brother? I believed it my duty to make the attempt, at least, to bring them together. It was long before I could get the consent of the sick man. I urged upon him that his professed

trust in Christ would be doubtful indeed if his heart still retained malice. No, he had no malice; he could forgive, but not forget. I urged that it was no forgiveness that thus expressed itself—and at length got his consent to send a message for his brother. I was the bearer of it myself. Here, however, the task was still harder; and an hour was spent in argument, appeal, persuasion, and prayer. At length he agreed to accompany me, and was helped across the little street that parted the two houses. But when they did meet, and the one gray-haired man bent over the body of the other—their tears flowed freely, and the alienation that had lasted long was confessed and deplored with mingling sobs and prayers for forgiveness. I left them with some thankfulness of spirit, that I had been able to persevere in a painful duty—and as I retraced my steps at the close of a dull and dreary day, I could not but feel the truth of that proverb, "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." (Prov xviii 19.)

Among my readers there must be some to whom just reflections on this painful theme will be timely, and by God's blessing they shall be useful; for to quench the fires of one such unhallowed quarrel were worth more than the cost of producing this paper.

Brothers are usually on a level in education and social advantages. Their interests naturally come into collision in many things. Comparisons between them in character and circumstances are easy and natural to themselves and others, and if strife arises they feed the flame. Brothers commonly know each other well, and are therefore capable of inflicting the deepest and most rankling mutual wounds. Maintaining a common relation to the same circle, they have many opportunities of renewing or displaying their malice, and so the reconciliation of the alienated is extremely difficult. Whether we have rightly stated the *principle* of it or not, the sad *fact* must have come under the observation of every thoughtful person.

The Scriptures—in which nothing is omitted that we need to know—set up their beacons to

us on this point. Cain and Abel introduce the mournful array. Then a confused noise of violence is drowned by the flood; and a chosen family is made the depository of God's will. Then Abraham and Lot, Jacob and Esau, Jacob and Laban, Joseph and his brethren, pass before us in their quarrels, to make way for Israel and Edom in bitter and protracted rivalry. The family feud did much to embitter David's life, as the strifes of brothers have many a household since.

And what can be done? Something surely in the way of prevention. Parents have much responsibility here. Be it theirs to avoid such thoughtlessness as wrought evil in Jacob's family, where a matter of *dress* (O, how real and life-like is the Bible!) produced sad results. It is a difficult and delicate but incumbent duty to repress all jealousy, all captious quarrelling and childish strife. Let parents study the example Christ set in his family of disciples, when "the ten had indignation" against Zebedee's sons (Matt. xx. 24).

Grown-up brothers and sisters should guard against the beginning of strife among them.

Do no wrong to the rest. Give no provocation, and if it be given, as offences must come, rather bear than resent the evil. What temporal advantage, or personal satisfaction, could compensate you for the loss of the love of one who was cradled in the same arms, and cherished on the same fond bosom? Learn to cultivate such a virtue as magnanimity. Be greater, like Abraham, than your brother, by giving way. Let no servants' quarrel breed strife between you. But above all, get out of your heart that carnal pride which originates and protracts so many such disputes which always asks "who shall be the greatest the most popular, the most attractive," and which fosters detraction, jealousy, and slander. You can only be sure of escape from this pride by having the "new heart." You know *that*, I hope. "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" No natural process of self-discipline, such as a virtuous heathen might adopt, will do. The task is so hard, that in view of it, the disciples prayed, "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke xvii. 5).

And what if, unhappily, the contention has

begun? Then end it as speedily as possible. A spark of fire may be quenched, which let alone, may become a wasting conflagration. The first exuding drops that percolate through the breakwater may be met by timely resistance; but, let alone, they may become the rushing and resistless torrent. Are there misunderstandings? Get explanations at once Go and tell thy brother his fault—or your own—where there shall be no witnesses to provoke pride. If you were injured, then in Christ's name forgive. But is there not a limit to this? So Peter thought: "till seven times." So thought *not* Christ: "till seventy times seven." A brother may do wrong, so that you must separate from him, or be partaker in his sin; but setting this aside, what amount of wrong to you personally ought to root out of your heart the feelings and affections God implanted there? Down with these "bars!" Break them in pieces; melt them, if they will not break, with the fires of love, and get into sympathy with the heart that ought ever to beat responsive to your own.

O! parents, only fancy those boys and girls of yours, when you are dead, perhaps before that, without affection to one another: or rivals: or enemies!

Brothers and sisters! think of being alienated from those whose presence is now so precious to you! You have read the touching lines that describe "the graves of a household"—how they who played under the same green tree, and around the same parent knee, are sundered in their resting-places, and sleep apart—east and west, by land and sea. It is sad enough; but it is a happy pensiveness that the thought brings over us. We will suppose that he "who wrapped his colors round his breast," and fell fighting in Spain, mingled thoughts of home with thoughts of Christ, as his life ebbed away on that battle-field; that he who went to sleep on the blue lone sea, and "the last of that bright band," who "faded midst Italian bowers," looked forward to reunion with the rest in a brighter land, where there shall be "no more sea." But to think of hearts still alive in the world, but dead to love, and buried in selfishness—of

brothers no more to each other than common men; sisters no more to each other than strangers—perhaps rivals, perhaps foes—this awakens no tender feelings, this is intolerable, horrible, revolting!

Reader! are you condemned of your conscience? Is there a quarrel—a "coolness" you can't defend? Go this very week and pay the friendly visit, or write the penitent letter. Is there a brother or sister between whom and you intercourse has gradually dropped? Go and renew it at once. Is there so much love in the world that you can lightly throw that away which the Creator made yours at the first? Do not march onward to the grave with a widening breach between you and those who were born of the same parents; fed by the same hands; sheltered in, perhaps, happier days under the same roof. What is your religion worth if it is powerless here? If you love not your brother whom you have seen, how can you love the unseen Jehovah? Love and hate are like light and all other influences proceeding from a centre —nearest the centre they are vastly strongest.

and diminish regularly and rapidly with distance. The nearer my enemy, the bitterer my hate; and so "the contentions of *brothers* are like the bars of a castle;" and the nearer my friend, the stronger should be my love. Any feeling under this name that works differently is affectation or romance. You could not compel light to shine in one direction, or on one side only. It will radiate all around. So will true love. Upward to God it is reverence and worship; towards angels and saints it is affectionate and grateful interest; abroad among the good it is brotherly love; among the bad the kindness of pity. To an enemy it is generous forgiveness; and to one's own flesh and blood, what should it be but unquenchable tenderness, natural feeling strengthened, purified, and made fruitful by the grafting of grace upon it?

A LIFE-STORY, IN SIX SHORT CHAPTERS.

I.

INTO the Sabbath-school of ——, in the spring of 184–, walks Thomas ——, led by the hand of a most loving father, who, if not himself a godly man, valued godliness, and wished his little son to grow up in the ways of goodness. Thomas felt a little strange at first in the Sabbath-school. But the superintendent spoke to his father, learned the boy's age, and the amount of his knowledge, and put him into the class of a very sensible and godly teacher. Thomas's father was rather better off than the parents of most of the children there, and the superintendent was a good deal encouraged by his bringing his son. He thought

it a good example to other parents, who would soon hear of it through the children; and he took much interest in Thomas's progress. He was a frank, guileless, and spirited boy and made good use of his time at the Sunday-school. It was a pleasant thing to see him enter the school with brisk step and cheerful boy's-smile, walk up and shake hands with his teacher, and take his place in the class. Had ever poor Thomas happier hours than those he spent in that Sunday-school?

II.

Again Thomas is conducted by his father, but this time to a house of business in the city of ——. He is a tall, graceful lad, well-dressed, and well-educated. He is about to "serve his time." He is to be three years in the place. His father settled all for him in the most considerate and handsome manner. He called with him at the house of a clergyman of whom he had heard a good report. He commended his boy in person to his care,

and with some feeling. He went to the proper person and took and paid for a sitting in the church for his son, and for many months his son occupied it regularly. For a time, too, he availed himself of a class for young men, not exactly in the Sabbath-school, but connected with it. For a time the minister had hope of him, and in reply to a letter of inquiry from his father, had pleasure in saying so. Thomas had, at this moment, as good prospects as any lad of seventeen in the city.

III.

In a small back-room of the —— Hotel about ten o'clock at night, a few young men were "enjoying themselves." There were glasses on the table, and pipes in the lips of several. The room was full of smoke. Two or three were "young men," in this sense, that they were in the employment of others, though between thirty or forty years of age. They had cards there occasionally. As they were dropping away, one by one, for some

of them had to be "in" by half-past ten, Thomas was invited by two of them to join them in a "little run to the country" on the next Lord's day. They were older than he was. It was rather flattering to be sure, for them to ask him, but he had a misgiving about "its being Sunday." They quizzed him a little about it, inquired if he was on trial for the eldership under Mr. —— (the minister whom they saw calling to see him), and eventually got the promise that he would join them. He kept the promise.

IV.

It is only a year and a-half since that Sabbath, but, alas! that evil works so rapidly! It is very just to call the evil-doers of our cities "fast" men. Thomas's father is with him again. He has come to settle his debts—at the tobacconists,' at the —— Hotel, at a couple of shops where his father's good name was known, and also with several of the young men to whom he owed money, of

which neither he nor they gave a very clear account. His father looks ten years older than he did when he called on the minister before, as he comes again, partly to get advice, partly to get sympathy, partly to say good-bye. "Mr. —— advises me to put him somewhere else. He did not like to dismiss him or prosecute him"—and the poor heart-wounded father's utterance was stopped—he turned sobbing into a window—"for he might have done that—and he hoped the separation from his companions here might, with this disgrace, do him good." And Thomas was changed, too. His eye had lost its courage. His voice had lost its clearness and firmness. His lips had become flabby and thick, and there was a certain reserve—almost sullenness, about him. His color was gone—but shame might have done that—and the disagreeable, *unwholesome* look he had might be caused by the showy dress he wore, now a little faded. Thomas returned home.

His father was buried about ten months after. He died of no particular disease. His only son, Thomas, attended his funeral,

and afterwards put a neat tombstone over his grave. He might have put upon it, "Died of shame and grief," the neighbors said, for he "never held up his head after Mr. Thomas's return.'

V.

Thomas is back again in the city. He is his own master. He is of age. Alas! he is not "of discretion." It was very sad to see him on a Monday morning, among men with coats of no color in particular, only shining on the arms and shoulders—and old young women with bold, bad, begrimed faces, awaiting his turn to be brought up. He had evidently made friends with a couple of policemen, who put him forward, loudly gave out his name as "Mr. Smith," detailed the "drunk and disorderly" story on oath, and when the "five shillings or forty-eight hours" was entered, familiarly took him from the place. He is greatly changed now. He has fashionable colored kid gloves on, is much stouter in his person, yet paler in complexion, and with

a certain weakness in his eyes and lips that is painful to look at. It is well, perhaps, that he has not a near relative in the country. The only relations he has are in America, and we need not write down the language in which he declared he "did not care about them."

VI.

It is usually sad enough to enter an hospital ward, with a row of beds on each side of you, and each with its own story of pain. Sadder still to sit down by a particular bed, and try to say what words of hope you can to its dying occupant, almost in public, for around you are persons of "all religions and no religion." But it is saddest of all if you cannot even say the words you would wish, for delirium or stupor has barred the avenues to the soul. And so it was with Thomas ——, when the clergyman whose name he had been heard to call in his incoherent wanderings reached him. The resident doctor kindly led him to the bed, and the minister spoke a

word or two of friendly notice. "No use, sir, he's rambling. We can't keep him up either. Bad subject, sir! Likely stupor will come on, and he will never wake out of it. Bad subject, sir!" And the resident doctor walked off, leaving it to the minister's discretion to pray or not, as he thought proper, beside that miserable bed. Perhaps it was natural for the doctor to take it thus. He was familiar with such things. "Bless you! he often saw cases like this. Fellows who lived fast—got ill—had no stamina—could not be kept up—went off in a day or two." But the minister remembered the fine bright boy whom his father brought to him—and he remembered the sobs and tears of the father, as he took him away again; and he sat down on the bed-side. He could not help putting himself in the heart-broken father's place. He wept there. He could not help it.

A few days after, the newspapers announced among the deaths.

"On the 23rd instant, at ——, of congestion of the brain, Thomas ——, only surviv-

ing child of the late Thomas ——, Esq., of ——, aged twenty-three."

It was inserted by the solicitor of the family, who has been collecting for the last couple of years what remains of the property, that it may be sent to America to the heir at law.

SHINING LIGHTS.

CHRIST our Lord is the Light of the world, the great life-giving Sun of Righteousness. His Church is a reflector, giving forth His light while the world has not His visible presence. She is to be "fair as the moon." "Ye are the light of the world," He said to his disciples. This imposes great responsibility on His people. Let them look to it that they shine. No man lights a candle and then hides it away. He puts it on a candlestick and sets the candlestick in the best place for giving light to the whole house. "Let your light so shine, therefore, that men may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven." When He speaks these words to us, as He does every

time we read them, we may well ask, "What light have we to exhibit?" We shall be all the better for getting an answer to this question.

We have for instance *the truth we know.* When the one boat put off from the sinking *London,* the few that were in it hoping against hope, the man who could steer the boat, and who had got the "course" from Captain Martin, had a certain light of which he was bound to make the best use for the saving of his own life and the life of the men that were with him. So if we have learned the doctrine of salvation from the great Teacher, we have a light to hold up. The man who joins an Evangelical Church, so far holds forth an Evangelical light. He witnesses for Unitarianism if he joins a Unitarian Church, for Romanism if he becomes a Romanist. If he joins no Church, he shows none of this light. He is practically saying that light is of no great value. To join a club, or an insurance company, or a scientific society, is not to show any light in this sense, for these bodies profess nothing religious. The more definite the creed of a

Church, the more decided the light our joining it gives forth. The apostles were always very careful about this matter. They would have nothing to do with any who did not bring with him the true doctrine—would neither have him with them nor bid him God-speed. Men should feel their responsibility on this point. They should ask, "Am I giving my name and influence to truth, or error, or to a useless mixture of both? Am I by this Church-connection of mine standing up for the truth? Does my light shine? Will men know when they see me here that I believe Evangelical doctrine?"

In the life we live, too, we have a light to show. Talk is proverbially cheap, and profession is easy. But if our creed overmasters our passions, our follies, and our temporal interests, and makes us what it requires us to be, we have a light to show. But how is it with the man who is drunk every market day? with the man whose temper is ungovernable, and whose tongue is unbridled? How is it with the extortioner or the grasping money-maker, of whom all his neighbors

know that he will lie, or take an advantage for a shilling? The apostles were very careful about this light. Paul had a right to be maintained, but for the sake of the light, he would not exercise his right. He wished to be above suspicion. He could say—"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." He took no liberties, indulged in no levity, and never forgot himself even where "believers" might be supposed to "understand him." He would be a living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. This light in the life is sadly wanted to demonstrate the reality of religion. It is most natural for non-professors to inquire, "Why should I profess religion? I don't see any great effect it has on professors."

But you can have, over and above this, the light of *the positive good you do.* Beyond the ordinary requirement of a man's passive obedience, there are certain active efforts a Christian can make, and as he has opportunity should make. Now and then a fellow-creature who has fallen among thieves will come

in his way, to whom he can be the good Samaritan. There will be persons of a sorrowful spirit, to whom he can speak words of good cheer. There will be now and then a young Apollos, with gifts, if they were but directed, whom he may help much. There may be a Lazarus about his gate, to clothe, or feed, or refresh, or visit whom, for Christ's sake, will not be beneath Christ's notice. These services give a light we can hold forth. A man who reads and ponders, and translates into the vernacular of his common life the Epistle of James, will hold forth such a light. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." There are regions where this light is specially required. A neglected hamlet of Protestants is a reproach to the Church members of the place. An uncared-for family going unwarned and unheeded to ruin is a stain on the Christian character of professedly Christian neighbors. Orphans neglected and allowed to fall into open sin give just occasion to doubt the qual-

ity of the religion of those about them. And there are wide districts and large masses of men in this land whom we do not see any way of reaching but by the sustained, silent power of practical and active godliness on the part of true Christians. See, then, that you have this threefold light—a profession of the truth, a consistent life, and a measure of Christian activity. You get the truth in the Word of God; and you can profess it in connection with His Church. Of course, it follows undoubtedly from this that you should be a member of a Church. Unquestionably you fail in duty if you are not. To treat the Church of Christ as if it were a self-constituted body which you may join or not, as suits your whim, as though it were a club, or a literary society, is to insult the Saviour, and betray total ignorance or contempt of His truth. Join a Church that commends itself to your conscience by its conformity to the Word. Take your share of its responsibilities. We fear that they who do no good in congregations rarely get much good from them.

That you may have light, be sure you have life. When the Atlantic cable is *alive*, that is when its insulation is perfect, and it is fitted for its work, a bright light is reflected on a mirror and thence on a dial, and its movements give the signs. When it is dead—that is when its insulation is destroyed and the current is running to the earth—that light disappears. So when the soul is alive, its light shines; when it is dead, there is darkness.

The manner in which this light is to be held up, is obviously of some importance—"So shine that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The first requisite is that we show the light to be borrowed, that men may glorify, not us, but our Father in heaven. This precludes all ostentation, against which our Lord elsewhere gives a warning—"Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth." No trumpet is to be sounded before us as we give our alms. And it precludes all fitfulness. A candle that burns in starts is the next thing to useless. It is the steady, uniform light that

serves. An intermitting light does not enlighten. It shows where a rock is. All self-seeking is thus precluded. If a man is secretly thinking of the impression to be made in his favor, by the gold he puts on the plate, or the poor he feeds, or clothes, or advances, or the rich donations or bequests he makes, he comes short of this injunction. It enjoins courage and decision for good and for God's glory. Let your light thus shine.

There are some better than they seem. Partly from timidity and self-distrust, partly from temperament, partly from a kind of pride, they conceal their religion. They do pray in secret, strive against sin, read the Bible, but they wear an air of indifference or of apathy. They have no right to do this. They violate a plain command. They are not thus the "light of the world." And there are others who start with an altogether erroneous idea as to the nature of true religion. They think of it as something to soothe and tranquilize them and make them comfortable. It terminates on themselves. Now, God never

meant religion to terminate on itself. He enlightens to enable us to shine, and we very much doubt if there be any force in all nature, or any gift or any work of God, that is self-contained or non-communicative. Certainly He is not Himself, for He is always giving to all. Not so His Son, who said—"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Not so the Holy Ghost, who is ever giving light and joy and peace. Not the angels, who are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. Nor in nature do we find anything great shut up in self. Not the sun, or moon, or stars, whose beams fill every land. Not the sea, whose broad expanse gives forth the vapors that water the earth. Not the rivers, that give back their gathered wealth to the sea. Not the land, that gives its harvests. Not the air, that forms the vital breath of all things. Not even the lightning, which men long thought a wanton and vindictive power, but which, better understood, is seen to be a force inherent—a sort of soul in matter, which will stoop to be yoked to man's instruments, and with the speed of thought carry his mes-

sages over cheerless waters and through the trackless paths of ocean depths, filling up a sense which the sacred writers never contemplated in the words, "His lightnings lightened the world." And should it be that God shines into man's heart to give the light of the knowledge of His glory, for man to hide the light? No, truly; this were to convert into a possession what God ties up as a trust, and bids us use for the creature's good.

There are unhappily all too many at present either directly or indirectly setting aside the truth of God's Word. It is a good thing to be able and ready to stand up for it. In a party of gentlemen in a public room, as the amusement proceeded, one indulged in language which happily nearly all gentlemen, irreligious as well as religious, have given up. His neighbor said to him, "Now, my dear sir, I beg you will not think I am given to cant, for I am not specially good, I assure you; but your language pains me excessively. Do pray leave out these phrases." The thing was done with the most gentlemanly frankness, and received so. "What a good fellow he is,"

said the reproved one to the friend who was present, and who reports to us the case, when they met the next day. "Upon my word I never felt so ashamed in my life, and I don't mean ever to do it again."

Let us feel and show kindness, especially to those nearest to us. There are good people who, perhaps, join the *Evangelical Alliance*, and go to its meetings in Geneva, or Paris and love their brethren at a distance. The Episcopalian missionaries in Tinnevelly they admire and esteem, but they have no great affection for the Episcopalians of the next parish; or they feel kindly to Dr. Duff or Dr. Chalmers, or other "beloved dissenting brethren" in India, or in glory; but the honest men who are toiling at their very door they have never regarded cordially. This is a doubtful kind of affection. The light of a candle is strongest nearest the candle. The love that only reaches the remote, and leaps over the near, is a romance, not a reality. Love those whose foibles and weaknesses you see, in spite of them, and show that love in all becoming and suitable ways.

One cannot shine in ways like these without some vigilance. The candle will burn dimly, and obscuring influences must be watched against. Christians get too fond of human applause, or earthly possessions, or carnal indulgences. Their lamps come to need trimming. Even the abundance of privileges may be an evil—the wick is in danger of being drowned in the oil. And we must guard against being badly situated. We may be ill-placed—not "on a candlestick." If men go to theatres, race-courses, gambling-houses, and such like places, the main and obvious design of which—that for which they are—is against the Christian cause, they cannot shine *there*. They debar themselves from shining. They go into an atmosphere in which the Christian taper will not burn. Let the candle fill "all the house." That were a strange light surely that illumined the whole village and left the room it burned in black as night. If you could produce it you would have the type of a religion that is felt everywhere *but at home*, or of that louder type of hollow profession that sounds forth in the

"Christian world," and is perfectly useless in its own congregation!

On the whole, the good lamp burns noiselessly. When the candle hisses and sputters, or when the gas is making monotonous music, there is something wrong. The "silent stars," the quiet moon, or the great bright voiceless sun, these may be studied with advantage by those Christians who think they can only testify by shouting vehemence, or "gushing" unctuous declarations. Strive *so*, dear friends, if you can, that *you* shall be as little noticed as possible, but that your Heavenly Father shall be praised. Perhaps you are poor, but trying to seem rich; or with little culture, seeking to be thought learned; or being a "plain person," you are trying to be "striking," or impressive, or polished; or being worldly, trying to have a character for religion. Give over the effort. It is most wearisome. It is "double, double, toil and trouble." It gets you into many of your difficulties. It takes all ease out of your life. Be real. Have one aim, not two or three. Let your eye be single. Do not look one way and pull another, as

rowers must do. Let your eyes look right on. Live a simple, natural, true life, with one main purpose running all along it, and that purpose "that men may glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

THE QUESTION EVERY ONE SHOULD ASK.

"LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?"

THE attentive reader of Scripture will recollect in what solemn circumstances Saul of Tarsus asked the above question (Acts ix. 6). The presence and words of Christ, and the working of the Holy Ghost in his soul had awakened in him a sense of guilt, danger and obligation. He now knew Jesus of Nazareth to be the Lord, whom he was, therefore, bound to obey. We cannot say whether he expected directions as to his own personal salvation, or, more generally, directions as to his future line of conduct, or whether he guessed, in the hurry and excitement of the scene, that this special appearance must be in

order to some special work he should undertake. Nor is it necessary to settle this. The Lord sent him to a despised follower to receive the necessary instruction — a salutary lesson, perhaps, to a proud-minded Pharisee, and an honor put on human instrumentality in spiritual work.

We can conceive this question put by persons in very different conditions both of knowledge and of feeling. The answer must be shaped by the state of the inquirer.

Let us suppose, for example, a man of fair intelligence in ordinary things, who has never seriously made up his mind about religious truth, who is devoid of settled convictions as to what he should believe, to ask—"*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*"

We reply to him in the words of the Lord, "Search the Scriptures" (John v. 39). There must be some distinction between truth and error, right and wrong. Your own conscience, we should say to him, tells you this. You are bound to inquire into the distinction. You are responsible for the opinions you hold. To take them up on slight and insuf-

ficient grounds, without careful examination, is not only unworthy of any rational being; it is highly criminal. You have a soul; in what state is it? Good or bad? Is it immortal? If so, how is it to live out its life, happily or wretchedly? Is there anything you have to do about this point? What is it? Have you done it? Is all doubt on the subject removed? A man had a heavy lawsuit, on the issue of which it depended whether he should be penniless or comfortable. As it was being called on, he turned, with an anxious face to the conducting attorney, and said—"*Now have we done everything that can be done?*" If this should fall into the hands of any one who has not made up his mind about religious truth, we would earnestly beg him to set about it. Dear friend, you know that there is a Bible, a book that professes to be from God, and that many people found the most solemn conclusions on it. If it is true, you will have a most miserable existence forever, unless you believe in Jesus Christ. It is bad to be an unbeliever. It is bad to have convictions, and not act

upon them. But it is dreadfully insulting to the Most High practically to say to Him, "Lord, I heard I had a soul to be saved or lost, and that the Bible explained all about it, but I never thought it worth my while to look into the subject." How could any man face the Judge of all with this statement? Consider this thing, and make up your mind. Not to consider it is to perish. Not to have thought of it is to decide for destruction. "The turning away of the simple shall slay them" (Prov. i. 32). "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" (Prov. i. 22).

Suppose a man whose feelings and general convictions are in favor of Bible truth, who owns its authority, though he has never received it, to say—"*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*

We reply at once—Learn your own state. You bow to Scriptural authority. Take the Word and see how your soul stands in God's sight. Are you pleasing to God's holy eye? or are you in sin? "Fools make a mock at

it' (Prov. xiv. 9), but, "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). Are you in a neutral state, or at enmity with God? The latter is the Scripture account of you. "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7.) If you see yourself as the Bible paints you, you will know that you are wicked, and if you see God as the Bible paints Him, in His justice and holiness, you cannot but say—"Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God" (Psalm cxxxix. 19). Then are you to be slain of God? For He slays thus—"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm ix. 7). Are you on the road to hell? Are you nearer it than when you rose this morning? Does the new year bring you a year nearer it? "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm vii. 11). Does it not make you ashamed to feel that he who is love is always displeased with you? Do you mean that it should always be so? What are you to do? Shake off the wickedness? You may try that, perhaps you may have tried it. You cannot. As soon might the negro hope to change his

skin. You may forget it: but God will not. "He will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus xx. 5). You may try to do better for the future. But what of the past? And all the time you are trying this because you fear hell, Christ looks down and says—"I know you that ye have not the love of God in you" (John v. 42). And all the time you are laboring after amendment and going about "to establish your own righteousness" (Rom. x. 3), the Lord's recorded sentence stands over against your name—"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. i. 32). What will become of you? When you pray, you know sin comes before God, and He is not bound to hear you any more than to hear Saul, when "He answered him not either by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (1 Sam. xxviii. 6). If you see this, dear reader, you cannot be unconcerned any more. You *must* be troubled. You *must* cry out, "Lord save me?" But as long as you acknowledge no guilt, and feel no danger, we can have no hope of you. O that we heard

you confessing your sin and saying, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sin is not hid from thee" (Ps. lxix. 5). O that we saw you whose hearts are whole, and who are unconcerned, "trembling and astonished" like Saul of Tarsus! Christ will not come to you, as to him. He is coming to you, pleading with you in the Word. You have no right to look for any revelation but that of Holy Scripture. "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. v. 14). When it was asked, in the parable, that a messenger should be sent from heaven to keep certain men out of hell, the reply was—"They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them" (Luke xvi. 31). Men now have Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, "Let them hear them." *That is the way to keep out of hell.* And any one who is not moved by them would remain unmoved by an actual messenger from the world of spirits. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

Suppose a man alive to his sinful and dangerous condition to put the question—(Oh! that we heard it oftener!)—"*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*"

The answer is already to our hand. The Apostle Paul, no longer an inquirer, but an earnest, rejoicing believer and preacher, speaking by the Holy Ghost, has given it. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." You are not to believe in your sorrow for sin. It is all too little, and it cannot atone; nor in your intention to amend, for it is worthless, and may be forgotten; nor in yourself in any shape; "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. xxviii. 26); nor is the thing to be believed that you are saved, or are a child of God; He has not chosen to reveal His mercy in that form. You are to "believe in Jesus Christ," a Person; a Divine Person; a Divine Person commended to you by the witness of His Father and of the Holy Ghost, as having died to save sinners, and as being able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. You are not to believe that

Jesus Christ, milder and more loving than His Holy Father, has brought Him round to favor you. This is to dishonor the Father in a most dreadful manner. You are to believe that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him" may be saved (John iii. 16). You are not to believe in Christ and the Church; or Christ and the minister; or Christ and the sacraments; or Christ and your repentance, earnestness, works, or faith, but *in Christ alone.* His obedience and death satisfy God's law which you broke; and God has made this public by His words when He declared He was well pleased with Him, and by raising Him from the dead, giving Him glory, and sending down the Holy Ghost. The coming of Christ out of the prison-house proves the settlement of the debt. God's angel came and rolled away the stone, and without hurry or trepidation Jesus came out of the tomb, the very grave-clothes bearing witness to the freedom of His movements. He did not break out of custody, but was honorably discharged as having paid the

uttermost farthing. Dear friend, believe in Him. He is THE Saviour, the one, only, sufficient Saviour. Neither angel nor man laid down his life for you; nor would such a death avail you anything. "He died once.' It was enough. And now, any sinner, of any land, or Church, or time, and of any degree of guilt, who will believe in Him will be saved, simply for His sake and without respect to anything else whatever. This is sure from God's Word. To you is the word of this salvation sent. When you have read so far in this paper you have had an offer of salvation made *to you*—salvation as free to you as the water in the well, or the light and air above you. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

To tell this to a careless man *may* be the means in God's hand of suggesting to him his need; but if we know him to be careless, we are bound to treat him as Christ treated careless men, as Peter treated them, and as Paul treated them. We are bound to show them their danger, the need of fleeing from the wrath to come, and the way of deliver-

ance. But when men are asking, like Peter's congregation on the Day of Pentecost, or like the jailer, "What must we do?" we have no more to do than tell them this one thing. We have no choice of topics left us—no discretion whatever. We are commanded to say to them, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Suppose one who has heard and believed the Gospel to ask, "*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*"

We reply, as in the Psalm (xlv. 11), "He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." Confess Him before men in all proper—that is, in all Scriptural—ways. Go "to your own company," the company of the people of Christ (Acts iv. 23). Show that you have been "added to the Lord," by your being "added to His Church" (Acts ii. 41, 47). The Christian Church may not seem to you all it ought to be; but it is infinitely better and nearer to you than the world in which you were till God called you. Enter into the labors, join in bearing the burdens, share the joys, and endure the sorrows of the Lord's people.

Let it be seen that they are your people, and their God your God. So did Saul of Tarsus when he believed. So did the Philippian jailer. So did Lydia and her household. So when little groups of men believed in Corinth, Ephesus, and Philippi, they came together as Christian Churches, edified and helped one another, had officers among them whom they honored for their works' sake, who instructed them and presided in the regulating of their Church matters, according to the law of the Lord; and of whom the Spirit of God said, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for this is unprofitable for you." Christ's house is not like a common, but like a vineyard: "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse" (Song iv. 13). "If the people of the land take a man of their coasts and set him for their watchman" (Ezek. xxxiii. 2), he is bound to them and they are bound to him. There is recognized and definite obligation on both. So we say to believing men and

women, Be under "oversight" with the rest of the flock (Acts xx. 28, and 1 Peter v. 2). You may have something to bear with, something to mourn over, something to seek to amend. You have the Master's command for all these, but you have no command from Him to go on your solitary way, if there are fellow-pilgrims near you. You will best show your love to the saints by fellowship with them. Those were good days when, amid much remaining ignorance, selfishness, and other imperfections which soon enough showed themselves, the believers continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts ii. 42).

