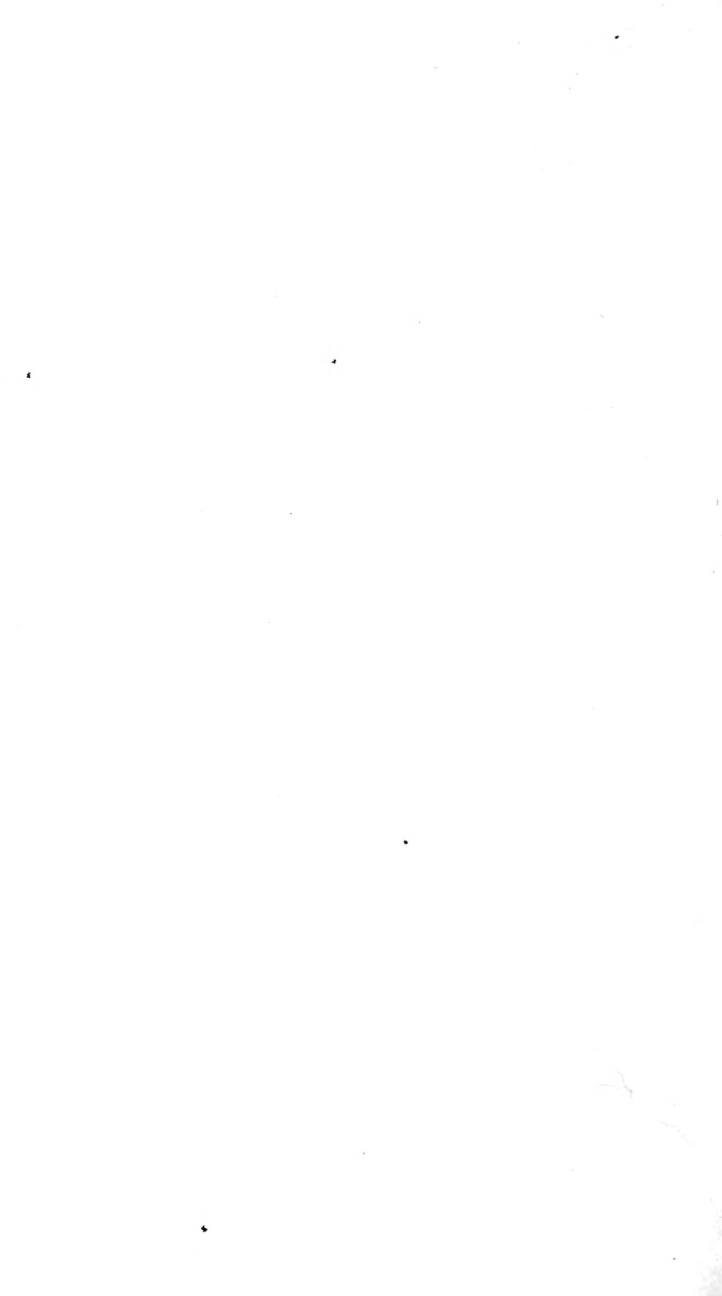


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A SERIES

OF

TRACTS

ON THE

DOCTRINES, ORDER AND POLITY

OF THE

✓  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

EMBRACING

SEVERAL ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

VOL. VIII.

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# THE POSTURE IN PRAYER.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

WITHIN a few years many Presbyterian congregations have been gradually forming the habit of sitting in prayer. To find a practice so unfriendly to devotion constantly making progress, has been painful to not a few reflecting minds. An anxiety was expressed by a number to see some decisive steps taken to check the growing evil. The action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the year of our Lord 1849, in reference to posture in prayer, was viewed by them as a prelude of a change for the better. The action of that body was as follows, viz :

“That while the posture of standing in public prayer, and that of kneeling in private prayer, are indicated by examples in Scripture, and in the general practice of the ancient Christian church, the posture of sitting in public is nowhere mentioned, and by no usage allowed ; but on the contrary, was universally regarded by the early church as heathenish and irreverent, and is still in the customs of modern and western nations an attitude obviously wanting in the due expression of reverence ; Therefore, this General Assembly *Resolve*, that the practice in question be considered grievously improper whenever the infirmities of the worshipper do not render it necessary ; and that ministers be required to reprove it with earnest and persevering admonition.”

As strange as it may seem, the action of the General Assembly has not been regarded in the least by many congregations. Now either the pastors or the people, or both must be in the fault. It occurred to the writer some time since, that a suitable tract or manual on the importance of worshipping God with our bodies as well as with our minds, might be, if put in circulation, of use. He flattered himself that one so much needed would be prepared by some able pen; but he has been disappointed in this expectation. Though conscious of his incompetency to do justice to the subject, yet he has been influenced by the advice of others to undertake the work himself. Arguments are to be found on the following pages for which he claims no originality. But it will be perceived by any one acquainted with the subject, that in a work like this nothing more can reasonably be expected but the re-casting and re-combining of that which is old.

I. T.

*Troy, Pa., Oct. 20, 1851.*



## PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Him shall ye worship.—2 Kings, xvii. 37.

JEHOVAH is the only proper object of religious veneration. He, and he only, is possessed of those perfections which are presupposed in one entitled to this service. Worshipping the Supreme Being consists, principally, in praising him for his glorious perfections and wonderful works; in rendering thanks to him for blessings, spiritual and temporal, bestowed upon us; and in confessing before him our dependence and sinfulness, and in praying to him in humble confidence for those things which we need. Jehovah's being

omniscient, omnipotent, and infinite in goodness, renders him worthy of supreme respect, love and confidence.

To worship God is the highest duty of rational creatures. All who are living in the neglect of this duty, are living in a state of rebellion against the Sovereign of all worlds. This is clear, inasmuch as they are constantly disobeying one of the fundamental laws of his kingdom. As man consists of both body and mind, and both are derived from God, it is reasonable that both should be employed in his service.

*I. God is to be worshipped with our minds!*

Are we indebted to the Supreme Being for our existence? Are we under obligations to his bounty, for endowing us with the faculties of the mind? Is the Most High, in and of himself infinitely excellent? Surely then he deserves the very best service which we are capable of rendering; the choicest that we can give. The service of the soul, as this deathless principle is the noblest part of man, is certainly not to be withheld from the Supreme Being. While such is his nature that it is due to him, such is our nature that it is due from us. In worshipping God all the divine perfections are to be honoured. Now, how can these receive honour if the mind is not employed in contemplating them? God requires us to worship him with a knowledge of his true character. As this is the case, it must be our duty to make use of the reason with which we are endowed, in contemplating his character as made known by his works and his word. The principal end which he had in view, in making us intelligent beings, was that we might glorify him with our minds.

To no one but the Being who gave us our existence belongs the highest place in our affections. He demands this place. "My son, give me thy heart," are the words in which each one of us is addressed by infinite Wisdom. A service in which the affections share no part cannot be acceptable to God. In all worship the exercise of faith is

essential. "Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to him must believe that he is and that he is the rewarder of all who diligently seek him." Without faith all worship would be a mere empty form. The principal exercise of faith in our approaches to God must have respect to Jesus Christ. In our worship we cannot make too much of the Mediator. We are to expect to find acceptance only through his merits.

II. *We should worship God with our bodies.*

1. As the body as well as the soul is derived from God, it is reasonable that it should be employed in his service. The internal respect, veneration, and homage which we pay him should be shown by external acts. God not only created the body as well as the soul, but he also preserves it. His right, therefore, to this service, is strengthened by preservation, and cannot be withheld without our sinning.

2. Are we God's people? If so, our bodies, as well as our souls, have been redeemed from hell. To redeem them Christ suffered in his body as well as in his soul. The apostle assigns this as a reason why we should honour God with both body and soul. His words are, "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your *body* and your *spirit* which are God's." 1 Cor. vi. 20.

3. *A foundation is laid in human nature for outward signs of devotion.*

So long as we remain on earth our nature is closely allied to sense, and depends very much upon it. A worship, therefore, which is purely intellectual, is not wholly suited to it. But that which calls for the employment of the bodily organs and members, as well as our mental faculties, is well adapted to human nature. The sense is made to assist the mind, and at the same time to elevate the soul far, very far, above the sense. By the members and organs of our bodies being called into exercise, when we worship God, they, so to speak, reflect back upon the soul. The tongue, for instance, when we

use it in worship, fixes the mind and sets, as it were, the heart on fire. An humble posture of body tends to bring the mind into a lowly frame. The same is true with regard to the soul: so long as it remains in its clay tenement it can hardly perform an act of real worship without bringing the body into a reverential posture.

4. *The institution of social and public worship obviously demands the employment of our bodily organs and members.*

Are we required to sing God's praise in the congregation of his saints? Ps. ix. 11; cxlix. 1; l. 23. If so, our tongues are to be employed. Is the whole assembly unitedly to approach the mercy seat? 2 Chron. vii. 14; Joel i. 14. Then it is obvious that it is the duty of all to manifest in public prayer, by external actions and gestures, their reverence for the divine Majesty. You need not be told that the Most High makes manifestations of himself by his works and by signs, which are visible. Ought we not then, in public worship, to express the acts of the soul by such signs as all who are present may be able to see or hear?

5. *We are taught by the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Christ himself, by their own example, to worship God with our bodies as well as with our minds.*

We certainly ought to aim to tread in their footsteps. Says one of them, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." 1 Cor. xi. 1. Inasmuch as all the ancient worthies, and our Saviour himself, worshipped God with the body as well as the mind, it is unquestionably our duty to do so too.

6. *The employment of our bodily organs and members in the worship of God is frequently enjoined as a duty.*

We are directed thus to employ our tongues and our lips. Says the Psalmist, "Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God, for it is pleasant and praise is comely." Ps. cxlvii. 1. We find those who have wan-

dered in forbidden paths addressed in these words, "Take unto you words and turn unto the Lord; say unto him, Take away all our iniquity and receive us graciously; so shall we render thee the calves of our lips." Hos. xiv. 2. By the expression "calves of our lips," is meant the sacrifice of our lips—the worship of our lips. When we are called upon to engage in humble prayer and supplication, we are given to understand that our bodies are to bear their part in the worship of God. Says an inspired penman, "O come, and let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Ps. xcvi. 6.

### POSTURES IN PRAYER.

THE postures in prayer, for which there is scriptural authority, are such as these—*prostration, kneeling, kneeling and sitting at the same time on the heels, bowing the head while standing, and standing erect.* These postures are all expressive of reverence.

1. *Prostration.*—This was considered appropriate on days of deep humiliation and sorrow. At the time of Korah's rebellion, Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and prayed for Israel. Thus did Joshua and the elders of Israel pray when the Israelites were defeated by the men of Ai. Joshua vii. 14. While prostrate on their faces, in deep humiliation they agonized in prayer, and continued so to do from morning till night. Thus did David and the elders of Israel pray when the angel of the Lord was seen, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched over Jerusalem. 1 Chron. vii. 16. And thus did the Saviour himself pray in the garden of Gethsemane when in an agony. Matt. xxvi. 39. Prostration is a posture in prayer which has never been viewed as adapted to worship on ordinary occasions. It is very suitable for one person, or for a small



company, when burdened with a sense of guilt, or when favoured with extraordinary manifestations of the glory of God.

2. *Kneeling*.—This is a posture, the use of which is sanctioned by many Scripture examples. We read that Daniel “kneeled upon his knees and prayed.” Dan. vi. 10. Peter kneeled down and prayed at the time Dorcas was raised to life. Acts ix. 40. When the apostle Paul and the elders of the church of Ephesus were about to part, “he kneeled down and prayed with them all.” Acts xx. 36. Our Saviour, the evening before he was crucified, withdrew from his disciples, “about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down and prayed.” Luke xxii. 41. No posture is more suitable in secret and in family prayer than kneeling. It is also an appropriate attitude in prayer when a small number meet for social worship. It is a very significant posture. It is expressive of earnestness as well as of humility and reverence.

3. *Kneeling and sitting at the same time on the heels*.—This posture is nearly the same as that of simply kneeling. On one occasion at least this was David’s attitude in prayer. Says an inspired writer, “Then went King David in, and sat before the Lord.” 2 Sam. vii. 18, and 1 Chron. xvii. 16. He so knelt as to rest or sit upon his heels. This has always been regarded as an humble attitude. Dr. Pococke informs us, that at the present day in the East inferiors make use of this posture to express their reverence, when they appear in the presence of great men. This attitude is considered among the orientals as a token of the deepest humility. The posture then in which David prayed was at once consistent with the majesty of Jehovah and the humility of the worshipper.

4. *Bowing the head while standing*.—This mode is expressive of devout reverence. Abraham’s servant, who was sent to Padan-aram on an important errand, on observing

what he considered important indications of God's favour and approbation, bowed his head and worshipped the Lord. Gen. xxiv. 26. He was at the time standing near a well, where he had just been engaged in conversation with Rebekah. Gen. xxiv. 13, 23—25. Thus did the elders of Israel worship in the land of Egypt. "When they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he looked down upon their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped." Ex. iv. 31. At the present day in the East, when any one approaches a person of rank, in order to show peculiar respect, he bows his body almost to the ground. Bowing the head is very suitable in ejaculatory prayer; a worshipper may thus express his devout reverence in any place wherever he may happen to be standing.

5. *Standing*.—This posture in prayer has long been in use. Job was in the habit of standing when he prayed. This appears from these words of his, "I cry unto thee and thou dost not hear; I *stand up* and thou regardest me not." Job xxx. 20. When Abraham prayed for Sodom he stood before the Lord. Gen. xviii. 22. In this posture Hannah prayed when at the tabernacle. This we learn from her own words. To Eli she said, "I am the woman that stood by thee praying unto the Lord." 1 Sam. i. 26. After the return of the Jews from Babylon, in a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, they, as Nehemiah informs us, "stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers." Neh. ix. 2. They were afterwards directed to stand up and bless the Lord. Neh. ix. 5. The humble publican is represented as standing when he prayed. Luke xviii. 13. Our Lord said to his disciples, "When ye stand praying," &c. Mark xi. 25. Standing was in the temple, and afterwards in the synagogue, the usual posture in public prayer. In the time of the apostles, Christian assemblies on the Lord's day uniformly thus expressed their reverence when they approached the mercy-seat. This continued to be the pos-

ture in the days of their immediate succession. Justin Martyr, who was born in the apostolic age, in mentioning what took place immediately after the preacher had finished his discourse, says, "Then we all *stand up* together and offer up our prayers." At this early period it was only on days of fasting that Christians were in the habit of kneeling in public prayer. In order to prevent any from so doing on the Lord's day, the preacher sometimes reminded them that they were not to kneel, but to rise and stand. Origen, who was born only eighty-five years after the time of the apostles, often exhorted his hearers not to kneel, but to stand in prayer. Says he at the close of one of his sermons, "Wherefore, *standing up*, let us beg help from God that we may be blessed of Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen." At the close of another, he makes use of these words, "Wherefore, *rising up*, let us pray to God that we may be made worthy of Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." At the close of another still he says, "*Standing up*, let us offer sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ, who is the propitiation for our sins, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." It continued to be the custom of worshipping assemblies to stand in prayer on the Lord's day long after Origen's time. Nothing can be more easily made to appear than that it was the practice of the Christian church throughout the world, for the first three hundred years after Christ. We have the testimony of eye-witnesses, among whom are such men as these: Epiphanius, Jerome, Augustine, Basil and Ambrose. It was considered by the primitive Christians improper for worshipping assemblies to kneel on the Lord's day, because it is a season which, in a special manner, is appropriated to spiritual joy; it being the day on which the resurrection of Christ from the grave is commemorated. Standing in prayer, inasmuch as it was regarded as a joyful, as well as a reverential atti-

tude, was considered at such times as the only suitable posture. Ambrose somewhere remarks, that the faithful stand in prayer on the Lord's day to commemorate the Saviour's resurrection. This was considered a matter of so much weight that it occupied the attention of the General Council which met at Nice in the year of our Lord 325. A number of canons were passed by that Council relative to the different matters which were deemed important. It was ordered in the twelfth of these canons that all kneeling in public prayer on the Lord's day be prohibited. As worshipping assemblies during the early ages of the church were in the habit of appearing before the mercy-seat in this posture, when there was occasion for more than ordinary humiliation, to do so on the Lord's day they considered as not at all befitting the privileges and the hopes of the believer. As standing in prayer was viewed as expressive of spiritual joy as well as of respect and reverence, it was regarded as the prerogative of all consistent professors of religion to employ this posture in their public devotions. The early Christian writers speak of it as a real privilege which was denied those who had so fallen into sin as to incur the discipline of the church. At the time they began to manifest penitence, they were required to kneel as expressive of deep humiliation. As soon as they were restored to all the privileges of the church, they stood in public prayer as formerly. It was therefore said of them that they were again "lifted up and set upon their feet." In consequence of standing in prayer being the posture which was every where employed by worshipping assemblies, the word *station* (*statio*;) passed into common usage. Ambrose evidently has in view this universal custom, when he says, "the Christian soldier repelled the attacks of his spiritual enemies standing."

Many and weighty are the objections to a congregation's sitting in prayer. It is a practice directly at variance with

the principal ends had in view by the great Head of the Church in instituting public worship

I. One of these was the promotion of our own spiritual advancement.

1. Sitting in prayer is never expressive of either solicitude or reverence. This being the case, its direct tendency must be to increase the want of a spirit of devotion. So unfriendly is this posture to a devotional frame, that if we possessed in any measure such a spirit, it would be liable wholly to remove it. As a proper attitude of soul serves to bring the body into a reverential posture, so an humble posture of body tends to bring the mind into a lowly frame. As this is the case, let no one say that it matters not what the posture of the body is, if the mind is really devout, since an irreverent posture of body in prayer seems to indicate an irreverent state of mind. Where is there a Christian that does not know, from his own experience, that the more deep and solemn his sense of the Divine presence, or his sense of his own guilt and perishing need, the more forcibly he is impelled to present his supplications in some other than a sitting posture? The spirit of devotion, when it really exists, can hardly fail to discover itself in the posture of the body.

2. Sitting in prayer is an indolent posture; consequently, its tendency is to produce a spirit of lounging indifference. To sit and recline the head on the back of the seat before us, is not only an indolent, but also a drowsy posture. Of course it ought to be regarded as an unseemly and highly improper attitude in prayer.

3. When we keep our seats in prayer, we do violence to the instinctive sense of propriety which God has made a part of our very being. This appears evident, inasmuch as an attitude in supplication which seems to indicate indolence, has always been viewed as unseemly and highly revolting, by even the most uncultivated savage tribes.

None of the pagan nations, in any ages of the world, however rude they might be, presented their most solemn acts of worship in a sitting posture.

4. As often as we sit in prayer we disregard in many ways the laws of association, which God in his goodness has made a part of our very nature. This being the case, a person who professes in some measure a spirit of supplication, must necessarily possess at the same time an instinctive aversion to remaining on his seat in prayer.

II. Another end which God had in view in instituting public worship, was the benefit of all who might witness us when we are engaged in our devotions.

Sitting in prayer is directly at variance with this end.

1. This is clear, for as often as we refuse to rise when called upon by our minister to unite with him in approaching the throne of grace, we are guilty of nothing less than a careless or wanton violation of the law of love, a regard to which is so beautifully exemplified by Christ and his apostles. Many pious persons conscientiously believe that sitting in prayer, excepting in cases of indisposition, is contrary to the teachings of Scripture, and therefore sinful; whilst it is admitted by all that some other attitude may be taken without sin. Now, can we be Christians if we have so little regard for the feelings of others, as to wound them by keeping our seats, when we ourselves cannot but acknowledge that some other posture may be taken without our contracting the least degree of guilt?

2. All who keep their seats when their minister rises to lead in prayer, will be liable to be considered by some as mere learners. Such an impression will have an unhappy effect. A congregation ought therefore to be found in the posture of supplication, instead of in that of receiving instruction. They ought at the same time to be praying instead of learning how to pray.

3. By sitting in prayer, we give others to understand

that we make very little, or make nothing of our bodies. An impression like this on the minds of those who are looking up to us for guidance, cannot but be a very unhappy one indeed. Surely our bodies ought to be viewed as a part of ourselves; for they are so united with our souls as to constitute oneness. They ought not to be regarded as of no account, for God himself declares that the bodies of believers are the temples of the Holy Ghost. He commands them to present them a living sacrifice. We are directed to bring our bodies in subjection. The bodies of all, whether believers or unbelievers, are destined to a resurrection from the grave, and to a participation of the joys of heaven, or the torments of hell. Are these things so? Surely then we ought to make it manifest that we are disposed to honour God with our bodies in every possible way.

4. By sitting in prayer we give the young to understand that there is nothing more solemn in approaching the throne of grace, than there is in the other services of the sanctuary. When they discover a similarity in that which is visible, it will be very natural for them to come to the conclusion that there is a corresponding similarity in that which is invisible. Thus they who remain in the same posture in prayer, that they were in when listening to the word of God, are guilty of placing, apparently, preaching and prayer on one common level. The impression produced in the minds of the young must be a very unhappy one.

5. By sitting in prayer we give the rising generation to understand also that we may with propriety, when moved by mere caprice, set aside any long established usage. It will be useless to deny this, since our refusing to rise when about to engage in a most solemn act of worship is not only an unnecessary, but also a wanton departure from the established practice of our pious ancestors. In all Presbyterian churches in every land, standing was considered the appropriate posture in prayer. No longer than thirty-five years

ago, all Presbyterian worshippers, excepting those who were constrained by debility to remain sitting, were in the constant habit of standing in public prayer. Ask those whose heads are beginning to whiten with age, how it was in the days of their childhood, and they will tell you that such a thing as a congregation keeping their seats in prayer was then unknown. Could our fathers rise from their graves and visit some of our churches where they were once wont to worship, what think you would be their emotions on finding none standing in prayer but the pastor? In their day, when any sat in prayer they thought that an apology was due for their so doing. But the practice of indulging in this indolent and irreverent posture, which was at first introduced with the "new measures," has been gradually making such progress that in many of our churches sitting has become the general rule, and standing the exception. It is now a common thing, not only for others, but for even professors of religion, not simply to sit in prayer, but to sit in such an attitude of lounging indifference as clearly to evince that they lack nothing more than they do a spirit of devotion.

Sitting in prayer is not only contrary to the usage of our Presbyterian ancestors, but also to that of the church in general for more than 1800 years after the coming of Christ. Even at the present time none of the churches in Europe sit in prayer. The origin of this unseemly custom must be attributed to sheer indolence, in connection with a love of novelty.

6. By keeping our seats in prayer while others stand, we produce the impression on the minds of the young, that we consider the want of uniformity in public worship in the same church no great evil. But is it not written, "Let all things be done decently and in order?" Now it is unquestionably the duty of all, belonging to the same denomination, to make it manifest that they view this injunction as bind-



ing upon them as individuals. There is not only a Scripture impropriety but also a moral unseemliness in some sitting while others stand in prayer. Let a Presbyterian, who is in the habit of standing in prayer, go to a church where they keep their seats as if spell-bound, and he finds himself in an exceedingly awkward predicament. He must either countenance a practice which he knows to be unscriptural, or he must take such a course as will subject him to the charge of wishing to distinguish himself by his singularity. A lady belonging to a denomination which is in the habit of kneeling in prayer, remarks, "I have gone to churches that differ in non-essentials from the one to which I belong, with the intention of conforming to the usage peculiar to them; but in so doing I have found myself singled out from the majority of the worshippers, in consequence of my standing in prayer while they kept their seats. I have since come to the conclusion to act in the case in accordance with my own views of propriety. Though perhaps the only one in the assembly, I turn and kneel, being determined not to approach the majesty of heaven in such an attitude as I dare not approach an earthly sovereign."

7. So very unfavourable is the effect which the novel practice of sitting in prayer is calculated to produce on the minds of the young, that they will in all probability soon take little or no interest in the devotions of the domestic circle. Its withering blight many a family is already beginning to experience.

8. By keeping our seats in prayer we really, though perhaps not intentionally, aid the cause of infidelity. As often as we refuse to place ourselves in the posture of supplicants, when the minister calls upon us to unite with him in prayer, we are liable to be considered by not a few as saying that prayer is useless. "What is the Almighty that we should serve him, and what profit shall we have if we pray unto him?" Job xxi. 15.

Again, by sitting in prayer we give countenance to the infidel notion that we are under no obligation to make the Scriptures the rule of our faith and practice, any further than may happen to be agreeable to our feelings. This appears evident, inasmuch as by keeping our seats we seem to manifest an unwillingness to pay the least regard to such intimations as are given in reference to the will of God on this point. Every one who reads with any degree of attention the sacred Scriptures, well knows that sitting in prayer does not harmonize in the least with the typical representations of the ceremonial law. He also perceives that it does not accord with the emblematical representations which the Scriptures give of the world of glory. Holy beings in heaven are never represented as coming to God in direct acts of worship in a sitting posture, but if seated they are uniformly represented as leaving their seats.

As often as we sit in public prayer, we give countenance to the idea of unbelievers that we are not bound to regard the will of God as made known to us by the examples of inspired men. Hardly any thing is urged upon us by more frequent examples than standing and kneeling in prayer. Now if these do not bind us in the matter of attitude when we appear before our Maker, it will be difficult to make it appear that we are bound by Scripture examples in any other matters.

By sitting in prayer we countenance the notion of unbelievers, that men are at liberty to violate every precept found in the Bible. This must appear evident to all, if they bear in mind that by taking this posture we seem to be inclined to make it manifest, that we are disposed to treat as unworthy of our regard the authority of that Being who says, in so many words, "Glorify God in your body," or with your body. 1 Cor. vi. 20. As often as we refuse to take the posture of supplicants in prayer, this precept is violated. By so doing we encourage others to treat with contempt the

authority of their Maker, and thus we lend our aid to the cause of infidelity. To pursue such a course, as is calculated to lead our fellow-men to understand that we view ourselves as having a right to substitute novelties in the place of usages which have the sanction of Scripture authority, cannot but be highly offensive to God.

9. The apparent apathy, and the feeling of irresponsibility which we manifest by sitting in public prayer, can hardly fail to have a very unhappy effect on the mind of our pastor.

Every minister of the gospel, when he attempts to lead in the devotions of the sanctuary, should have the sympathy and union of his flock. He certainly is entitled to it, and needs some indications that he has this sympathy and union of those who are the people of his charge. If they keep their seats in prayer, they are guilty of withholding the evidence which their standing would seem to give, that they are disposed to unite with him in approaching the throne of grace. There is a language in actions as well as in words. By not changing their posture when their minister rises to pray, a congregation says, and that emphatically too, We will not unite with you. To find his people habitually making such a declaration is calculated to greatly depress and dishearten any godly pastor.

III. Another end still had in view by the great Head of the Church in instituting public worship, was that the Triune Jehovah might receive from his creatures an outward manifestation of their desire to reverence and obey him. As often as we sit in public prayer we are guilty of withholding from the Supreme Being that manifestation to others of our reverence for him, of which he is infinitely worthy, and which it is every one's duty to render him. Very few of us would be willing to withhold from our fellow men what are generally known to be the tokens of respect. When we come before magistrates, and address them in their official capacity, we never fail to make it manifest to all who are

present, that we are disposed to render honour to whom honour is due. It is very painful to find that so very many can slight and offend God when they are so decorous towards human dignity. Guilt, and great guilt, is contracted by those who are disposed to manifest before others a greater degree of reverence towards a fellow worm than towards God. The listlessness of demeanour indulged in by those who are in the habit of sitting in prayer, ill becomes so sacred a place as the house of God. Some are gazing upon the congregation. Others place themselves in an attitude favourable to repose. Now, such conduct in the house of a friend would be regarded in polite society as a mark of ill taste. If indulged in the presence of some earthly potentate, the aggressor would most certainly be spurned from his presence. Who would think of approaching in this posture before the governor of the state, with a view of pleading in behalf of a near and dear relative condemned to be hung? Sitting is not the attitude of supplication. He, therefore, who is really in earnest in pleading for the life of his friend, chooses to take some other posture. Many years ago a mother and her children appeared before Washington, who was then President of the United States, in behalf of a husband and a father. He had been guilty of high treason, and for this crime he had been condemned to be hung. What posture, think you, this lady and her children took the very moment they found themselves in the presence of the President? Did they seat themselves? No; they all prostrated themselves before him, and in this attitude they earnestly pled that the life of one who was near and dear to them, and on whom they were dependent, might be spared; and they did not plead in vain.

By withholding from the Most High that honour which may be rendered by our bodies, we seem disposed to cast contempt upon the brightest pattern of excellence ever beheld by mortals. The most spiritual worshipper that ever

trod this earth, when he approached the Father in prayer, either stood or kneeled, or prostrated himself; but never, never sat. Our Saviour was disposed to glorify the Father in every possible way. He blessed with his mouth. "Father," said he, "I thank thee," &c., and he lifted up his eyes as well as elevated his soul. Now who can deny that it is safe, with regard to posture in prayer, to follow the example of Him who never erred? Is it not dangerous to cast contempt upon it, by keeping our seats when our minister calls upon us to unite with him in approaching the throne of grace?

Two objections to standing in prayer have been advanced. Say some it is a fatiguing posture. Now this objection has no weight. A change of posture during public worship is rather a relief than otherwise. But even admitting that it is somewhat fatiguing, the performance of this or any other duty ought not to be viewed as burdensome. If this objection be regarded as having the least weight, it may lie against all religious service. On the ground of it being fatiguing to go to the house of God; men may justify themselves in remaining at home on the Sabbath. Who are the persons that are the most inclined to sit in public prayer? Are they the aged and infirm? No, no, they are the young, and those who are favoured with health. A venerable father,\* now gone to his rest, speaks thus of the late Dr. Ashbel Green: "In regard to the service of the sanctuary, I know not that I ever saw any man who seemed to engage in public prayer with manifestations of more entire and cordial devotion. And to one point in this connection, I think it my duty to say, in these days of sedentary sluggishness in public prayer, when so many of the young and healthy are seen indolently lounging amidst the devotional exercises of the Lord's house, that the example of our departed father ought ever to shame them. I was never placed near him

\* Dr. Samuel Miller.

as a fellow-worshipper without observing how uniformly, amidst all his bodily weakness, and sometimes when I knew he was hardly able without distress to stand erect, he stood up and maintained a posture of solemn reverence, and evidently joined with a striking manifestation of fervency in every petition. His joining in public prayer was no doubtful matter. Every one that saw him was satisfied that he was no cold and indifferent member of the assembly, but was absorbed in the exercise.”\*

The same is true of the father who penned the above. Even after the infirmities of fourscore years were pressing upon him, and his health very feeble, he ever manifested an aversion to allowing himself to sit in prayer. The late venerable father, the Rev. Robert G. Wilson, when unable to rise from his knees without assistance, would still kneel in family worship.

Others object to standing in public prayer, because it is viewed by them as unfavourable to close and solemn attention. Females, say they, if they stand are more liable to be gazed at than if they kept their seats. But let them only depress their countenance, and withdraw their eyes from surrounding objects, and they will not be disturbed in this way. And this they should do, if they would engage in the devotions of the house of God.

All that is asked of the reader is to examine this subject in the spirit of Him who purchased the church with his own blood. And may the Lord in mercy incline him so to do for Christ's sake, Amen.

\* Life of Dr. Green, page 532.

OLD AGE ANTICIPATED AND REALIZED.

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MY RESPECTED FRIENDS: You are now descending into the valley of declining years. That valley we are persuaded need not be dark, if you but carry into it the lamp of true wisdom. To meet it aright requires reflection and experience. There is what may properly be called, perhaps, *the art of growing old*. But where shall it be found? or what are those precepts and appropriate considerations and practices by which we may sustain and comfort ourselves when found falling "into the sear and yellow leaf" of our earthly existence? To answer these questions is the design of the present undertaking.

Cicero, the heathen philosopher, has written something on this subject; nor do we think that his beautiful thoughts, so far as they go, are to be despised or wholly neglected. According to him, the different sources of molestation in old age are these four: 1. our necessary withdrawing from the more active pursuits of life. But he tells us there are other employments more appropriate to this condition; and these are specified and recommended. Then comes, 2. the loss of our voluptuary enjoyments; but these were never worthy of man, and their loss cannot be an annoyance when

they are no more desired. 3. The failure of our *mental faculties* comes next—but this is not necessarily or universally true. Even memory need not essentially fail in old age, when it is cultivated; and he adduces many examples to show that it may still be strong. 4. But the most formidable of all the evils of old age, is, *in that it compels us to contemplate a near approaching death*: and it is instructive to observe here, by what an unsatisfying train of thoughts heathen philosophy attempts to meet this want. The argument of the aged Cato is essentially this—that death is not an evil to be dreaded, because it either ends our being, and then it is nothing; or there is an immortality, and then it leads to eternal felicity. There is, he thinks, no third estate. For himself he is inclined to believe in immortality, and then he solaces himself with the thought that he shall meet there the spirits of the illustrious and beloved dead, who, like him, will have escaped from this perturbed and transitory life! “Oh! illustrious day,” he exclaims, “when this shall once be!”

Now, we are free to admit that all this, or most of it, is true and very interesting, with one exception. There are thoughts and precepts here not unworthy of a reflecting old age. But we are sure you feel their defectiveness. The last argument in particular is not only defective, but in part false. There *is* a third estate. Yes, we may live beyond time and *not* be happy. And then the *kind of solace* he seeks there, is inferior and ought not to be confined to the few things here specified. We need on every account a larger and securer instruction. In nothing perhaps does the superiority of the blessed gospel above the teachings of



heathenism more strikingly appear, than in what it teaches of future happiness, and the true secret of a tranquil old age. The gospel brings life and immortality to light; the gospel does not vainly deny that old age is an evil in itself—but it admits its trials, and then provides appropriate alleviations.

I. Would we learn to bear the ills of old age so as to be happy under them? therefore, *let us learn first of all, to expect it, and submit to it, when it comes as a providential event.* We should learn, says the proverb, *to be seasonably old*, that we may be *long old*. By this it is not meant that we should antedate old age, or be too often dwelling upon it in our minds. But since we know it must come, and has its annoyances—and that all this is the order of Providence, it is best to admit the truth freely, and make the best provision for it ~~that~~ we can. The man who denies his age, or attempts to conceal its approach from himself, acts unworthily both of his nature and condition. The consistent man rather faces his trials, anticipates them, and submits to them as they arise, because they are from God. And when he can say with John the Baptist, “He must increase, but *I must decrease*,” and yet rejoice in the providence, the half of his difficulties are thereby removed.

II. Here also we may properly *look at and estimate the amount of these trials as they are usually seen to occur.* Some trials of age are inevitable, and others *may* come whence they ought not. We shall undoubtedly find some of our faculties and some of our enjoyments decreasing in that state. We may find ourselves pushed out of our places by those who are coming after

us, and not always without a rough or thoughtless touch. The young do not in all cases honour gray hairs as they should. Some instances of vain and fanciful self-conceit will undoubtedly annoy us. The changes and wastings of things must constantly meet us—the thoughtlessness of the age, aggravated to us by the too ready forgetting of what has gone before—jealousy of improvements because they are *new*, and grief for the loss of other things because they are *old*—all these are to be met perhaps in our own case, together with poverty, darkness and neglect; and then the inevitable necessity of being swept away at last by a “rude stream that must forever hide us”—this is more or less to be expected, and it is no wonder if the anticipations of such things do at times shake our faith, and gather clouds over our future experience.

III. And yet it is comfortable to be able to believe *that the anticipations of abandonment and extreme trials in old age are not often realized.* On the contrary, except where vicious habits or peculiar circumstances have rendered escape impossible, the wants of age are remarkably provided for, and most persons are comparatively happy in that condition. They have many sources of enjoyment, (as we shall soon see) and they have learned better to appreciate them. They have surmounted their annoyances, and their state is generally tranquil—sometimes truly enviable. Their old age is peaceful, resigned, cheerful and deeply respected. “The apex of old age,” says Cicero, “is *authority* ;” by which we suppose to be meant, that respect and influence to which a virtuous old man usually attains. For the attainment of this state however,

*means* are undoubtedly to be used. *The art* is to be learned and practised. We proceed to say, therefore,

IV. That an important means of rendering old age happy *is to have a sufficiency of appropriate employment.* Agriculture and gardening are particularly to be recommended. Let the old men plant trees, though they may never expect to eat the fruit of them; let them cultivate a cheerful intercourse with children—let them bring forward and encourage all virtuous and enlightened progress—let them sympathize with, and as far as possible, relieve the afflicted—let them sedulously cherish the confidence of the young and seek to do them good—let them furnish the world with the results of experience and observation—transmit facts and recollections—set a goodly example of patience, prayer and steadfastness, in attachment to all good institutions; and if they have the proper furniture for it, let them become authors, and thus instruct the world when they are dead. Old age, other things being suitable, seems the very time for authorship. We are told that Plato wrote at eighty-one years of age, and Isocrates at ninety-four. We might even recommend the study of languages, since every new language or science is an enlargement of mind, and a most absorbing employment. Cato is said to have learned Greek in his old age, and Socrates to play on musical instruments.

V. Again, *we should cultivate most carefully those faculties which are most usually impaired in old age.* *Memory* is one of these. The memory soonest fails, undoubtedly; but it need not be altogether so; nor do we see why we should not remember all we desire to

remember, as well in old age as at any other period. The reason why we do not probably is, that to many things we attach less importance than we did in earlier life. Seldom does any man forget his legal titles to property; the Christian never forgets the name of his Saviour. We should occupy our memories, therefore, with things most worthy to be remembered; and then much may be done by practising them. Sloth and neglect will ruin any faculty. "If the instrument be blunt—then must he put to the more strength."

VI. On the same principle, it is important *to keep alive our hope and ambition in old age*. The affections of the mind can in many things control bodily infirmities, and among these affections there are none stronger than those of hope and ambition. "An old man can do something," says one. "I will show it," cries another; and "I shall succeed," says a third. And now by believing, feeling, and *trying*, success and great usefulness are finally attained; while on the other hand, many no doubt have sunk prematurely, through mere discouragement, or retiring too early from the activities of life. Cases are occurring to show that health and physical strength may be greatly extended by determined and appropriate efforts, and why should it not be so with mental activities? Let us never give up hope.

VII. Let us learn *to avoid and resist, as far as possible, those things which may be called the besetting infirmities of this condition*. These are jealousy of neglect, an undue valuation of old things, peevishness, neglect of personal appearance, moroseness, or discontent with our whole condition. These are natural ten-

dencies undoubtedly, and great annoyances where they exist; but much may be done by foreseeing and avoiding them. It was Dean Swift who wrote his resolutions as to *what he would not do* in old age. But the better recommendation is prayer, watchfulness, and a constant exercise of patience.

VIII. Another rule is, *to think as little as possible of our losses in old age, and more of the blessings which still remain.* No doubt natural differences of disposition will have influence here, and some cases are so providentially afflictive that human efforts can do little to modify them. But in general, we believe that cheerfulness and entire contentment may be secured in the way now suggested, and we have witnessed some cases of this that were truly edifying. "See," said an old lady of eighty-six, to her pastor, "*how well I can read without spectacles.*" "Yes," said he, "and you have all these other comforts. Here are your convenient accommodations, your dutiful children, and above all your Bible with all its precious promises." "I know it; I know it," said she, with rising animation, "I am only afraid that I am not thankful enough." Now, that individual would have been cheerful in almost any condition. The happiness we recommend is not of indifference, however, not of a mere animal, but of a rational being, and therefore it is reflective.

IX. We must not omit now *those more direct exercises of prayer, and faith, and Christian meditation*, so necessary and so becoming the condition we are contemplating. The aged should have opportunities for these. They should have retirement and freedom from noise; and it is one of the greatest cruelties practised

upon them, that these opportunities are sometimes denied. But what more pleasant—what more appropriate and profitable, when they are enjoyed than to

“Walk thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore  
Of that vast ocean we must sail so soon :”

to spend much of our time in reading, meditation and prayer ; to withdraw our affections more and more from the world, like old Barzillai ; to reflect much on God’s dealings with us, like David in the 71st Psalm, and to seek the welfare of Zion, and all around us, as we find ourselves descending to the tomb !

“The land of silence and of death, awaits my next remove :  
Oh, may these poor remains of breath, teach the wide world  
thy love.”

X. But we come to the closing scene. We must all come there at last ; and now the great question is—the only question worthy of much solicitude, *how shall we best be prepared to meet anticipated death ?* Not, we answer, by the cold despisings of philosophy—not by mere natural resolution, or vain speculation, as if death must either be nothing, or necessarily lead to eternal felicity. For, alas, we may live after death in a very different state ! And no mere natural resources seem sufficient to face with calmness a responsibility like this. Nor yet is it a sufficient solace, in view of death, that we may say, We shall meet beyond death those with whom we held intercourse here on earth. No, we *feel*, we *know* that we want all this, *and more*. Now, the true Christian, and he alone, has this resource. To him the blessed gospel “has brought life and immor-

tality to light." He believes this. He has long obeyed the gospel, and tasted some of its blessed consolations; and now, in his old age, he lies down to die with infinitely more and better enjoyments than the wisest of heathens ever knew. He has all that Cicero wrote so pleasingly of; and then he goes much further. He knows he must die; he sees death near; and yet he does not shudder. He has heard his divine Redeemer say, "I am the resurrection and the life," and he responds, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." He is conscious, never more so than now, of his great sins and great deficiencies of obedience; but he knows also that he has a great and mighty Saviour, and "that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." He expects a glorious resurrection also; and then as to the felicities that await him beyond the grave, he does not confine them to mere social intercourse, such as he possessed on earth, but expects these infinitely improved; and then the superadded and almost inconceivable fruition of a present God, an openly beheld Saviour, and the society of all holy and elevated beings—angels and men—in one unwearying activity around the throne of God for ever. Illustrious day indeed, when all this is to be entered upon and enjoyed! As to leaving the world, he does not regret it, for he has enjoyed what of good it could ever afford, and finished his usefulness in it. Dear objects of his affection are there still, but he leaves his blessing with them, and hopes besides to meet them all again "at the great rising day." And thus he dies, easily, tranquilly, and with glorious hopes.

"Sure the last end of the good man is peace.

Night-dews fall not more gently to the ground;

Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft."

## GARDEN MEDITATION

UPON AN OLD YET FRUITFUL TREE.

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WHEN I saw an old tree which promised little, yet was richly laden, and had not only more fruit than those which were younger and made a greater show, but the fruit was better also—it exceeded not only in quantity but also in quality the other trees—this observation made me think such a tree resembled much an aged Christian, an old disciple, as we read, Acts xxi. 16. Of such, it may be noticed, that they usually bear more and better fruit than younger professors, their judgment being ripened and mellowed by experience, and themselves usually not so censorious and self-willed as the others are, who are apt to condemn all that are not just of their judgment, even though they may exhibit as much of Christ and a gospel conversation as themselves. This consideration brought to my mind what the Psalmist says of such: “The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.” Psa. xcii. 12—14. Those that draw sap from Christ, and are grafted into



him, must needs bud and bloom, and bring forth fruit. These are the trees planted by the rivers of water, which bring forth their fruit in their season, Psa. i. 3; for as aged men, so especially aged Christians, have their judgment ripened by experience, and mellowed by time, and their zeal is not a hot and furious zeal, without knowledge—a zeal like that of the apostles James and John, who would have called for fire from heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans, as they said Elijah did. Luke ix. 54. Young professors, as I said, are prone to be censorious, apt to condemn those who cannot see with their eyes, or who differ from them, though it be in circumstantial and things of small concern; yea, perhaps will disparage their graces, as if their own hearts, like Jehu's, were the touchstone of sincerity, and their own judgment the touchstone of truth. But aged Christians have learned Christ better, and studied their own hearts more, and will yield a grain of allowance to others, as knowing they need it themselves; and where they see the vitals of religion preserved, they will reach out the right hand of fellowship, though it be to men of a contrary persuasion, in lesser matters; yea, they will love them better and value them more than they do those of their own persuasion, in whom they cannot see such evident signs of grace. There is honourable mention made of an old disciple, Acts xxi. 16; a gray-headed, experienced Christian; a father, 1 John ii. 13. "Ye are they," said Christ, "which have continued with me; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." Luke xxii. 28, 29. God will especially reward those that are aged servants.

“Days should speak,” said Elihu, “and multitude of years should teach wisdom.” Job xxxii. 7. It was a duty commanded by God, and is yet incumbent upon us, to “rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man,” Lev. xix. 32; but then much more should we do so to an old Christian. “The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.” Prov. xvi. 31.

O my soul, own Christ wherever thou seest him, and make not thy own judgment the test to try all other men’s; nor, with Jehu, thine own heart the touchstone to try others. Judge the tree by the fruit, not by the leaves, and professors not by their words, but by their works. Grow in grace as thou growest in years; so mayest thou be an old disciple.

O my God, make me fruitful, and let my fruit be pleasant to thy taste, and let the last be better than the first.—*Bury.*

## PAUL'S INQUIRY.

"And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6.

THIS is a *sincere question*. It is an appeal to the Lord, the Searcher of hearts. It is proposed to him who knows what our duty is. He is able to direct us; willing to direct; and he has promised to direct. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Prov. iii. 5, 6. When we come to the Lord with such a question as this, our hearts should be sincere. It is a serious question, and it should be proposed with all sincerity, for he knoweth our hearts.

It is an *impartial question*. Show me what I should do, and I will do it, though ever so arduous, ever so trying to the flesh, ever so difficult and perplexing. The disposition which prompts this question is not that which would do one duty and leave another undone; not that which would choose between the services which God requires, selecting what is easy, and refusing what is difficult; but it is a disposition to do every duty in its appropriate time and place. When we inquire of the Lord what he would have us do, we must not feel like choosing for ourselves, but be resolved to do impartially what he reveals as our duty, without preferring one thing before another.

It is a *personal question*. We do not inquire for others, but for ourselves; not for what others should do, but for what we, individually and personally, should do. It is often the case that people hear the gospel preached for their neighbours, and not for themselves; and so it often happens that people are more concerned about the duty of others than their own. But this question is personal; it possesses individuality. It comes from a heart burdened with a sense of its personal responsibilities. We must not lose ourselves in the mass; nor when we enquire about the duties of the church, forget that we are part of it, and that we have, each one for himself, duties to discharge. Nor should we forget

that there is something for us to do. We should make the question a personal one to ourselves, and ask what we must do. "What labour can I perform in the vineyard of Christ? What good can I accomplish in the world? What influence can I exert in favour of truth and righteousness?" We must not shrink from the cross ourselves. We must be willing to bear ourselves the burden and heat of the day, and not bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, upon the shoulders of others, while we ourselves refuse to touch them with one of our fingers. Matthew xx. 12; xxiii. 5. Luke xi. 46.

It is a *practical question*. It is not about what is to be believed, though that is important, but about what is to be done. Duty is to be done; and the end of inquiring about it is, that we may know what is our duty, and then do it. And let it be borne in mind, that we are responsible for all the good we can do. If God has given us much, he requires much. Luke xii. 48. If he has made us capable of doing much good, he requires us to do it; and he holds us responsible for the neglect. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James iv. 17. Hence, this question of Paul should have a practical influence upon the heart and the life of every son and daughter of Adam.

1. It becomes every *careless sinner* to make this inquiry. Every such person should ask what he must do. For something must be done, and done soon, or it will be too late. Time is fleeing away, the judgment is drawing near, and what is to be done must be done quickly, with all the might. Eccl. ix. 10. Do you ask what you must do? You must shake off this lethargy; you must awake from your dreadful slumbers; you must arise from the dead, and call upon God for mercy and salvation; you must *repent, and believe the gospel*. Eph. v. 14; Matt. iv. 17; Acts xvi. 30, 31; 1 John iii. 23. O sinner, awake! rouse yourself, ere the brittle thread of life is severed, and your soul is lost for ever! Can you sleep on the brink of the grave? Can you slumber on the borders of the pit?

2. This inquiry should be made by every *awakened sinner*. It was when Saul was first awakened that he made it; and they who become seriously awake and alarmed in view of their condition as sinners, are disposed to look anxiously about them, and to ask what they must do. Reader, are

you thus inquiring? and do you wish to be told what you must do? And if told, will you do it? It is but this: Cease from yourself; receive Jesus Christ as he offers himself to you, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Acts xvi. 30, 31. Resist the Spirit no longer; give up the controversy; repent of your sins; accept of Christ, and trust in him alone for acceptance with God. There is salvation in no other; no other way to heaven; no other way of escape from hell. Acts iv. 12. John xiv. 6.

3. Every *hoping sinner* should make this inquiry. When one has been awakened to a sense of his situation, felt himself a sinner, sought for pardon at the foot of the cross, trusted in Jesus Christ, and entertains a hope that his sins are forgiven, that he is born again, and is a child of God, it becomes an interesting question, What is there still for me to do? This question should be asked by every one who has hope in Christ, and is not yet connected with his visible people. Let him do what Saul did, (Acts ix. 18 :) he was *baptized*; and then let him obey the divine command, *This do in remembrance of me*. 1 Cor. xi. 24. Yes, reader, this is what the Lord would have you do. He has answered the question for you; he would have you unite with his church, and commemorate his atoning love in the Lord's supper. Matt. xxvi. 26—28; 1 Cor. xi. 20—34. You may endeavour to persuade yourself that you can be as good out of the church as in it, but the Bible does not authorize you to entertain such a notion. The Bible makes it your duty to be a Christian, and to profess your attachment to Christ before the world. Jesus will be ashamed of those who are ashamed of him. Mark viii. 38. If then you have a hope in Christ, and believe yourself a Christian, come out from the world, unite with the people of God, and be diligent in every Christian duty.

4. *Christian reader*, it becomes you to inquire, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? You should consider the design of the church, and of your being brought into it. The church is intended to be, and is, a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid; the salt of the earth; the light of the world. Matt. v. 13—16. It is to diffuse the blessings it enjoys, and scatter them over the earth. It is not only to seek after its own preservation, but by seeking the enlargement of its borders, to endeavour to bring the whole world within

its bosom. So of particular churches; they are to be centres of influence where they exist, shedding light all around them. They are usually placed where they can do good, and that good they are bound to do. As parents are to see to the training of their own children, and cannot innocently leave it to others, so every church is to do its own work, and may not innocently leave it for others to do. No church is to depend on foreign aid to do that which it can do itself. It must shine by its own light, or rather, by that which it reflects itself from the Sun of righteousness. And Christians are brought into the church, not only that they may enjoy its benefits, and in the enjoyment of them become prepared for heaven, but also that they may be blessings to the world by their faithful endeavours to bring others into the church. They enter the vineyard of Christ, that they may work in his vineyard. They are to *do good as they have opportunity*, unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith; and they must always abound in the work of the Lord. Gal. vi. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Consider then, Christian reader, your situation and circumstances. Bear in mind the design of the church—to be a light shining in a dark place; remember why you were brought into the church—that you might do good. Then look about, and inquire what good needs to be done, and what good you can do; and *that good which you can do within your own sphere, right around you, is just what the Lord would have you do*. You ask, LORD, WHAT WILT THOU *have me to do?* and the answer is, *the very first good thing you can, and then the next, and the next; and so on all the time*. KEEP DOING GOOD, and thus imitate your divine Master, who went about doing good. Acts x. 38. Ps. xxxvii. 3. TRUST in the Lord, and DO GOOD. Begin at home, but spread abroad your efforts; speak a word in season, and scatter books and tracts over all the neighbourhood around you, over the whole parish where you live, over your whole town and county, your whole country, the whole world! No man knows what good he can do till he tries. We are often inactive because we do not think what good we might do. Inconsideration is the cause of half the mischief in the world, and inconsideration prevents the doing of half the good which might be done.

EMILY J ——— .

OR THE

DANGER OF WORLDLY CONFORMITY.

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MISS EMILY was the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J., who were members of the church under my pastoral charge. I baptized her, watched over her with much solicitude as she advanced through the stages of childhood and of youth; beheld, with great satisfaction, the gradual development of her character, which was adorned with many excellences; and on her attaining the age of eighteen, I had the gratification of receiving from her an application for admission to the Lord's table. She could not give me any specific account of the time of her conversion and self-surrender to God, nor of any particular means which were employed to effect it. She said, "The great change has been so gradual, that I cannot trace it to the period of its commencement—resembling the break of day, after a beautiful moon-light night, rather than an instantaneous translation from the kingdom of darkness unto the kingdom of God's dear Son."

For the space of rather more than two years after her public profession of religion, she maintained the consistency of her Christian character; keeping herself unspotted from

the world; breathing a pure, and even an ardent spirit of active zeal in the cause of Christ; and distinguished herself as a Sabbath-school teacher, and a most energetic and successful collector in behalf of the auxiliary missionary society, which was in connection with the church and congregation of which she was a member. She had never left home till about this time, when she accepted an invitation from her aunt to spend a few weeks with her; and though it was known that her aunt and her cousins were all gay, moving in fashionable circles, yet no one expected that Miss Emily would sustain any moral injury from a short intermingling with them, her religious principles having become so consolidated and habitual to her. On her return home, one of her cousins came with her, and remained for several weeks. I soon saw a change in her spirit, her style of dress, and in her whole appearance and manners. She uniformly absented herself from the week-evening services of devotion; accepted invitations to gay parties, first as a compliment to her cousin, and then to gratify her own taste; till at length she crossed the boundary line which separates the church from the world, and was often to be seen at the concert, and in the ball-room, among the gayest of the gay. She kept up her attendance at public worship on the Sabbath with her usual regularity, but there was a listlessness and an indifference so obviously apparent, that it gave great pain to her parents and myself.

“O, sir,” said Mrs. J., “we did wrong by letting her go to her aunt’s; but I hope when her cousin is gone, she will regain, what I fear is either lost or materially injured.” Her cousin left, but the influence of her spirit and example did not go with her; it remained as a prolonged blight, withering the bloom, and eventually destroying the fine tone and complexion of Miss Emily’s religious spirit and character.

A few weeks after the departure of her cousin, she accom-



panied a small pic-nic party to a most romantic part of the country, about ten miles from home ; and all being deceived by the serene brilliancy of the heavens, they prolonged their rambles till a late hour. The weather suddenly changed ; a thunder-storm rushed upon them so unexpectedly, that before they could reach any place of shelter, they were thoroughly drenched with the heavy rain which followed it. In this state she returned home, and immediately retired to rest ; but within the space of an hour she had a succession of shivering fits, occasioning some alarm. Her pulse beat with great rapidity, she complained of pain and thirst, and her pains became so violent, that it was deemed expedient to send for the family surgeon. "There is nothing to fear," he said, after seeing her, "she will be better in the morning, and will very soon be quite herself again." She was better in the morning, and in a few days she was able to take an airing in the country ; but, in appearance, she was not herself again ;—the healthy bloom of her countenance was exchanged for the faint and hectic flush. She lived through the summer, subjected to varying changes ; but towards the autumn, it was considered advisable to send her to the coast of Devonshire. Here she breathed a salubrious air, and was soon almost herself again ; but happening to renew her cold by an imprudent exposure to a damp night air, all the alarming symptoms of the fatal disease came back with still greater violence, and she hastened home to die. I went to see her on the evening after her return ; but she had sunk into such a state of sullen reserve, that I could not get at the state of her mind. One morning her mother, on entering her room, saw the New Testament lying open on her table, but made no allusion to it.

"Yes, ma', we must soon part ; and then we part for ever."

"Not so, dear Emily ; if we part, it will be, I hope, only for a season. We shall meet in heaven."

“Never, my dear ma’; that holy book says it is impossible.” Taking the New Testament and giving it to her mother, with a leaf turned against a passage, she added, “You will take it out of the room; the sight of it agonizes me, as the appearance of an executioner would agonize the prisoner doomed to die by his hand.”

“My dear Emily!”

“Ma’, read that passage:—‘For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.’” Heb. vi. 4—6.

I saw her the next day, and found her calm and disposed to converse with me; but it was a fearful, because an ominous calm,—the quietude which steals over the spirit when sinking into despair.

“I was, sir, once enlightened. I have tasted of the heavenly gift, and was made a partaker of the Holy Ghost. I have tasted the good word of God, and have felt the powers of the world to come. And, sir, as you know, I have fallen away; and the words of that holy book have pronounced my doom. Indeed, sir, I am more calm in despair than I should be if I struggled to indulge hope.”

“But, my dear Emily, think of Peter. He denied his Lord with an oath, and yet he was restored to his favour.”

“Yes, sir, but he went out the moment he sinned, and wept bitterly; but I have been living in a practical denial of him for many months, and should have been living in the practical denial of him still, if this fatal disease had not intervened to prevent it, and I have no tears to shed. No, my eyes refuse such an offering to repentance.”

“But, my dear Emily, if you read the entire passage,

you will see that those who cannot be renewed to repentance, after they have fallen away, are those who become such daring and hardened apostates, that they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame,—that is, they approve of the conduct of the Jews, who actually crucified the Son of God; and in their impenitent state, they revile him as a blasphemer or impostor. Now, you cannot do that?"

"Revile the Son of God! No, sir; I tremble under a keen sense of his judicial authority. Approve of the treatment he received when on the cross! No, sir; I would rather be able to say, Come, Lord Jesus, than cry, Away with him, crucify him, crucify him!"

"Then, my dear Emily, you are not one of the fatal number whose recovery is impossible."

"My fixed belief is, that my recovery is impossible; and I am waiting the awful issue in dread suspense."

"But you will admit that, with God, all things are possible; and if so, he can renew you again to repentance."

"But, sir, there are occasions when the exercise of his power is held under subjection to the claims of his justice. He has power to redeem and renew the lost, but his justice prevents it. My case bears some analogy to theirs. He *can* renew me again to repentance, as he *can* renew them; but I dare not expect that he *will* exercise his uncontrollable power to nullify his own equitable decree, which has decided that the wilful apostate *shall* perish."

"But, my dear Emily, a person may fall away under the influence of an ensnaring and subtle temptation, who does not do it as the result of a resolute determination. He may be overtaken and overpowered, and borne away by temptation, as David was; but such a fall as this, materially differs from a premeditated design to renounce the faith of Christ, as a fabulous invention of man, that the sinful pro-

pensities of the heart may be indulged, without any dread of penal consequences."

"O, that fatal visit! O, that I had never gone! That verse, sir, which says it is impossible to renew the apostate again to repentance, is the first, and indeed the only one which struck my eye when I opened the Bible, to see if I could find any promise of mercy, to afford relief to my troubled soul; and it has struck its barbed point into the very core of my heart. I know my doom."

On finding her one evening rather more tranquil than usual, I said to her, "Death will soon put an end to some of your sufferings; but if you die in despair, your sufferings will never end. Think, dear Emily, of Him whom you once loved—in whom you once put your trust for salvation—who once began the good work of grace in your heart—and of whom it is said, that he will carry it on to perfection."

"Yes, sir, but I arrested the progress of his work."

"Yes, as a hurricane sometimes beats down a part of a building; but the builder sets to and repairs it."

"But, sir, do you think it is possible, that he will set his hand the second time to the work?"

"Can you not perceive some indications that he is now at it? If he intended finally to abandon you, and leave you to perish, he would have left you in a state of absolute insensibility and indifference. But, instead of this, he has caused the whirlwind of his anger to bear down upon you, to rouse you to a perception of your great danger, that you may feel compelled to lay hold of his strength, and thus be rescued from it."

"I do not doubt his ability to rescue me, and save me."

"And he is as willing to do it as he is able. Did he ever refuse to save even the most abandoned and worthless, who applied to him for salvation? And has he not said, that he will not cast out any who come to him? Think of his conduct towards the sinners of Jerusalem, who, after

witnessing his splendid miracles, the living witnesses of his divine mission, imbrued their hands in the blood of his life; and yet he commissioned his apostles, just before his ascension, to go and preach repentance and remission of sin to them, before they visited any city of Samaria, or any other country, with the tidings of mercy and grace. ‘And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”

She was silent; and, for the first time since her return home, she consented to my praying with her. For several weeks I repeated my visits almost daily—read the Scriptures—and prayed with her; and she became more composed, and listened with fixed attention to my conversation, and we thought that she began to indulge hope of returning mercy. But she would at times, after a season of mental calmness, when we were believing that the words of consolation were taking effect, suddenly, as though impelled by some indwelling spirit of evil, call up before her imagination, as so many spectres of terror, all possible objections against her salvation, and then her looks, her tones, and her utterances were truly appalling. To speak to her then, was like whispering to a hurricane; she was driven, as in a whirlpool of anguish, with such fearful rapidity, that she had no power to listen, and appeared as though forced to plunge herself into the very gulf of despair.

“I deserve, sir, all I suffer, and more than the Lord has yet inflicted upon me. And my suffering, instead of being any argument against the truth of the Bible, is an awful confirmation of the truthfulness of his righteous judgments. denounced against apostates.”

“But, my dear Emily, why not admit that the promises of mercy are equally true as the threatenings of vengeance?”

“I do, sir; but my guilt which makes me feel the equity of the threatening, makes me afraid to plead the promise of mercy.”

“But, Emily, the promise of mercy presupposes the existence of guilt, or it would be unnecessary and useless.”

“True, sir.”

“You know that Jesus Christ sustains the relative character of a Saviour towards fallen humanity, and this supposes that those he is able and willing to save, are in a perishing condition, and unable to save themselves.”

“But, then, they must believe in him, and I feel I cannot do that.”

“You would do it, if you could?”

“Yes, that I would, and this moment.”

“Then you can pray, as a father interceding for his afflicted child once prayed,—‘Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.’”

On seeing her the next morning, she said, “A ray of hope darted through the settled gloom of my soul, when you, sir, repeated to me yesterday the prayer of the afflicted father. And that prayer, I was enabled to offer up in the night-watches, when reviewing the history of my life, and meditating on the glorious character of Jesus Christ. I loved him once. His name was once precious to me. I once enjoyed his love. They were happy seasons,—spring-time seasons of bliss and of hope. Had I continued in his love, I had still been happy and safe. But I forsook him, and he has now forsaken me. What a change! It is stern winter now; no signs of life—no sweet influences from above now—storms and tempests; all is dark and wild now.”

“But you mourn your departure from him.”

“I regret it, sir, but I am not conscious of any feeling which is at all like contrition. My heart is as hard as a rock. This is the most fatal symptom. I can muse on the terrible sequel without feeling terror-struck, as I felt when the pains of hell first got hold upon me; then I found trouble and sorrow.”

“The Lord has passed by in the earthquake and in the whirlwind, that your spirit may gain composure, to fit you to listen to the still small voice of mercy.”

“No, sir; no, sir; it’s a mere lull in the storm, which I dread more than tempests bursting over my head. O, that fatal visit! I ought to have been a blessing to my aunt and cousins; and if I had acted a faithful part to them, I might have been; and now, as a punishment for my unfaithfulness, they have been a curse to me. My settled belief is, that I shall perish.”

“You need not perish when the great Deliverer is so willing to save you.”

“O, that I could believe in his willingness.”

“Why not, when he says, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?’

“O, I cannot come to him. I am held back—spell-bound by my convictions that I shall perish, as an awful warning to others. Yes; my fall, the agony I suffer, and the final issue will be a warning beacon to guard others against the fatal spot of danger and of death.”

An event now occurred which had a very powerful effect on her mind, and one as novel as it was unexpected. She had become exhausted by the excess of mental excitement, and contrary to her expectations when she retired to rest, she went off to sleep almost immediately, and slept soundly the greater part of the night, her beloved mother watching by her side. She awoke in the morning, and exclaimed, “And am I still here—still suffering here!” and for the first time she wept, and remained some time bathed in tears. “O, ma! I have had a most wonderful and consolatory dream. I dreamt that I was walking alone through a romantic scenery, alternately gazing on the heavens, which no clouds obscured, and on the hills, and woods, and green fields of earth, which seemed enveloped in a mantle of living beauty. At the end of my pleasant path, I entered a thick coppice, and

there, to my surprise, I saw a small Gothic chapel. I approached it and listened, and heard the sweetest music I ever heard, and soon caught the words which they were singing—

‘He is able, he is willing,  
Doubt no more.’

I entered. A man of God rose up in the pulpit, and preached a very eloquent and impressive sermon from Hosea xiv. 4—‘I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him.’ And I dreamt that while listening, the anguish of my soul gradually abated, and ere he had finished, I felt assured that the Lord Jesus would heal my backsliding; that his anger was turned away from me; and I had a persuasion of his love for me, like what I enjoyed when I first knew him and loved him.”

After narrating to me her dream, she added,—“I know the Holy One does sometimes employ the visions of the night as harbingers of mercy; and I cannot help thinking he has done so on this occasion, that he may have all the glory of recovering me from the depths of misery, into which my sins had plunged me.”

“Then this dream inspires you with hope?”

“It does. The dream itself presents to my imagination the great facts of the Bible, which you, sir, have again and again endeavoured to impress on my heart; and I cannot help indulging a hope, that it is a prefiguration of a reality, a shadow of good things to come.”

“And what effect has it produced?”

“It has led me to trust in Christ, and my dread of perishing is gone off. Yes; and my heart throbs with emotion, when I think of his compassion and his love. If I now perish, I will perish in the act of praying, ‘Lord save me!’”

“And does not this give you comfort?”

“I have no comfort, nothing directly positive—no actual



enjoyment—not even any sensible enjoyment, arising from hope. But I am not now in despair.”

Owing to an engagement from home, I did not see her for several days, and on my return, I found her as I left her,—without consolation, but not in despair.

“I hope, my dear sir, you will not leave me; for I have a presentiment that I shall not live through the night. O, where shall I be when the morning dawns on earth!

