

EXPERIENCE AND THEOLOGY.

Although there is only one door to the kingdom of heaven, there is many an entrance to scientific divinity. There is the gate of free inquiry as well as the gate of spiritual wistfulness. And although there are exceptional instances, on the whole we can predict what school the new-comer will join, by knowing the door through which he entered. If from the wide fields of speculation he has sauntered inside of the sacred enclosure; if he is a historian who has been carried captive by the documentary demonstration or a poet who has been arrested by the spiritual sentiment or a philosopher who has been won over by the Christian theory, and who has thus made a hale-hearted entrance within the precincts of the faith—he is apt to patronize that Gospel to which he has given his accession, and, like Clemens Alexandrinus, or Hugo Grotius, or Alphonse de Lamartine, he will join that school where taste and reason alternate with revelation, and where ancient classics and modern sages are scarcely subordinate to the "men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." On the other hand, if "fleeing from the wrath to come," through the crevice of some "faithful saying," he has struggled into enough of knowledge to calm his conscience and give him peace with heaven, the oracle which assured his spirit will be to him unique in its nature and supreme in its authority; and a debtor to that scheme to which he owes his very self, like Augustine, and Cowper, and Chalmers, he will join that school where revelation is absolute, and where "Thus saith the Lord" makes an end of every matter. And without alleging that a long process of personal solicitude is the only right commencement of the Christian life, it is worthy of remark that the converts whose Christianity has thus commenced have usually joined that theological school which, in "salvation work," makes least account of man and most account of God. Jeremy Taylor, and Hammond, and Barrow, were men who made religion their business; but still they were men who regarded religion as a life for God rather than a life from God, and in whose writings recognitions of Divine mercy and atonement and strengthening grace are comparatively faint and rare. But Bolton, and Bunyan, and Thomas Goodwin, were men who, from a region of carelessness or ignorance, were conducted through a long and dark labyrinth of self-reproach and inward misery, and by a way which they knew not were brought out at last on a bright landing place of assurance and praise; and, like Luther in the previous century, and like Halyburton, and Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards, in the age succeeding, the strong sense of their own demerit led them to ascribe the happy change, from first to last, to the sovereign grace and good Spirit of God. It was in deep contrition and much anguish of soul that Owen's career began; and that creed which is pre-eminently the religion of "broken hearts" became his system of theology.

"Children, live like Christians; I leave you the covenant to feed upon." Such was the dying exhortation of him who protected so well England and the Albigenes; and "the covenant" was the food with which the devout heroic lives of that godly time were nourished. This covenant was the sublime staple of Owen's theology. It suggested topics for his Parliamentary sermons:—"A Vision of Unchangeable Mercy," and "The Steadfastness of Promises." It attracted him to that book in the Bible in which the federal economy is especially unfolded. And, whether discoursing on the eternal purposes, or the extent of redemption—whether expounding the mediatorial office, or the work of the sanctifying Spirit—branches of this tree of life reappear in every treatise. In such discussions some may imagine that there can be nothing but barren speculation, or, at the best, an arduous and transcendental theosophy. However, when they come to examine for themselves, they will be astonished at the mass of scriptural authority on which they are based; and, unless we greatly err, they will find them peculiarly subservient to spiritual improvement and instruction in righteousness. Many writers have done more for the details of Christian conduct; but for purposes of heart-discipline and for

the nurture of devout affections, there is little uninspired authorship equal to the more practical publications of Owen. In the life of a Christian philosopher lately departed, it is mentioned that in his latter days, besides the Bible, he read nothing but "Owen on Spiritual Mindedness," and the "Olney Hymns;" and we shall never despair of the Christianity of a country which finds numerous readers for his "Meditations on the Glory of Christ," and his "Exposition of the Hundred and Thirtieth Psalm."—*North British Review.*

BE OF GOOD CHEER.

Though tangled hard life's knot may be,
And wearily we rue it,
The silent touch of Father Time
Some day will sure undo it,
Then, darling, wait;
Nothing is late
In the light that shines forever.

We faint at heart, a friend is gone;
We chafe at the world's harsh drilling;
We tremble at sorrows on every side,
At the myriad ways of killing;
Yet say we all,
If a sparrow fall,
The Lord keepeth count: 'rever.

He keepeth count. We come, we go,
We speculate, toil and falter;
But the measure to each of weal and woe,
God only can give or alter;
He sendeth light,
He sendeth night,
And change goes on forever.

Why not take life with cheerful trust,
With faith in the strength of weakness?
The slenderest daisy rears its head
With courage and with meekness;
A sunny face
Hath holy grace,
To woo the sun forever.

Forever and ever, my darling, yes—
Godness and love are undying;
Only the troubles and cares of earth
Are winged from the first for flying;
Our way we plough
In the furrow "now";
But after the tilling and growing, the sheaf;
Soil for the root, but sun for the leaf—
And God keepeth watch forever.