Suppose one who is in the membership of the Church to put this question, "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*"

We would send the questioner to consider the language he uses. "*Lord*"—so He is your master, dear friend. You own His Lordship. "*Thou* have me"—no matter what my friends, or my neighbors, or usage, or even the rest of my brethren might think enough, Thou,

my Lord, art the one competent authority I own and must obey. "*What* wilt Thou"—anything that pleaseth Thee will please me, no matter whether it seem "dignified," or "responsible," or "complimentary," or "laborious," or "obscure." "*To do*"—I have learned to believe and to feel; "what am I *to do?*" Dear friend, do you mean this, when you put the question? The Church is sometimes afflicted with men who will be their own masters. They "must be humored." They must get their way, or they will do nothing. They have to learn the very first principles of service. We ask you then to take work at Christ's hand. Only be ready, and it will come to you.

Sometimes it will come casually, as if by accident, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. ix. 10). Sometimes the Church will ask you to do it. So the deacons found work in Acts vi. So Paul and Barnabas found missionary work in Acts xiii. Sometimes the work will be forced on you, as it was on Stephen before the Council, or on Paul when he had to withstand

Peter. Sometimes it will arise out of your own right affections, as when the good centurion loved the Lord's nation, and built them a synagogue; as when the grateful women brought spices to anoint the body of Jesus. Oh, how much needs to be done for His mystical body! Come with the fragrant spices of truth and love, of generosity and large-mindedness, of gentleness and of joyous activity! Sometimes duty will arise out of the gifts you have. You can "speak well," and some Moses, meek yet mighty, needs a mouth. You have money; and the "poor saints" somewhere are in want of it. You have influence, and some "prisoner of the Lord" much needs a friend. You can "make coats and garments," and how many widows there are! You are "apt to teach," and how many are ignorant! But I need not linger over details. Dear believer, *have something to do for the Lord.* Do it as to Him. Never mind how it looks to men, so as your good be not evil spoken of, which it is sure to be if you are unwise, affected, self-seeking, eccentric, or boastful. Maintain the spirit of service,

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which is—"I am not my own; I am bought with a price." Pray for grace to serve as Christ did—"Behold My servant *whom I uphold*" (Is. xlii. 1). When we take our strength as well as our work from the Lord's hand, then does He "delight" in us. When you have any success, do not parade it or yourself before men. Our blessed Lord, after a series of wonderful and most popular miracles in Capernaum, did not wait "to enjoy his honors," or "rest on his laurels," or "receive congratulations;" but "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark i. 35). We are brought to our right place when we are alone with God, and we get strength there for further service. So, dear believer, keep from cooling, by activity; from freezing, by motion; from rust, by labor. The brightest needle is most easily drawn to the magnet; and the best Christian worker will most feel the love of Christ. "The time is short." The Lord has chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit

should remain" (John xv. 16). "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing" (2 Thess. iii. 13).

THE STORY OF THE GREEK TESTAMENT.

"YES, surely, I must have been sleeping! There is no other way of accounting for it. How could a Greek Testament speak? Let me see the time—I came up at half-past seven. It is now a quarter past eight. Three-quarters of an hour gone, and nothing done! I must have gone off in this arm-chair—I shall send this arm-chair out of the study—and I dare say I was dreaming."

So I had to say to myself. The way of it was this. I had given a good part of the day to holiday joys. It was New Year's Day. The courts were closed, of course, for the vacation, and my children obtained the fulfilment of an old promise that I should have a

long walk with them. Why should they not get a little pleasure with their father? Their mother had often said she would like to introduce the children to me. So I tried to be at home with them; made such poor jokes as a man of cares is able to make for boys; laughed heartily at theirs; allowed them, even, to make puns on the wig and gown—my working clothes; and, on the whole, must have got on well, for when we came back, Harry—a young rascal without veneration—announced to his mother that we "had a jolly ramble, and a lot of fun." I am not as young as I was. What was sport to them was fatiguing to me, and, when dinner was over, and the oranges had been eaten—on a plan for which Harry thinks we should take out a patent, namely, cutting a circular hole in the end (not the side, observe), filling it with sugar, and drawing the juice through the sugar; which is "taken with clause of renewal." After this was over, I recollected some briefs that must be looked over, and went to the study. I *did* feel tired, but I think I meant to do some work, sat

down in my arm-chair, and must have gone to sleep. I had run my eye over a line of books that I have long had on a shelf by themselves. There are stories in my mind connected with many of them. I cannot tell why, but an old Valpy's Greek Testament held me a moment. It was an unattractive book, that had been knocked about in the world a good deal. I forget what more I did, how I sat down to rest, or anything else, until I heard — at least, I seemed to hear, but I must have been dreaming—a slow, but distinct voice proceed from the shelf I had been contemplating, and, as it seemed to me—from the Greek Testament! And the curious thing is that, ridiculous as it seems to me, now that I recall it — it did not then appear the least ridiculous that a Greek Testament should talk, and talk English too. I listened, and with deep interest—at least, I thought so, for, of course, I must have been dreaming. My profession as a lawyer has habituated me to follow and remember long and complicated narratives, and I am quite sure that I write down, not, indeed, the words always,

but the substance of what the Greek Testament said, or seemed to say, for, as aforesaid mentioned or described, I must have been dreaming, during a sleep brought on probably by my unwonted exercise in the open air. The talk with the boys, and the turning of my attention to the book, as already detailed, may account for the general character of the communication, or meditation, or dream, or whatever it was.

In a slow and measured voice, and with occasional abruptness, as if soliloquizing rather than narrating, the old book began

ITS STORY.

"New-Year's Day again! Ah, me! it recalls many a touching scene to me. How much has happened since I left my companions in the great house where we all came into being and went down with a number of strange books I had never met before, by a coach, to a country town in the West! The shopman to whom I went said I 'had been ordered,' and at once sent me alone to a lady

in the neighborhood. My reception by her was far from encouraging. One glance inside — and several frowns at my cover — that was the only welcome I had. I understood it all, however, two days after, when the lady, simply writing on my fly-leaf, 'Rev. Richard Thompson, with the gratitude of S. M.,' carried me to a young clergyman, and as she handed me to him, apologized for my plain dress, saying that her bookseller had misunderstood her order, and sent me instead of one in better binding. My new owner had no feeling on the subject. He valued me for my own sake. I had an honored place among the books that always lay on his table. He was a hard-worked man. Many a time I have seen him come in, worn and faint, and, instead of rest, he has had to write, or read, or receive persons who wished to see him. Many a time I wondered at his patience. People came to him about everything — servants who wanted places, and mistresses who wanted servants, governesses who wanted situations, and mothers who wanted governesses, and who would tell the history, faults,

and virtues of all the governesses they ever had, and require all the virtues of a saint and all the learning of a scholar, and all the accomplishments of a lady, for the salary of a cook. Then there were persons with grievances, with complaints, with scandals. Now and again my owner seemed gladdened by persons who came to ask him about the way to heaven and their own souls' state; and then he would brighten and talk so cheerfully to persons who could not refrain from tears; and he would kneel down and pray with them. Sometimes — and I could not restrain my indignation—they came, even well-dressed and respectable-looking people, asking him for money—him to whom I knew that every shilling was important — and he would give it, telling his gentle wife, with a sigh, that they had asked it, and must be in need, and he could not turn away. 'The Lord will give us enough somehow, dear,' he would say.

"I was very happy with him. No other book was as much in his hand. But it did not last. My owner became ill, and had to

keep his bed. He did not get advice for a long time, and, when the doctor came, he wrote a prescription at the table on which I lay; and, as he wrote, I heard him say to himself, 'Poor fellow, stamina all gone—this will soothe him, at least; but his days are numbered.' Soon after, I was brought up to his bed, and lay beside his pillow. He would try to read, now and then, as he could. It was soon over. I remember the day his wife and little ones came to see him die—the cries of the children, and the silent, still, suppressed sorrow of the wife—the words of comfort he spoke to her—then the thin, pale face lying back on the pillow, and he fell asleep.

"I had no owner now. There was a stir in the house a few weeks after, and an auctioneer sold all my companions and myself, and, indeed, nearly all the things in the house. The widow held me in her hand, as he was making out the list, and said something about keeping me—but at length put me down with the rest. 'God help us!' she said, 'we shall need it all.'

"I found myself in strange hands. A shopkeeper in the town had come to buy some tables from the minister's house. Hearing the auctioneer call out 'Greek Testament, gentlemen! Cheap for a school-book!' he recollected that his son had begun the Greek grammar. 'Valpy's edition, gentlemen!' said the auctioneer, which reminded Mr. Stone that he had bought a Valpy's Greek grammar, and suggested to him that there must be some connection between them. He did not doubt that William, his eldest son, would, some time or other, need this book also, and so he offered a price for me. It was shamefully small; but nobody else in the town wanted me, and so Mr. Stone carried me home, pointing out to several of his neighbors that he had got a book for his son William that had not a word of English from beginning to end. He really believed that William either could or soon would speak 'all the dead languages' fluently. William, who took no pains to correct this error, showed no particular feeling on getting me into his hands, only remarking that he 'could have a

cog for this, in spite of old Ratan,' which his father, not understanding, probably thought a quotation from the dead languages.

"I had little enjoyment in my new position. To be crushed in a leather strap along with 'Gough's Arithmetic' and a very old 'Cæsar's Commentaries;' to be used now and then as a weapon of war, and flung at a boy's head; to be covered over with scrawls from the 'cog' aforementioned—and which I found to be an English Testament—to help William's bad memory, till the Gospel of Matthew is hardly readable; all this was not pleasant. William was not like my late master in anything. He went to school because he must. He dragged through the class without pleasure to himself or his teacher. He never tried to learn a lesson that could be avoided; and he did not tell the truth. He occasionally had access to his father's shop, and used to take the money secretly, and lay it out on luxuries which only a mere child would value. He never mastered the dead languages, nor, indeed, any of the living. His teacher—an honest and conscientious

man, rather blunt in his way—did not wish to be troubled with him. He taught all that was learned by the better-class boys of the town, of whom eight or ten, perhaps, in whom, or in their parents, there was a little ambition, would be put to 'the languages.' They formed the advanced class of the school, were a good deal looked up to by the mere 'English' boys, and their success gave great satisfaction as well as great dignity to the master, and a great impetus to learning in the place. The key that opened the door to many of the professions was a very small key, and they got it from 'the master.' But it did not suit him to keep boys at work who would plainly come to nothing; and so he told Mr. Stone, in a good-natured way, that his son had more 'taste for commerce than for the literary pursuits,' which was quite true; and that if he kept him at the classics any longer there would be a 'good merchant spoiled.' Mr. Stone, as I could collect from his remarks, was in great uncertainty for the period of three weeks about this statement. Was it an affront? or was it a compliment?

Mr. Stone decided for the latter. 'He had no notion of his son going for genteel poverty, like Mr. Jennings and the Rev. Mr. Barrow, who, though college-bred men, he knew could hardly pay their bills in his shop.' He concluded that a higher order of mind was needed in his business than in theirs; and that William's true place was in business. I was thrown aside, William and I parting with mutual satisfaction. I was laid on a shelf, and cannot tell how long I must have lain there. William grew to be a man, succeeded his father in the business, had entire control of the money, laid out too much of it on himself, in horses, dress, and, I am sorry to say, drink; and eventually strange men came, took possession of the place, which William left, apparently in great grief, and I saw him no more.

"In a few days these men turned everything upside down, and sent many things out of the house, including myself.

"When I began to look about me in my new position, I found myself among a number of quite strange books, on a board settled against a wall in the open air, A poorly

dressed man walked to and fro in front of this board, answering the questions of such passers-by as stopped to look at his books. I had a dreary time here, till a grave-looking young man one day asked my jailer—for so he seemed to me—had he a Greek Testament? I was produced, bought, and paid for—my cost having fallen much below what it was at the first, owing in part, I cannot but think, to William Stone's use, or rather abuse, of me. My new owner was a minister, who, I found, had been ordained without any very high education. I learned this from hearing him one day tell his friend how he had come to possess me. 'The fact is, my dear fellow,' he said, 'none of us know enough. We don't prepare our sermons. We don't make ourselves sure of what the Lord says in the texts we set about explaining, and so we make poor, uncertain preachers. I was in Cork once, Thomas was with me—you know Thomas? We saw a meeting advertised, and turned in. A gentleman was speaking—a Rev. Mr. Somebody—no matter what—but a good creature apparently. He was deprecating discussion about

religion, and, taking out his pocket Bible, he read as a proof-text of his position, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." "My brethren," said he, "these words ought to be written in letters of gold," and he repeated them with increased emphasis. "Would we know the greatness of the mystery of godliness, let it be without controversy." Thomas thrust his elbow into my side, and gave me one of his queer looks. 'That fellow must have lost his Greek Testament," said he, when we came out, "or he would have known that 'without controversy' there means undeniably or confessedly." But I,' said my owner, 'might have made the same mistake, for I could hardly make out a verse in Greek. I bought books,' said he; 'I taught myself, and now I never preach on a New Testament text without satisfying myself of its meaning in the original.' It was a renewal of my old happiness. I was on the study-table again. We moved from place to place. My owner, I saw, was poor. He did not buy many books, and he had no rich people to give him any. Many a time he sighed

as he came upon a reference to such a book as Bengel or Calvin, thinking how much more he might know and teach if he could get these books to which such authors as he had, referred! But he did not murmur. Many a time his hand rested affectionately on me as he fell on his knees, while preparing his sermons, and prayed for skill and wisdom in writing and preaching.

"He had not much strength of body, and, when he got fever, his mind soon began to wander. He would try to explain texts to the nurse, whom a kind-hearted neighbor sent to attend him, and tell her what the words were in Greek. The case was a very peculiar one. Again and again he relapsed. His brain could not be quieted. The gentleman who sent the nurse at length came himself to see him. The poor brain was still upset. 'Ah!' he said, 'you are very kind. I did not expect you to come. You are a lawyer—not a doctor. You are most kind. A lawyer—it is *νομικος*—not the kind of lawyer you are—you will find it in Matthew—tempted Christ with questions. You would not tempt Christ—

would you? Christ who wanted to save them—they tempted!' and he launched out into a burst of feeling, half indignant, half mournful, till they had to beg him to be quiet till the morrow, and then he might be stronger, to finish the sermon, on which he plainly thought himself engaged. The tears rolled down the cheeks of the visitor, without his thinking of wiping them away. He came again many a time; he was there at the last; he was at the grave; he settled the little affairs of the widow; he took her eldest boy into his office, and gave him a salary from the beginning. He was in the study one day looking over some papers about a small Life Insurance, and the widow told him all her situation, and, in broken sentences, expressed her thankfulness for his kindness. His eye fell on me, and he took me in his hand. There was some talk about the love *he* had for me, and the end was that the lawyer accepted of me as a memorial of my late owner, perhaps more than anything else to gratify the heart of the grateful mourner. So here I am now, in a handsomer and finer library than I was

ever in before, but I am useless! My present owner never looks on my pages, never thinks of the question that made him weep—'You would not tempt Christ—would you?'"——

. . . . . .

Here the story ended, or seemed to me to end; I must have awoke just at this point. I became agitated. It recalled the death of a true, simple, Christian man. I never could bear to see death-beds. It always agitated me. I cannot bear to see so much distress. Yes; I certainly was sleeping and dreaming. Curious that I should dream all this. Tempt Christ? Well, I do not know. These briefs —my children—my position—I fear, keep me from thinking as much about Him as I should. Strange that this should happen on a New-Year's Day. I could read Greek very well once. I knew the Greek Testament when at college. I remember our professor kindling into enthusiasm—"These are the words Paul wrote, gentlemen. This is his very formula—*Πιστευσον επι τον Κυριον Ἰησουν Χριστον.*" God helping me, I shall think more of this. I shall not tempt Christ. I shall believe on the Lord Jesus.

FAMILY RELIGION.

"MOTHERS" the first Napoleon pronounced to be the want of France. The Abbè Hyacinthe told the gathered crowds in *Notre Dame*, that families and family-life distinguish English and German from French society. Without family purity and family religion there can be no prosperous congregation, Church or community. Let there be a low state of feeling in families, and the central portion of every society is in an unsafe state, for the congregation, the Church, and the State are concentric circles of which the family is the centre; or rather they are an extension for separate purposes, of the family.

Family religion does not consist in worship

twice daily; nor in the occupation of a pew in church; nor in sending the children to a Sunday-school; nor in receiving the visits of a minister. One or all of these things may be, and yet there may exist no religion in the family, no pervading sense of God's claims, no sense of obligation regulating the daily life and checking all selfish feelings and passions. "Grace" may be said over every meal, and yet the family may not eat their meat with gladness or to the glory of God. Religion may be much talked of; its ministers may be respected, and its literature read; and yet it may be quite unknown in its life and power.

We shall mention some of the obstacles that may almost, or altogether, make family religion impossible.

A father or mother can make it impossible, by being *intemperate, or profane, or ungovernable in temper.* How can lips that falter and stammer in drunkenness offer prayer, or speak devotionally? How can a man that is seen by his children or his servants "drunk and incapable," command his children and his

household in the service of the Lord? How can a mother guide the steps of her children in the ways of piety and purity, if her own are seen tottering in unwomanly intoxication?

Or they may make it impossible by any *gross inconsistency*. Let it be seen that whatever shows of godliness are maintained, the world is really sought and honored with all the heart and with all the soul, that fashion is more powerful than the fear of God, that even the very worship itself is determined by considerations of a worldly character, and their solid and sincere piety is rendered unlikely, if not impossible. For persons of whom such things are true to pray for and expect family religion is to expect not miracles of grace, but contradictions of God's own word. It is to sow one thing and expect to reap another. Children and servants will see that whatever may be thrown up on the surface of the life for ornament, or for advantage, the substance and main texture of the life are of the earth, earthy. They will believe in what the life says, and disbelieve the lips.

Strongly marked religious differences prevent

family religion. Let there be diversity of conviction as to the object of worship—one portion giving it to the Trinity only, another to saints and angels besides; or let there be diversity of conviction as to the mode of worship, one portion accepting Jesus only as "the way"—and another seeking the mediation of various creatures; and family religion is impossible. There may be individual religion—the very trials springing out of such ill-assorted unions may be sanctified, but religion, in the sense of a common love, and trust, and hope, binding all together and lifting all upward and heavenward together, there cannot be. Divided counsels, views, and interests in such families destroy the feeling of oneness which lies at the basis of all family prosperity, in things secular or things sacred.

The young people of a family can prevent family religion. Let them give themselves to the excitements and pleasures of the world, and they will do one of two things; either they will render religious exercises in the family a burden, or a trial, to their parents, or

they will drag their parents after them. I have known many cases in which parents have in their later life, followed their children into frivolities, against which they had protested in all their earlier years; and as respectable people cannot long persist in doing what they will not defend, they come to justify what they formerly deprecated. How can human hearts, through which the passions have had "free course" in the theatre or the like scenes of excitement, expel the riotous throng that the King of Glory may come in, and fellowship with Him be enjoyed at a family altar? In fact, a course of ordinary worldly enjoyment usually renders family worship impossible. Religion is felt to be an impertinence, and its exercises an intrusion on the realm of fashion. To be thoroughly at ease in such a life, men must be "without God in the world;" and it is a sorry enough spectacle to see professing Christians throw off restraints to which, perhaps, their very prosperity is due, that they may gratify, or advance the supposed interests of their children by a truce with the devil, and a pleasant

excursion into the domain which they profess to have forsaken. They avoid persecution in Vanity Fair by the purchases they make, and the attire they wear, and end at times by leaving it in doubt whether they belong to God or to Mammon.

Even servants may do something to hinder family religion, especially where their association with the family is close, as in the pleasant farm-houses of the land. I have heard it said, and I believe it to be true, that in Ulster, family worship was dropped in the families of many small farmers through the presence of Roman Catholic servants, who, as is well known, necessarily live as members of the family, and who made it disagreeable. The good man "takes the book," and the servant rises and "slams the door," in leaving. Well, it is a small thing, and a little Christian firmness and good sense would get over it; but alas! one does not always find these qualities, and so the exercise is tacitly abandoned, rather than have any unpleasantness.

Even where there is no such extreme case

as this, a Protestant servant, who is plainly dishonest, or intemperate, or ill-conditioned, playing at cross-purposes with a fellow-servant or with her mistress, may so disturb the harmony and general quiet of a family as to render the exercises of family religion different from what they would be where all hearts are felt to be in unison. It is a great blessing to have servants who, at least, respect religion. Would that one could carry out the resolve of him who said—"Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me."

Too much society even of an unobjectionable kind hinders family piety. It does not commonly thrive in "an open house." It requires a little domestic privacy. It is extremely hard to keep children under proper restraints when your friends are always with you. The little students of human nature soon find out when they can take liberties. The religious instruction of children is too apt to be suspended at such times, fathers and mothers "have so much to do." The natural wish then is to

have everything agreeable, rather than exactly right. The rod, which the highest authority sanctions, is rarely used when there are 'visitors in the house."

It is needless to say that *irreligious visitors* are a great hindrance. He who would guard his home to the utmost will say—"I will not know a wicked person." (Ps. ci. 4.) Parents profess great respect for the good, great aversion to the wicked; and their children see them at the same time obsequiously and deferentially court the society of Sabbath-breakers, profane scoffers, perhaps shameful sinners. The thing must strike them as equally mean and insincere. I say nothing of the direct evil influence such persons bring into a family, by the restraint they impose on religious conversation, by the example they set, by the seeds of evil principles they sow. It is right to be hospitable. It is also your right to choose your guests: and the rule of the same psalm is a safe one—"He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight."

There are other obstructions to family piety

so obvious that they need hardly be specified. Such is a business that is bad in its nature or tendency. "My father is engaged in his own business," said a young person. "What is it?" I asked, for I had only seen him hanging about the doors in questionable company. "The turf," was the reply; and one would be surprised if family piety flourished under his auspices. Storekeeping on Sabbaths and entertainments on that day come under the same general head. "A Sabbath well spent" braces the mind, steadies the whole nature, recalls great truths, fixes good principles. A Sabbath ill-spent wearies and unhinges the mind, weakens resolutions, sets us at war with right principles, and launches us into the society of those who have already discarded them. We have not enumerated all the obstacles in the way of religion at home, but we have mentioned a number large enough to awaken reflection. How many things are against it! It is all important—more valuable—even if there were no eternity and we only thought of present enjoyment—than equipage, or splendid residence, or costly attendance;

and yet how many conditions are unfavorable to its growth. Even if one member of a family say sincerely—"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart," how many things may make the resolve difficult of execution!

If any of our readers have not yet made the choice of a partner of the future home, here is a consideration to be kept in mind. Is there reasonable hope that she of whom you think as wife will help you in godliness, and strengthen your hands; or is she a "fair Philistine," without any sympathy with the Lord's people? Does he who offers you his hand seem to have given his heart to Christ? Will his manly strength help you upward, or drag you downward?

Parents! are you blameless in your life at home? Can you speak to your children with a good conscience, and an unblushing face? Are your pursuits, pleasures, friends, the books you introduce among your children and the employments you select for them, conducive to piety at home?

Your dwelling ought to be to you and yours the brightest and happiest spot on

earth. To it you and yours should ever turn, confident that "whatever brawls disturb the street," you shall find there harmony and repose. Gentleness, mutual trustfulness, and unbroken sympathy should render it to you and yours a type of heaven. "Father" should be associated with such thoughts as would naturally rise up to "Our Father in heaven." "Brother" should suggest the tenderness, strength, and love of the "elder brother," and the dwelling should be fragrant with that love which circulates for ever through the eternal home. How can this be, among all the strifes and sins of the world, if God be not in the dwelling, the fear of Him in each heart, and the sense of His gracious presence softening, subduing, and harmonizing the whole into one "body fitly joined together and compacted" like the Church of Christ, unto the edifying of itself in love?

THE POISONED CUP.

A STORY.

From the Journal of Jane Meldon.

FEBRUARY 6th.—In many respects a blessed Sabbath. Comfort in reading the Word, and in prayer. Our minister from home, and his pulpit supplied by a young man, who preached from Ezekiel i. 26. He is very clever, but—yet I must try to profit rather than censure. Still, the preaching that does me good must have more of my Redeemer in it.

13th.—Mr. Johnson again preached for us, and returned with my father to dinner. His sermon was a great deal better than the last. My father approves of him very much, and says he is sensible and companionable. But have I improved the day? I must give ac-

count of it. Ever since I began this journal —from seeing how Henry Martyn and David Brainerd were helped by it—I have noted my Sabbath impressions. I fear I make little progress.

14th.—This day we drove out to show Mr. Johnson the places about. He is very clever and very intelligent. I did him injustice in thinking him without spirituality. How hasty I am in judging! The day was a pleasant one—Mr. Johnson very kind to me.

June 18th.—Nothing to record but that Mr. Johnson, having supplied in the meeting-house of Dunmore yesterday, rode over to our house this day. My father has invited him to stay for the Bible Society meeting to-morrow. Read some of Edwards. Have much to learn.

19th.—At the Bible Society, the deputation, Mr. Henry and Mr. Gracey, told us the value of the Scriptures, which we know; and almost nothing of the Society, which we do not know. But they are good men Mr. Johnson rather severe upon them—he knows so much.

20th.—Talking with my father about the new Society for Temperance. He has a bad opinion of it. Mr. Johnson agrees with him, and says—

> "Religion never was designed
> To make our pleasures less."

He has certainly the best of the argument against me, but I am a poor reasoner. May I be guided from heaven! My father says he cannot bear sheepish men, who will not be sociable.

September 2.—This has been an exciting day, Mr. Johnson having come and met at our house our neighbor, Mr. Finlay, who has been lately licensed. I cannot but hope that my old school-fellow will be a good minister of Jesus Christ. My mother says his sermons have the savor of the "Fourfold State" about them. Argument again about temperance. Mr. Johnson certainly made it out very absurd. Read more of Edwards. Oh! that *I* may be saved from all self-deception! 'Sinners in Zion" may well be afraid.

10th.—My sister has returned from her

long visit. I am so glad. I can speak to her freely. How many are my blessings! May I be grateful!

October 24th.—Our communion. A delightful day. The tables very full, and a solemn, holy stillness in the house. As I sat beside my sister and father, with my mother beyond, I prayed that we might all be together in heaven. God grant it. Greatly solemnized, as our minister spoke of going into the unknown future, with its heart troubles, and temptations, and griefs. Oh! my God, I have been happy ever since I was born, for Thou wast good to me even when I knew Thee not, and now keep me always through good and ill. The singing of the 23d Psalm after the last table brought tears to many eyes. Oh! that all with whom we ate and drank in God's house to-day may sit down in the kingdom above!

As we walked home, the brown leaves fell on us, and their rustling was the only sound in the sober quiet of the grey autumn afternoon. It was a fitting day for so solemn a service.

25th.—Our communion Monday. Mr. Johnson preached, and he and Mr. Finlay came home with us. Sorry they do not agree, for I like my old school-fellow's thoughts and ways; but Mr. Johnson is so clever, and knows so much. He talks to me a great deal, but I cannot talk to him. I appear to know almost nothing.

28th.—Oh! what a poor creature I am! Sadly wicked this evening—my sister's foolish jesting about Mr. Johnson led me into such folly. God forgive me, and give me grace to rule my own spirit.

Christmas Day.—I know not what to write. My father has been so pleased with Mr. Johnson, that he spends the Christmas here. I do not know what to write—or think. Am I fit to be a minister's wife? He says I need not fear, that I can learn anything, and that I can help him. He has been wonderfully kind to me. And I am so much inferior to him. I hope I am not wrong, that my father is not wrong.

1827: January 4th.—So here I am in a new year, and for many days my poor journal has

been sorely neglected. No wonder, perhaps I have been engaged always. And now it is all settled, yet I tremble to think of it—I am so weak and stupid. I have been reading of the wife of Jonathan Edwards. I should need to be made again to be like her. But I must try and seek for help from God.

February 6th.—A year to-day since I saw Henry, when he came to preach for us. I did not like him much then—I know him now. Oh! that he may have the honor of winning souls for Christ, and that I may help him.

8th.—A long pleasant letter from Henry. Yet I feel a little downcast. It is painful to part with any one we have long known. Mr. Finlay called to say good-bye. He goes to America in a few days. He has made up his mind, it seems, quite suddenly. He seemed in low spirits. I am sure he will try to do his best anywhere, and I hope the Lord will guide and bless him.

Letter from Eliza Meldon.

26th December, 1827.

My Dearest Aunt,—I am not writing to

you to wish you happy Christmas, or merry New Year, or any common trash of that kind, though you know I wish you all that is good. No, aunt—I have news to tell you. I have been expecting it ever since I came home in September, and been bursting to tell you; but you forbid prophecy, and only value history, and so I had to keep my secret. Out with it now, then! The fact is, Jane is going to join the Synod—nothing less or more. The way of it is this: Mr. Johnson came here to preach, last spring some time, for our minister, and my father invited him, in the minister's absence, to our house. A "sense of duty" seems to have brought him to our quarter pretty often since then. Bible Society meetings, Missionary meetings, and all good occasions have been favored with his presence. Jane does not seem to have thought much of him at first, when her eyes were all right. But now they only see the cardinal virtues, all the talents, and all the graces in his precious person. Don't think, dearest aunt, that I am jealous now, because Jane is the Rachel of the family, and I am left be-

hind. I am trying to give you a dispassionate view of the case,

I saw immediately on my return something was the matter. Jane had got a lot of new books, of which I could learn no history, but that Mr. Johnson had been speaking about them. She had some new notions, too. I observed that she had taken to gardening, to admiring sunsets, and to collecting ferns, which I shall henceforth count as a decidedly bad symptom in man or woman. All this time Mr. Johnson's "sense of duty"—that is the word, aunt—brought him now and then to our house, and my hospitable father likes him much. He talked politics and all the rest to him, poetry and what not in great abundance to Jane, and prose to me in small portions. On the Temperance question, papa and he are one, equally "enlightened," and equally despising the new notions. Well, as a prudent elder sister, I made some allusions to the attentions Jane was receiving, when she became so awfully serious, ending in a good cry, that I saw the case was hopeless. In fact, she was rude to me, but I "made al-

lowance"—very good, wasn't it, in poor Leah to do so? And then this Christmas came, and either hospitable papa invited, or the gentleman invited himself—I can't tell which; and we have had what I call "family solemnities," and the requisite explanations have been made, and Jane Meldon is to become Mrs. Johnson in suitable season, as our own minister says.

Now, dearest aunt, you will want to know what we all think about it. Papa is heartily pleased. Poor mother hopes for a blessing on it, but is not very talkative on the subject. I, of course, ought to be very fond of my brother-in-law that is to be, and I think I shall become so. He is ready, versatile, and very intelligent. He has the power of interesting all kinds of people, and is very amiable and genial. If I were as religious as dear Jane is, perhaps I could feel the force of the wonderful eloquence his sermons have to her, and which she *knows* will make him very great yet. If you feel as the rest of us do, Jane will have the sincere and hopeful good wishes of all she loves best on her marriage,

which I think will come off in spring, if Mr. Johnson can get a farm in the neighborhood of his people, as he expects to do. There is great difficulty, I understand, in this.

Everything has two sides, aunt. You will remember Mr. Finlay, whom you saw at our house, when poor Alick was alive. My mother had a great opinion of him. She predicted long ago that he would not only be a minister, but might even be a professor. Sure enough, he made his way through college in Glasgow, and is now licensed. He used to come often to our house. Mother thinks him fifteen degrees "sounder than most of them." He must think a deal, for he does not speak much. He had a way of looking at Jane as if she was a picture, and I am afraid — but you dislike surmisings. Well, Mr. Finlay has formed the notion of going to America, but does not yet speak of it. I am afraid Mr. Johnson's proceedings have something to do with it. He is reserved and proud in his way, but very good. Now, dearest aunt, I have told you all the news of our small world; and sincerely hoping that

you will see many a Christmas and many a New year, I am, with all our loves, your affectionate niece,

ELIZA MELDON.

The Story continued from Mrs. F.'s Journal.