‘Will it be morning then with me?  
Awaked to hail his glorious light,  
Or must my doleful destiny  
Be endless night?’”

After a short pause, her countenance indicating her strong emotions of her soul, she raised her hand, and exclaimed in a tone of terror, surpassing any utterance I had ever heard from her lips,—

“Where, where for shelter shall the guilty fly?”

“Where? dear Emily! to Christ; he is a refuge from the storm. He will cast out none who come to him. The volume of inspiration closes with an invitation, as comprehensive as it is appropriate,—‘And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.’”

She wept. They were tears of contrition, mingled with tears of gratitude and love. We wept with her. At length a prolonged silence was broken by a solemn self-surrender of her soul to the compassion of her adorable Saviour.

“Yes, blessed Jesus, I will come to thee! I do come to thee! Yes, I can come to thee now. Accept and save me.”

In a moment the darkness, which had so long sat brood-

ing over the chaotic state of her soul, passed off, and with ecstasy she exclaimed,—

“Yes, the light of life now illumines the dark valley of the shadow of death! I will now fear no evil. I find that I am safe now! Yes, he gives me hope now! More than hope; he is giving me now peace and joy in believing. O, how sweet the light of the morning, after the prolonged darkness of the night! How sweet the calm, after the threatening storm! Now, ma,” embracing her as she spoke, “though we part, it will not be for ever. No; we shall meet again; and then we shall meet where there will be no sighing or sorrowing, because no sinning.”

She now revived, and was able to remove into the sitting-room. The vivacity and the energy of her spirits and her feelings returned in full-tide manifestation of power and expression; the lurid gloom of her countenance was succeeded by a peculiar and marked serenity and loveliness; and at times so great was the change that we fondly indulged a hope that she would again live to enjoy life. Fallacious hope! It came to enliven and to cheer; it went away to disappoint and depress. The crisis came. She was reclining on the sofa, her head resting on the bosom of her fond mother; her father was sitting in his arm-chair by the side of the fire, and one of her sisters was standing near her, refreshing her with the scent of ether. In a moment of stillness, sacred to the crisis which no one was anticipating, she lifted up her eyes, looking with fixed steadfastness, and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” and without a sigh or a struggle she expired. The suddenness of her departure took us all by surprise. But what was our surprise in comparison with hers? While we were looking on her lovely form, now belonging to the tomb, she was beholding the person of her Redeemer, and the opening scenes of the celestial world; and while we were shedding tears, sacred to her memory, she was passing through the august

ceremony of presentation before the glorious presence of the Holy One with exceeding joy; and long ere she was attired in the shroud of death, she was arrayed with the white robes of immortality, and had taken possession of her quiet and enduring mansion in her Heavenly Father's house.

Yes, Emily though dead yet speaketh, and her warning voice demands attention. Watch and pray, O youthful disciple, against temptation! Be on your guard, especially when the gay scenes of the world present themselves to your passions and your taste. Emily fell, yet was recovered; but no words can sketch that terrible ordeal of suffering through which she had to pass; she was "saved, yet so as by fire." Shun, O youthful disciple, even the appearance of a conformity to the world; as it is more easy to arrest the progress of the good work of grace in the soul, than to repair it after it has been damaged and endangered. Cleave, then, to the Lord with full purpose of heart; for though you may be recovered, so as by fire, if you fall by the power of great temptations, yet should you "sin wilfully after that you have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

## EXHORT ONE ANOTHER DAILY.

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IF we could get near enough to the prison-house of souls (1 Pet. iii. 19,) to listen to what is passing there, we should overhear conversations which would make our ears to tingle. It is not improbable that our names are there associated with cursing and bitterness, and that the ruin of souls is ascribed to our negligence. We should hear one saying to his fellow-sufferer, "I had a Christian neighbour who lived next door to me eighteen years. He knew that I was regardless of religion, that I seldom attended public worship, that I often made the holy day of the Lord a season of worldly pleasure, but he never reprov'd my sin. To his silence I may trace my ruin. I remember the turning point in my life. It was a bright and beautiful morning. A friend had invited me to an excursion. His chaise drove off with us at the moment my neighbour was leaving his door to go to the house of God. I would then have given the world to accompany him, but I had gone too far to retreat. How well I remember all that passed on that occasion! O, what a curse is memory now! God has set my sins in order before mine eyes. There they are, in all their horrible minuteness of circumstances; not a single aggravation is forgotten. My thoughts, all that day, ran on the account to which I should certainly be called next morning. I pondered over the best excuses that my proud heart, or my vain imagination, could suggest. One was close confinement during the week, and the necessity of occasional recreation for the benefit of my health. Another, that the

Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. A third (and it was this that gave me greater relief than either,) that it was only once—that I never intended to do so again. Miserable was that day to me, and it was followed by a sleepless night. Conscience would not suffer me to slumber. But that was the last time conscience ever disturbed my rest. Monday morning came. My answers were ready. I prepared myself for the dreaded interview, and wished it over. Had my neighbour then treated me with affectionate fidelity I had never gone on a Sabbath's excursion again. I had already resolved that it should be the last time, and I wanted an opportunity of saying so. Judge then my astonishment, when I found that the religious friend, in whose eyes I had fancied myself degraded for ever, made not the slightest allusion to the manner in which I had passed the previous day! His silence I unhappily regarded as the sanction of my sin. He was a kind neighbour, and a good man, and I could not imagine that he would see my soul in peril without informing me. Fortified by his indifference, I reached the conclusion which has satisfied thousands. I thought religion good, but not indispensable. I regarded it as a thing about which every one should be fully persuaded in his own mind, and not make himself a busybody in other men's matters. I felt assured that with it my neighbour would go to heaven, and almost as certain that I should find my way thither without it. His conduct seemed to justify my opinion. For his habitual silence I could account in no other way. During the lingering illness which brought my body to the grave, and my soul to this place of torment, there was hardly a day when I was not the subject of his kind inquiries; yet not one word did he say about the claims of Christ, or the guilt and danger of neglecting the great salvation. The consequence is, that here I am, and here I stay for ever. Who can lie down in everlasting burnings? But I have no other

bed. Thanks to my Christian neighbour for this awful doom! Had he been faithful to my soul, and warned me of the wrath to come, I had not been here."—*Ford's Decapolis.*

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### WATCHFULNESS AND PRAYER.

Our Saviour's words are, "Watch and pray;"  
 Lord, make us willing to obey,  
 Able thy counsel to fulfil;  
 From thee must come both power and will.

The wisdom from above impart,  
 To keep our hand, our tongue, our heart,  
 In thought, word, deed—that so we may  
 Pray, while we watch; watch, while we pray.

Lest while we watch, and fear no snare,  
 We fall into neglect of prayer;  
 Or, while we pray, and watch not, sin  
 Creep, like a subtle serpent, in.

When, by an evil world beset,  
 Allurements smile, or dangers threat,  
 Well let us watch our Master's eye,  
 To pray for faith, to fight or fly.

Our strength be his omnipotence;  
 His truth our sole and sure defence;  
 His grace can help the feeblest saint  
 To watch and pray, and never faint.

For he who hath commanded thus,  
 Oft watched and prayed on earth for us:  
 And still, with interceding love,  
 Watches and prays for us above.

## THE UNIVERSALIST.



ANY one who will carefully scan the system of Universalism, and study its character, from intercourse with its professors, will be convinced of the fact, that it has its foundation and all its support, in the wickedness and pride of the human heart. This was very clearly manifested in many cases that came under my observation, but especially in the case of an intelligent physician. He had a pious mother, but being an only son he had been indulged from a child in having his own way in almost everything. How often the fondness of parents proves the ruin of their children! I call it *fondness*, because it cannot properly be called *love*. His father had died when he was quite young, and the fond mother had looked to him as her future hope, and the only stay of her declining years. He was a bright and promising boy, but the over fond mother, like Eli, though she gave him wholesome instruction, "did not restrain him." Too late she was brought to see her error, and to lament with a bitterness of sorrow, the extent of which may be learned from the sequel.

She had toiled hard to give him an education; and when I became acquainted with him, he was a practising physician in the village in which I resided. He had married, and his wife was a consistent member of the church. He

stood high in his profession, and was indeed the best physician in the place, though he had become intemperate, and was often unfit for business. He had a secret hatred of religion, but was careful not to make any open opposition, as he knew such a course would be unpopular, and might injure him in business. He, however, did not spare his taunts before his wife, who bore them all with Christian meekness, and endeavoured to exemplify the religion she professed. He was not without occasional compunctions of conscience, from which he was for a time strongly inclined to seek a refuge in infidelity; but his better judgment, aided by the early instructions received from his mother, would not permit him to deny the Bible altogether. Universalism suited the state of his mind and heart; he embraced it, and soon became a zealous advocate of its pernicious principles. This seemed to set his conscience at rest, though the only change that was visible in the man was, that now he openly and boldly opposed the preaching of the gospel and true religion in all its forms; whereas, when he was inclining toward infidelity, his opposition was secret. At first his intelligent mind seemed incapable of fully adopting all the absurdities of the system; but being in the reception of a Universalist paper, he drank greedily its weekly portion of mental poison, which seemed to "lay such a flattering unction to his soul," and seemed finally to become convinced of the truth of a system which taught him that "drunkards and adulterers" would certainly "inherit the kingdom of heaven." He threw off restraint, became more habitually intemperate, more harsh to his wife, and now endeavoured to prevent her from attending church

He always contrived to be absent during my pastoral visits to his family, but would ask his wife the purport of my conversation, and endeavoured to turn it into ridicule. She did not attempt any argument with him, but requested him to be at home when I visited the family, and propose



his objections to myself. To this he finally consented; and the next time I visited the family I found him at home.

“The wicked flee when no man pursueth.” Though I manifested towards him all the kindness of which I was capable, and felt sincerely desirous for his spiritual good, he seemed agitated and uneasy, in spite of his efforts to appear composed. It was very evident that his confidence in his system was not sufficient to sustain him under circumstances which he thought would test its truth—a convincing proof that it had not been examined and embraced in the fear of God. I pitied him deeply, and endeavoured to relieve his embarrassment by kind familiarity, and avoided any allusion to his principles, knowing that a conversation on practical religion would be better suited to the circumstances, and to his case, than anything that would afford a pretext for controversy; though I felt it to be my duty to lead him, if I could, by some practical remarks, to see the absurdity and danger of his system. Any pastor will readily conceive the difficulty and delicacy of the circumstances in which I was placed. I felt it to be my duty to say something to him about his danger, and the tendencies of his pretended belief—for I could hardly think that his confidence in it was very firm. Yet what to say, and how to say it, without seeming to provoke controversy, I was at a loss to know.

I spoke to his wife and children on the nature and effects of true religion, and asked several questions of an experimental and practical import. When I addressed myself to him, I asked if we could place any confidence in that profession of religion which produced no corresponding effects on the heart and life. He seemed to feel that the question applied to himself, as I intended it, and, though somewhat agitated, answered respectfully. I then asked, if we might not in general judge of the truth or fallacy of any system of religious teaching by its effects on its professors. He

saw that the question aimed at his system, and avoided a direct answer. He replied in substance, that God designed the happiness of all his intelligent creatures, both here and hereafter, and he thought it would be a better test of any system to judge of its accordance with the character of God, whom the Bible exhibits in the character of a Father who designs the happiness of his children. I asked again, if he thought happiness could be enjoyed, either here or hereafter, without holiness. He again avoided a direct answer, and advanced the sentiment so common with Universalists, that all those who led a wicked life were punished in this life, and that holiness was rewarded in this life; and asked me what I would think of him, if, after I had treated him to a feast, he should turn round and ask me to reward him for enjoying it, intimating that it was equally unreasonable for the righteous, who had enjoyed the favour of heaven here, to claim it exclusively hereafter; adding, that such was the selfishness of all "*partialists.*" I replied, that if his argument proved anything, it was that the righteous should be excluded from heaven altogether, as they had their reward here, and only the wicked could hope for any reward hereafter, who had enjoyed none here; adding, that this was "*partialism*" in a new light. He was much discontented, and changed the tone of his objections, asking me if I did not think that animals had souls as well as men, and if I thought they hereafter would be saved or lost, &c. I found it was useless to say more, and broke off the conversation. After praying with the family, I left, more than ever convinced of the fact, that Universalism has its foundation in the depravity of the human heart and its hatred of holiness. Poor man! little did he think that his system was so soon to be tried by so terrible an ordeal.

A fever of a very malignant form was then beginning to make its ravages in the neighbourhood, and I met him frequently in scenes of affliction and distress, and sometimes

of death; but they seemed to have no effect upon him. In a few weeks, however, he was taken with the disease himself. By exposure in riding, and the free use of ardent spirits, his system seemed to be prepared for the disease in its worst form. It did its work in a few days. From the first his case seemed hopeless, and on the second day he was given up by the physicians. From the nature of the disease, and the impossibility of procuring any favourable operation of medicine, he knew that he must die. His confidence in Universalism, if he ever had any, now failed entirely, and he gave himself up to the most agonizing despair. He expressed a strong desire to see me, and I visited him accordingly. When I entered the room, he cried out in agony, "O, Mr. S——! Mr. S——!" When I took his hand and inquired how he did, he fixed his glaring eyes upon me, with a look that almost made me shudder, and said, with an energy and emphasis that shocked all present, "*I am in hell!*" When I expressed a hope that he might yet be saved through Christ, and commenced to speak of the fulness and freeness of salvation, he interrupted me: "I know it, I know it all," said he; "but I have wilfully and wickedly shut my eyes against the truth, and tried to place my dependence on a system which I never could fully believe. I have slighted the Saviour, and blasphemed the gospel, when I knew better, and now I can have no hope. I can almost see him now, and hear him say, '*Depart.*'" Here he broke out into wild lamentations, such as: "There is a hell! I feel it now! Not only hereafter, but *here!*" laying his hand on his heart. "It is *here!* within me; around me! I am in it now, I feel it!" &c. His mother arrived, but her presence only seemed to increase his agony. His language, which was sometimes pronounced with a vehemence that amounted almost to a shout, together with the whole scene, proved too much for her to endure, and she was under the necessity of leaving the house. His

faithful wife was the only one that seemed willing to endure it for any length of time. She remained constantly beside him, trying to soothe him with her affectionate attentions. But all efforts to calm him were in vain. He continued his loud and boisterous lamentations until the physicians gave him opium; he then fell into a stupor, from which he never awoke.

Such was the end of the most intelligent Universalist with whom I was ever acquainted. Reader, if you have heretofore rejected the Saviour, permit me to call your attention to that gloomy death-bed. And when you have contemplated its woe and anguish, and all its attendant horrors, let me ask you, what it would be to die in that manner for one short year? Then, who can calculate the horrors of *eternal death*! To die in such a manner, or worse, *for ever*, and yet never die, so as to end your misery! Think, then, what a death eternal you are preparing for yourself, and escape it, before it is too late.

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## A L O S T S O U L .

FROM ALEXANDER'S "UNIVERSALISM FALSE AND UNSCRIPTURAL."

LET us look distinctly at the condition of a lost soul, as far as we can imagine it, when it first enters eternity. All delusive hopes vanish in a moment, and all doubts respecting the truth of a future state. It is felt to be a dreadful reality. The reflections of the lost soul may be conceived to be something of this kind. "The pangs of death are over, and I have passed into a new state of existence. But what means this tremendous darkness? What horrors are these by which I am surrounded? What fiends are these

which stare upon me and seem ready to seize me? Oh how wretched are my feelings! What a burden of guilt oppresses my soul! What I often was warned of has come upon me! My probation is ended! The door of mercy is shut for ever against me! My salvation is now impossible! Oh! that I had been wise, that I had considered my latter end. But my repentance comes too late. I am lost! my soul is undone! I am already in hell! O misery! misery! misery!"

Next, let us view this same lost soul when the archangel's trumpet shall sound, and call the living and the dead to the great tribunal. Now the sleeping dust awakes, and every human soul is clothed again with its own body. But while some rise with glorious, celestial bodies, resembling that of the august Judge, the wicked rise with bodies of frightful deformity; they rise "to shame and everlasting contempt." The judgment is set, and the books are opened; and now comes the turn of this man who died in impenitence. All his sins of thought, word, and deed are recorded in the book of God's remembrance, with all their aggravations. The man is speechless, "for every mouth shall be stopped." And all his shameful acts of iniquity are exhibited to the attending universe in the clearness of sunlight. Shame and confusion cover him. But the book of the law is there also, and the awful penalty and curse due for every sin is made manifest. Justice holds the balance; and every one sees that the sentence of condemnation is just. It could be nothing else than what it is. And his own conscience re-echoes the curse of the law. His wicked rejection of the gospel is also made prominent, as the chief ground of condemnation. The very devils seem to rise in condemnation, for they never had a Redeemer provided. The heathen rise up in judgment against him, for they never had a Saviour offered. Tyre and Sidon appear in judgment against him; and even Sodom and Gomorrha enhance his guilt

and condemnation, for with his privileges and opportunities they would have repented.

The rejecters of the gospel stand conspicuous among the condemned throng; their shame and remorse far exceed that of others, and their terror of condign punishment agitates them in a horrible manner. But now the sentence against them, in a voice of thunder, pierces their soul. If any one moment of the eternal misery of the lost is pre-eminently more painful than all others, it would seem that this must be that moment, when the Son of God pronounces the heart-rending sentence, "Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." It is in vain that we attempt to conceive the pangs and agonies which must accompany that sentence. Experience alone can reveal the whole truth, and may a merciful God save us from this experience!

The judgment is past. The Judge and his saints and angels return to heaven, where he resumes his place on the celestial throne. But what becomes of the lost sinner? He hears the music of their universal song of praise—but it increases his anguish; he goes away into everlasting punishment. Let us endeavour to grasp this eternity of woe. Let us call in the aid of arithmetic and try to number his years, or ages of misery. Alas! vain is our mightiest effort of imagination. Vain is the aid of the most extended multiplication. It seems to be at last as far from the end as at the beginning. Let us then imagine a point of duration as far forward as our imagination can reach, and let us suppose an inquiry be made of this miserable man, whether he experiences any mitigation of his torment, by the lapse of millions of ages; or whether he finds that he can bear up any better under his load of sorrow, in consequence of having borne the pressure so long. His answer must be, No! no! My despair, my remorse, my raging enmity, my anguish are the same, and ever will be the same!

QUALIFICATIONS

OF A

SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHER.

BY THE

REV. JAMES HAMILTON, LONDON.

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1. IT seems hardly needful to name, as the first requisite in a Sabbath-school teacher, a sincere and paramount love to the Saviour. A common teacher may be animated by many considerations. He may be an enthusiast for the classics, or for some branch of learning. He may have a strong affinity for the youthful mind, or be a zealot in the mere art of teaching; or he may be strongly impressed with the evils of popular ignorance, and from philanthropic impulses may do his best for the diffusion of useful knowledge. But however much *you* may share such feelings, the mainspring of your action is a more sacred and lofty motive. You believe that the knowledge most comprehensive of present happiness and essential to future blessedness, is the knowledge of Christ crucified. You believe that the event in our earth's history, by far the

most amazing and the most momentous, was the visit of the Saviour—the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God; and you believe that the most significant and surprising facts which must be taught are those included in the story of redemption. And just as you believe that the most important hour in the history of an immortal spirit is the hour when it is brought to the saving knowledge of Christ, so you further believe that the truest joy is brought to Immanuel, and the highest glory to God, when a soul is turned from sin to the Saviour. And believing these things, you magnify your office. You see how solemn are the verities with which you deal, and how sublime are the results at which you aim. But all the security and comfort with which you ply your work will depend on how far these verities are vivid to your own convictions, and these results dear to your own desires. If your own soul be filled with the grace and the grandeur of the gospel, you will contrive ways to expound it; and if your heart be burning with a Saviour's love, it will be a joy and a relief to commend him to others. Catechetical instruction is good, and Bible exercises are good; but, after all, the end and essence of Sabbath teaching is to explain the gospel and endear the Lord Jesus Christ. And this can be best accomplished by the glad eye and glowing tongue of one who exults in God his Saviour. In that genial moment when the faithful saying is sounding joyful to your inmost ear—when you see into the soul of Immanuel capacious, compassionate, and piteously yearning—when your own spirit is melted into sympathy with the Saviour's spirit—when one gospel is welling



up in your bosom, and another gospel is glistening in your eye—a text or verse of a hymn, or a few simple sentences, will do more in the way of heart-work at such a propitious moment than years of dry routine.

A young lady had charge of a Bible-class of fourteen girls. She taught them conscientiously for years without any visible success. She then lost a very dear and intimate friend; and spent some weeks with the relative in whose house her friend died. During this period of sequestration the Spirit of God had been drawing her mind away from the world, and fixing it more intently on heavenly and everlasting things. At the end of these weeks she returned to her class; but now she met her old scholars with very altered feelings. She was filled with love to their souls, and had a desire to glorify God such as she had never felt before. She gave out a hymn; and such was the solemnity of her manner and the earnestness of her tone, that in the reading of that hymn one of the scholars was pierced to the heart, and was led at once to cry, “What must I do to be saved?” The lesson for next Sabbath was the freeness of the gospel offer, and the young people were to search the Bible for instances. When they met that Sabbath, every heart was too full to speak, and the whole class sat silent, bowed before the felt presence of God. And the result of this awakening was, that eleven of the fourteen pupils gave evidence of real conversion, and became exemplary followers of the Lord Jesus. On one or two Sabbaths of spiritual instruction—when the heart was full and God was glorified—a blessing rested which had been withheld

for a long succession of conscientious but customary Sabbaths.

2. Another requisite to successful teaching is affection for the young. It was to this that Dr. Arnold mainly owed his pre-eminence as the head of a public school. Many who have held that position have been merely pedagogues. They have felt it a hardship to look after a parcel of boys, and have tried to save their dignity by a pompous stiffness or an awful severity. Dr. Arnold felt it no hardship to teach. He gloried in being a schoolmaster. He felt it a high calling, and all that was joyous and juvenile in his ardent nature was in full sympathy with all that was young and eager around him. And just as every outbreak of depravity vexed his righteous soul, so every indication of goodness was sure to catch his eye and cheer his heart. The best of the lads he would carry off to his country-seat in Westmoreland to spend the holidays, and took in them as true and intense an interest as if they had been sons or younger brothers; and in this way, by being the friend of the scholars, he became the master of the school. And it is only in some such way that you can attain a full ascendancy over your charge. In order to be the children's pastor or the children's teacher, you must be the children's friend. And this is what some people cannot be. They are severe and sullen, and little children share their spleen. They shake them, and cuff them, and treat them as if it were a crime to be little—a bad sign of a human being that he has not grown big. And others who have not this savage humour are entirely wanting in fellow-feeling for the young. They

are precise and formal, and cannot condescend to the little estate. To employ children's ideas or children's phrases, they fancy is almost as unmanly as it would be to go to sleep in a cradle, or walk the streets with a rattle; and therefore, in talking to children, they use the same abstract and general language which they employ among their own coevals. But the true teacher is neither the patron nor the tyrant; he is the friend of children. To the boys he becomes as a boy, and to the infant he becomes as an infant, that he may gain them all. And if it be not natural to him, grace can give him this congeniality with his youthful charge. Drinking of his Master's spirit—that Master who, with full conviction of children's perversity and sinfulness, but with equal conviction of the important place they fill in the kingdom of heaven, said, "Suffer the children to come to me"—the disciple of Jesus makes it a conscience to be kind to children. He prays and labours to have his own soul filled with the Saviour's exuberant benignity. He learns to look with new eyes on the little ones around him. He sees them in the light of the great hereafter; he sees them in all the importance of their future history, and all the solemnity of their everlasting destiny. He cannot tell but in that class of his he is training up a Morison or a Williams for the service of mankind, or an immortal spirit for the service of God in glory. And amidst all their fickleness and forgetfulness, all their infirmities and sins, he finds them full of interest. His kind and hopeful nature imbibes sprightliness from theirs, and his sincere affection beams out in that fascination which children perceive

so promptly—a fascination which cold natures cannot counterfeit; till in the same group where a spectator sees a parcel of children, he sees a band of youthful friends, a little flock of the Saviour's lambs, and taking them as a dear deposit and a delightful charge—"Lovest thou me? Then feed my lambs"—he not only tends them for that Saviour's sake, but learns to feed them with somewhat of that Saviour's lovingness.

3. A third qualification—or rather two qualifications in one—are familiarity with scriptural truth, and felicity in expounding it. Should you ever visit the field of Waterloo, you could not do better than take Sergeant Cotton for your guide; for this simple reason, that he has studied the subject. He was present in the battle himself, but he did not think that circumstance enough, for, as he confessed to us, his own share in the action did not give him much enlightenment. But having made up his mind to offer himself to visitors as a conductor and interpreter, he spent eight months on the spot, reading every narrative of the battle on which he could lay his hands, conning the different maps, and plans, and despatches, and picking up all the anecdotes and incidents of which he could get hold, till he was familiar with the grand outlines of the engagement, and well furnished with its more curious details; and then he entered on his avocation an intelligent and accomplished guide. Ministers are guides. The children's pastor is a guide. The Sabbath-school teacher is a guide. And, just like the preacher, the teacher should be fully furnished for his work beforehand. The grand outline of revelation should be so

bold and vivid to his view, that on the shortest notice he could state it with unhesitating promptitude and in the simplest terms; and he ought to be so conversant in scriptural details as to be able to variegate his instructions with endless instances from the Bible treasury. Before entering on his responsible office it would be well for every intending teacher to examine himself regarding his fitness. "Am I master of my subject? Do I fully understand the gospel? Do I clearly comprehend the way in which sinners are to benefit by that gospel?—the way in which the gospel is to do them good? And can I state off-hand the great truths of Scripture? Am I at home in its leading doctrines?—am I thoroughly acquainted with its most interesting and important passages? May I safely offer myself now as a Bible guide?" But besides knowing the truth, you need to tell it; and this is quite another thing. A man may be an adept in a science, and yet not "apt to teach" it. In Scotland we have had few mathematicians like Professor Playfair. His mind was mathematical. He lived in a world of *plus* and *minus*, and his imagination revelled in its own landscape of cubes and spheres, enlivened with infinite series and impossible quantities. And in the Royal Society, or with brother sages like Hutton and Leslie, he could expound his discoveries; but he was far too high and far too deep for the students in his college class. This was the philosopher's infirmity. He would have been a still greater man had he superadded the teaching talent—had he been able, like the blind mathematician Euler, to make algebra an amusement, and render the abstrusest of the sciences attractive to a child. There

is no reason why the same person should not be profound and popular ; and, indeed, the man who is shallow dare hardly be simple. Next to enlarging his own views, and establishing his own convictions, the teacher's great study must be the art of communication—how to make the matter obvious and alluring to his pupils. And happily for you, my friends, the main part of what you have got to tell is narrative—of all things the easiest told, a story. But still there is boundless scope for ingenuity, and need for anxious thought how to tell that story ; and he would need to have a full heart and glowing lips who could make that story as fresh, and wonderful, and affecting as the Bible gives it. If speaking to children, he would need to forget that there are old people in the world, and must forget that he himself is old. With all the reverence due to the mighty theme, and yet with the great plainness of speech required by his unlearned auditory, he would need to brighten up each sacred narrative ; and, nowise daunted by repeated failures, should never rest till he can paint in words a panorama, and repeat off-hand a pictorial Bible. And after a year or two of practice, should you learn this art of making the lesson plain and palpable, you will be better qualified to teach a Sabbath-school than Dr. Owen or Isaac Barrow would have been.

4. And besides this talent for simplification, it is very desirable that a teacher should have a warm and hopeful disposition. No doubt a phlegmatic teacher, if he be serious and faithful, will be more successful than his sanguine colleague who is withal light-hearted and desultory ; but it is quite possible to be vivacious

without being frivolous, and hopeful without being romantic or visionary. And in order to gain the hearts of children, it is needful to be fraught with expectation and fervour. Their sunny temperament shrinks away from all that is dark and gloomy; and what is worse, if they have a sombre teacher, by an inevitable association of ideas, his shadow is apt to rest ever after on every religious subject. The gospel is pure and genuine gladness. It is God-reconciled; it is peace in the conscience; it is the blessed prospect of glory. And did we tarry under its constant shining, its hopefulness should gild our countenance, and beam on all our movements. The Christian and the Christian teacher should be an embodied gospel; and if despondency or severity be our habitual temperament, we may be devout, but we are not evangelical. We have got a wrong version of the Christian revelation, and are giving forth an erroneous view of it. But more than this, few have ever effected anything important, as reformers or evangelists, who did not carry with them a genial atmosphere, and look at the brightest side of things. The philanthropist is one who takes up a lump of rusty ore, and espies in it a bar of precious metal. He is one who dredges rags from the kennel, and sees them converted into sheets of virgin paper, ready for the poet's pen or the artist's pencil. He is one who sees in an island of dirty savages a commonwealth of intelligence and piety not come as yet; and who discerns in a convict-ship a gymnasium for moral discipline, and the probationary school from which many a renovated and ennobled character may emerge. And he is one who, in a

ragged class, would detect the possible germ of many a virtuous and many a lovely thing—so many problems for Christian zeal, and so many trophies for all-conquering and all-transforming grace. Luther, and Knox, and Howard, and Eliot, and Williams, all were sanguine men. They saw everything in rose-light—in a warm light borrowed from the promises of God, and from the bright results to which their ardent faith looked forward. And if you would be a successful teacher, you must be sanguine. You must shed on your class some of this borrowed rose-light. You must not be daunted by any difficulty. You must not even be startled by any outbreak of depravity. And you must not despond, though hopes be only raised in order to be dashed again. Still look not at the turbulent spirits and sulky truants before you; but look at the Christian citizens and affectionate disciples into whom you hope to see them transformed. They are yet to be your joy and crown; take pains with them, therefore, though they may be your present grief and cross. Hope the best, and this very hope will end in something good. In due season you shall reap, if you faint not.

5. But the more conscientious a teacher is, and the more pains he takes, the more profoundly must he feel that something beyond the teacher is essential to insure success. The field may be beautifully ploughed—the furrows straight as an arrow-flight—and the seed-corn may be the choicest parcel, fresh, clean, and finely sifted, and brought from some famous farm; but there it has lain week after week, and skilfully harrowed in, but nothing comes of it. There is one



element which the husbandman cannot command. He has no control over heaven's bottles, and so long as the sky is blue the rigs are brown. A teacher may have a yearning affection towards the children of his charge. They may be often present to his thoughts. He may delight in preparing the Sabbath's lesson, and may speak to them in the simplest and most winsome words. But if the Lord withhold his blessing, all his efforts will end in weariness of the flesh and prostration of spirit. But that blessing will not be withheld, if prayer, believing, earnest, and persevering, ask it. That good gift, the Holy Spirit, your Heavenly Father will assuredly grant to the teacher's fervent intercessions. And this is the chief value of pastoral love—whether it be the minister's love to his people, or the teacher's love to his scholars. It is not its immediate efficacy—it is not its direct moral power—but it sends that teacher or minister to God. It compels them to pray. When the feeling is, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you," that solicitude can find no relief except at the throne of grace. It cannot refrain from prayer; and prayer is power. God hears it; and when for an object so agreeable to his will as the conversion of sinners and the salvation of souls, there is every security that he will answer it. You may see the answer soon. You may find the good seed springing up in some tender heart. You may be called to attend the sick-bed of a Johnny Ross, or a little James, and hear him with dying breath declare his love to Jesus. Or, when ready to despond, after years of labour, you may find a sudden recompense by

surprising your scholars in a little prayer-meeting, or giving some other sign of youthful piety. Or, looking over the list of your old scholars, you may find many of them now giving evidence that God has brought them to himself; like that American teacher who could reckon among his former scholars one hundred and six church-members and ten students for the ministry. Or you may not see the answer for long. The seed cast on the waters of England may spring up at the foot of the Himalayahs, or in the backwoods of Canada, and the teacher may be resting from his labours, before he knows that the runaway scholar, or the prodigal youth, has begun to follow him. But faith and prayer never fail. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

## THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

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God has not concealed his intention of bringing every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. From the earliest ages inspired men have freely and clearly spoken of the day of judgment. Enoch, who was the seventh from Adam, and all of whose life on earth, except the last twenty-two years, was cotemporaneous with that of Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Three thousand years after Enoch, Jude found no fitter words, by which to warn daring sinners of their coming doom, than those just quoted from the antediluvian prophet. The doctrine of a judgment is a familiar theme among inspired writers of both testaments. It is taught in the law, in the prophets, in the psalms, in the gospels, and in the epistles. It was so well understood in the days of Christ and of Paul, that they simply call it "*that day*," thus designating it as the day of days, "the day for which all other days

were made," and in comparison of which all other days are as nothing.

The day of judgment will be *the great day*. So inspired writers often and properly style it. It will exceed all other days for the brightness of its beginning. Other days had their dim twilight, but this will begin in ineffable effulgence. Their light was from the sun; the light of this shall be from Him who made all things. Other days dawn with general quiet, but this shall begin with great and unusual noises. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people." Jesus shall come in like manner as he went up on high. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." On that day men will see sights, and hear sounds, unlike all that ever struck their senses before. The brightness of Immanuel's coming will extinguish the light of the heavenly bodies, and the sounds, which shall be heard, shall make the earth reel and stagger like a drunken man. This day will be crowded full of wonders. It will be begun, carried on, and closed with such displays of miracles as the world has never seen before. The results accomplished by it will be as wonderful as the progress of its events. Every way of God to man will then be justified. All wickedness shall be put down. All cavil shall be for ever silenced. All judgment shall then be executed.

In speaking of the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, Peter says, "One day is with the

Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." From this some infer that the judgment-day will last a thousand years. This may be a mistaken conclusion, but that day will last long enough to answer all the purposes of a careful and universal scrutiny of human actions and characters. If this day be not a *long day*, it will be because God will, by his infinite perfections, make a few hours answer all the ends of a portion of duration equal to many generations. He can vindicate his ways, acquit the innocent, condemn the guilty, and show that he is just in saving sinners, without any of those slow processes to which human tribunals are subject. Yet there is a general impression that the day of judgment will commence at midnight, and last beyond what would be the limits of a day of our time. The word *day* in Scripture often designates a period much longer than *twenty-four* hours. The day of judgment will last long enough to answer all the ends of God in appointing it, and this is enough for us to *know*. The rest is open to conjecture.

The day of judgment is a day *fixed*. The time for it is set by God himself. "He hath *appointed* a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." To God that day is known, to us it is unknown; to him it is certain, to us it is doubtful. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." It will come as a thief in the night; as the flood came on the old world, as the tempest of wrath came on the cities of the plain, yet it is unchangeably determined by God. Men may not be looking for it, but God sees it afar off. As nothing can hasten it,

so that it shall come before God's purposes respecting the world are accomplished, so nothing can delay it one moment beyond the time fixed in God's eternal counsels for its coming.

Frequently the day of judgment is called "the day of the Lord." It will be the day when the Lord Christ shall appear in glory, display the wonders of his mediation and the perfection of his government, and will publicly be owned and crowned as Lord of all. There will be no disputes concerning the divinity of Christ, on or after the day of judgment, which will be *his* day. If the power that shall work, if the majesty that shall preside, if the knowledge that shall determine, if the justice that shall condemn, if the mercy that shall spare on that day be not divine, and convincingly so, it will be of no use to try to learn what is so. "The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son." That day will be the day of the Lord Jesus.

The day of judgment will be above all others a *day of convocation*. The heavens and the earth shall furnish the assembly. The chariots of God, which are twenty thousand, shall roll down the skies, bearing in them ten thousand times ten thousand, an innumerable company of angels. Fallen angels too shall be there; and them that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him. All that died in their sins shall be there; and all that are alive on the earth shall stand before God. Not one of all God's rational creatures shall be missing. Prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, saints, sinners, liars, hypocrites, infidels, blasphemers, haters of God, shall all be present. The assizes of the universe shall then be held. Mil-

lions on millions shall crowd this greatest of all congregations. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." This will be the first and the last gathering of all the denizens of the universe.

The day of judgment will be one of *unparalleled excitement*. There will be no listless spectators of those scenes. Men have fallen asleep at a marriage, at a funeral, in the house of God, and at the chamber of the dying. But none will slumber when they shall see a world wrapped in flames, a universe convened for judgment, and the Judge on the great white throne. Every eye shall see, every ear shall attend to Him, who utters the words, "Come, ye blessed," "Depart, ye cursed." Every faculty of intelligence and of feeling will that day be roused to the highest exercises of which it is capable. Dreams, fancies, whims and wandering thoughts attend men in this life, but in that day all will be eagerness, thought, excitement.

The day of judgment will also be a day of *great surprise*, both to saints and sinners. So Christ expressly informs us: "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or, when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" In like manner also shall the wicked say unto him, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" If the sentences of the just and unjust were reversed at the day of judgment, the surprise would not be half so great. Jesus said: "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy

name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Many will be saved, and many will be lost contrary to the judgments formed of them by their neighbours. But more will be saved, and more will be lost contrary to the opinions they had of themselves. Christians will wonder *that* they are saved, and *how* they are saved, and they will wonder that they should be commended for deeds full of imperfection. The wicked will be amazed *that* they are lost, and *how* they are lost, and especially that God puts no value upon their self-righteousness. The sons of God will receive more honour than they ever thought of claiming; while the wicked will find their hopes perishing one by one, and their lamp going out in obscure darkness. Christians will wonder why they *should* be saved. Sinners will wonder why they should *not* be saved. The latter will ask, "What have *we* done?" The former will say, "What have *we not* done?" The sinner says he does the best he can. The righteous says, "Behold, I am vile."

Many doubts, mysteries and perplexities will be fully and for ever removed in that great day. Things, which in this life were full of grievous darkness, will be then satisfactorily cleared up. God's providence, which is now accompanied by a thousand inexplicable things, will then be made plain. Now the wicked are exalted, then they shall be brought down to hell. Now the righteous are forsaken, afflicted, tormented. Then the Lord will bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noonday. That day will wipe off all aspersions from the innocent, and



fix guilt where it belongs, though never suspected before. God's truth, wisdom, holiness, justice, and mercy will shine brighter than the sun on that day. The slandered, injured and abused will then be vindicated. And the oppressed will rise up and clank the chains, with which tyrants had bound them, to the eternal confusion of wrong-doers. Many a righteous man, judicially murdered, will then face his corrupt judge with the suborned witnesses and perjured jurors who were at his trial. There will be a wonderful clearing up on that day.

It will also be a day of *exposure*. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some they follow after." The fraud, cunning, hypocrisy, and deceit of wicked men will then appear. All those dark designs and plots, which meditated ruin to individuals, distress to families, perplexity to nations, or dishonour to God, shall be held up to reprobation. The light of that day will shine through and through the thickest web of iniquity, and show all its foul intricacies.

This will also be a day of *decision*. In this world appeals are often taken from lower to higher courts, from the judgment of cotemporaries to that of posterity, and from the judgment of man to that of God. But the tribunal of Christ is the court of the last resort. From his decision there lies no appeal. On that day, causes and destinies will not merely be inquired into. They will be *decided*. Thenceforward for ever, the law will be, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Nothing can reverse, nor arrest the judgments of that day. Nothing can alter or vary the decree of the Judge. It shall stand for ever. The judgment of the great day is called the "eternal judgment," because it will be irrevocable and everlasting in its effects. It will bind for ever.

The day of judgment will also be a day of *separations*. Here saints and sinners are strangely mixed together. There it will be very different. Christ says: "Let both tares and wheat grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left." This separation shall be final. The righteous and the wicked shall that day part to meet no more.

To Christ, his saints and angels, the day of judgment will be a day of *triumph*. The Lord will then make a show of his enemies openly. They that would not kiss the Son, shall be dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. In his triumph, all his saints and angels shall share and glory. The most timid of his people shall "have boldness in the day of judgment." I never could have believed that, if the Bible had not said so.

To the wicked the same day will be full of *despair*. They will cry to the rocks and to the mountains:

“Fall on us and cover us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” Was more dreadful despair ever portrayed?

The day of judgment will be the *last day*. So Christ calls it. So inspired writers often teach. After it, “time shall be no longer.” No more shall duration be measured by the alternations of day and night, or of the seasons; and there shall be no succession of seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, or years as now. All beyond the judgment-day is boundless, fathomless eternity. This last day will leave an ineffaceable impression on all minds. None will ever forget what they shall have seen, and heard, and felt on that day. The great days of earth may fade from the memories of saints and sinners, but this *last* great day shall never, never, never perish from the recollection of any.

It may well be doubted whether any man thinks as much as he should of the judgment-day. Justin Martyr said, “I seem always to be hearing these words: Awake ye dead and come to judgment.” A modern writer speaking of the same day says: “It would seem as if Christ was always thinking of it. How frequently he speaks of it, and never but with the deepest solemnity.” The apostles seem to have had everything associated with it. One expresses gratitude for kindness and hospitality by praying that his host may “receive mercy of the Lord in that day.”

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy

conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

Reader, are you prepared for your last account? Have you made peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ? Is all your hope in the precious blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ? Nothing of your own can save you in that day. It will burn as an oven. It will try your works and your hopes as by fire. If you have built on Christ, and on him only, then hold fast your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

But if you are yet in your sins, then be persuaded to "flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Nor can you be in too much haste, or too much in earnest, in this weighty matter. It is your life. "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door." And he says: "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according to his work."

If you are out of Christ, you are unreconciled to God. There are three classes of controversy. The first is where neither party has done any wrong, but the whole contest has arisen from mistake. In this case, all that is required to settle the difficulty is light and explanation. This is not the nature of God's controversy with us. We may have, yea, we doubtless have often misapprehended his character, and will, and rights; but when we have understood them, we were more than ever averse to them. And God has

never misunderstood us. He knows that we cordially hate him. Reconciliation by explanation is here impossible. A second kind of controversy is where both parties have done wrong, and of course both have suffered wrong. Here must be *mutual* acknowledgment, concession and reparation. But God has never wronged us. He has never demanded too much. He has never been a hard master. His precepts concerning all things are right, and every just man thinks so, and says so. We can never be reconciled in this way. The third kind of controversy is where all the fault and blame are on one side, the other party having been wholly innocent and fully right in every particular. This is the nature of God's controversy with us. We have sinned much, long, wantonly, stubbornly, heinously. We are all dead men, dead in trespasses and sins. If we wash ourselves with snow-water, and make us never so clean, yet he will plunge us in the ditch, and our own clothes shall abhor us. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. "God be merciful to me a sinner," is always an appropriate prayer.

Salvation by grace is every way suited to your case. You are a criminal. I have heard of one, who had broken the law. His soul was guilty. His fears went like iron into his soul. He was arrested and held "in strong prison." His case grew darker every day. No way of escape seemed possible. The day of trial came. The testimony was clear. There was no room for fair argument in his favour. The verdict was, "Guilty." The sentence followed. The day of execution came. He was led forth in chains. His spirit was crushed. Dry sorrow had drunk up his blood and spirits; not a tear did he shed. The green fields, the

blue heavens, the hoary mountains, and the crystal streams had all faded from his mind. He thought as though he thought not. Some said he was hardened, some thought his mind wandered. All pitied him but himself. He said his sentence was just.

At that moment a cry was heard, "Open the way, and let the officer of the government pass." An avenue is cleared, and as soon closes. With quick step the new-comer ascends the scaffold, and hands the sheriff a paper duly signed and sealed. It is a pardon. In a proper way the sheriff reads to the guilty man his release from the penalty. His tears begin to flow, he utters a few broken sentences, his bosom heaves, it seems to him like a dream, he fears there is some mistake, he looks at the signature and seal. Surprise, gratitude, and abundant tears of joy mark the man who seemed just now to be past feeling. He is alive again. The sun shines in beauty, and nature seems to rejoice all around him.

But how came that pardon? It was obtained at the intercession of one whom he had always avoided and often contemned. Can he slight him again? No; he will search till he finds him, he will confess his past errors, he will express his thanks not once, but a thousand times. He will speak lightly of him no more. He will rise at midnight to serve him.

So is the case of the sinner saved by the blood, and righteousness, and intercession of Christ. He admires the Saviour. He calls him Lord. His heart melts whenever he thinks of his goodness towards him. His gratitude begets obedience, and he knows no Redeemer but one. He owns none else, he desires none else. Thus "the goodness of God leadeth to repentance."

## ON WORLDLY CONFORMITY.

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THE Lord Jesus loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might redeem it from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. To those whom he has chosen out of the world, and called, and justified, and in whom the work of sanctification has been commenced, he addresses, by his Spirit, the exhortation, "be not conformed to this world." The meaning of this precept is—be not like it—agree not with it. But the question arises, be not like it, agree not with it in what? A question which every pastor, every church officer, every pious parent, every true disciple of Christ is compelled to consider; and concerning which, it is highly important that correct views be entertained. In reference to it, two leading errors have prevailed, one of which laid the foundation of monasticism, out of which grow so many follies and so many abominations, while the other leads too many professing Christians to pursue a course of conduct which prompts ungodly men to ask the taunting question—"What do ye more than others? do not even the publicans the same?" Neither of these evils would exist if an intelligent obedience were rendered to the precept under consideration.

As a practical question, the concern of the church is, to avoid both these errors, and have its members so live in the world, that all who are out of the church, shall daily take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. To ac-

comply with this, it is not required that Christians shall abstain from all intercourse and co-operation with those who are out of the church; for there are many things in which the world may act like the called, and still be only "the men of this world who have their portion in this life;" and not a few things in which the followers of Jesus may be like them, without any culpable conformity to them. The various employments by which man's bread is gained from the productions of the earth—the mechanic arts by which the conveniences, comforts, and luxuries of life are secured—and the various civil offices connected with the administration of government, and growing out of the relation of man to his fellow-man, are instances of this. These things do not belong exclusively either to the church or the world; and engaging in them is not conforming either to the world or to the church. A Christian may discharge all the duties of any of these callings without interfering with the claims of piety either in the heart or in the life. They spring from man's nature, and his wants, and the circumstances in which he is placed. They will be attended to as long as he exists on the earth; and when all shall know God, from the greatest even to the least, then will none but the servants of God be found to engage in these callings and discharge their duties.

On the other hand, discharging the duties of these callings so far as is required by human laws relating to the interests of civil society, gives no evidence of the existence of that which entitles a man to be placed amongst the people of God. It only gives a good standing as a member of civil society. The claims of civil laws go no further. But in the laws of God, man is viewed as sustaining relations, and bound to the performance of duties, not contemplated by those laws which men frame for regulating civil society. These view man merely in reference to this world, and in relation to his fellow-men in this world. The laws of God have respect to this also; and where the legislation of man



is wise, it will agree with the principles laid down in the Divine institutions.—Hence it is, that not a few come to the conclusion that they are not under any great blame in the sight of God—are not guilty of any heinous sins, because they discharge the duties which they owe to civil society—duties enjoined by the laws of God and by laws which man has enacted. They fall into this error, because they lose sight of the fact that the divine laws view man in reference to other relations, and another state of being. In their whole structure, God's laws view man as under the dominion of the Sovereign of the universe, bound to obey him, and spending his days on earth in preparation for eternity; and teach that his condition in eternity, will be determined by the course he has pursued on earth; for God will render to every man according to his deeds.

It is easily seen that a clear ground of distinction between the church and the world is, that one consists of those who according to their own profession, are bound to both classes of duties—those that are due to Cæsar and those that are due to God; whilst those of the other class attempt nothing else than to meet the claims of Cæsar. The standard by which they regulate their conduct, has respect to nothing else. But whilst the law of the other embraces these and denounces the wrath of God against those who violate them; it at the same time teaches, that though all the duties contemplated by civil laws be fully performed, this does not entitle a man to acceptance with the divine Being. God's law, the claims of which they recognize in their whole extent, requires the discharge of many duties to man, and many duties to God, not enjoined by human laws; and in addition to holiness of life, that holiness of heart which will fit its possessor for the abodes of perfect purity.

That a great difference of life must result from acting according to these different standards of conduct, must be evident to any person who will examine them and their tenden-

cies even superficially. The difference will be more manifest, if we suppose a separation made, and the world existing as in the end it will exist, entirely removed from the church. This will present to our view a community relieved from all practical regard to eternity and eternal interests. Then, those tendencies which we now see struggling continually against the restraints which the principles of Christianity bring to bear on society at large through the church, would be fully developed; and even if those outbreaking crimes which always have prevailed in every place where a regard to God's authority had not controlled the fierce passions of men, could be prevented, through the influence of human institutions, still, we would see all wholly given up to the fascinations and follies which are loved, and indulged in by those whose present anxieties, hopes, and enjoyments, all centre in this present world. The thoughts would be given to business, and to the song, the dance, the revel, wine, cards, dice and kindred vanities and vices. No conversation, no institutions calculated to turn the thoughts to God, and eternity, and eternal interests, would intrude their hallowed, but neglected and shunned influences.

This is the state of things which the heart of man naturally loves; which the world desires, and for which, the men of this world who live in the midst of Christian institutions struggle, unless restrained by the influence of conscience. In the midst of this tendency to vanity and vice, in the midst of a world lying in wickedness, God has placed his people; and for the honour of his name, for their good, for the everlasting advantage of the men of the world with whom they are called to mingle every day, he has said, with all the tenderness of his love, and sternness of his authority—"Be not conformed to the world."

This implies, that his people are not to seclude themselves from the world, and under the plea of giving themselves entirely to the performance of the duties of piety, renounce

all part in the employments growing out of human society. This is the error out of which monastic institutions sprung at first, and by which they are still sustained. Christ has said that his church is the salt of the earth. That its savour may be felt in all human concerns, his people are to form a part of human society. But that the salt may not lose its savour, God requires that his people shall carry out into action, in all the relations of life, in their business, and in their relaxations from business, in all their intercourse with men, the principles of that holy religion which they profess.—When this is not done, either from dislike to the course enjoined, or out of deference to the wishes and tastes of those whose only pleasure is in the things of this world, as distinguished from the things of religion; then is such conduct, on the part of God's professing people, sinful conformity to the world.

Carrying out into action the principles of the Christian religion requires not only that we avoid all transgression of God's laws, but that we shall not lay our schemes for life, nor follow our business in life, as if our highest interest were in the things of this world; nor as if our highest happiness on earth were to come from them. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal," Matt. vi. 19. These are short-lived, uncertain, and unsatisfactory. They are the only treasure of "the men of this world who have their portion in this life." It is entirely consistent with their principles, that they should give their whole attention to these things. But God has called his people to a better inheritance—for "godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. They are therefore to "use the world as not abusing it"—they are to attend to worldly business, and worldly interests, as part of their duty to God and man; but always viewing them as subordinate to a much

higher object; and ever watching lest at any time their hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life. Wherever the principles of true piety do not control professing Christians in their schemes for life, and in their business in life, they are, in God's sight, guilty of sinful conformity to the world.

The precepts of Christ require also that his people in all their differences with their fellow-men, shall avoid the spirit and temper of those who contend for the things of this world, in the spirit of the world. Differences will exist even amongst good men; and pious men must sometimes contend for their just rights against the encroachments of those who have not the fear of God before their eyes. In these contests, it is to be expected that the men of this world will exhibit the tempers, and pursue the courses which belong to depraved human nature; but which are entirely inconsistent with the spirit and precepts of Christianity. Its language is—"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you, Eph. iv. 31, 32. See that none render evil for evil to any man, Eph. v. 15. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, Matt. v. 44, 45. For even hereunto were you called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, 1 Peter ii. 21-23. This is what God requires, and what consistency with their profession claims from Christians. To carry out the temper and the course of

action here enjoined, would cause the church to stand forth, the wonder and praise of all the earth. Not to carry them out into action, is sinful conformity to the world.

The principles of the Christian religion also require that its professors avoid the customs of those who walk in the lusts of the flesh and mind earthly things. This includes not only the more gross and open sins to which man is naturally prone; but all those customs the whole tendency of which is to divert the mind from serious things, and wed it to the fascinating follies of a world that lieth in wickedness.—There is a large class of things called amusements—the race course, the circus, the theatre, the public and the social dance, the private card-table, and similar things, which he who bears the Christian name, and he who would make his peace with God, must shun, as he who guards his health with the most zealous care, would shun the infection of the most deadly disease. If some have engaged in these things without the entire ruin of their soul's interests, this no more shows that they are not pernicious, than the fact that some persons have been exposed to the infection of the plague without contracting the disease, proves that this deadly pestilence is not contagious. The end of these things is death. Their whole tendency is evil. They are to be avoided, because they are unnecessary to any interest that man has either in this world or in the next; and because they are injurious to both. So far as indulged in, they fill the mind with folly and vice, banish all serious reflection, foster the natural disrelish of the soul to every thing sacred, turn it from God, and join it more closely to vanity and vice. Why then will any be so inconsiderate as to indulge in those things, which in the end bite like a serpent and sting like an adder? Why will any encourage in others the things which have proved the ruin of thousands? Why will parents fail to exert that influence and authority which God has given them, and for the exercise of which he holds them

accountable, in leading their children away from those things which (to say the best that can be said of them) are folly; and which alas! too often end in open and confirmed vice? To engage in them ourselves, or not to discountenance them in others, is sinful conformity to the world.

“Be not conformed to the world.” “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God,” James iv. 4. That is, whosoever will so yield to the world lying in wickedness, as to conform to those courses of the world which lead the soul away from God, and from the cultivation of piety in the heart, is the enemy of that Being who hates sin, and therefore must disapprove of everything that leads to sin.

“Be not conformed to the world,” because such a course dishonours the religion of your Redeemer. “For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil,” 1 John iii. 8. You by profession bear the name of Christ. You profess to have joined in the warfare against sin. When in your life you carry out the principles of your profession, then do you commend yourself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. And no matter how much a wicked world may scoff, God is honoured by you, and God is pleased with you. But when the professed followers of Christ, instead of bearing their testimony daily against the sins and follies of the world, join with the world in them, then is the Redeemer wounded in the house of those who call themselves his friends. Who can tell the amount of reproach which is daily cast on the religion of the Redeemer through the worldly-mindedness of those who are called by his name?

“Be not conformed to the world,” because conformity to the world in the sense in which it is forbidden in the word of God, is inconsistent with growth in grace. When the Redeemer of sinners ascended up on high leading captivity

captive, he gave gifts unto men. These were given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in 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," Eph. iv. 12, 13. At this perfection of fulness, each one is to aim steadily. None worthily bear the Christian name, who are not forgetting the things behind, and reaching forth to those that are before. Growth in grace can take place, only as a continued warfare is maintained with the corruptions of the natural heart. From this warfare there is no discharge, till in death the armour of the warrior is stripped off, to prepare for wearing the crown of the conqueror. Conformity to the world is so far from aiding the Christian in this work, that it tends continually to strengthen every corruption of the natural heart. It causes the roots of bitterness to spring up, and trouble the conscience, and defile the soul and pollute the church.

"Be not conformed to the world," because it is deeply injurious to the dearest interests of those for whose eternal welfare Christians should labour with the most earnest solicitude. "Ye are the salt of the earth," Matt. v. 13. This is true of the whole church in regard to the whole world; and true of each branch of the church in regard to the section of the country in which it is placed; and true of each individual in his more limited sphere. Just so far as any professed follower of Christ conforms to the world, the salt loses its savour, and instead of exerting a good influence, exerts one which is deeply pernicious. The men of the world will form their opinions respecting religion, from the lives of those who profess it; and more especially from the lives of those professors, with whom they are most intimate. They know to a great extent, what the precepts of religion require, and they justly expect to see no small degree of agreement between the precept, and the conduct of those

who profess to be guided by it. They look for a marked difference between the best of those who do not make any pretension to personal piety, and all who profess to have repented of sin, and to have engaged in the service of God. Where this difference is not seen, it tends to produce a deep rooted contempt for those who profess religion, and do not exhibit its power in their lives ; and this contempt is too often extended to religion itself, fixing the soul in hardened scepticism, or in settled carelessness about its eternal concerns. How widely different is the result, where the members of the church so adorn their profession that all around them are constrained to take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus ! Then are they the epistles of the Lord, known and read of all men. Such should be every one who bears the name of Christ ; and such would be every one, if all who name that holy name, were careful to depart from all iniquity. Such a testimony from the whole church would tell with a mighty influence on the salvation of immortal souls. This influence God wills that his people should exert wherever they are found ; and for all the evils resulting from the failure to do it he holds them responsible.

“ Be not conformed to the world,” because a state of conformity to the world is inconsistent with the salvation of the soul. “ No man can serve two masters ; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will cleave to the one and despise the other,” Matt. vi. 24. This truth cannot be too deeply impressed on the mind. God and mammon cannot both be served. Their service requires opposite courses of action. The tendency of one is to raise the affections above the world ; the other fixes them on the world exclusively. The one purifies the heart, the other fills it with pollution. No man who clearly understands what is implied in the service of each, will make the vain attempt to serve both. And yet it is to be feared that not a few are engaged in this vain attempt. The painful fact is too plainly seen in the



half-hearted service with which God is put off, whilst the principal cares and efforts are given to the business or follies to which those are avowedly devoted who do not profess to have given themselves to God, or to have laid up their treasure in heaven. This produces much of that conformity to the world which has been a sore evil in the church in every age. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life; too strait, and too narrow, to be entered and followed by those who carry with them the gains and pleasures which men seek from a conformity to the world.

To this forbidden conformity to the world, there is a continual liability on the part of the really pious; because they are sanctified but in part, are assaulted daily by the remainders of indwelling sin, and are surrounded with temptations to it. The temptations to which the members of the church are exposed, vary in some respects in different sections of the country, and with different individuals in the same section, and with the same person in different periods of life. Comparatively few of them may be seriously felt by some persons, whilst others are strongly assaulted by many. But perhaps no one cause operates more generally and more fatally in leading professors of religion to this sin, than the want of a clear abiding sense of the duty, and the importance of entire personal holiness; the duty of cherishing, for the purpose of strengthening and bringing into more lively exercise, the tempers enjoined in the gospel; and carrying its principles into action day by day. This unavoidably leads to adopt a low standard of practical piety; and the existence of such a standard gives to temptations of every kind, a tenfold force. A professor of religion with this defective standard existing in his mind, when assaulted by the world, the flesh, and the devil—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, cannot fail to be drawn aside from the course of piety which the Saviour enjoins upon his people. If not exactly led into what the

unconverted regard as scandalous sin in professing Christians, he will so live that his religion is neither a comfort to himself nor an honour to the cause of Christ. As circumstances may lead, he will join in the pursuit of the riches, or honours, or pleasures of the world, with a relish apparently as keen as that felt by those who do not profess to have any higher aim. Thus, he sinks down into a half-way sort of inconsistent religion, which by its example gives to the ungodly very little concern; because, in such professors, the power of piety is seen far less than that of the world.

Against this, which is the root of so much mischief, the church is most fully warned. Amongst the many passages in the word of God bearing on this point we may notice the exhortation addressed to Abram, Gen. xvii. 1. "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect." This language is as applicable to every member of the Christian church, as it was to him to whom it was addressed at first. To the same purport is the language found in Lev. xix. 2. "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy:" and the words of Christ, Matt. v. 48. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Be ye perfect, because the law by which your conduct is to be directed is perfect. And he who has left us an example that we should follow his steps, has left us a perfect example. If Christians would pursue a consistent course, and live above the world whilst living in it, they must have this example ever before them; and their minds fully impressed with the obligation resting on them to conform to it, and the guilt they incur when they allow themselves to come short of it.

## WHAT DO YOU WISH FOR?

How various is human character! Men's lives, words and hearts evince great diversity. The student is intent on his books, the lawyer loves his fees, the miser lifts up his voice for silver, the warrior pants for glory, the senator covets renown, the hungry longs for bread, the captive sighs for liberty, and the masses of men are grasping at wealth, honour or pleasure.

I once asked a poor man, who had long borne the character of an experienced Christian, *What do you wish for?* With an air of more than usual seriousness, he said, that all his wishes could be met in Christ. His manner affected me, and I asked him to explain. He said, "I greatly desire these three things:—*first*, that I may be found in Christ;—*secondly*, that I may be like Christ;—and *thirdly*, that I may be with Christ." I have thought much of his answer. He spoke not as the fool, but as one taught from above. The more I reflect on his words, the better I like them. Surely he had been with Jesus. Surely flesh and blood did not reveal these things to him. Let us consider them.

1. "May I be found in Christ," "not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness, which is of God by faith." Found in him, I shall not be under the terrible penalty of a holy and infinite law. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" so that "there is now no condemnation to them, who are in Christ Jesus." Found in him, the storm of wrath, which shall fall on a guilty world and overwhelm it, shall not reach me, for Christ is a "hiding-

place from the wind and a covert from the tempest, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Found in him, the avenger shall not slay me, for he is a refuge. In him are all things, and I shall thirst no more. Christ himself has said: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water, that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." If found in him, I shall hunger no more, "for the bread of God is He, which come down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Found in him, I shall not be found naked, I cannot perish, I cannot be condemned, I cannot lack wisdom, or righteousness, or sanctification, or redemption. "He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Found in him, I shall have him for my Shepherd, my Prophet, my Priest, my King, my Advocate, my elder Brother, my Intercessor, my Lord and my God. Oh may I ever be found in Christ.

2. "May I be like Christ." He is like the Father, and I would be like God. Oh that I had his image now! I hope that I have the outlines of it on my heart now, may every real Christian say, but I would in my measure be wholly like him. I too much resemble the first man, Adam, who was of the earth, earthy. I would be like the second Adam, who is "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." He, who is like Christ, has the beauty of holiness, has neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor blemish, nor any such thing. Nothing grieves a good man so much, nothing makes him so ashamed, as to find his heart "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." He often says:

"My grief, my burden long has been,  
Because I could not cease from sin."

I loathe and abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. I often weep and pray over my sins. Tears have been my meat day and night. The sweetest thought I have of

heaven and growing out of my present experience is, that there I shall never, never sin. Sometimes I fear that I shall never be like Christ. Then I flee to the promise, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Would God have given me this longing after holiness, if he had not designed to supply it? May I not hope yet to be like Christ? If I ever shall be, it will be enough. Blessed Saviour, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

3. "May I be with Christ." I hope I am now with him by faith, and through the power of his Spirit dwelling in me. In this sense I hope he has made his abode with me. But when done with earth, I would be with him, where he is, that I may behold his glory, which he had with the Father before the world was. Here I often hear him derided and reviled, and I weep that he should be thus spoken against. Here but few believe on him, and I am grieved that he should be thus rejected of men. Sometimes I am with those, who do seem to love him. Then I rejoice. But I should so love to be where I knew every one honoured and loved him as he deserves. Besides, I wish to see him for myself and not another. I hope he is precious to me now, though I never saw him. How I should delight to see him as he is! On earth he was full of grace and truth, but his glory was hid from us; but in heaven he shines more brightly than the sun. Once he wore a crown of thorns; now he wears the brightest crown in heaven. Yet he is full of kindness and condescension. He is as pitiful as when he wept at the grave of Lazarus. He is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. He has done much for me, yet he has promised more. If I can but go where he is, he will do for me more than I have ever asked or thought. "It does not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Then we shall learn better than any mortal could on earth

what is meant by the height and depth, the length and breadth of his love. O that exceeding weight of glory! Shall I ever share it? shall I ever behold it? Glorious Saviour! with thee, any place is heaven. Thy glory lights the temple not made with hands. Without thee, any place may be a dreary waste. May I be for ever with the Lord.

I have often thought of what this poor man said. How wise his choice! How noble his wishes! God will greatly bless such a man. He will hear him in the day of trouble. The name of the God of Jacob shall defend him, send him help from the sanctuary, and strengthen him out of Zion, remember all his offerings, and accept his burnt sacrifices, grant him according to his own heart, and fulfil all his counsel and all his petitions. It is safe to give the desires of his heart to one, who delights himself in his Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

The question then recurs, "*What do you wish for?*" On what are *your* affections set? Do *you* love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do *you* trust anything but his blood to atone for you, and his merits to justify you, and his Spirit to purify you, and his grace to save you? "What think *you* of Christ?" Does *your* heart agree with that of the poor man of whom you have now been reading? Are all *your* wishes met in Christ? Is he all *your* hope and all *your* salvation? Has he become to *you* the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely? Is he to *you* all and in all?

Remember that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." You cannot serve both God and mammon. Christ and Belial are not united. Choose you this day whom you will serve. Wish for those things, which, if granted to you, will make you happy and not miserable, holy and not vile, glorious and not degraded. Choose Christ and him alone.

THE VALUE OF THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

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IN the following observations I shall endeavour to confine myself strictly to the two points embraced in the subject on which I have been requested to address you. These two points are—

1st. The value of the Shorter Catechism as a text-book for Sabbath-schools.

2d. The best mode of communicating its truths to children.

1st. There is no better test of the value of any instrument, than just the actual results which have arisen from the use of it. We should be most willing to rest the illustration of our first point upon this ground. We must admit, however, that our present locality is not the best for the exhibition of these results. England, with all her greatness, and all her glory, must submit to the disgrace of having it said of her, that she has not nourished that child to which she gave birth, when her learned and godly divines were convened in Westminster's classic ground. This noble offspring of the prayerful cogitations of the Assembly of Divines, has obtained a more affectionate entertainment in the stern and sterling Presbyterianism of Scotland, than in the courtly and temporising episcopacy of England. And hence it is in Presbyterian Scotland that we must look for the palpable and practical fruits of a continued and systematic use of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism.