—Mary M. Dodge.

HOW TO KEEP OUR CHILDREN FROM
BAD BOOKS.

MR. HARDCAP'S WAY.

You want me to tell you how to keep our children from readin' bad books? Why, stop 'em; that's all. That's my way. If I don't want my boy to do a thing I just tell him not to, and that's the end of it. He understands it. I'm master in my own household, and they all know that I'm master. I believe that doctrine—Dr. Dullard calls it the headship of man. He preached last summer a capital sermon on Eli; he shewed us how God punished parents that don't make their children stan' round.

Just how should I go to work if I found that one of my boys was readin' a dime novel? Well, I will jest tell you how I did go to work. I came into the sittin' room the other night and found Robert with a copy of the "Ledger" in his hand. It had come into the house—that I found out afterwards—wrapped round a pair o' boots from the shoemaker's. He was a readin' of it. "What have you got there, Robert?" said I. And he shewed me. I picked it out of his hand sooner than a flash of lightning, and threw it into the fire. "Don't you never let me see you a readin' of any such stuff as that agin," said I, "or you'll hear from me. If I catch you a readin' of any sensational litrator you'll get a sensation from me, I can tell you. And he knows what that means. Some people say they don't believe in the rod. I do; and my boys know it."

"But, father," says he, "Dr. Hall writes for the 'Ledger.'"

"Never you mind who writes for the 'Ledger,'" says I. "You ain't a goin' to read it, not if the angel Gabriel writes for it." And no more he ain't; and I'll warrant you that I sha'n't catch Robert with the

"Ledger" in his hands agin in a hurry. And then I told my wife that I didn't want to see a copy of the "New York Ledger" in my house agin; and what's more—I wouldn't.

"It came wrapped around a bundle of shoes," said she.

"I don't care if i did," said I. "Don't you let any more of them paper come into this house; not if you never get another pair of shoes. What's feet to the mind! I'd rather my boys should go barefoot all their lives than that any of them sensational papers should ever come under my roof. I won't have it, and that's all there is about it." What did she say to that? Well, she didn't say nothin'. I reckon that Mrs. Hardcap's too good a wife to say anything when her husband tells her what to do. Ain't I afraid that my boy will go off and read worse papers in secret? Well, I should jest like to see him do it, that's all. I guess he wouldn't do it more'n once. Don't I think that when he grows up he may take to worse books? That's what the Deacon says. But I tell the Deacon that's none of my business. If, when he gets to be of age, he chooses to take up with bad litrator, that's his lookout, not mine. Besides, if you train up a child in the way he should go he won't depart from it. That's the promise, and I reckon it's safe to go on that. I won't have my children a readin' of any fiction. Walter Scott? No, not Walter Scott. Not a thing. Not a single thing. They shall read the truth and nothin' but the truth so long as they're under my roof. When they get out they can do what they please.

THE DEACON'S WAY.

How would I go to work to keep my children from reading sensational books? The best way to answer this question is by telling you what I have done.

The other evening, coming into the sitting room, I saw James reading a dime novel. At least, I thought it looked like a dime novel. Mother had her sewing; Jennie was working on an afghan; Tommy was making a set of jackstraws out of a piece of red cedar. "Let's have some reading aloud," said I. "James, you seem to have got hold of an interesting book there, suppose you read it aloud to us." James looked up with a flush on his face.

"I don't believe you would care for this," said he; "it isn't much of a book."

"You're mightily interested in it," said Tommy, "for a book that isn't much of a book."

"Yes! come," said Jennie, "let's have some reading aloud. Why not, James?"

"Mother wouldn't like this book," said he.

"Why not?" said mother.

"Oh! you wouldn't, that's all," said James. "It's just stuff."

"If it isn't worth reading aloud it isn't worth reading at all," said Jennie.

"That does not follow," said I, "by any means. There are a good many books worth reading that are not worth reading aloud. But if James is too much interested in his story to put it aside, the rest of us will form a reading circle and get something that is worth reading aloud."

"Oh! I don't care anything about it," said James. "I was just reading to get through the evening. If you have got anything better on hand, let's by all means have it." With that, he laid the book by with a shove that sent it half way across the table.

"What shall it be?" said I.

"How would it do to begin a course of history?" "There's our 'Hume' in the bookcase. I don't believe that any of us ever read it through. How would that do?"

I thought to myself that probably none of us ever would read it through, but I did not say anything. I waited for some one else to respond.

"I've got a bully book up-stairs," said Tommy.

"What is it?" I asked.

"'David Crockett,'" said Tommy. "I will go and get it." With that, and before any of us could decide whether we wanted it or not, Tommy was off upstairs after his "bully book." He is as quick as a flash in everything. It proved to be one of Mr. John S. C. Abbott's Pioneers and Patriots series.