1827: March 28th.—This day week I came to my new home, and there has hardly been time to write a line in my neglected journal since. Indeed, since the year began it has had little attention. Yet how much I need every help I can get to keep me in the right way. Oh! that this happiness and excitement and constant stir may not be a snare to me! My husband is so engaged that I get little time to talk to him, but, please God, it will not be so by and by. The people came to-day and ploughed his field—they are very kind. Felt how stiff and awkward I was in trying to be kind to them in our house. My husband must have a farm, it seems. Could we do without it?

April 3d.—My second Sabbath in our own place of worship. Last Sabbath all was so new, and I felt so much that all were noticing

poor me, that I had little real worshipping To-day I was joyful in the house of prayer. Oh! God, help my husband in his ministry. Save him from the distractions of life, and help him to give himself wholly to his work!

May 10th.—Our communion. Day fine, and the house full. Mr. Henry and Mr. Simpson assisted my husband. Five tables, and the service not over till five o'clock. What a pity that it could not be shorter, and so the people could stay in all the time. My husband says it is the custom here. But could it not be altered?

May 11th.—Our communion Monday. After the service, the ministers and our elders dined with us and spent the evening. Much talk about other ministers, about the Synod's affairs, and other things. They stayed late. My husband says it is the custom to spend the evening in this way. Oh! how much wisdom we need to keep us from all evil, and to make us good and holy without being fault-finding or disagreeable. The Lord give us His own grace.

June 28th.—At the Synod in Strabane with

my husband. Heard a good sermon from Dr. Wright. Mr. James Seaton Reid is the Moderator now. He is a learned and good man. There appears to be a great division among the ministers. My husband says the angry feeling is caused by the Arians keeping one of themselves as Clerk after his professing Arianism. I hoped to have enjoyed the Synod, but it is very sad and painful. There is a very venerable minister, Mr. Elder, who has spoken kindly to me.

July 2d.—This terrible strife about the Arians continues. It sometimes goes with them, and sometimes against them. It was attempted to-day to put Mr. Cooke off the committee for managing the Mission Society. God grant that peace may be brought. There can be no good feeling left on the minds of the people by all this debating; and yet, what can be done? They must defend the right and hold up the truth.

Letter from Eliza Meldon.

June 17th, 1827.

My Dearest Aunt,—I have just returned

from Grantly, where I was keeping house for my sister, while she put in an appearance at the Synod in Strabane. From what I hear of the contentions between the "New-light" and "Old-light," I am afraid she has not enjoyed it much, but she says little on the subject. Dearest aunt, you have several times asked me about her, and I have not been able to say much to you in reply. She can hardly be said to be settled yet. Mr. Johnson found it necessary to have a farm, not only to have a place to live in, but because his means would be very limited without it; so she will be, in many respects, a farmer's wife. How he is to manage all his duties and his farm, too, I cannot yet see. His evenings are often taken up with "christenings" and weddings, besides the social parties to which, as a young couple, they are invited; and the people look for a deal of visiting, and expect the birds of the air to carry tidings to the minister of all losses, crosses, and sickness generally, in the parish. Mr. Johnson is a great favorite among them. He is pleasant and social. Indeed, I think Jane considers him too much so, and

often wishes the new Temperance Societies were set up among the people. But she appears very fond of her husband, and I am sure wishes to do her duty. She is left alone a great deal during his absence among the people, and I am afraid cannot have much society in the neighborhood, in which she would feel any interest. I think she is very happy; still *I* am not discontented, aunt, with my "spinster" condition, and I write you all this to satisfy your affectionate interest in dear Jane. I got home safely; and with all our loves, I am your affectionate niece,

ELIZA MELDON.

(*The Story continued from Mrs. F.'s Journal.*)

July 10th.—My husband from home all day. Oh! how I wish he could arrange his visiting on some other plan. Refreshments everywhere of wine or spirits. Why must ministers be treated this way? My husband says the people would be insulted if he did not partake with them. The Lord give him grace and wisdom.

July 28th.—I hardly know whether or not

to continue this journal. Am I to have secrets *from it*, or am I to put down all I think? Yesterday was a sad day for me. Dinner at Mr. D——'s, and several ministers there. I never expected to see my husband so. Oh! this horrid social custom. My heart is weighed down with apprehension. We are not yet five months married, and this sore trouble already! My poor husband is angry with himself and with everything to-day. God grant this may be a lesson to him.

1st January, 1829.—Another year, and many a blessing. Oh! how good God is to me. I have everything I could wish, and but one care—how many others have—and the Lord seems to have given us help. Since July last all has gone well. But, oh, how I wish there were no drinking, no treating, and no such hospitality. On looking back over this journal, what a hurried life we seem to live. My husband has never yet settled to his proper work as a minister. Farming, which he says is quite necessary, going to markets, accepting invitations and the like, put it out of his power to study, and the pulpit preparation

is crowded into Saturday evening. Only that he is so ready, what would he do? Oh, I wish we could get settled and have a home—a real, quiet home! My journal has been often interrupted of late.

17th April, 1829.—Let me use my pen for the first time since I have been ill, to write down my thankfulness to God. Psalm ciii. suits me and my darling child—may the Lord make him His own. How I hope we shall have more quiet, more home-happiness. The Lord teach us how to order this child.

Letter from Eliza Meldon to her Aunt.

GRANTLY, 17*th* *March*, 1831.

MY DEAREST AUNT,—I am writing, you see, from my sister's. I came here to nurse her, for she has been, you will be sorry to hear, taken suddenly and very dangerously ill, and it has been God's will to take her infant. Thank God her own life is spared. The doctor says she must have had some sore trouble; and, dear aunt, I am afraid it is too true. Henry is very kind and affectionate, and yet there is some sorrow between him

and Jane, so that when he is away she is nervous and anxious and impatient for his return. I observed this, and told her how unreasonable she was, when I was last on a visit here. I have been questioning Mary, who is a faithful and sensible servant, and, dearest aunt, I fear I know—though I can hardly tell you, poor Jane's sorrow. Mary tells me that her master does not know the management of a farm, and that his income is spent before it is paid him; that he does not always like to tell Jane how it is; that he is a great deal among the farmers, and that every-where he is expected to join them in drinking. Mary says that after an ordination dinner in Mosside he came home late, and that her mistress would not let her sit up, but waited herself. She says, in the middle of the night she heard crying, and fearing one of the children might be ill, she got up and went to her mistress's room. Jane, she says, was walking up and down, crying to herself, "Am I a drunkard's wife—a drunkard's wife!" And Mary hearing this, and not being called, did not like to go in. She is an affectionate

creature, and loves her mistress, who, she says, never raised her head since. Dearest aunt, I would not write this to you, for I know how it will vex you; but you might hear other accounts that would make you uneasy, and so I write. Jane is, I hope, going on favorably, but she has been so feverish, and the doctor says she must be kept very quiet. I shall not close this till to-morrow, and put in a line then.

18th.—A sad day, dear aunt. The fever got worse last night. The doctor ordered her head to be shaved, and all her beautiful hair is off. Her poor mind wanders on all kinds of subjects. Just now she is muttering to herself, "Why need they have ordination dinners?" And she is constantly begging Henry to come home early. I fear Mary's account of her sore sickness is the true one. Pray for us, dearest aunt. I have often been giddy and thoughtless, but I feel the need of the Lord's help now.

Your fond niece,

E. M.

From the same.

April 20th, 1831.

MY DEAREST AUNT,—Our poor sufferer is gradually creeping back from the grave's mouth. The doctor said she "turned the corner" on the twenty-first day. It has been a terrible time. This forenoon she sat up in the bed, and oh! if you had seen her when she looked out for the first time on the green fields, and the trees coming into leaf—such a sad, sweet smile of wonder and delight! She must be cheered up and get a change, but I am sure she will go nowhere without Henry. I mentioned, dear aunt, in one of my letters about the ordination dinner you may recollect. I now find it is all true. Poor Henry, it appears, made a clever speech, which everybody praised; and as the evening went on, and toasts were given, he had to drink a great deal, and, at last, it appears, he lost all command of himself. I should not have known of it, but it appears the Presbytery had to sit about it, and they sent Mr. Kinross to speak to Henry. Henry

was greatly agitated; but only think, dear aunt, he actually ordered in spirits and glasses while they were talking about the affair. Poor Jane knows nothing of this. I am afraid Mary knows more than she has told me. She is talking of going away to America. I should tell you it was from her I learned Mr. Kinross's business with Henry. Mary says "He was a nice man to come on such an errand." She appeared to think the Presbytery would do something else in the affair. She is very sorry to leave my sister, but seems bent on going. Now, dearest aunt, I have told you all I know. You will pray for poor Jane. As for me, I trust I shall yet be a Christian; but I am a poor, silly, wayward creature. Pray for me, dearest aunt. Do you think any one so foolish and wicked as I am could be the Lord's child?

Your fond, but miserable niece, E. M.

Story continued.—From the Minutes of the Presbytery of ———.

Tuesday, October 18th.—On which day the Presbytery met:

The committee appointed to inquire regarding certain charges affecting the ministerial character and usefulness of the Rev. Henry Johnson, of Grantly, reported with deep regret that there appeared to be too good ground for proceeding with the investigation of this painful case; that a brother had been deputed to remonstrate with Mr. Johnson, without any apparent result; that repeated interviews had taken place between this committee and members of the congregation; that the committee has been furnished with evidence from members of this church of frequent and public intoxication; and that the persons whose names are annexed are able to prove the same if summoned by Presbytery.

On the receiving of this report, Mr. Johnson begged leave of the Presbytery to resign his charge of the congregation of Grantly, intimated his intention of emigrating to America with his family, and expressed a hope that the Presbytery would furnish him with credentials.

Whereupon it was, after discussion,

Resolved—"That the resignation of Mr.

Johnson be accepted; that the congregation be placed under the charge of a committee, consisting of Messrs. ——; Mr. C., convener, to supply the people with ordinances; and that the Moderator, with Mr. —— and Mr. ——, be a committee to give Mr. Johnson such a letter as, in the absence of credentials, the nature of the case will admit."

Letter from Mary Porter to Miss Meldon.

PHILADELPHIA, 1*st August*, 1833.

MY DEAR MISS MELDON—I am sure you will wonder to get a letter from me, particularly as I did not stay with my dear mistress when you asked me to stay. It would have vexed you to hear why I could not stay. The ministers would have brought me to prove against master, and I could not clear him, and it would break my heart to speak against him. So I made up my mind to come here, and, thanks be to God for all His mercies to me, He led me in a right way. After coming here, I was engaged in New York by Mr. Hale: you mind his uncle living in Grantly; and then I came to Philadelphia, and hearing of a fine

preacher, Dr. Finlay. I went to hear him, when who should I see in the pulpit but Mr. Finlay, that went to Glasgow College, you mind, from beside my mistress's. The look of him made me think of all at home, and I could not keep from crying all the time he was preaching, and I could not help going to speak to him. He did not know me, but when I told him I lived with the mistress, he minded all about me, and asked me a deal of questions; and, to make a long story short, as he was coming to live here, and wanted a housekeeper, after a while, he engaged me, and two happier years I never spent than in his house. My only trouble, I must now tell you—but I hardly know how to begin. You got letters from my mistress telling you her sorrows since she came here; but I am afraid she did not tell you everything. She never would believe all about poor master. She used, poor dear, to call him on her sick-bed, "My much injured husband." When he was ill, my master—I mean my master now—attended him as if he was his brother, and the same with poor mistress. They wanted for nothing, which will be a comfort for you

to know, and my master told me he hoped he found mercy at the last. My poor mistress was like an angel, and her beautiful face was pale and thin, but nobody ever heard her complain. Only once she said to me it was well her mother was in heaven, for all this would break her heart. She used to cry over her children—darling children—and pray that the God of the orphan would be their keeper. She said how good God was in taking her two infants before her. Nobody could get her from master's bedside as long as he lived; and when he was buried, she just got ready, she said, to follow him. I think her heart was just broke. The dear little orphans are here, and the master is as fond of them as their own could be. He does not know I am writing this home, but poor mistress made me promise to write to you, and to tell you all; but I cannot do that. She thought you might like to know about her children, and that you would tell what would be best to do for them. The master, I am sure, would not give them up to any one but a true friend, and there is no one we could send them home with, even

if you were going to take them. So I just tell you. I am but a poor writer, and you must excuse all mistakes. Please to remember me kindly to the old master and to all inquiring friends; and I remain, dear mistress—for you were the same as my own mistress—yours respectfully till death,

MARY PORTER.

The Story concluded in a Letter from Eliza Meldon.

PHILADELPHIA, UNITED STATES,
March, 1834.

MY DEAREST AUNT—In my last letter I described to you how I was placed. The winter, of course, must be spent here, for when I arrived in the fall it was too late to think of going back till the spring. I mentioned to you how surprised Dr. Finlay was at my going out for the children, and how much he seemed afraid of its being thought he counted them a burden. Nothing could be warmer than his interest in you and all our family; and nothing could be nicer or nobler than his whole conduct in this affair. The more I hea

of all that happened with my poor sister, the more I wonder at the Lord's goodness to her in directing her where Christian sympathy could soothe her last weeks on earth. Dr. Finlay has been a true friend. He directed me to most comfortable lodgings with a countrywoman of our own, the widow of a doctor. She says she knew you in her youth. My intention was to start for home with the children as soon as the spring weather permitted, but circumstances altered all my plans; and only for you, dearest aunt, I would be content now to remain in this country the rest of my life. But I must tell you all in order.

Dr. Finlay (nearly all the popular ministers appear to be doctors here) was, of course, the only friend I had when I came out, and the children lived at his house. They are lovely and engaging little things; every one is fond of them. Eliza, the little girl called for my mother and for me, is a sweet child. Of course I saw a great deal of Dr. Finlay, though he has a very large congregation here, and a great deal to do. We had much to speak of —about home, about poor Jane, about her sad

troubles. Dr. Finlay says I used to be merry at his expense, and that he was afraid of me at home. I am sure I do not remember this. I know I always respected and valued him, and I remember my dear mother had great expectations for him. But, be this as it may, he says he had made up his mind never to marry, and considered that the Lord, by sending the children into his house and care, pointed out his duty—to take and train them for God. I need not, dearest aunt, go into particulars; the end is, that he has earnestly begged me to become his wife, to remain and help him to bring up the children, and assist him in his pastoral work. If you saw him and knew him, dearest aunt, you would decide for me as I am doing. He says we shall go over to Ireland, and let you see the children. He is so noble, so unselfish, and so pure. The people here all look up to him. One of his great works—"holiday work," he calls it—is promoting Temperance; and if you heard him speak to crowds of working people, who are at one moment laughing over his descriptions, and the next crying with him, you would see

what a world of good he is capable of doing. He has a large and beautiful church, built of brick, and fronted with marble; and though he is not long in Philadelphia, and only eight years in America, they say he is "leaving his mark on the mind of the people."

But, dearest aunt, I must not weary you; yet I wished you—the only one whose wishes I am bound to consult—to know all about this, to me, most important matter. There is only one thing to mention to you, and I hope, dearest aunt, the affection you always showed to me and my poor sister will enable you to understand my feelings, and plead my excuse if I am venturing to make an improper suggestion. You told me your kind intention was to leave me the means you have, when the Lord should call you away, which I hope will not be for long. Now, I shall not want anything more than I have. Dr. Finlay says we shall have "enough and to spare"—(would that it had been so with my poor sister!)—and if you feel it right to give to her children what you would have given to me, I shall feel happy, and they will grow up feeling that

they are not dependent. Forgive me making this request. pray that I may be fitted for the duties I am to undertake, Dr. Finlay says, as early in summer as he can take a month's holiday. It is whispered among the people that they will request him to go to Europe, believing that, to a mind like his, travel would be a great increase of his power to benefit them, and then I should have the pleasure of presenting him to you. But this seems a happiness beyond what might be expected "for the likes of me," as Mary (who was the faithful servant of my sister, and is now the same to Dr. Finlay) is in the habit of saying of herself. God bless you, dearest aunt, and reward you a hundred-fold for all your love and affection for your grateful and ever-attached niece,

ELIZA MELDON.

A SAFE CONDITION.

A CHAPTER OF ELEMENTARY THEOLOGY.

A MAN of fair secular intelligence once said to me, "My wife, sir, has no faith. Now, it's not so with me; I am naturally religious; I think I am half converted." I had regarded this as a piece of gross ignorance, but a friend told me he heard a London minister tell his hearers, without any qualification, that many of them were "only half converted;" and I have certainly met with some intelligent persons who looked for certain well-defined stages in their turning to the Lord, such as a period for awakening, another for repenting, and another for hoping and believing. Their mistake is countenanced by hasty reading of books like Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Re-

ligion in the Soul," which seek to methodize the movements of a soul under good influences. The protection against such mistakes lies in an accurate and comprehensive view of the aspects in which true religion or divine life in the soul is presented in the Word of God. This may be taken easily and simply for practical purposes, by examining the words used to describe godly people—some referring to their state, some to their character. The order in which we take the words is of no importance.

They are *redeemed.* This term has respect to the penalty under which they lay, and which Christ paid. So it runs (Gal. iii. 13)—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." His payment was not in coin, but in kind. So it runs in 1 Peter i. 18, 19—"Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ." These are all safe. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Isaiah xxxv. 10). The whole business of redeeming, however, is outside themselves. It has been done by Christ. It gains

for Him one of the names which His people pronounce with special tenderness and confidence. "Their Redeemer is mighty." The word is of the Old Testament; but the act of delivering shall be remembered in this form for ever on earth, for ever in heaven. The burden of the new song is—"Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" (Rev. iv. 9).

They are *saved*. This term has respect to their danger from Satan, death, and the eternal consequences of sin. The preaching of the cross "is to us who are saved the power of God" (1 Cor. i. 18). In thinking of us, settling the mode of saving, giving the Saviour, and connecting us with Him by faith, God was influenced by love, pity, and patient, forgiving generosity. "By grace are ye saved." Among the old heroic tales is that of Andromeda chained to a rock in the ocean that a monster might devour her, and Neptune be appeased. But Perseus saw and loved her, vanquished the monster, and married the rescued maiden. Fable as it is, Pliny fixes the scene at Joppa, in Judea. We know the truth of which it was perhaps a poetical and

unconscious prophecy. Bound down by guilt and awaiting our doom, the Lord saw, pitied, saved, and united to Himself. "The Bride the Lamb's wife" is the gathering of the saved. "Thy Redeemer is thy husband," O Church of the living God!

They are *pardoned.* This is wholly an Old Testament word; our translators did not use it in the New, but employed for it the equivalent "forgiven." This word has respect to the offence we gave the Lord by our sins. "Your sins are forgiven you" (1 John ii. 12). The offended God forgives for Christ's sake. "Even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you" (Eph. iv. 32). That to which God has respect in Christ is His atonement; hence it is said—"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. i. 7). To look for forgiveness elsewhere than through His blood is to look in vain for ever. If you have a broken bone to set you have a choice of surgeons: or if you have a case to be tried you have a choice of attorneys: but for your soul's salvation you have no choice. "One God and one Media-

tor." This forgiveness is *complete*, *irrevocable*, and *cordial*. "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgression, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah xliii. 25).

They are *believers*. This term has respect to God's word to them, which the godless reject and the godly receive. The noun is used only twice in Scripture, but we have the verb hundreds of times. When God's hand, laid bare on Ananias and Sapphira, solemnized men, and strengthened the Church, "believers were the more added to the Lord" (Acts v. 14). To them pastors give spiritual food, for they alone are living and can be fed; you cannot feed dead men; and to them they are to set an example. So ministers, however young, are to win respect. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers" (1 Tim. iv. 12). Happy that people whose minister can be held up as a pattern in "word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." What a sixfold shield covers true religion there from the arrows of the gainsayers!

They are *quickened*. "You hath he quick-

ened" (Eph. ii. 1). The Holy Ghost effects this quickening (Tit. iii. 5). The word is the means of giving life and renewing it (Psalm cxix. 50). "For thy word hath quickened me." But this can only take place in virtue of the life in Christ, to whom the Holy Ghost joins the dead soul, and Christ—the second Adam being unlike the first—is "a quickening Spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45). "The Son thus quickeneth whom He will" (John v. 21). In point of law, and in God's sight, all the people of Christ are entitled to life in virtue of Christ's rising from the dead. In point of fact, they are "quickened together with Christ" (Eph. ii. 5) when they believe His Gospel, and are actually joined to Him. In infants, the moment of regeneration or quickening, is the moment when, in His own unexplained way, the Holy Ghost grafts the dead limb of the first Adam on the living stock of the second; in others, the moment when self-consciously or not, the soul rests upon Christ for salvation, is the time of quickening, the hour of regeneration, the day of the new birth.

You cannot tell, dear friend, when *that* took

place with you? But you are living now? Let that suffice. Suppose you had a fever, and long days and nights of burning pain and unconsciousness are followed by the crisis and the recovery, what matter to you that you cannot tell the very hour when you turned the corner and began to creep away from the gates of the grave? You *are* better now; good food, plenty of air, and exercise will make you strong again. So it is with your soul. You are resting on Christ now. Grow up into Him in all things. You will have time enough in heaven to celebrate your spiritual birth-day, for there you shall know all about it.

They are *converted.* The new life given in regeneration, like the new power given to the needle when it is laid on the load-stone, turns Godward. So it is written, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 19). The word is used actively to describe the instrumental service a saint may render, in James v. 20. "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death." With a laudable

anxiety to give the honor of His unparticipated work to the Holy Ghost, Christians commonly avoid this mode of expression. It recals to many the man who staggered up to Whitfield in drunkenness with "Do you not know me? I am one of your converts." "Yes, you are very like one of *my* converts." But he emphasized the "my" to show that the Spirit of God had no hand in it. Any hand may be the instrument—the Divine Spirit is always the agent; but the instrument is sometimes put for the agent, as when we say "faith saves," or "the Gospel saves," neither of which phrases excludes the Holy Ghost or the Redeemer, to whom he bears witness.

The word converted is applied to Peter when it seems to mean "restored after falling." "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." God is His own interpreter; and the subsequent life of Peter, and the solemn warnings of his two epistles, disclose the meaning of what has been, we conceive, fancifully called "second conversion," but which had been better called in this instance recovery, and in ordinary cases "revival."

They are *children of God.* The verb "adopt" is not used concerning them, but the noun from it is, and they are given "the spirit of adoption." Any man may take a beggar's child and bring it up as a gentleman, but he cannot be sure of infusing the feelings and spirit of a gentleman. But when the Lord makes outcasts his children He makes sure that they shall feel towards Him as children to a father by putting His regenerating and sanctifying Spirit within them. The adoption depends on redemption. God sent His Son "to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 5). The result is that the redeemed are "heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ." At present they hold "promises to pay" to an incalculable amount. When these bonds become due they shall realize their value in an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

They are *sanctified.* To proclaim a person holy—"sanctify the Lord God"—to purify one not pure before—to set apart to a definite holy use—these are three senses in which

this word is used. In the third sense Christ sanctified Himself, in the second the Holy Ghost sanctifies men. When the Irish Militia were embodied in 1854, they created some natural excitement among the lads of the county town in which I then labored. My duties led me among them when small-pox broke out, and the invalids were placed under canvas. But the risk of infection did not, I observed, check the curiosity of the idlers, who could with difficulty be kept from the contagious spot. Suppose a lad forbidden by his parents to go near the tents, yet does go and catch the infection. His diseased and loathsome flesh proclaims his disobedience; and he needs now not only his father's forgiveness, but medical treatment. So it is with us. We have disobeyed and need pardon; but our sin is in us—an evil disease cleaving to us, and we need One "who forgiveth our iniquities, who healeth our diseases" (Ps. ciii. 3). Holiness is spiritual health. It is provided for us in the Holy Ghost, who comes, in Christ's name, to render us spiritual. The word "sanctify" is an

Old Testament word, but the result it de notes is enjoined in the New Testament, begun on earth in regeneration, and perfected in heaven.

It appears, then, from a consideration of these various words, that the safe state of the soul may be variously described, the terms being selected from reference to something in the previous condition or relation of the sinner. He was in darkness; now he is enlightened. He was blind; now he sees. He was in unbelief; now he has faith. He was far off; now he is made nigh. He was an alien from God; now he is a child. He was going after sin; he is now converted. He was corrupt; he is born again, and a new creature. He was in guilt; he is justified. He was not under the influence of God; he is now being made godly, or spiritual, or holy, for the Word and Spirit of God guide him. He was sinning freely; he is now penitent. These are not separate stages in his career, but separate descriptions of it. As when a drowning man is being restored, the breathing, feeling, moving, swallowing, seeing are not suc-

cessive stages in his reanimation, but separate aspects of his condition, any one of them implying the rest; so faith implies penitence, penitence enlightenment, and enlightenment the Spirit's work. To receive Christ is to be forgiven, to be born again, to become a child of God, to be saved. He who believes is converted, is born again, is saved.

It appears, then, that "half-conversion" is an absurdity. A man receives Christ or rejects Him, is born again or is yet in his sin. Men may be restrained by the Word of God, or the power of conscience, or the force of natural principle or of habit, but they are either in Christ or in sin.

It appears, too, that no one should say, "I am now awakened; by and by I shall be penitent; then I shall believe, and at length be a Christian." There is no need in the nature of things for the interval. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." Do you know to-day that Christ saves sinners? Then your instant and immediate duty, that will not and cannot wait for any other, is to go to Him. Questions

as to being born again, penitent enough, awake enough, instructed sufficiently, earnest enough—are all to be put aside, and you are to go to Christ and believe on Him. In the act of putting your soul on Him for salvation, you get all these questions practically answered in your interest, and you are born again, and converted, and made a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

THE CRISIS AND THE CRY.

A PLEA of an unwonted kind is urged in prayer to God by the Psalmist (cxix. 126), "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void Thy law." The idea of the Psalmist seems to have been, that men so generally and grievously sinned, and that efforts put forth to check them so lamentably failed, that nothing but the direct interference of the Lord could remedy the evil, and meet the wants of the case. He seems to speak under a profound sense of man's helplessness and guiltiness. He feels that the case is desperate, and from man he makes his appeal unto God —"It is time for Thee to work." If the cause still exist, namely, the general and grievous

transgression of God's law, then the cry should still go up also, "It is time for Thee to work."

Does the cause exist? There can be but one answer: Men have made void God's law of *order*. He best knows the relative values of things, and is entitled to prescribe the amount and kind of attention we should give to them. He has promulgated a law on this point. Jesus, His Son, puts it thus in Matt. vi. 33—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." The meaning is plain. If your child is dangerously ill, you forget a variety of important and lawful questions as to how he shall be educated, clothed, and get a profession, and you concentrate all attention on the one, "How shall he be saved from death?" till it is conclusively settled. This is common sense. So should it be here as to ourselves. Settle first the pressing, all-important business—of being saved—and other things in their places. This is not merely enjoined. It is exemplified. Solomon asked wisdom as the principal and most urgent thing, and got it, and with it riches

and honors. So God will give with His righteousness "other things"—not all "good things," for the Lord is careful not to convey that idea. Now there is God's law of order. Have not men generally made it void? Have they not reversed it? Have they not first sought the "other things," and believed that, by the way, in the intervals of the eager pursuit, they could well enough secure the kingdom? Have they not generally regarded the primary business of life as a quite different thing from seeking the kingdom? I appeal to yourselves, my readers, for the confirmation of this. God says—"First spiritual, then temporal; first the soul, then the body—first the life that is eternal, then the life that now is." Man says—"First the temporal, then the spiritual; first the body, then the soul; first the present life, then the eternal." What God puts first, men put last; what God puts last, men put first. His law of order men make void. It is so in the education of our children, in selecting professions, in choosing company for them, in choosing our houses, in laying our plans, and carrying out our

arrangements. It is so from the first, and as the pitching of the first note tells on the whole tune, so the choice made at the beginning tells on the life. We are worldly when we should be spiritual, and our stock of affection is invested in earthly things when it ought to be in heavenly. Our views are perverted by the early and fatal error. The rich fool is of more account in our eyes than the poor wise man, and the acquirer of large means we count successful when the prize has, mayhap, been won by the loss of an immortal soul.

Nor is this the only form in which men violate God's law of order. Convinced of sin, and impressed with the need and value of religion, we begin to set about it. We put on a few of its trappings, and incidental attendants; we lop off a few of the indulgences and sins to which it is opposed, and we set ourselves laboriously to reform. Now, God's law of order is quite different. It is "make the tree good" (Matt. xii. 33). God would have us begin where he begins. "A new heart will I give you." And, indeed,

until we do begin there, we have neither hope nor comfort in the occasional struggles we make under conviction of sin, after goodness and holiness. Until we have fled to Christ, our self-reform is of little value in time, and of no value as regards eternity.

God has, beyond all doubt, promulgated a law of *Equity*, a law of right to which obedience should be rendered. It is by no means so involved or complicated as human law necessarily is. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. vii. 12). Now, how is this law too generally treated? Do not the abounding frauds of our own time, and every time, answer? "It is naught, it is naught," saith the buyer, and when he has cajoled the simple vendor, and got a bargain, "he goeth his way and straightway boasteth himself." Is it not so? Are there not men of whom it would be said, "They will not do for business, they are too simple, not up to the tricks of trade?" Are there not men whose forte lies in the capacity to detect the sharper and

the cheat? Are there not multitudes whose business is a continual imposition on the weakness, the credulity, or the ignorance of their fellows; whose life is a continual swindle? Are there not many whose only hope of a livelihood is in trading on the simplicity, and even on the compassion of others? Nay, what is more appalling still, men believing themselves honest and truthful, have so far had the moral sense deadened, and so far fallen in with the system, that they do not much scruple to promulgate as "a matter of business," what could not be maintained as a matter of simple fact! How many lies our dead walls are made to proclaim! How many untrue advertisements are there on the pages of your newspaper! How much is disclosed in every law court, of deception, fraud, and injustice, following men through life, not only in the shop, or the counting-house, but absolutely hunting them on their death-bed, and victimizing them while their faculties are being blunted, and their vision dimmed in the valley of the shadow of death!

God has proclaimed a law of love for His

creatures, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts xvii. 26). He has said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark xii. 30). How is this obeyed? Let the answer come from the Continent of Europe. Listen to the measured tread of armed thousands, trained, equipped, hired at enormous cost, for the express and simple business of slaying, most effectively, their fellows. Look at

> "Those huge leviathans that make,
> Their clay-creator the vain title take,
> Lord of the sea, and arbiter of war."

"Ah, but," you say, "these are hostile parties, and the conclusion drawn is too general for the premises." Well, look at society among ourselves. Legal and police establishments are needed to keep us from wrong and violence to one another. The gallows is one of our institutions in Christian, civilized Britain and America, and our jails are among our finest edifices. And where God's law of love is not made void in some violent and aggres-

sive way, yet how many other violations are there of it? How many petty jealousies and little feuds, are there—wraths, strifes, quarrels, handed down from sire to son, from generation to generation? Is it thus men love one another? "Well, but this *is in the world.*" Then look into the Church. How much sectarian hate, contempt and jealousy are met with even there? Such an one does not belong to my Church, so I treat him as of a lower caste; or if he be very humble and submissive, I patronize him as a dependent. Such an amount of good is being done, but not in my Church. Then I doubt it, suspect it, underrate it, and only reluctantly admit it at last! Is it not so? Are we not all guilty in this thing? "For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart," in the days of Deborah. We think there should be great searching of heart for the division of Christians now. "Well, but this is in rival Churches. It is not a fair test. Look in single Churches and congregations." Now, can we say even here, that the law of love reigns paramount? Even within con-

gregations are there no envyings, and small jealousies and contentions? Are there no uncharitable sayings and doings? I declare solemnly, as a minister, I have known and met people with comfort for months and years, and never detected their iniquities and drawbacks, till their fellow-worshippers poisoned my mind, and destroyed the comfort of my intercourse with them by telling them; and the worst things one knows about many, have been learnt from those who should have flung the mantle of charity over fellow-worshippers. Surely this law of love has been generally and grievously made void in the world.