Scotland has long occupied an honourable prominence among the nations, as an educated country. That prominence has not been so much the result either of refinement and polish, or of scientific research, as of that sound, sub-

stantial, and scriptural knowledge by which, generally speaking, the common people in Scotland have been characterized; and I only state a fact which is well known to all who are acquainted with the circumstances of the country, the habits of the people, and the system of instruction commonly followed, both in schools and in religious families, when I say that this sound, scriptural knowledge, which has so long honourably distinguished the very peasantry of Scotland, has been owing, in no small degree to the use of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. Whatever may be the case now, it may at any rate be affirmed that at no very distant period, it would have been a rare thing to find any respectable school, in which the Shorter Catechism was not taught. And whilst it was a regular *school-book*, it was also a regular *family-book*. In every well-ordered family in Scotland, the Bible and the Shorter Catechism were considered necessary and indispensable items in the furnishing of the house; and often were they conjoined in the religious exercises of the family. I know not one feature in the picture of a religious family, that to this hour stands out more vividly to my mental eye, or recurs more delightfully to my fondest recollections of other days, than that of the Sabbath evening catechizing—when parents beloved presided over the little seminary of sons and daughters, and when the question to each in turn went circling round, till the appointed portion for the evening was finished. We have long since learned to estimate more highly than we did at the time, the mighty efficacy of such a mode of household instruction, in the formation of character, and in giving a right direction to the mind in the important concerns of religion. If in more recent times the standard of religious character among the general mass of the population has been lowered, it might be an interesting problem for some religious statist, to ascertain and demonstrate how far the relinquishment of the family use of the Shorter Catechism



may have been the cause of it. But at any rate, the fact that contemporaneously with the general use of this book, there has been a high and happy state of religious character prevailing, forms an important element in the evidence which justifies that verdict of commendation which has been universally awarded to the book wherever it has been admitted into general use.

Now, if it be a suitable and valuable book for family instruction, it may be regarded as not only a just, but a necessary inference, that it must be equally suitable and valuable as a Sabbath-school book. The idea of the kind of instruction given in the family and in the Sabbath-school plainly implies this. Sabbath-school teaching is not designed to supersede, but rather to supplement family teaching. The parent can never be released from his obligation to teach his own children. But as, in many cases, this is neglected, or very inefficiently performed, the alternative has arisen, either that multitudes of youths must be allowed to grow up in ignorance of the truths of religion, or they must be taught at the Sabbath-school. Now, just as we would most earnestly recommend every parent to teach his child the Shorter Catechism, so we would recommend every Sabbath-school teacher to employ that same invaluable class-book. And if we may see evidence of its excellence for such a purpose, in the important results which have arisen from the use of it, we may also arrive at the same conclusion by an examination of the work itself. And here a question suggests itself, viz.—

What ought to be the characteristics of a class-book for a Sabbath-School? In reply to this question, we remark in the first place, that such a class-book ought to be one of simple statement, not of elaborate illustration. Now, such is the character of the instruction furnished by the "Shorter Catechism." Every question is answered by a simple statement of Divine truths; any one of which, indeed, may be

amplified and enlarged upon, by the judicious and intelligent teacher, but all of which are in themselves plain and simple statements, conveying distinct and intelligible views of doctrine or of duty. When we look into the Catechism itself, with the view of selecting a question as an illustration of this character of the book, we feel our only difficulty to be the admirable fitness of every one of them for this purpose. All so aptly illustrate our remark, that we scarcely know which to fix upon. Let us then just begin at the beginning.

The very first question proposes a most important problem for solution :—“What is the chief end of man ?” The vast magnitude and importance of this question surcharge our whole soul, as soon as it is proposed. And were it not that we who have been familiar with the “Shorter Catechism” from our boyhood, have the answer ready upon our lips as soon as the question is asked, we might feel that the duties, obligations, and interests involved in it, were almost too vast and manifold to be embodied in a single answer to a single question. And yet with what admirable conciseness, simplicity, and comprehensiveness, is this question answered in one short sentence—“Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.” This singularly appropriate and comprehensive answer is more like some Divine sentence of inspiration, than the result of mere human judgment. Let any one just lay this answer aside, and put it out of his view as if it had never been, and take the question, as if still unanswered, and then try his hand at framing an answer to it; and he will probably, for the first time, become aware of the inimitable beauty and propriety of that answer which the Westminster Assembly were directed to give. Or suppose, for illustration of the same point, that inimitable reply given to the question, “What is God?” We need not wonder at the silence and awe which are said to have pervaded that interesting Assembly, when that question was proposed, and the diffidence which was felt in venturing

to give an answer to such a question. But we may well be thankful, that the spirit of truth should have guided the thoughts and the lips of a member of that Assembly, slowly and deliberately, as if giving utterance to the internal suggestions of heavenly wisdom, to enunciate that singularly full and comprehensive, yet simple and concise form of words, which constitutes the answer to the question, "What is God?"

Now, we might point to all the questions with their respective answers, in this singular production, and from them all, one by one, demonstrate the truth of our statement, that the Assembly's "Shorter Catechism" conveys instruction by plain, direct, simple statement. In the question last quoted, which refers to one of the most sublime and mysterious doctrines of religion, there is no attempt at illustration, no amplification, no argumentation: "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." Here every word is a sentence. And although all the answers do not contain the same amount of meaning in equally concise terms, yet all of them contain much in little, and thus sustain the appropriate character of a text-book; giving at once a concise and a comprehensive view of Divine truth, and furnishing the groundwork of extended interrogatory instruction. The same remarks will apply to the question regarding Christ, that we have now offered on the question regarding God: "Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?" Answer: "The only Redeemer of God's elect, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures and one person for ever." In these few words we have the following doctrines: Christ's sonship, his eternity, his incarnation, and his distinct personality;—and all these set forth by simple and direct statement.

Mr. Patterson, in his admirable system of theology,

founded upon the "Shorter Catechism," and consisting of an analysis and explanation of the several questions, has a statement of no less than seven doctrines upon this question. And in "Fisher's Catechism," which is an explanation of the "Shorter Catechism," by question and answer, there are no less than forty-one questions with their answers, upon this one statement concerning the person and character of Christ, as the only Redeemer of God's elect. All this shows how rich and pregnant with Divine truth these questions are, and how admirably adapted for furnishing topics of instruction to the young. The simple and concise statements of truth which they contain, are fitted to convey to the mind of the learner, in easily remembered terms, a comprehensive view of Bible doctrines; and to suggest to the teacher a rich and varied store of topics for questionary instruction. This is a character, then, which, as you all know, belongs to the Assembly's Catechism throughout, and we shall not further enlarge upon it.

We remark, secondly, that another element of excellence in the "Shorter Catechism," as an educational text-book, is its systematic construction. It would be a serious mistake to suppose that system is unnecessary in the education of children. If the systematizing of science, and of every department of knowledge, be found advantageous to the maturest minds in the prosecution of study, it would be difficult to show why it may not be advantageous to the least matured. A right classification of subjects always assists the mind in forming distinct conceptions; and as religion embraces both doctrine and duty, it stands to reason, and commends itself to the common understanding of mankind, that in the study of Divine truth there should be a classification of the subjects of our study, according to this twofold division of doctrine and duty. This, accordingly is done in the Assembly's Catechism. After the first three questions, which are introductory and preliminary, the

whole of what we may call the first part, onwards to the thirty-eighth question, inclusive, is strictly doctrinal and didactic. And then the second part, commencing with the thirty-ninth question, is preceptive and practical, containing a view of Christian duty. But not only is this twofold division distinctly marked, but there is also a clear systematic arrangement of the doctrines themselves. The fourth question, to which we have already particularly adverted, forms the starting point in this system of doctrine. The doctrine which lies at the foundation of all religion, is that of the being and perfections of God. Hence the question, What is God? Then the subsequent questions proceed in regular sequence to treat of the persons in the Godhead,—the Divine decrees,—the execution and fulfilment of the Divine purposes in creation and providence,—the fall, and its consequences,—the work of redemption,—the character and offices of the Redeemer,—the application of the benefits of redemption by the Holy Ghost,—the justification, adoption, and sanctification of the believer,—the benefits thereby resulting at death and the resurrection. Here we have a beautiful and consecutive course of doctrinal divinity, all embraced within the short compass of thirty-five short queries, with their concise and comprehensive replies. It is impossible to imagine anything more beautifully adapted to the purpose of instruction. The very acquisition of being able to repeat these thirty-five questions, even without explanation, must necessarily involve a very considerable amount of religious knowledge. For it may fairly be questioned, whether so large a measure of sound scriptural truth is any where to be found within so short a compass.

2d. It is now time to turn our thoughts for a little to the other branch of our subject, namely, the best mode of communicating its truths to children.

And here you will observe, that the subject before us, is not the best mode of conducting a Sabbath-school generally,

but the best mode of conducting the particular department of teaching the Shorter Catechism.

Now whatever views may be held upon points of detail, I should imagine that among all practical men, that is, among all who have had experience in teaching, there will be a pretty general agreement upon this, that thorough and efficient teaching of the Assembly's Catechism must embrace two things,—namely, the committing of the questions to memory by the scholars, and the explanation of the questions by the teacher. Thus far, then, I think, there can be very little room for diversity of opinion. No doubt, it is possible to instruct the children in the doctrines and duties taught in the Catechism, without their being committed to memory, just as you may read and explain any portion of the Scripture; or as you may cause the scholars to read a chapter, and then examine them upon it, without requiring them to commit the verses to memory. But then, it is plain that in this case you would be overlooking and neglecting one of the very objects intended, in throwing the truths therein taught into the form of question and answer. There is a peculiar advantage in the interrogatory mode of instruction, as every teacher feels, and feeling which, he naturally, upon every subject, has recourse to it. If you are explaining a verse in the Bible, for instance, you do it by asking questions from it. Many of these questions you do not expect the scholar to answer; but you nevertheless put the question, partly to call forth the thinking powers of the child, and partly to give the opportunity of answering the question yourselves. The question puts the particular point under consideration in a distinct and definite shape before the mind, and fixes the thoughts upon the particular idea which you wish to bring out. Hence the advantage of this mode of instruction even in cases where it is not intended that the questions and answers should be committed to memory.

Each question furnishes a definite object for the mind to concentrate its energies upon, and gives a definite direction to the thoughts in their search after a particular truth. But there is only a part of this advantage gained when they are not committed to memory. The truths are not so thoroughly made the child's own. The very summary and sententious character of the answers in the Shorter Catechism shows their peculiar fitness for being so committed. They form, as it were, so many heads, or short synopses of Divine truth, easily remembered, and fitted to bring up to the mind, with comparatively little effort, the more enlarged and amplified views of Scripture doctrine of which they are the indices. From the sententious and comprehensive character of the statements of truth contained in the Catechism, a large amount of truth can be fixed in the mind by a very moderate effort. And thus many have been enabled, by a thorough acquaintance with the words of the Catechism, to carry about with them through life a body of divinity, large and scriptural, ever ready for use, and written upon the tablet of the memory, in befitting and appropriate phrases. If I wish to have at hand a short, clear, and comprehensive statement to give of any particular doctrine or duty, where can I find a statement of such a character, so appropriately framed for easy remembrance, as is provided for me in this text-book? If, for instance, I am required to define what faith is, or repentance, or baptism, or the Lord's supper, what can be more beautifully simple, or more full and comprehensive, within the compass of a few words, than the statements of the Shorter Catechism upon these subjects? My memory is not burdened by the remembrance of the words, while their being recorded in my memory furnishes me with an index to the fuller and more varied details of holy Scripture, upon the doctrines or duties to which the questions may respectively refer. I scarcely know any labour, in the way of committing religious truth to memory,

that offers so rich a reward, in proportion to that labour, as that of so committing the Shorter Catechism.

In this department of Sabbath-school teaching, the judicious teacher will, of course, see the propriety and advantage of prescribing small portions, and requiring their correct execution. The very meaning of a question is often utterly lost sight of under a hurried, rambling, and incorrect repetition of it. Here, as in other departments of education, let the rule be, little well done, rather than much imperfectly done.

The other point on which I have expressed my belief that there will be a pretty general agreement among those who have had experience in teaching, is the necessity of explanatory examination upon the Catechism. This I consider one of the most useful, and also one of the most pleasant of the Sabbath-school teacher's duties. When wisely, kindly, and judiciously conducted, it gives such a play to the mind both of teacher and scholar, as is at once entertaining and improving. And the very character of the Assembly's definitions, as already frequently adverted to in the preceding observations, shows that this exercise is necessary to bring out intelligibly to young minds the fullness of saving truth which they involve. As we have seen, there is no elaboration, commentary, or explanation, but a plain, direct, and succinct statement. Each question, therefore may be taken as a text, from which may be drawn many interesting lessons, and which may suggest a multitude of useful and explanatory questions. Fuller and Vincent afford examples of the way in which this may be done; as also Willison, in his "Example of Plain Catechizing, upon the Assembly's Shorter Catechism," where a rich and fragrant feast of Divine truths is to be found. In this use of the Catechism you will have constant occasion of reference to the text of the holy Scripture. So that, while you break down each question into the various parts and portions of Divine truth



which it may seem to involve, you will be able to make this the means of strict Bible teaching, by a constant reference to Bible authority.

In this important part of your work you will recognize and practically exhibit a most effectual refutation of the idea that we give the Catechism a preference to the Bible; for you will see that while the Catechism is one of the very best helps to the teaching of scripture truth, you cannot effectually teach the Catechism without the Bible. All its statements are founded on scripture, and to scripture you appeal for evidence of their truth.

To these remarks I need scarcely add any suggestions as to the spirit and purpose of soul with which this work ought to be conducted. The eternal well-being of the soul is the end at which the Sabbath-school teacher is expected to aim. This is an object which, if constantly present to his mind, can scarcely fail to animate him with zeal in his work. Humble as the position and labours of a Sabbath-school teacher may sometimes seem to be, and little accounted of as they are by worldly-minded men, he has before him an object and an aim worthy of an angel's admiration, and loftier far than the aims and objects which move the energies of the nations of the world, and keep the minds of statesmen and warriors alive. And as this noble object of saving souls requires the application of a divine and invisible influence, to secure its accomplishment, this will point out to the conscientious and zealous teacher another mode of effecting his purpose, in addition to all we have yet submitted to you. The efficient instrument of *prayer* you will not fail to employ, that your labours may be blessed to the souls of your interesting charge. This is a work in which you cannot have success, unless God be on your side. And this will suggest the question as to your own spiritual condition—whether are your own souls right with God? There is something peculiarly unnatural and revolting in the very

idea of one who is himself a stranger to the grace of salvation, and still living in unbelief, labouring at a calling which has for its object the conversion and salvation of others. To be successful teachers of God's truth, then, it is specially to be desired that you be yourselves converted. Then will you sanctify your teaching by prayer, and on whatever mode or plan you may follow, implore the divine blessing, that fruit may arise in the hearts and lives of your pupils to the praise of redeeming grace.

Before concluding, allow me to notice what I consider an evil of no small magnitude in Sabbath-school teaching wherever it prevails. I refer to the habit which some teachers have of indulging in long addresses to the children, under the idea of explaining some doctrine, or exhorting to some duty. This is sure to have the effect of lessening the attention of the children. It may occasionally be useful, but if adopted in the ordinary course of examination, it will not nearly so well answer the purpose of instruction as the plan of allowing the children to think, and giving them plenty of opportunity to answer. The business of explanation should be conducted as much as possible in putting questions. It is the object of the judicious teacher to draw out the minds of the children themselves, and this is far more effectually done by putting questions, and calling forth their energies in finding an answer, than by the teacher merely exhibiting his own powers of oratory.

THE END.

## USES OF A STORMY SABBATH.

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It was a fine day in autumn,—one that would well answer to Herbert's description,

“Sweet day! so cool, so calm, so bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky.”

The village pastor was in his pulpit, and the people in goodly numbers were in their pews. The solemn invocation was uttered. The psalms of praise were sung. The portions of Scripture from the Old and the New Testaments were read, with very brief comments. “The long prayer” was made, while the more aged people stood reverently with closed eyes, and some of the young people lazily reclined. At the usual time the preacher rose and announced his text :

“Fire and hail; snow and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word.”

The words immediately secured the attention of the audience. Some thought, “a strange text!” others, a “striking contrast with the day!” and all, “what will he make out of that?” The preacher gave a brief analysis of the Psalm, the 148th, wherein all nature, animate and inanimate, is invoked to praise God. The emotions of delight, of awe, or of sublimity produced by the different aspects of nature, were alluded to, and illustrated by reference both

to the sacred writers and to the poets. The sublime apostrophe of Coleridge was quoted, ending,

“Earth with her thousand voices calls on God,”

and a sweet passage from Montgomery, beginning,

“If in the field I meet a smiling flower,  
Methinks it whispers, God created me!”

And here the preacher took occasion to say that, while there might be an ardent love for the beautiful in nature where there was no love for the beauties of holiness, taste is by no means inconsistent with religion, and some people's religion would be decidedly improved if it had a little more of the amiable about it. The Bible is full of beauty, and we have no sympathy with that one-sided religion which would discard from all life the cultivation of taste, or the enjoyment of the beautiful in nature or art.

But, continued the preacher, this world is not made up altogether of things sublime or beautiful. It is a mingled world of darkness and light, of order and confusion, of beauty and of ugliness. There is not only the innocent lamb and the gentle dove, but there is also the fierce tiger and the venomous serpent. There are glittering gems, and radiant pearls, and fragrant flowers; but there are also poisonous plants, and stinging insects, and noxious reptiles. Every day is not bright and calm. Every night is not adorned with stars and moon. Every breeze is not laden with odours. There are days gloomy and sad, nights of storm and terror, and vapours laden with disease.

But as this earth is the dwelling-place of sinful men, is not all this becoming? ought it not to be expected? It is not befitting sinful creatures that they should dwell in a world of unmingled softness and beauty, a paradise of enjoyment. Nor, on the other hand, would it seem suitable

that a race of creatures, to whom God offers reconciliation and eternal life, should dwell in a world of unmitigated darkness and sorrow. We have, therefore, lights and shadows, joy mingled with sorrow, beauty by the side of deformity, images of heaven's joys and shadows of hell's horrors. Thus God made the world, either in anticipation of man's sin, or upon man's becoming sinful the world was revolutionized so as to be a fit dwelling-place for such a race. It is adapted to man, constituted as he is of soul and body; to man as mortal, to man as a sinner.

In all we see demonstrated this principle, that matter is subordinate to spirit. Man was not made for the world, but the world was made for man.

Here a person of rather shrewd mind, a little tainted with scepticism, and half disposed to be a socialist, began to question, "If this world was meant for the dwelling-place of an immortal creature, as the preacher declares, and if the soul is of so much more value than the body, why is it that so large a proportion of time must be devoted to the wants of the body?" On this point the preacher happened to suggest a few hints. Labour, although inflicted as a curse for sin, is really a blessing, as many penalties are. Bodily labour does not necessarily exclude thought for the soul. Not a few of the toiling millions have precious treasures laid up in heaven. "To the poor the gospel is preached." Moreover, men's vices are fearfully costly. Were all nations and all men peaceful, temperate and frugal, a day's work might be reduced to three hours. If men rightly cared for their souls, they would find their bodily toils alleviated and their labours blessed. That word of Jesus is true, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Some seem to think that the evidences of religion ought to be so commanding that no man could deny its truth. But God has wisely chosen to treat men as free, and to re-

quire the proper exercise of all their faculties. No good is to be attained without effort. God has so arranged it in this world. The best blessings of religion are to be sought and toiled for. It has not been the great aim of God's providence to make this a world of comfort, but to make it a suitable trial-state for a future and everlasting world. Hence, they who sacrifice duty to comfort, are inverting God's arrangements; and they who are attempting to connect a life of ease with the hope of heaven, are attempting to join together what God has separated; and they who are attempting to separate a life of self-denial from a hope of rest in heaven, are putting asunder what God has joined together.

Thus far the preacher had seemed to be dealing in generalities; but he now approached his subject by observing, that one way in which the enjoyment of religious privileges, and the performance of religious duties, might have been made more easy, would have been *by always having pleasant weather on the Sabbath day.*

No one can doubt that God might have so arranged the laws of nature that the Sabbath morn should always dawn in brightness, that there should be no threatening cloud to alarm the timid, no rude blasts, no extreme of heat or cold to confine the tender to their own houses.

Why is not the storm of snow or rain, which so interferes with the attendance on public worship, postponed until Monday?

Although at first sight it might be thought that rainy Sundays are great evils, and that it would have been wise in Providence so to order the weather that Sundays should always be fine, I, said the preacher, here take a different view of the matter, and embrace the occasion of this fine Sabbath day, to state what I think to be *some of the uses of stormy Sundays.*

The preacher was addressing a congregation in the neigh-

bourhood of one of our large cities. The congregation knew something of the evil and inconvenience suffered every pleasant Sabbath from the incursions of rude people. Their flower gardens and fruit trees had often been invaded, and the quiet and order of the village disturbed, by these intruders. Persons who have no conscience for the fourth commandment cannot be expected to be very scrupulous about the eighth. Now, said the preacher, when it pleases God to send a cloudy, rainy Sabbath, these disorders and outward immoralities are in a great measure prevented. This is one of the incidental benefits of a rainy Sabbath.

The preacher next spoke of the propriety of the distinction between week-day and Sunday dress, and commended it. Let the Lord's day be honoured with the use of our best apparel. Decency, order, and comeliness become the day. The family that has no distinction of this kind is to be pitied. But there is an extreme in the other direction. It is to be feared that some attend the house of God more to see and be seen, than to worship God and learn his will. It is unquestionably the fact, that one reason for our small congregations on stormy Sabbaths is, that a great many are not willing to expose their Sunday raiment to moisture or mud, and they do not choose to come in any other dress. The preacher thought that here was afforded an opportunity for the exercise of a little self-denial, and that if foolish pride were a little mortified, it would do no serious damage to some of his hearers.

A stormy Sabbath is, in no bad sense but in Scripture phrase, a *temptation*.

God tries his people. He has said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God." "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together." But now the Sabbath day dawns amid clouds and showers, or perchance amid cold whistling winds and driving snows. Roused from sleep, the fair weather Christian hears the storm beating against his windows. So

dull a day, so inclement a morn, calls not, he thinks, for early rising; so turning over he drowzes out an hour or two, until his place of rest becomes a place of weariness. At length he rises, and in time the morning meal is over; and now the clock admonishes him that the hour of church has come, and the question is, to go or not to go. Conscience speaks feebly, for it has been too often unheeded. He looks on the weather. The day is dull! The snow seems deep! The clouds look threatening! 'Tis extremely chilly! Perhaps the church is not well warmed. He does not feel *very* well. Besides, can he not read his Bible at home? And there is a book of sermons, more eloquent than those his minister preaches, on the book-shelf. The children certainly cannot go, and perhaps it would be well to stay at home and hear their catechism, which has been *rather neglected* of late. Thus time runs on, and now it is too late,—it may be clear by evening,—and thus the question is decided.

Oh! whose imagination is it that has conjured up all these lions? It is the sluggish, the fainthearted, the lukewarm Christian. These stormy Sabbaths are most useful to tempt sluggards, and to show some how little they care for the house of God, and how small an excuse would always keep them away.

But after this plain speech of the minister, a certain fair weather Christian thought in his heart, "Is it not my duty to take care of my health?" To this the preacher had prepared an answer, by asking whether Sabbath day clouds and rains were really any more baneful than those of other days, and whether there were not many who shrink from the Sunday storm, who manfully brave the storms of a week-day. Invalids are certainly excusable, but might not nine-tenths of our congregations attend public worship in all ordinary weather without any apprehension of danger?

On this subject there are *two secrets* worth knowing—



public secrets they may be called, as every one knows them, although no one likes to proclaim them. One is that a great many persons find it convenient to be ill on Sunday, who might, if it were not for the matter of profitable business or wages, just as conveniently be ill on Saturday or Monday. They are not sick enough to take their own time, but just enough to spend in idleness the sacred hours that God claims for his own.

The second secret is, that in all our congregations there are persons for whom church time, especially on short winter mornings, comes too early! Their seats are vacant or tardily occupied because they have not the spirit of David, "I myself will awake early; I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people."

Some justify their absence from the house of God in unpleasant weather, on the ground that the day may be profitably spent at home. But the history of such Sabbaths may be quickly told: a large part of the day spent in dozing, the rest in idle conversation or idle reading, such perhaps as is found in many of the cheap weekly papers, which like a plague of frogs deluge some of our congregations, and which, to quiet weak consciences, have one column headed *Sunday Readings*, while a large part is occupied with lovesick tales and such like matter, too well suited to the tastes of some of the pious people who love so well to keep the Sabbath at home.

The preacher remarked in conclusion, that although we Protestants do not believe in penance, we do believe in self-denial, both as a duty and as a discipline. He who braces himself up to duty, whether against the frowns of a wicked generation or of a rain-cloud, does himself a real service, shows himself a man, and strengthens his manhood. How can we plead Christ's suffering for us, if we are not willing to bear a little inconvenience for his sake? Taking up our cross we may address him,

“ Though I plead not at thy throne,  
Aught that I for thee have done,  
Do not thou unmindful be  
Of what thou hast done for me.  
Of the wanderings, of the scorn,  
Of the scourge, and of the thorn,—  
Jesus hast thou borne the pain,  
And hath all been borne in vain?  
Shall not mercy vast and free,  
Evermore be found in thee?”

While all his works praise God, man should not keep silence. Let all in their own sphere praise the Creator.

He who does all things well does not design that what men call the darker moods of nature should deter them from his worship. Weather has meaning. But the meaning of every cloudy Sabbath is not that a dispensation is given from our obligation to worship God. Lightning and hail, snow and vapours, and stormy winds fulfil his word; but not by keeping such multitudes from the places appointed for the preaching of his truth. Their mission will rather be accomplished when, notwithstanding their frowns and violence, the people venture to the house of God, and praise him as the sovereign Lord of nature, and the beneficent Father of our spirits.

The sermon was long; we give only a sketch of parts; but thus the preacher closed, and he has since had the satisfaction of believing that it was a word in season, there having been since its delivery fewer vacant seats on stormy Sabbaths to pain his heart than in former times.

B. F. S.

THE  
SPIRIT QUENCHED

AND

THE SOUL LOST.

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“Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come!  
Crush me, ye rocks: ye falling mountains hide,  
Or bury me in ocean’s angry tide.”—COWPER.

WE were startled one night, just as we were preparing to retire to rest, by a carriage stopping in front of the house, followed by loud ringing and knocking; and, on the door being opened, I heard a person say, “Is the Rev. Mr. —— at home?” “Yes.” “I must see him immediately.” A young gentleman was introduced. “My brother, sir, is very dangerously ill, and my mother will feel greatly obliged if you will come and see him. We fear he won’t live till morning. I have a carriage, sir, in waiting, and will take you, and bring you back, if you will have the politeness to accompany me.”

I knew not the gentleman who was supposed to be dying, nor did I know of his family; but I ascertained from his brother, as we were going along, that gay and dissipated habits had brought on the tremendous crisis, which was expected to take place during the night; and it was a fearfully dark and stormy night.

On entering his bed-room, which was very large, the feeble taper-light merely served to render the darkness visible; and his mother, a lady of the highest polish of manners and address, offered an apology by saying, "Our son, sir, cannot bear a strong light. Walk this way—he is lying here, sir," drawing aside the bed-curtain. The gloom, and the death-like stillness of the room, depressed my spirits; no one stirred; all seemed terror-struck, as though some tragical catastrophe was about to happen; when we were suddenly startled into fearful commotion of feeling, by one of the most piercing groans I ever heard uttered by a human being. "Are you in great pain, sir?" This question, coming from the lips of a stranger, whose entrance into the room he had not heard, startled him. He changed his position, and looking towards me, an extra light being supplied for the occasion of the interview, he said abruptly, "I am going to take a leap in the dark;" which was followed by another groan, expressive of the convulsive agonies, and the tumultuous agitation of his soul, now on the brink of the tremendous precipice of eternal destruction. "I hope not, sir." "No power can save me." "Christ Jesus is able, and is willing, to save the chief of sinners, even in the uttermost extremity of their guilt and their danger."

"Yes, sir, but outraged justice sometimes demands a victim, to vindicate its own honour. I am doomed to death and damnation. I am as sure of going to hell, as there is a hell to go to." "My dear Charles," said his agonized mother, who gave a wild shriek; and, in an hysteric fit of loud and terrific laughter, was carried out of the room. My spirit trembled. I had never before witnessed such a horrifying scene. His brother, who had accompanied me, and his younger sisters, withdrew; but one remained, who stood close by my side, calm, yet evidently in great mental torture. She feared her brother was speaking the truth, and this gave to her spirit the power to listen, and the power to

endure the terror of what she heard ; yet hoping some voice of mercy would control and allay the storm which seemed to threaten the fatal wreck of his soul. "Shall I pray with you, sir."

"You may, sir ; but I am beyond the reach of mercy."

After prayer he became more composed, and listened with fixed attention while I spake of Christ and the great salvation, and urged him to call on him to save him. I left him tranquil ; but whether his tranquillity proceeded from the effect of truth in his soul, or was the physical consequence of the near approach of death, was a question I could not decide.

"Have you," said his mother, who was pacing the parlour, wringing her hands in the severest anguish of grief—her hair hanging in loose disorder over her shoulders ; "have you, sir, been able to say anything to my dear Charles which has given him a ray of hope?"

"He is tranquil, madam ; but he has not told me the cause of his tranquillity."

"Will he die to-night, sir—this wild stormy night, sir?—and if he die to-night, sir, will he leap in the dark into" . . . I could not endure the wild scene which I now witnessed. Mother and daughters raised one shouting scream of woe ; and in that state I left them to the care of the servants.

In the morning I received the following note :—

"Rev. and Dear Sir,—I am happy to inform you that our dear brother lay quite tranquil for upwards of an hour after you left him. He then asked for a glass of water. 'I will now,' he said, 'try to sleep.' Towards late in the morning, we think he did sleep a little. The doctor has just been here. He reports rather more favourably. When you can make it convenient to renew your visit, we shall be most happy to see you. Mamma, sisters, and brother, unite in respectful remembrance.—Yours, sincerely, SARAH."

I went to see him in the early part of the following evening, when I found him more composed; his fever had abated considerably, and hopes began to be entertained by all, except himself, that he would recover. "They are sanguine, sir, but I am not. I think the sentence of death is at last recorded against me; and, sir, if it were not for that more tremendous sentence, which is called the *second death*—that is, the eternal banishment of the soul from all fellowship with God, the fountain of life and happiness—I should not tremble in prospect of the issue. It is that, sir, that fills my soul with horror."

"But I hope, sir, you are not in such a state of deep despair as you were last evening."

"There is, sir, a lull in the storm; but the horizon of my vision is yet surcharged with the elements of His coming wrath. I have less agony of soul; but I have no hope. I feel it would be an act of presumption to indulge hope."

"But the Bible tells us, that *the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*"

"Yes, sir, where reverential fear of his majesty is blended with humble hope in his mercy, the penitent may repose in security, in his compassion and his love. But I am not a penitent. I am a rebel struck prostrate before him. I dread his vengeance; but I cannot hope in his mercy."

I again called his attention to the character of Christ, uniting the divine and human nature in his person—to his wondrous condescension in assuming the form of man—his death—the design of it and its efficacy—to the character he still sustains, as a Saviour able and willing to save the chief of sinners—and argued, in support of the following propositions, that it was an insult to his benevolence to mistrust it, and an aggravation of guilt to cherish despair, rather than confide in the fidelity of his promises. This seemed to take effect. He remained silent some minutes, evidently

absorbed in thought. At length he said, "If, sir, you will pray with me, I shall feel obliged; and then I wish to be quite alone—not disturbed till I ring—as I should like to follow out that train of thought to which you have now given me the clue."

I did so, and left him, with some faint hope that the divine Spirit would preside over his thinking faculty at this eventful crisis in his history; and invest his thoughts with an unction and a power that might bring peace to his soul.

The threatening symptoms soon began to pass away; his strength rallied; and within the space of a few weeks, he was able to leave his sick chamber, and appear with the family in the parlour, and in occasional drives into the country. His recovery was hailed by his mother, and spoken of by himself, as partaking somewhat of the marvellous nature of a resurrection. He again went out into active life; and now I began to fear the result. I was very attentive to him during the progress of his recovery—watching, with great anxiety, his mental tendencies and their development; and while I saw much to sustain hope, yet a certain inexplicable mannerism, associated with casual outbreaks of a spirit yet unhumbled to a level with his real moral condition, made me, when disposed to rejoice, to do it with trembling. The family, either as a compliment to my polite attention to the son, or as the effect of my conversation and prayers when with them, took a large pew in the chapel, and attended my ministry for some months very regularly, and with apparent seriousness. Mr. Charles—usually headed the family in walking up the aisle; and after admitting all into the pew, he took his seat next to the door; and seemed, by his looks and his attention, as though he really loved the habitation of the Lord's house.

But, alas! their habits of external piety had not resumed the regularity of established order more than six months

before I observed an occasional break. Sometimes his younger sisters were absent, then his brother—and then himself; his elder sister was uniformly regular and punctual. When I called to see them, the hearty welcome was exchanged for the cold formality of artificial politeness; frivolous excuses were assigned for irregularity of attendance on public worship; and the re-appearance of the former signs of fashionable gaiety, and nightly revels, soon told the melancholy tale, that the promising glory was departed.

As I sat one day in my study, musing over this touching and depressing event in the history of my ministerial life, with the first night's visit passing in review before my imagination, and going onwards in my anticipations to the awful decisions of the last day, trembling under the burden of my own thoughts and fears, my servant informed me that there was a gentleman below who wished to see me. On entering the parlour, I was surprised, yet gratified, on seeing Mr. Charles —, who most cordially offered me his hand; and then, at my request, he resumed his seat. He is come at last, I thought, to unburden his mind, and to record now, more decidedly than ever, his vow of perpetual fidelity to God his Saviour. Delusive expectation! it soon vanished away—as the beautiful dream of a midnight hour vanishes when the eye opens on the dawn of the morning light. A scene of moral baseness, and consummate folly and impiety, now sprang up before me, which has never had a parallel in the whole course of my varied and extended history.

“I have called, sir,” he said, “to tender you my sincere thanks for your polite attention to me during my illness; and I am desired by my mother to say, that our family does not wish to retain the pew at your chapel, though it is very possible you may occasionally see my eldest sister. As it relates to myself, sir, I have to inform you that I feel no trifling degree of mortification when recalling, what, in the season of intense physical suffering, and when the mind was



somewhat wandering on the other side of sober reason, I said to you ; and what I have been induced to allow you to say to me since my recovery. This communication, I have no doubt, will startle you ; and, with your sentiments and opinions, it will vex, and may depress you, but a regard for my personal honour compels me to make it. One request, sir, and then I have done. Look no longer on me as a disciple of your faith ; repeat to no one what, in the sanctuary of private friendship, you saw and heard ; hold all that as sacred as the secrets of the grave. From this moment I shall sail down the stream of time, enjoying the pleasures of life while it lasts, and leave the future till the future comes.”

I was literally thunderstruck. The elegant politeness of his manners ; the cool effrontery with which he delivered these horrifying determinations ; his very respectful looks and tones towards myself, tended in some measure to keep down my spirit—to soften it—to melt it—to bring it to play on some latent feelings which I thought might still linger in his soul. The attempt failed ; for on opening on him in a calm and affectionate tone and style, he abruptly said, “Pardon me, sir, I merely came, out of respect to your character and your politeness, to announce a changeless determination, not to submit to a remonstrance, nor to argue a question of divinity.”

I replied, “Really, my dear sir, you do surprise me. However, as you will submit to no remonstrance, nor descend to any argumentation, you will allow me to say, in vindication of my own honour, that I did not obtrude myself on you or your family. I was sent for, and on a night, and at an hour of the night, when but few ministers would leave their home to wait on an entire stranger, as you then were to me. I employed no torturing process to work on your soul. I saw you writhing in mental agonies, when you knew not that I stood by your side. It was no remark

of mine which wrung from your burning lips the heart-rending exclamation, 'I am going to take a leap in the dark,' which sent your own mother out of the room, wild in delirious frenzy." He moved. "Stop, sir, I must finish; you are bound in honour to listen. You say, you will now sail down the stream of time, and enjoy life, leaving the future till it comes. Take warning; or if not, listen to an announcement. You may enjoy life, but remorse—and remorse keener than a scorpion's sting—is the penalty which you may have to pay. The future is coming; it may be here sooner than you expect, and then the *threatened* wreck of the soul may become a real one; the leap in the dark must be taken, and then you perish for ever." He bowed, and abruptly left the room. I did not follow him. I did not like to let my eye look intentionally on him for the last time, nor touch his hand knowingly for the last time. It was to me the most awful interview I ever held with a human being. Such a combination of evil principles, coming out in a set speech, and so coolly—such base ingratitude to the God of his mercies—such defiance of his authority—such scornful contempt of the great salvation—such a bold, daring announcement of a readiness to meet what might be involved in the future! Alas! I had no power to bear up under such an accumulated treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath. My spirits sank within me; and I sought a momentary diversion amidst the hilarity and playfulness of my much-loved children.

Well, that day soon passed away, though not its remembrance; his eldest sister still attended the chapel, though she cautiously avoided all intercourse with myself, or any of the people. At length the family removed to a distant neighbourhood, when she also disappeared, and all knowledge and trace of them was lost. Years rolled on; the terrors of that awful night, and the more appalling utterances of that eventful day, were now far back in the distant

history of my life; my recollections of them were less frequent, as I had other scenes to witness, and other utterances to engage my attention; and when they did rise up before my imagination, their once vivid impressions lost much of their depressing and agonizing power; except when out in a very dark and stormy night, then the past scene of horror, and the ominous exclamation, "I am going to take a leap in the dark," produced a convulsive agitation on my spirits.

After preaching on a Sabbath evening, from the word "Depart," one of my hearers, an intimate friend, followed me into the vestry, and said, "I wish, sir, you would accompany me some evening in the early part of the week to see a person who is dangerously ill. If you will fix the day and the hour, I will call on you, and take you in my chaise." We fixed Tuesday evening. He came, and we left together. He made no allusion to the dying person, except the probability of his not surviving many weeks, if days; nor did I ask any question, except to ascertain if the dying man was pious or not.

On our arrival at a beautiful villa in the suburbs, I was ushered into a drawing-room, where, to my astonishment, I saw the eldest sister of Mr. Charles —. She attempted to speak, but could not,—and, in a few minutes, she withdrew, and I was left alone. My friend was not with me; he went to make a call on another family. A servant at length appeared, and requested me to follow her, which I did, in mournful silence. I entered a bed-room, which was deserted by all, except the dying man and his nurse. This is strange. Is he an orphan in this world of sorrow? Has he no friend, except one hired for the occasion, a mere underwaiter in the ceremony of death? I had my fears and they were gloomy; for I felt as though I was treading near a fatal volcanic spot, marked off as sacred to some awful manifestations of divine justice. I looked on the dying man, whose

pale and distended countenance told me that death was near at hand. I thought I knew him, yet was not quite certain. "He has been lying in this state," said the nurse, "nearly half an hour; but he will wake up soon." I took a chair, and watched by his side. He moved, opened his eyes, looked on me with a fixed look, yet remained silent. It is, I said to myself, Mr. Charles —; but how changed! Ah! the voyage of life is nearly ended; and now he will have, I fear, to shoot the gulf; and there he will perish. He must now very soon take the dreaded leap. He still looked—we were both silent; the power of speech was gone from us. He raised himself a little on his pillow; still keeping his eye fixed on me, as though he dreaded me, and at length he spoke. "You, sir, saved me once, when the stream was drifting me on the rocks, and then I escaped the wreck. But what return have I made to Him, who sent you with the message of grace; to Him who gave me space to repent, and motives and promises to do it; to *Him* who waited to be gracious, and was willing to forgive? I rebelled against Him again. I sinned yet more daringly and desperately. He has again overtaken me; his heavy wrath has again fallen upon me; the pains of hell have got hold of me. I see the storm coming, and this time I shall go down. I must take the fatal leap now, and perish for ever." I knew not what reply to make; and, when making an effort to speak, he interrupted me, by saying, "Your visit, sir, has taken me by surprise. I knew not that you were sent for; I should have prevented it if I had known it. One confession I will make,—a sense of honour, not the hope of mercy, compels me to make it. Ever since the fatal day when I saw you last, and said what I did say, I have been abandoned by God, except when he has drifted a storm of vengeance over my mental pathway; and, perhaps, he has ordained that you, who heard, and have doubtless recorded, my impiously profane determination to enjoy life

while sailing down the stream of time, shall be present to witness the struggles of my doomed soul, when in the act of perishing for ever."

A fit of delirium now came on, and in that state I left him. He was more calm on the following morning, and continued tranquil during the day, and several succeeding days; and hopes were entertained by his medical friend, and others, that he would again rally, and yet live to taste once more the sweet cup of life. But they were all doomed to disappointment. His fever returned with still greater violence—he became faint, and seemed dying. And just before the death-stroke was given, he said to his eldest sister, who stood weeping by his side, "It's all over. I perish—let no one else. Bid the rest,—in the name of one who speaks from the wreck of his own ruin,—haste to the refuge!" His voice now failed him. He struggled hard, and long; and at last, with one loud groan, he expired,—and then took the fatal and dreaded leap; but has never come back to tell us what it is for a soul to perish.

Yes, man may hear the truth, and despise it; he may receive the truth, and live to reject it; he may lift up his voice in defiance of the justice, and in scornful contempt of the mercy of God; but he cannot go where the vengeance of God cannot follow him. He may sin in company, and alone; he may, while sinning, indulge himself in great hilarity of spirits; he may sin, in defiance of his own conscience, till he gets near the end of life; but there he is stopped, as now he can go no further. The last day comes at last,—and what a day of self-rebuke and terror! The last hour comes at last,—and what an hour of darkness, and of woe! The last breath of life is drawn, and it comes not back; life refuses its aid to live longer; the soul passes into the dark valley of the shadow of death, and feels, when there, conscious of being there alone,—moves forward, conscious that there will soon be an opening to illumine this place of

cheerless and hopeless darkness; hell moves to meet the coming spirit, which perishes for ever in the great deep gulf of despair. O man! O thoughtless man! O man, born to live for ever! Why, oh! why, fit thyself for destruction? Escape ere the last hour is come,—fly to the refuge *now*,—the gates of mercy are still open; call on the name of the Lord Jesus to save thee,—and call *now*; and with energy and earnestness, as the sinking mariner calls to the pilot who guides the life-boat in the storm. Listen; the voice of mercy still is speaking; listen and obey it—it is not too late. “*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.*”—Isa. xlv. 22.

## DEATH OF THE SAINT AND SINNER CONTRASTED.

WHAT scenes of horror and of dread,  
Await the sinner's dying bed!  
Death's terrors all appear in sight,  
Presages of eternal night.

His sins in dreadful order rise,  
And fill his soul with sad surprise;  
Mount Sinai's thunder stuns his ears,  
And not one ray of hope appears.

Not so the heir of heavenly bliss;  
His soul is filled with conscious peace;  
A steady faith subdues his fear;  
He sees the happy Canaan near.

His mind is tranquil and serene;  
No terrors in his looks are seen;  
His Saviour's smile dispels the gloom,  
And smooths his passage to the tomb.

Lord, make my faith and love sincere;  
My judgment sound, my conscience clear;  
And when the toils of life are past,  
May I be found in peace at last.

## “RIGHT SOON.”

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IT was in Doylestown, Pennsylvania; and around the public worship of that Sabbath, there seemed to cluster more than the usual discouragements of the Christian ministry.

The heat was excessive—one of those prostrating days, which leave neither preacher nor congregation energy sufficient to perform, with interest or satisfaction, the holy duties respectively assigned them.

The cholera had for some time been making its advances; and at our county alms-house, a few miles distant, two of every three of its unhappy inmates were fast being numbered among the victims.

After I had proceeded some distance in my sermon, the usual stillness of the assembly was interrupted by the tread of a young man, in his farming apparel, who was seen to enter the house. Without removing his hat, he advanced along the aisle with sober but steady step; and ascending the pulpit stairs, he leaned over, and said in distinct though subdued tones—“Mary R. is dying; she wants to see you RIGHT SOON.”

In conformity with long established custom, that Sabbath of the year was appropriated to the Bible cause. The specific object then before us, and its advocacy, the supplying of the destitute of our county, seemed,

in no small degree, to preclude the introduction of such topics as might have fallen in with the state of alarm and anxiety in the congregation.

Added to all this, as is often my allotment, I was borne down with an insupportable head-ache, and thus disqualified for either the performance of the day's duties, or enjoyment in them. And having mentioned, what had been plainly seen by all, that I was too unwell to attend an evening service, or to fulfil, in the afternoon, my promise to visit the Buckingham Sabbath-school, seven miles distant, where also appointment for preaching later in the day had been made, the assembly was dismissed, and began languidly to wend homeward their way. Through the seasonably proffered kindness of a parishioner, I was saved from a mile's walk, under an almost vertical sun, and was soon set down at the gate of the house where Mary was believed to be dying. She was a thoughtful girl, in her eighteenth year, of a worthy family connected with the society of Friends; but she often attended on my ministry. We had long known her to be of serious mind; and more recently were constrained to regard her as one truly inquiring—What must I do to be saved?

I found her still able to converse in broken sentences, with an humble, but calm reliance on the all-sufficient atoning sacrifice of Christ, as the only hope of her salvation. We prayed, we wept; we talked of sin and ruin, of redemption and heavenly joys; and, amidst our supplications and our tears, she ceased to breathe.

Taking the well-known and shady by-path through



the woods, I slowly returned home, depressed, because of all I had felt and seen, with this reflection—a Sabbath unprofitable to myself, and lost to the cause of religion.

The calls of usual and ever-pressing pastoral duty, soon left that day of depression, with the funeral scenes that followed, in which it was my mournful pleasure to share, as many others through which I had passed; claiming a common remembrance, tinged with sympathy for those who mourn, and sorrow that one so worthy to be loved should die so soon.

Months went round, when business leading me beyond the limits of my pastoral charge, I stopped at the public house of a small village; and giving directions respecting my horse—for I am conscientious against driving to the *minister's*, if I can otherwise “regard the life of my beast”—I stepped into the church near by, and enjoyed half an hour with the pastor and a few of his people, convened on matters-pertaining to the congregation.

On returning for my vehicle, a young man, whom I did not recollect having before seen, but supposed to be connected with the hotel, accosted me in language and manner more than usually respectful:—“From Doylestown, I think, sir? I was in your church some time ago, and was very much interested in the subject of the sermon, ‘the Bible not a cunningly devised fable,’ and the manner in which it was discussed. You may recollect, sir, that various objections against the Scriptures being a revelation from God, were stated, and answers proposed to these objections.”

Not being able to determine from what the young

man said, whether he was interested on the side of the objections, or of the answers, I endeavoured to draw him out more fully. He gave me, in substance, the following:—That he was from the extreme corner of the State, having come to Bucks county on business, in which he was then engaged. Neither of his parents was professedly pious. His mother's family-connections were some of them church-going people, but his father was an avowed unbeliever. He had himself been mostly with a near relative, who was specially hostile to religion, and who treated with a sneer and bitterness everything like regard for the Bible.

I asked the young man if he considered himself an unbeliever. He replied—"I do not wish so to be. The Bible, undoubtedly, contains a revelation from God; but is it entire an inspired book—a safe and sufficient guide? On this question my mind labours greatly. From earliest youth everything I heard was against the Christian religion and the holy Scriptures. Objections commonly urged against the Bible I have never been permitted to forget, but I heard no answers suggested to these objections. Conscience and my better judgment tell me there is a God, and it seems reasonable that he should reveal his will to us. But the power of youthful training, and the control of established habit—it is not easy to resist the one or overcome the other. The sermon to which reference was made opened to my view an entirely new field of inquiry. The objections stated were among those to which I had so often heard my father and other relatives make appeal; and as you briefly replied to them, and removed the difficulty, it came forcibly to

my mind : Might not all my objections, on fair examination, be in like manner answered, and the Bible stand confessedly the inspired word of God ?”

After recommending, at his request, a Manual and a Tract or two, on the Evidences of Christianity, and for the Inspiration of the Scriptures, and above all the constant and prayerful reading of those Scriptures themselves, receiving an affectionate grasp of the hand, and being earnestly importuned that I would remember him, when I prayed for such as in bondage desire to be released, I went on my way, and have not been permitted to see the young man since.

Often have I been led to contrast the events of that desponding and sorrowful Sabbath, with what advancing time and more calm reflection have brought to view. And instead of a day unprofitable to myself, and lost to the cause of religion, I am constrained to regard it as specially encouraging and instructive.

Among the many trains of thought which have been thus awakened, I mention these few :

1. WE ARE TAUGHT NOT TO BE HASTY IN DECIDING THAT OUR LABOUR IN THE LORD HAS AT ANY TIME BEEN IN VAIN.

All may to us appear dark and discouraging ; but in the work of the gospel, through the agency of which God “withdraws man from his purpose,” it is the divine pleasure usually “to hide pride from man.” The parent, the Sabbath-school teacher, the minister of the gospel, in despondency, are constrained each to say, I have spent my strength for nought. But wait

on the Lord; even in this life you may be permitted to gather the fruits of your toil. To comfort a weeping family, to point a departing soul to the Saviour's cross, to reach forth the hand and help a stranger, who begins to long for the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free; and to feel ourselves humbled in the dust, from a sense of our weakness and unprofitableness in the gospel work, is worth a day of prostrated strength, amidst darkness and conflict of soul.

## 2. WE SEE THE POWER OF EARLY ASSOCIATION.

That young man's heart was not worse by nature than yours or mine. He manifested unusual candor in weighing the evidences for the truth of the gospel. But he had been brought up in the midst of unbelief of religion, and contempt of a Saviour's death for sinners. He would be released, but he found himself a captive still.

And what a fearful account awaits those persons, who place their own children, or other youth committed to their care, where impressions only of evil can be received! They, too, who know something of the blighting influence of corrupt associations, and yet choose to mingle with profane and ungodly companions, how shall they answer for their contempt of God and ruin of themselves? "Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong."

## 3. WE LEARN ALSO THE POWER AND THE ADAPTEDNESS OF GOSPEL TRUTH.

A young man brought up amidst the sneers of infidelity, who has been *taught* to look with perfect hatred

on all that claims connection with the gospel, is brought from the extreme border of the State to hear a plain apology for the Bible—not a cunningly devised fable. And in that self-same hour, with all its disadvantages, there is wrought in his soul a holy desire, that he might partake of those blessings he had from his youth known only to despise.

A young woman drops in at times to hear of redemption through atoning blood. On a certain Sabbath her place in the house of God is seen to be empty. The time had come for her to die. But, with simple reliance in the faithfulness of Him whose promises she had loved to hear, calm in a cheerful hope, full of immortality, she bids her friends adieu, and leaves the world in peace.

#### 4. OUR TIME IS SHORT.

The work we have to do cannot be delayed. The young man is placed for the *first* time, as he regarded it, so as to hear the instructions suited to the state of his mind, and the peculiar wants of his soul. That opportunity unimproved, who could tell when another might have been granted? I have enjoyed since that day the privilege of *one* interview with him in relation to his soul's welfare, and only one—likely that will be the last. My agency in personal effort for his good I suppose to have terminated with that brief conversation.

“She wants to see you!” One hour had not passed away, until it would have been too late to point her departing spirit the way to heaven.

Are you *preaching* the gospel? There may be a

hearer there who will never again be so favourably placed for good impressions. Try and come near to that soul. Leave nothing that can be done now for the uncertainty of a future time.

Are you *hearing* the gospel? Whether it shall be to you the savour of life or of death, may be suspended on how you now hear. Make its blessings yours without delay.

Are you disposed at all to be *thoughtful and inquiring*? Improve the present hour. To-morrow may place you in circumstances adverse to seriousness and prayer. It is the messenger of God who tenderly speaks with your conscience; and he would have your answer, that he may bear it with him as he departs. It is the soft persuasive call you hear, of the lost sinner's Friend, whose ear, as none on earth can hearken, regards these faintest breathings of penitential grief and mingled trust.

“Under sentence of thy condemning, but righteous law, I am dying; Jesus, mighty to redeem, bring thy salvation near

RIGHT SOON.”

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## SCRIPTURE EVIDENCES

OF

A FUTURE STATE.  

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I HAVE been collecting in one view all that is taught both in the old and new dispensation of religion, respecting another and a future state of being. As this is to us the most important part of revelation, we should expect that the information would be so clear and explicit, as to satisfy candid and honest inquirers. Early educated in this faith, it has become a part of myself, and I as confidently expect another world, as I do another day. Yet it is desirable to establish and confirm the impressions of education, by the conviction of evidence. I have read the Scriptures with this precise object in view, and have written down whatever strikes me as proof or confirmation of this doctrine.

The first fact, which intimates another state, is the translation of Enoch. At that period when there was no written revelation, and mankind depended on verbal tradition, or the more intelligible language of action, such an event as the one recorded, would carry with it the most convincing evidence. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." Gen. v. 24. The apostle explains this, that "by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, having the testimony that he pleased God." What is it to escape death? what is it to be translated?

Surely, to undergo a change without a suspension of life, and to pass from one state to another. There must, certainly, therefore, be an invisible, and, we infer, a better state, as this translation was a reward of virtue. Osterwald makes this use of it. "God thought fit thus to recompense the righteousness of the patriarch, and to convince the men of that age that there is another life after this reserved for good men."

The first intimation our blessed Redeemer gives of this great doctrine is in Matt. viii. 30. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break not through, nor steal." Here he asserts that there is another state, and proves it to be a superior one, as its treasures are permanent, incorruptible, and secure. He who came down from heaven, announces and recommends it to his followers. Matt. x. 28. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Here is an express assertion of a future state of suffering. So that He who is truth itself has informed us, that punishments await the wicked, as well as rewards to compensate the righteous. Matt. x. 39. "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Where shall he renew existence? Beyond the grave. Matt. xi. 22, 24. "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment, than for Chorazin." Connected with our future state is this grand day, "for which all other days were made," this day of final judgment, which the Saviour here speaks of, as a thing certainly to be expected and to be prepared for.

Thus, in these first few pages of the gospel we find the most important objects, heaven, hell, and the day of judgment, distinctly recognized and established by the very highest authority.

Matt. xiii. 41-49. "The son of man shall send forth



his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them in a furnace of fire; then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." What can be more determinate than these accounts of the future allotments of men? With these verses agree the 49th and 50th of the same chapter.

Matt. xvi. 26, 27. In no passage are we so distinctly taught the superior value of the soul, and the certainty of the reward that awaits the just. Matt. xvii. 3. "And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias." These holy men had left this world ages before this period. They re-appear to prove to the apostles that there is indeed another life, as well as to talk to them of the events that were approaching.

Matt. xviii. 10. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven." This passage is highly mysterious. It is beyond our comprehension. As far as it can be understood, it abounds with consolation. In the first place it teaches us definitely, that there is a spiritual world, and in the second place, it intimates an angelic guardianship. In the third place, it gives the hope of the safety and felicity of infants. In the 24th verse is an assurance that it is not the will of our Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. If there is not another state, what can this mean? As to this world, what myriads of the human race have vanished in their early days; and as far as human enjoyment and utility are concerned, may justly be said to have perished; to have perished like untimely fruit or blighted blossoms. But here in the gospel of Christ is precious consolation to the bereaved parent. Those forms, the objects of so many hopes and fears, that have caused so many joyful, so many tender, so many agonizing sensations, are now safely sheltered by the divine Creator in his treasury above. They are not

lost. They are precious in his sight. They form a part of his inscrutable plan of wisdom and love.

The 18th verse corroborates the doctrine of the spiritual world and of our intimate connection with it, and our interest in its rewards.

Matt. xix. 14. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." How forcibly does this assertion confirm the gracious intimation contained in the last chapter concerning the safety of infants! The phrase, "the kingdom of heaven," does not always mean a state of future blessedness, but in this passage and in the others which follow in this chapter, this appears to be its true signification.

The 23d taken in connection with the 29th, seems to fix the meaning beyond doubt. "Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God." Then in reply to his disciples, Jesus assures them, "that whoever has forsaken lands and houses for his name's sake, shall receive here an hundred-fold and shall inherit eternal life." Thus, the kingdom of heaven into which it is so difficult for the worldly-minded and luxurious to enter, is indeed that eternal life, that state of immortal blessedness, promised to those who love and follow him in the regeneration.

Matt. xxii. 30, 31, 32. "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven." Here is new light thrown on this interesting subject, as we see more of its spirituality. The state of the righteous who have departed, is also partially revealed to us. Though absent from men, they are present with the Lord; dead to us, yet living to Him. What a consoling doctrine to those who mourn! Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather

together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." If this is to be taken literally, it opens to the mind a sublime prospect of that august and terrible day when all shall appear before God.

Matt. xxv. 13. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh." This serious reflection Christ makes after the affecting parable of the ten virgins, who attended a marriage solemnity. The scope of the parable leads us to think of another state, and of the necessity of suitable preparation for it, and also of the tremendous danger of negligence and delay. "The door was shut." Terrible doom, to be refused admittance to a glorious and blissful state! But if there was not such a state awaiting, why should we be admonished to watch? From 14-30, the parable of the talents extends our view on the subject. We here see rewards and punishments dispensed according to the diligence and fidelity of the good servants, and to the sloth and misconception of the wicked ones. But the conclusion of the chapter presents the final scene, which closes man's career on earth, without the veil of figure. Here the judgment is set before us, and the sentence passed. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." In what that punishment consists, and what is included in "eternal life," is not explained to us. It may be that our capacities are not equal to the reception of such ideas. Is not the fact here revealed enough to appal, and enough to excite, if it is truly believed?

Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." The opening of the sepulchres of those who rose with Christ, denoted that the dead should rise at the last day, by the efficiency of his death and resurrection. *Osterwald.*

Matt. xxviii. 3. "For he is not here, he is risen as he said." This is the crown of our hopes for salvation and

eternal life. Jesus died to purchase this salvation; he rose again to give ocular demonstration to his disciples that he was in truth the resurrection: and consequently thus to confirm his promise. "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live again. Because I live, ye shall live also." What bright and convincing proofs are contained in the gospel, of those truths on which the soul reposes! Jesus himself has taught us clearly that there is another and a better state of being beyond the grave, and that these bodies shall rise again. The final day of dread account—eternal rewards and punishments—are also taught in plain, solemn, and unequivocal terms.

Mark iii. 29. "But he who shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." Here is not only a confirmation of the great revelation of another state of being, but a view given us of that tremendous doom which awaits this particular sin.

Mark iv. 19. "And the cares of this world, &c." Does not the emphatic *this* lead us naturally to think of another world? Why find fault with providing with every power of our nature for present gratification, if this is the whole of existence? Why guard us against the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, if we had nothing more to look for?

Mark viii. 36, 37, 38, answering to Matt. xvi. 26, 27. These passages teach us the value of the soul, and the tremendous consequences of being ashamed of the gospel: "Of such will the Son of man be ashamed, when he appears in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Mark ix. from 42-48. These verses are exceedingly impressive, calculated to fill the soul with awful apprehensions of that place of punishment, which is prepared for the finally impenitent. What is meant by the worm that dieth not and the fire which cannot be quenched, it is impossible for us to say. We know not whether these images are to be taken literally or figuratively. But in whatever sense it is inter-

puted, it conveys the idea of ever-during torment. To this is opposed a state of felicity, designated by the title of "life" and "the kingdom of God."

The various passages in Mark x. correspond with those of Matt. xix., and certainly afford the strongest assurance of the life to come. This doctrine, like that of the existence of God, is assumed as an established point, and certainly does not appear to excite surprise, even in the multitude. "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" was the inquiry of a scribe. In what sense then has Jesus brought life and immortality to light? He has confirmed the vague hopes of nature, and given positive assurances of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the retribution of rewards and punishments.

Mark xii. 25 answering to Matt. xxii. 30-32. Mark xiii. answering to Matt. xxiv., in which the destruction of Jerusalem and the final conflagration of the earth are spoken of. It is somewhat difficult to ascertain the exact meaning, yet there seems sufficient ground to consider part of it as extending to, and admonitory of, the great day of decision.

Mark xiv. 21, as Matt. xxvi. 24. "Good were it for that man had he never been born." Does not this indicate the everlasting duration of punishment? For if there were any termination of torment, could the displeasure of God ever cease, surely eternity would compensate for all temporary sufferings, so that existence would finally prove a blessing, and it could not be preferable never to have been born. Twenty-fifth verse of the same chapter as in Matt. xxvi. 29. "Verily, I say unto you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Here a gleam of future joy is thrown over their gloom. They are assured, these afflicted disciples, who were thus trembling at the prospect of sad separation, that a day is coming of re-union to their adored Redeemer, and that they should be admitted to communion with him in God's everlasting kingdom. Did a doubt over-

shadow their minds, that they should not recognize each other? No! They could not have derived consolation from such a dubious hope. Mark xiv. 62, agreeing with Matt. xxvi. 14. "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." "Every eye shall see him." All must undergo the great change; enemies as well as friends. This is the commencement of that tremendous scene which is to fix the doom of mankind.

Mark xvi. 5, 6-19. There are several striking and convincing attestations of a spiritual state in this chapter. It is delightful to see the links of that great chain which unites the various orders of creation. Those below us are most obvious: we discern vegetable rising into animal, brute into rational, and here a glimpse is given us of corporeal ascending into spiritual; angels assuming our form, and humanity invested with new properties and new glories, received up into heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God. Jesus, flesh of our flesh, has gone through that wondrous change, to give demonstration to his followers, that in due time their bodies shall be like to his glorious body; that this mortal shall put on immortality, this corruptible, incorruption, and this corporeal shall become spiritual. As we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, we shall be conformed to the glorious likeness of the second and heavenly Adam. What a perspective of bliss opens to the believer! With these frail tenements, we shall part with all their infirmities, all their wants. We shall neither hunger nor thirst any more; neither marry nor be given in marriage. Sickness and sorrow shall fly away. These are only negatives; yet how large a portion of grief and anxiety would be subtracted, if a nature superior to these necessities, with all their painful consequences, were united to our present consciousness and intellectual powers? We have not the faculties to understand the enjoyments of a spiritual existence. It is not cognizable to our senses. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, the heart of man hath not conceived the glories that

attend the liberated soul. We must wait till death removes the veil.

Luke i. In this chapter we gain a further view of the ministry of angels. Gabriel is sent on errands of kindness, to announce the appearance of the forerunner of Christ, and of the supernatural conception of the Messiah himself. All this not only strengthens our confidence in the subsequent revelation which is made to us of our future admission to a better world, but gives a pleasing view of a present intercourse with beings of a superior order. They are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. How elevating is the idea! Do those pure and happy intelligences think of poor frail man, and promote his felicity? Shall we hereafter be associated with them in their blest society, and holy ministration?

Luke ii. The gratulations of the holy angels at the birth of the Redeemer, afford additional proof of the truth of the foregoing observations. They bring the joyful tidings not to kings, or to the great men of the earth, but to a company of shepherds. This shows us that the distinctions of society, on which we place such value, are of no moment to these superior beings. It is man, the rational, immortal creature, which interests them, entirely disregarding our artificial distinctions. The prayer of Simeon in the 29th and 30th verses, "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," suggests the sweet idea of one long detained from home, who has gained all he desired, and longs to return from exile.

Exod. iii. 15. "Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, hath sent me unto you," &c. Whether this was considered by the devout Israelite, as a proof of another state of being, we know not, nor would it readily occur as such to the unenlightened mind. We are, however, taught by our Lord Jesus Christ to consider it in this point of view, as in Luke xx. 17-38. "Now that the dead are

raised, even Moses showeth at the bush," in allusion to this passage. "For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him." "All live;" they therefore exist in a separate state, for they had all been laid in the sepulchre of Machpelah, and saw corruption. But as the soul still enjoys its consciousness, and is alive to God, assurance is given that the body (that which is dead) shall be raised again.

Luke iv. 33-36. The affecting scene of the demoniac mentioned in this passage, and indeed every instance of possession narrated in the Scriptures, proves that evil spirits, as well as holy intelligences, have an agency in the concerns of mankind. Both the holy and the evil convince us of an order of beings, whose powers far transcend those of humanity, and confirm the persuasion of another world, and of a spiritual abode. Whether this has a material locality, limited by a certain circumscribed space, or whether it is an unbounded ether, where disembodied natures range free as thought, is not for us to know in our present state of existence. So little do we know of spirit, that in our most abstract speculations on these superior intelligences, we find ourselves perpetually ascribing to them form as well as being. Hence an involuntary revolt of feeling, when we read of the man possessed by a legion; of Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven spirits. We say, How can this be? as if each of these must occupy space. But were we to conceive of them merely as thoughts afflicting and agitating the soul, and tormenting the body, we might more easily imagine how a legion could enter into a man, and produce the effects ascribed to them. It is a mystery to us how external things operate on our minds. We are accustomed to say, "We see, we hear, we perceive," and this seems quite plain. But when we ask ourselves, What is it within us, that thus sees, and hears, and knows? we are confounded. We may call it the mind, and thus give it a name; the question recurs, "What is the mind?" We know not. Why then should it



surprise us that this invisible, intangible part of our being should be operated on by spiritual essences, superior in powers to us, more subtle, in a manner, beyond our comprehension? The evil as well as the good have access to us. The Scriptures reveal this fact, and caution us to be on our guard; to beware of the wiles of the "evil one," to resist him, and to assure us also of assistance from the Source of all good. This is all that our well-being requires, and we must wait till the encumbering clay of our mortal tabernacle is dissolved, before we can understand the higher mysteries of our wonderful composition. Yet every intimation of our connection with an invisible world is highly interesting, and the authority of revelation, as far as it confirms and illustrates the union and intercourse, is most valuable and consolatory.