God has appointed a day of sacred rest, called it the Sabbath; and for man's good, and His own glory, made the Sabbath law binding. Some, indeed, find it convenient to deny this obligation, and to tell us it was merely a Jewish law, ceasing with the Jewish nation. They forget that it was one of the Ten Commandments. All the rest are binding; why take this from the bosom of the decalogue?

They forget it was binding *before* Sinai's thunders appalled the Jews, and declared a present Deity; for God said not "Keep holy," but "*Remember* the Sabbath." They forget that the Sabbath law dates from Eden, not from Sinai. "God rested," and taught man to rest. The Sabbath was instituted before the Jews, or Moses, or Abraham, or Noah, or Abel. "The Sabbath was made for man," not for Jews, and hence found a place in the Decalogue.

But, argument failing, they sneer at it as "*puritanical*," *i. e.*, of, or belonging to, or like the Puritans. Is this a reproach? Prayer is so; reading God's Word is so; family worship is so; sobriety is so; tried and trusty valor is so. England's greatness culminated under the Puritan sway. Nay, if we read history aright, our glorious freedom is Puritanical. So let us not be moved much by this sneer, and let us not, on account of it, undervalue that holy day which God made, as the selvage to keep the web of time from unravelling. But how is the Sabbath law made void? Look only to our towns. Listen

to the busy wheels of the pleasure seekers; listen to the whistle of the railway. Look at the open shops, and see the tavern and gin palace fling open their inviting doors. It would not be too much to say, that after a hurried compliance with some form of religion, to satisfy conscience, there are in this land some millions of people whose Sabbaths go substantially to the pursuit of pleasure, or the worship of mammon. Yet, we are not worse than others, not so bad as many. How truly have they made void the Sabbath law!

For the Sabbath God has made definite arrangements. He has enjoined the public worship of Himself, and the gathering of his people for the purpose. He attaches importance thereto. "He loveth the gates of Zion." The stated and public nature of the homage so rendered to Him glorifies Him more than the occasional and private service of His individual people. Yet, this law of the sanctuary men make void. How many forsake the assembling of themselves together! How many are there as guilty, but not as candid, as a man from Sabbath-loving Scotland, who

once told me in answer to my question, "I spend my Sabbath in the public-house, sir." But more than this, God has given a law to regulate the worship. Hear it from Jesus: "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Now, I do not speak of superstitious worship, nor of ignorant and erroneous worship, but of that offered by those who hold the truth. Look around our churches; how many faces betray no sign of reverence or godly fear! Eyes wander in vain curiosity, or stupid indifference, and not unfrequently the smile of the giddy indicates too truly that, whatever else they do, they are not worshipping God. They came avowedly to meet Him, and profess to believe He is specially there! Here is one proclaiming saving truth, simply and plainly; here is another proclaiming only the same truth, but with a statelier manner, or a more imposing elocution; yet, one is speaking to ill-filled pews, while impatient crowds worship with the other. Now, is it *God* or *man* that here presents the attraction? Is this worship of

God ; or of *taste*, or *talent*, or "originality"? It must be admitted that the law of the sanctuary has been sadly made void. We have become the votaries of genius, instead of devout and simple worshippers in spirit and in truth ; fastidious formalists, instead of hungry children coming to a Father to be fed, and opening our mouths wide that He may fill them.

God has revealed "*the law of the spirit of life* (Rom. viii. 2) in Christ Jesus." He has offered pardon through Christ's blood, acceptance through His righteousness, life through His spirit. Yet, how much is substituted for this? The religion of taste, the religion of the sacraments, of formalism, of self-righteousness, supplant this true religion. How few are simply trusting in Jesus, making Him all in all, feeling themselves complete in Him! Even in churches, how few are there who can say, "To me to live is Christ." They have made void the law. David had a profound conviction of the helplessness of man, and the inadequacy of means, and felt that the Lord alone could effectually interpose ; so may we. "*It is time for Thee to work.*"

There are various ways in which God works, as for example, in the way of judgment. The old world had made void God's law. The deluge swept away its race of transgressors. The sin of Sodom had gone up to heaven, and fire came down and destroyed it. The Ninevites had grievously transgressed, and but for timely repentance in forty days the city had been destroyed. Jerusalem sinned, and the Lord's word went forth, "Go ye up and destroy; take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's." So God does with his enemies. Awful words are written in Psalm xcii. 7—"When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever."

He works in the way of grace and wonderful mercy. You may see it in Isaiah xliii. 22–25—"But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings, neither hast thou honored me with thy sacrifices: I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor

wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." As a painter sometimes puts a dark background to throw his figure into clearer light, so it is here. When God thus works, men have a "spirit of grace" given unto them, leading them to seek the Lord. They are made to mourn for sin, to cry for forgiveness through Christ, and to turn from sin unto God. This is the Scriptural evidence of the work being of God—great effects on the body, great fluency in prayer, great love, great zeal, great confidence, affecting relations, being no signs for or against. But when the heart is drawn towards Christ, and His glory the chief thing upon the mind; when spiritual truth is valued and fed upon; when the life is purified, then there is certain and undeniable evidence that the Lord is working.

But, dear readers, God sometimes works in the way of judgment and mercy. This is illustrated in Romans xi. 22—"Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell severity; but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." A time of great outpouring of the Spirit, and deliv erance to the Church is a time of hardening and judgment to the impenitent and unbelieving. The sun that makes living plants to grow withers the dead; and the operations that draw men to Christ confirm sinners in unbelief, and enhance their guilt. The word, when it goes forth with power, and is the savor of life unto many, is the savor of death to the unbelieving. Men who live through such a season, and remain Christless, are extremely likely to continue so. God is near and is rejected. Then He may say, "Let them alone." Therefore, my dear readers, be your cry to God, that He may work in mercy. Leave the *mode* to Him. Do not prescribe. Seek to have Him work in you—not in the community merely, *but in you.* Use diligently

the ordinary means of grace. There is less risk of confounding excitement with a spiritual work, in using ordinary, than extraordinary, means. Do not despond. When iniquity comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against it. Our extremity is God's opportunity. Let us pray that He may revive us again, to the glory of His name.

COMPANION PICTURES FROM AN OLD MASTER.

"Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."—Jer. xvii. 5–8.

THIS is a long passage, but its images are so grouped that they may, with advantage, be looked at together; and by placing them so close to each other, the Spirit of the Lord certainly

intimates that they have some natural connection, and unity enough to be studied together.

The continental traveller reaches, in one place at least, the top of a mountain chain, where, looking northward, he sees below him a waste of rough and ice-clad rock, barren and ungenial, over which sweep biting winds and showers of snow; and, looking south, he sees, stretching away to the valleys below, groves of birch and chestnut, terraces of vines, crops of corn, flocks of cattle, and the sheen of waters dancing past the white huts of peaceful mountaineers. Something like this is the moral prospect suggested by this passage. On one side we have the blackness and the barrenness of an existence over which hangs a continual curse—"Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited" (vs. 5, 6). On the

other, we have the greenness and beauty of lives over which Divine blessing distils like the dew. Israel's tribes were once conducted through a solemn ceremony. About two hours' journey from Samaria, there is a range of hills, cloven across by some convulsion, with a stream, and at present the city of Nablus lying in the valley thus formed. The one side of this chasm is Ebal, on the other Gerizim. On these opposite hills the tribes were ranged, six on each, and as the blessings and curses of the law were called out, a hearty "Amen" from the tribes re-echoed over the valley between. Now, we have here the blessing and the curse, and if our consciences be in due submission to God, we shall be ready to add our "Amen" to both the one and the other.

THE CURSE

comes first in order. It is drawn down upon us by trusting in man, and making flesh our arm. The sin was committed by Israel when they sought protection from Assyria and the cavalry of Egypt, instead of seeking unto the

Lord, who had once desolated Egypt on their behalf. This sin is specially mentioned in Hosea xiv., for confession and abandonment by the people (vs. 1, 2, 3)—"O, Israel! return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto Him—Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips. Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy." He who falls into this sin flings off God, and all blessing with Him—"His heart turneth away from Jehovah." It is not roomy enough for two confidences. If trust in man is in, trust in God had to go out to make place for it. If a man will go into a cave, he has only himself to blame that he has no sunlight; and if a man's heart depart from God, he has only himself to blame that he has no blessing. So Israel found it. Egypt was a reed, to lean on which was to get your hand pierced through; and Assyria first took all the valua-

bles of the people for defending them, and ended by taking themselves. You can easily picture to yourselves a blasted tree upon the waste, from which leaves and fruit have long since gone. Summer gales and wintry rains are all alike to it. It drinks in no nourishment, and gives forth no beauty. Such would be an apt enough representation of the condition of Israel.

> "No portraits now our foes amaze ;
> Forsaken Israel wanders lone ;
> Our fathers would not know thy ways,
> And Thou hast left them to their own."

Such is the figure in verse 6. Indeed, Blayney, in his translation, renders it—"For he shall be like a blasted tree upon the wastes." Returning to this idea, and enlarging upon it (in vs. 11 and 13), a single specimen is given of the whole class of v. 5. The particular form of the sin is an overweening love of riches—a love so strong and unprincipled as to lead to unjust means of acquiring them. As the partridge hatcheth eggs she hath not brought forth, and as, being reared, the birds quit her side, and, obedient to the instincts of

nature, go to their own kind, so the man who dishonestly gets means shall lose them in due time. They will find out lawful owners. They will make to themselves wings and flee away. The wealth of the sinner shall be laid up for the just; and he, in the end, shall be written down a felon. This is the true meaning of the word "nabal" (or "fool"), and explains David's words on the assassination of Abner by Joab — "Died Abner as a fool dieth?" His hands were not bound, nor his feet made fast in the fetters—did he suffer as a felon? No. His arms were free, his feet unchained. He fell by treachery and assassination — a virtuous man before traitors. Under the Jewish laws, felony or treason would be the right word for forsaking God, who was the Monarch of the people, so that to disown Him was not only irreligion, but high treason, and punishable, as with us, by death. Do not think that this is the only form of sin over which the curse impends. This is only a specimen of the class of offenses described — a type of the crimes on which the curse is denounced. All who trust

in the fleshly arm—all who depart from the fountain of living waters, whatever the quarter to which they turn, come under the curse. They may make gain their portion, like Balaam or Judas; or power and place, like Joab; or ambition, like Absalom; or "this present world," like Demas; or mere sensual enjoyment, like the rich fool; but over them is suspended the awful curse from the lips of an angry God.

WARNING TO US.

Nor imagine, dear readers, that all this is Old Testament doctrine, having no counterpart in the New. Does any one think that, under the New Testament, there is no departing from God? no trusting in the arm of flesh? or that there is no curse upon this sin under the New Testament? Did ye never read what is written in 1 Cor. xvi. 23—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha"—accursed when the Lord shall come? Christ is the arm of the Lord, His creating, revealing, judging, saving arm. Let any of us, dis-

trusting Him, put our trust in anything else whatever, and it must be that we come under a curse. Let there be no light, and we have darkness and night; let there be no heat, and we have cold and frost. Night and frost are the absence of light and heat; and let there be no grace from God, and we have a hardened heart; no salvation by Christ, and we are under wrath and curse, due to us for sin. We are blasted trees on the parched waste, with a reckless mind, a seared conscience, a hardened heart; and then only one step more, *and we are lost souls!*

THE BLESSING.

Now we go to the south side, from Ebal to Gerizim. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is" (v. 7). For him, too, the trees of the field provide a figure. He is like the spreading sycamore by the river side, whose roots, while under ground, as its top above, drink in perennial supplies, and whose green leaves disregard the heats they intercept. Israel found this to be true through all the history of the

people. Trusting the Lord, Moses vanquished a proud, strong race, and gave liberty to a nation of slaves. Trusting in the Lord, Joshua swept the land of Canaan clear of its defenders—giants and walled towns together. Trusting in the Lord, Gideon, with lamps and pitchers, routed the myriads of Midianites; and, in the same confidence, Deborah and Barak prevailed against Sisera and his iron chariots. These servants of the Most High were strong, brave, and victorious, while the Lord was their hope. One chased a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. Spears and shields, chariots and chivalry, availed not against men whose battle-cry rung over the field—"The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." Marching under the unseen, but trusted, guidance of the Captain of the Lord's hosts, they had power to turn the tide of battle and to tread down strength. As, armed and sent from heaven, they fought, the stars in their courses fought against their foes, and the ancient rivers swept them away (Judges v.). Even in later and more degenerate times,

when the Maccabees emblazoned on their standard the inspired challenge—"Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods," and flung it on the breeze, they vanquished; and during *their* time, there flashes out awhile the ancient glory of Israel—a fitful light before it was quenched in darkness. Nor was it only on battle-fields that God's blessing prospered the people while they trusted Him. It enriched them in the calm pursuits of peace. It made silver like slate stones, and cedars like sycamore trees in Jerusalem, in the days of David and Solomon. It covered the Red Sea with fleets, and brought in the gold of Ophir. There never was yet in the world a population so happily situated as that which once covered the vales and vine-clad hills of Judah. Themselves proprietors of the fields they tilled, bound to the soil by ties that made them patriots, ruled by just and equal laws, and taught by a divinely arranged ministry, they had all the elements of human happiness; and they only forfeited these when they forgot God, and in their prosperity turned to idolatry.

HOPE FOR US.

But the God of Israel is our God; and the blessings He gave to His chosen nation are the signs and symbols—the early alphabet—by which the infant Church was helped to spell out the story of His boundless goodness. That story He is telling, and His Church is learning, until this day. To listen to the benedictions of the Bible should be pleasant employment for Christian ears. The first Psalm leads off the harmony—"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." How can he come to this? The 32nd Psalm takes it up—"Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." How can he hold on in this blessed estate? how get into this exalted place? Let the 89th Psalm answer—"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in Thy righte-

ousness shall they be exalted. "Cometh this blessedness upon the circumcision only?" Nay, upon all who believe, as Paul proves in Rom. iv. For hear Christ in the opening of the Gospel message on the Mount—"Blessed are the poor in spirit," "the meek," the "mourning," the "hungry and thirsting," the "peace-makers," "the persecuted for righteousness' sake." But what if they be afflicted? Why, they are blessed still. "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of Thy law." But what if they be tempted? No matter. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation," says James (i. 12). A crown glitters before the eye of his faith, as he comes up out of the furnace—a crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. But, he owes obedience? Well, to a loving heart, this is not irksome. "Blessed are they who do His commandments," says Christ by the loving John (Rev. xxii. 14), "that they may have right to the tree of life." Breaking them in unbelief shut man out from the tree of life. Keeping them in faith is the charac-

teristic of them who shall enter in and eat of it. But they must die? True; but even this is no interruption to the flow of blessing "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." It has been said that the voices of nearly all the lower creatures, like the cries of human distress, are in the melancholy minor key, for "creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now;" but assuredly there is a joyous melody ever ringing through the new creation, the early notes of which are struck here below, but the whole of which shall be played out in the new heavens and the new earth. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be still praising Thee." "Blessings abound where'er He reigns." Thus it is that blessings follow the people of Christ, from pardon to peace, from peace to holiness, from holiness to heaven. They are blessed in His house and in their own—blessed in justification and blessed in sanctification—blessed in chastening and in temptation—blessed in dying—blessed for evermore. Now, dear reader, do

you wish for *this blessedness?* Well, the way to it is here, in the Old Testament as in the New—"Blessed is the man that trusteth" in God, who is coming close up to you in Christ, and offering you life in Him; and, if you accept him, you trust God and are blessed. If you reject Him, you distrust God and are accursed. Accepting Him is *faith*, and, by that one *single* agent, God works all Christian work in us. I could take you to a large factory in which various operations are carried on. The whole is wrought by a stream of water. But a stream of water cannot spin, or weave, or cut, or smoothe, or press. No; but it can turn one large wheel, and that wheel, connected by joints and bands with a hundred mighty hands and a thousand iron fingers, keeps them all in motion and all at work. The wheel is doing all within, but the wheel is only an instrument moved by power without. Stop it, and you stop all. Now, so it is with faith. God brings the power from without to bear on the soul, and the soul believes —has faith. And now the soul is sorrowing for sin, because it sees God's holiness in the

cross· now it is loving because it believes God's love; now it is forgiving, because it believes God forgave; now it is pitying, because it believes in the awful future; now it is working, because it believes God blesses honest work; now it is fighting against sin, because it believes sin hateful and doomed; and now it is praying, because it believes God's promises. Faith is doing all this, as an instrument itself moved from without; and so all the blessedness comes through the faith or trusting of the Lord.

DIFFICULTIES AND DANGERS.

But you say, "I would like to do all this, but I cannot: this heart will not believe." Now, you see the difficulty is not a new or unforeseen one. God knows all about it far better than you, yourself. He says, "the heart is deceitful," and beyond the knowledge of any but himself. Some it keeps from begging mercy, through pride. Shall I submit to this humiliation? It is said of an Englishman of genius, that, a short time before his death, he cried—"Shall I sue for mercy?"

and after a long pause, "Come, come, no weakness; let 's be a man to the last!" Others it persuades to dismiss the subject altogether from their thoughts; others, that mercy may be had in some such way that their dignity shall be saved and their heart kept whole, forgetting that no sinner ever had the benefit of Christ's sacrifice who was not brought to render to God, in turn, the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Fancy such an one, misled by a deceived heart, this hour reposing in thought upon some favorite plan, his eye resting, perhaps, on his prosperous family, or his thriving mart, or his comfortable home. He has enough. "Soul, take thine ease," he is secretly saying; and the next conscious look he gives is at the Judge's face! The next conscious thought is, "I am at the bar of my Maker unprepared!" Oh! pity him, as the waste of time lies behind and the darker waste of eternity before; none to speak for him, none to speak to him, none to keep him in countenance. There, in front of him is God! He is very different from what he thought Him. All is different; time is

different; he himself is different. The life he thought so laudable is one mass of ungodliness — not *stained* with sin, for it is all sin, all godlessness. Oh! pity him, as his vengeful conscience now mounts the throne from which he thrust it, and anticipates the sentence from the judgment-seat! Yet, let me not draw out your pity only where must be blame. The heart is *deceitful because it hates God.* You are, you say, anxious to be His, and have His blessedness. The deceitful heart is the barrier in the way. Then in Jer. 17 : 14 is the course for you—"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved." You wish to be saved from the *curse*, but your heart rebels. Why, it is part of your curse. God would have you come and ask deliverance from it. You would be free from your guilt, but your heart will not submit. Why, its rebellion is part of your guilt. God would have you go to Him with it, and cry as in this passage. Fancy a man with general paralysis of his body: his speech is gone. He cannot even tell the symptoms of his case to the doctor. Shall

he, therefore, do nothing? Why, the very speechlessness is a part of his disease, and requires treatment. Let him, *as he best can*, show his helpless condition and be healed, if medical skill can do it. And so it is here. The heart is deceitful, and will not believe, or love, or pray. Why, that is the very centre of the evil. Go, and as you best can, looking to God's way of healing, cry to Him, and cease not to cry until you are healed. Is your soul not worth it? Why, I know patients who have gone on trying for years and years in the hope of getting bodily health; and I am afraid I know sinners who, if they put their history in a sentence, might say—"Once, I *did* think about life, and prayed and read a little, but I saw nothing come of it, so now I just go on like the rest." I tell you, O sinners! no human soul ever waited on God with its maladies, really willing to be cured, without being cured. Men, lifted up to heaven in privileges and in pride, have gone down to hell; but none, bowed down to the dust before the cross, ever failed to be lifted up to heaven. So I tell the Gospel to you. Oh,

embrace it, ye grey-haired ones! whose day of life is in the afternoon. The night cometh fast—faster every year. Oh, embrace it, ye hard-working, care-worn men and women, and ye busy, hopeful young men and maidens! It is the very thing for you—for all. "You cannot," says an old writer, "churn happiness out of a chest of gold; it will never come. You cannot make unfading crowns of fading flowers." And you, little ones, boys and girls! God wishes you to be saved. Do not think He takes no notice of you. He does, or He would not put in the description of restored Jerusalem that "the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in it" (Zech. viii. 5). Do you know the only thing with which Jesus, on earth, was "much displeased?" It was, according to Mark, when they brought young children to Him that He might put His hands on them, and the disciples rebuked them. And Jesus, when He saw it, was *much displeased*, and said, "Suffer the little children." "Oh, mamma!" said a little girl, on returning from church to a sick mother, "I have heard the child's Gos-

pel to-day." Now, here is the child's Gospel for you.

And now, believers! I have not time left to tell you all I should like. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel." You know how our forefathers used to set up stone crosses in the market-places. It was a good idea, superstitiously as it was wrought out. We should do our business as in view of a dying, risen Redeemer. The Jewish tribes were so encamped that all could see the tabernacle in the centre. Let us always have it, as on that sad day, that day of wonders—"Jesus in the midst." Even from heathens we may learn. The Chinese bring their idols into their shops, that they may buy and sell, and get gain in their presence. Let us love, and live, and labor, as under God's eye always. Amen.

WHY ARE THERE SO FEW CONVERSIONS?

WE do not take into account the inscrutable will of God, His revealed will, and not His decrees, being the rule of our life. We inquire humbly and cautiously into those reasons that appear to lie within man's own province. If the question were raised, Why are not more persons educated? it might be replied, Some have no teachers; some, no time; some, no wish, and some no capacity. These are proximate reasons independent of any sovereign and unknown appointment of the Great Ruler. They are such reasons as man has to do with. The corresponding reasons—within man's province—are the subject of this inquiry—Why are few converted?

1. Some do not think conversion necessary. They either count themselves engrafted into Christ in some other way than by a conscious turning to the Saviour, or they consider all the ends and value of conversion attained in a gradual growth in religious life. We speak now of those who *do* think of such themes—not of the large class who will "not consider." Not expecting conversion, they do not, as a rule, experience it. Nor do we take into account those who are truly godly without having consciously passed through a definite process of change; who in fact are converted people, though from the want of this definiteness as to the beginning of their spiritual life, they attract less notice; and of whom, we trust, there are some in all ordinary Christian flocks. We speak of those who, in ignorance or pride, expect no conversion.

2. *Many do not know the way of life*—and this though hearing it weekly for years. The ignorance on this point among regular hearers is incredible to any but close-dealing ministers, and inexplicable on any principle but that "the god of this world blinds the minds

of men." They have a power of keeping themselves in ignorance on this subject they could not exercise on any other. I have met with educated, moral, and steady hearers of the Gospel faithfully preached, who *held salvation by works*, unconscious of its being anything different from their ministers' instructions, and whose hope was expressed in these very words, "I have led a fair life on the whole." I have listened to this from persons who must have heard this very error denounced in set terms a hundred times.

3. Some ministers, right in the main, do not clearly preach the truth. They sometimes qualify it. They sometimes cloud it. They sometimes add to it. They sometimes misplace its portions, preaching human deadness to inquirers, and holding out promises to those who think they have quite enough. Sometimes they set forth Christ as the only Saviour, and then begin to talk about means of grace in such a way as to mix up in the hearer's notions the use of the means and the work of Jesus as combined in the business of saving; the result of which is that men go on

in the use of the means, and do not face the question, Am I saved?

4. Some preachers live in such a way that no moral, not to say spiritual, power attends their words. Gentle hearers say or think, "he is not a nice man." Ungentle hearers say, "he is not what a minister should be." The vanity, or the worldliness, or the selfishness, or the laziness, or the self-indulgences of a minister, as far as they are known, destroy his power to do good. The best of us are far from what we should be; but a plainly inconsistent man is not a sharp sword in Christ's hand, while "a holy ministry is an awful weapon in that mighty hand." An evidently worthless minister not only does no good himself—he hinders others around him. If he be settled, he is worse than a plague which kills its quota and is gone, for he is a stationary curse in spiritual and eternal things. If he move about, he is like one who carries with him the worst conceivable infection.

5. The deadness of professors hinders conversions. They are not visibly different from

the unconverted. Persons of integrity and spirit are conscious of being, for all practical purposes, as good as the so-called converted. They say, "Become religious — where's the use? To be only *like them!* I can be as good and make no work about it." That visible holiness of saints that would stop the mouths of such is too rare. Gradually the children of inconsistent parents, the pupils of inconsistent Sabbath-school teachers, the servants of inconsistent masters, and the associates of inconsistent friends grow out of the belief in the reality of religion, and the deepest feeling produced by the most pungent and powerful appeal from a minister will be, "He is an able man."

6. Bitter struggling for the means of life hinders conversions. A poor, crushed, wretched people, shivering always on the brink of starvation, embittered in soul, and made savage by the constant cries of animal wants, are in an unhopeful spiritual condition. Their minds are not only pre-occupied; they are rendered obtuse and animal-like. They would say if they spoke out—in fact, they often *do*

say—"Easy to talk of our souls—look at our bodies!" Physical destitution does in them what drunkenness and indulged lust do in their guiltier superiors. They are like the Hebrew brickmakers, when, sullen and despairing, "they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage." All success, then, to schools, to factories, to industrial enterprizes! They cannot save men, but they help to keep men accessible to the saving truth. Prosperity often destroys the hunger of the soul by satiety; but misery works the same sad result, when it benumbs and stupifies.

7. But the great crowning hindrance to conversions among us is *the simple love of sin.* I speak now of these lands in which Christian truth is commonly set forth. If a man in earnest has an ignorant or worthless minister, he can mostly go elsewhere. If there be no human guide near, the Word is in his hand. "Where there is a will there is a way." But there is no will with the majority. They do not wish to be converted. They cannot conceive of themselves as being happy without

their sin. They want immediate enjoyment. They must have it. Conversion would clash with that. Therefore no conversion! That is the simple truth. That they must die, have a soul in danger, are doing wrong, ought to be better—they will for the most part admit all this and far more, but they mean to get present satisfaction and happiness in sin. Conversion, or becoming religious, would prevent that, so they will not be converted. They choose sin for their present good. The young man who does not wish to be known to any minister, the business man who does not wish to have a clergyman "running after him," desired to be let alone in their own away of getting happiness. To talk of them as "poor sinners," as if some unhappy fatality *outside themselves* kept them in misery, is sheer nonsense, or empty and false sentiment. They should be told that it is their own deliberate choice not to be converted. God calls and they refuse. They prefer the pleasures of sin to the service of God. Thousands intellectually believe the history of the Redeemer, and mean to be converted when

nothing else would be safe. And we fear the proportion of these deliberate despisers of life and peace—so set against God that what He hates they love, what He cannot look upon, they cannot do without—who are saved at last, is small. Considering what the human mind is, what the Gospel is, what God is, what conscience is, what evil is, and how, in the operations of His grace, God respects the laws impressed on human spirits by Himself, we tremble to think of the future of those who, in the light love the darkness. Oh, reader! if the love of sin is keeping you from being converted—if you are unable to think how you would ever be happy without your sinful thoughts and ways—you are on the edge of a deep pit, and may fall in any moment! Cry to God to save you. Flee to Christ at once. He alone can help you. Remain as you are, and your feet shall slide in due time. The Lord, who made your spirit and calls you to Him that He may save you, can surely make you as happy in holiness as you try to be in sin. He makes the holy angels happy. Go to Him in Jesus Christ and,

confessing the evil of your heart and life, throw yourself on His mercy. He will not cast you out. Refuse this and I tremble as I forecast your future. "I would be religious," said a lady, "but for one thing, religion forbids cards." "And cannot you do without cards?" said the clergyman. "No, I could not be happy without them." "Then, Madam," replied he, "cards are your god, and they must save you." Oh sinner! you love sin more than God. It is your portion, your god. Shall He say of you, "He is joined to his idols: let him alone?"

A CALL TO THE CARELESS.

GOD HAS VARIOUS WAYS OF AROUSING MEN. To arrest the Apostle Paul the Lord Jesus revealed Himself in glory and majesty, showed He was the Messiah, identified His people with Himself, and made Paul His willing servant. The heart of Lydia was opened, as the light of morning falling on the sleepless eyelids, opens them. When the Apostle was on his voyage to Rome, through perils, and prophecies, and shipwreck the souls of all were brought to the truth; and the jailor at Philippi, in breathless terror and through frantic despair, that had all but made him a suicide, was brought to Christ and peace in Him. Long training and patient instruction

were expended on some of the disciples, while a word from Christ, even as he hung on the cross, went right to the heart of the dying thief and transformed him into a Christian. On some the Lord gently lays His hand, as when a mother kisses her babe out of sleep. To some He comes in the tempest and the thunder. Sometimes a long process goes on as in the opening of the buds of spring; with some there is the loud and terrific shock, and, as when after long mining, the rock flies open in the explosion, so the stony heart is reft asunder that the King of Glory may come in. A fashionable sinner is recorded to have been awakened by seeing the word "Eternity" at the head of a tract. The man may be named who sat in the theatre, and, as if a thunderbolt had lighted on him, the thought came—"In what a place I am—what a life I am leading—whither am I going?" and he rushed from the place to pray. As the conviction came to the Treasurer of Candace, while he read the roll of the prophet Isaiah, so it comes to men as they peruse their Bibles; and as the thousands at

Pentecost were smitten under Peter's preaching, so multitudes, under the preaching of the Gospel are brought to feel themselves sinners. It were wrong to prescribe the way in which the Lord should come to us. It were wrong to take up from the biography of men, from preconceived ideas, from tradition, or from common talk, any particular manner in which we would have the Lord to awaken us. The great thing to be concerned about is, that *we are awakened.* Perhaps, as those of us who have hope look back, we can point to various agencies that 'ed us to think. With some it was the entreaty or the teaching of parents, or the prayer we heard them offer for us—with some it was the faithful and affectionate dealings of ministers—with some it was the death of relatives or friends—with some it was the report of what the Lord had done in converting others—and with some the Spirit of God wrought, we know not how, till the happy result made it manifest. The great thing, dear reader, is to be awakened in any way God pleases. Oh! careless souls! let us use means once again with you. Let me

cry unto you in Christ's name once again. Christless souls! there are two things about you, which it is your interest to know;

1. *You are wrong.* You do not indeed now feel yourself to be in rebellion against God. A ship's crew mutiny, and throw the captain overboard; but they must, for mutual safety, have some commander, so they choose one, and all goes on well thenceforward. Every sailor does his duty. But they are mutineers for all that, and when the deed is known they will be tried for their lives, as surely as they come to land. All the obedience and subordination of the rest of the voyage will not cancel the crime of mutiny and murder. They may regulate sail and helm, and keep watch and guard, as promptly as the most loyal sailors afloat, but all they do they do in the character of mutineers. And just so, sinners, you may be good citizens and subjects, but you are doing all in the character of rebels against God, aliens from Him, despisers of his Son and of Himself, and as surely as you come to meet Him you must be put upon your trial! Oh! unawakened souls, that

you knew this! You would not surely go on as you do. You would not surely neglect your Bibles and refuse to pray, and despise the one only way of deliverance.