Luke xix. 24, agreeing with Matt. xvi. 26. Luke ix. 23, 31, agreeing with Matt. xvii. 3, 19. Luke x. 25 agrees with Matt. xix. 16. It is the very important inquiry, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And can time blot eternity from our view? Can this fleeting life make us neglect a coming state of eternal duration? Can the enjoyments of threescore years and ten, supposing them to be perfect and unembittered, render us indifferent to an interminable hereafter? Vain and foolish creatures! A child who exchanges a crown for a rattle is wise, compared to you. Eternal life! What an idea! combined with unchangeable happiness or misery, how transporting, how overwhelming the idea! Oh, thou Giver of life, fit us for thy presence!

Luke xii. 4, 5, 21, 33, 40, 46. All these passages strongly assure us of a state of being far more important than the present. How necessary to lay up a treasure where it can endure for ever!

Luke xv. 7, 10. Here heaven is opened to us. Here we behold that divine benevolence, which our best conceptions would lead us to believe is the element of that holy and

blessed state. Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; joy in the presence of the angels of God. Happy in themselves, happy in being holy, they rejoice when any intelligent being is rescued from sin and misery, and restored to purity and bliss. What a sweet glimpse is given us of that better country, to which we aspire! It is not only free from suffering, but from that depravity which is the source of pain. Purity and peace dwell together, holiness and happiness are inseparable. Joy in angel minds is nourished by goodness alone.

Luke xvi. 9, teaching how we may use the perishing goods of this life, that thereby we may be received into everlasting habitations. From 19 to 31; here is a picture which in no other part of Scripture is so strikingly delineated, representing the future allotments of mankind—the repose of the good man, reclining on the bosom of Abraham—the misery of the unfeeling sensualist, tormented in unextinguishable flame. Whether this is a real exposition, or merely a parable, it conveys the same immutable truth to us, coming, as it does, from our heavenly Teacher, who holds the keys of life and of death.

Luke xviii. 18, agreeing with Matt. xix. Both express to us the superiority of that world which lies beyond the grave, compared with the most splendid possessions of this life. Were it not so, would our Saviour have required the rich man to sell all that he had, and follow him? He knew how little all the wealth and all the honours of this transitory existence is worth, when compared with the enduring riches he had to bestow on those who love him, in his future kingdom of glory. Well may we use the prayer of the disciples on another occasion, “Lord, increase our faith.” Could we form any adequate conception of what is meant by “life everlasting,” our attachments would not be so strong to this transitory scene.

Luke x. 33–38. This is the parallel passage with Matt. xxii. but fuller, and throwing stronger light on the doctrine

of the resurrection and of a life to come. What are we to think of these words, "But they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," &c. Are not all to be resuscitated? Is there only a selected number—those who are accounted worthy?

Luke xxii. 29, 30. "I appoint you a kingdom," &c. What a magnificent prospect is here opened to Christ's disciples—power and distinction, the things which the heart most covets. These will no doubt be subordinate to benevolence, and consequently sources of pure delight. They will differ essentially from the empires of this world, which minister gratification chiefly to the evil passions. Verse 69. "Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God." What will be the splendour of this scene! It is impossible for our limited faculties to conceive its sublimity. "When we see him as he is, we shall be like him." The ransomed ones shall pass through various grades, from glory to glory, conforming more and more to his image, to his purity, to his bliss.

Luke xxiii. 42, 43. This passage is, perhaps, more explicit than any other met with in the gospels. The declaration of the Saviour himself to the penitent thief is, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." It reveals an after state; it teaches, moreover, that the transition is immediate. According to the construction of divines of our church, "the souls of believers do immediately pass into glory." This text affords stronger corroboration of the doctrine than any other one, and perhaps ought to settle the question, whether the soul shall retain its consciousness in the term which intervenes between death and judgment.

Luke xxiv. 51. "And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried into heaven." Here is the crowning evidence of the whole matter. Jesus, our great forerunner, has taken possession of the blest abode, and has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Delightful thought! Where he is, his disciples shall be! He has overcome death, and has ascended to glory. He is the first fruits, the earnest of the hereafter to come, when all his shall be gathered into the garner of life. The angelic host announced his birth, and also his resurrection. Strong proofs to us that they are connected to our world by ties of duty and of benevolence, affording additional confirmation to our hopes that we shall be united to those happy bands, and perhaps in our turn be sent forth on errands of mercy, and employed in executing the commissions of our divine Lord. What ennobling prospects open before us, when we thus prophesy our own futurity, and contemplate the new powers, the rapid acquisitions, of our disembodied state.

Then shall we see, and hear, and know  
 All we desired or wished below;  
 And every power find sweet employ  
 In that eternal world of joy.

John i. This gospel commences with an exhibition of the divine origin of the Redeemer. We have already read of his ascension to glory; here we are informed of his primeval state of bliss, before he became flesh, and dwelt among us. In the fifty-first verse there is a renewed attestation of his second advent. Humanity is thus taught to look beyond the tomb, as "hereafter ye shall see the heavens opened."

John v. 24, 25, 26. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." What an astonishing revelation! Who can understand the operations of divine power! Who can penetrate the profound depths of infinite wisdom! Who can imagine the immensity of the love of God! When restored to a new life, the soul, with new powers, shall enter into the plans which now transcend our restricted faculties.

John vi. 27, 33, 38, 39, 40, 44, 47, 68. These are strong

proofs of a life to come, far to be preferred to the life that now is.

John vii. 33, 34. "Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me." Could anything more definite be said on the subject? He does not tell us in what part of the universe the residence of his heavenly Father is fixed. It is enough for us to know that there is a different world, and that all our prospects of happiness depend on our conformity to this great and divine Teacher, who is the way which conducts to it, and whom we must follow with faith and confidence.

John viii. 23. "Ye are from beneath, I am from above." "Ye are of this world, I am not of this world." Fifty-first verse. "If a man keep my sayings he shall never see death." Mysterious words! What is that union which subsists between Christ and the believer? We are told our "life is hid in Christ." How can these things be? What is life? what is death? According to common acceptation, mankind all submit alike to the same doom. Surely He who was truth itself, meant to convey something to the minds of his disciples by this declaration. His words were spirit, or spiritual, as is elsewhere asserted, when he informs them that they shall neither hunger nor thirst. Here must also be a spiritual meaning; it is the life that all who are his shall partake of—an unceasing existence. The dead sleep in Jesus; he will restore to them a freshened sense of existence and enjoyment.

John x. 9, 10. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." Does not this teach us that there is something in the immortality which Jesus has purchased, superior to the life which mankind would have received through Adam, had he retained his primeval state? It carries that impression to the mind. Chapter x. 27, 28. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know

them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Father's hand." What can be more precious, more consolatory, more elevating? How supremely happy to be one of this flock!

John xi. This chapter contains the affecting narrative of the resurrection of Lazarus, which is itself a proof of the divine power possessed by the Redeemer. It is a pledge to us that all who are in their graves shall hear his voice. Martha believed in the resurrection at the last day. "I know he will rise again." But Jesus wished to impress her with an idea of his present inherent power. "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me, shall never die." Here is the same wonderful and mysterious assertion which occurs in the eighth chapter, fifty-first verse. It transcends all our natural apprehension of things, and can only be reconciled to our views of truth by attaching to it a spiritual meaning, and presuming that it refers to that vital union which subsists between Christ and the souls of believers.

John xxii. 24, 25, 26. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour." Verses 48, 49, 50. "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting." All this clearly refers to an after state.

John xiii. 1. "Now before the feast of the passover,

when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Here commences that interesting scene which terminates the ministry of our Lord on earth; and which was designed for the comfort of his disciples, not only at that moment, but to the end of the world. Simon Peter said unto him, "Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterward." Even the disciples had but imperfect conceptions of the invisible world, and knew not what their Lord meant. He despised not their ignorance, but most kindly and gently informed them of the better country which lay beyond the tomb. Chapter xiv. "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you; I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, ye may be also. Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. I am the way, the truth, and the life. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I." Chapter xvi. 28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father." Chapter xvii. "Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory that I had with thee, before the world was. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." These blissful assurances of a re-union in glory were calculated to fortify the timid, doubtful, and afflicted band of disciples, under the sorrows that were then going to overwhelm them; and they

are equally applicable to all believers, through the varied and manifold sufferings of life. With the belief that in a short time clouds shall be dispelled, and the sun of righteousness arise, the most tremendous storms, the darkest night, will be endured in patience. Happy, thrice happy believer in Christ Jesus, peace is yours. Eternity will make amends for the difficulties of the narrow road of an earthly pilgrimage.

John xviii. 36. "Jesus answered Pilate, My kingdom is not of this world." Yet it controls all kingdoms, although it will not fully be manifested until all the glory of this world is passed away.

Chapter xx. The account of the resurrection here given, includes some particulars omitted by the other evangelists, and shows the same benevolent ministration of the angels. Two of these celestial ministers appeared to Mary Magdalene, watching at the tomb where the body of Jesus had lain. With wonder and affection they lingered about the spot where his precious remains so lately rested, eager to communicate the soul-reviving intelligence to his disciples that their Master had risen. Thus also Jesus comforted Mary. "Go to my brethren, (what divine condescension!) and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God." What more do we require to confirm our hope of a future state of rewards, and to alarm us as to everlasting punishment? Jesus, who is the faithful and true witness, who came from God, and is returned to God, has given the most abundant testimony of a life to come,—a life of joy to the righteous, a life of woe to the wicked. The great precious truth of the resurrection of the body, and a special and final judgment, is also taught clearly. Knowing all this, what more is requisite to regulate our conduct? Did we know the exact location of the world we are hastening to; did we know the change that must pass on our outward form, or inward faculties; did we know



the services we should be called on to perform, did we know with what associates we should mingle, what greater operation would it produce in our faith? It would indeed gratify curiosity, but could in no greater degree stimulate to the acquisition of holiness and virtue. All is revealed that is necessary to make us wise unto salvation.

Acts i. 9. "And when he had spoken these words, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight, and while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them, in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? The same Jesus, which is taken from you into heaven, shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." This account furnishes us with the most convincing proof of the resurrection of our Lord, and of the certainty of his last coming, and surely, also, of another and a better world. Should not these facts engage us continually to raise our thoughts and our desires, towards that glorious mansion where our Intercessor is exalted at the right hand of God, and where he prepares for his elect an everlasting habitation?

Acts ii. The effusion of the Holy Spirit, and the wonderful powers conferred on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, are proofs that Christ was indeed risen again, exalted at the right hand of the majesty on high, and that in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead. It shows also the connection which subsists between the spiritual world and the natural world. Although we no longer expect miraculous gifts, yet it serves to strengthen faith, to know that necessary grace will be accorded, and that our divine Master is faithful to fulfil every promise on which he causes his servants to depend.

The apostle Peter, in reasoning from the Psalms, shows that David spoke predictively of the Messiah, when he says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither suffer thine

Holy One to see corruption," &c. Then follows, David is not ascended to the heavens. Where then is he? The body has mouldered to ashes, but where is the conscious part, susceptible of joy and of activity?

Acts iii. 21. "Whom the heavens must receive until the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." From this we must conclude that these great truths were revealed to the prophets, and that under symbols and forms which perhaps are not understood, as they then were, that the pious in ancient times had sufficient foundation on which to erect a holy hope of a Saviour, and of eternal life.

Acts iv. 33. "And with great power gave the apostles witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the ground of all our hopes; for if Christ be not risen, our hope of a life to come must be vain. But he has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Oh to be a partaker of this promise so full of divine consolation! to enjoy an existence interwoven with the duration of God himself, in holiness and bliss! It is an idea too vast for the comprehension of a finite mind! Yet is this assurance given to the lowliest disciple of Jesus!

Acts vii. 55. "And he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." What revelation can be more full and perfect than this? How great the privilege of this holy martyr! How wonderful the grace of God toward those who devote themselves to his service! A glimpse of heaven can overcome all the pains of the most terrible death. This example should support our faith. If called to endure great sufferings, is there not reason to hope, that consolations commensurate to their degree, will be granted to the true disciple? It is not only to the apostles and martyrs, but to all who truly believe that the promise is given of an abundant entrance into this eternal rest.

Acts x. The transaction recorded in this chapter contains proof of a spiritual world, in the conversion of Cornelius to Christianity, and the intimate connection of this world with our own. The mission of the angel to the centurion, and the instructive dream of Peter, show how perfectly the circumstances, feelings, and even prejudices of men are known to the inhabitants of heaven. The discourse of Peter contains also a repeated declaration of the resurrection of Jesus, and the doctrine of a future and final judgment. Verse 40. "Him God raised up on the third day, and commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he which is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

Judges xiii. The appearance of angels during the ancient dispensation of the Israelites, was a continual demonstration to them of the existence of another state of being, and of spiritual creatures who were interested in their happiness. How far this knowledge confirmed their hopes of a future world, we are and must be ignorant. The promises left on record have to us only an apparent reference to temporal good. Those who are enlightened may have viewed them as types, and enjoyed the assurance of the heavenly rest, as the apostle informs us they considered themselves as pilgrims and strangers on earth. Whatever was the ground or the extent of their faith, to us who enjoy a clearer revelation, these intimations are delightful proofs of the continual guardianship of holy intelligences, who disdained not to communicate glad tidings to the lowly children of earth, and of an invisible but not far distant country, which they inhabit, whose confines border on our own. Blessed thought, fraught with consolation to our frailty!

Acts xii. This chapter gives an account of the deliverance of Peter from prison by the aid of an angel, and confirms the foregoing observations made on the ministry of these heavenly friends to our mortal race.

Acts xiii. 46. "Ye have judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life," &c. The apostle Paul proclaims these glad tidings to Jews and Gentiles, teaching the resurrection of Jesus, and consequently the necessity of repentance, and the rewards of a life to come.

Acts xvii. 31. "Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Resurrection and judgment are here fairly taught. If men are restored to life, it must be for some purpose, and to occupy some place in the universe; and if the actions performed in this world are subject to this solemn review, must it not be to affix just and adequate rewards and punishments according to their merit or demerit? It is self-evident that a future state is the necessary consequence of a resurrection and a judgment, else would they be wholly nugatory.

Acts xxiv. 15. "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection from the dead, of the just and of the unjust."

21. "Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am now called in question of you this day." Here the apostle insists on the foundation doctrine of Christianity, and intimates also, that it was known to the ancient fathers; "which they themselves also allow." How or when this revelation was made, we are not informed. Both in the Psalms and in the book of Job, there are strong evidences that a better state was looked forward to. Certainly their hope could not have been as lively as that which Christians enjoy, as Christ brought life and immortality to light in the gospel. Acts xxvi. 6, 7. "And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise of God unto our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come; for which hope's sake, king

Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" 18. "To turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among those who are sanctified." These verses go further to confirm the opinion that the ancients looked for a life to come, and that the Gentiles when converted were to be admitted to the same inheritance.

1 Sam. xxviii. This account of the appearance of Samuel, apparently by the incantation of the witch of Endor, is a remarkable passage. Notwithstanding the various efforts of commentators to explain it away, and make it seem a mere legerdemain illusion, I cannot so consider it. I believe, through the permission of divine providence, Samuel was actually permitted to return to this world, and wonderfully to reveal the approach of coming events. It strikes my mind as a proof, not only of the faith of the ancients in a separate and spiritual state, but of the truth and actual existence of that state. Why do mankind universally conceive of the re-appearance of departed friends, if there was not some tradition, some attested fact, to give rise to the idea? Scott says, "The transaction was suited to impress the idea of a future state." "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." They should be with him, in a spiritual and eternal world, but nothing is intimated concerning their happiness or misery. This truth is important—they should live after death.

Rom. i. 4. "Jesus Christ is declared to be the Son of God, with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Here his introducing a new state, of which his own resurrection is the first fruit and proof, is advanced as evidence of his divinity, so intimately is the gospel in all its parts associated with the spiritual, holy, and exalted destiny that awaits us. Indeed, if there

were not a heaven in reserve, it is difficult for us to conceive what is meant by the salvation of the gospel, or wherefore the Lord Jesus Christ left his celestial glory to dwell in our inferior clay. His very appearance on earth, without his miracles or his resurrection, is enough to convince us that his intention was to bring his sons to glory.

Rom. ii. "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life." This is an express promise of future existence, in which is included interminable felicity also, to those who labour to conform to the precepts of the gospel. Oh that the reader and the writer may be found in this number! Notwithstanding all the obstacles which arise from the weakness of faith, and the obscureness of spiritual discernment, if we shall hold on the Christian course unto the end, there is a promise of the Creator, written and sealed with the blood of Christ, that we shall not be rejected of him, but that we shall receive a crown of life.

Rom. v. 22. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." What a transporting prospect is in these words presented! The ruins of the fall repaired, the edifice which sin and death have demolished, renewed and strengthened for eternal duration! All I can say is, in the words of the disciples, Lord, increase my faith, that I may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which is to be revealed!

Rom. vi. 23. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ." We can earn death, but life is a gift. Oh, the infinite goodness here displayed!

Rom. viii. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." "For I am persuaded that neither life nor death can separate us from the love of God, which

is in Jesus Christ." What can be more full than this assurance?

1 Kings xvii. 22. "And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came to him again, and he revived." The resurrection of the son of the widow of Zarephath, is a type of the general resurrection, which God saw fit to give the Jews examples of, to confirm them in the belief and expectation of another life. *Ostervald*. These striking facts, a few such as these, no doubt kept alive the hope given by some remote tradition. When it was communicated we are not informed; but that the expectation existed in an imperfect degree at the time that the blessed Redeemer began his ministry, is evident. The doctrine of the resurrection was not received by the Jews as it was by the heathen nations. The Sadducees, indeed, denied the existence of spirit, and consequently of another life; "but the people heard him gladly," showing that their impressions were on the side of this glorious hope.

1 Cor. i. 8. "Who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Is not this day, the great day, when he shall come to judge the world in righteousness, and consign some to everlasting perdition, but give to his own disciples life and felicity?

1 Cor. iii. 22. "Life or death, things present or things to come, all are yours." What a rich portion belongs to the true Christian! All that is good for him on earth, and that which lies beyond the grave—far transcending mortal mind to estimate. What does this vast eternity embosom? We see the glories and beauties of earth, which God has prepared for man, and which are graduated nicely to the powers of his nature, and to his capacities of enjoyment. The sun, with its inexhaustible effulgence; the moon, with its mild radiance; flowers, with their vivid colouring, and delightful fragrance; fruits, with their exquisite flavour; sight, hearing, scent, taste, in a word, unite to give delight. What lies beyond this

sphere, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath the heart conceived. But by the Spirit these are revealed to the heirs of salvation. Infinite Good! we know not what it is to see thee as thou art, still less the joy to be like THEE—pure, holy, and spiritual. Can it be? Can creatures of the dust be transformed into seraphs of fire? Yes, they shall be like Him; they shall see him as he is; they shall be satisfied when they awake in his likeness; they shall pass from glory to glory, for ever increasing in love and in excellence. “Things to come,” all are theirs!

1 Cor. vi. 14. “And God hath raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.” This is explicit. Christ is the pledge of the resurrection of the world; he was the first fruit, the general harvest shall surely come.

2 Kings ii. 1. “And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah to heaven by a whirlwind, as they went up and talked, behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up in a whirlwind to heaven.” God gave the antediluvians one instance of an immediate translation to heaven, to confirm their faith of another state of being; but from the account given to us, it appears that some veil of obscurity covered it. We are told simply, “that Enoch was not, for God took him.” In the translation of Elijah, which was to attest the same great truth, under the Mosaic dispensation, there was more splendour, more publicity, and of course the event must have produced a stronger sensation. Elisha witnessed this awful demonstration of divine power. The sons of the prophets expected the event; yet there is a mixture of incredulity to be discerned in them. For “they sent fifty men to seek him, lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord had taken him up and cast him on some mountain, or into some valley.” It was reserved for a later day to see the heavens opened, and to enjoy the full radiance of the throne of God. Christ ascended in the view of his adoring disciples,



and commanded them to declare that he is gone to prepare mansions for them that love him. Christ has revealed to us the reality of the world to come; he has brought life and immortality to light. There is a life beyond the grave. Mysterious change! Those who enjoy this clearer revelation know that there remaineth a rest for the people of God. What this shall be, or how or where this existence shall be, will be made known only by the great teacher, death. Our appointed time must we wait, till the change shall come. Then shall we know, as we are known, and with new powers love and serve our God.

1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 11, 12. "For we know in part, and prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known." This was written by that apostle who had been caught up into the third heaven, and heard words that it was impossible to utter with mortal tongue. He therefore knew and would testify the certainty of that glory which is to be revealed, and its transcendent excellence above all earthly good, or joy, or hope. Were it possible to abstract the mind from those objects which continually solicit its attention, and press it from every side, what a perspective would open before us, in that eternal state which is promised in the gospel—to have the veil removed, and to see the perfections of Deity, as they shine in the Redeemer, and to be able to comprehend the heights and depths of that love which passes understanding!

1 Cor. xv. This chapter throughout contains the most explicit declarations of the resurrection of the body, and the glory of another state, that are to be found in the Scriptures. It may with justice be called the Pisgah of the

Christian, from which he has a view of the promised possession.

2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; v. 1—10. These delightful passages assure us that the light afflictions of life, "which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The apostle seems to labour for expression equal to the grand idea. "When our earthly house is dissolved, we have a building of God." Does not this lead to the supposition that God has prepared a new and an ethereal body for his children, when the present tabernacle of clay is dropped, and that the transition will be immediate? As soon as the soul, the true self, the conscious being, shall be released from the body, it shall be present with the Lord. Then shall we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and receive the reward of the deeds done in the body. Who shall be able to stand?

Gal. vi. 8. "For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." That reaping cannot be in this world, where all is transitory.

Eph. i. 10. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." Verse 14. "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Eph. ii. 7. "That in ages which are (coming on), he might show the (ever overflowing) riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us in Jesus Christ."

Phil. i. 23. "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better." ii. 17. "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." iii. 11. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." 26. "For our conversation is in heaven, whence we

look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

Col. iii. 1, 4. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. When Christ who is your life shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory."

1 Thess. i. 10. "And wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come."

1 Thess ii. 12. "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory." iii. 13. "To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints." What a glorious prospect, to be presented before God, in a degree of holiness which he will accept, and to be united with all his saints in the train of the Redeemer! Here is all the heart can desire; here is all we can conceive of consummate felicity! Sin is our misery. To be free from its defilement, to abide the inquisition of the holy God, and to be made meet for the society of angels, comprises everything the soul can conceive of perfect bliss; and all this permanent.

1 Thess. iv. 13. "But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others who have no hope," &c. Here is fulness of assurance of a blessed immortality. Only let us belong to the Lord, and our felicity is secure.

1 Thess. v. 23. "And I pray God that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord." This is the consummation of the Christian's hope. To be presented in purity, integrity and uprightness, in that great and terrible day of the Lord, when we shall all appear before him. But well may we exclaim, "Who

may abide his coming!" Plainly, those only whom the Lord himself preserves and upholds. His sovereign grace can keep us from falling, and present any one of the sinful race of man "faultless" before his presence.

2 Thess. i. 5, 12. "That ye may be counted worthy the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer. Seeing it is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord."

2 Thess. iii. 5. This encourages the believer in all his sorrows to look for a state of retribution in which he shall find peace.

1 Tim. i. 16. "In me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life. 1 Tim. iv. 8. "The promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come." 1 Tim. vi. 19. "In store for themselves a good foundation, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

2 Tim. i. 1. "According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus."

Philemon 15. "He departed for a season," &c.; intimating a continued union between believers in a better state, where connections will not be liable to changes or separation.

Heb. iv. 9; vi. 18, 19, 20; ix. 12, &c. "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God: by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the

forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus. By his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

THE BETTER LAND.

THERE is a land of pure delight,  
 Where saints immortal reign ;  
 Infinite day excludes the night,  
 And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,  
 And never withering flowers ;  
 Death, like a narrow sea, divides  
 This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,  
 Stand dressed in living green ;  
 So to the Jews old Canaan stood,  
 While Jordan rolled between.

But timorous mortals start and shrink,  
 To cross this narrow sea ;  
 And linger, shivering on the brink,  
 And fear to launch away.

O ! could we make our doubts remove,  
 Those gloomy doubts that rise,  
 And see the Canaan that we love  
 With unclouded eyes !

Could we but climb where Moses stood,  
 And view the landscape o'er,  
 Not Jordan's stream, not death's cold flood,  
 Should fright us from the shore.

## VAIN WORLD, ADIEU.

WHEN for eternal worlds we steer,  
 And seas are calm, and skies are clear,  
 And faith in lively exercise,  
 And distant hills of Canaan rise :  
 The soul, for joy, then claps her wings,  
 And loud her lovely sonnet sings,  
 “ Vain world, adieu.”

With cheerful hope her eyes explore  
 Each landmark on the distant shore ;  
 The trees of life, the pastures green,  
 The golden streets, the crystal stream ;  
 Again for joy, she claps her wings,  
 And loud her lovely sonnet sings,  
 “ Vain world, adieu.”

The nearer still she draws to land,  
 More eager all her powers expand :  
 With steady helm, and free bent sail,  
 Her anchor drops within the veil :  
 Again, for joy, she claps her wings,  
 And her celestial sonnet sings,  
 “ Glory to God ! ”

BLESSEDNESS AND EFFICACY OF FAMILY  
PRAYER.

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THE accompanying narrative was related to me by the lady whom I have named "Ellen Douglass." I can therefore vouch for its truth.

"Ellen," said Louisa Gordon to her friend, as they entered the bed-room, "your dear papa is very good, but I do wish he would not pray for me every night, as if I was going to die so soon. I know I am not well, but it is only a cold; besides I am so young. Oh!" she exclaimed in a lively manner, removing the comb that confined her beautiful hair, "I have a great many years to live in the world yet, why should I talk of dying?"

Louisa Gordon was the only child of opulent parents, residing in the north of Scotland. Nature had endowed her with a form of great loveliness, and a mind capable of superior attainments; and as no expense had been spared in her education, Louisa, at eighteen, might be truly termed beautiful and accomplished, but like the young man in the Gospel, she "lacked one thing." Her fond parents little thought that anything else was required to fit her for eternity, as well as time, and therefore had merely taught her to look forward to the brilliancy of her future prospects and high expectations. Alas! how soon was a worm discovered at the root. A cold taken while returning from a party of pleasure settled on her lungs, and symptoms of consumption soon became visible; but, as is frequently the case with this insidious disease, the victim was unaware of her danger. With that fatal deception, falsely called delicacy, the truth was kept from her, and she was induced to believe that by change of air,

and avoiding for a time the theatre and the ball-room, certain recovery might be expected.

It was for this purpose that Louisa undertook the long deferred visit to her friend and schoolfellow, Ellen Douglass; and her parents hoped for the best results from this change, as Ellen's family resided in the south of England. The journey fatigued her; but in a few days she seemed so much better, that her spirits rose with the hopes of a speedy recovery. But the clear complexion and hectic flush told to Ellen's parents another tale. They had been intrusted with the secret of Louisa's disorder by her anxious parents, and felt for the beautiful flower, fading in its bloom, all that tender pity and anxiety with which Christianity endues the renewed heart; and, though dreading to alarm the gentle invalid, or disobey the trembling injunctions of her friends, yet Ellen's father was too conscientious—too anxious for the welfare of an immortal soul—to refrain from what he considered his duty. When, therefore, at eventide (as his countryman, Burns, so beautifully describes it,) the good man—

“Would offer up to heaven the warm request,  
That he who feeds the ravens' clamorous nest,  
And decks the lily bell with flowery pride,  
Would, in the way his wisdom deemeth best,  
For him and for his little ones provide;  
But mostly in their hearts with inward grace preside—”

his heart overflowing with tenderness, would pray that their dear visitor might be restored to health; or if such might not be the will of God, that a future and unknown eternity might be opened to her view, to induce her to “fly for refuge” to Jesus, as the only hope beyond the grave. These fervent petitions were never omitted, and their frequent recurrence at length roused Louisa to thought, and produced the remark with which this narrative commences. And even while the thoughtless girl was thus sinfully expressing herself, the work of conversion had begun. The writer once heard an old minister say, “Better brave open oppo-



sition than apathy or indifference; a feeling of conviction rouses the unrenewed heart to resistance, and Satan is always at hand to lend his aid. Well is it, then, for the convicted sinner, if the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him."

Not many weeks after this, Louisa's cough became so troublesome that the physician ordered her immediate return home, and the friends parted to meet no more on earth. Louisa had gone about a month, when Ellen received a letter from her, written, indeed, by her own hand, but oh! how changed! The once beautiful writing was in some parts oblique and illegible. Sad, however, as was the truth thus proved of Louisa's hopeless case, yet that disfigured letter was read by Ellen and her pious parents with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow; for, referring to the prayer daily offered for her during her visit, Louisa told her delighted friends, that through those prayers she had been led to think deeply of the importance of looking beyond the tomb, to Him who had conquered death and the grave, and had lighted up the dark valley with the brightness of his presence. She had sought and found comfort in the prospect of death, and been enabled to throw herself on the merits of a crucified Saviour for pardon and peace. She concluded her letter by blessing God, who had put it into the heart of his faithful servant to plead for her in his morning and evening devotions.

Louisa Gordon scarcely lived long enough to receive Ellen's reply, and the distracted parents saw the grave close over their beautiful child, without being able to understand that "their loss was her eternal gain." Ellen's father was shortly after suddenly summoned to his Master's presence. May we not venture to hope that the aged saint, and the youthful object of his earnest prayers, had a happy meeting in heaven?

How numerous are the instances in which God has been pleased to make family prayer an indirect means of conversion! The many reasons, or excuses rather, which are constantly made for its discontinuance

should surely be thrown aside, and every family rear an altar to His name, whose words seem more applicable to that duty than any other, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

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The following extract from an authentic letter from a tradesman, furnishes another instance in point:—

"When I first began business for myself, I determined to be particularly conscientious with respect to family prayer. Accordingly, I persevered for many years in the delightful practice of domestic worship. Morning and evening, every individual of my family was ordered always to be present; nor would I allow my apprentices to be absent on any account. In a few years, the advantages of these engagements manifestly appeared; the blessings of the upper and nether springs followed me; health and happiness attended my family, and prosperity my business. At length, such was the rapid increase of my trade, and the importance of devoting every possible moment to my customers, that I began to think whether family prayer did not occupy too much of our time in the morning. Scruples arose respecting my intentions of relinquishing this part of my duty; but, at length, worldly interests prevailed so far as to induce me to excuse the attendance of my apprentices; and, not long after, it was deemed advisable, for the more eager prosecution of business, to make the prayer with my wife, when we rose in the morning, suffice for the day.

"Notwithstanding the repeated checks of conscience that followed this base omission, the calls of a flourishing concern, and the prospect of an increasing family, appeared so imperious and commanding, that I found an easy excuse for this fatal evil, especially as I did not omit prayer altogether. My conscience was now almost seared as with a hot iron, when it pleased God to awaken me by a singular providence.

“One day I received a letter from a young man, who had formerly been my apprentice, previous to my omitting family prayer. Not doubting but I continued domestic worship, his letter was chiefly on this subject; it was couched in the most respectful and affectionate terms; but judge of my surprise and confusion when I read these words, ‘Oh! my dear master, never, never shall I be able, sufficiently able, to thank you for the precious privilege with which you indulged me in your family devotions! Oh, sir, eternity will be too short to praise my God for what I learnt there! It was there I first beheld my lost and wretched state as a sinner; it was there that I first knew the way of salvation; and there I first experienced the preciousness of ‘Christ in me, the hope of glory.’ Oh, sir, permit me to say, never, never neglect those precious engagements. You have yet a family and more apprentices; may your house be the birthplace of their souls.’ I could read no further; every line flashed condemnation in my face; I trembled, I shuddered, I was alarmed lest the blood of my children and apprentices should be demanded at my hands.

“Filled with confusion, and bathed in tears, I fled for refuge to my closet. I spread the letter before God. I confessed my sin—but you can better conceive than I can describe my feelings. Suffice it to say, that light broke in upon my disconsolate soul, and a sense of blood-bought pardon was obtained. I immediately flew to my family, presented them before God, and from that day to the present I have been faithful, and am determined, through grace, that whenever my business becomes so large as to interrupt family prayer, I will give up the superfluous part of my business, and retain my devotions. Better to lose a few shillings, than become the deliberate instrument of ruin to my family and to my own soul.”

## FAMILY WORSHIP ON SHIPBOARD.

A. B. was a sea-captain in the merchant service. It pleased God to open his eyes and to change his heart ; to turn him (in the language of the apostle) "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." He was then naturally most anxious to be made useful to others, in that state of life to which it had pleased God to lead him. This may be gathered from the following conversation, which I once had with him, on the subject of the propriety of all captains of vessels having what may be termed family prayer with their men on board their ships :—"Sir," he said, "I have no doubt it might be done if only masters of vessels would make the trial. For a long while I was desirous of doing so myself, but I was afraid that I should find it very difficult, and I continually put it off, hoping that the time would come when I should summon courage, and find it easier." The obligation which he felt to this duty, while he still could not muster resolution to make the trial, weighed much upon his conscience ; and at length, upon one occasion, being, as I understood from him, frozen up in the Thames, and detained there five or six weeks, he was so distressed by the conflict between sense of duty and fear of man, that it preyed on his spirits, and produced a change in his appearance evident to all. At length, one Saturday evening, as he and his mate were sitting together in the cabin, the mate said to him, "Captain, what can be the matter with you? I am quite vexed to see you so low-spirited as you appear to be. I am sure if I can do anything in any way to help you, I shall be glad to do it, for I am sorry to see you such an altered man." Upon this he resolved to open his mind to the mate, and replied, "Mate, it is as you say. Something weighs upon my mind, and I will tell you what it is. I have been thinking that, as a man professing to fear God and regard religion, it is my

duty to have my men down to prayers every day, but I am afraid they would not like it, and I do not know what to do." "Oh," said the mate, "I do not think there would be any great hardship in managing this, and I shall, for my part, be very glad to help you, by speaking to the men."

"And so, sir," he added, "we agreed to order the men to wash and clean themselves, and have them down the next morning, being Sunday, and read a chapter, and tell them my mind: and so we did. And after we had read the chapter, I said to them, 'Now, my lads, we will go ashore, and go to church.' And we went together to Rotherhithe Church. And now, sir," he said, "you will be surprised at what I am going to say—after prayers, the clergyman took his text, and preached about prayer, and told masters and mistresses of families that it was their duty to have prayers with their servants and their children every day. Ah, thought I, this would suit me as well as them; but, sir, he had a word more for me. He said that, seeing a good many sailors present, he could not help recommending to them the observance of the same practice with their men; and he said much upon the good of such a practice. Sir, you cannot imagine what I felt; I was altogether astonished, and seemed as in a dream. It appeared as though God had told him what to say, for I knew that no soul on earth could have told him of me and my case.

I was altogether overcome, and scarcely knew what I did. But I made the best of my way home to my ship, and from that day forward, I thank God, I always had prayers on board, night and morning, whenever it was possible; and it very rarely happened that we omitted it through stress of weather. I had all the hands to attend who could be spared from the duty of the ship, and I never found any difficulty with my men about it. I always told them, when I shipped any new men, what were the rules of the ship—to attend prayers, and never come on board later than

ten o'clock. I always found the men easier to manage; and if at any time any one got a little too much drink, which was very rarely, and stayed out too late, when he came on board he used to slink away to his berth, and never make any noise, or rioting, or cursing, or swearing about the ship."

I asked him whether he had ever repented of coming to this determination. "No, sir," he said; "I only wished that I had begun sooner. Sometimes," he added, "I had passengers, and I used to tell them our rules, and I always found them quite willing that we should not put ourselves out of the way for them. Once I was coming home from Holland, and I had two gentlemen passengers, who were Quakers; so I said to my men, 'These people are odd sort of folks; may be they will not like our prayers.' So we watched our opportunity, when they came on deck for a walk in the evening, and we then had the hands down to prayers; but they soon found out what we were doing, and they came down and joined us. They sat there with their hats on, and I did not know what to make of it, but went on in my way as usual. After prayers they said, 'Why, captain, how camest thou not to let us know that thou wast going to prayers?' 'Why, gentlemen,' I said, 'I thought may be you would not like our way.' The result was, they used always to be at prayers morning and evening all the voyage." Sometimes he used to find it a little difficult when getting in cargo, or discharging, to find time for prayers, but by management and resolution he generally accomplished it.

It was not my lot to witness the last hours of this faithful servant of his Lord. He died at a distance from home, and his illness was but of short duration; but I had the satisfaction of hearing that his end was peace.

## DO YOU PRAY?

“Men ought always to pray.”—Luke xviii. 1.

“I will that men pray everywhere.”—1 Tim. ii. 8.

READER:—I offer you an important question. It heads the page before your eyes. It is contained in three little words—Do you pray?

The question is one that none but you can answer. Whether you attend public worship or not, your minister knows. Whether you have family prayers in your house or not, your relations know. But whether you pray in private or not, is a matter between yourself and God.

Reader, I beseech you in all affection to attend to the subject I bring before you. Do not say that my question is too close. If your heart is right in the sight of God, there is nothing in it to make you afraid. Do not turn off my question by replying that you say your prayers. It is one thing to say your prayers, and another to pray. Do not tell me that my question is unnecessary. Listen to me for a few minutes, and I will show you good reasons for asking it.

*I. I ask whether you pray, because prayer is absolutely needful to a man's salvation.*

I say absolutely needful, and I say so advisedly. I am not speaking now of infants and idiots. I am not settling the state of the heathen. I know that where little is given, there little will be required. I speak especially of those who call themselves Christians, in a land like our own. And of such I say, no man or woman can expect to be saved who does not pray.

I hold salvation by grace as strongly as any one. I would gladly offer a free and full pardon to the greatest sinner that ever lived. I would not hesitate

to stand by his dying bed, and say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ even now, and you shall be saved." But that a man can have salvation without *asking* for it, I cannot see in the Bible. That a man will receive pardon of his sins, who will not so much as lift up his heart inwardly, and say, "Lord Jesus, give it to me," this I cannot find. I can find that nobody will be saved by his prayers, but I cannot find that without prayer anybody will be saved.

It is not absolutely needful to salvation that a man should *read* the Bible. A man may have no learning, or be blind, and yet have Christ in his heart. It is not absolutely needful that a man should *hear* the public preaching of the gospel. He may live where the gospel is not preached, or he may be bedridden, or deaf. But the same thing cannot be said about prayer. It is absolutely needful to salvation that a man should *pray*.

There is no royal road either to health or learning. Princes and kings, poor men and peasants, all alike must attend to the wants of their own bodies and their own minds. No man can eat, drink, or sleep by proxy. No man can get the alphabet learned for him by another. All these are things which everybody must do for himself, or they will not be done at all.

Just as it is with the mind and body, so it is with the soul. There are certain things absolutely needful to the soul's health and well-being. Each must attend to these things for himself. Each must repent for himself. Each must apply to Christ for himself. And for himself each must speak to God and pray. You must do it for yourself, for by nobody else can it be done.

Reader, there will be many at Christ's right hand in the last day. The saints gathered from north and south, and east and west, will be a multitude that no man can number. The song of victory that will burst from their mouths, when their redemption is at length complete, will be a glorious song indeed. It will be



far above the noise of many waters, and of mighty thunders. But there will be no discord in that song. They that sing will sing with one heart as well as one voice. Their experience will be one and the same. All will have believed. All will have been washed in the blood of Christ. All will have been born again. All will have prayed. Yes! we must pray on earth, or we shall never praise in heaven. We must go through the school of prayer, or we shall never be fit for the holiday of praise.

Reader, to be prayerless is to be without God, without Christ, without grace, without hope, and without heaven. It is to be in the road to hell. Now can you wonder that I ask the question—DO YOU PRAY?

II. *I ask again whether you pray, because a habit of prayer is one of the surest marks of a true Christian.*

All the children of God on earth are alike in this respect. From the moment there is any life and reality about their religion, they pray. Just as the first sign of life in an infant when born into the world, is the act of breathing, so the first act of men and women when they are born again, is *praying*.

This is one of the common marks of all the elect of God, "They cry unto him day and night." (Luke xviii. 1.) The Holy Spirit, who makes them new creatures, works in them the feeling of adoption, and makes them cry, "Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 15.) The Lord Jesus when he quickens them, gives them a voice and a tongue, and says to them, "Be dumb no more." God has no dumb children. It is as much a part of their new nature to pray, as it is of a child to cry. They see their need of mercy and grace. They feel their emptiness and weakness. They cannot do otherwise than they do. They *must* pray.

I have looked carefully over the lives of God's saints in the Bible. I cannot find one of whose history much is told us, from Genesis to Revelation, who was not a man of prayer. I find it mentioned as a charac-

teristic of the godly, that "they call on the Father," that "they call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." I find it recorded as a characteristic of the wicked, that "they call not upon the Lord." (1 Peter i. 17; 1 Cor. i. 2; Psalm xiv. 4.)

I have read the lives of many eminent Christians, who have been on earth since the Bible days. Some of them, I see, were rich and some poor. Some were learned, and some unlearned. Some of them were Episcopalians, some Presbyterians, some Baptists, some Independents. Some were Calvinists, and some Arminians. Some have loved to use a liturgy, and some to use none. But one thing, I see, they all had in common. They have all been *men of prayer*.

I study the reports of missionary societies in our own times. I see with joy that heathen men and women are receiving the gospel in various parts of the globe. There are conversions in Africa, in New Zealand, in Hindostan, in America. The people converted are naturally unlike one another in every respect. But one striking thing I observe at all the missionary stations. The converted people *always pray*.

Reader, I do not deny that a man may pray without heart, and without sincerity. I do not for a moment pretend to say, that the mere fact of a person praying proves everything about his soul. As in every other part of religion, so also in this, there is plenty of deception and hypocrisy.

But this I do say—that not praying is a clear proof that a man is not yet a true Christian. He cannot really feel his sins. He cannot love God. He cannot feel himself a debtor to Christ. He cannot long after holiness. He cannot desire heaven. He has yet to be born again. He has yet to be made a new creature. He may boast confidently of election, grace, faith, hope, and knowledge, and deceive ignorant people. But you may rest assured it is all vain talk, *if he does not pray*.

And I say furthermore, that of all the evidences of

a real work of the Spirit, a habit of hearty private prayer, is one of the most satisfactory that can be named. A man may preach from false motives. A man may write books, and make fine speeches, and seem diligent in good works, and yet be a Judas Iscariot. But a man seldom goes into his closet, and pours out his soul before God in secret, unless he is in earnest. The Lord himself has set his stamp on prayer as the best proof of a true conversion. When he sent Ananias to Saul in Damascus, he gave him no other evidence of his change of heart than this, "*Behold, he prayeth.*" Acts ix. 11.

I know that much may go on in a man's mind before he is brought to pray. He may have many convictions, desires, wishes, feelings, intentions, resolutions, hopes, and fears. But all these things are very uncertain evidences. They are to be found in ungodly people, and often come to nothing. In many a case they are not more lasting than the morning cloud, and the dew that passes away. A real hearty prayer, flowing from a broken and contrite spirit, is worth all these things put together.

I know that the elect of God are chosen to salvation from all eternity. I know that the Holy Spirit, who calls them in due time, in many instances leads them by very slow degrees to acquaintance with Christ. But the eye of man can only judge by what it sees. I cannot call any one justified until he believes. I dare not say that any one believes until he prays. I cannot understand a dumb faith. The first act of faith will be to speak to God. Faith is to the soul what life is to the body. Prayer is to faith what breath is to life. How a man can live and not breathe, is past my comprehension; and how a man can believe and not pray, is past my comprehension too.

Reader, never be surprised if you hear ministers of the gospel dwelling much on the importance of prayer. This is the point we want to bring you to; we want to know that you pray. Your views of doctrine may be

correct. Your love of Protestantism may be warm and unmistakable. But still this may be nothing more than head knowledge and party spirit. We want to know whether you are actually acquainted with the throne of grace, and whether you can speak to God as well as speak *about* God.

Reader, do you wish to find out whether you are a true Christian? Then rest assured that my question is one of the very first importance: DO YOU PRAY?

III. *I ask whether you pray, because there is no duty in religion so neglected as private prayer.*

We live in days of abounding religious profession. There are more places of public worship now than there ever were before. There are more persons attending them than there ever have been since we were a nation. And yet in spite of all this public religion, I believe there is a vast neglect of private prayer.

I should not have said so a few years ago. I once thought in my ignorance, that most people said their prayers, and many people prayed. I have lived to think differently. I have come to the conclusion that the great majority of professing Christians do not pray at all.

I know this sounds very shocking, and will startle many. But I am satisfied that prayer is just one of those things which is thought a "matter of course," and like many matters of course, is shamefully neglected. It is "everybody's business," and as it often happens in such cases, is a business carried on by very few. It is one of those private transactions between God and our souls, which no eye sees, and therefore one which there is every temptation to pass over and leave undone.

I believe that thousands *never say a word of prayer at all*. They eat. They drink. They sleep. They rise. They go forth to their labour. They return to their homes. They breathe God's air. They see God's sun. They walk on God's earth. They enjoy God's mercies. They have dying bodies. They have judg-

ment and eternity before them. But they *never speak to God*. They live like the beasts that perish. They behave like creatures without souls. They have not a word to say to Him in whose hand are their life, and breath, and all things, and from whose mouth they must one day receive their everlasting sentence. How dreadful this seems! But if the secrets of men were only known, how common!

I believe there are tens of thousands, *whose prayers are nothing but a mere form*—a set of words repeated by rote, without a thought about their meaning. Some say over a few hasty sentences picked up in the nursery when they were children. Some content themselves with repeating the Creed, forgetting that there is not a request in it. Some add the Lord's Prayer, but without the slightest desire that its solemn petitions may be granted.

Many, even of those who use good forms, mutter their prayers over after they have got into bed, or scramble over them while they wash or dress in the morning. Men may think what they please, but they may depend upon it that in the sight of God *this is not praying*. Words said without heart are as utterly useless to our souls as the drum-beating of the poor heathen before their idols. Where there is *no heart*, there may be lip-work and tongue-work, but there is nothing that God listens to—there is *no prayer*. Saul, I have no doubt, said many a long prayer before the Lord met him on the way to Damascus. But it was not till his heart was broken that the Lord said, "he prayeth."

Reader, does this surprise you? Listen to me and I will show you that I am not speaking as I do without reason. Do you think that my assertions are extravagant and unwarrantable? Give me your attention, and I will soon show you that I am only telling you the truth.

Have you forgotten that it is *not natural* to any one to pray? The carnal mind is enmity against God. The desire of man's heart is to get far away from God,

and have nothing to do with him. His feeling toward him is not love, but fear. Why then should a man pray when he has no real sense of sin, no real feeling of spiritual wants,—no thorough belief in unseen things,—no desire after holiness and heaven? Of all these things the vast majority of men know and feel nothing. The multitude walk in the broad way. I cannot forget this. Therefore I say boldly, I believe that few pray.

Have you forgotten that it is *not fashionable* to pray? It is just one of the things that many would be rather ashamed to own. There are hundreds who would sooner storm a breach, or lead a forlorn hope, than confess publicly that they make a habit of prayer. There are thousands who, if obliged by chance to sleep in the same room with a stranger, would lie down in bed without a prayer. To ride well, to shoot well, to dress well, to go to theatres, to be thought clever and agreeable,—all this is fashionable, but not to pray. I cannot forget this. I cannot think a habit is common which so many seem ashamed to own. I believe that few pray.

Have you forgotten *the lives that many live*? Can we really suppose that people are praying against sin night and day, when we see them plunging right into it? Can we suppose they pray against the world, when they are entirely absorbed and taken up with its pursuits? Can we think they really ask God for grace to serve him, when they do not show the slightest desire to serve him at all? Oh, no! it is plain as daylight that the great majority of men either ask nothing of God, or *do not mean what they say* when they do ask,—which is just the same thing. Praying and sinning will never live together in the same heart. Prayer will consume sin, or sin will choke prayer. I cannot forget this. I look at men's lives. I believe that few pray.

Have you forgotten *the deaths that many die*? How many, when they draw near death, seem entirely

strangers to God! Not only are they sadly ignorant of his gospel, but sadly wanting in the power of speaking to him. There is a terrible awkwardness, and shyness, and newness, and rawness, in their endeavours to approach Him. They seem to be taking up a fresh thing. They appear as if they wanted an introduction to God, and as if they had never talked with him before. I remember having heard of a lady who was anxious to have a minister to visit her in her last illness. She desired that he would pray with her. He asked her what he should pray for. She did not know, and could not tell. She was utterly unable to name any one thing which she wished him to ask God for her soul. All she seemed to want was the form of a minister's prayers. I can quite understand this. Death-beds are great revealers of secrets. I cannot forget what I have seen of sick and dying people. This also leads me to believe that few pray.

Reader, I cannot see your heart. I do not know your private history in spiritual things. But from what I see in the Bible and in the world, I am certain I cannot ask you a more necessary question than that before you,—DO YOU PRAY?

IV. *I ask whether you pray, because prayer is that act in religion to which there is the greatest encouragement.*

There is everything on God's part to make prayer easy, if men will only attempt it. All things are ready on his side. Every objection is anticipated. Every difficulty is provided for. The crooked places are made straight, and the rough places are made smooth. There is no excuse left for the prayerless man.

There is a way by which any man, however sinful and unworthy, may draw near to God the Father. Jesus Christ has opened that way by the sacrifice he made for us upon the cross. The holiness and justice of God need not frighten sinners and keep them back. Only let them cry to God in the name of Jesus,—only let them plead the atoning blood of Jesus,—and they

shall find God upon a throne of grace, willing and ready to hear. The name of Jesus is a never-failing passport to our prayers. In that name a man may draw near to God with boldness, and ask with confidence. God has engaged to hear him. Reader, think of this. Is not this encouragement?

There is an *Advocate* and Intercessor always waiting to present the prayers of those who will employ him. That Advocate is Jesus Christ. He mingles our prayers with the incense of his own almighty intercession. So mingled they go up as a sweet savour before the throne of God. Poor as they are in themselves, they are mighty and powerful in the hand of our High Priest and elder Brother. The bank-note without a signature at the bottom is nothing but a worthless piece of paper. The stroke of a pen confers on it all its value. The prayer of a poor child of Adam is a feeble thing in itself, but once endorsed by the hand of the Lord Jesus it availeth much. There was an officer in the city of Rome who was appointed to have his doors always open, in order to receive any Roman citizen who applied to him for help. Just so the ear of the Lord Jesus is ever open to the cry of all who want mercy and grace. It is his office to help them. Their prayer is his delight. Reader, think of this. Is not this encouragement?

There is the *Holy Spirit* ever ready to help our infirmities in prayer. It is one part of his special office to assist us in our endeavours to speak with God. We need not be cast down and distressed by the fear of not knowing what to say. The Spirit will give us words if we will only seek his aid. He will supply us with "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." The prayers of the Lord's people are the inspiration of the Lord's Spirit—the work of the Holy Ghost who dwells within them as the Spirit of grace and supplications. Surely the Lord's people may well hope to be heard. It is not they merely that pray, but the Holy Ghost pleading in them. Reader, think of this. Is not this encouragement?



There are exceeding great and precious *promises* to those who pray. What did the Lord Jesus mean when he spoke such words as these, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matt. vii. 7, 8. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive." Matt. xxi. 22. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it." John xiv. 13, 14. What did the Lord mean when he spoke the parables of the friend at midnight and the importunate widow? Luke xi. 5, and xviii. 1. Reader, think over these passages. If this is not encouragement to pray, words have no meaning at all.

There are wonderful *examples* in Scripture of the power of prayer. Nothing seems to be too great, too hard, or too difficult for prayer to do. It has obtained things that seemed impossible and out of reach. It has won victories over fire, air, earth and water. Prayer opened the Red Sea. Prayer brought water from the rock and bread from heaven. Prayer made the sun stand still. Prayer brought fire from the sky on Elijah's sacrifice. Prayer turned the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. Prayer overthrew the army of Sennacherib. Well might Mary, Queen of Scots, say, "I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men." Prayer has healed the sick. Prayer has raised the dead. Prayer has procured the conversion of souls. "The child of many prayers," said an old Christian to Augustine's mother, "shall never perish." Prayer, pains and faith can do anything. Nothing seems impossible when a man has the spirit of adoption. "Let me alone," is the remarkable saying of God to Moses, when Moses was about to intercede for the children of Israel. Exod. xxxii. 10. The Chaldee version has it, "leave off praying." So long as Abraham asked mercy for

Sodom, the Lord went on giving. He never ceased to give till Abraham ceased to pray. Reader, think of this. Is not this encouragement?

What more can a man want to lead him to take any step in religion than the things I have just told him about prayer? What more could be done to make the path to the mercy-seat easy, and to remove all occasions of stumbling from the sinner's way? Surely if the devils in hell had such a door set open before them they would leap for gladness, and make the very pit ring with joy.

But where will the man hide his head at last who neglects such glorious encouragements? What can be possibly said for the man who after all dies without prayer? Surely, reader, I may well feel anxious that you should not be that man. Surely I may well ask—  
DO YOU PRAY?

*V. I ask whether you pray, because diligence in prayer is the secret of eminent holiness.*

Without controversy there is a vast difference among true Christians. There is an immense interval between the foremost and the hindermost in the army of God.

They are all fighting the same good fight; but how much more valiantly some fight than others! They are all doing the Lord's work; but how much more some do than others! They are all light in the Lord; but how much more brightly some shine than others! They are all running the same race; but how much faster some get on than others! They all love the same Lord and Saviour; but how much more some love him than others! I ask any true Christian whether this is not the case. Are not these things so?

There are some of the Lord's people who seem *never able to get on* from the time of their conversion. They are born again, but they remain babes all their lives. They are learners in Christ's school, but they never seem to get beyond A B C, and the lowest form. They have got inside the fold, but there they lie down and get no further. Year after year you see in them

the same old besetting sins. You hear from them the same old experience. You remark in them the same want of spiritual appetite—the same squeamishness about anything but the milk of the word, and the same dislike to strong meat—the same childishness—the same feebleness—the same littleness of mind—the same narrowness of heart—the same want of interest in anything beyond their own little circle, which you remarked ten years ago. They are pilgrims indeed, but pilgrims like the Gibeonites of old, their bread is always dry and mouldy—their shoes always old and clouted, and their garments always rent and torn. I say this with sorrow and grief. But I ask any real Christian, Is it not true?

There are others of the Lord's people who seem to be *always getting on*. They grow like the grass after rain. They increase like Israel in Egypt. They press on like Gideon, though sometimes faint, yet always pursuing. They are ever adding grace to grace, and faith to faith, and strength to strength. Every time you meet them their hearts seem larger, and their spiritual stature bigger, taller, and stronger. Every year they appear to see more, and know more, and believe more, and feel more in their religion. They not only have good works to prove the reality of their faith, but they are *zealous* of them. They not only do well, but they are *unwearied* in well-doing. They attempt great things, and they do great things. When they fail they try again, and when they fall they are soon up again. And all this time they think themselves poor unprofitable servants, and fancy they do nothing at all. These are those who make religion lovely and beautiful in the eyes of all. They wrest praise even from the unconverted, and win golden opinions even from the selfish men of the world. These are those whom it does good to see, to be with, and to hear. When you meet them, you could believe that, like Moses, they had just come out from the presence of God. When you part with them you feel warmed

by their company, as if your soul had been near a fire. I know such people are rare. I only ask, Is it not so?

Now how can we account for the difference which I have just described? What is the reason that some believers are so much brighter and holier than others? I believe the difference in nineteen cases out of twenty, arises from different habits about private prayer. I believe that those who are not eminently holy, pray *little*, and those who are eminently holy, pray *much*.

I dare say this opinion will startle some readers. I have little doubt that many look on eminent holiness as a kind of special gift, which none but a few must pretend to aim at. They admire it at a distance in books. They think it beautiful when they see an example near themselves. But as to its being a thing within the reach of any but a very few, such a notion never seems to enter their minds. In short they consider it a kind of monopoly granted to a few favoured believers, but certainly not to all.

Now I believe that this is a most dangerous mistake. I believe that spiritual as well as natural greatness depends far more on the use of means within everybody's reach than on anything else. Of course I do not say we have a right to expect a miraculous grant of intellectual gifts. But this I do say, that when a man is once converted to God, whether he shall be eminently holy or not, depends chiefly on his own diligence in the use of God's appointed means. And I assert confidently, that the principal means by which most believers have become great in the Church of Christ, is the habit of *diligent private prayer*.

Look through the lives of the brightest and best of God's servants, whether in the Bible or not. See what is written of Moses, and David, and Daniel, and Paul. Mark what is recorded of Luther and Bradford, the Reformers. Observe what is related of the private devotions of Whitefield, and Cecil, and Venn, and Bickersteth, and M'Cheyne. Tell me of one of all the goodly fellowship of saints and martyrs, who has not

had this mark most prominently—he was *a man of prayer*. Oh! reader, depend upon it, prayer is power.

Prayer obtains fresh and continued outpourings of the Spirit. He alone begins the work of grace in a man's heart. He alone can carry it forward and make it prosper. But the good Spirit loves to be entreated. And those who ask most, will always have most of his influence.

Prayer is the surest remedy against the devil and besetting sins. That sin will never stand firm which is heartily prayed against. That devil will never long keep dominion over us which we beseech the Lord to cast forth. But then we must spread out all our case before our heavenly Physician if he is to give us daily relief. We must drag our indwelling devils to the feet of Christ, and cry to him to send them back to the pit.

Reader, do you wish to grow in grace and be a very holy Christian? Be very sure, if you wish it, you could not have a more important question than this—DO YOU PRAY?

VI. *I ask whether you pray, because neglect of prayer is one great cause of backsliding.*

There is such a thing as going back in religion after making a good profession. Men may run well for a season, like the Galatians, and then turn aside after false teachers. Men may profess loudly while their feelings are warm, as Peter did, and then in the hour of trial deny their Lord. Men may lose their first love, as the Ephesians did. Men may cool down in their zeal to do good, like Mark the companion of Paul. Men may follow an apostle for a season, and then like Demas go back to the world. All these things men may do.

It is a miserable thing to be a backslider. Of all unhappy things that can befall a man, I suppose it is the worst. A stranded ship, a broken-winged eagle, a garden overrun with weeds, a harp without strings, a church in ruins, all these are sad sights, but a backslider is a sadder sight still. That true grace shall

never be extinguished, and true union with Christ never be broken off, I feel no doubt. But I do believe that a man may fall away so far that he shall lose sight of his own grace, and despair of his own salvation. And if this is not hell it is certainly the next thing to it. A wounded conscience, a mind sick of itself, a memory full of self-reproach, a heart pierced through with the Lord's arrows, a spirit broken with a load of inward accusation, all this is *a taste of hell*. It is a hell on earth. Truly that saying of the wise man is solemn and weighty, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." Prov. xiv. 14.

Now what is the cause of most backslidings? I believe, as a general rule, one of the chief causes is neglect of private prayer. Of course the secret history of falls will not be known till the last day. I can only give my opinion as a minister of Christ, and a student of the heart. That opinion is, I repeat distinctly, that backsliding generally first begins with *neglect of private prayer*.

Bibles read without prayer, sermons heard without prayer, marriages contracted without prayer, journeys undertaken without prayer, residences chosen without prayer, friendships formed without prayer, the daily act of private prayer itself hurried over, or gone through without heart,—these are the kind of downward steps by which many a Christian descends to a condition of spiritual palsy, or reaches the point where God allows him to have a tremendous fall.

This is the process which forms the lingering Lots, the unstable Samsons, the wife-idolizing Solomons, the inconsistent Asas, the pliable Jehoshaphats, the over-careful Marthas, of whom so many are to be found in the church of Christ. Often the simple history of such cases is this, they became *careless about private prayer*.

Reader, you may be very sure men fall in private long before they fall in public. They are backsliders on their knees long before they backslide openly in the

eyes of the world. Like Peter, they first disregard the Lord's warning to watch and pray, and then, like Peter, their strength is gone, and in the hour of temptation they deny their Lord.

The world takes notice of their fall, and scoffs loudly. But the world knows nothing of the real reason. The heathen succeeded in making the old Christian, Origen, offer incense to an idol, by threatening him with a punishment worse than death. They then triumphed greatly at the sight of his cowardice and apostacy. But the heathen did not know the fact, which Origen himself tells us, that on that very morning he had left his bed-chamber hastily, and without finishing his usual prayers.

Reader, if you are a Christian indeed, I trust you will never be a backslider. But if you do not wish to be a backsliding Christian, remember the question I ask you—DO YOU PRAY?

VII. *I ask lastly whether you pray, because prayer is one of the best receipts for happiness and contentment.*

We live in a world where sorrow abounds. This has always been its state since sin came in. There cannot be sin without sorrow. And till sin is driven out from the world, it is vain for any one to suppose he can escape sorrow.

Some without doubt, have a larger cup of sorrow to drink than others. But few are to be found who live long without sorrows or cares of one sort or another. Our bodies, our property, our families, our children, our relations, our servants, our friends, our neighbours, our worldly callings, each and all of these are fountains of care. Sickesses, deaths, losses, disappointments, partings, separations, ingratitude, slander, all these are common things. We cannot get through life without them. Some day or other they find us out. The stronger are our affections, the deeper are our afflictions, and the more we love, the more we have to weep.

And what is the best receipt for cheerfulness in such a world as this? How shall we get through this valley of tears with least pain? I know no better receipt than the habit of *taking everything to God in prayer*.

This is the plain advice that the Bible gives, both in the Old Testament and the New. What says the Psalmist? "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Psalm l. 15. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Psalm lv. 22. What says the apostle Paul? "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God: and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. iv. 6, 7. What says the apostle James? "Is any afflicted among you? let him pray." James v. 13.

This was the practice of all the saints whose history we have recorded in the Scriptures. This is what Jacob did when he feared his brother Esau. This is what Moses did when the people were ready to stone him in the wilderness. This is what Joshua did when Israel was defeated before Ai. This is what David did when he was in danger at Keilah. This is what Hezekiah did when he received the letter from Sennacherib. This is what the church did when Peter was put in prison. This is what Paul did when he was cast into the dungeon at Philippi.

The only way to be really happy in such a world as this, is to be ever casting all our cares on God. It is the trying to carry their own burdens which so often makes believers sad. If they will only tell their troubles to God, he will enable them to bear them as easily as Samson did the gates of Gaza. If they are resolved to keep them to themselves, they will find one day that the very grasshopper is a burden.

There is a Friend ever waiting to help us if we will only unbosom to him our sorrow—a Friend who pitied



the poor, and sick, and sorrowful, when he was upon earth—a Friend who knows the heart of a man, for he lived thirty-three years as a man amongst us—a Friend who can weep with the weepers, for he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—a Friend who is able to help us, for there never was earthly pain he could not cure. That Friend is Jesus Christ. The way to be happy is to be always opening our hearts to him. Oh! that we were all like that poor Christian negro, who only answered, when threatened and punished, “*I must tell the Lord.*”

Jesus can make those happy who trust him, and call on him, whatever be their outward condition. He can give them peace of heart in a prison, contentment in the midst of poverty, comfort in the midst of bereavements, joy on the brink of the grave. There is a mighty fulness in him for all his believing members; a fulness that is ready to be poured out on every one that will ask in prayer. Oh! that men would understand that happiness does not depend on outward circumstances, but on the state of the heart!

Prayer can lighten crosses for us, however heavy. It can bring down to our side One who will help us to bear them. Prayer can open a door for us, when our way seems hedged up. It can bring down One who will say, “This is the way, walk in it.” Prayer can let in a ray of hope, when all our earthly prospects seem darkened. It can bring down One who will say, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” Prayer can obtain relief for us, when those we love most are taken away, and the world feels empty. It can bring down One who can fill the gap in our hearts with himself, and say to the waves within, “Peace, be still.” Oh! that men were not so like Hagar in the wilderness, blind to the well of living waters close beside them!

Reader, I want you to be happy. I know I cannot ask you a more useful question than this: DO YOU PRAY?

And now, reader, it is high time for me to bring this tract to an end. I trust I have brought before you

things that will be seriously considered. I heartily pray God that this consideration may be blessed to your soul.

1. Let me speak a parting word *to those who do not pray*. I dare not suppose that all who read these pages will be praying people. If you are a prayerless person, suffer me to speak to you this day on God's behalf.

Prayerless reader, I can only warn you, but I do warn you most solemnly. I warn you that you are in a position of fearful danger. If you die in your present state, you are a lost soul. You will only rise again to be eternally miserable. I warn you that of all professing Christians, you are most utterly without excuse. There is not a single good reason that you can show for living without prayer.

It is useless to say you *know not how* to pray. Prayer is the simplest act in all religion. It is simply speaking to God. It needs neither learning, nor wisdom, nor book-knowledge to begin it. It needs nothing but heart and will. The weakest infant can cry when he is hungry. The poorest beggar can hold out his hand for an alms, and does not wait to find fine words. The most ignorant man will find something to say to God, if he has only a mind.