2. You are *wretched.* It does not matter that you do not feel it. When you see the poor drunkard tottering along the street, unconscious of his shame, talking his drivelling talk, smiling his foolish smile, you cannot but say "Poor wretch!" When you enter the asylum and see the group of your fellow-creatures intently busy about some trifle, or hear them utter their incoherent talk, all unconscious of their pitiable situation, you pity them all the more from their ignorance of their state, and mingling with your pity for them is your gratitude that you have reason still. When you walk the streets at night, and the painted priestesses of vice flaunt past you in real or affected gaiety, their seeming ignorance of their condition does not prevent you, as you think whence they came and whither they are going, from saying, "God help them, poor wretches!" And, oh! sinner, it is so with you. You are *wretched*,

though you know it not, all the more because you don't know it. Samson slept on the knees of Delilah, and she took off his hair—the seat of his mysterious strength—and experimented on him to be sure it had departed from him, and he went out and wist not that the Lord had departed from him. So it is with you. Oh! that you would come to know this in time. You will be awakened some time, but then it may be too late. "It is high time to awake out of sleep." God may be calling to you this day for the last time, and though you see no angels with averted looks departing, and hear no sound of the approaching thunder of His wrath, and behold no hand writing on the wall, "Mene-tekel," yet all this may be really the case with you. A time comes to every godless man when the last offer is made—and then the book of promises is closed for ever—when the Spirit pleads for the *last* time and the voice of persuasion and entreaty is heard no more. Oh! sinner! you need to be plainly spoken to. Lot lingered when the fiery storm was just about to fall on guilty Sodom, and

you are lingering in the same way while justice is pursuing you. Oh! flee to the city of refuge. Like Paul and Silas, there are thousands of glad hearts to-day praising God in the joyousness of the ransomed ones—and like Paul and Silas praying—ay, even for you; the Spirit of God is moving among men, and prison doors are flying open and chains falling off. God is shaking the prison, and you, like the keeper, are like to destroy ourselves. Oh! sinners, "Do yourselves no harm;" come like the jailor, and put, as he did, the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

LIFE IN CHRIST.

THE biographer of Fox tells us how that gifted man used to fling out his arms, expand his broad chest, inhale the air of spring, and, in intense enjoyment of existence, exclaim: "What a glorious thing is life!" And so truly it is, even in the lowest sense in which we use the word. What a glorious thing is vegetable life! Look at bursting buds and opening flowers, at growing grass and springing corn, at towering fir-tree or spreading beech — and what a mysterious, beautiful, glorious thing is life in all these, expanding from the seed, each after its kind, according to laws that have held good since "God planted a garden, Eastward, in Eden." And none can look upon

the winged fowl, the prancing steed, or the vigorous man, without seeing what a grand thing is animal life. How much more glorious is intellectual life, with its memory making the past present, its judgment weighing all things, and its fancy anticipating the future, and bringing the distant near! But rising in dignity and greatness far above these is spiritual life, the life that Adam had in Paradise, in common with the angels of God, when his holy soul held converse, without terror, or shame, or embarrassment, with the Infinite Creator, where there was no gulf between the Divine and the human, but that necessarily between the former and the thing formed — when God talked with Adam and Adam walked with God. This was truly dignified life — only wanting perpetuity to be stamped upon it to convert it into life eternal. Now he that hath the Son hath spiritual life, and that life shall be eternally prolonged, so that he that hath the Son hath eternal life. For the Bible is a circle, in describing which the Divine hand begins in Paradise and ends there. In Genesis God dwells with men, and

He does so in Revelation. In Genesis man is in Eden, with the river that watered the garden, and the trees yielding their pleasant fruits, and in Revelation man is in the garden of God once more, with this advantage, that no serpent is there to beguile, and no forbidden fruit to allure.

Then the practical question for all is, "How is this life to be had?" In John i. 4, we read of Jesus — the Word, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." As men may know what is hidden in our hearts by our speech — as our audible words reveal the invisible and the secret within us — so Christ, the Mediator, reveals the unknown and hidden things of the invisible God. Now, in this Revealer of God, in Christ, the Mediator, says John, "was life, and the life was the light of men." It is not as the Creator, nor as the second person of the Godhead, but as Mediator, He has this life. It is in the same character in which He says Himself, John xiv. 6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." This last clause defines the character

in which Christ speaks — the only Mediator. Whosoever comes not by Him, stops short of access to the Father. Whosoever is not in Him as the way, is out of the way and lost whosoever is not in Him as the truth is in fatal error; whosoever is not in Him as the life is dead in sins. And proving that his mediatorial character is here presented, we read in John v. 26, "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." Now, it is only as Mediator that the Son has anything given to Him. To have the Son, then, is to be in connection with Him as Mediator. Thus only is life to be had. Here, then, is an irresistible plea for Evangelical preaching — that only by the mediation of Christ is there life. There may be the most clear-sighted theism. Rising through nature up to nature's God, a man may have the loftiest and justest ideas of the wisdom, power, and Godhead of the great First cause, but if he have not the Son he has not life. His telescope may sweep the heavens, and to his look the record of Divine creating power may be very legible; and in

his ear Arcturus and Pleiades and Orion may "their great original proclaim," but if he have not the Son he has not the life. Or his eye, fitted with the microscope, may chase the movements of countless creatures in the drop of water, and see the resistless evidences of design and power; or turning from this liquid globe, he may expatiate over the world, feel "a pleasure in the pathless woods," and "a rapture on the lonely shore;" he may play with the ocean when, like an angry war-horse, it chafes and stamps upon the sand; and he may lay his hand upon its mane; he may cry out in delighted wonder —

> "Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
> Glasses itself in tempests;"

but, with all this precious knowledge — all this lofty teaching of natural theology — if he have not the Son, he has not life. The sentence of death is still over him; the power of sin is still ruling within him; and he is on the other side of a great gulf fixed between God and him, over which he has no desire to pass.

Then, how is a man to have the Son? Let

anything be offered me and accepted by me, and it is mine. I have it. Let Christ be offered me and received by me, and I have Him. This acceptance of Him is faith, according to 1 John i. 12, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." He that believes on the Son has all the elements of life within him. This is reasonable. For God made man for his eternal favor, and only sin disturbs the arrangement; but he who believes has this disturbing element removed. God made man for Himself, and only sin separated man from God; but when Christ is believed in, the sin is put away — the barrier exists no more. Guilt on man, sin in man, and the consequent unwillingness to come to God—this threefold cord bound man in his dead condition, and hard as it was to be broken, it is broken, when the guilt is transferred to Christ, when sin in us is condemned and crucified, and when, by the drawing of the Holy Ghost, we come to God through Christ. The burden is off, and the enmity is slain, and the quarrel is concluded, and the living soul is back again in

the place where God put it at the first. "He that hath the Son hath life."

Now, dear readers, let us learn from this, the essential oneness of our life here, and life hereafter. He that hath the Son now hath life now — the same life essentially, he shall have for ever and ever. He who quits this existence without this life shall never have it. Was any question ever asked so interesting as this, "What shall we be? What is to be the future of our life? When millions and millions of ages have gone, and yet others begin, we shall be — but what? With what feelings, in what condition, how employed?" Can any question be equal in momentous interest to this? To explore the source of some mighty river — to penetrate the secrets of the frost-bound pole, to see what creation is like in the heart of Africa, what adventurous spirits have toiled, and dared and endured! But here is a secret more important, nearer to us — each of us — personal to each of us — What shall we be? When the apostle saw the mysterious book in Revelation, and none was found worthy to open it and loose

its seals, and read it, he wept much. And if the mysterious volume of being were utterly sealed to us, we might weep too. Yes, many a brave, but bewildered spirit, that has tried to look into the terrible fathomless depths of being, that has come to the brink as it were of a gulf, been arrested there at the limit, and felt itself powerless to penetrate the gloomy immensity, and has been confounded, has wept in bitterness of despair! But the Book is opened. He that hath the Son now has life — the life he will always have. He is essentially what he will always be. The love that draws him to God now shall draw him to Him for ever. The joys that gladden him now shall have power to charm him for ever. The character which he endeavors to acquire now he shall have for ever. The society that delights him now he shall have for ever. The bias of mind and tone of spirit which he longs and prays for now he shall have for ever. He knows not, indeed, what he shall be — what new senses may be given him, what new powers, new employments, new objects of expectation, new possessions, but He knows he

will be perfect. His life here is all imperfect. It is a heap of vain attempts, painful failures, little beginnings, small successes, "like a plantation of stunted trees on a bleak and cheerless heath." But then he will be perfect. This life begun in him now, given him in Jesus, shall go on—on for ever, with enough always in the eternal future to give the zest of hope, and enough in the blessed present to furnish perfect enjoyment.

Readers, do you feel that such a life is the natural continuation of what you are now living? Is there any unity between such a life as this and yours? For, remember, death will make no essential change in you. Your character shall pass through death untouched in all its essential elements. Throw into the furnace the mass of iron and clay and it shall be reduced to its elements, and the iron shall come out from the clay; but it is the same iron in itself that it was when it entered the furnace. It undergoes no transmutation; and so you and I shall find. Death will swallow us and we shall go into the grave, but we shall come forth from both in all essential

respects the same, with tastes, affections, desires substantially the same as when we entered the valley in which body and spirit are separated. Are there not some of you looking to death as a saviour, or, at least, a sanctifier. You say—"I am now, I admit, all wrong, but death will change me, and put me in such a new state that I shall feel no motive to sin." No, indeed, my dear reader, death will do nothing of the sort for you. There is no such power in death. It is not given to the king of terrors to transmute evil into good, any more than the furnace can change dross into good metal. Death can set the seal of immutability on you. What death finds you it can fix you for ever. If it find you believing God, loving Him, trusting Him, making Him your chief joy, it can stereotype that as the character of your being for ever. If, on the other hand, it find you alienated from God, able to satisfy yourself without Him, and, in fact, most happy when farthest from Him, it can stereotype *that* as your character for ever. It can—not as a judge, but as an executioner—give effect to that sentence, "He that is filthy

let him be filthy still, he that is holy let him be holy still;" "He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son shall not see life." If, then, you have in the arms of your faith a Redeemer loved and trusted, you, like Simeon, as he held the infant Jesus, can say—"Now, Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

There are some among you who have the Son and have this life; but you are afraid to own it, lest it should be presumption, or appear presumption. Anything like assurance you shrink from. You are afraid of a high degree of peace, lest it be self-deception. You think it is better to keep away from strong confidence and full joy. Certainly we would warn you against any confidence not founded on Christ, and any joy not drawn from Him. But we would advise you, on the authority of the Word, to hope—to strong, confident hope, to assured hope, and to a hearty joy. He that hath the Son, he that believeth with ever so feeble a faith, hath life. So saith the Lord. Faith is not the merit-

orious cause of life. It is not the price that pays for it. If it were, I might say, "I have not, perhaps, enough of faith, and so may not have life." But faith is not the meritorious cause of life, any more than the windows are the cause of the light in the house. The windows are the means by which the free light enters; and faith is the means by which the free life enters our souls. That life is God's gift through Jesus Christ, and it is ours when we believe, as the light fills the room when the windows are opened. Now, suppose the Lord Jesus should come to your dwelling — to your room—and that in serene majesty He stood before you, named your name, told you your past secret history, as He did to the woman of Samaria, and ended by telling you He would absolutely and surely bring you to heaven, would there be any merit or goodness in hesitating about the hearty belief of His Word? Would there be any pleasing humility in saying, "I hope He will keep His word and bring me to heaven?" Would not this be to insult Him? And if He has not appeared but written the message, is not the

case the same? Nay, is it not stronger in the written promise than the spoken? We bind men to their promises by getting them in writing. Then, why not believe fully, and have a full peace, a full assurance, a full joy? "But," you say, "if Jesus appeared it would be different from the Word—we should realize it more than the word: we should then heartily rejoice." But why? Is not faith the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen? It is from want of faith that the Word of Christ is less impressive to you than his appearance would be. Men and brethren, do you believe the Scriptures? Many of you have rested on Christ. Then it is but to believe, to be assured that he will lead you for his name's sake, and accomplish His purpose, and having given you Himself, give you eternal life. Why, has He not given you an earnest of it already? Heaven is the abode of peace. Have you not had some degree of peace already within vou? That is heaven begun. Heaven is the abode of love. Have you not had some feeling of this to God, and to the Lamb, and to

His people? That is heaven begun. Heaven is the place of holiness. Have you not been striving after holiness? That is heaven begun. Heaven is the place of God's revealed glory. Has not some of that glory shone into your heart already in the face of Jesus Christ. That is heaven begun. These are the growing shoots of God's planting—the springing corn of God's husbandry, and He will finish the work in righteousness, He will gather the corn into his garner. Do not then divorce this life, believers, from that which is to come. Let there not be pernicious estrangement and unnatural dissociation between this and the future portion of our one life. "He that hath the Son hath life." Let this be remembered, and it will "lessen the false importance of the things of this world," and slacken their hold on us, and it will bring us daily into hallowed and improving fellowship with the world into which our spiritual life shall carry us—the world of glory.

THE PLACE OF REPENTANCE IN THE EXPERIENCE OF A CHRISTIAN.

IN the anxiety to proclaim a free Gospel, the Scripture doctrine of repentance is in danger of being pushed out of its place. In guarding men against delaying their acceptance of Christ, until they had attained suitable penitence, we may, through the looseness of our speech, or the dimness of their apprehension, leave the impression that repentance is of little or no account. But this would be entirely opposed to all Scripture teaching. Whatever the word may mean, "repent" is often on inspired lips, and whatever the place of this attainment, it shines conspicuously in the crown of Christian graces. The Old Testament enjoins it on sinning Israel, by the voice

of kings and prophets. The annals of the covenant-people illustrate it abundantly. The Baptist preached it. The Saviour made it an essential of salvation to His hearers, and His apostles declare He was exalted to bestow it upon men. Clear judging and accurate speaking are surely desirable on a theme so important as repentance thus appears to be.

Both God and man are said to repent. In relation to the Divine Being, however, the word can plainly bear no sense but that of altering His providences, for His purposes do not alter. And so it is said (1 Sam. xv. 29), "The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for He is not a man that He should repent." Whence we may learn how foolish it is to build our views on texts, regardless of their connexion, and forgetful of the circumstances in which they came forth from Him, who to be understood by man with His present faculties, must speak in man's language.

Repentance may exist in relation to *temporal* or to *spiritual* things. The son in the parable, at first disobeyed his father, but after-

ward repented, and set to work in the vineyard. And the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. A man repents a bargain he has made; or he repents an offence committed against God. In both cases there is *after wisdom*, as the word rendered repentance in our New Testament literally means. In both cases a view of things is present to the mind, which, had it been entertained at the time, the thing would not have been done, and which, while it lasts, will prevent the repetition of the act.

Once more, repentance may be produced in different ways. A man gets a sight of God's law and its awful penalties, and says, "I regret I exposed myself to all this," or a man gets a sight of God's love and says, "I regret that I despised and outraged all that." There is regret in both cases. There is after wisdom in both cases. But the eyes of the mind are not on the same objects in both cases. In the former, the man is looking at himself going down into the gulf. In the other, the man is looking at God's wonderful pity. Self and God—these are the two ob-

jects, through looking at which, the after wisdom comes. And to these words it is only needful to add a syllable to get simple and intelligible definitions of two kinds of repentance, the selfish and the godly.

Selfish repentance has no regard to God, any more than as He is terrible to self. It terminates on self. Let God be ever so loving, merciful, patient, only let him not be just and holy, and this repentance would never exist. Sin, therefore, is not hateful to selfish repentance, except that it brings self into trouble. That it offends a good God, grieves a compassionate God, that is nothing if it could be indulged without imperilling self. No wonder that selfish repentance is not saving. It might exist, does exist, to a degree now inconceivable to us, in hell. It may be very sincere on earth, but it is only another form of the sinful, selfish, corrupt nature. It is the human heart shrinking from suffering, but not yearning after God. Godly sorrow, on the other hand, eyes God mainly. That *He* should have been sinned against, seems the terrible thing. That such love and goodness

should have been despised and insulted, seems intolerable. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned," said David, when he had wronged Uriah and others, and deeply injured and disgraced himself. This is the human heart, yearning after God, saying, "Nearer, my God, to thee; even through the fires."

We may trace in some degree the origin of these opposite forms of repentance. Let there be disclosed to a man God's justice, with its terrors as embodied in law, and let there be no intimation of mercy, grace, or other amiable quality in the law-giver, and we shall have a certain sorrow, which some of the writers agree to call "legal," because the law has produced it. The same term would describe any effort made in ignorance of the Gospel, to satisfy law by a supposed due and adequate regret. This legal sorrow is for all practical purposes the same as the *selfish*, and is, of course, without any saving quality.

But let the same man have disclosed to him the mercy and grace of the Law-giver, and let him say, "I am sorry for offending

such a being," and he has an entirely different feeling from the legal repentance. And as the mercy, love, and other amiable qualities of the Law-giver shine in the person and work of Christ, or in other words, are disclosed in the Gospel, the regret produced thus, is called *Evangelical* repentance.

It seems to follow that to produce *selfish* or *legal* repentance, it is only necessary to dwell on the evil consequences of law-breaking, in the style in which a miserable pamphlet, entitled, somewhat doubtfully, "Hell opened to Christians," describes and attempts with woodcuts to represent, "Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire." It seems also to follow, that in order to produce Evangelical or godly repentance, it is necessary to declare the whole of the divine character, and as that character is displayed in Christ; in other words, to preach the Gospel.

It seems also to follow from this, that faith must, in the order of things, precede repentance. A man does not tremble till he believes the law's terrors to be real; and a man does not melt and weep till he believes God's love

and mercy to be real. We do not mean by that statement, that a man will receive faith as a gift from God on the first of the month, and on the second, or at any subsequent time, receive repentance; for if he have faith on the first, he will, on the same day, have repentance. We only mean that, in the order of nature, the man first believes God, and then repents, as we first perceive a calamity, and then lament it. So repentance is "the tear dropped from the eye of faith;" and so the Catechism, than which no little book is more needed just now, is right when settling the order thus—"Faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life."

It seems also to follow, that a preacher will be quite correct who says to his hearers, "Do not put off your coming to Christ till you have any given amount of repentance; repentance in this place, and connection, does not improve your condition, or tend to your safety." For, in saying this, he only declares that law-work is not saving work. Jesus does not say, "This is life eternal that they might know Thy terrors," but, "that they may know

Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." But he will be quite wrong, if he willingly impress the people with the idea that repentance has no place in the Christian system, or the Christian life, or the preaching of the truth. All the history of inspired preaching is against this one-sided view. The Gospel preacher may well say with an Old Testament prophet (Joel, ii. 12, 13), "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

And if the Lord bless his preaching, the result will be as in another Old Testament prophet (Jer. xxxi. 9), "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born." Nor is this

out of harmony with New Testament truth. The woman who stood behind Christ, weeping, at Simon's table, had nothing legal or objectionable in her tears, for our Lord said (Luke vii. 47, 48)—"Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is for given, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, thy sins are forgiven." And it was along with the fullest statement of saving truth that the apostle said to the people, "pricked in their heart," into whose souls the light was entering, in whom an after-wisdom was being wrought of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 38), "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." If anybody insist on declaring that that word could only mean strictly, "Change your mind," since the apostle could not be supposed to prescribe anything else to inquirers than looking to Christ, we reply: the apostles were not intent on propounding a system of philosophical divinity, but were dealing prac-

tically with practical men, awaking to a sense of sin, in whose heart the streams of suitable sorrow were beginning and should be encouraged, to flow; and they, therefore, like Paul to the Jews and Greeks, testified (Acts 20, 21), "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." If we wish to practise a kind of spiritual quackery, and dexterously to convey to our hearers the notion that we have some fuller gospel and some nearer, and straighter road to peace than other Evangelical Christians, let us dwell one-sidedly on the second part of this apostolic testimony, and decry all who speak of both, and in their proper places; but we do so at the risk of producing a superficial religion, and we can hardly say to our hearers, as Paul did in the verse preceding that just quoted, "I kept back nothing profitable unto you."

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

THE easiest triumphs the devil gains are over men who are kept *indifferent*, who sit still, and make no movement towards salvation, or, which is the same as sitting still, go with the stream—follow on according to the course of this world.

But times come when men are disturbed and roused out of this condition, when they think something about salvation, and will be doing something towards it; and it is now that *errors* become part of Satan's machinery. A man sitting by the roadside does not go wrong—it is the man walking onward who goes wrong, and if he be off the road, the faster he walks the further he goes wrong.

Hence, strange as it may seem, the time of religious earnestness is the time of most mistakes. A slumbering community does not think enough about religion to err about it. A people roused up to think and speak and write about religion will be assailed by Satan with errors. If they will sail away from the harbor of indifference, he will hang out false lights to divert them from the safe and straight course. What a multitude of errors the Apostolic age brought forth, and how much trouble the Apostles had to combat them!

Some said that circumcision was needful to salvation, like the Galatians.

Some said that "the resurrection is past already."

Some said that our Lord's second coming was just at hand, and gave up their business, and bewailed their dead friends, like the Thessalonians.

Some said that our Lord had only an apparent human body, not a real; and John had to correct their error in his first epistle (chap. i. 1).

Some said, we are saved by grace, and may live as we list—turning the grace of God into licentiousness. And finally,

Some made the Lord's Supper, in practice, an ordinary feast, and used it for gluttony and drunkenness.

The same thing occurred in other forms at the Reformation time—a fact which is used to damage the Reformation by one-sided writers, who do not see that it is equally damaging to primitive and Apostolic Christianity; that it is a necessity, not of true religion, but of true religion coming into contact with corrupt man, and into collision with a subtle and powerful enemy of souls.

The same thing may be looked for in a measure in any time of *revived religion.* I think we may say, with profound gratitude, that few years pass that are not marked by special religious earnestness over regions more or less wide: at such times and in such places, questions are raised and discussed that have not been so agitated before.

We do not object to this canvassing—anything is better than apathy. We have more

health and usefulness in the rolling river, even with its rapids and brawling noises as it dashes over the rocks, than in the stagnant marsh that breeds fever and pestilence. Only let the Church, with her Bible in her hand be able to answer these questions to all honest inquirers, and there is, by God's blessing, nothing to fear from the freest and fullest investigation.

One of the first, and surely most important, of these questions is, "What is the gospel?" Several causes produce mistakes on this point among good people, into whose hands the Devil will obviously prefer to put an error if he can. It has no chance with the bad—it has with the good.

1. A laudable desire to be very simple. For this end the gospel is reduced to a single statement, a single text, a single fact. Sometimes it is this truth (1), Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; or this (2), He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification; or this statement (3), He died for you; believe that, and you are saved.

This looks simple, and is attractive. But

simplicity, like gold, may be bought too dear. I am to give an account of that noble Church, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists. Suppose I content myself with saying, "They are a pious people," I have made a "simple statement," but surely a defective, unsatisfactory statement! It is true, but it is only a fragment of the truth; and it might be justly complained that I had given a meagre and inadequate account of them. And just so, if, for the sake of simplicity, we reduce the Gospel to a proposition in this way, and make *that* the exclusive message, we give a meagre and inadequate account of it; and our hearers may well ask, Why, then, this lengthy Bible, with its gospels, prophets, and epistles, its precepts, promises, and warnings?

2. Good men are led into mistakes by the successful handling of particular truths by other good men. That noble band of men whom John Wesley led and organized, roused up a self-satisfied, formal church and a sleeping community, with the word, "Ye must be born again," "Except ye be converted," etc.; and it might be thought, at first sight, that

this cry, having been so much owned of God should be constantly and exclusively repeated; but every one knows that a community in a different state will be appropriately addressed with a different truth. On one occasion John Wesley was met, and his money demanded, by a highwayman. He gave him his money, and the man departed. Mr. Wesley called him back, and said, "The time may come when you will repent and feel remorse for your wickedness, and if it does, remember that 'the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin,'" and so dismissed the man. But the man afterwards waited on him, recalled the circumstance, and stated it was the means of his conversion. Now, it would have been supremely foolish for Mr. Wesley to argue that, God having owned that truth, it was to be his exclusive message to all men. Yet these two practical mistakes are committed now, and the results are, (1) a narrow *view of truth*, and (2) a narrow and intolerant and censorious spirit, and (3) a shallow and superficial type of religion.

What, then, is the Gospel? It is a revelation

of God's mercy to fallen men through Christ the Mediator. It is the presentation to us of *the person and work* of Christ, to be received and rested upon by us—not of a mere doctrine to be believed, however firmly, nor a mere proposition to be accepted, however heartily. It offers a living Person, divine and human, the Son of God and the Son of man, to be accepted by us in His offices for our salvation, and to whom all this Bible bears witness. Now, I would as soon think of gathering up in my hand all the waters of a noble river that flows through many a province, and satisfies the thirst of man and beast, and saying, "I have them all here, here, and nowhere else," as holding up a single text, or a single truth, or a single proposition, and saying "Here is all the Gospel—here, and nowhere else." The river of living water flows through all this Bible, and men approach it from different sides, and in different ways, and drink and live.

Let me try to make this plain to you. The Gospel was preached to Adam in the garden —"The seed of the woman shall bruise the

serpent's head." That promised seed, received by faith, was a Saviour to Adam. He had the Gospel. Paul tells us the Scripture —*i. e.*, the Lord in the Scripture—preached the Gospel to Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed."

"Ah! but," you say, "all this has passed away, and Christ has come, and now the Gospel is one definite thing, one simple and exclusive truth, the same to be presented to every one, and he who does not present that, does not present the Gospel." Now, let me appeal to your judgment regarding this statement.

Suppose I am sent to preach the Gospel to the heathen, who have gods of their own making among them. Where is the one proposition I am to tell them? Nowhere in Scripture. I am to show them that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; that He is holy, just, and sovereign as a judge, and that we need to be prepared for dealing with Him. Will any one tell me that I am not preaching the Gospel all this time? Why, I have apostolic

authority for this course. In Acts xvii., Paul's discourse to polished heathens at Athens is given at length, and it is just such as I have described—a masterly compendium of natural theology, resistless logic, skilful appeal, and even heathen poetry. Will any one tell me Paul was not preaching the Gospel at Athens all this time?

Suppose I am sent to preach to Jews, who own God in the Old Testament, but deny that Christ came as His Son and our Saviour. What am I to do but, from a review of their own history, and of the prophecies, and of Christ's life and death and resurrection, prove to them that this is the Christ? Will any one tell me I am not preaching the Gospel to them? Why, again we have apostolic example, for we have the preaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, in Acts ii.; and in the Temple, in Acts iii.; of Stephen, in Acts vii.; and of Paul at Antioch, in Acts xiii. Will any one tell us that Paul did not preach the Gospel there?

Suppose I am sent to preach the Gospel to a self-righteous, but intelligent, people, who

have low views of God and His law, and correspondingly high views of themselves—am I not to show the holiness and spirituality of that law, their shortcomings, and their need of a perfect righteousness? Am I to be told I am not then preaching the Gospel? Why, this is the very thing our Lord did in the Sermon on the Mount, and other addresses of His to the people. Am I to be told that He did not preach the Gospel? Suppose I am sent to persons who are steeped in carelessness and sin,—am I not to take pains to show them their sin and its consequences? Am I not then preaching the Gospel? Why, this is the very thing our Lord had to do with the Samaritan woman, and Paul with Felix. Am I to be told they did not preach the Gospel unto them? Suppose I am sent to persons who, with a certain religiousness of feeling, hold Christ to be a creature, and His death only an example of heroic self-sacrifice, or suffering innocence,—am I not to show the Divinity of Christ, and the nature of His atonement? And is this not to be reckoned preaching the Gospel?

Undoubtedly we have in Scripture different classes of persons, addressed by our Lord and His apostles in different forms, yet, to all of them the Gospel is preached, and there is no collision or conflict between them. They set forth, in different aspects of it, the one grand reality—viz., the person and work of Christ to be received by men for salvation, and they present each that view of the truth which the condition of the hearers suggests and demands. But what if Peter should claim to be preaching the Gospel exclusively and pre-eminently, or assert that only one side of the truth should be held up, because God blessed it at Pentecost—would not this be a grievous practical mistake? Or suppose that I,—having thought it good to set forth, in a former paper, a particular part of the truth,—should give you the impression that the excellent rector of the next parish, for example, failed to preach the Gospel every time he preached anything but that—should not I be doing evil, the worst form of it I could do, to a minister of the Gospel? But this is, I fear, being done in some instances, and it

could not be censured in too strong terms. "Oh!" says A., B., or C., "I never do this." Very well; we have only to do with those who *do* fall into this practical error. It is *their* uncharitableness and narrowness we denounce.

Suppose I am to persuade my fellow-countrymen to go and colonize and possess a splendid island of the ocean, with noble rivers, splendid soil, and rich mines. I go to the farmer, and I tell him of its fertile plains; to the miner, of its rocks rich in ore; to the merchant, of its rivers, highways for a wealthy commerce, and seats for crowded cities. Do I contradict myself, or exceed my commission? And suppose my countrymen refuse to go, satisfied with barren and uncertain prospects at home—do I travel outside my commission, or fail to execute it, because I show them the worthlessness of their present possessions? And this, dear friends, is the thing we have to do. God offers you *Christ in all His offices*—your prophet, to teach you; your priest, atoning and pleading; your king, ruling, defending, and governing;—in all His

characters,—brother, example, friend;—with all His possessions—righteousness, acceptance, holiness, victory, glory. We present HIM to you freely. We dwell on the various parts of His work, and on the glory of His person, to win you to Him; and we declare unto you His law, to show you how to glorify Him. We declare unto you the whole counsel of God, and we plead with you that you receive and rest on Christ, and that you live for and by Christ. *We wish you to be saved.* One part of truth may arrest one, and another, another; but as long as Christ is its substance, it is the Gospel.

You may have read or heard of the case of a self-righteous but earnest man, who was seeking peace. Walking through the town, he came upon a blind man reading from the raised characters to a little circle. The poor man was at the verse Acts iv. 12—"There is none other,"—lost his place, and, going back on it, repeated:—"none other name"—"none other name"—"none other name." The gentleman heard and passed on, but as he lay down that night, like the music of evening

bells, this word fell on his spirit—"none other name;" and when he awoke in the morning, its echo was there, and died not away till he had peace through CHRIST.

HINDRANCES TO PERSONAL RELIGION.

GAIUS must have been in a most desirable religious condition when the Apostle could throw his good wishes into this form: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." Such a measure of outward and general progress as their souls are making in inward and spiritual things would be no great advancement to many. It would be more natural and true to the facts with many to express one's kindly desires in this form — "I wish thy soul may prosper even as thy body, or business, or family, prospers."

And yet our personal religion ought to have at least three things — Growth, which

distinguishes all living things that have not reached perfection; Comfort, which attends the healthy exercise of all our capacities; and Power, which we possess *in right*, as a royal priesthood, but which, alas! *in fact*, we forfeit by indolence and other forms of sinning.

And why is it so? What are the immediate and actual causes within our comprehension and within our reach, of this backward spiritual condition? We can estimate and discuss the causes of national decay, or personal failure in any line of effort. Let us, even so, look to the obstacles that prevent the growth, comfort, and power of our personal religion.

1. Some, perhaps all of us, suffer from having *too many occupations*. We attempt so many things, we can do few or none of them well. Our time is frittered away on miscellaneous pursuits, and our strength is wasted over too wide a surface. We are not very good scholars, nor very good politicians, nor very good farmers, nor very good artists, nor very thorough worldlings, nor very good Christians, from trying to do a little in sev

eral of these characters; and some who confine themselves to, perhaps, one thing only, in addition to their spiritual condition, are so awfully in earnest about that one thing, as to leave too little time and strength for religious advancement. For reading, or, as the Apostle represents it, feeding on the word, there is little time. Hurried eating of the daily food, I have heard, is bad for the physical health. There is such a thing as swallowing the allowance of spiritual food so that it shall do no good. Thinking, or, as it is called, "meditation," or reflection, is out of the question. To dress, pay, and receive visits, keep abreast of the literature of the day, do common duties, and "be like other people," and, at the same time, "think," is out of the question with many. And what prospect is there of being much in prayer with hurried Scripture reading, and no thought? Look about, Christians, and consider what you can properly forego, if you are to prosper in your souls. This is the first consideration; all else is secondary.