It is useless to say you have *no convenient place* to pray in. Any man can find a place private enough, if he is disposed. Our Lord prayed on a mountain; Peter on the house-top; Isaac in the field; Nathaniel under the fig-tree; Jonah in the whale's belly. Any place may become a closet, an oratory, and a Bethel, and be to us the presence of God.

It is useless to say *you have no time*. There is plenty of time, if men will only employ it. Time may be short, but time is always long enough for prayer. Daniel had all the affairs of a kingdom on his hands, and yet he prayed three times a day. David was ruler over a mighty nation, and yet he says, "Evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray." Psalm lv. 17. When time is really wanted, time can always be found.

It is useless to say you *cannot pray till you have*

*faith and a new heart*, and that you must sit still and wait for them. This is to add sin to sin. It is bad enough to be unconverted and going to hell. It is even worse to say, "I know it, but will not cry for mercy." This is a kind of argument for which there is no warrant in Scripture. "Call ye upon the Lord," saith Isaiah, "while he is near." Isaiah lv. 6. "Take with you words and come unto the Lord," says Hosea, Hos. xiv. 1. "Repent and pray," says Peter to Simon Magus. Acts viii. 22. If you want faith and a new heart, go and cry to the Lord for them. The very attempt to pray has often been the quickening of a dead soul. Alas! there is no devil so dangerous as a dumb devil.

Oh! prayerless reader, who and what are you that you will not ask anything of God? Have you made a covenant with death and hell? Are you at peace with the worm and the fire? Have you no sins to be pardoned? Have you no fear of eternal torment? Have you no desire after heaven? Oh! that you would awake from your present folly! Oh! that you would consider your latter end! Oh! that you would arise and call upon God! Alas! there is a day coming when many shall pray loudly, "Lord, Lord, open to us," but all too late;—when many shall cry to the rocks to fall on them, and the hills to cover them, who would never cry to God. Reader, in all affection I warn you. Beware lest this be the end of your soul. Salvation is very near you. Do not lose heaven for want of asking.

2. Let me speak in the next place *to those who have real desires for salvation*, but know not what steps to take or where to begin. I cannot but hope that some readers may be in this state of mind, and if there be but one such I must offer him encouragement and advice.

In every journey there must be a first step. There must be a change from sitting still to moving forward. The journeyings of Israel from Egypt to Canaan were long and wearisome. Forty years passed away before

they crossed Jordan. Yet there was some one who moved first when they marched from Ramah to Succoth. When does a man really take his first step in coming out from sin and the world? He does it in the day when he first prays with his heart.

In every building the first stone must be laid, and the first blow must be struck. The ark was 120 years in building. Yet there was a day when Noah laid his axe to the first tree he cut down to form it. The temple of Solomon was a glorious building. But there was a day when the first huge stone was laid at the foot of Mount Moriah. When does the building of the Spirit really begin to appear in a man's heart? It begins, so far as we can judge, when he first pours out his heart to God in prayer.

Reader, if you desire salvation, and want to know what to do, I advise you to go this very day to the Lord Jesus Christ, in the first private place you can find, and entreat him in prayer to save your soul.

Tell him that you have heard that he receives sinners, and has said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." Tell him that you are a poor vile sinner, and that you come to him on the faith of his own invitation. Tell him you put yourself wholly and entirely in his hands,—that you feel vile, and helpless, and hopeless in yourself,—and that except he saves you, you have no hope to be saved at all. Beseech him to deliver you from the guilt, the power, and the consequences of sin. Beseech him to pardon you and wash you in his own blood. Beseech him to give you a new heart, and plant the Holy Spirit in your soul. Beseech him to give you grace, and faith, and will, and power to be his disciple and servant from this day for ever. Oh! reader, go this very day, and tell these things to the Lord Jesus Christ, if you really are in earnest about your soul.

Tell him in your own way, and your own words. If the doctor came to see you when sick, you could tell him where you felt pain. If your soul feels its disease indeed, you can surely find something to tell Christ.

Doubt not his willingness to save you, because you are a sinner. It is Christ's office to save sinners. He says himself, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Luke v. 32.

Wait not, because you feel unworthy. Wait for nothing. Wait for nobody. Waiting comes from the devil. Just as you are, go to Christ. The worse you are, the more need you have to apply to him. You will never mend yourself by staying away.

Fear not, because your prayer is stammering,—your words feeble, and your language poor. Jesus can understand you. Just as a mother understands the first babblings of her infant, so does the blessed Saviour understand sinners. He can read a sigh, and see a meaning in a groan.

Despair not, because you do not get an answer immediately. While you are speaking, Jesus is listening. If he delays an answer, it is only for wise reasons, and to try if you are in earnest. Pray on, and the answer will surely come. Though it tarry, wait for it. It will surely come at last.

Oh! reader, if you have any desire to be saved, remember the advice I have given you this day. Act upon it honestly and heartily, and you shall be saved.

3. Let me speak, lastly, *to those who do pray*. I trust that some who read this tract know well what prayer is, and have the Spirit of adoption. To all such, I offer a few words of brotherly counsel and exhortation. The incense offered in the tabernacle was ordered to be made in a particular way. Not every kind of incense would do. Let us remember this, and be careful about the matter and manner of our prayers.

Brethren who pray, if I know anything of a Christian's heart, you are often sick of your own prayers. You never enter into the apostle's words, "When I would do good, evil is present with me," so thoroughly as you sometimes do upon your knees. You can understand David's words, "I hate vain thoughts." You can sympathize with that poor converted Hottentot,

who was overheard praying, "Lord, deliver me from all my enemies, and above all from that bad man myself!" There are few children of God, who do not often find the season of prayer a season of conflict. The devil has special wrath against us, when he sees us on our knees. Yet I believe that prayers which cost us no trouble, should be regarded with great suspicion. I believe we are very poor judges of the goodness of our prayers, and that the prayer which pleases us *least*, often pleases God *most*. Suffer me, then, as a companion in the Christian warfare, to offer you a few words of exhortation. One thing, at least, we all feel,—we must pray. We cannot give it up. We must go on.

I commend then to your attention, the importance of *reverence and humility* in prayer. Let us never forget what we are, and what a solemn thing it is to speak with God. Let us beware of rushing into his presence with carelessness and levity. Let us say to ourselves, "I am on holy ground. This is no other than the gate of heaven. If I do not mean what I say, I am trifling with God. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Let us keep in mind the words of Solomon, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou on earth." Eccles. v. 2. When Abraham spoke to God, he said, "I am dust and ashes." When Job, he said, "I am vile." Let us do likewise.

I commend to you, in the next place, the importance of praying *spiritually*. I mean by that, that we should labour always to have the direct help of the Spirit in our prayers, and beware above all things of formality. There is nothing so spiritual, but that it may become a form, and this is specially true of private prayer. We may insensibly get into the habit of using the fittest possible words, and offering the most scriptural petitions, and yet do it all by rote, without feeling it, and walk daily round an old beaten path, like a horse in a mill. I desire to touch this point with caution and

delicacy. I know that there are certain great things we daily want, and that there is nothing necessarily formal in asking for these things in the same words. The world, the devil, and our hearts, are daily the same. Of necessity we must daily go over old ground. But this I say, we must be very careful on this point. If the skeleton and outline of our prayers be by habit almost a form, let us strive that the clothing and filling up of our prayers, be as far as possible of the Spirit. As to praying out of a book, it is a habit I cannot praise. If we can tell our doctors the state of our bodies without a book, we ought to be able to tell the state of our souls to God. I have no objection to a man using crutches, when he is first recovering from a broken limb. It is better to use crutches than not to walk at all. But if I saw him all his life on crutches, I should not think it matter for congratulation. I should like to see him strong enough to throw his crutches away.

I commend to you, in the next place, the importance of making prayer *a regular business of life*. I might say something of the value of regular times in the day for prayer. God is a God of order. The hours for morning and evening sacrifice in the Jewish temple were not fixed as they were without a meaning. Disorder is eminently one of the fruits of sin. But I would not bring any under bondage. This only I say, that it is essential to your soul's health to make praying a part of the business of every twenty-four hours in your life. Just as you allot time to eating, sleeping, and business, so also allot time to prayer. Choose your own hours and seasons. At the very least, speak with God in the morning, before you speak with the world; and speak with God at night, after you have done with the world. But settle it down in your minds, that prayer is one of the great things of every day. Do not drive it into a corner. Do not give it the scraps, and leavings, and parings of your day. Whatever else you make a business of, make a business of prayer.

I commend to you, in the next place, the importance of *perseverance* in prayer. Once having begun the habit, never give it up. Your heart will sometimes say, "You have had family prayers; what mighty harm if you leave private prayer undone?" Your body will sometimes say, "You are unwell, or sleepy, or weary; you need not pray." Your mind will sometimes say, "You have important business to attend to to-day; cut short your prayers." Look on all such suggestions as coming direct from the devil. They are all as good as saying, "neglect your soul." I do not maintain that prayers should always be of the same length; but I do say, let no excuse make you give up prayer. It is not for nothing that Paul said, "continue in prayer," and "pray without ceasing." He did not mean that men should be always on their knees, as an old sect, called the Euchitæ, supposed. But he did mean that our prayers should be like the continual burnt-offering—a thing steadily persevered in every day;—that it should be like seed-time and harvest, and summer and winter—a thing that should unceasingly come round at regular seasons;—that it should be like the fire on the altar, not always consuming sacrifices, but never completely going out. Never forget that you may tie together morning and evening devotions, by an endless chain of short ejaculatory prayers throughout the day. Even in company, or business, or in the very streets, you may be silently sending up little winged messengers to God, as Nehemiah did in the very presence of Artaxerxes. And never think that time is wasted which is given to God. A nation does not become poorer because it loses one year of working days in seven, by keeping the Sabbath. A Christian never finds he is the loser in the long run, by persevering in prayer.

I commend to you, in the next place, the importance of *earnestness* in prayer. It is not necessary that a man should shout, or scream, or be very loud, in order to prove that he is in earnest. But it is desirable that



we should be hearty, and fervent, and warm, and ask as if we were really interested in what we were doing. It is the "effectual fervent" prayer that "availeth much," and not the cold, sleepy, lazy, listless one. This is the lesson that is taught us by the expressions used in Scripture about prayer. It is called "crying, knocking, wrestling, labouring, striving." This is the lesson taught us by Scripture examples. Jacob is one. He said to the angel at Penuel, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Gen. xxxii. 26. Daniel is another. Hear how he pleaded with God: "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God." Dan. ix. 19. Our Lord Jesus Christ is another. It is written of him, "In the days of his flesh he offered up prayer and supplication, with strong crying and tears." Heb. v. 7. Alas! how unlike is this to many of our supplications! How tame and lukewarm they seem by comparison! How truly might God say to many of us, "You do not really want what you pray for!" Let us try to amend this fault. Let us knock loudly at the door of grace, like Mercy in "Pilgrim's Progress," as if we must perish unless heard. Let us settle it down in our minds, that cold prayers are a sacrifice without fire. Let us remember the story of Demosthenes, the great orator, when one came to him, and wanted him to plead his cause. He heard him without attention, while he told his story without earnestness. The man saw this, and cried out with anxiety that it was all true. "Ah!" said Demosthenes, "I believe you *now*."

I commend to you, in the next place, the importance of *praying with faith*. We should endeavour to believe that our prayers are always heard, and that if we ask things according to God's will, shall always be answered. This is the plain command of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark xi. 24. Faith is to prayer what the feather is to the arrow; without it prayer will not hit the mark.

We should cultivate the habit of pleading promises in our prayers. We should take with us some promise, and say, "Lord, here is thine own word pledged. Do for us as thou hast said." This was the habit of Jacob, and Moses, and David. The 119th Psalm is full of things asked, "according to thy word." Above all, we should cultivate the habit of expecting answers to our prayers. We should do like the merchant, who sends his ships to sea. We should not be satisfied unless we see some return. Alas! there are few points on which Christians come short so much as this. The church at Jerusalem made prayer without ceasing for Peter in prison; but when the prayer was answered, they would hardly believe it. Acts xii. 15. It is a solemn saying of old Traill's, "There is no surer mark of trifling in prayer, than when men are careless what they get by prayer."

I commend to you, in the next place, the importance of *boldness* in prayer. There is an unseemly familiarity in some men's prayers, which I cannot praise. But there is such a thing as a holy boldness, which is exceedingly to be desired. I mean such boldness as that of Moses, when he pleads with God not to destroy Israel: "Wherefore," says he, "should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains? Turn from thy fierce anger." Exod. xxxii. 12. I mean such boldness as that of Joshua, when the children of Israel were defeated before Ai: "What," says he, "wilt thou do to thy great name?" Josh. vii. 9. This is the boldness for which Luther was remarkable. One who heard him praying said, "What a spirit—what a confidence was in his very expressions! With such a reverence he sued, as one begging of God, and yet with such hope and assurance, as if he spake with a loving father or friend." This is the boldness which distinguished Bruce, a great Scotch divine of the 17th century. His prayers were said to be "like bolts shot up into heaven." Here, also, I fear we sadly come short. We do not

sufficiently realize the believer's privileges. We do not plead as often as we might, "Lord, are we not thine own people? Is it not for thy glory that we should be sanctified? Is it not for thine honour that thy gospel should increase?"

I commend to you, in the next place, the importance of *fulness* in prayer. I do not forget that our Lord warns us against the example of the Pharisees, who for pretence made long prayers; and commands us when we pray not to use vain repetitions. But I cannot forget, on the other hand, that he has given his own sanction to large and long devotions, by continuing all night in prayer to God. At all events we are not likely in this day to err on the side of praying *too much*. Might it not rather be feared, that many believers in this generation pray *too little*? Is not the actual amount of time that many Christians give to prayer in the aggregate very small? I am afraid these questions cannot be answered satisfactorily. I am afraid the private devotions of many are most painfully scanty and limited—just enough to prove they are alive, and no more. They really seem to want little from God. They seem to have little to confess, little to ask for, and little to thank him for. Alas! this is altogether wrong. Nothing is more common than to hear believers complaining that they do not get on. They tell us that they do not grow in grace, as they could desire. Is it not rather to be suspected that many have quite as much grace as they ask for? Is it not the true account of many, that they have little, because they ask little? The cause of their weakness is to be found in their own stunted, dwarfish, clipped, contracted, hurried, little, narrow, diminutive prayers. *They have not because they ask not.* Oh! reader, we are not straitened in Christ, but in ourselves. The Lord says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." But we are like the king of Israel, who smote on the ground thrice and stayed, when he ought to have smitten five or six times.

I commend to you, in the next place, the importance

of *particularity* in prayer. We ought not to be content with great general petitions. We ought to specify our wants before the throne of grace. It should not be enough to confess we are sinners. We should name the sins of which our conscience tells us we are most guilty. It should not be enough to ask for holiness. We should name the graces in which we feel most deficient. It should not be enough to tell the Lord we are in trouble. We should describe our trouble and all its peculiarities. This is what Jacob did, when he feared his brother Esau. He tells God exactly what it is that he fears. Gen. xxxii. 11. This is what Eliezer did, when he sought a wife for his master's son. He spreads before God precisely what he wants. Gen. xxiv. 12. This is what Paul did when he had a thorn in the flesh. He besought the Lord. 2 Cor. xii. 8. This is true faith and confidence. We should believe that nothing is too small to be named before God. What should we think of the patient who told his doctor he was ill, but never went into particulars? What should we think of the wife who told her husband she was unhappy, but did not specify the cause? What should we think of the child who told his father he was in trouble, but nothing more? Oh! reader, Christ is the true Bridegroom of the soul—the true Physician of the heart—the real Father of all his people. Let us show that we feel this, by being unreserved in our communications with him. Let us hide no secrets from him. Let us tell him all our hearts.

I commend to you in the next place, the importance of *intercession* in our prayers. We are all selfish by nature, and our selfishness is very apt to stick to us, even when we are converted. There is a tendency in us to think only of our own souls—our own spiritual conflict—our own progress in religion, and to forget others. Against this tendency we have all need to watch and strive, and not least in our prayers. We should study to be of a public spirit. We should stir ourselves up to name other names beside our own before the throne of grace. We should try to bear in

our hearts the whole world—the heathen—the Jews—the Roman Catholics—the body of true believers—the professing Protestant Churches—the country in which we live—the congregation to which we belong—the household in which we sojourn—the friends and relations we are connected with. For each and all of these, we should plead. This is the highest charity. He loves me best who loves me in his prayers. This is for our soul's health. It enlarges our sympathies and expands our hearts. This is for the benefit of the church. The wheels of all machinery for extending the gospel are oiled by prayer. They do as much for the Lord's cause who intercede like Moses on the mount, as they do who fight like Joshua in the thick of the battle. This is to be like Christ. He bears the names of his people on his breast and shoulders as their High Priest before the Father. Oh! the privilege of being like Jesus! This is to be a true helper to ministers. If I must needs choose a congregation, give me a people that prays.

I commend to you in the next place, the importance of *thankfulness* in prayer. I know well that asking God is one thing, and praising God is another. But I see so close a connection between prayer and praise in the Bible, that I dare not call that true prayer, in which thankfulness has no part. It is not for nothing that Paul says, "By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God." Phil. iv. 6. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Coloss. iv. 2. It is of mercy that we are not in hell. It is of mercy that we have the hope of heaven. It is of mercy that we live in a land of spiritual light. It is of mercy that we have been called by the Spirit, and not left to reap the fruit of our own ways. It is of mercy that we still live and have opportunities of glorifying God actively or passively. Surely, these thoughts should crowd on our minds, whenever we speak with God. Surely, we should never open our lips in prayer without blessing God for that free grace by which we live,

and for that loving-kindness which endureth for ever. Never was there an eminent saint who was not full of thankfulness. St. Paul hardly ever writes an Epistle without beginning with thankfulness. Men like Whitefield in the last century, and Bickersteth in our own time, were ever running over with thankfulness. Oh! reader, if we would be bright and shining lights in our day, we must cherish a spirit of praise. And above all, let our prayers be thankful prayers.

I commend to you in the last place, the importance of *watchfulness over your prayers*. Prayer is that point of all others in religion, at which you must be on your guard. Here it is that true religion begins; here it flourishes, and here it decays. Tell me what a man's prayers are, and I will soon tell you the state of his soul. Prayer is the spiritual pulse. By this the spiritual health may always be tested. Prayer is the spiritual weather-glass. By this we may always know whether it is fair or foul with our hearts. Oh! let us keep an eye continually upon our private devotions. Here is the pith, and marrow, and backbone of our practical Christianity. Sermons, and books, and tracts, and committee meetings, and the company of good men, are all good in their way, but they will never make up for the neglect of private prayer. Mark well the places, and society, and companions that unhinge your hearts for communion with God, and make your prayers drive heavily. *There be on your guard*. Observe narrowly what friends, and what employments leave your soul in the most spiritual frame, and most ready to speak with God. *To these cleave and stick fast*. Reader, if you will only take care of your prayers, I will engage that nothing shall go very wrong with your soul.

Reader, I offer these points for your private consideration. I do it in all humility. I know no one who needs to be reminded of them more than I do myself. But I believe them to be God's own truth, and I would like myself and all I love to feel them more.

TRUE PHILOSOPHY FOR THE MECHANIC.

WRITTEN FOR THE BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

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“No wonder I feel cross,” said Mr. Wiggins, the cabinet maker, to his neighbour, Mr. Sledge, the blacksmith, who had just stepped into his shop, and found him out of humour,—“no wonder, I say, when everything goes against me. Here I have been working, working for eight long years, and I find myself as poor as when I begun. The five hundred dollars which I had out at interest, and which I was saving to build for myself a house and shop, are all gone by that cheating scoundrel, Ruxton, whom I thought to be rich and safe. Phillips, too, has run off, who owed me fifty dollars for furniture, for which he gave me his note, which turns out to be worth nothing. And, as if this was not enough, my cow died yesterday, and my horse has fallen lame, and, I suppose, he will never be worth a cent to me. If I am cross I have some reason to be.”

“Well, I acknowledge, Wiggins,” said Sledge, “that you have had something to disturb you; but cheer up, you may get the better of all your losses yet, and remember you have a wife and children to work for, and you are bound to take care of them.”

“Wife and children, do you say? There is not much encouragement in that quarter. All goes wrong about the house and shop. My wife says my temper is intolerable, and instead of sympathizing with me, she has become so crabbed, that I take no pleasure in looking at her as I once did, scolding and boxing the children from morning till night, and making me hate the very thought of going home. Then, too, my apprentices have become sulky and disobedient; and I can scarcely get a journeyman to come into my shop for any money.”

“Ah, I see things are really going wrong with you, and yet they are not past mending. The loss of money is bad enough, but the loss of family comfort is still worse. I have had a good deal of experience in such matters myself, and it set me to study how the evil might be cured. I got a book of philosophy, and I studied it till I found something I thought would answer, and I must say, the more I try its rules the better I like them. I go along tolerably well and happily of late years, and it is a matter of astonishment to myself how few things now rise up to trouble me. I sleep well, eat with a good appetite, find my best company in my wife and children, work cheerfully, and feel a good will to all men.”

“Well, neighbour Sledge, I wish you would lend me that book of philosophy, for no poor sinner ever needed help more than I do.”

“I am glad to hear you say so, friend Wiggins, for when a man is willing to receive help, it is not far off. There is nothing like philosophy, if it be of the right kind; and although I am not very book-learned, as you know, and never saw the inside of a college, I think I have picked up a little knowledge of the right sort, and this is what I call my philosophy.”

“What might be the name of the book you were speaking about? I should like to read it for myself.”

“Oh, as to the name of the book, that is of no particular consequence. The main point is what it contains. Now let me tell you a little about it and myself. Ten years ago, when I set up business for myself, I very naturally thought if any man could get along in the world, I was the one. Having a good business, and plenty of health and spirits, I went to work, and the dollars came in. I soon married, and when little ones were to be fed and clothed, I worked the harder. I took things easy, and never troubled myself about that religion that some folks make so much account of. I laid it down as a rule, that Sunday was to be amusement day; and wife, and children, and I, used to ride about the country and go a visiting, which we thought was better than going to church. I thus became acquainted with a jolly sort of companions, and we used to have times of it, I tell you. But some how or other, I found after a while the business of the shop did not go on so well. One neighbour says to me, ‘Mr. Sledge, if you swear at so awful a



rate, I must leave your shop, and can't send my sons here to listen to such oaths.' I believe I gave him a pretty short answer, for he took away his custom from the shop. Another one said, 'Sledge, you begin to drink too much, and you'll lose your character if you go frolicking so much on Sundays.' I just told him to mind his own business, and I supposed he did, for he never troubled me with his presence again. And so it was of others; they were all for meddling with my concerns, and giving their advice. I couldn't stand it. I cursed them for their impertinence, and soon I had plenty of time, little work, and no prosperity. What did I do? Got mad with all the world; cursed every one, and everything that came in my way; abused my wife and children, and if ever there was a mortal man unhappy it was I. One day I was sitting idle in my shop, and feeling very badly, for I had been drinking the night before, in the vain hope of drowning my feelings, and the thought came to me in this fashion—'Sledge, you must do something, or your wife and children must be beggars. You had better change your ways.' It was a kind of home thrust, but I did not know exactly what to do. I got up and went to my house. There I saw my wife, with a book on her lap, and the tears in her eyes. I did not say a word, but when she rose and left the room, I picked up the book, and read a few things in it which made me think. It was a book of philosophy. Without saying a word I put it into my pocket, and walked into the woods about a mile off, and there I read in it until the sun went down. First I felt badly, for it pointed out many of my bad ways; then it gave me encouragement, and I cried like a child; and among the many lessons I learned from it, I remember it told me my duty to God, my duty to my family, and neighbours, and what I owed to myself in managing my own bad passions. I made the resolve before I left that place, that I would try this new tack. My wife soon discovered that some change had come over me, and she smiled and spoke pleasantly, and that went right to my heart, like a ray of sunshine in a dark, cloudy day. I went to several of my neighbours, who had been my best customers, but had left me, and I expressed my sorrow for what I had done, and they at once told me I should have their custom again, and if I wanted money they would lend it to me. I gave notice to my old cronies that I had done with them, and had knocked off swearing and drinking. I got my tools

in order, and soon work came in thick upon me. Everything began to smile around me; I had more friends than ever, and people began to say I was the most obliging, civil and good-humoured man they ever knew. This was not all. I never felt so happy in all my life. Night and day, at home and at the shop, it was just the same. I quarreled with no one, and was at peace with myself. Little disappointments did not trouble me as they used to, and even when I was cheated, I did not fall into a passion. And all this change was the effect of the philosophy I got out of that book, which I found had made the same change in my wife. Now, neighbour Wiggins, I wish you would try it. It will do as much for you as it has done for me. It will teach you how to bear your losses, and how to repair them. It will sweeten your temper, and will make all things go right with you, both in the shop and at your house."

Wiggins thought for a while, and then said, "Ah, Mr. Sledge, I know what you mean. The Bible is your book of philosophy. I have neglected it for many a long year, but if God will help me, I will follow your example. Fretting will do no good. Bad humour has only made things worse. I will try your philosophy."

The reader will be pleased to hear that he was as good as his word, and at the present time there is not a more quiet, orderly and prosperous man in all the neighbourhood than Mr. Wiggins. He fears God and keeps his commandments, and God has fulfilled his promise to him, so that like Mr. Sledge he has peace in his own mind, and is at peace with all around him. He never fails to recommend his *book of philosophy* to his neighbours, and it has already become the most popular book in all the village.

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PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

NO. 265 CHESTNUT STREET.

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## FAMILY RELIGION.

“Feed thy kids beside the shepherds’ tents.”—SOL. SONG i. 8.

THE chastened and penitent Church, under the figure of a shepherdess, asks the heavenly Shepherd where and how she may regain his forfeited presence and fostering care—“Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon!” In the former clause of this tender address we have the idea of substantial nutrition suggested, such as would promote the health and life of the flock; and this is sought after in appropriate expressions of ardent desire, “Tell me where,” &c., as if she should say—“My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the blessings which thou art wont to bestow upon thy flock.” In the latter clause we have a no less tender expression of desire—“Tell me where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon.” Here the peace which passeth knowledge, springing fresh from the fountain of gospel pardon, is affectionately sought after as a life-giving antidote to the burning lusts of sin, and the tormentings of a guilty conscience; all of which a backslidden church or individual feels sadly in the high noontide of departure from God.

To these ardent breathings of repenting affection, the kind Shepherd replies—“If thou wilt know . . . . go forth by the footsteps of the flock;” that is, you must mark the paths of holiness in which the godly have trod, and you must walk in the same; and then with all the emphasis of a closing remark, he adds—“And feed thy kids beside the shepherds’

tents;" as if he should say—"I have a most tender care for, and a chief value in, the children of my followers; and I will not speak the quietude of peace to your souls, nor fill you with the strengthening provisions of my grace, until you bring the 'little Benjamins' up to me;" or, in other words, "Let the children of your families be brought away from the outposts of danger, and from the tempting paths of sin, where they might wander away and perish. Place them under such influences as that they shall be most certain to be noticed, cared for, and guarded, and then the great Shepherd of Israel shall restore you to the rich provisions of his grace, and shield you from the burning noon of your bewildered wanderings." This we offer as the exposition of the beautiful text before us; this, therefore, is the doctrine taught: When the Church shall herself return to the observance of the divine commands, and shall bring her children with her, then, and not till then, God will afford her the richness of his reconciled favour. The latter portion of this condition is the precise topic for our consideration at present, viz: Bring the children and youth of your families under the best possible religious influences—"Feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents."

I. It is remarkable that this instructive command comes to us in answer to an inquiry proposed by a repenting church, or individual Christian. By the grace of God his wandering people are brought, sooner or later, to remember the "bread enough and to spare," which they left in their Father's house; and also to return, inquiring how they may be restored to its soul-sustaining provisions. That such a departure has taken place in our day, as truly as in Solomon's, cannot be denied. Many, professedly at least, belonging to the fold, know not where the great and good Shepherd is, with his nourished and flourishing flock. In many churches where the gospel was once preached and felt with power, there is now little better than a hollow form of godliness, represented by a pompous and fashionable worship,

and a congealed orthodoxy. In many places where willing, solemn, and crowded numbers met for living spiritual prayer and praise, there is now coldness, feebleness and death. It must not be withheld, that in very many families where the parents are professed sheep of the fold of Christ, there is no family invocation of heavenly blessings, no gathering the children around the parents' knees, with open Bible and helping catechism, and a father's or a mother's expositions and illustrations. There is many a pew in our churches with the parents devoutly seated, but alas! they seem to be written childless—for on account of the neglect of these and other kindred duties, their children, being left to themselves, have wandered like the untrained branches of a neglected vine. One has fastened upon a poisoned bramble of error; another hangs out over a frightful crag of scepticism; and still another struggles here and there in mid air, at loose ends as to his creed, the sport of every wind of doctrine; one trying to believe, that perhaps the difficulties of a divine revelation are a sufficient apology for not receiving and obeying its plain truths; another trying to sit so still in neglect of mercy's call, as that his convictions may incrust upon him to the consistency of insensibility; and still another, the active propagandist of soul-ruining error, gathering around him a deluded multitude to share his doom.

But we are happy also to affirm, that from many a church, from many a divided family, and from many a far-wandered Christian, there is now going up the prayer which called forth our text—"Tell me where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon!" We hail this as a token for good, and also congratulate ourselves that the fervent prayer has found such a suggestive response in this unerring counsellor—"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine"—"Feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents," and then I will show you where I feed my flock, and where I make it to rest at noon, and I will lead you forth as a shepherd doth his flock, gathering the lambs in his arms and carrying them in his bosom.

II. We may now look in upon that best remembrancer of man's first estate—the family—and see what propriety or necessity there may be for making it religious. The family may consist of only the married pair. But even then it should be religious. We do not affirm that there is no genuine wedlock without true piety, nor yet that unrenewed persons are incapable of high conjugal affection; but we may fearlessly affirm, that without true piety the strongest bond of the marriage covenant is lacking, and the purest and most blissful element of conjugal affection overlooked. It is only when husband and wife recognize each other as a gift from God that they properly regard each other. It is religion, and religion alone, that enkindles perfectly unselfish love; and where it reigns supreme in the breasts of the married pair, there is experienced by themselves, if not seen by others, the liveliest type that earth affords of the paradise in Eden, and of the blessedness in heaven.

But the family may display a larger group. Parents and children, consociated by a mysterious heaven-appointed compact, now engage our attention. When the tender infant, in all its helplessness, is cast upon the parent's arms, it is religion only that can teach how to estimate it rightly; and when its mental and moral powers begin rapidly to expand, it is religion only that can shape and regulate their growth. And when the period of wayward, precipitate youth, with its gush of hope, aspiration, and action, comes on those children, who shall guide them? and how, without that wisdom which cometh down from above? The learned philologist can teach them to parse; the mathematician can instruct them in the relations of numbers; the musician can add his chaste and useful science; and the statesman may give lessons on the dignified science of government; in short, every earthly accomplishment, whether useful or ornamental, may be bestowed, and yet, unless the moral principle which religion alone possesses is communicated, they will become, if not educated rogues or

genteel atheists, at the best deliberate neglecters and despisers of the only qualities which can make them most useful in time, and most happy in eternity. Mere parental tenderness, such as nature teaches, pities the temporary sorrows of the offspring, and strives to remove them, but has no just compassion for their eternal welfare, and makes no proper exertions to promote it. No motives are so truly ennobling, wherewith to stimulate an immortal youth, as those which true religion presents. It also requires the unflinching nerve of religious obligation to restrain and subordinate the young and restless and much loved group.

O! parents, and guardians of youth, if your children were merely earth-born, if they were not begotten to an immortality of being, then you might possibly dispense with any religious element to infuse into and strengthen your discipline. On that supposition, their violent and uncontrolled passions could torment themselves and others only for a few (it may be very few) years. If they are not immortal, then I could almost advise you to forego your fatigue and pain in watching their morals, chastising them for their faults, and training them "in the good and right way." But if otherwise—if they have immortality enstamped upon them, and a heart propense to evil within them, and a world of evil temptations around them, then religion itself can do none too much for them, and without its aids you must entirely fail to discharge your paramount obligations to your beloved charge.

But let us take one more view of the family before we take leave of it. A few rapid years have passed away. Those parents have grown gray and feeble with age and toil; and those children are, in their turn, marrying and constituting new families, and each one says—"Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." How often does it occur that the portion given does not contain one farthing of "the true riches!" In the estimation of the world, the portion is large and amply sufficient, but in reality the child has been ruinously defrauded by the parent.

Perhaps an indiscreet care to teach him the art of growing rich in this world's goods has forestalled every better aspiration, and that son, or daughter, leaves the parental home to organize another. And now mark the regulations of this new family. The first meal is eaten without imploring the benediction of heaven. The first morning dawns, and the first evening passes, without the sweet hymn of praise, or the chapter read, or the blessing of the God of families besought in prayer, and yet these individuals are, perhaps, of families where God was known. Here, then, is a real apostasy; and this young family, as to form at least, is an atheistical family. Those kids have not been properly fed beside the shepherds' tents—for it stands recorded, that if you "train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it;" and there is much reason to apprehend that they will wander entirely away from the flock and from the fold.

But the disruption of the family often presents—we are happy in saying it—a very different scene. Each new branch that separates from the parent stock carries with it the blessing of the God of Jacob. It has its altar sacred to the worship of the God of all the families of the earth, and the morning and evening oblation of domestic prayer and praise is ever fresh. And these families, as they multiply and separate, transmit the precious heritage—the *favour of heaven—to their children's children for ever.*

III. It is now time to enumerate some of the details of that family religion which may be appropriately called the "shepherds' tents."

1. *An entire subordination to the will of the parent.* We urge this, however, in the full light of the inspired command—"Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." We are considering that the will of the parent is regulated by the law of God, and then, peaceably if it can, and forcibly if it must, but absolutely, that parental will is to be the living law of the household.



Must we tarry to defend this position? Reason shall sustain us. In early youth there is no possibility of a well regulated household, unless the will of the parent sits regent. Nor does it follow that the addition of a few years to the age of the child absolves him from that obligation; for in that case, inasmuch as parents and children often think most diversely, there will be a house divided against itself, and then, divine revelation for it, that house must fall. Domestic anarchy, that fittest emblem of satanic rule, is the unavoidable result. But even well regulated reason, with all her sage lessons of observation and experience, may retire, for God hath spoken on this point. How often does his servant, doubly-wise with observation, experience, and inspiration, ring it in our ears—"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother." Prov. vi. 20. And again—"The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Prov. xxx. 17.

But a greater than Solomon hath said, when amidst inapproachable symbols of divine majesty he uttered those laws which are the pillars of righteousness to his government—"Honour thy father and thy mother;" and the great apostle to the gentiles puts the only possible construction on this statute, when he says—"Children, obey your parents, which is the first commandment with promise."

The enviable distinction given to Abraham by God was this—"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him;" and then the commendation is crowned with a most precious promise—"And they shall keep the way of the Lord, and do justice and judgment;" and no Bible reader will fail in adducing, as testimony, the case of indulgent and heart-broken old Eli, and his unrestrained sons; all of which, together with numerous other coincident passages, fully sustain our position, that the will of the parent cuts off all discussion—that in the application

of religion to the family, *complete subordination to the heaven-appointed will of the parent is a fundamental law.*

2. We have found it impossible even to allude to the general topic of family religion, without mentioning family worship; it seems to force itself upon us as an essential element of family religion.

By *family worship* we do not mean that dead and un-sightly thing, a stiff adherence to reading just one entire chapter in the Bible, be it long or short, and always singing just one entire psalm or hymn, and then spending perhaps a wearisome length of time upon the knees, whilst a long list of thread-bare phrases is repeated. No—this bears about the same relation to family worship, that the withered blackened crisp, called a mummy, does to the animated being of whom it is the soulless remembrancer.

By *family worship* we mean the *visible recognition of the divine government, and the consociated worship of Jehovah by the family in its household character.* When this condition of mind exists, to any proper degree, in those who have the management of a family, it will not be an insuperable task to give the sentiment a sufficiently appropriate utterance. Let the heart of a family be right, and then, when their table is spread with the munificence of our heavenly Father, that heart will compel the tongue to speak the language of humble supplication and aspiring gratitude. Or let the morning dawn upon the family, and show that the vengeance of offended justice has not closed the eyes of any of the loved ones in death, and let a view of the dangers and temptations of the coming day pass before the mind of the parent, or let the happy, tranquil evening gather in the much loved group, and it will be passing strange if that family is not devoutly seated together—parents, children, servants and all. The father, or some one appointed by him, or perhaps all unitedly, will read a portion of God's holy word—if practicable all will join in a sweet song of praise, and then, almost instinctively, all will fall upon their knees whilst the

forgiveness of sins, and all needed supplies of temporal and spiritual blessings are besought through the merits of the Friend of sinners. Such a *family worship* as this is, in the beautiful pastoral imagery of our text, bringing the kids beside the shepherds' tents, and giving them their morning and evening supplies.

3. There was a time-honoured custom for whose restoration we now plead. *Whole families appeared in the sanctuary together.* A goodly number of intervening miles formed no barrier whatever. Their only effect was to set the church-bound family in motion a little sooner in the morning. Neither did the number of persons involved produce any habitual change in this regulation. If necessity required the more robust to travel on foot, then those "walked to the house of God in company." Or if the same ample vehicle was required to contain them which carried their produce to the market, then it was pressed into this more sacred and honourable service. Every heart in that family beat high for church, and nothing short of absolute necessity might detain any one at home. Householders trusted their homes, in those days, to the guardianship of angels, who, encamping round their dwellings, well sustained their trust; and parents could then say, as they entered the house of the Lord, as Cornelius said—"Now, therefore, we are *all* here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Acts x. 33.

Then when "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees" occurred, the children and all were at hand to witness the power of the right hand of the Most High. Or when the "angel came down and troubled the water," the children and all were there to step into the pool and be healed of whatsoever disease they had. It is a sad case when the face of any member of a church-going family has grown strange to the pastor, even the countenance of one of the "kids."

Christian parents, if you would find where the good Shep-

herd has gone with his flock, that you may refresh yourselves and your children with his grace, let me tell you he has "gone down into his garden to the beds of spices to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies;" there you may find him. Be sure then to go there as habitually as possible yourselves, and also be sure that you have with you, as nearly as possible, your whole family *beside* the shepherd's tent.

4. Let us now accompany that interesting group home from the sanctuary upon the Sabbath evening. A little season of bodily refreshment, &c., is now supposed to have passed, and a new scene, most befitting our theme, transpires. The father or mother presides on the interesting occasion. The text and the sermon for the day then pass under review, and thus all are trained to "take heed how they hear," and to remember and analyze. Then the catechism is produced—that *multum in parvo* of theology, so hated and traduced by the ignorant and the sceptical, and by its aid that most promising theological class, in the pleasing manner of question and answer, thread their way through the whole history of redemption. True, this is an old-fashioned way of spending the Sabbath evening, and we fear has fallen very much into disuse in very many families, fond to be called Presbyterian. But should the innovations of time entirely discontinue it, still catechizing after this manner can claim as its trophies multitudes of the most intelligent Christians, and of the best theologians, "of whom the world was not worthy." If no greater good was attained, this is an ample recompense—the hour thus spent was redeemed from Sabbath desecration. But in addition to this, they have enjoyed an hour of vigorous mental exercise—both the memory and the judgment have been invigorated, and the minds, even of very young children, have been stored with evangelical principles and correct phraseology, which, in after years, will give consistency and precision to the whole Christian life.

For this excellent custom we plead more than patristic recommendation. As to this precise *form* of teaching religious truth, we only plead the wisdom and counsel of good and great men, but for the *fact* of imparting, even to young children, these truths we have a "thus saith the Lord"—"He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and tell them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of the Lord, but keep his commandments." Psa. lxxviii. 4—6.

5. In close connection with catechizing, we urge *private conference between parents and children on topics of religion; also, private prayer together*. We shall not now attempt to offer any solution of the surprising fact, that there is often an extreme reluctance to free conversation between members of the same family, even between the parent and child. But we shall, under two or three particulars, insist upon it as a high duty to which all are prompted by nature, and by the word of God, and which is most certain to yield a rich harvest unto eternal life.

We plead for free conversation and prayer together, because of *their adaptedness to promote the right type of religion*. Such exercises are almost perfectly free from many influences which most injuriously affect some other religious efforts. There is here the utmost opportunity for patient and full discussion, and therefore the young mind is led along intelligently from one step to another. Difficulties are removed as fast as they occur, and thus the youth attains to a clear and accurate understanding of the truth. The religious impressions thus made are upon the understanding rather than on the passions, and then admitting (yea, we contend for it,) that conversion to God is not a mere exercise of the understanding, but the result of the effectual operation of God's Spirit upon the whole man, yet, as that Spirit works effectually only through the truth, these persons are pre-

pared in his own appointed way for his effectual operations, and he will certainly own his appointed means, and will work savingly on their minds, and they will become intelligent Christians, not soon shaken in mind, and tossed by every wind of doctrine.

If parents would at an early period talk with their children, explaining what the nature and operations of true religion are, they would not often mistake mere animal excitement for the work of the Spirit. Then these sensation meetings, which are lashed into a foam of mere animal excitement by the application of machinery to an ignorant multitude, will lose their pestilential power. Very few of our youth, if thus instructed at an early age, would become indurated in sin by a false profession, or be the hopeless subjects of that spasmodic religion, which results from the combination of large mixed assemblies, and uncommanded and unprofitable bodily exercises. *Knowledge, yea knowledge,* lies at the foundation of that religion which can give a reason for the hope that is within; and no period of life is half so precious for its acquisition as early youth.

Again: we urge this method of impressing religious truth on account of the *peculiar impressibility of the young mind by religious truth thus spoken.* We have no doubt but all children are "entirely born in sin," and naturally averse to the reception of religious truth, however or whenever communicated; but we are quite as certain that the means for their redemption are quite as powerful as the hold of sin upon them, "for where sin abounded grace did much more abound;" and whilst they are, as yet, not doubly indurated by long continued personal and actual transgression, there is a peculiar hope and likelihood of imparting lasting impressions for good. Young children receive with implicit faith the lessons taught to them, and when these lessons come through the channel of a parent's love, they can scarcely fail to leave a lasting impression for good.

Moreover, we rest persuaded that there are no topics

which will interest and so deeply impress young children as those which speak of the soul, and the future world, and God. Therefore, we urge parents to present these subjects to their children, and then approach with them into the immediate presence of God by simple, earnest prayer, whilst this precious, fleeting hour of impressibility is here. Leave them not, dear parents, to the hardening influence of another day or year. Sleep not or the enemy will sow tares in this your precious field. Your young children are not only the fit subjects of the final retributions of the divine government, but they are also fit subjects of the means of mercy, and you are the divinely appointed persons through whom they may, at present, learn for eternity.

We urge private conversation and prayer, again, *because of their known efficacy*. To the discharge of some duties we are impelled by our adherence to moral principle, without being cheered by a *present* recompense. But not so of this duty—the recompense has come in such manifest connection with its discharge, as greatly to encourage to its performance, and to leave great guilt upon all who neglect it. There are also many strong indications, that when all secret things are made manifest, there shall stand forth an innumerable multitude, who shall point back to the time and place where prayers were offered under such circumstances as we have recommended, and to the private conversations and exhortations, eloquent with a father's and a mother's piety and love, and say, "There, and then, serious impressions were first made upon my mind; there my hard heart began to melt; in that sacred retreat I first saw myself to be a sinner, and Christ to be a Saviour, and felt persuaded that I should and might lay hold upon him as my Saviour."

Some scenes have been witnessed by mortal eyes; yea, angels have hovered, beholding delighted; yes, God himself has been well pleased to behold them, in which this duty has been reduced to action. Let one such pass before us **now**. Once a pious mother was in the habit of retiring

with her youthful charge, her "kids" beside her knees, to talk to them of heaven and God, and then to give utterance to the treasured emotions of a mother's heart in prayer, and also to teach those children to pray for themselves. In the twilights of bland and summer evenings, the fence corners of an untravelled lane were their chosen retreat; in more inclement seasons it was the undisturbed maternal chamber. The older children usually kneeled on the extremes, arranged on either hand, whilst in the centre kneeled the mother, her hand resting upon the neck of her last-born child. Those prayers were heard, and an answer in mercy given. That mother has recently entered into the abodes of the blessed, and now from her "prepared mansion" she may look down and behold every child of her numerous family, save one, professing faith in the Redeemer. One is a ruling elder in the church of his fathers. Three have, for more than a score of years, preached the glorious gospel of the Son of God; another, that last born son, the inheritor of a mother's peculiar blessing, has, more recently, been set apart to that same high calling. What precise relation exists between those means and these results it might be unbecoming to inquire, but this may be most properly and truthfully testified—the unfading impressions which those occasions have left, are an experimental demonstration of their moral power; and in the language of Peter and John, "we cannot but speak that which we have seen and heard," when we urge you, dear parents, to take with you your youthful charge, enter into your chamber, and when you have shut to your door, talk to them of their sins, their souls, and their Saviour; then teach them to lisp their prayers and their praises to their Redeemer, and then in their hearing pour out your parental solitudes into the ears of Him who is in secret, and your Father which seeth in secret shall reward you openly.

6. There is still another tent of the shepherd beside which, in closing, we must invite you to feed your kids.



This may, with a little latitude, be called the *domestic school*. We plead for a *home education religiously proportioned*. By *home education* we mean, that youth, especially in their earlier years, should not be removed from under their parents' observation; and by *religiously proportioned* we mean, that a proper admixture of practical industry and economy, literature and religion, be secured to them; in other words, let the presence and principles of the Bible accompany and control the entire education of the habits and principles of the youth.

It may be, some reader has adopted the creed of theorizing Thelwall, "who thought it unfair to influence a child's mind by inculcating any opinions before it should come to years of discretion, and be able to choose for itself." "I showed him my garden," says Coleridge, "and told him it was my botanical garden." "How so," said he, "it is covered over with weeds." "O!" I replied, "that is because it has not yet come to years of discretion and choice; the weeds, you see, have taken the liberty to grow, and I thought it unfair in me to prejudice the soil in favour of roses and strawberries."

But perhaps you have determined to send your children, even in early life, and with their unestablished principles, to some distant boarding-school or seminary, being determined to have them thoroughly and fashionably educated. Perhaps you admit that the institution is under the care of infidels, or Roman Catholics, or has no higher sense of moral accountability than a *mere state institution*. But you say, "it is a thorough place, and the children of the best go there!" Then send them, fond parent, but do not treasure for yourself the bitter disappointment which must recoil upon you when they return with hearts alienated from good social order, filled with pride and fashion, deriding your old-fashioned Puritan principles and practices, and firmly fixed in the faith (more truly the infidelity) of their preceptors, and not unfrequently with the mark of the Beast upon them. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things

of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.”

Let us hope that you will look carefully, especially to the early training of your youth. Count no lawful effort or admissible expenditure too great, that you may put into their hands such papers and such books as you would be willing to see acted out in their lives, and such as you will be willing to answer for at the judgment-seat. Bring to bear every argument you can urge, and every vote you can poll, to have such home schools as are likely to make men and women, citizens and Christians, of your children; and when you may be compelled to send them from under your immediate observation that they may complete their education, or acquire some useful mechanical art, we beseech you by the love you bear to them, by the heart-rending experience of some, and by the rendering up of your final account, that you lead them not into temptation, by placing them in families where their morals are uncared for, or under instructors who care not for their souls, but deliver them from evil, so far as your agency can affect them in these arrangements.

Finally. Is it at all strange that the Good Shepherd should withdraw his fostering care of the sheep of his fold, and leave them to wander famished and forlorn, when they abandon the young of the flock so unnaturally as at the present day? No, the greater marvel is that he does not smite his flock with perpetual barrenness, and finally disown and abandon them. If, therefore, you would see the heavenly Shepherd return and refresh you amidst the pastures of his grace, and make you to lie down in his favour at noon; if you would see your children rise up and call you blessed; if you would have them truly happy and useful in the various relations of life; and if you would stand amidst your group of beloved offspring in the day when you must give account of this your highest stewardship, and joyfully say—“Behold! I and the children which God hath given me;” then you must “go forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed your kids beside the Shepherds’ tents.”

## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

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“Ye are the light of the world.”—MATT. v. 14.

FOR four thousand years darkness had covered the land, and gross darkness the people. The history of each successive generation served but to confirm the truth of the assertion, that “the world by wisdom knew not God.” Guided by the light of nature, with all the advantages of antediluvian longevity, the human mind pushed its researches, and through accumulated centuries augmented its stores of knowledge, till, before the Christian era, the human intellect had reached the zenith of its development. The perfection of Grecian and Roman literature had erected a monument to genius as imperishable as the history of our race. But the history of the world’s moral career is as humiliating as that of her intellectual is brilliant. The elements of religious knowledge lay concealed beneath a veil that no human sagacity could penetrate. Nothing but a revelation from God could dissipate the darkness of moral death which involved our guilty race, and gild our future prospects with a ray of hope. Such a revelation God in mercy vouchsafed to give, but not to the world at large, nor with the full splendour of meridian light. One single promise was given to the representatives of our race, to mitigate the sternness of despair, as they turned their last lingering look on Eden’s entrance, now for ever closed: “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” Obscure and enigmatical as that promise seemed, it revealed to the eye of faith a ray of hope

beaming from the throne of God. Successive communications from on high, and the divine appointment of sacrificial rites, rendered that intimation of mercy more intelligible.

Under the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, the scape-goat, the spotless victim, the blood of atonement, the interceding priest, and all the minutiae of a complicated ritual, taught in expressive though symbolical language the doctrine of imputation; and foretold the character and the mission of the *promised seed*. In the progressive development of the divine purpose, the predictions of the Messiah's advent became more and more clear and definite, until the Spirit of the Lord touched Isaiah's lips with a live coal from off the altar; when, wrapped in the ecstasy of prophetic vision, he directs the eye of faith down the long tract of coming time, till it rests on the burning focus where meet all the types and prophecies of ancient times. As he beholds in the infant of Bethlehem the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, he exclaims, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Seven hundred and fifty years after the utterance of this prediction, its fulfilment was announced by an angelic messenger to the shepherds of Bethlehem—"Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Such was the person, and such the office of Him who said, "Ye are the light of the world." In the execution of his commission as the Captain of our salvation, he selects, and organizes, and trains for spiritual warfare an army for the conquest of a revolted world. In the little band of his chosen followers he recognized the elements of that kingdom which is destined to extend from sea to sea, and

from the river to the ends of the earth. He furnished the church with spiritual weapons from heaven's armory, and constituted her the visible representative of the interests of his kingdom on earth. While seated on the mediatorial throne as God over all blessed for ever, he will give efficiency to her instrumentality.

In the present tract it is our purpose to discuss the following topics, viz. I. The Character, II. The Office, III. The Resources, and IV. The Responsibilities, of the Church.

Our first inquiry then is, what are the essential

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

In reply to this practical and vastly important inquiry we shall not present you with a fancy sketch, a beau ideal of a perfect church; nor shall we enter the arena of polemic strife, to decide the long contested claim to the apostolic succession, or to settle the *jure divino* form of ecclesiastical piety. It were well for the interests of piety, had these and kindred topics occupied far less prominence in theological discussion. The Saviour has furnished us a model in the church gathered under his own ministry, and trained by his own instructions; and his approbation, implied in the language of the text, seems to address itself to all who labour in building up the church of Christ, in the language of God to Moses when he was about to make the tabernacle: "See that thou make all things according to the pattern which was shown thee in the mount." We shall endeavour to exhibit the characteristic features of that pure and primitive church, as a criterion by which to test the claims of modern communions to being a part and parcel of the church of God.

1. The church of Christ is a regenerated body.

The very terms of membership, as prescribed by her divine Head, are receiving Christ, or believing on his name

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John i. 12, 13. Her members are represented as separate and distinct from the world. “If ye were of the world the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” John xv. 19. The design of the gospel and the end of Christ’s death establish the same truth. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” Christ’s special prayer for his people shows the same thing. “I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” Their bodies are called the temples of the Holy Ghost; they are addressed as the saints of the Most High God; as those that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; as Christ’s sheep; as partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and as having passed from death unto life.

2. The primitive church implicitly received, and heartily rejoiced in, the doctrines revealed in the word of God. This is evident, from the fact that her ministry, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, were mainly employed in stating, explaining, defending, and enforcing those doctrines. Nor were they indifferent as to the sentiments adopted by those over whose spiritual interests they were called to preside.

They regarded *the truth* as the only legitimate instrument of sanctification, and hence the unflinching boldness with which they proclaimed it in the face of the most cruel persecutions. The great apostle to the Gentiles, who could become all things to all men, that he might, by all means, save some; and who, in unessential matters, could cheerfully forego his own Christian liberty rather than wound the conscience of a weak brother, did not hesitate to pronounce the most unqualified anathema on him, though he be an angel from heaven, who should preach any other gospel. Doctrines which are adopted by many at the present day, who claim to be Christians, Peter denounces as damnable heresies. The apostles earnestly warned the churches against the insidious approach of false teachers, and the destructive tendency of false doctrines, and enjoined on those who were invested with authority in the church, to exclude from her communion such as persisted in heretical opinions. "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition, reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth being condemned of himself." Tit. iii. 10, 11.

3. The apostolic church received and administered those ordinances, and only those that were instituted by her glorious Head. In obedience to their divine commission, we find her ministers baptizing individuals and households who received the Christian faith, whether they were Jews or Gentiles; and the church as a body "continuing steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." For the first of these they found a warrant in the great commission, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and for the latter, in the express command of the Saviour, "Do this in remembrance of me," impressed as it was on their hearts by the hallowed associations of that memorable night in which he was betrayed into the hands of sinners. These they justly regarded as

the circumcision and the passover of the Christian dispensation. For the other rites which have been dignified with the name of sacraments, we search in vain for divine or apostolic authority. They originated at a later period, when a corrupt church taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and substituted for the pure incense of a spiritual worship the pageantry of a splendid ritual.

4. The church of Christ in its primitive character was truly a missionary organization.

That such was the design of its Founder, is obvious from his explicit and repeated declarations. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," was the broad commission under which her ministry commenced their aggressive movement against the powers of darkness. In the spirit of that commission, apostles and evangelists went forth everywhere preaching the word. From the hill of Calvary as a radiating centre, the true light shone forth in every direction, transcending the boundaries of Judea, and dispelling the thick darkness of paganism in all its varied forms. Nor was the spread of the gospel a mere incidental result of the establishment of the church. As we learn from the parables of the leaven, and of the mustard-seed, it was the great leading end of her existence. The very spirit and genius of Christianity are diffusive. Ye are the light of the world, and where that heavenly light exists it can but illuminate. Not only the apostles, but the church at large, evidently so understood their commission; and the love of Christ shed abroad in their hearts constrained them to unremitting zeal in its fulfilment. When threatened and forbidden to speak and to teach in the name of Jesus, their ready and decisive answer was, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Paul felt himself a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise,



and was ready to the utmost of his ability to preach the gospel to all men.

The zeal and devotedness of the ministry was seconded, and their hands upheld by a like spirit of self-denial on the part of the private members of the church. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." They held their services, their influence, and their worldly possessions as a fund sacredly consecrated to the cause of Christ, and at all times subject to his demands.

Such is a brief and imperfect delineation of the more prominent characteristics of the primitive church, on which the Saviour devolved the stupendous work of evangelizing the world. While she retained her original character, her efficiency justified the wisdom of the divine appointment; the gospel had free course and was glorified; the chariot of salvation went forth conquering and to conquer, and the spiritual weapons which she wielded, proved mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Clothed with the panoply of heaven, and sustained by the arm of Omnipotence, she pursued her victorious march, in defiance of the confederate powers of earth and hell.

The Lord Jehovah was a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her. But when a sinful conformity to the spirit of the world—pride, ambition, and self-dependence—had induced her to lay aside the shield of faith, and when the alloy of human error had blunted the edge of the sword of the Spirit, then it was that she was shorn of her strength, and ICHABOD was written on the escutcheon of a degenerate church.

In these days of exclusiveness and bold pretensions, when many standing in high places are proclaiming with unblushing confidence, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these," it becomes a question of no secondary im-

portance, where is the representative of that church which our Saviour designated as the light of the world? In the solution of this inquiry, it were worse than useless to search the doubtful genealogy of popes and prelates, or to attempt to determine the precise formula of patristic rites and ceremonies: for "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The true succession consists in identity of character and spirit with the primitive church. Where this is found, it secures the fulfilment of the divine promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world;" and the presence and approbation of her glorious Head give validity to her ordinances, and efficiency to her labours. That such an institution exists at the present day, possessing essentially the characteristics already enumerated, intelligent candour will not deny—that it is circumscribed by the pale of any particular communion, none but the most exclusive bigotry will claim. It embraces all who are born of the Spirit of God—whose creed is the teachings of the Holy Ghost—whose lives are conformed to the image of Christ, and whose glorious destiny is an inheritance among them that are sanctified. It constitutes the mystical body of Christ—"the sacramental host of God's elect." And this leads us to our second topic of consideration, viz.:

#### THE OFFICE OF THE CHURCH.

Under this branch of our subject it is pertinent to inquire in what sense the language of the text is applicable to the church. Obviously she is not the original source of that light which must dispel the moral darkness of mankind. In that sense Christ is spoken of as "the *true light* that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," inasmuch as he is both the author and the object of divine revelation. Of that revelation the Psalmist says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;" and the apostle

Paul declares that "life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel." In short, the Scriptures abundantly teach that the revealed word of God is the only light which can illuminate this benighted world, and guide degenerate man to the favour and enjoyment of his Maker. From these considerations we infer that Christ has constituted the church the depository of divine truth. This deduction is corroborated by the entire history of the sacred canon, as well as by its providential preservation in subsequent ages. From the beginning divine communications were confined to the proper elements of the church of God, even before it had an extended organized existence; for "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

It was the peculiar distinction of the Jews, that "unto them were committed the oracles of God;" and we are indebted to the reverence of that people for the writings of Moses and the prophets, and to the fidelity of their scribes in preserving unadulterated the sacred records, that those ancient scriptures have reached us in their purity.

The same economy was observed in the introduction of the Christian dispensation. An extraordinary class of officers in the church were divinely inspired to complete the sacred canon, and furnished with unquestionable testimonials of their inspiration. Under the direction of an overruling Providence, the inspired volume has been completed, and under the seal and sanction of Him who is the Alpha and the Omega, committed to the church in sacred trust for the benefit of a lost world in all coming time. It contains the whole duty of man, both to his fellows and to God, and provides for his highest happiness, both in the present and the future world. The office of the church, then, is to disburse this invaluable treasure for the benefit of the entire race. Herself a monument of the power and efficacy of divine truth to regenerate, sanctify, and save, it is made her privilege and duty to employ the same divine instrumentality

for the salvation of others. She may propagate and explain the truth as dictated by the Holy Ghost in the sacred Scriptures, according to the principles of correct interpretation—but her decretals can give no authority to doctrines which are not found in the word of God. The integrity of the sacred canon is guarded by sanctions which would seem too fearful to be disregarded by any but such as are given over to judicial insensibility. He who is the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star, testifies unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

From the faithful execution of the high trust committed to the church, two grand results may be expected; the one pertaining to the present life, and to the welfare of man as a social being; the other having reference to his future existence, and the glorious retributions of eternity. Human experience early taught the necessity of civil government, but the relative duties and obligations of the various elements of society can never be understood except as they are learned from the pages of revelation. The history of the world has been a history of despotism, where the weak have groaned under the oppression of the mighty, and the multitude have submitted to the dictation of the few. From century to century the proud possessors of hereditary royalty have looked down with contempt upon all the world besides as their vassals, born to minister to their royal pleasure, and to shed their blood in the execution of their ambitious purposes.

It was the slow and powerful leaven of divine truth under the teachings of Protestant Christianity that elicited

the true design of civil government, and developed the correct principles of civil and religious liberty. The principles of the Bible, inspiring the hearts, and controlling the consciences of the yeomanry of England, roused them to bid defiance to the tyranny of Charles and the intolerance of Laud, and at the peril of their lives to maintain that glorious aphorism of freedom—"Under God the origin of all legitimate authority is the will of the people." The same principles, cherished and propagated by our pilgrim fathers, and transplanted on American soil, have laid the foundations of a government unparalleled in the annals of nations, exciting the admiration and the envy of the world, affording every facility, and presenting every inducement to individual and national enterprise; thus gilding our future destiny with a prospective effulgence, alike illimitable and interminable. Let the church, then, gird herself to the fulfilment of her heavenly mission. Let the Bible find a lodgment in every habitation of man; let it meet the emigrant as he first sets foot on our shores; let the heralds of salvation, with the grace of God in their hearts and the law of kindness on their lips, proclaim the invitations of mercy in every village and hamlet in the land; let the self-denying colporteur, laden with an evangelical literature, enter the abodes of poverty, ignorance, and crime, and by his condescending piety, and fervent prayers, seek to elevate their wretched inmates to the standing of citizens and to the hopes of the Christian.

Let Sabbath-schools collect the rising generation, and enstamp on their infant minds the impress of the divine law. And let the pure incense of true devotion burn on every family altar, until our legislators shall be constrained, either by the law of love or by the controlling influence of a heathful public sentiment, to award to every portion of our Union what even-handed justice and equity demand. Then shall our land become Immanuel's land, and ours shall be

the blessedness of that nation whose God is the Lord. Then may we bid defiance to internal dissensions and foreign invasion. The Lord of Hosts will be our banner, and the light of the millennium will gild our numerous temples, already radiant with the beams of the Sun of righteousness.

But should the church prove recreant to her trust, and permit our population to out-run the means of evangelization, what an appalling contrast to her present prospects will the condition of our country exhibit! When the morality of the Bible shall cease to control the consciences of our rulers, and the sanctions of religion shall no longer give energy to law, then the sun of our prosperity will have set for ever, and the darkness of licentiousness and anarchy will cover this fairest portion of man's earthly heritage. In vain shall we trust for deliverance to the wisdom of human legislation, or hope to escape the operation of that immutable decree of God, "When the wicked bear rule the people mourn." That living, operative, practical Christianity is an essential element of a free government has been clearly demonstrated by the experience of one of the most distinguished nations on the globe. France, that model of refinement, whose capital is the emporium of fashion for the world; whose language is heard in every literary circle; proverbial for her chivalry, alike distinguished in literature, science, and the arts; whose military prowess rendered her the terror of continental Europe, and whose patriots studied the principles of republicanism amid the struggles of our own revolution—France has sought to be free. By her own native energy she burst the shackles of royalty, and dashed to the earth the sceptre and the crown. But why, ah, why has each successive revolution resulted only in anarchy and unbridled licentiousness, from whose terrific reign she was soon compelled to seek relief in a more absolute despotism? An obvious answer to this inquiry is found in the fact that she was characteristically and avowedly an infidel nation. She had discarded the Bible, the

only chart of social and political safety; uprooted the divine institution of the Sabbath, and exalted the goddess of reason to the throne of Jehovah. A God of righteous retribution has put into her hand the cup of wrath, and while the streets of her proud capital were literally drenched with the blood of her citizens, she was but reaping the fruits of her own impiety. Exulting in the name of liberty without its enjoyment, she stands a lasting monument of the folly of human wisdom, while the internal throes of the elements of perpetual revolution threaten her very existence. Scathed by the curse of that God whom she has abjured, like Lot's wife petrified on the confines of Sodom, she presents a beacon of fearful warning to the nations of the earth.

The other result of the faithful and general diffusion of the light of the gospel to which we referred, is of still more vast and far-reaching importance. It has reference to the whole moral character of man as it shall affect his eternal destiny. It furnishes to the world the only solution of the momentous question, "How shall a man be just with God?" It affords the wretched wanderer in this vale of tears an adequate solace under all the ills that flesh is heir to, lights up the dark valley of the shadow of death, and sustains him in the giving up of the ghost, by a hope of a glorious immortality. It is the divinely appointed instrumentality by which this revolted world is to be brought back to its allegiance to God, and the ruins of the fall repaired in the restoration of man to the favour and enjoyment of his Maker. When the church on earth shall have fulfilled her high commission, and shed abroad her light from boundary to boundary of this benighted world, then shall the church in heaven raise the everlasting anthem, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

The third general division of our subject is

## THE RESOURCES OF THE CHURCH.

We have already shown that it is the office of the church to preserve unadulterated the truth of God, and herself transformed by its divine power, to go forth wielding the sword of the Spirit for the subjugation of the world to Him whose title is by covenant right King of kings and Lord of lords. The point of our present inquiry is, By what appliances shall this divine instrumentality be brought to bear on the entire mass of the human race? The authoritative command of our ascended Saviour, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," implies the necessary duty of furnishing a competent, pious, and able ministry in sufficient numbers to meet the necessities of the world. This will be seen at a glance to be a work of no ordinary magnitude. Reason as well as the apostolic injunction forbids the committal of the tremendous responsibilities of the sacred office to a novice. He who officiates as ambassador for Christ to guilty men, must be able to understand, and intelligibly to explain, the terms of his embassy, and by appealing to the legitimate motives of human action, earnestly and successfully to plead the cause of his glorious Lord. An ability to discharge this high trust, supposes a mental vigour and an intellectual cultivation commensurate with the highest responsibilities ever imposed upon man. But such an extensive and protracted training requires a pecuniary expenditure beyond the reach of a majority of such as may be expected to seek the office of the ministry, and therefore the church must hold herself chargeable with the education of her sons. But supposing the necessary funds for ministerial education already secured, a still greater difficulty presents itself. Human learning is not the chief, much less the sole, qualification of the gospel minister. Where then shall we look for an adequate supply of suitable candidates, whose souls are



fired with love to the perishing, and zeal for the cause of Christ, consecrating themselves a living sacrifice to God in the ministry of reconciliation?