2. But this suggests another great hin-

drance — *The want of a single eye.* We are not content to stake all on the one thing. We are anxious to have many cisterns, out of which to draw the waters of happiness. We do not wish to crucify *self* altogether. We desire to stand fairly with the *world.* We look in many directions besides upwards. Our eyes are not to God like the faithful maid's to her mistress. We cannot say our expectation is only from Him, for we expect a good deal from self, and so we please, indulge, and magnify self; a good deal from the world, and so we tolerate, and even conciliate and flatter it. Our eye is not single. And so when something is wrong about self, and we should crucify it, or something is very wrong about the world, and we should, for our part, resist it, we "cannot see it." We do not wish to see it. You may hand us the glass of the word: we put it to the blind eye. So we are full of inconsistencies. Our road lies straight on; but there are coveted objects right and left, which we wish to pick up by the way, and on which we are casting longing looks, and turning to which, ever and anon, our path is

crooked and our progress slow. I lately saw two people walking on a fine strand. One was hurrying home and one was sauntering — ready to pick up a shell here, or linger to measure the advance of the tide there. Accordingly, the track of the one was straight as an arrow — he had an object before him on which he was intent. The other had, for the time, no object but to loiter, and his track was crooked, and ever returning on itself. We should be intent on one thing, our eyes looking right on; but we are lamentably loitering as far as God is concerned, and our "footprints on the sands of time" are often zigzag — sometimes retrograde. Oh! for a little of his concentration of purpose who said, "This one thing I do!" Oh! for more of the mind of Him who declared, "My meat and my drink is to do the will of my Father in heaven!"

3. But this only leads to another main hindrance—*Our nature is in great part unrenewed* This may be variously conceived and described. We apprehend only a part of the truth; or we feel it only partially. Our heart

is divided; or it vacillates, instead of being fixed. We are not "perfect," because we do not wish to be so. We are less holy than we might be, because we do not wish to be altogether the Lord's. Sin appears in some forms necessary to a part of our happiness. We cannot quite conceive of being wholly happy and wholly the Lord's. To tell us that this shall be the case in heaven is nothing, because we say to ourselves that we *in ourselves* shall be different there from what we are here. We count the Lord holy, a hater of all sin, and yet we love it in some of its shapes. We say Christ died to put it away, and yet we secretly resolve to keep some of it for the present. We see it nail Him to the tree, and yet we yield to its blandishments, and find a portion of our enjoyment in its indulgence. We think with some pleasure of much we dare not speak of, and speak with some pleasure of much we dare not do. And in this we are not passive, but active. It is not that we are not approached by a power equal to the renewing of us wholly, but that we will not submit to it. The medicine is here, but

we will not take it. The Teacher is at hand, ready and competent, but we will not learn. The Deliverer is thundering at the gates and ready to deliver us from the sins that hold us in bondage, but we have become attached friends to some of them, and do not like to be parted from them at the present entirely. And so with the one hand we open the gates and say, "Come in," and with the other we close the door of some secret and safe hiding-place in which a mortal enemy is lurking. Samson is a good man, but he has darling lusts; Lot is a good man, but he wishes to get on in the world; Peter is a good man, but he likes to lead and be somebody; Naaman the Syrian, is a good man, but he does not wish to go out of favor with his Sovereign. And so besetting sins linger with us, and are a drag on the wheels of religious progress.

4. We are retarded by *low views of our calling*. We take our *names* from Christ and the Scriptures; but we take our *views* from the world, *i. e.*, from that class of people among whom our lives are spent. We are "disci-

ples," but we do not follow Christ at any inconvenience. If there be inconvenience we do not see it our duty to follow Him. We are soldiers, but we do not run any risks in fighting for Him. We are in full force on parade, and make now and then a great show of our weapons. But where are our battle-fields? Where our honorable scars? Where our trophies? Who dislikes us because we stood up manfully for Christ's truth and honor? "Woe unto us, for all men speak well of us!" We are a priesthood — where are our sacrifices? We are fellow-workers with God — what are we doing with God? Many of us hardly ever think of the obligation to labor for the Lord. Fashion can command us. Pleasure can command us. Money can command us. Society can command us. God speaks to us, and we are deaf as an adder. You shall hear men say, "I must extend my business," "I must give over such a Christian labor," "I must go to such a place." Why "must?" Who fixes the obligation? You are a freeman under God, and properly speaking, God alone is entitled to pronounce

the words "you must" to you. Has HE said of this thing you are doing or deserting "you must!" One sees men choose residences for themselves, professions for their children, friends for their family, amusements for their leisure hours, even ministers, and meetings, and sacraments for their souls and the souls of their children under this imaginary obligation, where, if they only looked at the thing in the light of God's word, and only took the trouble to look at first principles, they would have to admit that the only Being entitled to say "must" to them has spoken, as far as He has spoken, entirely the other way.

"And what is the remedy?" Do you really wish to know, dear reader?

"Yes." Then gather up all the idols, and go out and bury them. Bring out Agag and and all the bleating flocks he owned, and destroy them. "Little children, what have you to do any more with idols?" They blind your mind, sear your conscience, harden your heart, and hinder your progress.

Go to your Bible now, and learn from it how God wishes you to follow the Lord fully,

like Caleb, and to be faithful unto death. Consider what a change it would make in the frame of your mind and the tenor of your life to begin "following the Lord fully." There are "tricks of trade" to be practised no more enervating indulgences to be given up; secret aims to be foregone; cherished friends to be dealt faithfully with or quitted; influential sinners, at whose sins you must wink no more; old jealousies to be buried; old grudges to be forgotten and turned into kindliness; old sins to be confessed; old wrongs to be honestly and fairly repaired. Go to your Bible, and get a better acquaintance with it. Learn its elements — open your heart to its lessons — master its meaning by doing as it bids you. You must then grow in grace, for you are believing in Jesus, and consequently loving him, and consequently keeping His commandments. You are breathing a pure air, eating nutritious food, and getting regular and suitable exercise. Your spiritual being must grow.

And now your religion no longer hampers you. Instead of being fetters to bind you, it

is now tools to work, and weapons to fight with. You had up till now religion enough to spoil your pleasure as a worldling, but not enough to satisfy your soul's cravings. How hard you have had to wink not to see certain reproofs in the Bible, and certain sins in yourself and others! It is so no more. Con science is at rest; you need not to hide from God amid formal duties and busy occupations; faith is not afraid to grasp the promises and hold them up to the mouth of hope that they may be eaten; all the Bible is welcome to you; all work that God appoints is grateful; and every step you take is a step nearer His presence, where is fulness of joy. Your religion brings some gladness now; you inherit now as disciples under Him who said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

And now there will be power. "There is reality in *his* religion," says the man who does business with you, "he is as honest as the sun." "There is something in his godliness," says your associate, "you might trust your life to him; he is true as steel." "There

is more than talk here," says your servant; "he keeps down his temper, and bridles his tongue." "He is a man of principle," says, perhaps, some hoary sinner, "his religion is not a thing of words and impulse; I have known him these twenty years, and he was always the same." So you will have power to do good, to silence gainsayers, to witness or Christ.

DISCRIMINATION IN TEACHING THE TRUTH.

ACCORDING to the Apostle Paul, ministers are bound rightly to divide the word of truth,—that is, to present *the right truth* to the several classes of hearers, and so to instruct them that truths shall lie in their *minds* as nearly as possible in the relations and proportions in which they appear in the *Scriptures*.

This canon is violated in at least three ways, which we shall state and exemplify, not as if we were exhausting this subject, for only a small part of it can be compressed within the limits of a paper.

1. It is violated by exaggerating particular truths. As in the human body the members are set over one against another, and proper-

tioned the one to the other, so it is in the body of revealed truth: all portions of it are important in their place, but all are not equally important. The question, whether or not blood may be eaten, as raised in Acts xv., is very different from that which the jailer put in Acts xvi. Now, whenever any member of the body of truth is over-estimated in its importance, more spoken of and thought of than its relative importance justifies, this principle is violated. It is the misfortune of small and struggling bodies of Christians to be tempted to this exaggeration. They have gone out, or kept out, from other and larger bodies. The points on which they rest the defence of their isolation become all-important to them, and are so dwelt upon and contemplated that they come to fill up the sphere of vision. As the biographer of an obscure individual, to justify his book-making, is tempted to magnify the importance of his subject, so these bodies are tempted to swell the importance of those fragments of truth to which they conceive themselves necessary witnesses. Many secondary questions that might be named, have

thus in some instances acquired an undue prominence in the thoughts, sermons, and relationships of Christian communities. It is not that they fail to hold the truth, but they disproportionately exalt their respective points because they are distinctive. But great communities may, and do, err in a precisely similar way, when, it may be, peculiar circumstances lend interest to a particular part of their creed. When large bodies of Nonconformists began to rear themselves alongside the Church in England, it was not unnatural that her ministers should dwell disproportionately on *the Church*, contrasting, more or less openly, her antiquity, her position, and her long-established forms, with the newer organizations that offended or alarmed them. The tendency was natural, and the mischief was extensive and real.

Where rival churches are divided by specific points, the same result is produced. A piece of ground, worthless in itself, is in dispute between two rival proprietors, and it seems more to them than half their estates. A miserable town lies on the borders of two king-

doms, and more attention is concentrated on it than on either capital, because *it is a border town.* And so it has often happened with portions of truth between contending churches. Whether Easter should be observed at one period or another seems a small affair to us, who raise the previous question, Should it be observed at all? but we do not forget how, when the atonement and pardon through the blood, and renewing by the Holy Ghost, were comparatively forgotten, this miserable dispute divided the Eastern and Western churches.

Against all such exaggeration we must guard, for it contains the very essence of sectarianism. There are leading and fundamental truths in God's Word by which men's souls live. He who holds these is one with us, in whatever subordinate points he is at war with us. And it would be preposterous—would it not?—that we should give our sympathy to a Socinian because he calls himself by our distinctive name, say, Presbyterian, and refuse it to an evangelical believer because he declines the name; yet this is being

done practically every day. And in no way could the devil more effectually defeat our aims as ministers than by raising minor issues with which unduly to occupy us, to the practical disregard of the great truths which God is wont to bless to the salvation of men. When our Lord was dealing with the conscience of the woman of Samaria, she would gladly have turned aside to discuss the points in dispute between Jews and Samaritans; but our Lord held on to the main business—her own need of salvation, and His willingness to bestow it, and we know the result. So let us, as approved workmen, rightly divide the word of truth.

2. *This canon is violated by the overlooking of truth.* Various causes contribute to this error. Romanism made angels mediators, and gave them the power of hearing prayer. Protestantism has hardly touched the subject of angels. Romanism opened a debtor and creditor account with heaven, and Protestantism is silent regarding the reward the Lord gives to His people whom His grace has saved. We are not sure if we, in avoiding *church*

preaching, be not overlooking an important Scripture truth which our people should hear, and forgetting the true *church authority*, because the thing has been misstated and abused. Many are the forms in which the presentation of one truth may be marred by overlooking a kindred or related truth. In preparation for the pulpit, men may so employ the promise of help from the Holy Ghost as to forego the use of those means by which such addresses are rendered effective, and so forget that, here as elsewhere, it is not indolence and recklessness, but *effort*, that the Lord will bless. So, when we preach the doctrine of regeneration, and declare the impossibility of men being saved, or doing any good, until they have been the subjects of this mysterious change, we weaken our own hands if we connect not with this the statement that the Lord does regenerate by revealing Christ to us, and therein revealing Himself. How short a way do we carry a hearer if we prove to him that men are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" and if we dis-

connect this truth from that with which the Lord has connected it—"As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe on His name." John i. 12, 13. It was thus our Lord taught Nicodemus. Having announced to him that "except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of heaven," He did not leave him in the blank and utter helplessness produced by such a statement, but proceeded to proclaim Himself as the saving Son of Man, through a believing look to whom the new birth is effected—"*As Moses lifted up*," &c. (John iii.) So, in the laudable desire to save our people from *a legal spirit*, and to make clear conveyance to them of the terms of the covenant of grace, we must not overlook the truth, that, having been pardoned and adopted, our Divine Father's law becomes the rule of our life, in obedience to which we walk and glorify Him. So, in our laudable efforts to show the *reasonableness* of the demands of revelation, we may overlook the fact that the truth is to be received, *not because we have proved its reasonableness*, but

because God has declared it. Our demonstration may be weak, and it were sad indeed if God's demands were made to seem correspondingly feeble.

Even so we may preach, in the matter of experimental religion, the doctrine of *faith*, and overlook the kindred doctrine of repentance, and so lead men unconsciously into the belief that there is in the Divine life one distinct stage of repenting and another of believing. Other instances might easily be adduced, in which we may weaken our power, give trouble to ourselves and to our hearers by overlooking truths which have been intended to accompany other truths—truths which are to one another as the opposite and yet harmonious powers—the centrifugal and centripetal forces that keep planets in their orbits—and the due and combined action of which keeps us in the way of safety.

3. In the third place we violate the canon by *misplacing* truths. A man may preach so that you could not point out a single error in his statements, *taken separately*, and yet he may so preach that the combined effort of *the whole*

will be substantially to mislead. Truth out of place is often a dangerous error. It is true that man's soul is dead, and his heart utterly alienated from God. It is true that there never will be a movement of the soul Godward unless by a power that comes from God. But to whom is this to be preached? Is it to the inquiring and anxious soul? What can it do to him but paralyze him, when he wants to be encouraged to come to the Lord as a loving, gracious Saviour, when he is to stretch out the withered hand, that it may be healed in the act? But if we are speaking to *self-confident sinners*, blindly putting off, or presuming on their own strength, who need to be paralyzed, deliberately rejecting and cavilling against Him, then let us say to them as Christ did—"Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come unto me except my Father which hath sent me, draw him." John vi. 44. If that God, whom you deliberately insult, do not please to draw you, you shall never come. You shall die in your sins!

It would be an interesting thing to inquire in what connections the doctrine of *election* is

presented in the Divine Word, and to regulate our presentation of it accordingly. We should find that it is introduced to cut off all hope of salvation by works, to account for, without excusing, Jewish unbelief, and to show the certainty of Christ's purpose being fully accomplished, however men or devils might oppose and resist. Thus used, it humbles pride, gives God all the glory, and cuts the ground from under the feet of presumption; but otherwise understood and presented, it can only minister to pride and most repulsive vanity, as it did with the Jews, when, presuming on being an elect nation, they said, "We be Abraham's seed." The best things abused, become the worst, and we have no hesitation in saying that this precious doctrine has been abused by its well-meaning but ignorant friends, and become too often not a help, but a hindrance, to the spread of truth, and the glorifying of Christ.

It is sometimes objected against believers asking pardon of sin at the Lord's hand, that they are already forgiven, and need not ask it. But though God forgives once and for ever

as a Judge, He forgives often as a Father. "But," it is sometimes said, "He forgave you eighteen hundred years ago," referring to Christ bearing our sins on the tree. But this is a grievous misplacing of truth. This were an equally good reason for *never* asking forgiveness. Beside, why say eighteen hundred years? As well six thousand years, for is not Christ "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world?" Nay, as well might the objector say eighteen thousand years, for God has loved us "with an everlasting love;" but in *point of fact* He justifies us *when we believe*, and renews the sense of his pardon when we return to Him at the throne of grace, and take a believing look at the Saviour.

It is by a like displacement of truth that Christians painfully engage themselves in weighing, measuring every feeling within them, analyzing and noting it, in order to growth in grace, applying to themselves the machinery which the word provides for detecting and exposing hypocrisy, when they would be better employed in believing the simple promises, and doing the revealed du-

ties—going out of themselves, and concentrating their thoughts on the Saviour, whose righteousness covers, and whose spirit instructs in the way of peace. And we cannot but think they misplace truth who make a large portion of their teaching to consist of the exposition of unfulfilled prophecy;—not so did our Lord teach men, and not so did the apostles. Both did indeed appeal to prophecies *fulfilled*, and both did give new predictions, as our Lord did of his betrayal by Judas, and his ascension, with this notice of the reason—"And now I have told you before it come to pass, *that when it is come to pass*, ye may believe." (John xiv. 29, and John xiii. 19.) If this pre-eminent regard to prophecy, for which some good men claim so peculiar a sanctifying power, produced on themselves any conspicuous effects; if their life and labors were marked by pre-eminent spirituality and success, we might indeed hesitate before declining to follow their guidance; but as it is, we cannot but think that they, apart altogether from the soundness or otherwise of their interpretations, misplace this portion

of truth, mistake its great use, and largely apply it to purposes for which it was not intended.

These are illustrations that might be easily multiplied of the evil of misplacing truth. One good thing, so perverted, may vitiate all the truth we know, as Paul said to the Galatians, "Christ is become of none effect unto you, if ye be circumcised," or as Moses and the law became a snare to the Jews when under cover of zeal for them, they rejected the Redeemer.

PLAIN QUESTIONS FOR MEN'S CONSCIENCES.

ARE YOU IN CHRIST OR NOT? Perhaps you have not thought of this, or allowed the question ever to come to your heart. Feeling it to be embarrassing and troublesome, you have done with it as we sometimes do with curious friends who put awkward questions, to whom, by our own volubility, we give no time to make inconvenient inquiries. Perhaps you have kept your heart or conscience—that is, yourself—so engaged as to keep this question away. Pray consider it now. Are you a believer in Christ or not? Some are believers who do not clearly know it, but none, surely, who never thought of it. If you had to die at a moment's warning as men have

died in the railway collision, or by a fall from a horse, would your soul, having made its distant flight into another world, be in bliss or woe? Had you been on board that ill-fated steamer, the *London*, when she went down in the Bay of Biscay, with the crowd of men, women, and little wondering children, could you have said, as the waters gathered over you, "I am in Christ, and I shall soon be with Christ?" The deluge is coming to you; are you in the ark? The avenger is on your track; are you in the city of refuge? The Judge standeth at the door; have you arranged with the Advocate? Answer this question to your own conscience. Better have to say "No," than not to think at all. For you to say to yourself "I am yet unsaved," would do you good. Oh! how can you go to sleep in peace and know this? Let but a membrane, as thin as the leaf of paper you are reading, give way in the night, and your sleep shall be the sleep of death, and your soul shall be in an eternity for which you never prepared! But oh! how happy if you can say, like a good man who was "in deaths oft,"

I am "in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

2. Are you gaining or losing as a Christian? Having come to Christ, and been, as you hope, forgiven, are you advancing or receding? When the Apostle Paul had been long a believer, he wished to "know Christ," from intercourse and fellowship with Him, from Christ being "manifested" to him. Is this your wish in the main. Do you watch and resist those things which keep Him away? Have you a deepening attachment to Jesus? Is your religion more and more in the form of steady principle, less and less of a fitful impulse? How can you be sure your soul is living, if it is not growing? It may turn out, after all, that you are only deceiving yourself! You may be, after all, but a child of hell, walking in the light, as described in Isaiah 50: 11: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire and of the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of

mine hand: ye shall lie down in sorrow." O reader! settle this question rightly. It would be an awful thing to find out on the other side of death that your one life was gone for ever, and that the hope you held was a delusion! Are you growing in religion? Or "having a name to live," are you growing in contented religious deadness—your peace, no peace?

3. Are you serving the Lord or serving yourself? "I am a Sabbath-school teacher." Yes, but that may be serving yourself. "I am a minister." That also may be serving yourself. "I am an active elder." That, too, may be serving yourself. *Are you serving Christ?* Would you go on with this Christian work if you were discouraged, hurt, neglected by men, and do it for Christ's sake? Is it the authority of Christ over you that keeps you at your post? Or is it regard for any other person or thing? There is much need to look into this, We constantly see active persons throw up their work in disgust. "I shall not serve them if they pay so little attention to me." Just so. It was not Christ

you were serving, then? "I shall let them see how they can do without me?" Ah! yes; but the Lord? He may have need of you. When ministers were active as poor men, and sought dignified leisure when they became rich; when persons were zealous laborers till they were married, and then dropped out of the ranks; when they "labored abundantly" till they had got a position, and then saw it to be their duty to retire into inactivity, what can men think but that they were serving themselves? Are you serving Christ or yourself? If the latter, you will need to be "managed," complimented, to get little sops of honor or advantage to keep you up to the work. If the former, you will proceed "as to the Lord," calm, steady, noiseless, like a star in its orbit, for the Great Master in the midst attracts and retains you. Oh, the quiet, harmony, and joy of a company of people serving the Lord! Oh, the painful friction, erratic movements, and threatening collisions of a company of people serving themselves!

Which are you doing? If the latter, and you repent not, you are sure to be lost. You

may be exposed and disgraced in this world, but you are *sure* to be cast out in the next world!

4. Are you on the Lord's side, or with His enemies? There are good men who straggle out of their own proper camp in ignorance or thoughtlessness, as there are bad who creep into the camp of the saints. Where are you? Which party is strengthened by you? Which party can count on you? Or can either? Then you are in a bad condition, indeed. You are with the Lord on Sabbath, and Mammon has you all the week. You are at the Lord's table, and fashion enlists you at the card-table or the dance the next week!

"But I don't see anything wrong in cards or a dance." I am not asking about the right or wrong of the thing, mind. I am asking *on whose side are you?* Are you for the Master or His despisers? If you can honestly say, "I am for Christ at the card-table," I do not expostulate with you. Your head or your heart, in its present state, is not ready for the discussion. If the Lord has purposes of mercy for you, He is likely to lay

His hand on you, and in new circumstances you will get new light. For there is that "flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful," as you may see in the 36th Psalm. Are you on the Lord's side? A blameless, useless professor is not on His side. He is a tempter and a snare. A self-seeking, proud, vain person, who patronises Christ's cause is not on his side. His money, name, and even his effects may be occasionally on His side. He may give "the favor of his presence" now and then to the Master's cause, but *he* may be all the time under the curse that overhangs every man who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ. "I never knew you," the Lord will say to all such if they repent not. "Who is on the Lord's side—who?" A luxurious, money-making, self-indulgent age thinks to serve God and also Mammon—to live with Pharaoh and be of Israel—to keep the doors of God's house (with subscriptions, and donations, and "very regular attendance, when convenient," for example), and at the same time to dwell in tents of wickedness. The thing cannot be

done: it is impossible. If you are not with Christ, you are against Him, though you preach, and prophesy, and pray; and if you do not repent, your "own company" will claim you in "the congregation of the dead." Oh! Consider this question. If you can find it in your heart to be good friends with what Christ hates, it may be that you never became one with Him—never were converted—never were made a new creature in Christ Jesus. If you had faith like Moses, you would be something like him. If you were in Christ, you would walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh. Take care lest you be among the castaways. Oh! if you only knew how the reckless professors and those whose calling commits them to religion—such as ministers and elders—are regarded, when they forget themselves—when, for example, a minister is excited by drink, or plainly cares nothing for his office—you might, in the contempt with which common people, and the grief with which pious people watch them, see in some dim way the vileness and guiltiness of your ways, when you soil your garments and de

grade your exalted name. Look into this, and see that you are consistently, wholly, and heartily on the Lord's side.

5. Are you as fervent, zealous, and earnest in your secret religious exercises as in those you perform in concert with others? For, what you are *alone with God*, that you are really. If you only feel in a crowd, it may turn out that when you have to *die alone* you will have no religion to sustain you! Look to this. No religion is worth keeping that is not a religion to die with.

ARE BELIEVERS UNDER THE LAW?

TIME was when God alone existed, when above, below, there was nothing but God. He filled all, as light now does the firmament; pervaded all, as gravitation now does all space. There was none to honor or dishonor Him, none to obey or disobey. One's mind reels in trying to comprehend this, and one's eyes look back dimly into that far-off silent everlasting, with only the Great First Cause, infinitely happy in Himself.

Then was made a heaven, and angels were formed to people it. They are so far like God that they are *intelligent* and *holy;* their nature is, moreover, *spiritual.* The Bible is not a book for angels, but for us; therefore it

details the doings of angels just so far as they affect us; therefore we cannot do more than idly conjecture how angels served before there were fellow-creatures with whom to be occupied. But, from a king to a subject, command is the natural form of communication, and obedience is the natural response. Being holy, the angels love the infinitely Holy One, their Maker, their Father; and He could say to them, sure of a prompt and joyous rejoinder—"If ye love Me, keep My commandments." A portion of them rebelled against His authority, lost their first estate, and have been consigned to chains and darkness; but the rest have continued to yield homage and service to Him. They love Him still, and continue to keep His commandments, whether He require them to waste a land or fill it with grief, to deliver a saint or breathe death over a sleeping host, to minister to Christ in His sorrows or carry the spirit of a Lazarus to heaven.

In due time man was made. He bore on his soul the image of God; he was like Him in knowledge and purity, and like Him in

ruling the inferior creatures. In innocence, man was under God's law, whether we understand by law the general will of God or the special commands He is pleased to issue. To test this assertion, inquire which of the ten awful words given at Sinai, amid the overpowering display of the Law-giver's majesty would it have been right for man to disregard? Could he, with impunity, have set up an idol or shaped his service as he pleased? Would profaneness on his lips have been excusable, or Sabbath toil allowable? Might He whom Luke calls "the Son of God" disregard His Father, kill or pollute His kind, steal or covet? The question answers itself. "But," you may say, "these laws were not then written?" Why not? Because they were not binding? Certainly not; but because they were so obviously plain, so instinctively felt to be binding, that the writing of them was needless. What father or mother binds a child, by an express command, not to kill a sister, or set the house on fire, or swallow poison, or burn a Bible? The wrong is so obvious that the mind can be trusted to

see it without formal announcement. But man was under law, and the forbidden tree was the outward and sacramental sign of obedience. God could have said to man in Eden—"If ye love Me, keep My command ments."

"But," says some friend, "is not law a yoke? Are not commandments a burden? Is it not the death of all liberty and enjoyment to be under law?" The ceremonial law was a burden to the Hebrews, as Paul says to the Galatians (v. 1), and service of God as the price of heaven is in "the spirit of bondage" (Rom. viii. 15). But these must not be confounded (alas, that they are so often!) with subjection to that law of God which is the formal expression of the Divine mind, and which Paul says (Rom. vii. 12) is holy, just and good. To a loving wife, is the law of obedience irksome? To a loyal subject, is his loyalty a burden? To a dutiful son, is his father's wish a grievous and heavy yoke? There are those to whom the marriage vow is a fetter, and the oath of allegiance an abomination, and the duty of a child repugnant,

but they are the unprincipled, the disloyal, and the disobedient. But angels in heaven, happy in obedience, and man in Eden, happy in innocence, prove conclusively enough that submission to law, to the virtuous and upright is no hardship "Oh! how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day." This is the principle of a holy creature.

But man fell, and, in his fall, his understanding was darkened, his conscience was defiled, and his heart was turned away from God. The Divine mercy, however, came to his relief, and a covenant was made. Sacrifices were appointed, and worship enjoined. The Divine will was declared. Man was to look to the coming Seed, and to sacrifice in the spirit of believing obedience. Abel did so, and was accepted; Cain did not and was rejected. And again God can say to man—"If ye love Me, keep My commandments," and Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, and all the rest of their kind, the gray fathers of our race, could reply with an honest and good heart—"We do love Thee, and we desire to keep Thy law."

You may inquire, Why was the law so in-

formal, and why was it not committed to express enactment, as afterwards? The reply is obvious. By our common reckoning, Adam was among his descendants more than half the time till the flood, himself to instruct them in the Divine will. And what an instructor he was fit to be! What a story he could tell! What an impressive exhibition of the Divine will he could present! "I have been, my children," he could say, "in the garden of God. He walked and talked with me; He, our Maker, gave us all good things, but we disobeyed Him, and our sin drove us from the garden; yet He will not cast us off for ever. A coming Seed of the woman shall destroy our tempter, and win us back to God. Let us hope in God's mercy, and put trust in the Seed that is to come and save us." While this teacher—second, it seems to me, in power and fitness to impress, only to the Second Adam—remained to recite the history of paradise to his children, and while they who heard it from his lips remained, no written tables of stone were needed.

But when the chosen race was called out,

and the life of man was shortened, this advantage no longer remained. Then thunders played around Sinai, the mountain shook under the tread of the Almighty, and the ceremonial law, temporary and for Canaan, was published, and the moral law of all time, and for all climes and lands, was formally republished; and again God might say to His people—"If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

You may ask me, Why was this law so minute, so detailed, and, in the submission it required, so mechanical?

For the answer I go to your firesides or to your own childhood. In your earliest days your parents made almost everything you did a matter of distinct command. The hours when you should rise, and lie down, and eat; the books you should read; the companions you should choose; the very dishes you should partake of—all this and much more your parents explicitly enjoined. But when your years advanced, and your understanding grew with your body, these regulations fell into disuse, and you are supposed to know by your own

understanding what you are to do. You are just as much bound now as you ever were; but it is not by minute details adapted to your childish condition, but by principles the obligation of which renders you responsible as a man. So was it in the immaturity of the Church in Jewish times. At length the fulness of time came. God who at sundry times and in divers manners had spoken in times past unto the prophets, now spake by His Son. Jesus is born in Bethlehem, grows up in Nazareth, teaches in Capernaum, throughout Galilee and Judea, and in Jerusalem itself. He is the Prophet of His Church in person, directly teaching "what men are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." Christ gave no new revelation reversing that already given. His sermon on the mount is the spiritual exposition of what God had ever said to men. When He enlightened the apostles it was by explaining to them the Scriptures. He displayed no new road to heaven. He relaxed no yoke that His Father had laid on. He did, indeed, come to break the yoke of Sa-

tan, to deliver from the bondage of sin, to snatch from the prison-house of hell. But He did not come to put man under less obligation to obey, or to rescind any claim God had to service. As the school-books of the child are laid aside, being useless for the man, so indeed the ceremonial law was laid aside when Christ came; but the Father's claim to obedience remained, and the servant's obligation to obey remained likewise. Let no man think that Christ sets up a milder duty than His Father's. He rebukes by anticipation the dishonorable thought—"He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings, and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."—John xiv. 24. Men were summoned to obey Him for this very reason. "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him," said His Father from the bosom of the white cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration. And if He says "my commandments," He refers to Himself not as the source of their authority, but as the medium of their communication. If men heard and read Moses (though God spake by him), and trembled under the voice

of prophets (though it was God who spake through them), much more are they to hear Christ's words, for the Father speaks by Him. "Surely they will reverence my Son" is not an unreasonable expectation. By itself and through any channel God's command is entitled to obedience, but the claim is enhanced when He speaks by His Son.

And so, now, every disciple of Christ is to prove His love to Christ by keeping His commandments. These cover all the life of a man, inner and outer, public and private. My temper is a part of my inner life. Christ commands me, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you." Forgiveness, gentleness, charitableness in judging, patience, He commands me to cultivate as truly as honesty, purity, or obedience to parents. My aims are a part of my life. He commands me to seek first the kingdom of God; to lay up treasure in heaven; to be a light in the world; just as truly as He commands me to pray, to worship, to believe. My dealing with others is a part of my life. He commands not only honesty and justice, but generosity. But why

enumerate? Go to the Gospels and go to your own life in its every department, from January to December, from youth to age, and tell me what portion of it is not covered by Christ's commandments? And tell me further, from what one of them are you exempt? —which of them may you break in safety? If you are ever tempted to dream that you are either above divine law or beyond it, because you are in Christ, let there echo through the depths of your spirit these words of the Master—"Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." Do not for a moment give place to that high-sounding but hardly intelligible jargon that holds up exemption from Christ's commandments as the privilege of believers. What does it mean? Is it that a Christian is not saved by his own obedience? All evangelical teachers proclaim that, and the new truth, as it appears, is nothing new. Do they mean that a Christian may steal and be guiltless? Surely not. What then?

But there are good men who relax the claims of obedience. Very likely. The Sav-

iour contemplated their case—"Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, but whosoever shall do and teach them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."—Matthew v. 19. Oh, for greatness in that kingdom! Here ambition may have its full swing without danger. Oh, learn to do and teach all the precious Saviour's commandments. So shall be fulfilled in you the prophecy of Isaiah, spoken of such as you (ii. 3)—"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Nor will such holy, spiritual obedience be without its appropriate gracious reward, for the precious Redeemer pledges Himself to this—"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

MANNER: A HOMILY FOR "SELF AND FRIENDS."