Obviously, not to the world. The maxims of worldly policy neither lead to, nor qualify for, the self-denying work of the missionary of the cross. Where then shall we look but to the church, to the baptized children of the church—that nursery of piety—those objects of covenant engagements with the God of Abraham, on whom the seal of the new covenant has been impressed, and in whose behalf its blessings have been daily invoked, with all the fervour of parental supplication; in whose minds divine truth has been implanted, with all the diligence and fidelity of maternal love? This, in our modern Israel, is the Levitical tribe, whence the ministers of the sanctuary are to be anointed. Such is evidently the appointment of God. “Ye are the light of the world.” To the church are committed the necessary resources for the accomplishment of the work assigned her. While she surveys the appalling destitutions, present and prospective, of our own and foreign lands, let her not stagger at the promises of God, and in the language of unbelief exclaim, Whence shall we buy bread to supply this great multitude here in the wilderness? He who said to her, “Give ye them to eat,” can multiply the loaves till the perishing nations are supplied with the bread of life. But ministers are not to be raised up and qualified for their work by a miraculous interference of Providence. The church must diligently ply the appropriate means, while she prays the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest. The present spirit of the church, instead of supplying the tens of thousands of ministers, which the condition of a perishing world demands, will but augment the fearful destitution. The most superficial observer can readily trace the present paucity of candidates for the ministry, to the apathy and worldliness of the

church herself. The undue prominence that is given to the acquisition of worldly distinction and temporal gain, even by members and officers of the church, enlists the ardent aspirations of the rising generation in their pursuit, while the gospel ministry is regarded as beneath their ambition.

When will the church learn to appreciate the glorious birth-right conferred on her by her ascended Lord; and acknowledging the obligations that rest on her as the purchase of his blood, consecrate her sons as heralds of salvation to a dying world? The sentiment that she is the light of the world, and that it is her office to publish the gospel to every creature, must not only be declared by the official decisions of her judicatories, but must be personally felt, and become an operative principle in every member of the household of faith. Ye mothers in Israel, let your sons, like Samuel, be the gift of God in answer to your prayers; and like Samuel's mother, redeem your vows by devoting them to the Lord from their birth. Teach their infant lips to lisp the voice of prayer, and inspire them with reverence and love to God, by permitting them to witness the tokens of his gracious presence afforded you, in the hallowed retirement of the closet. Inculcate by repeated precept, and enforce by your own example the cardinal sentiment, that "the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever." Indelibly impress on their tender minds that, next to their own salvation, their most imperious duty, and their highest privilege, is by heaven's own appointed means to seek the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, in the salvation of their fellow men. The Rev. Samuel Davies, that eminent and devoted man of God, testifies that he was blessed with a mother whom he might account, without filial vanity or partiality, one of the most eminent saints he ever knew upon earth. "I cannot," said he, "but mention to my friend an anecdote known to but few; that is, that I am a son of prayer like my namesake, Samuel the prophet, and

my mother called me Samuel, because she said, I have asked him of the Lord. This early dedication to God has always been a strong inducement to me to devote myself to him as a personal act, and the most important blessings of my life I have looked upon as immediate answers to the prayers of a pious mother." The apostle Paul more than intimates that the eminent piety, and the distinguished qualifications of Timothy, as a Christian minister, were materially affected by the faithfulness of a pious mother. The strongest and most enduring tie entwined around the human heart, is that which binds the mother to her offspring; and when that is sanctified by the grace of God, it gives her an influence which none else can exert. The most abandoned have owned its power. When the profligate has cut loose from every social moral restraint, as he pursues his downward career, amid the wreck of principle and of conscience, the last barrier that intercepts his fearful plunge into the gulf of interminable woe, is that erected by a mother's prayers and a mother's tears.

Ye Christian fathers, whose hearts have been made glad by the birth of sons, consider well the import of those solemn vows by which you consecrate them to God at the baptismal font. In that transaction you devote them to the service of the Lord by solemn covenant engagement, and bind yourselves to employ the divinely appointed means, to qualify them for the work to which God shall call them. In testimony of this engagement, the seal of the covenant is impressed on them in the presence of men and angels. Are these solemn rites an unmeaning farce? Or can you discharge the obligations they impose by fitting those sons to shine at the bar or in the senate, while souls are perishing for the bread of life? Can you innocently degrade the sacred office in their esteem, and engage them in the lucrative pursuits of life, that you may set them as princes in the earth?

I beseech you, brethren, that ye withhold not from God that which is his own, while the wants of a perishing world so unequivocally declare that the Lord hath need of them. Teach them that no office is so honourable as that of the ambassador of God; no work so important as that of saving souls from death; and no reward so glorious as that which awaits the faithful herald of salvation. Hold up continually before their minds the miseries of a world lying in wickedness, and pour out your souls before God in earnest, persevering, agonizing prayer, that he would call them by his Spirit, and qualify them by his grace to labour in the gospel of his Son. And here I would especially appeal to my brethren in the ministry, whose sons are growing up like olive plants around their table. Shall those consecrated sons of Levi, born as it were in the sanctuary, and reared up at the altar of the Lord, lay aside the ephod, and with a secular ambition prefer the honours of the world to that which cometh from God—the fading treasures of earth to the crown of righteousness that fadeth not away? Can you endure the thought, that when your voice is hushed in death, you will leave behind no lineal representative to blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in the holy mountain? Then with the faith of a wrestling Jacob invoke the Lord God of Elijah, that when you shall have finished your work on earth, and ascend to receive the reward of faithful servants, your beloved sons may catch your falling mantle, and be endued with a double portion of your spirit.

But though the gospel ministry is the grand channel through which the church is to diffuse the light of divine truth throughout a benighted world, it does not supersede the employment of subsidiary agencies for the accomplishment of the same object. The Bible must be translated into every human dialect, and find its way into every human habitation, for “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is

profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." An evangelical literature must be scattered broadcast throughout the world to supply the instinctive cravings of the human mind for knowledge, to administer salutary warning, reproof and consolation in the absence of the living ministry—to launch the arrow of conviction when the heart is unshielded by prejudice, and to operate as an antidote to the poison imbibed from the polluted fountains of infidelity and licentiousness. Sabbath-schools must search the highways and hedges, enlighten the ignorant, and elevate the degraded, and thus render them accessible to the truth. Religious family instruction must give the right direction to the infant mind, and train up the rising generation in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But above all, the earnest, united, importunate, believing prayers of the church, like one dense, unbroken column of incense, must ascend without ceasing to the throne of Zion's King, that he would give efficiency to his own appointed means, and fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. The kingdoms of the earth are his by purchase, and by covenant gift; and with the resources of the universe at his command, he has committed to the church the instrumentality of gathering his elect out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; and the guaranty of his presence and his power forbids her faith to falter, or her zeal to languish.

We now proceed to consider the last general topic proposed, viz.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH.

The responsibility of an agent is commensurate with the importance of the work entrusted to him, provided he is furnished with means adequate to its accomplishment. The work entrusted to the church is the evangelization of the world. The means were appointed by infinite wisdom, and to their faithful application the unfailing promises of the

God of truth ensure success. Her responsibility, then, is measured, on the one hand, by the incalculable blessings which will result to untold millions of immortal beings, in time and eternity, from obedience to the terms of the gospel; and on the other, by the disastrous consequences of rejecting the only name under heaven whereby men must be saved. Fully to estimate such responsibility is not within the sphere of human arithmetic. The subject is boundless, and our present limits will scarcely allow us to enter upon its consideration; but its necessary connection with our foregoing remarks requires that we should at least glance at the field before us, that peradventure its necessities may stimulate us to the performance of a duty, which we cannot neglect without staining our skirts with the blood of souls, and incurring the guilt of downright rebellion against the authority of our glorious Redeemer. It is not our present purpose, however, to investigate this subject in its broad and illimitable extent—the conversion of the world is not the work of a day, or of a generation. The authoritative command of the Son of God, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” was addressed to the church as a body, rendered identical by perpetual succession; and its obligations are binding upon her in each successive generation, in proportion as the developments of Providence afford her facilities for prosecuting the conquests of the Prince of Peace.

The great practical question, then, for us to determine is, What is the measure of the church’s duty at the present day? To supply the necessities of our present population, will require a degree of self-denial and Christian enterprise far beyond what the church has ever attained in modern times, to say nothing of the urgent claims of the more benighted portion of our own continent, and of foreign lands. And these necessities are augmenting with a rapidity unprecedented in the annals of the world. In the last fifty years our territorial domain has trebled, and our population nearly quintupled; and at the present ratio of increase, before

the close of the present century it will have reached the enormous aggregate of one hundred millions of souls. The responsibility of providing for the temporal and eternal welfare of this immense heterogeneous mass of immortal beings, by supplying them with the gospel of salvation, is devolved on the church of the present and the immediately succeeding generation. Who can estimate the consequences of fidelity or neglect in the discharge of that momentous trust? What mighty influences for weal or for woe shall go forth from this great nation, to the east and to the west, encompassing the globe, and controlling the destinies of the world! And when we reflect, that in the next century the direct and reflex influence of our national character will operate immediately on more than twenty-five hundred millions of minds on our own soil, and that number continually increasing in a geometrical proportion, the boldest conception of finite intelligence must despair of grasping an idea which only Omniscience can comprehend.

The last prominent idea with which I shall detain you, is that the responsibility of the church at the present day, is infinitely enhanced by the unparalleled facilities which the present state of the world affords for the execution of her great commission. The present century is pre-eminently distinguished by its improvements in all the departments of human enterprise; and those improvements have given a new impulse to the progress of the world. The discoveries of science have brought to the knowledge, and subjected to the control of man the most powerful agents of nature. The application of steam as a locomotive power, has given to man the eagle's speed, and brought into close proximity the most distant nations. The lightning's fiery wing is made the vehicle of thought from the extremities of continents. Geological research has opened inexhaustible treasures of mineral wealth—while commercial enterprise has found a market for the increasing products of mechanical skill and agricultural industry. The accomplishment of

one great project but prepares the way for the projection of a greater. What was once the work of ages is now achieved in a single year, and what once required the alliance of nations is now performed by individual enterprise. The present aspect of the world presents to the mind the image of some vast comet, that having made the broad sweep of her eccentric orbit, is now approaching her perihelion, and as she draws nearer the centre of attraction glows with a fiercer blaze, and acquires a velocity that threatens some fearful catastrophe. What crisis is that to which our world is thus hastening? Doubtless that which shall merge the kingdoms of this world in the kingdom of God's dear Son. Jehovah's hand has given this unwonted impulse to human activity—his footprints may be seen in the adaptation of the means employed to prepare the way of the Lord. The wonderful developments of his providence call, in thunder-tones, upon the church, as his accredited agent, to mount the whirlwind and direct the storm. Never, not even in the apostolic age, has the church had access to so many and such efficient agencies for publishing the gospel to the world. Her missionaries may traverse every continent, and gain access to almost every island of the sea under the protection of Christian nations. Most of the languages of the globe have been reduced to writing, and the press affords her the means of multiplying indefinitely copies of the word of life. Literature and science are lending their aid to elevate and enlighten the nations. The spirit of emigration is disseminating the leaven of gospel truth in many a dark corner of the earth. Tens of thousands of pulpits are eloquent with the melting story of the cross, and millions of humble worshippers are presenting at the throne of grace the petition, "Thy kingdom come." In addition to the living ministry now labouring for the salvation of the world, there are Baxter, and Bunyan, and Flavel, and Doddridge, and Alleine, and Chalmers, and Alexander, and Miller, and hosts of kindred spirits, who, having fulfilled their ministry on earth,



and gone to their eternal reward, are still, through the medium of the press, in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn," preaching the gospel in various languages, and from their seats in glory rejoicing in the triumphs of redeeming grace achieved through their instrumentality. Missionary and educational organizations in the different branches of the church, literary and theological seminaries for training the ministry, Sabbath schools, Bible and catechetical classes, and associations for publishing and disseminating religious books, constitute the scaffolding for the erection of the temple of the Lord.

The angel having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth has already commenced his flight. Missionaries have gone forth to the four corners of the earth, and the gospel of salvation is proclaimed in the temples of idolatry. The prophetic handful of corn is planted in the top of the mountains, whose fruit ere long shall shake like Lebanon. Benighted Africa has stretched out her hands to God, and a colony of her exiled sons have gone to her relief, bearing with them the blessings of civilization and Christianity, and kindling on her shores a light which is destined to illuminate her dark borders, and elevate her down-trodden race to a place in the great brotherhood of man. The God of missions has already set the seal of his approbation on the efforts of the church. He on whose vesture is written, "King of kings and Lord of lords," now rallies his church to the conquest of the world; and on his banner is inscribed in characters of blood, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." The word of command has gone forth, but who is ready for the onset? Even the thrilling scenes that surround us have not roused the church from her apathy, and infused into her that intense and all-pervading activity which impels the children of this world. Here and there we see a faithful soldier of the cross girding on the heavenly armour, and investing the out-posts of the powers

of darkness, trusting to the literal fulfilment of the promise that one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight; but there must yet be a mighty waking up in the church at large. The rank and file of the armies of the living God must be brought into action, under a full sense of their personal responsibility in the work, before we shall witness the glorious and decisive conquests of the Prince of Peace.

There is perhaps no theme in the whole compass of ministerial duty that calls more loudly for the concentration of all our energies of soul and spirit, than that of rousing the church to the measure of her duty in publishing the gospel to the world. Nay, the ministry itself is not yet half awake to the tremendous responsibilities that crowd upon the present generation. Let us ponder the divine promises of the Father to the Son of his love, and the glorious triumph which the Saviour claims as the recompense of his dying agonies, till our hearts glow with gratitude for the unspeakable gift, and melt with compassion for a perishing world. With hearts fired with zeal for the Lord of hosts, let us urge upon the church the authoritative claims of her glorious Head, enforced as they are by the unprecedented facilities which his providence affords, and reiterate in her ears the shrieks of despair, as they come up from millions of lost souls, from whom her selfishness has withheld the only balm in Gilead, until every child of God shall adopt the language of the prophet: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

## RESPECT FOR THE AGED.

BY THE REV. REUBEN SMITH.

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A BEAUTIFUL illustration of the sentiment we mean to inculcate in this tract, is contained in 1 Kings ii. 19. Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, goes in to the king to present a petition. Solomon is now sitting upon the throne of David his father, and his kingdom is established greatly; yet no sooner did he see his aged mother approach, than "the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand."

It is a fine example, both of filial affection and youthful reverence for the aged; a virtue inculcated most abundantly in the Scriptures, and in all the better and more simple states of human society; yet a virtue much lost sight of, we fear, and a duty alarmingly neglected at the present day.

Observe how abundantly the Scriptures have enjoined this duty: "Honour thy father and thy mother;" "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man; . . . I am the Lord;" "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father;" "The

elder women as mothers ;” “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.”

So fully has inspiration inculcated this duty, scattering its instructions through many ages of the world’s history, and founding its precepts on relations which are in their nature unchangeable. It was one of the most bitter ingredients in the cup of Job’s affliction, that whereas the younger had once honoured him, now they had him in derision ; while it is prophesied by Isaiah as a peculiar aspect of Israel’s degradation, in the day of her calamity, that “the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.”

All the heathen nations, accordingly, in their more unsophisticated states, have been remarkable for their reverence for the aged. “Strike me,” says the Arab, “but do not speak ill of my mother.” The Chinese have raised this virtue to a religion ; and we have seen how, among another patriarchal people, or those of Job’s day—not to rise up before the aged, was considered the most vile insult from the rabble which could be offered.

Even the poor savages of our own wilderness are patterns of this virtue ; and the writer of this tract remembers witnessing a pleasing example. A company of travelling natives from Canada had pitched their tents near a village where he was then residing. They attracted, of course, a crowd of visitors ; and he observed among their temporary cabins, one which was closely covered, and guarded from all intrusion. We learned, on inquiry, that it was assigned to a very aged female among them, said to be a descendant from the Williams family, who had been carried captive in the

Deerfield massacre of 1704. It was instructive to observe with what watchfulness and tender care this individual was treated. No visitor might approach the tent; a little lass was set to watch it; and if a choice article of food was presented—a peach or a melon—the curtain was carefully lifted, and the gift offered to the white-haired and decrepid mother. One might think of the fable of the young storks covering the naked bodies of their parents with their feathers, and bearing them on their wings when unable to fly any longer.

Now the reason of all this is to be found in the nature of things. The aged need the attentions of the young, and have a claim to them on the score of gratitude. The principle lies at the foundation of all order also, and therefore has been thus commanded, and thus practised, wherever more artificial states of society or gross infidelity have not prevented.

All this notwithstanding, the virtue in question has been much neglected, and by some from whom we might hope for better things. Among the Hindoos this has been owing to a heartless selfishness—aggravated, it is probable, by a highly artificial state of society.

Cicero, among the enlightened Romans, deemed it necessary to write a treatise to prove that the aged were not altogether worthless, and might be even useful and happy; while in more than one modern country, as in infidel France, this virtue was at one time nearly repudiated.

If many observers are not mistaken, even our own country is not what it should be, or indeed what it once was in this respect. Our Puritan fathers are often ridiculed for the order and strictness of their family government. Neither clergymen, school-teachers, nor

rulers, are respected now as they once were ; while in too many instances young children are left wholly to their own direction, until the consequence is a vain arrogance, and bold intrusion into positions for which they are by no means fitted, nor were ever intended.

We have more than once witnessed a treatment of the aged—especially of aged clergymen—which has filled us with pain and alarm. The gray-haired servant of God, who had spent two-thirds of the ordinary age of man in the service of others, with learning, talents, experience, and character, all fitting him still for years of usefulness, has been neglected, for his age alone, and sometimes left to pine in want, and waste away in a solitude, which nothing but grace could enable him to endure. These things ought not to be.

It is much the same, apparently, in the practice, in some places, of selecting only or mostly the young to offices of civil trust ; and certainly it cannot but be observed, that in most of our families there is far less reverence for parental authority than at some former periods of our history. “ I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.”

No doubt something of this is to be ascribed to the large freedom of our civil institutions ; more to the remarkable spirit of advance which distinguishes our age ; and still more to a covert infidelity which glories in the pride of intellect alone, and aims, as in other things, to undermine the Bible, and destroy the family relation.

But from whatever source it may arise, the propensity is both obvious and alarming. A free government, above all others, is the one where the social and moral virtues are required ; nor is it very consistent for us

to boast of our institutions, and be deficient in these attainments.

Besides, may we not advance in all other things, and yet leave unchanged the first principles of morals? Or is it quite safe to drive so fast on the road of natural improvements, as to forget there is a moral government controlling all others? "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

But the most affecting, because the most immediately observable, of all the examples of this delinquency, is that which is offered in the deportment of some of the young in our cities and large villages. We will not assume this to be true of all, since we do believe that the pristine faith on this subject is still held in some families.

But see that company of noisy boys, assembled in the streets on the setting in of every evening: they are profane and vulgar; they sport their cigars, and drink like other rowdies; they plan deeds of violence, or execute them; they remain from home at unsuitable hours; and if one, more scrupulous than the rest, suggests a doubt of its propriety, he is immediately taunted as being too much under parental authority; they scoff at restraint and advice, even when it is offered by the aged; and should a prophet, venerable as Elisha, happen to pass that way, it is not unlikely he might encounter exclamations as insulting as that offered to him: "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head." These are the reasons for affirming the degeneracy of our times in relation to respect for the aged, and for parents; and they cause us to fear for the result.

Certainly God has often manifested great zeal on this subject; and who can tell but, as in the case of

the children of Jericho, he may yet visit us with judgments for these things!

The subject is one which demands urgent and immediate attention, to save our land from merited judgments, and our children from an awful doom. What then is to be done? How are we to correct this evil, and secure its opposite blessing? Answer: Let us go to the foundation; begin at the beginning, and return to first principles; for, indeed, we have grievously departed from them. Children, as well as others, are depraved by nature: let us remember this in all our schemes of education for them. Begin early; secure family government as the basis of all order, and the type of all religion. Early must we also teach our children correct doctrines on this subject, and make them intelligent. Rule with gentleness, with reasoning and affection, where you can; but still rule. Set before them a good example; never discourage, but always excite by proper motives. Where it is possible, furnish them with the best models. Advise, direct, and sometimes restrain; look well to their reading and amusements; make them thoroughly acquainted with the Bible; secure for them good associations; keep their love and confidence; treat them as men and women, in proportion as they prove themselves worthy of it; still let them see you are their superior, as well as their fondest and their best friend. Let us do all this—do it with prayer, with perseverance, and with faith in God; and we do not believe that our children and youth will often afflict us with the evil now contemplated. On the contrary, “they will be like olive plants around our table,” and many be found “walking in all the ways of the Lord.”



The remainder of my remarks will be in the form of

ADVICE TO YOUNG PERSONS.

You have seen, my young friends, what prominence the Bible gives to respect for the aged: how strongly this is illustrated in the manners of nations, and its great importance to the welfare of our country; and yet that the virtue does not obtain among us as it should, nor yet to the extent it once did.

Shall we not hope that you will duly consider this matter, and that a reform may be expected from you?

Never—let us enjoin it upon you—never suffer yourselves to despise any aged person. Bear with their infirmities—remembering these are more grievous to them than to yourselves; show them always that you do venerate age, and defend them boldly against want of esteem, or the abuse they may receive from others. “Rise up before the gray hairs,” or always show them some token of your respect; seek their advice, and be persuaded that they are in most things wiser than yourselves; strive by all means in your power to make their declining years comfortable. If they are your parents, you are most solemnly bound to provide for, honour and cherish them. See, therefore, that they have retirement, food, clothing, and a comfortable habitation; convince them also that they are not wholly useless or forgotten, since in this thing they are too apt perhaps to imagine the worst.

Remember your early and enduring obligations to them; and, in one word, treat them in all respects as you desire to be treated in similar circumstances—a condition which will, if you live, very soon be upon you.

This is the advice we must urge upon you, my young friends, and these things on the authority of God himself. And now we close with two additional motives.

Remember, first, that thus discharging duty, you will save yourselves from a bitter regret that will otherwise come upon you. The writer of this tract had endeavoured, through life, as he supposed, to discharge his duties to his parents; and yet he confesses there was one circumstance which, now that they are dead, he can never remember without a pang. His father, when dying, strongly desired to see his absent son: it was inconvenient, on account of distance. That son hoped yet to have an opportunity, and he neglected the journey until it was too late. Ah! now he can never visit that venerated grave, or read the name upon it, without seeming to see the emaciated form, and hear the words of that dying father, "Why don't he come? why don't he come?" And thus will it be with you, my young friends; and in regard to a thousand neglected duties, and a thousand transgressions, if you do not duly honour your parents while they are here.

As the second motive, remember that God always rewards such attentions. "Honour thy father and thy mother," is the only command, with promise; and we understand this promise to extend to far more than mere lengthening of natural years. No doubt God will bless you, in all desirable things, if you conscientiously discharge this duty. You shall be fed and cared for yourselves, if you become old; you shall enjoy the pleasure of a good conscience; you shall be honoured and cherished in turn; and when you come to die, shall have your cold face wet with the tears of children, and a Joseph perhaps to "lay his hand upon your eyes."

## THE BANK IS CLOSED.



It is a principle in mathematical science, that if a mistake be committed in any of the premises of a problem, the result must be erroneous. The mistake at first may be small; it may consist in the omission of but a unit, or the use but of a wrong sign or letter, yet even so small an error will defeat the result of the entire operation, however tedious and protracted. Although demonstrated in a different way, yet is the same principle as operative in morals as in the abstract sciences. The misapprehension of truth, or the misunderstanding of facts, will as certainly produce errors of conduct, as any misstatements whatever in mathematical calculations. The Jews believed that Jesus was an impostor. What was the consequence? They crucified him! The rich man mentioned in the gospel, supposed that he was to live "many days." What was the result? He made no preparation for death, though that very night his soul was required of him!

There is no subject on which men commit these errors more frequently, than in their *too great extension* of the day of grace. That the day of grace is limited, or hath a fixed boundary, the Scriptures plainly teach. Hear them—"Seek ye the Lord *while* he may be found, call ye upon him *while* he is near." "Behold *now* is the accepted time; behold *now* is the day of salvation." "Oh that thou hadst known, even thou *in this thy day*, the things that make for thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." These and many other passages of Scripture clearly teach, that the time of a

sinner's repentance and salvation is definite and fixed. To that period, not a day or an hour may be added. When it terminates, means are withdrawn, probation ends, and the soul must render its account. Prepared or unprepared, it is now summoned to the judgment-bar "to answer for the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad." Now, can a more fatal mistake be committed, than for a man to put off repentance a day or an hour beyond this period? He calculates to repent to-morrow; but his probation ends to-night! He intends to seek salvation next year; but this year he is to die! Must not death take all this class of persons by surprise? Will they not be fatally disappointed in the end?

It was not long since, that the writer of these lines had some important business with a bank in one of our commercial cities. Circumstances rendered it necessary that the business should be accomplished on a certain day. Supposing the hour for closing the bank to be two o'clock, he leisurely whiled away the time till one. At that hour he turned the corner of the wall surrounding the building—he saw a bank-officer close the iron gate and ascend the steps; but even this awakened no suspicion, he was so sure of being in time. He could have hailed the officer even, and have been admitted. But no; he apprehended no difficulty of admission whatever. He approached the iron gate and tried to open it; but he found it locked. As a voice from one passing by exclaimed, "*The bank is closed!*" just now, when it was too late to correct it, he discovered his mistake, as much mortified at his error as at his loss. Instantly the thought arose in his mind, How true is the saying—"a *moment* too late, is an *eternity* too late!"

And now, dear reader, are you of the number of those who postpone salvation to some future period? Are you calculating upon years and months of sinful pleasure, *after* which you intend to seek repentance? Let me assure you, that you are making an adventure, which, if you could see it

properly, would make the very hair rise on your head. On the very brink of eternity, with no guaranty whatever for the continuance of your probation for even an hour longer, you are sporting with the immortality of your nature! The alternative of heaven or hell is to you a matter of no moment! Here on this fearful crag you can sit, and see those suns arise and set, which are measuring out the period of your day of grace! Oh! most sanguine man! you see rainbows on the mists of a future, far, far beyond the period of your actual probation! But ah! those splendid figures of the imagination will vanish when the shades of death are gathering around you; and when your heart, discovering its mistake too late, shall sink within you in despair and sorrow. With these views before your mind, let me entreat you to give an earnest attention to a few lessons deducible from the incident alluded to above.

1. The first of these lessons is, that to all who live in a gospel land, there is a time, when, if sought, salvation may be found. The class of institutions referred to have what are called "bank-hours." During these hours all who have business with the bank, may have free access to the proper officers, and may have their business adjusted. These hours, too, are generally selected from the most convenient portion of the day, so as to accommodate the public as much as possible. Now, in like manner, there are in the kingdom of God *salvation-hours*, when all who come are accepted, and all who pray are heard. During these hours "the Spirit and the bride say, Come," and whosoever will may "come and take of the waters of life freely." This period too is most happily selected—it is the period of youth and of vigorous health—it is when human nature is in its prime—ere yet its "silver cord is loosed, or its golden bowl broken," or "the grasshopper has become a burden." It is when the intellect is clear, the heart is sensitive, and the conscience tender. It is under these most auspicious circumstances, that God calls

men to repentance. And is not this your condition, dear reader? Oh, face that mirror in your room—look at those rosy cheeks, those flashing eyes, that animated countenance. Do not even these tell you, that “now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation?”

2. We learn, secondly, from the incident narrated, that for the most part it is the *merest trifles* that divert men from the attainment of salvation. Why was the writer not in time for the bank? He first put the matter off to a late hour; on his way he met a friend whose conversation delayed him; he then attempted to accomplish another object. In the mean time the clock struck one, and the bank was closed. It is thus with men in the pursuit of salvation. They neglect their souls as long as possible; and even when they professedly set out to seek salvation, the smallest event, the most insignificant trifle, may turn them aside. An old companion, an old temptation, some suggestion of the devil, some momentary fear, some sudden impulse; ah, anything of this sort may decoy them from the prize before them, and turn them again to “the beggarly elements of the world!” Esau sold his birthright for “a mess of pottage,” and Judas sold his master for “thirty pieces of silver!” And so it is with thousands and thousands now, who barter all the bliss of heaven, and incur all the pains of hell, for *a mere bauble!* Reader, is this your case? Has some phantom of earth so bewitched you, that you are about to sell your *soul* for its possession? Oh! madman, madman! stop in your career. You are making a choice whose perversity all the tears of an eternity of suffering will not be able to correct.

3. We learn also from this incident, the *deadening* nature of error. Why did not the writer, after having turned the wall, and when the bank officer was in sight—why did he not call to him, and thus accomplish his object? Ah, he *believed* he was right, though entirely wrong. His firm conviction that he was in time did not allow him to use any

extra efforts; hence he failed of his object. This is the nature of all error; it calms the mind into a fatal repose; it repels every suspicion of insecurity; it deafens the ear and hardens the heart against every call. So it was with the old world in the time of Noah. The men of that day disbelieved even the possibility of a flood. They mocked at the diligence of the old prophet in preparing his ark. Oh, how secure, how even *happy* they were! But hark! the flood is coming; it roars, it peals, it shakes the earth, and "they are taken away!" Error always produces this fatal security; and it is this mainly that enables sinners to resist the call of the gospel, and from Sabbath to Sabbath to say to the messenger of salvation, "I pray thee have me excused." And reader, are you not also under some fatal delusion as to your soul? Oh, inquire what opiate it is that Satan has given you to produce this awful slumber! You hear the call of the word; you feel possibly the call of the Spirit; salvation is at your very door, and yet you are not concerned! What sort of a sleep is this? It can't be natural, it can't be healthful. It is an ill-boding slumber; and I pray you shake it off. "Arise, oh sleeper, and call upon thy God, that thou perish not."

4. This subject also teaches, that all the efforts sinners may make after their day of grace has passed, will be utterly in vain. So soon as the writer saw that the great bolt of the lock had been turned, and when he heard that voice from behind him, "The bank is closed," all his expectation perished, and he turned away in despair. And so must it be with all wilful and incorrigible sinners—and so must it be with all who put off salvation *beyond* "the accepted time." "When once the master of the house has risen, and has shut to the door," all will be over with them, and over for ever. No cries, no horrors of remorse, no torments of hell, will ever change their condition afterwards. The kingdom of heaven will then have closed its gate of salvation; the great

bolt of the divine purpose will then have been turned; the gate-keeper will then have departed; and a voice will be heard to say, "he openeth and no man shutteth; *he shutteth and no man openeth.*" Yes, my dear reader, if you procrastinate repentance but a day, an hour, a minute too late, your fate will be sealed for eternity. And do you know the time when the door will close, when your day of grace will end? This very ignorance of yours on that point should alarm you. You are now possibly in high health; you are calculating upon "many days"—but all this may be but error and delusion. The disease that is to destroy your life may now be in the atmosphere around you—the couch on which you are to expire may be that on which you expect to repose to night. Oh, put not off even a moment longer, the salvation of your soul! Every moment of delay is dangerous, and *any* moment of delay may prove fatal.

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#### DANGER OF DELAY.

Hasten, O sinner, to be wise,  
 And stay not for to-morrow's sun;  
 The longer wisdom you despise,  
 The harder is she to be won.

O! hasten mercy to implore,  
 And stay not for to-morrow's sun;  
 For fear thy season should be o'er,  
 Before this evening's course be run.

Hasten, O sinner, to return,  
 And stay not for to-morrow's sun;  
 For fear thy lamp should fail to burn,  
 Before the needful work is done.

Hasten, O sinner, to be blest,  
 And stay not for to-morrow's sun;  
 For fear the curse should thee arrest,  
 Before the morrow is begun.



## THE DISAPPOINTED STUDENT.

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Too late! too late! It is many years since I heard that cry sounding through a large and well filled court, under rather interesting circumstances. It was the court of Trinity College, Dublin. Along with numerous other spectators and friends of the collegians, I stood there to see them enter the Examination Hall.

On these occasions there are set hours appointed for their admission, which are observed to the second. The porter stands with the great, and, to many, awful door of entrance in his hand, and the instant the immense clock tolls out the first stroke of the appointed hour, swings it over with a sound that might seem to carry something portentous in it. Considering the importance of a college examination to those who may have spent a large portion of their strength, time, health, and money, in preparing for it or its honours, we might wonder that any anxious student would allow himself to be run to the last few moments of the hour of admission.

Such, however, is sometimes the case; for either in order to have some subject fresh in memory, or from many other causes more or less worthy, it often happens that not the idle and indifferent only are placed in such a predicament, but many a youth whose hopes of success are highest, whose efforts to attain it have been most laborious, risks the loss of what he aspired to, from not reaching in time that door, which, once closed, forbids their hope, at least for that term. On the occasion of which I speak, the collegians, in their gowns and caps, had been passing in at intervals—some who

had more than sufficient time, leisurely; others, as that time diminished, more rapidly.

The minute hand of the great clock approached the figure of twelve; the hour was about to sound; there were no loiterers now in cap and gown within the court; those whom a fear of disgrace led willingly to exclude themselves, were not in sight; all the rest were within the hall; when suddenly a cry was heard—too late! too late!

I started round; the spectators' looks were all directed towards the entrance to the court, where a tall young man, with a book under his arm, was coming rather leisurely along, under the persuasion that he had *time enough*. The cry made him raise his eyes, and they had fixed in an almost stony gaze upon the clock. He had unconsciously stopped on seeing it. The porter, in total unconcern, was already almost in the act of moving forward the massy door.

“Room—room!” the by-standers shouted. “On—on! make way—make way!” “Too late, too late!” others reiterated.

He sprang forward with a bound—the clock tolled out—the door swung over, its sound re-echoed through the court just as his foot was within reach of the step.

The young man extended his arms, dashed his cap from his head, twisted his hand in his damp black hair, and flung himself, with a groan, on the stone step at his feet.

Poor fellow! it required no very vivid imagination to make out his history. The only son of his mother, and she was a widow—of promising talents, conscious of their powers, ambitious of distinguishing himself, and confident of rising to some degree of eminence in the world; and then becoming the support of her who now supported him. Many were the visions that haunted his sleepless pillow, and mingled with the drier pursuits of his academic course. Much had he toiled to win the honours of that examination; the rising sun had looked in amid the darker light of his unextinguished

lamp, and found his young brow damp with that dew which was *his* portion of the decree; ah! how much more severe than that of the manual labourer—"In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread."

And now as the cry, too late! too late! rung round the court, a tear unbidden sprang to my eye. He had lost his hope through the desire of looking upon his mother's face of deep and thankful joy, as she heard of her son's success; of meeting his gentle sister's smile of admiring pride. In the forenoon's examination he had "carried all before him," and the gold medal was already within his grasp; he had gone to their humble lodging to impart the tidings of his progress, and now all was lost—he was one second too late!

The porters who came up, remarking that he was one of the prize men, were about to lift him from the ground, but the youth had thrown himself there, not in weakness, but in the energy of despair, and he sprang to his feet at the touch, and with more quickness and activity than he had shown before, rushed away over the court, and into his rooms.

Something like the rage of desperation was doubtless at that moment within his breast; but as I turned away, and walked out by the quiet country road I had come, this, I thought, will soon pass away,—he will soon feel that he has not lost all. He has lost his term to be sure, and to him it is a heavy loss; another, too, and perhaps a rival, will win the prize that awaited him. It is painful; but other terms and other honours are before him—his energy, damped for a little, will revive with greater power—his mother will grieve herself, but will soothe her son; his sister will cheer and reanimate him; that door will open to him again; that hall witness again his entry and his triumph; he will press forward in the course that has now met this depressing check, and in future days will smile at the sensations of this.

But were all he ever has done, all he ever could do, dependent on this one event—were the closing of that door to

have sealed up the past of his life, and opposed a lasting barrier to the future, how much worse than the utterance of his death-doom would be, to that impetuous and ambitious mind, the solemn closing of the door that had then told him he was left to dull despondency for ever!

The transition was an easy one. This mortal existence is but a term, a brief term of our immortal course; but it holds the same relation to it that the collegian's term would have held to his, had all the former and all the future part of his career been dependent on it.

Our term will end, never to come round again. The door that will for ever receive, or for ever exclude us, will close. The appointed hour, which human hopes and human fears can neither accelerate nor retard, will come. But there is this great difference; the collegian might have allowed himself some latitude, and yet have been in time for his; for he knew the hour, and the minute, and the second of its termination. We know neither the year, nor the day, nor the hour, nor the moment. The hand that regulates the dial of human life is unseen in its movement; but, true to the second at which it points, will the stroke be heard and felt, even in the inmost souls of those who have waited in dim uncertainty, in anxious expectancy, in joyful hope, or in careless indifference, for its solemn sound.

Then shall that door close which shall never, never open to us again. The porter has it already in his hand; and O how unlike the cold indifference, the stoical unconcern of the official whose accustomed duty I witnessed! His language, his voice, urges on the candidate. "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." "Walk while ye have the light; the night cometh when no man can work." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

But, I continued, for one thought naturally supplies

the link to another, He who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth, is also, by an expressive and intelligible symbol, himself the door; and his language, far from discouraging the anxious competitor, is, "I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

But lo! the time is short—the passage is intricate—the course is perplexing—the distance is great; and the same voice speaks again—"I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

These, then, are the facilities for our course.

Eternity is the scene we are to enter on, and heaven is the prize set before us. There never was a human heart, professing a belief in its reality, that would acknowledge to a disregard of the latter. All would wish, and all would hope, and most, perhaps, would expect to receive that prize. How inadequate are the means employed, let them who know something of the students' toil consider. "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." What *do* we do? Few even profess to think the prize undesirable; but in the firm, yet totally unfounded belief, that they have time enough, they loiter in the very court and vestibule of eternity, till a warning is given, a cry is raised, a knell has been sounded, and the door has closed.

Too late! too late! are words that never sounded through the realms of bliss. But they are words that have rung through the agonized and frenzied sinner's heart and brain when all his hopes and fears start up alarmed. When his worldly day-dream has been snapped short, just when most engrossing; and his startled soul looks out and sees, that as it were, but a second of his mortal term remains, and all, all is to be done in it, for the whole of eternity hangs upon it. Death has come, bearing to him the commission of the great archangel at the last, to swear that time shall be no more.

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over

one sinner that repenteth, even at the eleventh hour ; for it is never too late with God. But conviction is not conversion, and remorse is not repentance ; neither will a passive resignation to what is inevitable supply the place of a diligent pursuit of that which was attainable ; nor the fear of a sinner's conscience stand in the stead of the love of a believer's heart.

It may prove a terrible thing to be accounted not far from the kingdom of God. The nearer the prize in view, the greater the anguish of losing it ; the closer to the entrance, the more intense the misery of coming short of it ; and the fuller and simpler the directions for running the race set before us, the keener will be the despair and self-condemnation of him who turns aside from it.

The way was plain—marked out even by the blood that traced it from Calvary ; but he chose some other way. The porter urged, but he listened to other voices. The door was open—for the hand of love had thrown it wide, wide apart ; but he delayed to enter in, being too much charmed by the trifles that perish in the using—too much engrossed by the cares of a world of which he was not even an hourly tenant. And now all that he has risked, or all that he has lost, bursts on his startled sight, and his own despairing soul breathes in its anguish the cry which malignant spirits re-echo with joy—too late ! too late !

“ Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, through a new and living way, which he hath consecrated through the veil—that is to say, his flesh—let us press towards the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Mercy's door is open to every soul that seeks its portals ; but our hour *must* come, and we know not how soon, when it will close against such as have, in fatal security, postponed to a convenient season an entrance within it. That hour is the hour of death. As the portals of the grave unclose, the door of mercy shuts on the unpardoned soul.

CONVERSION AND CHARACTER

OF

COL. WILLIAM YEADON.

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IF there is any knowledge, which ought to fill the heart of man with joyful emotions, it is the knowledge of Jesus Christ as He is set before us in the gospel. It is like sunshine to the dreary waste of a Lapland winter. All is cold, dark and desert. The earth is bound with adamantine chains. Vegetation is at an end. The fresh verdure of the fields—the foliage of the trees—and the varied beauties of the landscape, are all lost in one dull and cheerless monotony. Man himself escapes from the misery around him only by burying himself in his darkened hut, and by drowning all thought in an endless round of dreamy occupation. And just such is the condition of every human heart until the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as exhibited in the face of Jesus Christ, shines within him. All around is dark and dreary. All nature reflects the angry frown of a holy and offended God, against whom man has sinned, and whose “anger burneth unto the lowest hell.” The whole animated “creation groaneth and travaileth in pain.” Man, everywhere and in all circumstances, is “sub-

ject to vanity." He "walks in a vain show." "The fashion of the world passeth away," and all the joy and pleasure of earth are like sparks of fire, which appear but for a moment and then vanish away. But dark as is man's present, still darker is his future. Death stares him in the face—the grave yawns before him at every step—and "hell from beneath is moved to meet him at his coming."

How worthy, then, of the acceptance of every man is that "faithful" and infallible "saying"—that glorious "gospel of the blessed God"—the "good tidings of great joy"—that "Christ Jesus," the eternal Son of God, though "in the beginning with God and equal with God," nevertheless came down into this sinful world that "He might save" from present danger and everlasting ruin, miserable sinners. Oh, how worthy to be heard, regarded and obeyed! How worthy to be welcomed, not only into the understanding, but even into the inmost heart, is this merciful message of our most gracious God—this "unspeakable gift"—this adorable Redeemer, "in knowledge of whom standeth eternal life.

Oh, what a new and wondrous song,  
That name affords the human tongue!  
Of joy it prompts the sweetest strain,  
It wings the heavy hours of pain.  
When life draws near its dread eclipse,  
'Tis the last sound upon our lips;  
When heaven unfolds, 'twill be the first  
That from our raptured hearts shall burst.

Such, undoubtedly, is the case with every man who is led by the spirit of God, to the true knowledge of



his disease and danger—of his guilt and the way of deliverance and escape.

Behold the Apostle Paul. Once he was the most proud, haughty and confident of men. He regarded himself as superior in morality, and even in religion, to most of those who stood highest in the community and the church. He could even challenge the scrutiny and claim the approbation of God, as in all things “touching the righteousness which is by the law blameless.” But his religion was no more than a proud and self-righteous observance of ordinances, rites and ceremonies, and his morality offered no rebuke to hatred and revenge, intolerance and persecution. Enlightened, however, by the teaching of God’s word and Spirit, Paul saw that his religion was hypocrisy, and his morality selfish pride, and that he possessed neither love to God nor love to man. He saw that he had been employing God and his religion for the mere purpose of self-exaltation, and of securing the honour and applause of men—that a due regard to the character and claims of God “was not in all his thoughts”—and that he was “steeped to the very lips” in ungodliness, unbelief and sin. His views of God, of God’s law, and of the nature, extent, and malignity of sin, were entirely changed, so that instead of regarding himself as the greatest of saints, he felt himself to be “the chief of sinners.” It was no longer a question with him, how he might secure the greatest favour and friendship on the part of God, and the highest honour from his fellow-men. But filled with self-loathing and contempt, and conscious of having insulted and provoked God to the very utter-

most, his wonder and amazement was, that God had borne with him in such long enduring patience, and was still willing and waiting to be gracious. That God, whom he had so foully dishonoured and blasphemed, should be even yet willing to be reconciled—that Jesus, whom he had persecuted, nay, even “crucified afresh and put to an open shame,” should magnify in his conversion and apostleship the riches and omnipotence of his grace—and that he who had been the greatest enemy of the gospel, should now be noted as its chiefest apostle—this was to Paul a mystery and a miracle of mercy.

To that mercy, and to it alone, he refers all his hope and all his salvation. The grace of our Lord “was exceeding abundant,” and as high above all merit or expectation as are the heavens above the earth. It had pardoned all his sins—his blasphemies—his persecutions—his evil and malignant example—his murderous connivance and co-operation in the destruction of Christ’s faithful followers—and the whole spirit and temper of his ungodly heart. That mercy had renewed his soul, and sanctified his motives and principles of conduct. An entire change was effected in his sentiments, feelings, and character. All the faculties of his mind received a new impulse and direction. New views of Christ, of religion, of life and death, of time and eternity, took possession of his mind. “Old things passed away, and behold all things became new.” The mercy of Christ brought both regeneration and pardon to his guilty and depraved spirit. And having made him “a new creature in Christ Jesus,” the grace which had begun

continued to carry on the work of salvation in his soul, to influence his affections, and to mature his christian character. This grace filled him with a love to Christ, whose mercy he had obtained, which rose and triumphed over every other feeling of his heart; —led him infinitely to prefer his Master to every other being in the universe; and to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. That mercy made his spirit yearn with tender and earnest compassion over all who still rejected the salvation he had found. It consecrated him with an absorbing and untiring devotion to the service of Christ and the spiritual welfare of his fellow-men. It inspired him with unequalled fortitude and magnanimity in the endurance of shame, obloquy and disgrace, of hunger, nakedness and peril, so that he “took pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake,” and when at last death itself appeared in its most frightful form of martyrdom, he was “ready to be offered up,” since “to him to live was Christ, and to die was gain.” And, above all, while “not a whit behind the very chiefest of apostles,” with what unparalleled humility did this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ fill the Apostle’s soul! In his own estimation, he was “the chief of sinners,” not worthy to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the church of God; and the life that he now lived, he lived by the faith of the Son of God, who was to him “all and in all.”

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord,” says the Apostle,” who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was

before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Christ Jesus might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

How does the Apostle, in this passage, annihilate the spirit of selfish pride! The mercy thus manifested, he considers as intended, not so much for himself, as for others. In the reception, influence, and transforming efficacy of this grace, he tells us he was a pattern, a form, a copy, or a sketch of what the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is—what it is able to effect—and how freely and sovereignly it is bestowed. In the case of Paul, Christ gave an example of what his grace is able to accomplish, and what his mercy is willing to perform, for the very "chief of sinners." We have here a monument more enduring than brass, and more persuasive than eloquence, attesting to the faithfulness of this saying, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief," and that he is both able and willing to "save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him."

How touching were the circumstances under which the Apostle makes this overpowering appeal to his own example, as a motive and an encouragement to every needy sinner! Thirty years had elapsed since he had found this mercy. He was now "such an one

as Paul the aged." The spring and summer of his life had departed. Winter had crowned his head with the snows of age, and bowed his body beneath the weight of many infirmities. He had endured also every conceivable trial, because of his adherence to the cause of Christ. In every city, bonds and imprisonment awaited him, and at all times his life and liberty were exposed to the greatest jeopardy. But none of these things moved him. He was at this very time a prisoner, and nothing but apostacy could secure him against the sudden execution of anticipated death. Instead, however, of being either ashamed or afraid, he was exceeding joyful in all his tribulations. As his outward man perished and decayed, his inward man was strong in the Lord, and renewed day by day;—and thanking Christ Jesus his Lord for the mercy manifested towards him, he was now ready to be offered up, assured that he should receive a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge should give him, and not him only, but all them also who should love his appearing.

As Paul, the chief of sinners, was thus made an illustrious example, a pattern of the sovereign, free, and efficacious grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; so it has pleased God from time to time to find those who seek him not, and to magnify in their conversion, and subsequent holy life, the riches of his grace and the security and perseverance of believers, as a pattern and encouragement for all those who believe on him to eternal life.

Such was Augustine in ancient times. Such were

Bunyan, Newton, and Col. Gardiner, in modern times. Such, more recently, was the remarkable conversion of Dr. Capadose, a Jewish physician of Amsterdam; and such, also, to a very remarkable extent, was the late Col. WILLIAM YEADON.

Mr. Yeadon was born in the city of Charleston, S. C., August 12, 1777. He had a very pious mother, of whose care, in consequence of the death of his father, and his removal from her, he was deprived, when he was only seven years old. He was thus left an orphan, and brought up without the advantages of that religious education, and of that "nurture and admonition of the Lord," which it would have been the first great object of that pious mother to bestow. Her character, example, and prayers were still, however, for some time left him, together with the mercy of a covenant-keeping God, who is the Judge of the widow and the Father of the fatherless, and who, when it pleases him that father and mother should forsake us, takes up those for whom the effectual fervent prayers of a righteous parent have availed much.

So it was with Col. Yeadon. For a long time he seemed utterly abandoned to his own evil and ungodly heart, and like every child left to himself, to go astray like a lost sheep, departing from the living God, and running into every excess of evil.

In early youth, he was accustomed to go to church, but like some children, who are fatally and permanently injured, he was allowed to sit away from observation and restraint, in the singing-loft, where he associated with wicked and ungodly boys, more evil than himself, so that instead of being profited, he was

made more hardened by his church-going associations. This training in evil, in connection with the want of all religious training at home, made him, while young in years, a veteran in pride, passion, and ungodliness. At a very early age, therefore, some dissensions in the vestry and among the members of the church—who, alas, little think how their harsh and acrimonious temper, their readiness to take offence, and their severity towards those whom they choose to make their enemies, serve in the hands of Satan to lead sinners to destruction—led him to make the desperate determination never to go to church again. Thus did Satan blind his conscience by a plea of false honour, and lead him, as he does so many, captive at his will, protected against all the assaults of truth, and exposed to every temptation and to every device of the great adversary, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

From that early period of his boyish thoughtlessness, until his fiftieth year, Col. Yeadon never read the Bible and never offered up a prayer. Nor did he ever go to church, except on funeral and public occasions, until about his sixtieth year, when he was led there under deep conviction of sin by the invisible hand of the Divine Spirit.

During these many years, he lived in pleasure, and was dead while he lived, loving and serving the creature more than the Creator who is God over all and blessed for ever. He studied and became a lawyer. He entered into public life, where he always held some honorable office in connection with the State. He married and became the father of several children.

He was all heart, and soul, and strength, and mind in military and political affairs, devoting himself with intense enthusiasm to whatever seemed to bear upon the honour and glory of his native State. But during all this time of God's long suffering mercy, he thought not of—he feared not—he honored not—and he cared not for—that God who was yet to bring him into judgment, and who was able to cast, at any moment, both soul and body into hell for ever.

It is truly astonishing how desperately wicked, and how deplorably ignorant and hardened a man may be, in the very midst of Christian influences. Colonel Yeadon lived during this lengthened period utterly destitute, as he affirmed, of any religious opinions whatever. He believed in God, but did not know who or what Christ was. He did not even realize or sensibly feel that he had a soul, and therefore he never thought of death or of hell. He encountered, in this condition of fatalistic thoughtlessness, the most imminent and frequent danger. The Bible, or any other religious book, he never once read, and the presentation of the truth made no impression upon him whatever.

His manner of life during these years of his ignorance and impenitence needs not to be rehearsed. To use his own expressive language, he was “living in the greatest wickedness, and enjoying life very much.” But he was yet to be a pattern of the power and efficacy, of the sovereignty and the freeness, of divine grace. God had not cast him off, and a mother's prayers were yet to be answered. To this end God sent him a truly faithful, pious and devoted wife, who,



though she mourned in bitterness, and died without the sight of his salvation, believed against hope, that he would yet be converted, and agonized for him in prayer to God that he might be saved. Dying, she left him her children, her prayers, her Bible, and her pious books, among which was Baxter's Saint's Rest.

Another step by which redeeming grace first led his roving feet to seek the heavenly road, was by bringing him into retirement. He was located in the Citadel as Arsenal-keeper in the year 1832. Here he was necessarily much alone, and thus led to consider his ways. The mercy of God had provided a shelter for him, and the Spirit of God wrought in him an inward sense of sin and misery. The actions of his past life, like ghosts of memory, crowded upon him, and while conscience accused, his own heart condemned him. The images of a departed mother and a sainted wife arose before his troubled spirit, even in the darkness of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men. He remembered that mother's prayers and that wife's interceding groans, and he now turned to her unopened Bible, and her well worn and tear-bedewed Saint's Everlasting Rest, and found in them that peace which the world had never given, and which, blessed be God, it could never take away.

This transition from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was immediate in its character, and yet very gradual in its full development. He was, like Paul, at once determined to be a Christian,

and yet, like him, it was necessary that he should be instructed in order to know what he should do. While, therefore, he was delighted with the Bible, he was minded to remain a year in private and hide his convictions in his own heart. When in this condition of mind, he was led to attend a night service at the Third Presbyterian Church, when I preached on the character and conduct of Nicodemus. The truth was a word in due season, an arrow which, though drawn at a venture, was guided by unerring wisdom. It reached his heart, and was made the power of God to the full conviction and complete establishment of his soul. He heard me again in my own pulpit, and very soon after called upon me, and originated that acquaintance which afterwards ripened into friendship and regard.

It was truly a delightful task to explain more perfectly the way of God to one so willing and eager to learn and to obey. His first act was an open and unreserved confession of all his past sinfulness, and his desire and determination to make all the reparation he could to man, and to acknowledge, bewail and repent of it both before God and man. Of this he gave a remarkable illustration. Soon after he had connected himself with the congregation, and before it was prudent for him to unite with the church, a communion season took place. I had entered the pulpit and was about to commence the service, when Col. Yeadon came up the pulpit stairs. He expressed a most ardent wish, if it was still possible, to unite with the church at that time; and as he knew it was too late to be practicable, according to the rules of the

church, he was ready, if deemed sufficient, to come out before the congregation, and there acknowledge his past sins, make an open confession of his penitence, and submit to any examination I might think proper. But when the inexpediency of such a course was pointed out, he cheerfully acquiesced.

Of the Bible, he was necessarily very ignorant. Calling to see him at the Citadel, he exhibited the armory with its terrible array of bloody weapons. I hope, said I, the time is not far distant when "men shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Beautiful, he replied, but pray where is it from? On learning that it was from the book of Isaiah, he said I must excuse him, as he really was not acquainted with the books or contents of the Bible, but that with God's help it should not be so long. Nor was it—for, having procured for him Scott's Commentary on the Scriptures, he had within a year studied every portion of it, and continued to read it regularly, with the text and observations, once a year, even to the end. He became to his family a patriarchal priest, as well as protector, holding with them constant religious services, not only morning and evening, but also on every Sabbath, when prevented from attendance at the sanctuary. For years, also, and until health failed him, he was a diligent reader of various religious and devotional works, and became a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, and thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

Like Paul, Col. Yeadon carried all his natural boldness, affectionateness, and ingenuous candour, into his religion. He appeared to have no thought of ridicule or of the reproach, the jeers, and the opprobrious insinuations of the world around him. He gloried in the cross, and knew nothing among men but Jesus and him crucified. He began at once to speak to all around him, and his blessed Jesus and the joys of his salvation were the beginning and the end of all his conversation. Probably no one ever came into contact with him, upon such terms as gave him any opportunity of telling them what God had done for his soul, without being urged to "taste and see that the Lord is good" to all that call upon him in sincerity. There are many living, with whom he has repeatedly laboured, beseeching them, even with tears, to be reconciled to God, and have peace with him through our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor did he confide in his words. He travailed for them in prayer, and wept over them in secret places. May those prayers still be answered, and those pleadings still be heard!

Nor was he less ready to speak a word in season to his fellow pilgrims, as he met them on the way. His heart was full and his tongue eloquent; and it was indeed edifying to hear him as he encouraged the timid, cheered the desponding, enlightened the doubting, and stimulated all to aspire to the loftiest heights of assured faith, and hope, and joy. These he had himself attained in an eminent degree, and to their attainment he thought every Christian privileged to reach. He lived in an unclouded sunshine. God was his sun and shield, and his exceeding great reward, in

keeping whose commandments he found great and uninterrupted delight. It was a thrilling scene when a distinguished scholar and christian, on taking farewell of him, expressed to him the obligations under which he lay for his counsels, prayers and example, in all his christian course, and the earnest hope that they would be permitted to resume their intercourse and progressive advancement in a holier and happier world. Ah, yes! they who have turned many to righteousness, and comforted and edified one of Christ's least disciples here on earth, shall shine as stars in the firmament of heaven.

Like Paul, Col. Yeadon was characterized by active, devoted, and self-sacrificing charity. He was, indeed, willing to distribute, and zealous in every good word and work. To his ability, yea, and beyond his ability, he was forward in every benevolent expenditure. At one of our first interviews, he expressed his interest in the Missionary enterprise, and as he was then nearly sixty years of age, he wished to give a dollar for every year of his life, as an offering of his first fruits to the Lord. This he did, and that, too, out of a very moderate income, and he continued to give to that and every other religious object to an extent very rarely equalled. Nothing pained him so much as his inability to give more. So sure and clear was his faith in Christ, that he laid up with him not only the treasures of the life to come, which, because they have never actually possessed them, men are ready enough to do, but also the treasures of the life that now is, as far as within his possession, which men are so reluctant to part with and so eager to obtain. He consecrated

one-tenth of all his income to charity, in the proper sense, besides his general contributions to churches and other objects of public benefit, and his private acts of munificent bounty to the poor and needy. Of his activity, the recent members of the church have no idea. For years he had been a dying man, having been brought down to the gates of death by various attacks of dangerous disease. Until thus enfeebled and incapable of going out at night, he was an invariable attendant upon every service, prayer-meeting and lecture—frequent at the Sabbath-school—and ready to serve on any committee on behalf of any interest of the church. He was then, also, a frequent visitor at the houses of the sick and poor, and by his prayers and alms comforted and relieved many.

Nor was Col. Yeadon less analogous to Paul, or less a pattern to them who believe, in his maturity of piety. Faith was his crowning grace, as it was that of the Apostle. From having been a grain of mustard seed, it became a great tree. It was to him literally the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. It removed mountains—filled up valleys—made crooked places straight, and rough places smooth. It never failed him. Faith and prayer were his panoply against all adversaries, his fortress in all dangers, his very present help in every time of need. In everything by supplication and prayer with thanksgiving, he sought the Lord. And as in all his ways he acknowledged God, and trusted in him, he found God verily faithful to his promises and better than his word. Of this, how very emphatic was the illustration, when his last hours were cheered by the intel-

ligence that, through the kind agency of his nephew, his situation was secured to his son as a home for his family. He literally lived and laboured and walked by faith for years, and found it his meat and his medicine. This nerved him for scenes of peculiar trial, and gave him boldness and an utterance which astonished and abashed his detractors. He prosecuted every work, performed every duty, encountered every hazard, and achieved herculean tasks, by the supernatural aid derived from this principle. His faith was more like that of the apostles and primitive believers, than that of any man we ever knew, and would have appeared fanatical and wild, had it not been associated with such modesty, such mildness, and such constant and wonderful attestations in the providence of God. Twice this faith seemed to restore him when pronounced to be beyond possible recovery, and I have not known how, without it, he could have lived for years past. This, he said, was his chief and only support, and while it made him ready at any moment to die, and unwilling to pray for a moment's longer life, it left all that regarded his life, his health, his fortune, and his family, entirely to the disposal of his gracious God. His will was therefore swallowed up in the will of God, and while he was diligent in the use of all means for the improvement of his health and fortune, he had no anxiety about the future and no unhappiness about the past, but had learned in whatever state he was to be therewith content. No man was more diligent and correct in business, and none more fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. His dying charge was, "tell my brethren of the happiness I am enjoying and the misery of those who are shut out from

the blessed Saviour, and beseech them to be much in prayer and more in effort."

Col. Yeadon's piety was therefore cheerful and happy. Joy was his constant companion and guest. He rejoiced evermore. In sickness or health—when at home or abroad—when in difficulty or distress—when persecuted or defamed—he was at all times and alike happy—happy in the assurance of God's favour, which is life, and that all things work together for good to them that love him. This joy increased as death drew near. It was his habitual spirit, days and weeks before any signs of sickness appeared, and it soothed and comforted him in all time of his last days of suffering and prostration. His faith was like the shining light of the rising sun, shining more and more unto the perfect day. One of his last acts was an act of praise. Learning that he was approaching death, he requested his wife to have family worship, and as his hearing had become impaired, to let the children sing as loudly as they could that he might hear. And as they proceeded, he united in the song of praise, while the tear of joy rolled down his fading cheeks.

The secret of his extraordinary faith and hope and joy was his extraordinary devotion, spirituality, study of the word of God, and prayer. His faith was no antinomian boast, or fanatical enthusiasm. It was the pure flame of heaven, fed by constant oil bought at the heavenly fountain, and rising from a lamp daily trimmed and kept burning. He was continually in the spirit and frame of prayer, and he spent hours every day in family and private devotion. At sunrise, morning, noon and evening, he was found using his favourite



guide, Bishop Andrews's Devotions, which he interspersed with frequent and full ejaculations. And when all around him were curtained in sleep, he was in the constant practice of spending from one to two hours in midnight reading and devotion. In these nocturnal vigils he found so great delight and such increasing happiness, that while evidently dangerous to his health, he could not be induced to relax or abandon them.

It was in that spirit of prayer and in those constant communings with God in Christ, the strength of this Samson lay. It was from this he derived uninterrupted peace and joy. And it was by this he was made victorious over the world, the flesh and the devil, and even while here on earth, made meet in no ordinary measure for the inheritance among the saints in light.

To die, therefore, was to him an easy task; nay, it was rest from all his labours. His work was done. His course was finished, and he was ready to depart. He yielded himself at once to God's will. He lay upon his bed in peace, willing that his friends should do for him all they thought advisable, but conscious that his hour was come, and rejoicing with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The election of grace—Christ and his righteousness—and the exceeding great and precious promises of God—these were his own declared foundations of faith and hope. Blessed be God, while he is gone, these are left, and though dead, he yet speaketh. For he obtained mercy, that in him the chief of sinners, Christ might show all long-suffering for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

He was a pattern to those who are still impenitent sinners, teaching them that their only hope of salvation is the mercy of God, as in Christ Jesus he is reconciling sinners unto Himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses. Pardon and eternal life are not to be obtained by human merit, or by man's doings. They are the free gifts of God's great and gracious mercy. Not according to works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saves us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he sheds on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.

But let none suppose that Saul of Tarsus needed mercy merely because he was a persecutor and a blasphemer, and that, if they avoid such crimes, pardon and regeneration will, in their case, be unnecessary; for there may be much that is both moral and amiable in the character of the man who is living without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world. "One thing thou lackest," said the omniscient Saviour to the man who declared that he had kept the commandments from his youth. And the one thing which he lacked, and which in every case is the one thing needful, was a new heart and a new spirit—a heart which trusts in Christ's redeeming mercy for salvation, and in which love to Christ is cherished as the supreme and best affection. This is the only heart which is right in the sight of God—the only heart that can stand the test of future judgment—the only heart that can participate in celestial blessedness. "Create

in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Amen.

But, in the next place, this pattern; like that of the apostle Paul, teaches us the willingness and ability of Christ to show this mercy to the greatest sinners, if they will repent and believe in the gospel. The pattern thus exhibited in the apostle, and in Col. Yeadon, has been displayed in every period of the Church.

What is the language of one? "The time was when I knew nothing of Jesus Christ. I was careless of my soul. I thought not of eternity. Sunk in ignorance and vice, I was wholly given up to sensual enjoyments. I had no pleasure but in gratifying my fleshly lusts. I wrought the will of the gentiles, and lived without God in the world. But the Lord in mercy brought me to myself. By his word and Spirit he quickened me, when dead in trespasses and in sins, and breathed into my soul a spiritual life. Trembling and astonished, I was led to seek that God and Saviour, for whom I had not asked. Blessed by the riches of divine mercy, I did not seek in vain. I found him whom once I sought not. I found him faithful to his promise, and mighty to save. He has blotted out all my sins, and filled my soul with peace. He has delivered me from the bondage of corruption, and enabled me to walk in newness of life. I stand a monument of redeeming grace, to the praise and glory of his holy name." What is the confession of another? "Once I loved the world, and the things of the world, with supreme delight. My affections were all set on earthly objects. My only aim was to grow rich and increase my substance. As for God,

I had no knowledge of him ; no fear of his wrath, no desire after his favour. If my worldly affairs prospered, my utmost wishes were gratified. But the Lord met me in my ruinous course. He mercifully opened my eyes, which the god of this world had blinded. He taught me to see the vanity of all earthly objects and pursuits. He taught me to aspire to the things which are not seen. He revealed to me the only valuable treasure, a treasure in heaven. There my affections now are fixed. The Lord himself is my portion. I prize his favour above all things. There is none upon earth that I desire besides him. When he lifts up the light of his countenance upon me, I find far greater and more genuine pleasure than I ever felt at the increase of my corn, and cattle, and gold." Listen to the declaration of a third. "Great has been the divine mercy to me. I was long led captive by Satan when I suspected it not. I was puffed up with a proud conceit of my own goodness. Because my conduct was free from gross sins, I presumptuously thought that I was righteous before God. At least, I supposed that my good actions would fully make amends for my evil deeds ; and, consequently, that I had nothing to do with being saved by grace through faith. But it pleased the Lord to take away the veil from my eyes. By his Spirit he convinced me of sin. He showed me what I really was. He set before me the spiritual demands of his heart-searching law. He led me to see how far short my fancied goodness fell of this holy standard. Thus he humbled my pride. He taught me to cry for mercy ; to renounce my own righteousness ; to receive with

thankfulness the gift of free salvation ; and to live the life which I now live in the flesh, by faith in the Son of God. He hath brought me by a way that I knew not. He hath led me in paths that I did not know. He hath made darkness light before me, and crooked things straight. These things hath he done unto me, and hath not forsaken me."

Are you, then, a trembling, broken-hearted, and despairing sinner, fearing that you have sinned beyond hope of mercy? Despair not. Look at the patterns of divine mercy set before you for your encouragement and hope. Were they not brands plucked from the burning? And is that mercy which delivered them, shortened that it cannot save and deliver you? Oh no, sinner, it is not. Christ is just as able, and just as willing to save you as he was to save them. Yea, to save even *to the uttermost* all who come unto him. "Sir," said a gentleman to the celebrated John Newton, respecting a notoriously wicked man, "Sir, if that man becomes converted and saved, then I shall despair of no one." "Sir," replied Mr. Newton, "I never have despaired of any one since I obtained mercy myself." This is the doctrine taught us by these patterns. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

But, again, these patterns here exhibited teach us that this mercy is sovereign and given to whom Christ wills to give it. It is only to be found when, and

where, and how he wills. And if, therefore, any sinner wilfully and knowingly neglects the great salvation, tramples under foot the Son of God, and crucifying him afresh, puts him to an open shame—he runs fearful hazard of being abandoned to final and hopeless impenitence. Paul did what he did ignorantly, through unbelief, thinking he did God service, and Colonel Yeadon “thought if he had really known the truth he would have accepted it.” Seeing, therefore, that God’s Spirit will not always strive with men, and that he who, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy—take heed, lest by provoking God to anger, you find him a consuming fire, and now, in the day of his merciful visitation, lay hold on eternal life.

Finally, this pattern teaches us that, through mercy, a sinner may become not only saved, but sanctified. Christ saves his people from their *sins*, as well as from their *danger*. He is a purifier, as well as a pacifier, and imparts his Spirit, as well as his grace. He gives to all who believe, power to become the sons of God, and is able to do for them exceeding abundantly, above all that they can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in them. So it was in the case of Paul, and in the case also of Col. Yeadon. So completely was he transformed in thought, word and deed, in the subjugation of pride, passion, temper and revenge—so humble was he, and gentle, and affectionate, and meek—so essentially was he a Christian in all places and in all cases—that I have never heard of any one who questioned the sincerity or the reality of his piety.

THE BIBLE,  
THE  
BASIS OF MORAL CHARACTER.

A TRACT FOR YOUNG MEN.

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THE Bible is a remarkable book. It meets the wants of our ruined race. It contemplates man as fallen, and offers him that aid which his condition requires. And, with a wisdom which eminently distinguishes its divine origin, it seizes upon the most favourable period in man's life to subject him to its authority, and mould him into the likeness of his Creator. It takes him in the days of his youth, and provides for his renovation and purification from the corruption which sin has introduced into his moral nature. And, by pointing to its own sacred teachings, as furnishing the best and surest way of attaining the desired end, it has solved a problem, which has ever proved too difficult for human reason to work out. Hence, when the question is asked, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" the reply is, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Psa. cxix. 9.

This inquiry, it will be perceived, proceeds upon the supposition that young men are depraved, that they are polluted by sin, and stand in need of cleansing. This is true of all, without exception; for "they are all together become filthy." Every young man is corrupted in "his way;" that is, in his whole deportment. This must be understood as including his internal habits, as well as his outward acts, as every

course of external action is founded on habits or principles of a corresponding character. Man, therefore, being from his earliest youth polluted in the habits of his soul, his whole course of action will partake of that pollution, unless his character be changed and purified.

But how is this to be done? How shall a young man form a pure and elevated character? How shall he acquire principles and habits of action, free from the impurity of the wicked? The answer is, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word;" that is, by carefully attending to the word of God, and submitting to its instructions. Hence the doctrine of revelation clearly is, that **THE WORD OF GOD IS THE BASIS OF MORAL CHARACTER; AND THAT THE YOUNG MAN WHO WOULD FORM A PURE AND VIRTUOUS CHARACTER, MUST DO IT ON THE PLATFORM OF THE BIBLE.** This truth, it shall be the object of the following remarks to establish and illustrate, by pointing out some of the advantages which the word of God affords for the formation of a pure and elevated character, such as every young man should desire to possess.

And, in the first place, the word of God provides for the subjugation and destruction of the evil principles of our nature, and the introduction, in their room, of others of a higher and holier character. To deny that man's nature is depraved, is to quarrel with facts; it is to resist the whole current of history. If it be not depraved, whence all these manifestations of corruption? If there be no evil principle in our nature, whence all these evil actions? Can there be a stream without a fountain? Can there be fruit without a tree? Can there be an effect without a cause? For such absurdities none will contend. And men have laboured in vain to assign an adequate cause for the universal prevalence of outward vice, while they have denied the existence of depraved principles in the heart.

Assuming the fact, then, that man is depraved, the word



of God provides for the subjugation and destruction of the depraved principles of his nature. This it does, not by a mere curbing, restraining, or reforming process; but it provides for an entire change of character. According to its teachings, men must be "born again;" they must be "created anew in Christ Jesus;" old things must pass away, and all things become new;" the corrupt habits or principles which reign in the heart must be taken away, and those of holiness implanted.

Here, then, we have the first great step towards the formation of a pure and elevated character. Here is what no system of philosophy or of educational reform ever proposed. And for want of this they have all failed, and ever will fail. Education and philosophy are not to be despised. They are good enough in their place. They may restrain and control to some extent; but they do not, they cannot, root out and destroy the corrupt bias of the soul—those depraved habits which lie at the root of all obliquity of conduct. To the Bible, and the Bible alone, we must look for that system which lays the foundation of a virtuous character in the entire renovation of the heart, in the destruction of the principles of corruption, and the implantation of those of holiness. The Bible, then, is the only sure basis of a pure and virtuous character.

Again, the word of God provides for the formation of such a character in the exhibitions which it gives of God's moral character and government. It exhibits God as a holy and righteous moral governor, exacting full and perfect obedience to his holy and righteous laws. The language of God, and of his law is, "obey, and live; disobey, and die." In carrying out his system of moral government, this regard to holiness and hatred against sin, are shown in a striking manner. They are seen in the penalty which has been inflicted on the race of man for the first transgression of their covenant-head. They are seen still more strikingly

in the punishment which Christ endured as the substitute of sinners, when "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief." In the cross of Christ, above all other places, are exhibited God's love of holiness, his hatred against sin, and the unyielding severity with which he exacts conformity to the demands of his holy law and righteous government.

In these exhibitions which are given in the word of God of his moral character and government, of his love of holiness and hatred against sin, the sinner is instructed in the necessity of holiness, "without which no man can see the Lord." A sense of accountability to God is increased, and he is made to feel that punishment and misery are the certain consequences of sin; and that if God spared not his own Son, when he acted as the sinner's substitute, much less will he spare the guilty sinner himself.

Here, then, is a point of much importance, tending strongly towards the formation of a pure and virtuous character. If young men can be made to see and feel their accountability to God; that suffering and punishment certainly follow transgression, and that happiness is the sure reward of a life of holiness, they will hardly fail to make vigorous efforts to secure the one and avoid the other. For this purpose, we would direct them to the Bible, which alone gives full and accurate views of God's righteous character and moral government; which alone places him upon the throne of the universe, and holds every intelligent moral being accountable to his righteous tribunal.

Another advantage which the word of God affords for the formation of a pure and virtuous character is, that it makes provision for the sinner's union with the most perfect character which the world ever saw, and secures its influence in his favour. That character is Jesus Christ, the only perfect character who has ever appeared on earth. The Bible points out the way in which the sinner is brought

into union with Christ, and made one with him. It is effected by faith wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God. The completeness of the union is clearly indicated in the Holy Scriptures. He is the vine, they are the branches. He is the head, they are the members. And while this union involves a measure of conformity to Christ, on the part of believers, it furnishes security for a still nearer approximation to him, who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

This union between Christ and his people lays a foundation for the exertion of his influence in the formation of their character. The influence in this case is of two kinds, or is put forth in two forms. The first is that of the Spirit, who is sent forth to lead them into all truth, and mature the work which has been begun in their hearts. Of this we shall not now speak, as it will be brought more distinctly into notice hereafter. The other kind or form of influence arising from this union, is that of example. The Lord Jesus, with whom the believing sinner is united, is ever present, as a perfect pattern of moral excellence, shedding the light of his divine and attractive glory before his eyes continually.

The perfection of the Saviour's character is admitted even by infidels themselves. Nor is it in a single point, but in all the high attributes of moral character that he sheds forth his attractive glory. Let us select a few particulars.

How perfect, for example, is his wisdom, as it beams forth from the sacred page! With what consummate skill did he escape the snares which were laid for him by the "cunning craftiness" of men who lay in wait to deceive him! The Pharisees and Herodians, who differed on the question of paying tribute to Cæsar, approached him, and with high pretensions of regard for him, as a teacher sent from God, put to him the contested question, "Is it lawful

to give tribute to Cæsar or not?" By this they designed to entangle him. If he had said that it was lawful, they would have accused him of being hostile to their liberties, and going contrary to the law of Moses. But if he had said that it was not lawful, they would have arraigned him as an enemy to Cæsar, and implicated him with the Roman government. The plan was most artfully laid. But Jesus "perceived their wickedness," and in the exercise of the most admirable wisdom, escaped the snare, by directing them to "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Matt. xxii. 15—22. The same profound wisdom he manifested on various other occasions, which are worthy the admiration and regard of all who would form their character on the most perfect model.

Another point to which we would direct attention is his compassionate sympathy for suffering humanity. Thus, when he saw the multitude who followed him "out of all cities," he "was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd," and by a gracious act of divine power he provided for their wants and the alleviation of their hunger." Mark vi. 33—44. How tenderly, also, did he sympathize with Mary and Martha, the afflicted sisters of Lazarus, mingling his tears with theirs, and those of the weeping Jews! John xi. And what overflowings of compassion are seen in the tender lamentation which he poured forth over Jerusalem, when in the fulness of his heart, he exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

Look, also, at his meekness. When false witnesses testified against him before Caiaphas, he was silent. When the

rude soldiers mocked him, and spit upon him, and smote him upon the head, he calmly endured it all. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 23. And in his last agonies on the cross, his dying prayer in behalf of those who put him to death, was, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." With signal propriety, then, does he invite men to come and learn of him, as of one who is "meek and lowly in heart."

But I shall only point you further to his holiness, to the perfect purity of his character. Even his enemies could not convict him of sin. Pilate declared that he "found no fault in him." And, the multitude testified, that he had "done all things well." In reference to this, the apostle Paul declares, that he is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;" and Peter affirms that he "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

We see, then, in the perfection of the Redeemer's character—a small part only of which has been here exhibited—an influence, for the exertion of which in the formation of man's character, the Bible makes provision. It provides, as we have seen, for the union of the sinner with this holy Redeemer, and for the purifying influence arising from constant fellowship with him. And can there be any doubt of the beneficial effect arising thence? We all know the influence of virtuous associations. Let the veriest profligate be drawn into constant intercourse and close communion with persons of established and consistent virtue, he will gradually become assimilated to them, in his outward deportment. Much more will those who are united to Christ by a living faith, and whose hearts are influenced by the grace of God, imbibe his spirit, and copy his example.

A further advantage which the word of God affords for the formation of character is, that it presents the highest

motives to abstain from evil, and to practice that which is good. Man is so constituted that he never acts but under the influence of motives. Every act of the will is excited by some motive. Hence, the stronger the motive, the greater its tendency to excite to corresponding vigour of action. But what stronger motives can be presented to the human mind, than those which the Bible reveals? The law of God, which is the rule and measure of obedience, is enforced by sanctions drawn from the eternal world. According to the teaching of the Bible, it is not mere temporal inconvenience which the sinner will experience, by the disregard of God's authority. To this he will, doubtless, be often subjected. For sorrow and suffering are the natural and necessary effects of sin. But he will experience far worse than this. Without repentance and an interest in Christ, he will be subjected to eternal misery in hell. "The wages of sin is death," eternal death, where "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." So on the other hand, the rewards of the righteous are not temporal honours or emoluments, but crowns of glory in heaven. "An exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

Here are motives of the very highest kind—motives drawn from heaven and hell—motives commensurate with eternity, putting forth their mighty influence to determine the will in favour of a holy and virtuous course of action, and against that which is sinful and polluting. It is in the Bible that we find these motives. There they are presented in all their commanding force, and he who would feel their influence, must read and ponder the contents of this blessed book. He must "take heed" to the word of God, written by the pen of inspiration, and given to train us for heaven.

Again, the word of God reveals the purest system of

morality, which has ever been presented to man. There has never been any thing like it. Search all antiquity; read the works of the wisest sages; canvass the writings of the most accomplished philosophers and statesmen of ancient and modern times, and you will find no such system of morality as that which the Bible contains—so pure, so spiritual, so far above all that the human intellect has ever conceived or elaborated. While it does not eradicate human passions and affections, it purifies, refines, and elevates them. It points them to their proper objects, and induces their exercise in such a direction, as secures the highest measures of happiness. Love to God and man is the controlling element. Pride, revenge, hatred—every thing which exerts a disturbing influence upon the soul is excluded. An obedience proceeding from a heart sanctified by the grace of God, is alone recognized as acceptable in the sight of him who seeth not as man seeth, and who judgeth of acts according to the state of the heart. To the word of God, then, the youth who would form a pure and heavenly character, must come and take counsel. To the Bible he must resort for those lessons of divine wisdom, whereby he may cleanse his way.

The Bible, moreover, provides for the formation of a pure and exalted character, as it promises the efficient aid of the Holy Spirit for the successful attainment of the desired object. The Spirit of God is an almighty agent. It is his office to enlighten, renew, and sanctify the sinner. It is by him that he is “born again;” that the natural darkness of his mind is removed; that the opposition of his heart to that which is good and excellent is overcome, and that all the moral powers of the soul are brought into harmony with the character and law of God. He has been commissioned to make man “a new creature,” to form him like to his Maker, by enstamping upon him the image of God, in which he was originally created, and which consists in “knowledge, right-

eousness, and true holiness." Having been commissioned and sent into the world for this purpose, to make man holy, none who will avail themselves of his efficient aid need despair of success.

If, then, young men would possess a pure and virtuous character, they must yield themselves to the teachings of the word of God on this subject, and seek for the special influence of the Holy Spirit to cleanse their polluted souls from the contaminating power of sin. No agency short of His can accomplish the object. And for the knowledge of this, and the assurance that it can be obtained, we are indebted to the Bible. In relation to this point, the Bible is emphatically the basis of moral character, as it makes us acquainted with the only power which is adequate to the entire renovation of man's nature, and the complete assimilation of his character to that of God.

From the view thus given of the advantages which the word of God affords for the formation of a pure and virtuous character, is it not obvious that all those systems of education which exclude the teachings of the Bible are radically defective? Men, in the pride of their hearts, have extolled "the law of nature" as furnishing a plainer revelation than that which is found in the Bible. They have told us that there we "have sight to enlighten the blindness of faith; fact, to correct the errors of speculation." But those who declaim in this way, only show their own blindness and ignorance. If men would see what nature, unassisted by revelation, can do, let them read the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. There are found disclosures which should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, who claim for reason what it can never accomplish. Instead, therefore, of looking to the dim and dubious light of nature, we must go to the Bible, if we would have the errors of reason rectified, and have an enlightened faith to guide us in the pathway to heaven. Let the Bible, then, be studied



thoroughly. Let it be read, not only in the closet, and in the family, but let it be the text-book in our schools, and colleges, and seminaries of learning, of every grade. Nor would it be out of place, in our halls of legislation, where the excited passions of men, often greatly need the softening and subduing power of its holy precepts. Especially let it be the grand agency in moulding the character of the young, and training them for the high purposes for which they have been brought into the world.

Indeed, if the Bible contains so many elements adapted to the formation of a character of the highest purity and excellence, the young cannot fail to perceive that it has claims on their most profound attention and regard. It is to be feared, that many of our youth exclude the Bible entirely from their course of reading. We do not speak merely of those whose reading is almost exclusively devoted to novels, and other light and trashy publications of a similar kind. To minds diluted and perverted by such works, the solemn and weighty truths of the Bible will, of course, be distasteful. But even of those who read works of a more solid character, how few include amongst them the Bible. This is a most serious mistake and omission. If it be so eminently adapted, as we have seen, to the formation of a good character, it should have a chief place in the reading of the young. It should be read daily—and not read only, but studied, and its truths pondered, and applied to all the purposes for which they have been revealed.

And here the youthful student will find, what is not to be found in any work of human production, he will find instructions suited to all the various conditions of human life; instructions in regard to his duty to God and to his fellow-men—so that if he wishes to qualify himself for the exertion of a great and controlling influence, he should form his character on the platform of the Bible. The importance of this will be more manifest, when we consider that as the

character is formed here, so it will continue throughout eternity. A good character is of great value here, in the present state of existence. But it is of far greater value in reference to the eternal world. To every young man, then, who peruses these pages, I would say : If you would be prepared to enter the eternal world safely, and shine as a bright star in the firmament of heaven, read your Bible ; study your Bible ! Make it the rule of your faith and your practice. If you do this, it will assuredly conduct you safely and triumphantly to the enjoyment of everlasting glory at God's right hand.

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### THE ONE BOOK.

FOND as you are of books, there is only one that you will value at last ; and with your head on the pillow, you will hardly care to be told, that a new volume of the great history is published, or a marvellous epic, out-peering all its predecessors. "No ; read me the twenty-third Psalm. Let me hear the fourteenth of John." When your strength sinks yet lower—when your interest in all under the sun has faded away, and ebbing life affords not even a parting tear—it will, for a moment, rally the worn faculties to hear the whisper, "My flesh and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." And when all is over—when to orphan children and desolate kindred the world is grown a great sepulchre, and the most tender friends are vain comforters—when letters of condolence lie unopened, and words of compassion fall like hail-stones on the heart, the first thing that sends a warm ray into the gloom, and brings to the eye, tears that are not bitter, is when Jesus himself breaks the silence, and you hear, "I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—*Selected.*

## THE COLLEGE STUDENTS.

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THERE is in the kingdom of grace, as in nature, a time for seed-sowing, and a time for harvesting. Hence we are assured by the Psalmist, that "he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." This is often illustrated in cases of individual conversion. The parent who has long counselled and wept over a beloved child, and the pastor who has long bestowed his faithful instructions and admonitions on some one member of his congregation, each of these, though often despairing of success, has ultimately realized the truth of God's promise, and has been made to rejoice over the conversion of a soul on which so much pious culture had been expended. Now, what takes place with an individual, may also be expected to occur in a community or church. In a Christian congregation the seed-time is enjoyed by all in common. Why, then, should not the harvesting partake of the same social character? Indeed, there is much in human nature itself to facilitate such a result. Although not a matter exclusively of sympathy, yet does religion enlist and control the purest sympathies of the human heart. The conversion of one person in a family or congregation is often

made the means of arousing the attention of others, and this still of others, and so the work extends, until a whole community is brought under religious influence. Now, this is what we term a revival of religion. And so far from wondering at such an event, the only cause of wonder is, that it so seldom occurs!

Still, revivals of religion, like other good things, may be spurious in their character. This occurs mainly under two conditions; first, from the sowing of wrong seed; and second, from premature efforts to gather the harvest, even where good seed has been sown. If a man were to plant in his field thorns and thistles, it would certainly be vain for him, from such a sowing, to expect a crop of wheat or barley. So, if a professed minister of Christ should scatter the seeds of error among his people, it were utterly absurd to expect from such a sowing the genuine fruits of the gospel. The cause is parent to the effect, and the seed to the tree. If, then, a man does not sow the gospel, he cannot, of course, reap the gospel; if he does not plant truth, he cannot reap truth. Now, whatever revivals may occur under a ministry of this sort, they are spurious and not genuine—they may build up a sect, but they will never people heaven. But even he who sows the truth, and sows it faithfully, may destroy the harvest by attempting to gather it too soon. If the husbandman should thrust in his sickle before the harvest is ripe, the effect would be the total destruction of his crop. He might fill his barns, but his table and his purse would be empty. So with the spiritual labourer—should he be so ignorant of “the

signs of the times," as to mistake the actual state of his congregation, and thus attempt to force an ingathering before the facts would authorize his efforts, he might realize results; but they would be such as to fill him afterwards with disappointment and sorrow. Such are the causes, for the most part, of spurious revivals. They should not, however, operate to the detriment of those that are genuine, which as naturally result from the plain and earnest preaching of the gospel, as light does from the sun, or water from a fountain.

The facts about to be narrated occurred in the town of A., and in the year 1826. For the sake of convenience, we will call the two young men who were the prime movers in these scenes, C. and L. They were both members of the Junior class in college, and also professing Christians. C., indeed, was a candidate for the ministry, and had been a member of his class from its origin. L., who unfortunately stammered, had joined the class the previous spring. With the exception of these two young men, there was but one other professor of religion in connection with the college. This last young man belonged to a different denomination, and although amiable and correct in his deportment, seemed to take but little interest in the spiritual welfare of those around him. The college itself was in a flourishing condition; but the students were generally ungodly, and some of them skeptical. Long had the prayers of the pious, and especially of pious parents, ascended to heaven in behalf of this institution. Yet all continued as dark as Egypt, and class after class graduated with no bright monuments

of redeeming grace during their collegiate term. It was under these circumstances, that the religious condition of the college became the matter of the following conversation between C. and L.

C. "Well, brother L., do you not think the moral state of our college very gloomy and afflictive?"

L. "Indeed, I do; but I see no way to change it."

C. "Yes, there is a way, and that way is prayer. Are you willing, brother L., to make with me a covenant on this subject, so that we shall present the case jointly before God?"

L. "Perfectly;—and let us begin the work at once."

Before separating, these young men agreed to pray apart in their closets each evening at sunset for the students in college, and also to spend an hour together on each Wednesday afternoon at some remote spot in the country. This spot, which was about a mile from A., and entirely secluded by trees, turned out to be a *white log*; where each successive week these young men met for mutual encouragement and prayer. In all the reminiscences of the past, the writer, who was one of the parties, can recall no richer and holier associations than those connected with this white log. Here they met with the Saviour—here they pled the promises—and here their hearts often burned within them, while discoursing about the things of the kingdom.

For several weeks these young men proceeded no further than to offer up strong petitions at a throne of grace. At this period in their religious history, they were more willing to intercede with God in behalf of

their fellow-students, than to speak to the students themselves about their souls. It is the nature of grace, however, to increase its influence on the heart, and to dispose those who undertake but small things at first to venture upon greater ones afterwards. And so these young men found it; for very soon it occurred to them as an inconsistency to be praying for certain results, and yet to put forth no direct efforts to accomplish those results. They resolved, therefore, at one of their weekly meetings, that each of them should hold conversation on religion with at least three of his fellow-students during the week. This resolution was adopted with timidity, as they both believed that personal religion was a matter not only neglected, but contemned by most of the students. They resolved, however, to do their duty in this respect; and so, earnestly entreated the blessing of God upon this new field of labour.

The writer can never forget the fears with which he approached some of his classmates on this subject, and his amazement at observing their readiness to converse about divine things. Alas! it too often happens with even advanced Christians, that they seem to suppose that religion is something peculiar to themselves and a few others, and that all the world beside are but "publicans and sinners." This is a great mistake, as providence now and the judgment-day hereafter will loudly teach. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." All around us are those whose hearts are labouring on the subject of religion, and whose souls God is preparing for both the blessings and labours of his king-

dom. "What God hath cleansed," then, let not man call "common or unclean."

The first young man with whom the writer conversed, not only spake without reserve, but when alluding to his early training and the example of a godly mother, shed tears of the liveliest emotion. The second was so deeply affected and agitated that prayer was offered up specially for him at his request; after which, he entered his private room, and falling on his knees, continued some time in supplication! A third was agitated all over, wept, and simply begged it as a favour, that the subject should not then be pressed! A fourth was found to be already "a disciple of Christ, but secretly, for fear" of the world! Others were conversed with, who were in every state of mind, from a child-like docility to an almost rabid infidelity. Even the skeptical, however, admitted that the subject was important, and some of them desired light on various points upon which their minds had laboured. This was C.'s experience in conversation with his fellow-students. He found that not only the ground was not fallow, but that "the fields were already white to the harvest." Those godly parents and ministers, under whose care these numerous young men had been trained, had done a great preparatory work, and all that was needed was to build on the foundations already laid. The experience of L. was of a similar character. He found many whom he deemed perfectly thoughtless, in an entirely opposite state of mind. They welcomed him with his message, and encouraged him to repeat his visits. The interest which these occurrences excited in the bosoms of these two young



men, when associated at their "white log" on each Wednesday evening, may better be imagined than described. Their hearts were not only warmed, they *caught fire*; and these two timid babes in Christ now began to feel like strong men in the Lord. Their hope, their joy, their strength had greatly increased; for they found One on their side more powerful than all their enemies. They resolved, therefore, to increase the number of weekly conversations, and also to adopt all other proper means for the conversion of their fellow-students.

At this time several events occurred that seemed to them remarkably providential, and which facilitated the results. A protracted meeting was held some thirty miles off by several ministers. At this meeting a young man, a former member of the college and then a resident in the town, professed to be converted. This was a strange thing; for the conversion of a young man was an event that had not recently been witnessed in A. One of the ministers, also, and with him a graduate of the last class who was a candidate for the ministry, after attending the protracted meeting, came to A. By a sort of impulse, this minister said to his young companion on the road: "Brother C., let us go *into the college*, and there lift up the standard of the Lord." It was a bold thought, especially as these brethren were not officially connected with the institution. But faith knows no obstacles—fears no dangers—stops for no lions. It clothes itself with omnipotence, and all else is but as cobwebs in its way. It was acquiesced in by the other; so that a mere visit to A. for relaxation and social pleasure,

became one of deep and eternal interest. These brethren now felt as if they were commissioned of God to preach salvation to the youth of the college. Upon their arrival, they inquired of Professor C., who was also a minister of the gospel, the religious state of the college; and especially, *if any practical means* could be used to reach the students. The result was that the Professor's lecture-room was secured for holding a meeting which was appointed for Sabbath afternoon. In the meantime, the young brethren, C. and L., became acquainted with the purpose of the two visitors, and gave them great encouragement in the enterprise. They assured them that all that was wanted was reapers; many of the young men being already much concerned on the subject. When the hour arrived for the meeting, the room was crowded. Oh! never can the writer forget the interest and joy with which he gazed upon this group of young men—the first, so far as he knows, assembled in that college for a similar purpose. Rev. Mr. W. arose. His manner was simple, earnest, and clear. He showed the importance of religion to the young, and especially to young men, and pressed an immediate attention to the subject on them all. The effect was visible. All of them were deeply solemn, and some of them shed tears that they could ill disguise. Mr. C. also exhorted; and even the young man so recently converted at the protracted meeting, arose and concisely narrated the history of his conversion, urging the young men from his example to seek the salvation of their souls. It was a meeting never to be forgotten. At its close, several of the students, chiefly acquaintances of Rev.

Mr. W., came forward and expressed their purpose to take his advice, and to make the salvation of their souls their first concern. C. and L. were at this meeting, and looked with the deepest interest on all that occurred. To them it seemed so wonderful that "they were like those that dream." Scarcely had they begun their efforts for the conversion of the young men, when the work began! God had brought to their aid, even from a distance, faithful and zealous men, who seemed to be specially designed for this very work! Their hearts were enlarged, and now, with holier boldness than ever, they could plead, not for a few souls only, but for the entire college and town.

Rev. Mr. W. spent some two weeks in A., visiting not only many of the students, but also several families in the village. He found the state of things in town quite as encouraging as in the college. Several heads of families were either indulging a trembling hope, or appeared anxious to know, what they must do to be saved. Meetings for either prayer or preaching were held in the college chapel each evening, where the students and people of the village were assembled. A Bible-class was instituted both in the college and town, where all who were concerned for their souls were requested to meet, and where such instruction was given as those present were supposed to need. By this time it was manifest to all, that God was in both college and town of a truth; and that a day of salvation was at hand. The kingdom of heaven began to suffer violence, and the violent were taking it by force. Several meetings, of from two to four days' continu-

ance, were appointed by the different denominations in the village, and the work went forward with power. C. and L., however, confined their efforts chiefly to the college; where they were permitted to see one friend after another made a participant of the blessings of salvation. They were now not ashamed, but spake boldly to every man, "the Lord adding to the church daily such as should be saved." Oh, the scenes that occurred during this precious revival can never be narrated with pen and paper. Many bold transgressors were cut down, and many daring unbelievers were brought to repentance. The exercises of many under conviction were deeply interesting. Some were brought to a hope by one means, some by another. The evidences of some were exceedingly clear; others had less light. These various experiences, narrated at the daily college meetings, became matters of the deepest interest. Some sixty of the students were brought under religious concern, about forty of whom became professors of religion. Of these, several devoted themselves to the ministry, and have been made the means in their turn of winning many precious souls to God. A large number from the village also connected themselves with the different churches. The entire moral condition of both town and college was changed; nor have they since returned to that midnight gloom which once covered them, but for years have been radiating points, from which has issued light to those who sat in darkness.

1. From the facts in the preceding narrative, we learn, that the first step in promoting a revival of religion is *to lay to heart* the perishing condition of

those around us. Every unconverted man is under sentence of death; and if not delivered from his state of sin and unbelief, must perish for ever. This fact is but little appreciated at ordinary times; but when the "still small voice" of the Spirit begins to be heard in a church, the wretched condition of sinners is revealed, and the godly begin to feel for them as much as they did for themselves when under conviction. They are pitied—they are talked about—they are prayed for. Such concern as this, if it does not precede, invariably attends every genuine revival of religion. When Zion "*travails*, she bringeth forth children." Hence, in worldly and carnal congregations, such a phenomenon as a revival seldom or never occurs. Professors of that class feel but little for themselves; how then can they lay to heart the misery of those around them? If, then, reader, you would promote a revival of religion in your church or community, cast not your eyes abroad for some distinguished "son of thunder" to accomplish the work. But rather turn your eyes in upon your own souls, and ask, How much do *I* feel for the perishing around me? Have I estimated their perilous condition aright? When I see them careless under sermons, light and trifling in their conduct, mad upon their worldly pleasures, or absorbed in secular pursuits, have I been afflicted in soul, and been made to exclaim like David, "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law"? Have I feared the wrath upon which they are rushing, and have I shuddered at the pit into which they are falling? Ah, these must be your feelings, if you would promote a revival of religion.

2. We learn, also from this narrative, the efficacy of *united prayer*, in promoting a revival of religion. Genuine prayer is always heard, by whomsoever offered. The prayer of Abraham, of Jacob, of Moses, of Elijah, and of Daniel, was powerful prayer. But our Lord teaches that there is *peculiar* power in *united* prayer. "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." We need not here speculate upon the reasons why the combined supplications of two men are so efficacious with God. We need only to know the *fact* as a sufficient basis for faith. That fact Christ himself teaches in the passage of scripture quoted above. Do you desire, then, dear reader, a revival of religion? Not only pray for it yourself, but associate one or two others with you, that you may thus come within the provisions of this particular promise. "Two," says Solomon, "are better than one." When you undertake the work alone you are apt to be discouraged; you distrust your motives, your sincerity, your faith even. But when a like-minded brother is with you, to encourage you, to sympathize with you, to share your burdens and to participate in your labours, you realize unwonted strength. The fervour of his heart enkindles yours, and the energy of your faith increases his. Thus is there between your soul and his a perpetual giving and a perpetual receiving. Thus yoked together in the Spirit, you go on "from strength to strength," until not only you yourselves, but others converted by your agency, "shall appear in Zion before God." Come, dear

reader, enter upon this work. It will be a blessing to you, a blessing to your church, a blessing to lost and perishing sinners.

3. A third step in promoting a revival of religion is, *earnest and well-directed effort*. Such effort will naturally spring from a state of mind such as we have already described. What would you think of the mother who could calmly continue at an evening party, when informed that her child had met with an accident, and was apparently dying? What would you think of a man who, when seeing another mangled in the street, should make no efforts to relieve him? This is not humanity, it is stoicism of the lowest grade. As to the species of effort to be used, this will depend upon a variety of circumstances. To some you may give well-selected tracts—others you may counsel in private. Some will be prepared to receive instruction as to the nature and evidences of conversion; others, again, you will find involved in the sophistries of some erroneous creed, or of some deep and malignant prejudice. Here you will need great caution. Persons of this kind are to be approached, not so much on the ground of their creed, as on the ground of their *necessities* as sinners. It is not the front but the side door that you must attempt to enter in cases of this kind. Many a man who will let you break a hundred swords over his forehead unharmed, will yield instantly to a thrust upon his heart. However, we would not advise private Christians generally to this work of admonition and reproof—this is chiefly the pastor's business. Hints, kind remarks, insinuations, encouragement, prayer, &c., better suit private

Christians. With these apparently insignificant weapons, especially if well sustained by a godly life, they may do wonders. David's *sling* did more to conquer the Philistines than Saul's armour; yea, than all the swords and spears of Israel.

If, then, my dear reader, the state of religion is low with you, join not the number of those who are ever crying out, "Who will show us any good?" nor yet of those who exclaim, "Lo! here," or "Lo! there." There is a better, far better way. David teaches it to us in these words, "I will lift up mine eyes to the *hills* from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth." Here is a helper for you—one ever near—one ever merciful—one ever ready to hear sincere and believing prayer. To this great Helper come, and you will soon experience the truth of his word, "I never said to the seed of Israel, Seek ye my face in vain."



Extract from an "ADDRESS TO STUDENTS. By the Rev. James Hamilton, London." Published by the Board of Publication.

Should your mind already be made up that the Bible is the word of God, lose not a moment in devoting yourself to God's immediate service. So long as you live to yourself you live in sin, and you only commence a truly happy and noble life when you begin to live to God. And for his dear Son's sake, a holy and merciful God is unspeakably willing, not only to receive you into his service, but to make you something more than a servant, even his own son. And happily for you, whatever be your tastes or talents, there are endless fields in which you may exercise them, and still be serving God. The great thing is personal devotedness. It was this which hurried Martyn and Thomason away to the missionary work, and which made Spencer and McCheyne such burning and shining lights at home. It was this which shed such a halo round jurists like President Forbes and Sir Matthew Hale, and which interwove its fragrant myrtle with the laurel crown of Haller, and Hope, and Boerhaave. It was this—the feeling that their pen was not their own, but that they were bound to glorify God in their authorships, which actuated at once Foster's iron energy, and Cowper's enchanting elegance, and has imparted to their books more than human perpetuity and power. And though they never passed forth to active life, it was their undisguised devotedness, that relation to a beloved Redeemer, which they neither vaunted nor concealed, which gave

a lustre to the college life of students like John Urquhart and James Halley, and gave to genius the momentum and majesty of pervasive piety. And, my dear friends, is there any thing else for which you are content to live? Is it College honours? Hear a senior wrangler: "I obtained my highest wishes, but was surprised to find that I had grasped a shadow."—(H. Martyn.) A seat in the English Cabinet? Hear a Secretary of State, (Lord Melville,) when a friend wished him a happy New-Year: "This year had need to be happier than the last, for I do not remember a single happy day in it." The Chancellorship of England? Hear him who longest held it, and most dearly loved it, (Lord Eldon.) "A few weeks will send me to dear Encombe as a resting-place between vexation and the grave." Is it Fame? "They came from all lands to hear the wisdom of Solomon," but the famous philosopher summed it up, "Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity." But pray the Lord to teach you a nobler end, and a more excellent way. Pray that he would make you zealous for himself, and enable you to diffuse his glory through the earth. And do not rest till you feel in your secret soul that something grander prompts you than the love of money, the love of title, or the love of power. Let that motive urge you which fired evangelists and strengthened martyrs, to which earth owes its most splendid virtues, and to which heaven owes all its earth-born citizens. Let the love of Christ constrain you, and then you can neither live too long, nor work too hard, nor be summoned from the world too soon.

## SHALL I GO TO THE LORD'S SUPPER?

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WHEN our Lord was eating the last passover with his twelve apostles, and but a few hours before he was betrayed, he saw fit to institute a service which should remind his people of his sufferings and death, in such a manner as no precept alone could possibly have done. Separating two simple elements, which were before them on the table—the bread to represent his body broken, and the wine to represent his blood poured forth—he distributed them to his disciples, saying of the bread, “This is my body;” and of the cup, “This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many;” and then giving it in solemn charge, “This do in remembrance of me.” It was a permanent ordinance, so given and so understood; for more than twenty years afterwards, Paul enjoined its observance on the Corinthian church as a well known institution, saying, “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread,” &c. 1 Cor. ii. 23—26.

Conscientious Christians have to this day, by almost universal consent, observed the Lord's supper. It is an ordinance peculiar to the church of Christ, and to be stately observed there until “He shall appear the

second time, without sin unto salvation." Notwithstanding this general admission of the obligation to observe this sacrament, there are those who neglect it. Those who do thus are of two kinds; some disregard it altogether, living without prayer, and contemning not only this, but every other divine institution, and caring for none of these things; while others are serious persons, exhibiting some degree of evidence that they are Christians, and at times having a hope for themselves that they have passed from death unto life, but still neglecting to come to the Lord's table, from a supposed want of the proper qualifications. With the first of these classes we have at present nothing to do. God calls them to himself, but they stop their ears; he lifts up his hand to invite, but they shut their eyes; his Spirit hovers over them, but they harden their hearts. To their own master they stand or fall. But we have now in view the other class; those serious and perhaps pious people, who would gladly know their duty, that they might perform it, and who hesitate about making a public profession of religion by uniting with the visible church, and thus taking a seat at the Lord's table, not from a want of love to God or his ordinances, but from a fear that they are destitute of the proper qualifications. We shall endeavour, therefore, to remove these difficulties, and show both the duty and the privilege of God's people to render obedience to him in this particular duty, as well as in all others.

1. Coming acceptably to the Lord's table does not necessarily demand entire innocence of character. If it were so, no mortal could sit down there. There is

no such thing on earth as innocence of character. Every child of Adam is a guilty sinner, naturally destitute of holiness, and inclined to evil. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it." Such is man, a sinner by nature, an entire sinner. But this admitted truth should deter no one from taking a seat at the table of the Lord. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; and all such, repenting of their sins and believing on him, may freely come to his table.

2. The want of full assurance of being in a state of grace, is no insurmountable obstacle to a worthy partaking of the Lord's supper. The highest degrees of evidence of being in a state of grace are desirable, and should be sought by all; neither should any be content with low degrees of the witness of the Spirit, that they are children of God and heirs with Christ, and we should constantly aim at making progress in the divine life. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," we should "press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus." There doubtless is such a thing as assurance of God's love, and we should labour for its attainment, and hope for its possession, but the want of it, as yet, is not to be considered as an obstacle to the performance of any duty which is plainly commanded.

3. None should refrain from an open profession of religion, and consequently from taking a seat at the Lord's table, on account of a supposed want of joy and delight in the things of God. "I am gloomy and

melancholy," says the objector; "I have no joy and peace in believing, and therefore scarce dare to indulge any hope of pardon and acceptance with God. In this state of mind, can I believe that I am a child of God, and as such entitled to a seat at his table?" To this it may be answered, that the reality of vital religion is to be ascertained, not by the measure of joy and delight afforded, but by the existence in the soul of the substantial graces of the Spirit, such as *faith*, or trust in Christ; *repentance*, or deep self-loathing for sin; and *humility*, or self-abasement before God. These graces are characteristic of the Christian, while joy and delight are not. A self-deceived hypocrite may be very joyful, but he can neither trust in Christ, nor lie in humble abasement at the foot of the cross. These substantial graces, as characteristic of true piety, may be seen in holy men of old. The piety of Job will not be questioned, and while all was dark around him, and he did not see his way, yet his faith and trust in God was a strong and active principle within him. Listen to his language: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." But "O that I knew where I might find him." "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him." So dark and gloomy was the mind of this holy man, notwithstanding his firm trust in God. Were Job with us at this day, should we exclude him from the Lord's table, because he walked in

darkness, and had no joy? Certainly not. And there was David also. Look at the occasional state of his mind, and hear his agonizing cries: "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God." "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted." Shall David be excluded from the Lord's table because instead of joy and delight he is covered with a cloud, and because his evidences of grace are for the moment obscured to his own mind? No one will admit it. And what are we to think of Jeremiah, who said, "When I cry and shout, God shutteth out my prayer?" Or, what are we to think of Paul, as we hear him exclaim in bitterness of soul: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Shall Paul keep aloof from the table of the Lord, because there may have been a cloud over his mind at that moment? If the argument is a sound one, which keeps the desponding soul away from his privilege, merely from the want of joy and delight, then the holy men of old while walking in darkness, as they sometimes did, should have refrained from the discharge of religious obligations, until the cloud passed over, and joy again filled their souls. But if they were not to be excluded from participating in divine ordinances while under the cloud, we are not to exclude ourselves on the same ground.

4. None should refrain from taking a seat at the Lord's table on account of a supposed weakness of

faith, and a fear of unworthiness. This is often urged. Let such as indulge it consider that it is the *quality* of the grace, and not the *measure* of it to which we are to look. For example: water is as truly water in a single drop, as in the whole ocean; it differs only in quantity. So real faith of the very weakest kind, hesitating, trembling, and fearing, it may be, is truly faith, notwithstanding—and as surely unites the soul to Christ unto justification of life as absolute assurance. And as to legal worthiness, there is no such thing. All men are utterly unworthy of the least favour, and deserve eternal banishment from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; and we are accepted in attending upon divine ordinances, not because we are worthy, but because God is merciful, and condescends to the lowly.

5. It will doubtless be asked whether there are not some positive qualifications in those who worthily partake of the Lord's supper. There are such, and they are principally these three, viz: Faith in Christ, Repentance for sin, and Love to God and to his commandments.

Faith in Christ is the renunciation of our own righteousness, and a heartfelt trust in him to save us. It is easy to see that this may be found in great purity where there is very little comfort. Let the man be asked whether he has evidence of being renewed in the spirit of his mind, and he may be very doubtful; but ask him on what he relies for salvation, and he will tell you that he relies on Christ alone to save him, if he is ever saved. Thus he exercises faith, and trusts his salvation with the great Redeemer. He has



no hope at all in himself, but with great tenderness of spirit his eyes rest on Christ, and although he may walk in much darkness, yet Christ is all his salvation, and all his desire. Such a man has faith, and will come acceptably to the Lord's table.

Repentance for sin is a deep self-loathing on account of the depravity of nature, the want of conformity to God, and actual transgressions of his law. The fear of punishment does not enter into this grace, for it probably is never more sincere than when sin is viewed as forgiven, and when Christ is seen by faith, taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Then the truly penitent soul sinks down in self abasement before God, and the streams of godly sorrow will flow from the eyes. The penitent looks to him whom his sins have pierced, and mourns most unfeignedly. It is the pollution of sin which troubles him. It is the plague of his heart that he feels, and he seeks to put away sin, not as he would fire because it burns him, but as he would some filthy thing because it defiles him. A feeling like this is an evidence of repentance, and those who exercise it may come freely to the Lord's table, gathering assuredly that they are welcome there.

Love to God and to his commandments becomes manifest, much as love to other things is manifested. When we love a person we think of him, we speak of him, we love what he loves, and hate what he hates, and we seek to please him in all that we do. So it is if we truly love God. He will dwell in our thoughts, and our meditation of him will be sweet. We shall love to maintain intercourse with him by prayer, and

our best affections will turn upon him, and upon all that whereby he makes himself known.

These three things, faith, repentance, and love, comprehend everything which is absolutely demanded in the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper; and those who can discern these graces in themselves need not fear to make an open profession of the name of Christ, by enrolling themselves among his visible people, and partaking of the sacraments of the New Testament, as God in his providence may give them the opportunity.

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#### AN ANXIOUS INQUIRY.

'Tis a point I long to know,  
 Oft it causes anxious thought;  
 Do I love the Lord or no?  
 Am I his or am I not?

Could my heart so hard remain,  
 Prayer a task and burden prove,  
 Every trifle give me pain,  
 If I knew a Saviour's love?

Yet I mourn my stubborn will,  
 Find my sin a grief and thrall;  
 Should I grieve for what I feel,  
 If I did not love at all?

Could I joy his saints to meet,  
 Choose the ways I once abhorred,  
 Find at times the promise sweet,  
 If I did not love the Lord?

Lord, decide the doubtful case,  
 Thou who art thy people's Sun:  
 Shine upon thy work of grace,  
 If it be indeed begun.

## THE CROSS.

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—GALAT. vi. 14.

READER—What do you think and feel about the cross of Christ? You live in a Christian land. You probably attend the worship of a Christian Church. You have perhaps been baptized in the name of Christ. You profess and call yourself a Christian. All this is well. It is more than can be said of millions in the world. But all this is no answer to my question, “*What do you think and feel about the cross of Christ?*”

I want to tell you what the most eminent Christian that ever lived thought of the cross of Christ. He has written down his opinion. He has given his judgment in words that cannot be mistaken. The man I mean is the apostle Paul. The place where you will find his opinion, is in the letter which the Holy Ghost inspired him to write to the Galatians. And the words in which his judgment is set down, are these, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Now what did Paul mean by saying this? He meant to declare strongly, that he trusted in nothing but Jesus Christ crucified for the pardon of his sins and the salvation of his soul. Let others, if they would, look elsewhere for salvation. Let others, if they were so disposed, trust in other things for pardon and peace. For his part the apostle was determined to rest on nothing, lean on nothing, build his hope on nothing, place confidence in nothing, glory in nothing, except “the cross of Jesus Christ.”

Reader, let me talk to you about this subject. Believe me it is one of the deepest importance. This is no mere

question of controversy. This is not one of those points on which men may agree to differ, and feel that differences will not shut them out of heaven. A man must be right on this subject, or he is lost for ever. Heaven or hell, happiness or misery, life or death, blessing or cursing in the last day,—all hinges on the answer to this question, “What do you think about the cross of Christ?”

I. Let me show you what the apostle Paul did not glory in.

II. Let me explain to you what he did glory in.

III. Let me show you why all Christians should think and feel about the cross like Paul.

I. *What did the apostle Paul not glory in?*

There are many things that Paul might have gloried in, if he had thought as some do in this day. If ever there was one on earth who had something to boast of in himself, that man was the great apostle of the Gentiles. Now if he did not dare to glory, who shall?

He never gloried *in his national privileges*. He was a Jew by birth, and as he tells us himself,—“An Hebrew of the Hebrews.” He might have said, like many of his brethren, “I have Abraham for my forefather. I am not a dark unenlightened heathen. I am one of the favoured people of God. I have been admitted into covenant with God by circumcision. I am a far better man than the ignorant Gentiles.” But he never said so. He never gloried in any thing of this kind. Never for one moment!

He never gloried *in his own works*. None ever worked so hard for God as he did. He was more abundant in labours than any of the apostles. No living man ever preached so much, travelled so much, and endured so many hardships for Christ’s cause. None ever converted so many souls, did so much good to the world, and made himself so

useful to mankind. No father of the early church, no reformer, no puritan, no missionary, no minister, no layman,—no one man could ever be named, who did so many good works as the apostle Paul. But did he ever glory in them as if they were in the least meritorious, and could save his soul? Never! never for one moment!

He never gloried *in his knowledge*. He was a man of great gifts naturally, and after he was converted the Holy Spirit gave him greater gifts still. He was a mighty preacher, and a mighty speaker, and a mighty writer. He was as great with his pen as he was with his tongue. He could reason equally well with Jews and Gentiles. He could argue with infidels at Corinth, or Pharisees at Jerusalem, or self-righteous people in Galatia. He knew many deep things. He had been in the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words. He had received the spirit of prophecy, and could foretell things yet to come. But did he ever glory in his knowledge, as if it could justify him before God? Never! never! never for one moment!

He never gloried *in his graces*. If ever there was one who abounded in graces, that man was Paul. He was full of love. How tenderly and affectionately he used to write! He could feel for souls like a mother or a nurse feeling for her child. He was a bold man. He cared not whom he opposed when truth was at stake. He cared not what risks he ran when souls were to be won. He was a self-denying man,—in hunger and thirst often, in cold and nakedness, in watchings and fastings. He was a humble man. He thought himself less than the least of all saints, and the chief of sinners. He was a prayerful man. See how it comes out at the beginning of all his Epistles. He was a thankful man. His thanksgivings and his prayers walked side by side. But he never gloried in all this, never valued himself on it, never rested his soul's hopes on it. Oh! no! never for a moment!

And now, reader, mark what I say. If the apostle Paul never gloried in any of these things, who in all the world, from one end to the other, who has any right to glory in them in our day? If Paul said, God forbid that I should glory in anything whatever except the cross, who shall dare to say, "I have something to glory of,—I am a better man than Paul?"

Who is there among the readers of this tract, that trusts in any goodness of his own? Who is there that is resting on his own amendments, his own morality, his own performances of any kind whatever? Who is there that is leaning the weight of his soul on anything whatever of his own in the smallest possible degree? Learn, I say, that you are very unlike the apostle Paul. Learn that your religion is *not apostolical religion*.

Who is there among the readers of this tract that is valuing himself on his baptism, or his attendance at the Lord's table,—his church going on Sundays, or his daily services during the week,—and saying to himself, What lack I yet? Learn, I say, this day, that you are very unlike Paul. Your Christianity is *not the Christianity of the New Testament*. Paul would not glory in anything but the cross. Neither ought you.

Oh! reader, beware of self-righteousness. Open sin kills its thousands of souls. Self-righteousness kills its tens of thousands. Go and study humility with the great apostle of the Gentiles. Go and sit with Paul at the foot of the cross. Give up your secret pride. Cast away your vain ideas of your own goodness. Be thankful if you have grace, but never glory in it for a moment. Work for God and Christ with heart and soul and mind and strength, but never dream for a second of placing confidence in any work of your own.

Think, you who take comfort in some fancied ideas of

your own goodness,—think, you who wrap up yourselves in the notion, “all must be right, if I keep to my church,”—think for a moment what a sandy foundation you are building upon! Think for a moment how miserably defective your hopes and pleas will look in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment! Whatever men may say of their own goodness while they are strong and healthy, they will find but little to say of it, when they are sick and dying. Whatever merit they may see in their own works here in this world, they will discover none in them when they stand before the bar of Christ. The light of that great day of trial will make a wonderful difference in the appearance of all their doings. It will strip off the tinsel, shrivel up the complexion, expose the rottenness, of many a deed that is now called good. Their wheat will prove nothing but chaff. Their gold will be found nothing but dross. Millions of so-called Christian actions, will turn out to have been utterly defective and graceless. They passed current, and were valued among men. They will prove light and worthless in the balance of God. They will be found to have been like the whitened sepulchres of old, fair and beautiful without, but full of corruption within. Alas! for the man who can look forward to the day of judgment, and lean his soul in the smallest degree on anything of his own!\*

\* “Howsoever men when they sit at ease, do vainly tickle their own hearts with the wanton conceit of I know not what proportionable correspondence between their merits and their rewards, which in the trance of their high speculations, they dream that God hath measured and laid up as it were in bundles for them; we see notwithstanding by daily experience in a number even of them, that when the hour of death approacheth, when they secretly hear themselves summoned to appear and stand at the bar of that Judge, whose brightness causeth the eyes of angels themselves to dazzle, all those idle imaginations do then begin to hide their faces. To name merits then is to lay their souls upon the rack. The memory of their own deeds is loathsome unto them. They

Reader, once more I say, beware of self-righteousness in every possible shape and form. Some people get as much harm from their fancied virtues as others do from their sins. Take heed, lest you be one. Rest not, rest not till your heart beats in tune with Paul's. Rest not till you can say with him, "God forbid that I should glory in anything but the cross."

II. Let me explain, in the second place, *what you are to understand by the cross of Christ.*

The cross is an expression that is used in more than one meaning in the Bible. What did Paul mean when he said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ?" in the Epistle to the Galatians. This is the point I now wish to make clear.

The cross sometimes means that wooden cross, on which the Lord Jesus was nailed and put to death on Calvary. This is what Paul had in his mind's eye, when he told the Philippians that Christ "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 8.) This is not the cross in which Paul gloried. He would have shrunk with horror from the idea of glorying in a mere piece of wood. I have no doubt he would have denounced the Roman Catholic adoration of the crucifix, as profane, blasphemous, and idolatrous.

The cross sometimes means the afflictions and trials which believers in Christ have to go through, if they follow Christ fathfully, for their religion's sake. This is the sense in which our Lord uses the word when he says, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, cannot be my disciple." (Matt. x. 38.) This also is not the sense in

forsake all things wherein they have put any trust and confidence. No staff to lean upon, no rest, no ease, no comfort then, but only in Christ Jesus."—*Richard Hooker.* 1585.



which Paul uses the word when he writes to the Galatians. He knew that cross well. He carried it patiently. But he is not speaking of it here.

But the cross also means in some places the doctrine that Christ died for sinners upon the cross,—the atonement that he made for sinners, by his suffering for them on the cross,—the complete and perfect sacrifice for sin which he offered up when he gave his own body to be crucified. In short, this one word, “the cross,” stands for Christ crucified, the only Saviour. This is the meaning in which Paul uses the expression, when he tells the Corinthians, “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.” (1 Cor. i. 18.) This is the meaning in which he wrote to the Galatians, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross.” He simply meant, “I glory in nothing but Christ crucified, as the salvation of my soul.”\*

Reader, Jesus Christ crucified was the joy and delight, the comfort and the peace, the hope and the confidence, the foundation and the resting-place, the ark and the refuge, the food and the medicine of Paul’s soul. He did not think of what he had done himself, and suffered himself. He did not meditate on his own goodness, and his own righteousness. He loved to think of what Christ had done, and Christ had suffered,—of the death of Christ, the righteous-

\* “By the cross of Christ the apostle understandeth the all-sufficient, expiatory, and satisfactory sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, with the whole work of our redemption; in the saving knowledge whereof he professeth he will glory and boast.”—*Cudworth on Galatians*. 1613.

“Touching these words, I do not find that any expositor, either ancient or modern, Popish or Protestant, writing on this place, doth expound the cross here mentioned of the sign of the cross, but of the profession of faith in him that was hanged on the cross.”—*Mayer’s Commentary*. 1631.

This is rather to be understood of the cross which Christ suffered for us, than of that we suffer for him.”—*Leigh’s Annotations*. 1650.

ness of Christ, the atonement of Christ, the blood of Christ, the finished work of Christ. In this he did glory. This was the sun of his soul.

This is the subject he *loved to preach about*. He was a man who went to and fro on the earth, proclaiming to sinners that the Son of God had shed his own heart's blood to save their souls. He walked up and down the world telling people that Jesus Christ had loved them, and died for their sins upon the cross. Mark how he says to the Corinthians, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.) He, a blaspheming, persecuting Pharisee, had been washed in Christ's blood. He could not hold his peace about it. He was never weary of telling the story of the cross.

This is the subject he *loved to dwell upon when he wrote* to believers. It is wonderful to observe how full his epistles generally are of the sufferings and death of Christ,—how they run over with "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn" about Christ's dying love and power. His heart seems full of the subject. He enlarges on it constantly. He returns to it continually. It is the golden thread that runs through all his doctrinal teaching and practical exhortations. He seems to think that the most advanced Christian can never hear too much about the cross.\*

This is what he *lived upon* all his life, from the time of his conversion. He tells the Galatians, "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God,

\* "Christ crucified is the sum of the Gospel, and contains all the riches of it. Paul was so much taken with Christ, that nothing sweeter than Jesus could drop from his pen and lips. It is observed that he hath the word 'Jesus' five hundred times in his Epistles."—*Charnock*. 1684.

who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galat. ii. 20.) What made him so strong to labour? What made him so willing to work? What made him so unwearied in endeavours to save some? What made him so persevering and patient? I will tell you the secret of it all. He was always feeding by faith on Christ's body and Christ's blood. Jesus crucified was the meat and drink of his soul.

And, reader, you may rest assured that Paul was right. Depend upon it, the cross of Christ,—the death of Christ on the cross to make atonement for sinners,—is the centre truth in the whole Bible. This is the truth we begin with when we open Genesis. The seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head is nothing else but a prophecy of Christ crucified. This is the truth that shines out, though veiled, all through the law of Moses and the history of the Jews. The daily sacrifice, the passover lamb, the continual shedding of blood in the tabernacle and temple,—all these were emblems of Christ crucified. This is the truth that we see honoured in the vision of heaven before we close the book of Revelation. "In the midst of the throne and of the four beasts," we are told, "and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." (Rev. v. 6.) Even in the midst of heavenly glory we get a view of Christ crucified. Take away the cross of Christ, and the Bible is a dark book. It is like the Egyptian hieroglyphics, without the key that interprets their meaning,—curious and wonderful, but of no real use.

Reader, mark what I say. You may know a good deal about the Bible. You may know the outlines of the histories it contains, and the dates of the events described, just as a man knows the history of England. You may know the names of the men and women mentioned in it, just as a man knows Cæsar, Alexander the Great, or Napoleon. You may know the several precepts of the Bible, and admire

them, just as a man admires Plato, Aristotle, or Seneca. But if you have not yet found out that Christ crucified is the foundation of the whole volume, you have read your Bible hitherto to very little profit. Your religion is a heaven without a sun, an arch without a key-stone, a compass without a needle, a clock without spring or weights, a lamp without oil. It will not comfort you. It will not deliver your soul from hell.

Reader, mark what I say again. You may know a good deal about Christ, by a kind of head knowledge. You may know who he was, and where he was born, and what he did. You may know his miracles, his sayings, his prophecies, and his ordinances. You may know how he lived, and how he suffered, and how he died. But unless you know the power of Christ's cross by experience,—unless you know and feel within that the blood shed on that cross has washed away your own particular sins,—unless you are willing to confess that your salvation depends entirely on the work that Christ did upon the cross,—unless this be the case, Christ will profit you nothing. The mere knowing Christ's name will never save you. You must know his cross, and his blood, or else you will die in your sins.\*

Reader, as long as you live, *beware of a religion in which there is not much of the cross.* You live in times when the warning is sadly needful. Beware, I say again, of a religion without the cross.

There are hundreds of places of worship, in this day, in which there is every thing almost except the cross. There is carved oak, and sculptured stone. There is stained glass

\* “If our faith stop in Christ's life, and do not fasten upon his blood, it will not be a justifying faith. His miracles which prepared the world for his doctrines; his holiness, which fitted himself for his sufferings, had been insufficient for us without the addition of the cross.”—*Charnock*. 1684.

and brilliant painting. There are solemn services, and a constant round of ordinances. But the real cross of Christ is not there. Jesus crucified is not proclaimed in the pulpit. The Lamb of God is not lifted up, and salvation by faith in him is not freely proclaimed. And hence all is wrong. Reader, beware of such places of worship. They are *not apostolical*. They would not have satisfied Paul.\*

There are thousands of religious books published in our times, in which there is everything except the cross. They are full of directions about sacraments and praises of the church. They abound in exhortations about holy living, and rules for the attainment of perfection. They have plenty of fonts and crosses both inside and outside. But the real cross of Christ is left out. The Saviour and his dying love are either not mentioned, or mentioned in an unscriptural way. And hence they are worse than useless. Reader, beware of such books. They are *not apostolical*. They would never have satisfied Paul.

Reader, Paul gloried in nothing but the cross. Strive to be like him. Set Jesus crucified fully before the eyes of your soul. Listen not to any teaching which would interpose anything between you and him. Do not fall into the old Galatian error. Think not that any one in this day is a better guide than the apostles. Do not be ashamed of the old paths, in which men walked who were inspired by the Holy Ghost. Let not the vague talk of men, who speak great swelling words about catholicity, and the church, and the ministry, disturb your peace, and make you loose your hands from the cross. Churches, ministers, and sacraments, are all useful in their way, but they are not Christ crucified.

\* "Paul determined to know nothing else but Jesus Christ and him crucified. But many manage the ministry as if they had taken up a contrary determination, even to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified."—*Traill*. 1690.

Do not give Christ's honour to another. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

III. Let me show you *why all Christians ought to glory in the cross of Christ.*

I feel that I must say something on this point, because of the ignorance that prevails about it. I suspect that many see no peculiar glory and beauty in the subject of Christ's cross. On the contrary, they think it painful, humbling, and degrading. They do not see much profit in the story of his death and sufferings. They rather turn from it as an unpleasant thing.

Now I believe that such persons are quite wrong. I cannot hold with them. I believe it is an excellent thing for us all to be continually dwelling on the cross of Christ. It is a good thing to be often reminded how Jesus was betrayed into the hands of wicked men,—how they condemned him with most unjust judgment,—how they spit on him, scourged him, beat him, and crowned him with thorns,—how they led him forth as a lamb to the slaughter, without his murmuring or resisting,—how they drove the nails through his hands and feet, and set him up on Calvary between two thieves,—how they pierced his side with a spear, mocked him in his sufferings, and let him hang there naked and bleeding till he died. Of all these things, I say it is good to be reminded. It is not for nothing that the crucifixion is described four times over in the New Testament. There are very few things that all the four writers of the Gospel describe. Generally speaking, if Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell a thing in our Lord's history, John does not tell it. But there is one thing that all the four gives us most fully, and that one thing is the story of the cross. This is a telling fact, and not to be overlooked.

People seem to me to forget that all Christ's sufferings

on the cross were *fore-ordained*. They did not come on him by chance or accident. They were all planned, counselled, and determined from all eternity. The cross was foreseen in all the provisions of the everlasting Trinity, for the salvation of sinners. In the purposes of God the cross was set up from everlasting. Not one throb of pain did Jesus feel, not one precious drop of blood did Jesus shed, which had not been appointed long ago. Infinite wisdom planned that redemption should be by the cross. Infinite wisdom brought Jesus to the cross in due time. He was crucified by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

People seem to me to forget that all Christ's sufferings on the cross were *necessary for man's salvation*. He had to bear our sins if ever they were to be borne at all. With his stripes alone could we be healed. This was the one payment of our debt that God would accept. This was the great sacrifice on which our eternal life depended. If Christ had not gone to the cross and suffered in our stead, the just for the unjust, there would not have been a spark of hope for us. There would have been a mighty gulf between ourselves and God, which no man ever could have passed.\*

People seem to me to forget that all Christ's sufferings were endured *voluntarily* and of his own free will. He was under no compulsion. Of his own choice he laid down his life. Of his own choice he went to the cross to finish the work he came to do. He might easily have summoned

\* "In Christ's humiliation stands our exaltation; in his weakness stands our strength; in his ignominy our glory; in his death our life." *Cudworth*. 1613.

"The eye of faith regards Christ sitting on the summit of the cross, as in a triumphal chariot; the devil bound to the lowest part of the same cross, and trodden under the feet of Christ."—*Bishop Davenant on Colossians*.

legions of angels with a word, and scattered Pilate and Herod and all their armies, like chaff before the wind. But he was a willing sufferer. His heart was set on the salvation of sinners. He was resolved to open a fountain for all sin and uncleanness, by shedding his own blood.

Reader, when I think of all this, I see nothing painful or disagreeable in the subject of Christ's cross. On the contrary, I see in it wisdom and power, peace and hope, joy and gladness, comfort and consolation. The more I keep the cross in my mind's eye, the more fulness I seem to discern in it. The longer I dwell on the cross in my thoughts, the more I am satisfied that there is more to be learned at the foot of the cross than anywhere else in the world.

Would I know the length and breadth of *God the Father's love* towards a sinful world? Where shall I see it most displayed? Shall I look at his glorious sun shining down daily on the unthankful and evil? Shall I look at the seed-time and harvest returning in regular yearly succession? Oh! no! I can find a stronger proof of love than anything of this sort. I look at the cross of Christ. I see in it not the cause of the Father's love, but the effect. There I see that God so loved this wicked world, that he gave his only begotten Son,—gave him to suffer and die,—that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. I know that the Father loves us because he did not withhold from us his Son, his only Son. Ah! reader, I might sometimes fancy that God the Father is too high and holy to care for such miserable corrupt creatures as we are. But I cannot, must not, dare not think it, when I look at the cross of Christ.\*

\* "The world we live in had fallen upon our heads, had it not been upheld by the pillar of the cross; had not Christ stepped in and promised a satisfaction for the sin of man. By this all things consist; not a blessing we enjoy but may put us in mind of it; they were all forfeited by sin, but merited by his blood. If we study it well we shall be sensible how God hated sin and loved a world."—*Charnock*. 1684.



· Would I know how exceeding *sinful and abominable sin* is in the sight of God? Where shall I see that most fully brought out? Shall I turn to the history of the flood, and read how sin drowned the world? Shall I go to the shore of the Dead Sea, and mark what sin brought on Sodom and Gomorrha? Shall I turn to the wandering Jews, and observe how sin has scattered them over the face of the earth? No! I can find a clearer proof still. I look at the cross of Christ. There I see that sin is so black and damnable, that nothing but the blood of God's own Son can wash it away. There I see that sin has so separated me from my holy Maker, that all the angels in heaven could never have made peace between us. Nothing could reconcile us short of the death of Christ. Ah! if I listened to the wretched talk of proud men, I might sometimes fancy sin was not so very sinful. But I cannot think little of sin, when I look at the cross of Christ.\*

Would I know the *fulness and completeness of the salvation* God has provided for sinners? Where shall I see it most distinctly? Shall I go to the general declarations in the Bible about God's mercy? Shall I rest in the general truth that God is a God of love? Oh! no! I will look at the cross of Christ. I find no evidence like that. I find no balm for a sore conscience, and a troubled heart, like the sight of Jesus dying for me on the accursed tree. There I see that a full payment has been made for all my enormous debts. The curse of that law which I have broken has come down on One who there suffered in my stead. The demands of that law are all satisfied. Payment has been made for me, even to the uttermost farthing. It will not

\* "If God hateth sin so much that he would allow neither man nor angel for the redemption thereof, but only the death of his only and well-beloved Son, who will not stand in fear thereof?"—*Homily for Good Friday*. 1560.

be required twice over. Ah! I might sometimes imagine I was too bad to be forgiven. My own heart sometimes whispers that I am too wicked to be saved. But I know in my better moments this is all my foolish unbelief. I read an answer to my doubts in the blood shed on Calvary. I feel sure that there is a way to heaven for the very vilest of men, when I look at the cross.