I AM admitted, even by partial friends, to be ungainly and awkward in almost everything I do. I am original without design or effort, for, having no capacity to imitate, I have never improved from good examples, and there is so much sense in the world, that no one imitates me. This is remarkable, seeing that imitators commonly reproduce blemishes; were I a great man, mine also might be copied. But my obscurity permits me to be unique.

I hope it will be felt, therefore, that I may lecture the readers of these papers on manner, with propriety. My circumstances have rendered me a closer observer than happier persons are, and as dwarfs commonly affect tall

partners, I may have become more appreciative of the virtues for the want of which I am consciously conspicuous.

Many people would be condemned to temporary silence but for their ministers. Numbers of persons between whom there is little connection except by "the Congregation," exchange visits. They have nothing to talk of but the minister, and his ways. And inasmuch as many persons are competent judges of what strikes the eye, who are by no means expert theologians, the outward ways are likely to be praised or censured even more than the doctrines taught or the duties inculcated. The Gospel has much to contend against, and the minister is naturally anxious to commend it. His manner, therefore, is not unworthy of notice. He has not given out the sixteen lines of the hymn that are to sung, until many have formed their opinion of his taste, culture, and degree of earnestness. An unnatural voice, a stilted style of elocution, or an easy flippancy may prejudice some hearers against him as a solemn drone an artificial talker, or a coxcomb. All this

applies to prayer with peculiar emphasis. It is no part of this paper to allude to the matter of prayer, but while many make most admirable use of inspired verses, with others it were more to edification, and more suggestive of reality, to ask what we need for common life in the familiar language of common life. "To sit under our own vine and fig-tree, &c.," might be rendered with more life-likeness by reference to freedom, homes, books, work, and other blessings. But the manner of prayer respects, in the present view, tones of voice, attitude and style of address. Oh! how good it is when there is humble asking, not dictating or explaining; when there is no obscurity, and no declamation; when short sentences convey earnest wishes; and when the deep and solemn awe is expressed not in words, but in the whole bearing of the minister!

Manner in preaching, is admitted on all hands to be important. Indeed, a man may sometimes go through the "preliminary exercises" (that adjective convicts of an error—they are not "preliminary,") in such a way as to say to the audience (not the worship-

pers, observe)—"Never mind this—it is of no importance. *I* shall *preach* by and by." This is very bad. Men whose manner is radically vicious are sometimes tempted to depreciate the excellence they want as "mere manner." But the men of "mere matter" need not boast; and when, as will sometimes happen, they are equally without matter and manner, they are very ineffective indeed. To shout, or rant, to drawl, whine, or chant, is very bad, and requires very admirable matter, indeed, to make it endurable. Of the grave fault of denouncing woes in such angry tones as say to the hearers—"You will suffer if you don't take *my* advice, and you richly deserve it," we say nothing. "Did you preach it *with tenderness?*" was M'Cheyne's question to a brother minister, who mentioned that he had preached on final ruin. It was the proper question to put.

But ministers may complain if I presume to lecture *them* exclusively. It is not certainly from want of occasion on the part of their hearers that as yet we have said nothing of them. What is to be said of those who enter

God's house as if it were a waiting-room, whose occupants they must scrutinize before settling into a seat? or of those whose first act is to open a chat with a companion? Oh! for photographs of worshippers (?) who take a leisurely survey of the scene, while the congregation is praying! Could they but see themselves once, would they ever repeat the exhibition? "Well, I am thankful —— is no longer beside me in church," said a lady. "Why?" it was asked. "Why, because his conduct was so irreverent and shameful; it not only kept me from attending, but it vexed me." The ruder of the sexes is certainly, in my judgment, and with all respect to Mungo Park, the female, and their own sex suffers more than the other. In railway carriages, omnibuses, and elsewhere, I have seen more ungentleness from women to women than I ever saw among men. "This is a man's calumny," says a gentle reader. Dear lady, I proceed to horrify you yet more by remarking that this rudeness sometimes goes to church. You shall see a lady block up the entrance to a half-filled pew, while her weak-

er sisters stand in the aisle—fatigued, confused. How I have rejoiced when some bold and persevering "man of war," not to be put out by a stare, has broken the boom and entered! I have cheered inwardly over such small victories.

Next to rudeness, in power to disgust, is petty officiousness in God's house. I hate to see people so little engaged in the occupations of the place as to be in constant competition with the sexton. Don't be rude, but don't be "tiresome" with your small politenesses. *Est modus in rebus.* The old gentleman who took lozenges to church and deliberately carried one to every person that coughed, including the clergyman, did not, to my certain knowledge, promote devotional feelings.

Did you ever "beg?" No? Congratulate yourself. The mendicants outside the Reformation-pale have not a pleasant time of it; but they are better off than their brethren in the Reformed Churches, inasmuch as a chimney-sweeper, brought up to the business, does not feel the hardship like a gentleman forced into it by temporary necessity. But if you

ever have to beg—and no man can tell to what he may come—you have a grand opportunity of studying variety of manner. "Improve the shining hour." You shall see one who hears you calmly and respectfully. His manner says—"This gentleman is doing an unpleasant duty; let me make it easy to him." He tells you to what extent he can aid you, and gives "with simplicity." Let me, when my turn comes to beg, ever find such! "Thank you very much," I said once to such a man. "Never mind," said he; "I should be as much obliged to you for coming to me." Blessings on him! His sovereign is worth more than twenty shillings. There is a pound's worth of strength and comfort with it.

Another gives you his subscription with a lofty, patronizing air, accompanied, perhaps, with a Memoir of Bountiful Giver, Esq., by himself. You are bound to hear it. Never mind him. It is his weakness. Attention to him is the value he gets from you for his money.

Another is "a blunt, out-spoken man.'

Now, I avow openly my rooted dislike of all such who announce their character. They are often rude, sometimes cunning, occasionally impudent. But when you apply to such a man, and he gives you "a bit of his mind"—

"Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness!"

You shall get his autobiography, with illustrative references to your own history. You shall hear how much it has taken to maintain his Christian character—how much religion has cost him, and how little it has done for him (in this you mentally agree with him); you shall have the weak points of your case and of your subscribers, exposed; and you shall get, in the end, a rough refusal or an insulting consent, which you accept because it is not your private affair, but a public duty. It is like cracking a walnut of special hardness, with uncommon difficulty, to find a dark and nauseous kernel. The collector who comes on a few such nuggets of lead in a day will return at night footsore and heartsore.

"But it is his manner." And what business has he to keep such a manner, that, like a

mastiff, ought to be clogged, muzzled, and chained, only to be let loose on midnight plunderers. Is he a Christian? Are not Christians bound to "be courteous?" Is there not something in the Word about adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour? Is not "gentleness" growing somewhere among the "fruit of the Spirit?" Is not the Christian the true gentleman? Is not manner something in the make up of such a character?

PASTORS AND TEACHERS.

AND He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.—Eph. iv. 11, 12. And is the gift perpetual?

The question here raised is a very simple one. It has no reference to the order or rank of Christ's ministers. We do not need to collate this passage with two similar passages (1 Cor. xii. 8–11 and 28–30), and to inquire whether these terms include all the officers who had place in Christ's Church, or whether they be simply mentioned as examples. I propose to look at the passage as proving the

Divine intention that there should be a continuous ministry in the Church, until the Church shall have been all gathered, and the body of Christ be perfect. For if it be alleged that the perfecting here applies to individuals, and not to the whole mystical body, it may be replied, "Even so; whatever necessity existed for a ministry for individual benefit still exists; and, for the same reason as at the first, will continue to be supplied.' And if it should be alleged that on this principle it might be argued that Apostles should continue, we reply, No—there is no evidence that each person requires all these officers; but there is evidence that some of them were ordinarily necessary from the beginning, and for that necessity the same good hand that provided at the first will continue to provide "till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

1. Such an arrangement the nature of the case demands. Modern thought has settled down into the conviction that division of

labor is best for the laborer, the work, and the community. Societies do not depend on the casual and desultory efforts of their members in order to push their plans and objects. They designate office-bearers, assign them position and duties, and hold them responsible for the doing of their respective shares of work. But in this, human societies have been simply following the arrangement long adopted in the Divine. Modern improvements, here, as in many another field, instead of marching past and superseding the Scriptures, are but slowly following in their wake. What human organization would make way without recognized representatives and office-bearers? It is doubtful if ever any Christian community has lasted through a second generation without a ministry; and it is certain that the less definite and the more desultory this ministry, the less potent for all Church purposes is the community. "What is the business of everybody is that of none," is one of the proverbs into which a result of long human experience has crystallized. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists always looked

much to preachers, and believed in their ordination, but left them in other respects in great measure to the common lot of ordinary Christians. But with the growth and spread of the Church, and the growing expansiveness of the Church's mind, it has been clearly seen that a ministry, to be equal to ministerial toils, must be set free from the rival cares of agriculture and commerce, that its members must "give themselves wholly to these things." It gives one increased confidence in the Scriptural plan, to see right-minded men, whether they will or no, shut up to its adoption by the necessities of their Christian life, and by the results of their Church experience.

2. When the Lord made this gracious gift to the Church, He only continued and exemplified His Old Testament plans, with such changes as the new arrangement demanded. The whole tribe of Levi He gave of old to Israel for the work of the ministry. It is not enough considered how far Jewish legislation anticipated the very improvements which are the boast of modern times. The questions of sanatory reform, safe tenure of land, Church

and State relations, education for the nation, and others we could easily name, were settled for the Jews in a manner up to which we are only creeping slowly in our own time. Any one at the trouble to look into the distribution of the Levites over the land of Israel will see that for the central service of the Temple, for the Synagogue service, as it grew to be the natural form of weekly worship, and for the systematic instruction of the people, God had made ampler provision for His favored people than any nation, the most enlightened and religious, has yet attempted. A ministerial tribe became unsuitable to a dispensation that was for all nations; and so the families of God's people everywhere furnish the ministers of the New Testament. From among themselves, as from among the Jews, does the Lord take out and call to the ministry the pastors and teachers who are to break among the people the bread of life. The New Testament introduces not a new religion, but a new form of the old, and it continues therein a separate body of men, chargeable specially with keeping the house

of the Lord, and instructing the people out of His Law.

3. In this respect the Lord Jesus reveals His Father and discloses the Divine will. "Have not I chosen you twelve?" One fell indeed—a proof that unworthy members of the ministry can never be made an argument against a ministry, for who would deny the honor due to the apostolic band because it included a traitor and hypocrite? But, as if to indicate that there must be suitable office-bearers, the Lord Himself called Paul; so, whatever may be thought of the action the other apostles took in the choice of Matthias, their ranks shall not want one to fill up the melancholy gap—one summoned thither by the Master Himself. Nor did this special office-bearing die with the apostles. They ordained them elders in every city. Churches once organized had men whom the Holy Ghost had made overseers of the flock of God. They were to feed the flock, and at the hands of the flock to receive obedience and double honor. As the Lord, in creating, gave to the trees of the field a self-perpetuat-

ing power, so the Lord, in founding His New Testament Zion, gave to His people the right and power to construct, extend and perpetuate their simple and effective organization, regardless altogether of external power or authority. This is a point carnal men can never understand. They cannot conceive of any higher power than a senate or a king. But we do conceive and know of a higher—and that without any slight, even in thought, on the civil jurisdiction. Why do I keep the Sabbath? Not because the government has feebly legislated in its favor; but because Christ has enjoined it. Why do I search the Scriptures and teach them? Not because the country has a free press and free speech, but because the Lord has enjoined me. Why may we not, on the same high warrant, meet to worship, choose a minister, form a community, receive into or expel from it, as independently of external control as the Corinthian Church was, when expelling and restoring the incestuous professor by Paul's direction (1 Cor. v. 3–5 and 2 Cor. ii. 5–8)? And all this, as the history of the Church

proves, and indeed the nature of the case will show, is not only compatible with due regard to the civil authority — which is supreme in its own department—but is conducive to the maintenance of its due supremacy; for the heart that responds to the demand, "Render to God the things that are God's," will most promptly render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. He who most fears God will most "honor the king."

The Lord's actual appointment of a ministry, then, and His instructions to them to perpetuate the office, indicate clearly enough His will, and show that a ministry is to continue in His Church, until disbanded by an order as clear and explicit as that by which it has been appointed.

4. How is the ministry to be called out now that Christ does not visibly select in person?

By the Lord's preparing, and the people's trying and accepting. The difficulty is no greater than in the choice of deacons—"Look out among you some men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom." To

get up objections to this course would have been easy. At little outlay of wit, or sagacity, one might have said, "Competent judges they are, indeed! a set of common people, recently brought into the Church, just now murmuring and quarreling among themselves about a miserable poor's fund!" Even so; this, with all its faults, was the apostolic plan, and until a command as plain supersedes it, we must, with all its evils—if they exist—work it out honestly. And this preparation on the Lord's part does not put aside means, but, in a non-miraculous age, implies the use of them. Timothy was none the worse as a minister for the Scripture-reading of his home; nor Apollos for the judicious instruction of Aquila and Priscilla. And if it be said this was casual instruction, and is very different from putting a man through a three years' course of theology before he becomes a preacher, we reply that the Lord put the Twelve through so many years of His own personal instruction before they went forth to all the world; and when Paul was converted, it is a curious coincidence, that just so many

years of his life are unaccounted for, except on the supposition that he was undergoing preparation for his future work. If the Master so dealt with the first men of His choice, who had the benefit of his direct teaching, we shall not think the three or four years given to the study of Divinity time lost, but rather a good and warrantable means — not without the Lord's sanction — for training "good ministers"—"workmen that need not be ashamed"—competent "rightly to divide the word of life." Nor shall we undervalue that trained reasoning power, and that acquaintance with Greek poets, which Paul possessed and used, and which, when he joined the Christian ranks, redeemed the sect from the reproach of ignorance and illiteracy. True, the hard-working pastor may have long since lost the memory of mathematical demonstration and classical idiom with which he was once familiar. But only the most superficial thinker would, therefore, conclude them worthless, or place the man on a level with him who never made these acquisitions. Because, in the very mastery, he acquired a

mental preparation, and underwent an intellectual training, of which he could not divest himself, even if he would. Possibly enough, the brave old veteran may have forgotten his drill, but he would not wield his weapons as he does if he had not learned it once. So let us do our utmost—it will all be needed—in school and college, to train and discipline the young men into whose hearts God puts it to seek the work of the ministry. They will not be long in it—if they are anything worth —till they find all their powers, natural and acquired, little enough for the lofty task of "disputing, and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." God, it is true, has no need of man's learning. We might reply with the witty Divine, "Neither has He of man's ignorance." But we prefer to say He has no need of our efforts, of our money, of our sons, of our ministry of any kind; but it has pleased him to employ them, *and we shall give them to Him of the best.*

These truths bind the church to two things —the reception and the maintenance of the ministry. To call a minister, to encourage

him to devote his life to your instruction, and then either to neglect or to treat lightly his administration, is surely unfair to man and dishonoring to God. It is to put your hand to His institution that you may insult it. There is sometimes seen a most distressing levity on this subject, and those on whose solemn promise of respectful waiting on His ministry, a Christian man has taken the most momentous steps, will, on grounds the most frivolous, fling their promise to the winds, as if ministers were to be called like cabs, and ordered to drive whithersoever the hirer pleased. It is not so, dear brethren; we do not ply our work with hire from you as our main object. We are Christ's servants, and our real wages come from Him. Properly speaking, the most you can do for us is to give us the means, with comfort and efficiency, to do Christ's work for your benefit; which leads me to add that the Church is bound to see to the maintenance of the ministry she receives. Regard a minister as simply the member of a profession, and society has an undoubted right to fix the scale of his

remuneration; but Christian society does a most cruel and heartless thing if it demands from the minister the expenditure in all outward things of a member of a learned profession, while giving him the income of a mechanic. It is society that fixes the scale of our living, and it is at the peril of our very usefulness if we fall below it. To withhold the means of coming up to this scale, therefore, is to inflict a wrong, and that upon a class who may hardly complain or seek redress without the imputation of sordid motives.

I must not fail to add that this continuous ministry does not preclude the exercise of the talents of other members of the Church. There is room for all the gifts God bestows—room for the ruler, for the teacher, for the administrator, for the giver, for the evangelist. But no one of these lessens the value, or renders less necessary the steady, patient, regular and trained power that the ministry of the gospel exercises on the community Now and then, indeed, a Garibaldi spurns the laws of regular war, and, at the head of a

ragged mob, snatches victories from trained troops; but we shall count military training a requisite for the defenders (under God) of the land, notwithstanding. And just so, now and then, a brilliant and, by God's grace, useful evangelist is set up by injudicious or interested people as illustrating by his success the apathy or stupidity of his less demonstrative or locomotive brethren. But while a comet, once in a way, blazes in the heavens, to our great delight and wonder, and puts all other bodies out of mind for the time, the steady business of lighting up the world is done, and ever has been, by the sun, moon and stars. "Let the newest take it," is the inscription on the golden apple of its admiration, which the community ofttimes flings down. It must be the care of good and true men, not to allow the tempting fruit to become an apple of discord among them, for

"Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi,"

("The monarchs are mad, and the Greeks are punished,") which we take leave to read freely—ministers dispute and the people pay the penalty. Let us only be energetic, pure,

laborious and faithful, and the ministry — Christ's institution—will be honored in us; souls will be saved; every auxiliary agency will receive its life and vigor through our Divinely-appointed and Divinely-blessed efforts; and when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of life.

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON.

THE interpretation of prophecy attracts less attention among us than in some other quarters. Now and then some remarkable movement is connected with a divine announcement and becomes the subject of a sermon or a pamphlet, and awakens some popular interest. Such passing notice the year 1848 received in connection with Fleming's remarkable book. Sometimes, as during the Crimean war, a clever catchpenny like the "Coming Struggle" links itself to the topic of the time, and spreads a little the spirit of inquiry through which it rose to fame. Before the events have falsified it, the prophet and his predictions are generally forgotten.

On these and other accounts it may be we

are not addicted to the study of such volumes as Dr. Cumming has submitted to the public notice. His readers are for the most part among Englishmen, the evangelical portion of whom look favorably on the theory of our Lord's personal coming to bring in the Millennium. The number of tracts, pamphlets, and books issued on this subject from the press is amazingly large. Whether it be cause or effect, we do not pretend to say, but it is certain that many evangelical persons, if appealed to on the subject of necessary reforms in the church, would reply in substance—"What is the use of trying to improve institutions that will soon give place to the new dispensation—which we daily long for and, in fact, expect?" Among the smaller bodies of Christians there is also great activity in the field of prophetical interpretation, and the tendency to fanciful minuteness by which they are distinguished in other departments, is here abundantly illustrated.

That loose or wild speculations have been indulged on these subjects is no good reason for disregarding prophecy. The difficulties

in the way of reaching some satisfactory understanding of this large section of the Word are not so great as at first sight they seem. The prophecy was not meant to be history written beforehand. It is a "miracle of wisdom," without being minute in details, or specific in announcements. It has been so constructed that obscurity hangs over the prediction till the event rolls it away, and then men cry out as they do over some great discovery,—"How simple and plain! How could men fail to see it!" The extraordinary birth of our Lord; His descent from Shem; His coming of Judah and of David's seed; His birth in lowliness in Bethlehem Ephratah, and the general outlines of His work are all clear enough to us in prophecy. God has been "His own interpreter." But to how few were they plain until they came to pass! They were, indeed, a light shining in a dark place. Godly men knew of *a* Deliverer, and a good hope for them through Him, and they looked for redemption in Israel; but they had no power to construct a map of the future. When the fame of the wonderful circum-

stances attending the Lord's birth, and the inquiries of the wise men for the "King of the Jews" called attention to it, the Jewish Doctors could point to Micah's words. But how little impression the announcement made on themselves, subsequent events clearly enough showed.

Now the thing that hath been is the thing that will be. Jewish Rabbis had constructed for themselves a history of the future. It included a powerful Messiah, before whom the armies of Rome should flee as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. It included national greatness, of which Solomon's grandeur furnished the ideal. It included the depression of all the foes of Israel. How violent the disappointment when "the carpenter's son" disclaimed all this, we all know. And yet they had some show of argument for their views. They could point to many a verse that boded splendor to Israel under Messiah's reign. They allowed their minds to dwell on a selection of predictions, to the exclusion of others. These favorite portions they interpreted with slavish literalness, and while the most impor-

tant portion of their own prophecies was being fulfilled before their eyes, they held to their dream of national vanity, and knew not till the flood of God's judgments came and carried them all away. And yet Christian writers may be found quoting these dreamers as authorities on the subject of prophecy, and entitled to the most profound respect and confidence.

There are few earnest readers of the Scripture whose minds have not been stirred at one time or another with inquiries as to the events to which prophecy is supposed to refer. The two witnesses; the downfall of mystical Babylon; the conversion and return of the Jews; the Millennium rest; such subjects of inquiry stir the more thoughtful minds to their depths for a time. A book is read on the subject, perhaps a theory is accepted. Subsequent reading disturbs this easy faith. Perhaps events refuse to conform to the interpreter's programme. The previous confidence is readily shaken. All trust in the interpretation is driven away, and the mind settles into disregard of all attempts at interpretation.

Few subjects of this kind have awakened more interest, or their interpretation been regarded with more distrust, than that of which we have placed the title at the head of this paper. And no wonder! For how varied have been the plans of this future contest! It has been assumed that Armageddon is a definite locality, and that a physical conflict is to take place. But what reason is there thus to interpret the announcement?

Taking such a book as "Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature," and looking to the word "Armageddon," we are told that it means the Hill of Megiddo. But the Old Testament records two very famous encounters that have already taken place there.

In Judges v. 19, we read—"The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo." Here the Israelites gained a signal victory over the Canaanitish kings. But, in Rev. xvi. 16 it is said—"And he gathered them together into a place called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon." Now, if it was meant that the people of God should be victorious over the com-

bined forces of their enemies, could it be better represented than by saying that the battle of Megiddo should be fought, as it were, over again? That the allusion is historical, is, to say the least, very probable, from a singular coincidence in the language of Revelation and of the book of Judges. In Revelation xvi. 16, the sacred writer says—"And he gathered them together." Now, if he got the name from the book of Judges, what more likely than that he would also find there the attendant circumstances. But we find Deboray saying to Barak, in Judges iv. 7—"I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver them into thine hand." "He shall gather them," "I will draw unto thee"—how much alike are the two expressions? Nor is it easy to see why the sacred writer should say, "which is called in the Hebrew tongue," if he did not mean, writing in Greek, to refer his readers back to the Hebrew Scriptures, whence he drew his prophetic terms. On the assumption that this is the historic reference, the bat-

tle of Armageddon is simply a conflict between the Lord's servants and His allied foes, in which the former should gain a signal victory. That it will be a struggle involving bloodshed, and the other circumstances of human warfare, appears to be entirely an assumption. The conflict may be moral. The weapons of warfare may be spiritual. This view is more in harmony with the general character of the Revelation than that which would make one human battle with carnal weapons the symbolic representation of another human battle of the same kind.

There is another historic event, however, to which some are inclined to refer the Armageddon of Revelation. Josiah was encountered at Megiddon by Pharaohnecho, King of Egypt, and slain. He seems to have meddled in the cause of the King of Assyria, without any more urgent call than the Egyptian king passing through dominions over which he claimed authority, on his way to attack the King of Assyria. It is, undoubtedly, to this that the Old-Testament prophet refers, when it is said (Zech. xii. 11)—"In that day shall

there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as in the mourning of Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddon." That the death of the good Josiah caused such mourning as might justify this reference, appears from 2 Chron. xxxv. 24, 25—"And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah, and Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day." Now, if we suppose that the Apostle John refers to this incident connected with Megiddon, it will modify our interpretation. We shall then be obliged to think that the battle of Armageddon will, in some way, go against the Lord's people, and that a temporary and partial check will be sustained by them. This incident Fairbairn considers to be alluded to by the apostle. We doubt, however, his accuracy in this. Indeed, he seems to have overlooked the reference in Judges, for he says in his most valuable book on "Prophecy"—"There is only one event recorded that had any peculiar moral bearing on the affairs of the old covenant—the one, namely, in which Josiah fell before the might

of Egypt"—(p. 426, note.) But whether we take the allusion to be to the book of Judges or the death of Josiah, much of that mystery which shrouds, and much of that speculation which has been founded on "Armageddon" disappears, and we have an event in the future of corresponding moral significance, either to Israel's victory or Josiah's death at Megiddo.

Any attempt, therefore, to determine the place of this battle is a waste of speculative ingenuity. They who supposed the Crimean war to be the beginning of the contest were as far astray in their principles of calculation as the event showed them to be in the result. Just as little reason is there to make the "kings of the East," the Jews and the combatants on one side, and to take Euphrates literally (when all else is symbolical confessedly) as the seat of the Turkish Empire.

The ingenious author of the "Seventh Vial," in which are many important principles, gives a chapter to the battle of Armageddon, but without a single allusion to the historical reference! He adopts here a very common expedient, that of explaining the New Testa-

ment predictions by those of the Old—the very reverse of the plan we should suppose natural. Carrying this principle a little further, we sometimes find the Lord's parables explained by the more obscure of the prophecies!

A local allusion of the same general character to that we have been examining is found in the prophet Joel (iii. 12)—"Let the heathen be awakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about." A vague impression exists among many that the valley of Jehoshaphat is near Jerusalem, and that it is here indicated as the scene of the final judgment. Both Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans have been inclined so to regard the glen which devides Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. But this identification is no older than Eusebius, and Professor Porter has shown that the word for "valley" is totally inapplicable to the Kidron, as it signifies not a glen, but a low tract of land of wide extent, such as suited a battle-field. "Torrent Valley," or glen is the word always applied to

the Kidron, which is a narrow rocky ravine, in which it is impossible for "multitudes" to convene. (See Joel iii. 12.) He asserts that, for the identification of the glen near Jerusalem, and the place named by the prophet, there is not the slightest ground, either in Scripture or in Josephus. The common mind always wishes to have definite, local and personal references in prophecy, to have, in fact, history written beforehand. But this would destroy human freedom and responsibility and defeat the very object of prophecy. There is, however, an event to which the prophet Joel probably refers, an event of such national importance as justified his reference. We quote from Kitto (in the Cyclopædia) the following summary of 2 Chron. xx., which our readers can examine at their leisure: "The allied forces" (Moab, Ammon, Edom and such aid as they could count) "entered the land of Judah, and encamped at Engedi, near the western border of the Dead Sea. In this extremity, Jehosaphat felt that all his defence lay with God. A solemn fast was held, and the people repaired from the towns to Jerusa-

lem to seek help of the Lord. In the presence of the assembled multitude, the king in the court of the temple offered up a fervent prayer to God, concluding with 'O our God, wilt Thou not judge them, for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee.' He ceased; and in the midst of the silence which ensued, a voice was raised, pronouncing deliverance in the name of the Lord, and telling them to go out on the morrow to the cliffs overlooking the camp of the enemy, and see them all overthrown without a blow from them. The voice was that of Jahaziel, one of the Levites. His words came to pass. The allies quarrelled among themselves, and destroyed each other; so that, when the Judahites came the next day, they found their dreaded enemies all dead, and nothing was left for them but to take the rich spoils of the slain. This done, they returned with triumphal songs to Jerusalem."

Such an event as this occurring about two hundred years before Joel's time might well be

seized by him as the vehicle of a prophetic announcement of a future deliverance, a repetition in another field, and perhaps not in material but in moral warfare, of the intervention of Divine power on his people's behalf. But such interpretation puts far away all speculation as to the place of the final judgment, of which, probably, as of the hour no man nor angel knoweth.

It is wise to seek for the meaning of prophetic language in the history of the Old Testament. In Revelations xviii. 4, is heard the well-known cry concerning New Testament Babylon, "Come out of her, my people." Now, when the Lord gave the Jews the power to return from the actual Babylon, many had become so comfortable in the land of their captivity that they did not remove. So the prophet Zechariah is instructed, while encouraging the rebuilding of the temple, to call upon them to come out of Babylon that they partake not of her plagues—"Ho! ho! come forth, and flee from the land of the North, saith the Lord; for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith

the Lord. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon (Zech. ii. 6. 7). What is the New Testament call but a repetition of this to the New Testament Israel?

The faithful and consistent application of this mode of inquiry would save us many errors. We should not, then, expect literal Israel to be replaced in the land, and to vanquish Moab, Edom and the Philistines in a spiritual sense (see Isaiah xi. 13, 14). We should see that, if literal Israel is in question, so must literal Philistines, Moabites and Ammonites. But are these nations to have a resurrection? It is expressly declared that they shall not. We should see that Christ is the New Testament David; Zion His Church; His believing people His Israel; the bringing of men to Him the enlargement of His kingdom; and the establishment of His fear in all men's hearts, the universal sway of His sceptre, the reign of righteousness, the glad Millennium. We should see, too, that it is our duty to labor to promote the growth of the stone cut out of the mountain without

hands, till it fill the earth; and to expect confidently that for which we pray and labor earnestly. We should see that Christ is to sit at the right hand of the Father, until His enemies are made His footstool; and so we should escape much fanciful, and, as we fear, mischievous, speculation regarding the personal advent of our Lord to set up His kingdom and introduce the Millennium.

BE READY TO DIE.

WHEN instant preparation for death is urged upon men, they too often shake off the obligation by recalling the many nearer, and therefore, as they imagine, more pressing, interests to which they must give heed. "It is all very well to tell me to prepare for what *may* come any moment, but here are concerns actually on my hands — visible and present burdens that I must bear, and bear before I take up this other affair. My wife, my children, my business — these *must* be looked after. They are not possibilities, but realities, distinct and tangible. Excuse me, but I cannot now relax my attention to them for this additional care, important though I own it to be."

So many persons say in their hearts, as they do practically say in their lives. Closely analyzed, it comes to this with them—that, finding themselves in certain relations to the creatures and the Creator, they put these relations in comparison. The creatures are near and noticeable by the senses; the Creator is invisible and therefore thought to be distant, or, what is the same thing, treated as distant; and the interests of the near and visible are first attended to. But there should be no such comparison made, or, if it be made, it should be with the very opposite result. To help you, however, as far as possible, over this difficulty, inseparable, perhaps, from our weakness, let us study the various elements of preparation for death — such a thorough preparation as will not leave out of sight what is due to creature or Creator. That the usual hindrance above alluded to may not operate again, let us consider, in the first instance, what is due to the creature; then we shall be ready, with hearts free and unembarrassed, to weigh the requirements of the Creator.

PROVIDE FOR DEPENDENTS.

1. You have some dear ones for whom you provide home, food, and comfort. Your death would strip them of all these, and leave wife or child, parent, brother, sister, or other relative in want. Of course nothing could make up to them for your presence and affection, but it is possible, in many cases, to provide for the evil day in the matter of material comforts. Do this as far as possible. When God does not leave it in our power to make such provision, He will undertake for them; but we have no right to put God's providence in the room of our plain and commanded duty. Many good men recommend life insurance as a legitimate and desirable course. The forethought, prudence, self-denial, and calculation this course implies are good in themselves; so is the security of feeling thus procured. If any of you need counsel about this matter, I am sure there are ministers, elders, or other friends who would have pleasure in giving it, and would be doing their duty in

aiding you, just as I am doing mine in counselling you thus to provide for your own. To rescue the widow and fatherless from want is held to be quite proper work for ministers, and even for sermons from the pulpit; but prevention is better than cure; and when means exist by which those whose industry is their only property can so invest a part of it that it shall live after them, it is culpable to neglect the precaution. As to the doubt about the morality of life insurance, I say nothing. It has vanished with the ignorance of which it was the offspring. And surely every man must feel that the common sorrow of the bereaved is heavy enough without having added to it the misery of destitution or dependence. Let all who have others dependent on them make timely provision—and we know no better mode than this—for the separation that death effects. It is not human prudence, but the Spirit of God, that says, by Paul (1 Tim. v. 8)—"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

BUSINESS MANAGEABLE.

2. Another preparatory step is putting your business, where you are so engaged, in an intelligible and manageable form, so that, should you be removed from it to-morrow, those who come after you could gather up the threads in their hands and proceed without embarrassment. But you see great difficulty in this. You cannot, in fact, do it. Then it is worth considering whether you should go into that which, on your removal, would be practically useless, or even burdensome, to those who follow you. This, however, is an advice of such limited application that one need not dwell upon it. It suggests a third step, too often neglected.

MAKE YOUR WILL.

3. Make, in due form, such conscientious disposal of your affairs as will most serve those connected with you, and most glorify God. How much better to do this, in calm

and unclouded moments, at leisure and at peace, with friends at hand whom you may consult, than amid the agitation and alarm of an illness, if the Lord should give you even such a season of preparation. That you should do this without passion, caprice, or revenge, as one solemnly accountable to God, is a truth so obvious, we need not dwell upon it. That it is good to be brought thus face to face with eternity, to realize the temporary nature of our hold on our possessions, and to contemplate our resignation of them into other hands, might be also argued from the reluctance many men have shown to make a testamentary disposal of their affairs.

REPARATION.

4. If there be any whom you have wronged or injured, and to whom reparation is possible, make that reparation. Why should you carry thorns to your dying pillow, or have to regret that as undone which you might have done, and can never now attempt? It is not only in material things that repara-

tion is to be made. "It must needs be that offences come;" and bitter words are hastily spoken that bite like an adder. "Go, and be reconciled to thy brother." Let *your* conscience, at least, be clear; and if, in word or deed, you have injured him, make what atonement is possible for you to make. Evil done to God, and unrepented of, is the same as evil persisted in. The same is true of man. If I have injured another, and never owned it or repaired it, as far as I could, I am continuing the injury from day to day. Do not overlook this. Death itself is solemn and awful enough without attendant bitter memories. The last enemy is sufficiently formidable without being accompanied by the spectre of wrongs, the power to right which is departed for ever!

And if, on the other hand, there be any to whom you have had kindly intentions, put them in force yourself. Do not put them away till, perhaps, their realization is impossible. Be your own executor. How pitiable it is to see gifts bestowed on worthy objects, as men are stepping out of this world into the

next, which only serve to be a bone of contention among the survivors! How sad the mockery when men grasp the means of which they are stewards with the tenacity of a passion, and only surrender them to their lawful uses when they lose the power to hold them, as if the Lord's saying had been—"It is more blessed to retain than to give." David dedicated the materials for the temple, and would have built it himself if the Lord had permitted him. Why not, wherever you can, give the seeds of goodness from your living hand, and gladden your own eyes with the rich and ripe results?

These elements of preparation spring out of our relations to the creatures. Now let us see what steps we are to take in consequence of our relations to the Creator and Judge. "There are three persons in the Godhead," one in purpose and in authority; and to each we occupy a definite relation. We have been rebellious children to our Father; we have rejected, or crucified afresh, or denied the blessed Saviour; we have resisted or grieved the Holy Spirit. The unbelieving have not

only done these things; *they have never done anything else.* All their life has been spent in rebelling against the Father, rejecting the Son, and "doing despite" unto the Spirit. That they can be ready to die in this state is so plainly impossible that it needs no argument. Then, what is the preparation for death as regards God?

REPENTANCE.

If you conceive a case as nearly like this as possible, a child in rebellion against his father and seeking restoration to his favor, you have the answer supplied. Regret for the disobedience and sincere reformation may surely be set down as obvious essentials to a reconciliation. So the Lord himself depicts it. The prodigal (Luke xv. 17), comes to himself, resolves on, and makes confession of his sin and submission to his father, even in the lower place of a servant. This is repentance. And so the Saviour came to "call sinners to repentance." (Mat. ix. 13.) So, when explaining Scripture to the disciples, after His

resurrection, He said that, "repentance and remissions of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Accordingly, Peter began at Jerusalem with the very word (Acts ii. 38) "Repent," and Paul kept it up (Acts xx. 21), "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God." If you, O sinner, would be ready to die, repentance for sin is an essential part of your preparation. To be without it, is to go into God's presence as if in the continued act of sinning. God gives you space to repent, and there will be joy in heaven among the angels over you if you do repent; but, if you do not, the men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment against you to condemn you, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and a greater calls to you. He upbraided Chorazin and Capernaum because they repented not. God is not seeking occasion against you, but "is long-suffering to usward (2 Peter iii. 9), not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

O sinner! get ready to die. God grant you repentance—such repentance as Paul and the Gentiles of his time obtained—"that saving grace whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of heart, and endeavor after new obedience."

FAITH.

There is, however, no atoning virtue in repentance. It is nothing—even if it could exist—apart from Christ. Another element, therefore, is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It goes with repentance. Men look to the Pierced One and mourn (Zech. xii. 10). Jesus called on men to believe; He put the same call into His Apostles' lips. That call is ringing through the world now more loudly, perhaps, than at any former time. Jesus offers to be a Saviour for you. Accept His offer. He undertakes to plead for you. Commit your case to His hand. He receives those

who go to Him. Do not keep away. Unseen though He be, He is not far from any one of us. He is nigh to us in His promises, on which we have only to lay hold; and, as a bank-note from London is good all over the empire, His word is sure to us at the ends of the earth, and to the end of time.

O sinner! without faith in Christ, you are quite unprepared to die. You have neither pardon nor peace, neither righteousness nor strength. You never can have them till you believe in Jesus. You may go on, but it is ot ruin. The "unbelieving" shall be "in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

We make no separation in point of time between repentance and faith. They go hand in hand like feeling a sorrow and weeping, or believing a joyful piece of news and rejoicing.

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT.

Nor can repentance and faith be separated from living in the Spirit. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die" (Rom. viii. 13) "If any

man," the Apostle had said just before, "have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Not having the Spirit is one mark, according to Jude (19) of those "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

Now observe how you stand. Out of the very relations in which you are placed to the creatures, springs the obligation already mentioned, if you would set your house in order. Out of the relations in which you stand to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the nature of things, springs the obligation of repentance, faith, and fellowship through the Spirit. O dying sinner! rise up and get ready to meet God. Here are the requisites. Take them in any order you will. Repent, believe, receive the Spirit. The Bible makes no account of the order. If you have one, you must have the rest. If you want one, you want all. To be destitute of the Spirit is condemning, awful evidence of being impenitent and unbelieving. To believe in Christ is sure to bring repentance. Do you wish to have faith? "It is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8). Do you desire repentance? Christ is exalted

to give it (Acts v. 31)—yes, even to them who "hanged Him on the tree." Dying sinner! your case may be bad, but, if you wish for the Spirit, by the very zeal that moved you to seek your children's gratification, God represents to you His willingness to "give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" (Mat. vii. 11). How did the murderers of our Saviour get life? Thus: Christ received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 33), and shed forth that Holy Ghost on the hearts of that hard and heartless crowd, so that they were awakened and converted. There is hope for you, O sinner. Strive—not with God, for He is willing; nor with Christ, for He is the door; nor with the Spirit, for He is striving with you, perhaps in these very words; but strive with your own apathy, indolence, and love of sin, and enter in at the strait gate. Oh! be ready, "for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

It may not be amiss to guard you against abusing the grace of God and delaying, because God's grace is so free, and His saving

help so promptly given. Would you wish to snatch up, for the first time on the very battle-field, the armor in which you are to overcome the king of terrors? Would you not wish to have proved your weapons beforehand? The cables and anchors used at sea are very properly tested before being given out. And if you will now believe in Jesus, you may have your religion tested before the last strain is put on it. There are persons who have tested it. "I have been in sore temptations, and my religion has kept me from falling," says one. "I have been in deep waters," says another, "but my religion saved me from sinking." "I was even at the gates of death," says a third, "and I thought I should have entered in. I had no fear, nothing but a joyful, patient hope, and

> 'I can trust Him for all the future now
> I have been to the Border land.'"

Oh! it is something to go to death with a religion tried and proved amid the varied scenes of life. "I hope this is true repentance," said an agonized man lately, as he shivered on the

brink; "I heard a minister say 'late repentance is seldom true;'" and so he believed, but trembled. How different from the exultant shout of one with whom the Lord Jesus had stood to strengthen him (2 Tim. iv. 17)! "*I know* whom I have believed" (2 Tim. i. 12). Prove the Christian armor in life and be familiar with its use.

Nor would we quite leave out of view that there are others besides the Divine Being in the place whither we proceed. We go "to an innumerable company of angels." Minis tering is their work. Let us learn to minister here, that we may be ready for association with them yonder.

And if we are to be members of "the General Assembly and Church of the first-born" above—if we are to share the felicity "of the spirits of the just made perfect," should we not be in their fellowship below? He who has repentance toward God, faith in the Lord Jesus, life in the Spirit—who has learnt to minister as angels do—who has made God's people his people—is ready to die; heaven will nct be strange to him. The arm on

which he leans in the dark valley is the arm of a long-known Friend. The tones of the voice that whispers to his soul, "Fear not, for I am with thee," are blessedly familiar. He is ready, quite ready. Nay, if to-day the heavens should open and a light appear, brighter than the sun's, gradually approaching earth, and unfolding the great white throne, he should lift up his head with joy, knowing that his redemption, complete and eternal, had drawn nigh.

"WORLDLINESS."

IN the judgment of many excellent persons, the Church of Christ is now suffering from worldliness to such an extent as to raise grave apprehension, and call for special notice in prayer and effort. The complaint might mean one of two things: either that the worldly, as such, are pressing upon and dominating the Church, as, for example, in carrying against the general Christian feeling such points as the opening of libraries and galleries on Sabbath; or that Christian people, themselves within the Church, are adopting the style of life peculiar to "the world."

The latter is the subject of complaint, though it is obviously not without some connection with the former, for an undecided and divided Church is not a formidable opponent to her

enemies. The prevalence of prosperity, the diffusion of wealth, the adoption of many continental usages, and the reception into society of many persons educated to continental ways, may be specified as causes of the relaxation in question.

As a help to just thinking on this matter, the writer ventures to offer a few thoughts which may possibly disappoint some readers (because we are all accustomed to hear "worldliness" blamed rather than defined), but may yet awaken salutary thought in others.

We are all liable, as we learn from faithful friends and sarcastic neighbors, to judge severely those things which we have escaped, and to rate highly the virtues which we possess. The "good young man," who neither uses tobacco nor stimulants, and has been brought up so, may easily assign himself, or have given him by others, a high place over those who "smoke and take wine," while in the eye of God the smoker may be the better of the two. The good young man may be conceited, mean, vain even of his goodness, censorious, and selfish. A gentleman of hospitable nature and easy means, with a family

of young people and a wide circle of friends, keeps a tolerably open house, entertains, and "sees a deal of company." He may be looked askance at, as exceedingly worldly, by his next-door neighbor, who early learnt to economize, and practised the lesson after its necessity had ceased, who never has company, and does not understand such "goings on." Yet the latter may be narrow-minded, cold-hearted, secretly congratulating himself on his prudence and prosperity, and so hard and honest that he is hardly honest. I have been brought up, let me suppose, on the soundest theology; took it in with my mother's milk; lived in controversial times when the "points" were sharp indeed, and all the lines of doctrine as definite as the ten commandments. I am liable to rate too low my neighbor, who grew up under a different *régime*, and who, cross-examined about some of the distinctions familiar to me, would probably say bluntly, "Upon my word, I don't know." Yet he may have a simple, devout, earnest, manly piety, in the sight of God of greater value than mine.

These examples I give, because no one will

suppose me to be in favor of tobacco, drink, fast living, or loose religious thinking, and because they illustrate, I hope harmlessly, the position laid down at the beginning of the paragraph.

What is true of persons is true of classes. Among the inhabitants of tenement-houses, there is a good deal of roughness, coarse speaking, rude boxing of human ears, blows even, in bad times; and some excess of wine, revellings, and such like, unrefined freedoms, and boisterous and unregulated jollity, in good times. These things are apt to be classed very far down in the scale of human worth by the educated and well-to-do, who forget that a bitter word may be as bad as a blow, and shocking vice may be indulged in with great refinement of manner. Mary Ann, whose duties as lady's maid require her to dress and undress her young ladies four nights in the week for external displays, thinks it dreadful dissipation; while the young ladies think it shocking that Mary Ann will dawdle as she does about the basement-door with her "friend." We total abstainers have not much patience with the moderate drinkers; but Dr. Thomas Chalmers wound up his day's labors with a glass

of toddy, and put it in his journal, too; and many a Scottish minister, as good in his place as any of us in ours, sees no harm in the like, greatly to the distress of good Total Abstainers

Now it is not meant that there is no right and wrong for the individual in these things, but that a general judgment upon particular points is so difficult as to make general judgments of little value. Legislation against particular follies has had little real success. Even special preaching has had, we humbly think, no great results. Congregational action has been taken to the exclusion of dancers, for example, from Church-fellowship; and then have begun fine distinctions between "square dances" and "round dances," hard to be understood, and easily wrested by the unlearned in such things. Deeds done thoughtlessly, as we drop a witticism, are made into formal transgressions. An artificial standard is set up for conscience, and religion is made to be a little too much in *the things we keep from doing*. The further evil ensues that men are needlessly set to pick holes in other people's coats. "I'm sure I might as well go to the opera, as listen to an opera singer in church."

"I'm no worse with my dress—hair and all—than the deacon with his hair dyed." "There was less naughty talking at my reception than at Mrs. Smith's Dorcas Society." And these retorts getting whispered about, and being in the air, the spirit of even good people is "riled," and perhaps the minister is led to lay out as much force for a Sabbath or two, in dissuading from dress, or dance, or theatre, as he ordinarily does in dissuading from rejection of Christ and eternal death. And some of his dear people, who love and respect him, come to have two sets of sins in their mind's eye—those that are clearly against God's word, and those that are against the minister's. We do not mean that this latter word should not be taken into account by Christian people. It should be; and a good man will not willingly shock the feelings, or weaken the hands, of a minister; but the fewer the points on which a minister, or indeed a church, thus exercises the obedience of members, the better for the minister, and for the manly, independent, well-developed, Christian character of the people.

"Then do you think excessive dressing, and

dancing, and entertainments, and theatrical displays, right things for Christian people?" No, indeed; I think them generally excessively childish; sometimes very pernicious.

"Then would you do nothing? Do you advise 'masterly inactivity?'" No. There is something to be done. Let an example indicate what.

The pastoral epistles emphatically require gravity in ministers. Now, suppose it were put in the ordination-vows, or "charges," that a minister should never make a pun in English, Greek, or Latin; never wear a colored necktie; never allude to Dickens or the like; never make people laugh with an "amusing speech," never throw a fly, or shoot game, or knock down nine-pins (which things could be shown to be unfavorable to gravity)—would it mend matters? Would not a wise man say, "My dear sir, some of these things, in proper time and place, are well enough; '*est modus in rebus;*' and if I am not capable of judging and obtaining helps to form a judgment on such things, if there is no way to keep me right on these points but by this formal prohibition, I am not fit to be a minister at all. If I

am a true minister, my *preoccupation of heart and life with God and the souls of men will keep me from trifling.*"

Now it is just here that the right line of treatment of the Church's worldliness seems to lie. To have a ministry, grave, sober, such that no man can despise, let it be an educated and intensely earnest ministry, thoroughly engaged in God's work; and to have a church free of worldly trifling, let her be thoroughly educated, and intensely occupied in God's work. Filled with the wheat of true Christian life, there will be no room in her vessels for the chaff of fashionable follies.

But how to get this?—or, rather, how to seek it? With great diffidence we venture a few hints:

1. There is a broad line drawn in Scripture between God and mammon, Christ and Belial, flesh and spirit, the will of the flesh and the will of God. That which makes godliness is the love of God shed abroad in the heart. That is its essence, its animating principle, its life. That which makes worldliness is *the love of what is not God*, lust of the flesh, or the eye, or pride of life.

The object may be dignified, like honor, or power; or small and mean, like gain, or personal display. It may be pure, like literary fame, or social influence; or it may be sensual and beastly, like the pleasures of the table or of the harem.

What makes it worldly is not its high or low character; it is its *godlessness*. The "honorable merchant" loving his money; the "mother in Israel' loving her position; the deacon loving his power in the Church; the minister "purring" over the "society" of which he is the "honored head;" all may be worldly in God's sight, as truly as the butterfly that shines in over-dress in the boxes, or the poor creature that gyrates on the stage in half-dress, *and with less excuse*. One may conduct a prayer-meeting, or manage a mission-station, in essential worldliness.

A ball thrown away on the top of a hill will obey the law of gravitation and run down. What side of the hill it will take will depend on the impulse given to it, and the inclination of the ground. So human beings without the dominant love of God will be worldly, and what form of gayety, display, hoarding, gossiping, self-seeking, self-indulgence, mean gains, or sense of power, the

sin will take, is only a matter of detail, and of secondary moment. Men, like trees, will bring forth fruit after their kind.

2. Let there be close and faithful dealing with those whom we take into the Church. Let us be more concerned about quality than quantity. "They are not all Israel which are of Israel."

3. Let us keep the churches, *as churches*, free of worldliness. If they be the scenes of theatrical displays; if they parade themselves before the world; if they follow in its wake in style, "effects," music, and general accommodation to the fashion, can it be wondered at if the members catch the spirit, and "better the instruction?" What minister does not know that it is possible to preach on humility with a spirit as proud as Lucifer's? And so may a church be sound in creed, and most respectable in character, and yet differ from other institutions only in this: that they serve man's *natural tastes and wishes* on the six days, and it gratifies the same in the ways appropriate to the seventh.

4. Let us seek in all appropriate ways—by praying, studying, teaching, preaching, and holy

living—THAT POWER which has ever best resisted the encroachments of worldliness, so-called; which enters the heart: dispossesses its old occupants; raises the tastes; purifies the affections; sets the hands to work; makes life solemn, earnest, and dignified; gives efficacy to law; creates sustaining public sentiment, and renders all obedience simple, unconstrained, and spontaneous, holding men back from frivolities, not so much by the iron fence of "Thou shall not," as by the loftier inspiration of positive Christian living, that replies to all syren calls of the world—"Why should the work cease while I leave it, and come down to you?" We may err in dealing with symptoms; we may mistake by governing too much; but we are safe in declaring, by word and deed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

SUBSTITUTES FOR THE BIBLE.

THERE is hardly anything more observable about man than his felt need of light from without. He may not know enough to say to God, "O send forth thy light," but he feels the darkness so sensibly, and stumbles so much, that he cannot repress a cry, often inarticulate, for some light. The evidence of this truth might be collected from many a field. What means his search for omens, signs, and presages? Why do seers flourish, and Homer's augurs peer into the entrails of slain beasts, and wizards peep and mutter? Why have oracles been so mighty? Why has superstition been so influential a force in the world? Who that has seen Raphael's cartoon of Elymas, the sorcerer, "seeking some to lead him by the hand," can forget the look of utter

helplessness of the strong man struck blind? And all too like him is humanity; to change the figure, like

> "An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry."

And as a part of this world-wide unconscious confusion, is the knowledge that the light must come from without. The soothsayer or astrologer is of no account by himself. It is the belief that the "Spirit of the Holy God" somehow speaks to him and through him that gives him authority. The individual is ignorant, and does not expect the coveted knowledge from his peers, but from outside and beyond the race. One does not ask the way to his own dwelling when he knows it perfectly; and, when he must ask it, he does not inquire of persons obviously strangers, like himself.

Many of man's inquiries for supernatural guidance relate only to common and secular things. He has his "lucky" signs and his unfortunate. But his helplessness is most apparent in the things of his soul and the unseen world. Hardly anything offers itself as a reve-

lation—Vedas, Koran, Book of Mormon, or the rhapsodical utterances of a spiritualist adventurer—that will not find some favor and secure some adherents. Philosophers who deny this, and attempt to make out that man is self-sufficient and complete within himself, are exceptional cases—not one in a million of the race; and their very philosophy, when analyzed, would be found the product of a real or pretended communication from without.

To be without, or to reject, the Scripture, therefore, is to be compelled by the necessities of the position to find something in its place. An examination of some such substitutes in our own time may not be without its uses.

Education is relied on by many. Multiply common schools, train teachers, improve the books, spare no expense. The common school is our safety and our glory. So say many men with a clear but incomplete view of the value of knowledge. They suppose the accomplishments and acquaintance with facts and laws imparted in schools will serve all human necessities.

But there are grave considerations on the other side. This acquaintance is defective. It

leaves out one entire hemisphere, to say the least, of that world with which man has to do—that of the soul and the unseen world. It lacks certainty. The differences among denominations of Christians on vital points are as nothing to the differences among historians, naturalists, and scientific men generally. The more recent edition of one man's book corrects the earlier, and the science of this century laughs at that of the last. This acquaintance is only attainable by a few of the race. Who has time to master an encyclopædia? Now and then a man of so-called "universal knowledge" appears; but he is one in a hundred million. You cannot say of the scientific way to happiness: "The wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err therein." And, finally, many who have reached the highest educational point have had so low a moral development as to show that they have not realized the chief end of their being.

The "*inner light*" has seemed to some the infallible guide man needs. Not always rejecting the Word—sometimes, indeed, reverently using it—sober-minded men like Barclay, Fox, and the later mystics, have watched the indica-

tions of the Holy Spirit, and found, as they thought, a sufficient revelation to each man on the fleshly table of his own heart. Less religious men find the same guide in universal human consciousness, or some equally pretentious human property. But, not to mention other considerations, the inner light must shine, to be effective, on many things that concern others besides the man himself. A is persuaded within that B should give A his house, field, himself. But the inner conviction of B is, "I should do no such thing." An umpire is needed. Who shall decide between conflicting convictions? Who shall say how much is sound judgment, and how much a thought of which a wish was the parent? Here it is that the written Word is indispensable. And here is the weak point of that valuable class of men and women who in other ways have rendered good service to the world, and whom all men are willing to call and count "Friends." They enjoin, indeed, parents to teach their children the Scriptures; but they have hitherto suffered from the want of regular and systematic instruction in the Word, a want which they are now happily supplying in part, and in which they

should have the hearty co-operation of all Christians.

The Church has been made to do duty for the Bible. They who most exalt her admit, with Protestants, the need of an external revelation, and admit that it has been given through Christ and his apostles. But its sufficiency is denied in form, and its place is supplied in fact, by the Church. Since the Reformation, she calls her authority the teaching of the apostles written, and handed down by tradition. But she is the judge of what constitutes tradition. She finds it out, rejects or accepts as she will, so that in point of fact it is hers to make tradition what she pleases. The Scriptures, on the other hand, committed to writing and published, become subject to the ordinary laws of literature, and are open to all men's scrutiny and criticism. In the party contests of a city or a state, each side has its set of rumors, reports, and statements, ignored or denied by the other. But religious feuds are as fierce as civil, and the issues graver than in social struggles. There is need of an umpire, and that umpire we find in the written Word.

It is now supposed by some that Spiritualism will be a sufficient guide to man; and any one who looks into its publications will see that it takes the tone, more or less distinctly, of opposition to the Bible. The extent to which it prevails in this country has been enormously exaggerated. Eleven millions of the American population have been claimed for this revived superstition of an earlier time. That one person in four of all the American people is a Spiritualist is too incredible to any American of intelligence. One in forty would probably be thought an excessive estimate, whatever may be printed and credited in England. But this is unimportant. It is to be deplored that any should be led to seek guidance in the affairs of life and of the unseen through supposed communication with the dead.

It has long been the way of evil to caricature what cannot be contradicted. There is a true Kingdom of the Saviour. It has its travesty in the Papacy. There is a true self-denial enjoined by Christ. Asceticism made it ridiculous. Unworldliness is scriptural. Monasticism is its mischievous perversion. There is a genuine

communication from the risen Christ. Spiritualism is its misleading counterfeit. One may see in its printed works reports of interviews between men and spirits, and also between departed spirits, in which the mighty dead have retrograded intellectually to the style and thought of a schoolboy of fifteen, slightly stage-struck. With facilities without parallel, if their own account were credible, for acquiring new ideas, they have produced none; and, with channels of information exclusively their own, they have added nothing to the sum of human knowledge.

The most that can be said regarding the investigations of this class is, that they have called attention to certain curious facts regarding the physical system. Ever since the days of Shakespeare, at least, every wise man has been willing to be told, like Hamlet's friend,

> "There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

But curious facts regarding the body and other matter, and the influence of mind on matter, are not necessarily a religion. It is a curious fact that "ordinary air is no better than a sort of

stirabout of excessively minute solid particles; that these particles are almost wholly destructible by heat; and that they are strained off, and the air rendered optically pure, by being passed through cotton wool." It is a curious fact that the lymph of vaccination should consist of living particles, twenty thousand of which would not make a line an inch long. Yet, if Tyndall, Chaveau, Sanderson, or Helmholtz should offer volumes of such curious facts, men would not accept them as a religion. No amount of mysterious "footfalls," or inexplicable noises, or vivid impressions on irregularly working minds can be a substitute for the perfect law of the Lord, which converts the soul and makes wise the simple.

Indeed, the manner in which so many of these pseudo revelations are given is a strong presumption against them. When Bacon, Milton, or Shakespeare speak to us, we do not expect them, after centuries of intellectual progress, to return to puerility in matter or in manner. And, when men who shook their world in life, who were great and noble and dignified in their communications on earth, pass the boun-

daries that divide us from them, it is, or ought to be, a surprise to find them crawling under tables or rocking chairs in dumb show, and jerking the skirts of women's garments. It was not thus Webster and Washington made known their thoughts when here. It is difficult to guess what law has modified their methods for the worse.

So far, we see no substitute for the Holy Scriptures, which are legible, intelligible, accessible, and full of all we need to know. Let us believe them fully. Let us obey them cordially. Let us teach them to our children. Let us open them reverently morning and evening with our gathered households, begin and end the day with the reading and the pleading of their promises, and with the acknowledgment of our sin where we have broken their precepts. So shall we best promote mutual love, helpfulness, forbearance, and employ the best check upon disorder and insubordination in our homes. Let us offer them to all men, for "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

A PLEA FOR THE NEGLECTED RICH.

THE proportion of ungodly rich persons does not differ very materially from that of ungodly poor persons. But there are many causes in operation tending to the production of good impressions on the poor, by which the rich are not reached. A little reflection on the subject will satisfy, to most minds, the heading of this paper, and show that we may with advantage vary our appeals for the "outlying masses" and the "neglected poor."

A rich person, unless made impulsive by some exceptional peculiarity, acquires some consideration from the known possession of wealth. This is greatly increased if some family respectability, culture, and fair character accompany large means. A little deference is paid to the rich man by the majority of his fellow-crea-

tures—some from sordid motives, some from vulgar admiration, some from real respect for a man who has achieved that which they have always sincerely desired for themselves, and counted the success of life. The deference thus yielded to his wealth, a man is tempted to credit to his worth, and it is difficult for him to realize that he is anything else than "an excellent man," when he is so regarded by all around him. That he who is "universally respected" in a free and intelligent community should "awake to shame and everlasting contempt," is not easily conceivable by him. "What everybody says must be true," and so he protects himself in a coat of mail composed of the compliments, tacit or formal, of his fellows; the counsels and cautions of truth fail to penetrate it; and he self-complacently assumes that, as providence always was good to him here, it is a fair presumption that he will stand well enough forever. That providential goodness is one thing, and redeeming grace another, is a distinction he does not readily perceive.

On the other hand, a poor, weak, good-for-nothing cannot well live twenty-four hours with-

out being reminded of his moral condition. He begs and sometimes gets help, sometimes not; but he rarely fails to get a moral lecture. He is in debt, and his creditors make him understand how they value him. His landlord tells him in lucid Saxon that he is a worthless fellow, a cheat, a swindler, because he cannot pay his rent. Among the poor, conventional restraints are less binding than elsewhere, and even his own family will sometimes suggest deficient moral worth. The Bible-woman, the Scripture-reader, or city missionary, makes him most properly the subject of direct and indirect approach; and it must be through extraordinary obtuseness if he is not aware that he is a "miserable sinner."

The sharp providences that drive many men to God and religion are often blunted to the rich. Sickness brings to them the best medical skill, the most watchful solicitude, the widest sympathy. It is, if in a mild form, a new kind of easy luxury. Want, or the fear of it, they never know. "What shall I eat?" is a question, inability to answer which never sent them to their knees. The bereavement that saddens a family makes a change of scene necessary, and a pleas-

ant trip diverts the mind into other channels. It is not here meant that the rich have no troubles. They have many and keen. But it is meant that the pressure that is heavy on the poor, and heavy for men's good, is eased off in the case of the rich by their circumstances.

On the other hand, the poor constantly have reminders that they need the Lord. They may disregard them; but they come. Living often on the very edge of their income, a little enforced idleness brings want very near to them. Sickness is an evil with few mitigations. Death in the family has to be dwelt upon, and only ceases to be vividly remembered through the necessity —which mercy overrules—to return to hard toil and fresh planning for the future.

Nor is it to be forgotten that wealth and culture tend to produce reserve on the greatest themes; not perhaps from any inherent force, but as the consequence of tendencies already mentioned. Unused to be approached on the subject of religion by his fellows, and uninterested in it, a man has no language in which to express religious sentiments. Many men hang around the outskirts of the church who should

be encouraged to come in; but they have a shy dread of embarrassment in getting through the ordeal, which they do not exactly know, and count terrible, because it is unknown.

There is no machinery for reaching the wealthy, as there is for reaching the poor. No city mission contemplates millionnaires. No Bible-woman looks up the "queens of society," and invites them to a mothers' meeting. Whoever saw a "helping hand" for ladies who keep carriages? Even the clergyman is shy of approaching the rich man, sometimes from motives he could not define—sometimes from a vague apprehension that he may be misunderstood. A family might live long enough in a first-class house in most of our cities, and not be approached with religion till they approach it in one of the churches.

How different is the condition of the poor, one does not need to say. The district-visitor drops in; the Sabbath-school teacher, on his rounds, invites the children to school. The minister hardly needs to apologize for calling when visiting next door, and inviting them to church. In some quarters the poor are ap-

proached by so many and various agencies, and the competition for them is so keen, that they set a high value on themselves, and feel that they patronize Christians by submitting to their reforming agencies.

And, not to carry this contrast into tediousness, a little religion is held to go far with rich people. A chance word spoken, an unexpected bit of tenderness, a common act—uncommon in the career of a rich man—is held to be "a great thing for one like him." With a dim perception of their difficulties in getting into the kingdom, the average Christian is thankful for good signs, and inclined to make the most of them.

On the other hand, the poor are put on probation, formally or otherwise. Allowance is made for complicated motives. Their peccadilloes are remembered, and there is not much delicacy in allusion to them. No one speaks with bated breath and in confidential whispers of their slips and falls, and when they die there is little demand for a favorable obituary notice.

Then what is to be done? Set up a society? No, indeed. Any change in the number of societies had better be in the direction of amal-

gamation and decrease. Some of them might well be improved out of existence, and the Church made to do what was always her work, and is now considered theirs. What then? Among other things these might be done, and are here respectfully suggested:

Ministers might address themselves *as ministers* to the outlying rich. If we believe in our commission, and in ourselves as holding it, we may go very far without offending or doing any harm in beseeching men to be reconciled to God. So far as the writer's observation has extended, the rich in our churches get less ministerial attention than the poor; for there is some distinction between the social attention one pays as a gentleman and friend, and ministerial attention. Private Christians in good circumstances should make a point of doing good to their class, not only in the passive forms of good example and the like, but in direct, active effort. Reading-circles, where Christian truth is the main thing; Bible-classes, where the word of God is paramount; prayer-meetings, where they that "fear the Lord speak often one to another," and into which one and another could be invited; and

honest, courteous, direct address, by letter or in conversation—these are specimens of the methods, varying with conditions, which a wise ingenuity should devise for reaching and enlightening the neglected rich; for it is as true of them as of the very lowliest, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

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