Would I find strong *reasons for being a holy man?* Whither shall I turn for them? Shall I listen to the ten commandments merely? Shall I study the examples given me in the Bible of what grace can do? Shall I meditate on the rewards of heaven, and the punishments of hell? Is there no stronger motive still? Yes! I will look at the cross of Christ. There I see the love of Christ constraining me to live not unto myself, but unto him. There I see that I am not my own now; I am bought with a price. I am bound by the most solemn obligations to glorify Jesus with body and spirit, which are his. There I see that Jesus gave himself for me, not only to redeem me from all iniquity, but also to purify me and make me one of a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He bore my sins in his own body on the tree, that I being dead unto sin should live unto righteousness. Ah! reader, there is nothing so sanctifying as a clear view of the cross of Christ! It crucifies the world unto us, and us unto the world. How can we love sin when we remember that because of our sins Jesus died? Surely none ought to be so holy as the disciples of a crucified Lord.

Would I *learn how to be contented and cheerful* under all the cares and anxieties of life? What school shall I go to? How shall I attain this state of mind most easily? Shall I look at the sovereignty of God, the wisdom of God, the providence of God, the love of God? It is well to do so. But I have a better argument still. I will look at the cross

of Christ. I feel that he who spared not his only begotten Son, but delivered him up to die for me, will surely with him give me all things that I really need. He that endured that pain for my soul, will surely not withhold from me anything that is really good. He that has done the greater things for me, will doubtless do the lesser things also. He that gave his own blood to procure me a home, will unquestionably supply me with all really profitable for me by the way. Ah! reader, there is no school for learning contentment that can be compared with the foot of the cross.

Would I gather *arguments for hoping that I shall never be cast away?* Where shall I go to find them? Shall I look at my own graces and gifts? Shall I take comfort in my own faith, and love, and penitence, and zeal, and prayer? Shall I turn to my own heart, and say, "This same heart will never be false and cold?" Oh! no! God forbid! I will look at the cross of Christ. This is my grand argument. This is my main stay. I cannot think that he who went through such sufferings to redeem my soul, will let that soul perish after all, when it has once cast itself on him. Oh! no! what Jesus paid for, Jesus will surely keep. He paid dearly for it. He will not let it easily be lost. He died for me when I was yet a dark sinner. He will never forsake me after I have believed. Ah! reader, when Satan tempts you to doubt whether Christ's people will be kept from falling, you should tell Satan to look at the cross.\*

And now, reader, will you marvel that I said all Chris-

\* "The believer is so freed from eternal wrath, that if Satan and conscience say, 'thou art a sinner, and under the curse of the law,' he can say, it is true, I am a sinner, but I was hanged on a tree and died, and was made a curse in my Head and Lawgiver Christ, and his payment and suffering is my payment and suffering."—*Rutherford's Christ Dying*. 1647.

tians ought to glory in the cross? Will you not rather wonder that any can hear of the cross and remain unmoved? I declare I know no greater proof of man's depravity, than the fact that thousands of so-called Christians see nothing in the cross. Well may our hearts be called stony,—well may the eyes of our mind be called blind,—well may our whole nature be called diseased, well may we all be called dead, when the cross of Christ is heard of, and yet neglected. Surely we may take up the words of the prophet, and say, "Hear, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth; a wonderful and a horrible thing is done,"—Christ was crucified for sinners, and yet many Christians live as if he was never crucified at all!

Reader, the cross is *the grand peculiarity of the Christian religion*. Other religions have laws and moral precepts,—forms and ceremonies,—rewards and punishments. But other religions cannot tell us of a dying Saviour. They cannot show us the cross. This is the crown and glory of the Gospel. This is that special comfort which belongs to it alone. Miserable indeed is that religious teaching which calls itself Christian, and yet contains nothing of the cross. A man who teaches in this way, might as well profess to explain the solar system, and yet tell his hearers nothing about the sun.

The cross is *the strength of a minister*. I for one would not be without it for all the world. I should feel like a soldier without arms,—like an artist without his pencil,—like a pilot without his compass,—like a laborer without his tools. Let others, if they will, preach the law and morality. Let others hold forth the terrors of hell, and the joys of heaven. Let others drench their congregations with teachings about the sacraments and the church. Give me the cross of Christ. This is the only lever which has ever turned the world upside down hitherto, and made men for-

sake their sins. And if this will not, nothing will. A man may begin preaching with a perfect knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. But he will do little or no good among his hearers unless he knows something of the cross. Never was there a minister who did much for the conversion of souls who did not dwell much on Christ crucified. Luther, Rutherford, Whitefield, M'Cheyne were all most eminently preachers of the cross. This is the preaching that the Holy Ghost delights to bless. He loves to honour those who honour the cross.

The cross is *the secret of all missionary success*. Nothing but this has ever moved the hearts of the heathen. Just according as this has been lifted up missions have prospered. This is the weapon that has won victories over hearts of every kind, in every quarter of the globe. Greenlanders, Africans, South-Sea Islanders, Hindoos, Chinese, all have alike felt its power. Just as that huge iron tube which crosses the Menai Straits, is more affected and bent by half an hour's sunshine than by all the dead weight that can be placed in it, so in like manner the hearts of savages have melted before the cross when every other argument seemed to move them no more than stones. "Brethren," said a North American Indian, after his conversion, "I have been a heathen. I know how heathens think. Once a preacher came and began to explain to us that there was a God; but we told him to return to the place from whence he came. Another preacher came and told us not to lie, nor steal, nor drink; but we did not heed him. At last another came into my hut one day, and said, 'I am come to you in the name of the Lord of heaven and earth. He sends to let you know that he will make you happy, and deliver you from misery. For this end he became a man, gave his life a ransom, and shed his blood for sinners.' I could not forget his words. I told them to the other Indians, and an awakening

began among us. I say, therefore, preach the sufferings and death of Christ, our Saviour, if you wish your words to gain entrance among the heathen." Never indeed did the devil triumph so thoroughly, as when he persuaded the Jesuit missionaries in China to keep back the story of the cross!

The cross is *the foundation of a church's prosperity*. No church will ever be honoured in which Christ crucified is not continually lifted up. Nothing whatever can make up for the want of the cross. Without it all things may be done decently and in order. Without it there may be splendid ceremonies, beautiful music, gorgeous churches, learned ministers, crowded communion tables, huge collections for the poor. But without the cross no good will be done. Dark hearts will not be enlightened. Proud hearts will not be humbled. Mourning hearts will not be comforted. Fainting hearts will not be cheered. Sermons about the Catholic Church and an apostolic ministry,—sermons about baptism and the Lord's supper,—sermons about unity and schism,—sermons about fasts and communion,—sermons about fathers and saints,—such sermons will never make up for the absence of sermons about the cross of Christ. They may amuse some. They will feed none. A gorgeous banqueting room and splendid gold plate on the table will never make up to a hungry man for the want of food. Christ crucified is God's grand ordinance for doing good to men. Whenever a church keeps back Christ crucified, or puts anything whatever in that foremost place which Christ crucified should always have, from that moment a church ceases to be useful. Without Christ crucified in her pulpits, a church is little better than a cumberer of the ground, a dead carcase, a well without water, a barren fig tree, a sleeping watchman, a silent trumpet, a dumb witness, an ambassador without terms of peace, a messenger without tidings, a lighthouse without fire, a stumbling-block to weak

believers, a comfort to infidels, a hot-bed for formalism, a joy to the devil, and an offence to God.

The cross is *the grand centre of union* among true Christians. Our outward differences are many without doubt. But after all, what shall we hear about most of these differences in heaven? Most probably nothing at all. *Does a man really and sincerely glory in the cross of Christ?* That is the grand question. If he does, he is my brother; we are travelling in the same road. We are journeying towards a home where Christ is all, and everything outward in religion will be forgotten. But if he does not glory in the cross of Christ, I cannot feel comfort about him. Union on outward points only, is union only for a time. Union about the cross is union for eternity. Error on outward points is only a skin-deep disease. Error about the cross is disease at the heart. Union about outward points is a mere man-made union. Union about the cross of Christ can only be produced by the Holy Ghost.

Reader, I know not what you think of all this. I feel as if I had said nothing compared to what might be said. I feel as if the half of what I desire to tell you about the cross were left untold. But I do hope that I have given you something to think about. I do trust that I have shown you that I have reason for the question with which I began this tract, "What do you think and feel about the cross of Christ?" Listen to me now for a few moments, while I say something to apply the whole subject to your conscience.

*Are you living in any kind of sin?* Are you following the course of this world, and neglecting your soul? Hear, I beseech you, what I say to you this day: "Behold the cross of Christ." See there how Jesus loved you! See there what Jesus suffered to prepare for you a way of salvation! Yes! careless men and women, for you that blood

was shed! For you those hands and feet were pierced with nails! For you that body hung in agony on the cross! You are those whom Jesus loved, and for whom he died! Surely that love ought to melt you. Surely the thought of the cross should draw you to repentance. Oh! that it might be so this very day. Oh! that you would come at once to that Saviour who died for you and is willing to save. Come and cry to him with the prayer of faith, and I know that he will listen. Come and lay hold upon the cross, and I know that he will not cast you out. Come and believe on him who died on the cross, and this very day you shall have eternal life. How will you ever escape if you neglect so great salvation! None surely will be so deep in hell as those who despise the cross!

*Are you inquiring the way toward heaven?* Are you seeking salvation but doubtful whether you can find it? Are you desiring to have an interest in Christ but doubting whether Christ will receive you? To you also I say this day, "Behold the cross of Christ." Here is encouragement if you really want it. Draw near to the Lord Jesus with boldness, for nothing need keep you back. His arms are open to receive you. His heart is full of love towards you. He has made a way by which you may approach him with confidence. Think of the cross. Draw near, and fear not.

*Are you an unlearned man?* Are you desirous to get to heaven and yet perplexed and brought to a stand-still by difficulties in the Bible which you cannot explain? To you also I say this day, "Behold the cross of Christ." Read there the Father's love and the Son's compassion. Surely they are written in great plain letters, which none can well mistake. What though you are now perplexed by the doctrine of election? What though at present you cannot reconcile your own utter corruption and your own responsibility? Look, I say, at the cross. Does not that cross tell



you that Jesus is a mighty, loving, ready Saviour? Does it not make one thing plain, and that is that if not saved it is all your own fault? Oh! get hold of that truth, and hold it fast.

*Are you a distressed believer?* Is your heart pressed down with sickness, tired with disappointments, overburdened with cares? To you also I say this day, "Behold the cross of Christ." Think whose hand it is that chastens you. Think whose hand is measuring to you the cup of bitterness which you are now drinking. It is the hand of him that was crucified. It is the same hand that in love to your soul was nailed to the accursed tree. Surely that thought should comfort and hearten you. Surely you should say to yourself, "A crucified Saviour will never lay upon me anything that is not for my good. There is a needs be. It must be well."

*Are you a believer that longs to be more holy?* Are you one that finds his heart too ready to love earthly things? To you also I say, "Behold the cross of Christ." Look at the cross. Think of the cross. Meditate on the cross, and then set your affections on the world if you can. I believe that holiness is nowhere learned so well as on Calvary. I believe you cannot look much at the cross without feeling your will sanctified, and your tastes made more spiritual. As the sun gazed upon makes everything else look dark and dim, so does the cross darken the false splendour of this world. As honey tasted makes all other things seem to have no taste at all, so does the cross seen by faith take all the sweetness out of the pleasures of the world. Keep on every day steadily looking at the cross of Christ, and you will soon say of the world as the poet does:—

Its pleasures now no longer please,  
 No more content afford;  
 Far from my heart be joys like these,  
 Now I have seen the Lord.

As by the light of opening day  
The stars are all concealed,  
So earthly pleasures fade away  
When Jesus is revealed.

*Are you a dying believer?* Have you gone to that bed from which something within tells you you will never come down alive? Are you drawing near to that solemn hour when soul and body must part for a season, and you must launch into a world unknown? Oh! look steadily at the cross of Christ, and you shall be kept in peace. Fix the eyes of your mind firmly on Jesus crucified, and he shall deliver you from all your fears. Though you walk through dark places, he will be with you. He will never leave you, never forsake you. Sit under the shadow of the cross to the very last, and its fruit shall be sweet to your taste. "Ah!" said a dying missionary, "there is but one thing needful on a death-bed, and that is to feel one's arms round the cross."

Reader, I lay these thoughts before your mind. What you think now about the cross of Christ I cannot tell; but I can wish you nothing better than this, that you may be able to say with the apostle Paul, before you die or meet the Lord, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"

## I N F A N T B A P T I S M .

## INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

THE writer of the following Tract was raised in the Baptist church. When young, in an interesting revival of religion in New Hampshire, I was led by the Holy Spirit to see my lost condition as a sinner, and as I then thought, and still hope, was brought to accept of pardon through the free grace of God in Christ Jesus. As was natural, in company with many others, I joined the Baptist church and remained in that communion for more than ten years. During a great part of this time, I was engaged in a severe struggle, (such as young men looking to the ministry at this day know but little about,) in trying to obtain an education. I looked for years to the ministry in the Baptist church. In reference to that point, I studied, conversed, prayed and laboured.

I mingled much with Presbyterians and other Pedobaptists, and was often greatly distressed when present at their communion seasons, because I could not *consistently* join them in that solemn ordinance. This led to a protracted investigation of the whole subject of the differences between the Baptists and Pedobaptists. I read extensively on both sides. For about four years, while still trying to prosecute my education, I was in an unsettled and most unhappy state of mind. I loved the Baptist church and do still. With them were most of my early associations and *all* my early prepossessions; and with them are now my father's and my mother's sepulchres.

The difficulties as to the *mode* of baptism were more easily removed than those pertaining to the subjects. Almost from my cradle I had been taught that the words *bapto* and *bap-*

*tizo* meant simply to *immerse* or *plunge*. But in my investigations I found that these words, as used by sacred and profane writers, and as expounded by the best lexicographers in the world, meant to *dye*, to *stain*, to *wash*, to *sprinkle*, to *plunge*, to *overwhelm*, to *pour*, &c. &c. To resist this conviction was, in my case, as impossible as to resist the consciousness of my own existence. Upon this point I have written extensively and preached frequently; but have never published a page. And since reading, as I recently have, a little book published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, entitled "Confessions of a convert from baptism *in* water to baptism *with* water," I feel much less anxious to publish what I had written, than I did before. I earnestly recommend the reading of this little volume to those who have doubts upon this subject.

I have now been in the ministry of the Presbyterian Church a little over thirty years. I have been pastor of one church in the interior of Georgia for more than twenty-three years; and I have several times re-investigated the subject of baptism. The results of these investigations, so far as the settled convictions of my own mind are concerned, in reference to the proper *subjects* of baptism, will be found in the following pages.

It was this simple view of the Abrahamic covenant which I gathered from the Scriptures, which made me a Pedobaptist. I claim no originality for the remarks and arguments herewith submitted. But as these arguments thus briefly and I trust clearly stated, refer exclusively to one branch only of the controversy, viz., the *subjects* of baptism, I have thought it possible that others, labouring under difficulties similar to those through which I have past, might be benefitted by a perusal of these pages. This is my reason for giving this little treatise to the public. I am honest in my convictions, and I censure no one who differs from me. N. H.

## INFANT MEMBERSHIP SECURED BY THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

WE propose to discuss, in the following, pages this question : Is the Abrahamic covenant still in force? or is it abrogated? Or in other words, is the church under the gospel dispensation, the same church to which Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and all the prophets, belonged? Or did those holy men belong to one church, and do we belong to another?

We are aware that so many volumes have been written upon this subject, that it would be preposterous to claim for our remarks absolute originality. No such claim do we set up.

An honest, perhaps a youthful enquirer, asks for some treatise, in which, in the course of one hour's reading, he may ascertain what are the precise views of Pedobaptists, relative to the Abrahamic covenant, the identity of the church under the present and the former dispensations, and the definite scriptural reasons, why we baptize our children. He asks for an argument, brief, clear, logical, scriptural, and unmixed with other questions. We will suppose the enquirer to ask concerning the baptism of the jailer and his household, (Acts xvi. 33,) "Why does this new convert present his children for baptism, when we have no evidence that any member of the family was then pious, except the head? Why did Lydia, (Acts xvi. 15,) on embracing the Saviour, present her household for baptism? Were these rare instances of household baptism? Or, are the infant offspring of believing parents, having a regular connection with the church under the gospel, entitled to baptism?"

Now we proceed to answer this question in the affirmative, for the following reasons, viz : If we are genuine believers in Jesus Christ, we belong to the same identical church to which Abraham belonged, and are under the same

gracious covenant which God made with him. Now for the proof of this proposition :

And 1st. The terms of salvation were the same in the case of Abraham as they are with us. Faith in Jesus Christ, in both cases, is requisite to salvation. Says Paul, in Gal. iii. 8, "The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, *preached* before, the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

Here the gospel was preached to Abraham by the Holy Ghost. He believed that gospel. He believed in a promised Messiah to come, and was thereby justified. In Gen. xv. 6, we read, "And he" i. e. Abraham, "believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." And in Gal. iii. 6, we read, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Just so all real Christians believe God; they believe the record which he has given of his Son; they believe in Jesus Christ, and are thereby justified. Says Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Are not the conditions of justification, in the case of Abraham and of believers under the gospel, precisely the same? And if so, do not both belong to the same church? Who can doubt it? Abraham believed in a Messiah to come. That was the ground of his justification. Christians now believe in a Messiah already come, and this is the ground of their justification. Do they not belong to the same church? If so, no marvel that the jailer, when he became a believer in Christ, had the present seal of the covenant applied to his offspring, as Abraham had the ancient seal to his.

But again, obedience was required of Abraham; and the same obedience is required of all Christians in our day. Here is the proof: Gen. xxii. 18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, *because thou hast obeyed*

*my voice.*” And the Saviour said to his disciples, John xv. 14, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” Are not the terms of discipleship the same in both cases? And if so, do they not both belong to the same church?

But 2dly. Abraham is expressly called the father of all believers, and believers are called his seed, or his children.

God said to Abraham, “Behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations,” Gen. xvii. 4. Now in what sense is Abraham the father of many nations, except as he is the spiritual father of all believers in all ages, and in all nations? Is it true that Abraham is the *natural* father of many nations? If so, where are those nations? Can they be found on the face of the earth? They can not. Who, besides the Jews and Arabians, “lay a just claim” to being the *natural* descendants of Abraham? But God promised that he would make Abraham the father of many nations. Has God failed to redeem his pledge? He has not. Heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than one jot or one tittle of his word shall fail. Where then are those many nations? We reply, they are all true believers scattered over the earth. These are the spiritual children, or seed of Abraham, as they are included in the same covenant with him.

As the father of all believers, Abraham now has many thousands, and hundreds of thousands, of spiritual children dispersed among different nations of the earth; and the number is constantly increasing. But when the heathen shall be given to Jesus Christ for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession; when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; when the stone, cut out of the mountain, without hands, shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth, then it will be fully understood what God

meant, when he said to Abraham, "Thou shalt be a father of many nations."

But we have stronger testimony still, to prove that all believers, Jews and gentiles, are included in the same covenant which God made with Abraham, are all considered as his spiritual seed, and as such, belong to the same church. In the 4th chapter of Romans, Paul says, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised, *that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised*, that righteousness might be imputed to them also." Can anything be plainer than this? Abraham is our spiritual father, if we are true believers, although we are not of the circumcision.

Do not the father and the children belong to the same church? If so, no wonder that the jailer at Philippi, when he became a believer, and thus a son of Abraham, brought his children forward, and applied to them the *present sign and seal* of the covenant, as his spiritual father had the *former sign and seal* of the same covenant. This all appears plain, consistent, and beautiful. But again, Romans iv., our apostle uses this language: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law," i. e., not merely to the Jews, or the natural descendants of Abraham, "but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, *who is the father of us all.*" And immediately after in the first clause of the 17th verse, the apostle quotes the passage from Gen. xvii., (already considered,)



“As it is written, *I have made thee a father of many nations.*” This explains the apostle’s meaning, when he says that Abraham is the father of us all. He is the father of all believers; no matter to what nation they belong; no matter where they reside; no matter whether they be Jews or gentiles; if they are Christians, they are under the same covenant with Abraham, and shall be blessed with him, as we shall proceed to prove.

Again we ask, do not the father and the children belong to the same church? Let us now turn to the 3d chapter of Galatians, and see how the apostle dwells upon this subject. “Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” We have line upon line, and precept upon precept. No one can deny that all believers are Abraham’s children, or his spiritual seed. If this point is not proved by the passages just quoted, we may despair of proving anything from the Bible.

But the enquirer still asks, Do we know that these spiritual children are heirs with the father to the same spiritual blessings? This is a momentous point; and if we fail to prove this, our argument is incomplete. It is not enough for us to know that we are children of Abraham. We want to know whether the children are, by God’s gracious covenant, heirs to the same spiritual blessings which were promised to the father. The Holy Ghost has anticipated this enquiry which arises in our minds, and most fully and satisfactorily answered it, by the pen of the apostle in this same chapter. “So then they which be of faith *are blessed with faithful Abraham.*” “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and *heirs according to the promise.*” “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” What can be more explicit? What more could we desire? If believers, we are Abraham’s seed, and heirs with him to the same blessed promises. God promised

to be a God to Abraham, and to his seed after him. Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. By faith, Abraham took fast hold of a promised Saviour; here was his righteousness. He saw Christ's day and was glad. It was through a forthcoming Messiah, in whom Abraham now believed, that the LORD promised to be Abraham's God. And it is by virtue of their connection with the Lord Jesus Christ, that the same LORD is the covenant God of all believers. Our Saviour said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." And this is the work which all true Christians are enabled, by the grace of God, to do; they believe in Christ, and hereby receive the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father. And the Lord says, "I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. vi. 18. This was what God promised to Abraham, and he renews, in the New Testament, the same to all believers.

But God's covenant with Abraham included his natural children. Not that Abraham's seed were to be saved by virtue of his faith, and without personal piety. This is not what we mean; but by virtue of the covenant which God made with Abraham, besides the temporal blessings promised, his children were attached to the church, and pious influences were thrown around them. Now, as pious parents are the spiritual children of Abraham, and heirs of the same spiritual promises, (see Gal. iii. 29.) and as they belong to the same church with Abraham, are not their children included in the covenant also? By virtue of this covenant, have they not a connection with the church? Are not the church bound so to regard them, and then to throw around them their believing prayers, and their most holy, pious influences? Was not this the view of the jailer, when, upon his own profession of faith, he brought forward his household and had them baptized? Was not this the

view of the pious Lydia, who, upon the profession of her own faith, had her household baptized? Was not this the view of Peter, when, on the day of Pentecost, he said to those anxious enquirers, "Repent and be baptizied 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; for the promise is to you and to *your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call?" Was not this the view of Paul, when he baptized "the household of Stephanas?"

Now, we can understand Paul's reasoning in the 11th chapter of Romans, where he illustrates the identity of the church under the former, and the present dispensation, by the olive-tree. He says that some of the natural branches were broken off, and others, wild by nature, were grafted in among the remaining natural branches, and with them partook of the root and fatness of the olive-tree. And he warns these wild, gentile branches thus: "Boast not against the branches: but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say, then, The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." Rom. xi. 18-21. Now all this is unmeaning, if the church, under the former and the present dispensation, be not one. But admit that, and all is as clear as the noon-day sun. Had the Apostle represented the olive-tree as being dug up by the roots, and thrown out of the orchard, and another brought in and planted in its place, then the idea would have been distinctly conveyed to the mind that the church under the gospel is a new church. But not so. The root is there. It has never been taken up. Some of the natural branches (the Jews) were broken off for their unbelief; and wild branches (Gentiles) were grafted in among those that

remained. But whatever changes took place among the branches, the root remained untouched and undisturbed. The church is one. The Abrahamic covenant is an everlasting covenant, just as God promised Abraham it should be. See Gen. xvii. 7. And here we ought to thank God for the gracious intimation, that those natural branches shall not always remain withered and separated from the tree. "God is able to graft them in again," and in due time he will do it.

In the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the infant children of God's people were included in the covenant, and the males were circumcised at eight days old. Now what did this mean? The apostle tells us: He says, that "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the *father of all them that believe.*" When a covenant is made among men, as of matrimony, or of the exchange of property, there is usually a solemn, sealing act attending the transaction. So likewise when God entered into covenant with Abraham and all his seed, he gave circumcision as the sign and seal of that covenant. So says Paul. But we have proved that all believers are Abraham's spiritual children, included in the covenant, and heirs with him, of the same spiritual blessings. Now then, as Abraham's natural infant offspring were included in the covenant, and considered as connected with the church, how can we resist the inference that the infant children of believing parents, under the gospel, are in the same favoured condition?

With this view accord the conduct and the language of the Saviour, when he took little children in his arms, and blessed them, and declared that of such was the kingdom of God. With this view also accords the declaration of Paul, that "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were

your children unclean," i. e. excluded from the covenant; "but now are they holy," i. e. relatively holy, included in the covenant. 1 Cor. vii. 14.

But though the covenant remains unaltered, the seal of that covenant has been changed. When the Jews admitted gentile proselytes to their church, they uniformly circumcised the males, and baptized all, males and females. Says Dr. A. Clarke, on John i. 25, "Baptism was a very common ceremony among the Jews, who never received a proselyte into the full enjoyment of a Jew's privileges, till he was both baptized and circumcised." And Dr. William Brown, in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, vol. 1, p. 629-630, while treating of the admission of proselytes to the Jewish church, says: "And if the head of a family was, in this way, baptized, the infants and slaves were baptized at the same time, without asking their consent: the former, because they could not give it, and the latter, as being his property, and having no rights of their own: but sons come of age were not baptized unless they wished it. Hence, no mention of children or slaves in the baptism of the first Christians. It was a matter of course in the baptism of houses." Stackhouse in his "*History of the Bible*" says: "Now baptism, we know, was no new or strange thing among the Jews. It was acknowledged and practised as an emblem of purification from past guilt, and a rite of entering solemnly into covenant with God." This writer states that the expositors of the Jewish law agree "that their custom, in all succeeding ages, has been to receive their heathen proselytes by baptism."

The testimony upon this point is so abundant, that no one who investigates the subject, can doubt for a moment that baptism was common among the Jews. We *know* that baptism did not commence with the ministry of our Saviour. John, the forerunner of Christ, administered this rite to thousands. Now, our Saviour dropped the bloody rite of circumcision,

and adopted baptism, then in use, as the future seal of God's covenant with his people, and as the rite of recognition in, or initiation into his church. He dropped the eating of the flesh of the paschal lamb, and all other ceremonies of the passover, and took bread and wine, (which they always used at the passover,) and instituted the holy Eucharist or Lord's Supper.

Both the passover and the rite of circumcision required the shedding of blood. But our Saviour, having shed his own atoning blood, all bloody rites under the gospel cease. Hence, Jesus Christ gave the command to his disciples, to go and "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This command the disciples perfectly understood, and they endeavoured to obey it. And what was their practice? Do we find them baptizing whole households, in cases where we have not a particle of evidence that any member of the family was converted, except the head? We do, in the cases of Lydia and the jailer, already noticed.

Several instances of household baptism are mentioned in the New Testament. Is it probable, there were no children in any of these families? But you may enquire, Do we ever hear the apostles speaking of baptism, as if it had taken the place of circumcision? We reply, we do, in Col. ii. 11. Says Paul, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Now, what does he mean by "the circumcision of Christ?" Read the next verse, and you will see: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead."

As circumcision was a sign, and a seal of the faith of believers under the former dispensation, so is baptism a sign and a seal of the faith of believers under the gospel. Bap-

tism is "Christian circumcision." The church, under the former, and under the present dispensation, is the same church. Some changes have taken place in her external rites and ceremonies, but it is the same church. So thought Paul, when he said to the Ephesians: "But now in Christ Jesus, ye, (gentiles as they were,) who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the *Apostles* and *Prophets*, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord."

Now as apostles and prophets are all built upon the same foundation, they all help to compose the same building. See what strong proof we have that Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Daniel belonged to the same church with Paul, and Peter, and John, and all the apostles. But does any body doubt that we, if believers, belong to the same church to which the apostles belonged? This point we have never heard questioned, except by Papists or High Churchmen. But, if we do belong to the apostolic church, then we belong to the same church to which the prophets belonged; for we have proved that the prophets and apostles belonged to one and the same church. Does not this settle the point as to the identity of the church under the ancient and the present dispensation?

The Abrahamic covenant is still alive. The church, as a spiritual temple, is one. It is composed of "lively stones," and its walls are gradually rising in beauty, grandeur and glory. Its foundation is a *rock*, a stone, elected by infinite wisdom, precious in the sight of saints and angels, and laid in Zion by the hand of Omnipotence; and we may rest as-

sured that the gates of hell shall never prevail to move it, nor to shake the edifice which it sustains. Upon this rock, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles built, and were never confounded. Here the holy martyrs built, and were sustained amidst all the howling storms and desolating floods of persecution. And here all true believers in Jesus may build in safety for time and for eternity. God dwells in this temple, and all is safe. He says—"I will dwell in them and walk in them."

Through the Lord Jesus Christ, if we are Christians, Abraham's God is our God, and the blessed spiritual promises he made to our father in the faith, are ours. Are not our children, then, included in the covenant? And may we not while they are young, like the jailer, and Lydia, and Stephanas, and others, apply the seal of that covenant to these children? But you may ask, Why was not the command to baptize our infant offspring given in express terms? We reply, no such express command was necessary. It was a thing of course, as the Abrahamic covenant was never abrogated, but continued in full force. The change of the seal never affected the covenant, and this the apostles well understood. The change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, took place without any express command. But, again, where is there any express command for female communion? And yet, who doubts that pious females have a right to come to the Lord's table? You may ask again, Why does the apostle in Gal. iii. 16, call Jesus Christ the seed of Abraham? How can he and believers both be called the seed of Abraham? We reply, Jesus Christ was *the seed* of the woman who was to bruise the serpent's head. And again, as to his humanity, he was a natural descendant of Abraham. And again, such is the vital union between Christ and his people, that they are represented by the Holy Ghost as one. "Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, *are all of one* : for which



cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren ” He is the bridegroom and they are the bride. He is the head and they are the members. He is the vine and they are the branches. Says Paul, “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” Both Christ and believers are the seed of Abraham. You may object again, and say, that formerly the seal of the covenant was applied only to *males*, but that now we apply the present seal to *males* and *females*. We reply, the apostle has anticipated this objection and answered it, by saying, that now there is neither male nor female, but that all are one in Christ Jesus.

With the doctrine here advocated, accorded the practice of the church in the days of the early fathers. It was a mooted question in the third century, whether children might or might not be baptized, before they were eight days old. Many thought, as baptism had taken the place of circumcision, that children ought to be baptized when they were precisely eight days old, the age at which circumcision was administered. But a council, held at Carthage in A. D. 253, decided that they might be baptized at any time after birth. Was there at that time any dispute about the propriety of infant baptism? None whatever.

Irenæus, who lived in the second century, was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John; and this Irenæus says, that the church learned from the apostles to baptize their children. Origen, in the third century, declared that the custom of baptizing infants was received from Christ and his apostles. Cyprian, in the same century, said that infants might be baptized as soon as they were born. Ambrose, in the third century, testified that the baptism of infants had been practised by the apostles, and the whole church until that time. Chrysostom, in the fifth century, said that “the catholic church everywhere declared that infants should be baptized,” Augustine, in the same century, declared that he had “never heard or read of any

Christian, Catholic, or sectarian, but who always held that infants were to be baptized." Pelagius says, "I never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants." You may ask, what possible benefit can result to our children from their baptism? We reply, if it be God's institution, we have no right to call in question its utility. We might as well ask, what good did circumcision do? Or what good does it do for Christians to go to the Lord's table, and celebrate his sufferings and death? Our business is to obey God. Having ascertained his will, we have no right to entertain questions of utility. If the infant offspring of believers were included in the covenant in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, why should they not be included in the covenant now? That covenant has never been repealed. This covenant was made four hundred and thirty years before the law was given at Sinai. But neither the *giving* of the ceremonial law, nor its *repeal*, ever touched this covenant. See Gal. iii. 17-19, where this point is elucidated.

When God, in the 8th chapter of Hebrews, finds fault with the "*first covenant*," and says, he will make a "*new covenant*" with Israel; lest he should be misunderstood, he tells us expressly that he alludes to the Sinaitic covenant; (see verse 9th,) which was four hundred and thirty years after the Abrahamic covenant. Through all those Sinaitic transactions, this covenant remained unimpaired and untouched. The apostle expressly says, that "the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, can not disannul the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, that it should make the promise of none effect." Gal. iii. 17. That blessed covenant still lives.

Upon the subject of the utility of infant baptism, we would ask, is it nothing for pious parents, publicly and solemnly, to recognize their obligations to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Is it

nothing to interest the hearts of the pastor and of the church to watch over and to pray for these children? Is it nothing for parents to be able to plead in humility and faith the promise of Abraham's God, "I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee?"

An eminent living writer says, of a baptized child, "He is placed in a school, where he is to receive faithful instruction and discipline, and to be trained up for the service of Christ." (Dr. Woods on Baptism.) Let pious parents by faith take hold of that covenant which God made with Abraham, as "the father of all them that believe;" and let them, like the pious jailer, bring their infant children before God, and apply the seal of that covenant, and God will bless them. Would all Pedobaptist parents do their *whole duty* upon this subject; would they faithfully train up their children for the church, and not for the world, for heaven, and not merely for the pleasures or the honours of this transient life, infant baptism would occupy in the public mind, a position much more commanding than it now does. We are decidedly of the opinion, that the broken vows and the want of fidelity on the part of Pedobaptist parents, have inflicted deep and lasting wounds upon the church, and have brought more discredit upon infant baptism than all things else combined.

May God enlighten his people upon this interesting subject; and may he "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest he come and smite the earth with a curse."

## IMPROVEMENT OF BAPTISM.

To the *baptized*, whether in youth or in adult age, this ordinance addresses the most weighty counsels, as it encourages to walk in all holy obedience. It is recorded that when individuals were baptized in the primitive church, they were arrayed in white robes, to indicate their cleansing from sin, and to declare their intention thenceforth to maintain a life of unspotted purity. At the same time, they were addressed in these words, "Receive this white and immaculate garment, and bring it forth without spot before the tribunal of Jesus Christ." "They were thus considered as engaged to that strict and holy life, which Jesus Christ has left us by his doctrine and example."\* Baptized persons, indeed, rest under the most weighty obligations to imitate the Saviour's perfect example, and to walk as he also walked. The apostle Paul addressing such declares, "*As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*" Gal. iii. 27. Herein consist their highest privilege and paramount duty. Baptism is the expressive sign of union to Christ, and those who receive it in faith, are regarded in the face of the Anointed, and as one with him—their glorious vital Head. By providing for them this seal of the covenant, God graciously intimates his design to bestow upon them eternal salvation, and to put upon their whole persons the righteousness and image of his Son. Theirs it is to put on Christ daily in believing, and to study and practise increasing conformity. As dedicated ones, they are required to live not to themselves, but to shine as lights in the world, and in all things to aim to promote the Redeemer's glory. Incorporated by baptism into one body with the faithful in all ages, they should learn to

\* See Cave's Primitive Christianity.

love all that love the Lord Jesus with a pure heart, and to cultivate with them a holy and constant fellowship. Forgetful of this, and unmindful of the holy separation from the world to which baptism calls them, the members of the church lose their distinctive character. The love of many waxes cold—perilous times come—and selfishness, alienation, and enmity reign where self-denial and fraternal affection ought to abound.

The practical improvement of Baptism, under the blessing of the Spirit, will restore to the Church its primitive glory and beauty. As in apostolic times, the religion of love will again prevail throughout the Church—healing its manifold divisions, and exhibiting before the world the excellence and attractive power of the Christian profession. A Pentecostal shower of the Spirit will produce the same blessed effects as in the days of old: “The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.” “None of them said that aught that he had was his own, but they had all things common”—and “did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” Thus will Christians again know and feel how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity; and the sweet counsels of the loving apostle will be transcribed in their whole spirit and intercourse, “BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER; FOR LOVE IS OF GOD; AND EVERY ONE THAT LOVETH IS BORN OF GOD, AND KNOWETH GOD.” 1 John iv. 7

And, finally, Christians are encouraged, in improving their baptism, to hope for victory in death, and for a blessed resurrection unto life everlasting. “If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” “Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.” Rom. vi. 5, 8. Laying hold on eternal life, and frequently renewing our engagement to be the Lord’s we may entertain a joyful hope, which may grow up to a blessed assurance—

“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness.” “Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Psalm xvii. 15; xvi. 11.—*Practical Treatise on Christian Baptism* by Thomas Houston, D.D.

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### BAPTISM.

'Twas the commission of our Lord,  
 “Go, teach the nations, and baptize;”  
 The nations have received the word,  
 Since he ascended to the skies.

He sits upon the eternal hills,  
 With grace and pardon in his hands,  
 And sends his covenant with the seals,  
 To bless the distant Christian lands.

“Repent and be baptized,” he saith,  
 “For the remission of your sins;”  
 And thus our sense assists our faith,  
 And shows us what the gospel means.

Our souls he washes in his blood,  
 As water makes the body clean;  
 And the good Spirit from our God  
 Descends like purifying rain.

Thus we engage ourselves to thee,  
 And seal our covenant with the Lord;  
 O may the great eternal Three  
 In heaven our solemn vows record.

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

THE efficiency of the church of God depends instrumentally on the character of its individual members. It is in vain that we look for a living, energetic, aggressive church, whilst those who compose it are indifferent to their obligations. The decline of a church may uniformly be traced to the declension in personal piety on the part of its members. They have ceased to wrestle with God in secret; they have allowed long intervals to elapse without self-examination; they have absented themselves from the place for social prayer; they no longer go up to the house of God, panting for the refreshing, vitalizing streams of the water of life; and even sacramental occasions have become mere formal observances. Their conversation does not savour of the gospel; they are not found labouring for the upbuilding of the Redeemer's kingdom; their associations, habits, and general tone of feeling are, to a great extent, those of the world. The aggregate of such a lapsed state of individual piety makes a cold, formal, lifeless church.

Such an unhappy and sinful dereliction of Christian duty does not usually at any one time pervade the whole church of God, or even the entire membership of any individual church. Almost always there are those who, even in the darkest and most inauspicious seasons, keep alive the coal within their own hearts. They have lived too long, and too much under the powers of the world to come, to be carried away by the seductions of this present life. They have had too much bitter experience of the emptiness of the world's broken cisterns, to turn aside to them again. They have felt too strongly the attractions of the cross, and the sweet

endearments of a Saviour's love, to be easily drawn away from them. They have known too well, by sorrowful experience, how cheerless is a state of spiritual declension, what compunctions of conscience attend it, how it provokes the chastening rod, and how bitter is the remembrance of the past, when the soul has been brought back from its wanderings, to desire again to expose themselves to similar calamities. Especially, too, has God's grace now gained too strong a hold upon their hearts, to let them go. But whilst there are, all the while, some such in the church generally, and in individual churches, the great mass of those who name the name of Christ not unfrequently seem to be borne away from their Christian integrity by adverse currents from Satan, the world, and their own imperfectly sanctified natures, until they scarcely remember what manner of persons they profess to be. The habitual life, indeed, of many professed believers is little else than a fixed state of spiritual declension. The disease with them has assumed a chronic type. It would be difficult to detect, at any time, in them indications of a living, active piety. A stupor has fallen upon them, as to the claims of Christ's kingdom. It would seem to be sad irony for them to repeat, in application to themselves, Paul's language, "For me to live is Christ."

One of the sorest evils under which the church of Christ labours, is the fact that so large a portion of her membership act as if there were no claim upon them whatever, to lend a hand towards advancing her interests. Many enter the church apparently with the feeling that the only thing to be accomplished by it is, that their church connection, in some undefined way, may at last bring their own souls to heaven. They do not regard taking upon themselves the Christian profession as an obligation the most solemn and unrepeatable upon their part; to cultivate, by every instrumentality, personal piety; and to engage in all available



methods for sustaining the institutions of the gospel, and spreading abroad the truth as it is in Jesus. Upon what other ground than this can we account for the fact, that so many live and die, apparently under the impression, that whilst others are called to seek after eminent piety—to bear the burdens of the church—to engage in every good word and work, they are as much exempt from any such obligation, as if provision had been made in the church for two distinct classes, one of which was to do the work, and the other simply to look on as spectators, and at last share a portion of the spoils? One would think that they have taken their ideas of the great society of believers from some of the scientific and literary associations, where a portion of the members are practical, working-men, and others are mere “honorary” members, whose names have been enrolled simply as a complimentary distinction. Where is the scriptural authority for such a difference? Does not our common Lord and Master say to all alike, “Go work to-day in my vineyard?” Does not the stern rebuke from his lips, “Why stand ye here all the day idle,” fall alike upon all who toil not? What obligation rests upon any portion of the church’s servants, which does not lay its strong hand equally upon all?

This lurking idea, that a portion of God’s people are under obligations which do not apply to others, shows itself in the practical workings of every individual church. Who can point to a single such company of professed believers, where the whole body is enlisted as one man in the service of Zion? Let us take a single church as a sample. The present number of elders is insufficient, and an addition to their numbers is wanted. The minister and his associates in the session look around them amongst the communicants for suitable persons to fill this high office. But there are few, if any, who seem to be men of the right stamp—astonishingly few, considering the large numbers embraced on the

roll of the church. Some, indeed, are unfit because of their youth, their inexperience as Christians, their lack of sound judgment, and from other similar reasons; but among the many who are old enough, discreet enough, and have been long enough in the church, but here and there one of the proper stamp can be found, for the sole reason, that the great majority of them have been so deficient as to personal piety, and Christian activity, that neither their brethren nor themselves regard them as possessing the spirit required for rulers in the church of God. One would think that such a want of what would seem a natural and indispensable requisite in a professor of the religion of Christ, would itself be enough to arouse the indifferent; but such is not the result. The fact, that they have not piety and zeal enough to fit them for office-bearers, gives them no uneasiness; others, they think, are better Christians than themselves, and ought to fill such offices: but their own deficiencies occasion but little, if any concern. We beg leave to ask, why the few who may be regarded as suited for such positions, are in any way more under obligations to be living, active Christians, than the many.

In that same church, too, numerous and varied interests of a practical character are to be cared for. The Sabbath-school must have a corps of teachers; the weekly lecture and prayer-meeting must be attended; contributions must be made for the stated objects of benevolence, and for special purposes which certain unforeseen emergencies require; the poor and destitute without the church, as well as within it, must be provided for; and a great number of minor claims for co-operation and labour come up constantly. Some how or other, and to some extent, perhaps, these various instrumentalities are carried on. But by whom is the work done? A few—a mere fraction of the whole church—are engaged as Sabbath-school teachers. The same persons, by their presence, sustain the weekly lecture and the prayer-meeting. When

appeals are made for objects of benevolence, the same persons give the money and do the work of collecting. They are also helpers of the poor, the visitors of the sick, the distributors of tracts—in short, they are the working corps of that church, on whose agency, to human observation, not only its efficiency, but its very existence would seem to depend. Where is the great body of professing Christians in this church all this while? How does it happen that all the responsibility and toil is devolved on a few? Why is it that whilst a small portion of them are bearing the heat and burden of the day, the great majority are doing nothing? Is it in accordance with the principles of God's word, with their own covenant vows, with the claims of the church and the world for all the labour which all the lovers of Christ's cause and of souls can bring to them, or with common sympathy and justice for our brethren, that the majority should pass their lives in idleness, whilst the few are making all the sacrifices, and enduring all the hardship? Is it true that the mass of professing Christians were called into the church merely to go along as passengers, whilst a little band of their brethren work the ship? We shall never see the church what she ought to be, until, by some means, each member is brought to feel that he has a work to do. In giving, praying, and doing, every one must be led to take his part just as much as if the whole interests at stake devolved, instrumentally, upon himself. Then the aggregate of such individual piety and efficiency will make a living, energetic, efficient church.

The idea that every church member is not individually responsible for a portion of the work to be done in the Redeemer's kingdom is simply preposterous. It would be answer enough to give to those who excuse themselves for doing nothing, to say, "Produce your certificate of absolution from service in the church." As work is enjoined by Christ on all his disciples, none can be exempted from

its performance unless they can show a special edict in their behalf. "Go work in my vineyard," is the injunction of the Master upon all who take his name upon them. "Faith without works is dead." "Ye are my friends if ye *do* whatsoever I command you." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." The sentences meted out at the judgment day, are to be in accordance with what has been done, or what has not been done. Active service, therefore, is an essential ingredient of the Christian life. An empty profession, or a mere routine of devotional exercises, will not suffice. Satisfactory evidence that we are united to Christ, can only be found in the fact that we are labouring faithfully to do his will in every way in which we can find opportunity.

Some may plead, that they have no talent for usefulness. We might answer this by saying, that if this be true, then they have no right to regard themselves as the people of God, since activity is inseparable from a genuine Christian character. But is it true that any have no talent for usefulness? We think not. Some, doubtless, are less gifted by Providence than others; but even some of those who might have urged this plea, have been amongst the most honoured instruments of good. Roger Miller was an obscure layman, poor, uneducated, and unknown; yet he accomplished more for Christ by his devoted labours among the poor in London, than do many ministers of the gospel in a long life. Harlan Page had but few endowments beyond those of any private church member; but with a heart on fire with the love of Christ and the love of souls, he was the instrument of doing a work which has made his name to be remembered and honoured, and his works of love to be held up as an example in the church. How many pious women, whose secluded position would have seemed almost to bar against them the doors of usefulness, but who could not be

content to fold their hands all their days in indolence, have scattered abroad thousands of tracts, raised money for objects of benevolence, visited the chambers of the sick and sorrowing, wrought with their needles for religious enterprises, and in a thousand ways made themselves blessings to a world that lies in wickedness. It is a great mistake to imagine that a high degree of talent or peculiar gifts are requisite to a useful life. This was just the plea urged by the unfaithful owner of the one talent in the Scriptures. As he had not been endowed with five, or even two, as had been the more favoured, he refrained from using his one, and buried it in a napkin; and for his unfaithfulness was cast into outer darkness. The plea that he had so little capital to trade upon, did not shield him from his Master's displeasure; it was his business to use what he had to the best advantage. To the same responsibility will professing Christians of this day be held, when they are summoned to give their reckoning.

To those who excuse themselves upon the ground of lack of talent, we might say, "You have talents which fit you for other employments; why cannot these be turned to good account in doing the work of Christ? You can carry on an arduous and complicated business; you can enrich yourself and your family by your ingenuity and industry; you can take an active part in politics, in agricultural pursuits, or in scientific investigations; you can carry on an interesting correspondence with various friends; you can make yourself agreeable and entertaining in the social circle; you can conduct with admirable judgment and tact the affairs of domestic life; you can spend hours of many days of the week in shrewd trafficking in the shops." No talent then? There is not one who makes this plea, who is not giving a practical refutation to it, in the pursuits of every day of his life. These gifts, to which we have just alluded, show that there is a power, which, though now dormant as regards

religious obligations, need only be turned into that channel in order that the happiest results may ensue. Would the talents which are so successful in the counting-house, or the market-place, or professional life, or the social or domestic circle, be of no value to the church? If but for a single year the church could command the ability of her sons and daughters, so successfully developed in worldly affairs, in co-operating with her great enterprises, she would present an aspect of power and prosperity, the aggregate of which ten ordinary years would not equal. But alas! the tithes are not brought into the Lord's store-house, and hence Zion languishes.

It is indeed lamentable to look abroad, in our great cities for instance, and see the untold power of the church which is lying dormant. Great merchants who, from poverty, have amassed hundreds of thousands; professional men, whose well trained minds give them position and influence over a whole community; energetic young men, who are gaining confidence and a good name by their successful devotion to the interests of their employers; gifted women, whose social qualities invest them with a charm in every circle; and yet, out of the vast mass, making an accumulated force, which, with the blessing of God, might shrink from no undertaking, however arduous and seemingly hopeless, but here and there one who seems to have any proper sense of the true obligations of a Christian profession!

With each successive year, large additions to the number of communicants are reported, but what is the gain to the church? Mere numbers avail nothing unless each individual brings with him a contribution in some shape, to add to the body of which he becomes a part. Most of those who make a profession of religion seem to have the idea that the church is to do them good, by imparting to them wholesome instruction; by opening up to them sources of spiritual enjoyment; by comforting them in times of sorrow;

by preparing them for death, and introducing them into heaven when they die; but as to their doing good for the church, and by their very profession coming under an obligation to co-operate with all the heart, and mind, and strength, in her every enterprise, it is a thing which does not appear even to be thought of. The suggestion to them of such an idea is met with a look of bewilderment or surprise.

So long as this state of things lasts, it is impossible that the church can ever accomplish her great mission. If some may be excused from active service, why not others? and if a part, why not all? The effect of an inert mass of unproductive professors, must, more or less, have an unfavourable influence upon the whole body. It is not in human nature, even when partially sanctified, to escape the deleterious impression of an unsympathizing, inactive spirit, in those who are members of the same church, and bound by the same profession with themselves. The fact that so many are indifferent and useless, will inevitably suggest to those who have higher impulses and purposes, "If my brethren, who are under the same obligations with myself, care nothing for these enterprises for good, then why should I give myself so much concern about them?" So that the evil done is two-fold—the church loses the labours of those who do nothing, and she also loses a part of the power of those who are disposed to engage in every good word and work, because of the discouragement cast upon them from their unproductive, useless associates.

The church is a great organization, having in view as its specific end on earth, in addition to the sanctification of its own members, the honour of its Divine head, by extending his kingdom through the world. In this respect, it has its grand end and aim, just as distinctly as an association for building a railroad, or a steamship; and it follows, of course, that all who enter the organization, are to be ex-

pected to contribute to the accomplishment of the end in the one case as in the other. Do men become members of joint-stock companies, without either contributing, as owners of the stock, or in some other capacity? And yet, judging from their conduct, a large portion of those who enter the organization of the church, in no visible way add one iota to its means for carrying out the end of its institution, in the uplifting of fallen mankind, and bringing a revolted world back to its allegiance to God. The efficiency of any organization is but the aggregate of that of its individual members. The golden treasures which California and Australia are pouring into the lap of the world, are the aggregate results of individual toil in the mines. The beautifully curved and graded track over which trains freighted with travel and merchandise glide as with the wings of the wind, was the product of the united toil of a thousand hands; and the prowess which drives back a hostile foe, and carries victory over prostrate legions, is the combined result of the courage, daring, and strong arms of the individual soldiery. In either case, for the individuals engaged to have said that they could do nothing, would have been to leave the work undone. The fact that each one felt that he must do something, and that he strove with all his might to do it, was the secret which secured success. "England expects every man to do his duty," said Lord Nelson, at Trafalgar; and the church expects every man, woman, and child, to do their duty, Jesus Christ says virtually to his professing people. A great work is to be done. Valleys are to be filled up, mountains to be levelled, the way of the Lord is to be prepared, a hostile world is to be conquered, the kingdom of the Son of God is to be established on earth.

It behoves every professing Christian also to consider by whom can the work of the church be done, if neglected by him. Upon whom can she more properly call, or with a greater prospect of success? True, God can raise up others



to serve him more faithfully than a race of heartless, indifferent professors; but we are taking things as they now are, with both the world and the church, and we put the question, To whom can the church look with more propriety to do her work than to those who have voluntarily come forward and entered into covenant with her and with her Divine Head? The unregenerate world cannot be expected to do that which professing Christians shrink from undertaking; the few faithful ones in Zion who are ready for every work of usefulness, are, after all, human nature with limited capacities, and cannot do their own work and that of a thousand others. It results, then, simply in this, that each professing Christian who will at all consider his obligations is confronted with the great work of his divine Master on earth, and asked the solemn question, Will you do this work or not? If he can answer affirmatively, and at once put his hand to the plough with the resolution never to look back, happy will it be for him, and for others who may be blessed through his instrumentality. If either in word or in deed he replies negatively, the ghosts of his murdered opportunities, and the souls whose blood is upon his skirts, will one day rise up to confound him.

It is surprising what even one Christian can accomplish in the course of a lifetime, or of a series of years. What in the progress of its doing seems to be but little, when it has been repeated scores or hundreds of times, and carried on year after year, in the summing up, makes an amount of good over which there is abundant reason for thanksgiving and joy. The habitual and persevering repetition of comparatively insignificant efforts, is what usually makes the life of usefulness. To lay a straw across your doorway each morning, would seem to be a trifling thing; but continue to lay straws there every morning year after year, and you stop the ingress to your house. The coral insects, who busily ply their work in the sea-depths, add but an atom of

matter to their structure each day; but laying these atoms day after day, and others doing the same, the jagged reef at length rises from the ocean beds, lifts its head above the surface, the angry billows are dashed and broken upon it, great ships are wrecked against it, and vegetation having spread its green mantle over it, men make their homes and ply all the busy pursuits of life upon the masonry moulded and fashioned by the daily atoms of the coral insects. A beautiful spectacle is it to see, what once in a while is our privilege, a Christian professor laying out his whole strength for God—forming his plans, economizing time and money, labouring with his counsels, his prayers, and his donations, and by every practical means, day by day striving to promote the great end of serving God. Who can, without admiration, contemplate such a character as that of Lady Huntingdon? High station, an abundance of this world's goods, and fashionable society, as well as a title of nobility, were her birthright; but all these faded from her view, when once by faith she got a sight of the cross. From that time forth the world, with all the fascinations for which she seemed to have so remarkable an adaptation, was regarded as a thing forgotten, and Christ and his cause was the all-absorbing theme. She sought the society of the most spiritually-minded; made her house the home of faithful men of God; expended her money, and even her jewels, to build chapels; founded and sustained a school for training ministers and missionaries; went to the fashionable watering-places in the gay season, not to seek pleasure, but to take advantage of the presence of congregated thousands of the thoughtless, to reach them with the word of life, and turned her mansion in London into a place of preaching, in order to entice the nobility to hear the truth. How natural, for one in her circumstances, to have argued that the idea of bringing the most noted men of rank from parliament and the drawing-rooms of the metropolis, to listen to preachers

whose words were like burning coals of fire upon the conscience—preachers who were strangers to honeyed sentences, time-serving, and seeking the favour of man—how natural to have argued that to bring such men to hear such preachers, was simply an impracticability—that in the nature of things there must be an aversion and incongruity between things so opposite. But so did not this noble woman argue; but opening her mansion, she invited the peers of the realm, and they came—even Chesterfield among the number.

The reader may reply, however, that all this was beautiful and noble in this devoted Christian woman, but that they are not the Countess of Huntingdon—they have not her position, her means, nor her widely-extended sphere of influence. This may be true, but if, according to your measure, you are not breathing the spirit and doing the work of a Lady Huntingdon, you would not be what she was, with all her rank, title, possessions, and accomplishments. He that is faithful in much, is faithful also in that which is least; and whoever lacks the heart to trade with his one talent, would be equally recreant even if he were endowed with five. It is according to that which we have, and not according to that which we have not, that God accepts us.

In every church and congregation there should be many who would breathe the spirit and do the works of a Lady Huntingdon. In many churches there are such—not so conspicuous, of course, but still known and read as constant, faithful, active, useful friends of God and man, in every department where good may be done. We have known such Christians, whose ingenuity in doing good seemed almost as much to be admired as the actual results accomplished. They were ever devising some plan for reaching others with what seemed adapted to the peculiar spiritual wants of each. If a book fell into their hands which seemed calculated to be useful, copies of it were immediately bought and given to friends, or loaned diligently to various persons,

from whom the promise was required that it should be read. If a tract or a newspaper article struck them as suited to some particular case, it was forthwith mailed and sent off on its errand of mercy. Half-worn clothing, remnants of food from the table, or whatever could be applied to the relief of the poor, were carefully and systematically laid aside, and in due season appropriated to praiseworthy uses, as well as donations of a more costly sort. By a thousand methods, running through every day of life, have some, who name the name of Jesus, given evidence of the spirit of their Master, who went about doing good; and never, until eternity reveals all hidden things, will it be known what have been the happy results of these labours of love. A noble Christian woman, not long since gone to her heavenly rest, whom we numbered among our most valued friends, bore this lofty stamp. She was ready for every good word and work. She was at every meeting for preaching or for prayer; she was by the bed-side of the sick; she was in the humble homes of the poor; she was bearing a tract to this one and bread to that one; she was toiling day after day with her hands, moulding forms of beauty, and plying her needle with exquisite delicacy, that with this handiwork she might gather in hundreds of dollars annually to train up young men for the ministry. For long years was this the habit of her life; when old age and feebleness came heavily upon her, she remitted not her self-appointed task, and at length lay down and died with the needle arrested in its half-finished work. Had this excellent woman naturally superior qualifications for such usefulness? In some few respects, perhaps, she had; but the main qualities, which made her what she was, are such as belong to a great extent to all.

Even, however, where circumstances would in some measure forbid so entire a devotion of the time to the active employments for doing good, and where the sphere must be

less varied and more restricted, there is still an opening for a useful life, if there only be the heart to improve it. How much good can be done by a Sabbath-school teacher who faithfully serves God in that work—prayerfully doing his duty, and year after year instructing successive bands of children and youth as to how they ought to live and how to die. Within your own doors, there may be those who need to be taught; who could better do it than yourself? Your servants, perhaps, are in want of such tuition as you could easily give them; how little of time or labour it would cost you to store their minds with the principles of divine truth, and thus confer on them a treasure of which neither time nor eternity could rob them! That untutored domestic, who has been providentially brought under your roof, knows but little of the word of God, and does not understand even the alphabet of the language in which it is written. How easily could you teach her to read, and thus open up to her fountains of divine knowledge! It is needless, however, to attempt to specify the various methods in which life may be rendered useful, even by those whose circumstances are comparatively most unfavourable. “Where there is a will there is a way.” A heart yearning to do good, will assuredly, in this needy world, find good enough to do. Such a Christian will not be continually putting upon the already burdened shoulders of others that which he should do himself, with the cry ever on his lips, “I pray thee have me excused.” Blessed is he who seeks for opportunities of usefulness, and improves them. Blessed is he whose whole life is fragrant with works of piety and love. Blessed is he who, when his days have reached their utmost bound, and when the night of death is closing in, can say, “I have finished my work.” Blessed, thrice blessed is he, who on his entrance into the unseen eternity, shall be greeted with the inspiring plaudit, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” To be rich, learned, honoured, fashionable, or self-

indulgent, may now seem matters of high concern; but in that day when earth shall be fading from our sight and eternity rushing on, these earthly baubles shall seem trifles and vanity, and the only matter for contemplation in the past which can afford real satisfaction, will be the remembrance that our lives have been spent for the glory of God, and the good of our fellow-men.

How long, then, shall those who name the name of Jesus, continue to fold their hands, and cry, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber?" How long shall they excuse themselves upon the vain and wicked plea, that their influence can be of but little consequence, and that they have not the qualifications for active service? How long shall the storehouse, the workshop, the office, the farm, the household, the vanities of life, absorb the powers which might prove a rich blessing to the church and the world? Reader, if you wear the badge of a Christian profession, make up your mind to strive to do a Christian's work. Live not for yourself alone, but for your generation—for souls that are perishing, for a Saviour's cause that is languishing. Endeavour not to shift to the shoulders of others all the responsibility and toil, but seek to bear it with them. When calls for duty come, instead of regarding them as addressed to some other than yourself, take the appeal home to your own heart and conscience, and with a willing heart respond, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." "What wilt thou have *me* to do?" When every member of every church in this and other lands, shall be imbued with this spirit, then Zion will arise in her strength, going forth clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners. But whether all in the church shall be thus inspired or not, let each individual resolve for himself, that henceforth, let others do as they may, he will endeavour, by the grace of God, no longer to live a barren and unprofitable life, but to lay himself out to be a helper of the church, and a doer of good in his day and generation.

## A FRIEND INDEED.

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THERE is an old saying, that "*a friend in need is a friend indeed.*" A hungry man thinks so when he gets a loaf of bread, and the thirsty man, when some one gives him a cup of water. The traveller thinks so, when he has lost his way, and some one tells him which is the right road. The sick man feels the truth of this saying, when he receives a certain cure for his sickness, and the drowning man feels it, when a strong arm draws him out of the water.

This little printed paper comes to you in your need as a friend indeed. Will you welcome its call, and hear what it has to say?

You have two things to care for—your body and your soul. The body needs to be clothed and fed and kept in health, and whatever we do to defile it or injure it, is sinful. But with all our care it will not last a great while. Most of the trees and houses that we pass every day, will be where they are now, long after our bodies are under ground.

But it is not so with the soul. That will live always. It will live when the trees are all dead, and the houses are all fallen. It will live when the earth and the seas, the moon and the stars, yes, and the sun itself, shall have all passed away!

**THE SOUL WILL NEVER CEASE TO LIVE!**

Will you think of this, my friend? Your soul is to live always!

God made both our bodies and our souls. You know that everything that is made must have had a maker, and he "who built all things is God." (Acts xvii. 24; Heb. iii. 4)

God takes care of us every moment. It is in him we live, and move and have our being. (Acts xvii. 28.) He gives us health and food, clothes and friends. Is it not right that we should do what he tell us to do, and try to please him in all things?

In the Holy Scriptures we have his law plainly set before us; and besides that, we have within us a law, written on the heart, which is also the law of God, and which approves of what is right and condemns what is wrong. (Romans ii. 15.)

This holy law requires us to love God with the whole heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. (Mark xvi. 29-33.) Is not this a very just and good law? If all men should obey it, would not all men be happy? Just think of it.

But all men have done many things which this good law forbids, and have left undone many things which it requires. So that the Bible truly says, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans iii. 23.)

Now we cannot ask to have this good law set aside and made of no account, because it condemns us for our sins. Nor can we ask or expect that our obedience in time to come, will make up for our past sins. A murderer is not pardoned, even among men, just because he promises not to commit murder again. God is just and holy, as well as kind and good, and if we break his law, we must expect he will punish us as he says he will; and we can all see, that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews x. 31.) We need not fear them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but we ought to fear him who after he hath killed, hath power to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Luke xii. 4, 5; Matthew x. 28.)

Do you not feel in your own heart, that you are not what you ought to be? And do you think, if you should die just as you are, you could be happy with the holy beings that



dwell in heaven? And yet you want to be happy. You have a soul that might be happy. If you were holy you would be happy—happy now and happy for ever.

But what can a wicked man do to make himself holy? This is the very thing I have come to tell you. The Son of God came into the world, and having taken upon himself the form of a man, perfectly obeyed God's law, and suffered the penalty which we deserve for having broken it; and now God is pleased to say, that whosoever repents of his sins, and forsakes them, and believes in Jesus Christ, shall not be punished for his sins, but shall have everlasting life. For Christ's sake, God can and will pardon the most wicked sinner who repents and believes in him. (John iii. 16.) The Holy Spirit is also sent to cleanse us from sin, and make our hearts holy like Christ. (1 Corinthians vi. 11; Titus iii. 5, 6.)

Perhaps you think he will not bestow so great a gift on such an one as you are; but to encourage you to come to him, he likens himself to a father, and tells you that he is more willing to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than earthly parents are to give good things to their children. (Luke xi. 9-13.)

Were you even the chief of sinners, there is a word of encouragement in the sacred Scriptures which is meant for you. The apostle Paul says, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, OF WHOM I AM CHIEF," (1 Timothy i. 15.)

Now, my friend, you must either cast away your Bible as a book of fables, and be in darkness as much as the heathen are, or you must allow that God is very gracious and merciful, and could not have done more for you than he has done. I beg you then to answer to yourself these four plain questions:—

1. Are you now ready to forsake all your sins, and to do just what God commands you to do?

2. Do you feel your need of strength from God to enable you to keep his commandments?

3. Are you willing to take the Lord Jesus Christ for your only Saviour, and to give up every hope of mercy which does not rest on him?

4. Are you ready to fall down on your knees, and cry out as a poor, perishing creature,

GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME, A SINNER?

God will hear such a prayer, and if it comes from the heart, he will, for Christ's sake, blot out your sins, and give you grace to serve and enjoy him for ever.

CHRIST THE FRIEND OF SINNERS.

One there is, above all others,  
Well deserves the name of Friend;  
His is love beyond a brother's,  
Costly, free, and knows no end.

Which of all our friends, to save us,  
Could or would have shed his blood?  
But this Saviour died to have us  
Reconciled in him to God.

When he lived on earth abased,  
Friend of sinners was his name;  
Now above all glory raised.  
He rejoices in the same.

O! for grace our hearts to soften;  
Teach us, Lord, at length to love;  
We, alas! forget too often,  
What a friend we have above.



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