

gymnast: 'hear what comfortable words are here' 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.' (1 John ii. 1, 2.) Hear what God says: 'Come now, let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' (Isaiah i. 18.) 'How, how?' said the man eagerly, 'What must I do to be saved?' 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved' (Heb. vii. 25.) Your past sins shall not condemn you. 'Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.' (Acts. xvi. 21.) The man stretched out his hands with upraised eyes, as if imploring mercy—'God be merciful to a poor sinner,' he faintly uttered, and at that moment his soul departed.

The clergyman looked around him; the light of the glorious gospel can illumine even this dungeon of darkness and horror, thought he: on him who lay in darkness and the shadow of death, has this light now shined. The rest of the men had kept at a distance from the idea that something mysterious must pass between a dying mortal and his spiritual instructor, which others were not to hear, 'corrupted as their minds are, from simplicity that is in Christ.' (2 Cor. ii. 3.) But he determined not to depart without a word of exhortation to them; and coming forward into the midst of them, he spoke to them of the awful state in which they were sunk; invited them also to come to Jesus, and obtain from him a full and free pardon for all their past offences. 'You know not, my fellow-sinners,' said he, 'how soon each of you may be summoned, like that poor man, before the awful bar of God! Cholera is sweeping the city from one end to the other. There is contagion in that corpse. I know not but this may be the last time I may have an opportunity of declaring the gospel to poor perishing sinners. I am a dying man addressing men. But Oh! let the love of Christ, who poured out his blood upon the cross to save lost sinners, speak to you and urge you to quit this pit of destruction—a faint type of that hell to which sin must lead you. Return to habits of honest industry. Nothing but idleness and crime could have brought you into this place.' 'It is true,' said the man who led him there, 'it was crime brought us here—We are a gang of robbers; our lives, Sir, are in your hands; but as a minister of religion I depend on your not betraying us. We could not get employment—no one would trust us.' 'Trust in the Lord,' said the clergyman; 'hear his words; 'Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands that which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' Eph. iv. 28. Farewell, we may never meet again in this world; but a time will come when we shall meet—and oh! on that awful day may I find that this message of mercy has been blessed to all your souls.' The man conducted the clergyman until he was past the dark narrow street, and could find his way easily to his home; where he returned with sensations of astonishment, at the strange and almost romantic scene he had witnessed—it almost appeared to him like a dream, but blessing God for sending him as a messenger to declare the gospel to that poor sinner, to bind up his broken heart, and proclaim liberty to this wretched bond-slave of Satan.

What an important testimony does this afford to the efficacy of God's word, when applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. The word of God was in this case quick and powerful; it was sharper than any two-edged sword; it pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit; and was a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; (Heb. iv. 12.) like what was said of the Samaritan woman, it 'told this robber all that ever he did.'

This is no fictitious narrative; it is the truth, however romantic it may seem; and oh! how does it speak its awful language to those who would keep Scriptures from the people.

Reader, if you have not already obtained pardon, and felt its peace, you need it as much as this poor robber. O seek it 'while it is called to-day.' (Heb. iii. 13.) 'Him that cometh unto me,' saith the blessed Saviour, 'I will in no wise cast out.' (John vi. 37.)

Faith in Christ is the only true source of good works; and this is not a faith of the head, but of the heart.

## PRESENT CONDITION OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

In surveying the present condition of Asia Minor, there is nothing so remarkable as that of the Seven Churches, which formed a glorious constellation in the primitive Church. They are thus described by their latest and most able historian:

"To Ephesus," he says, "shorn of her religious ardor, and fallen from her first love, the extinction of the light and influence of Christianity was foretold; and the total subversion of both Church and City followed as the punishment of her impenitence. There is now no trace of the faith that was once preached; the candlestick has been removed from the station where it was planted by apostles; the traveller looks down from the heights of Priou, Corissus, and Pactyas, upon a scene of solitude and desolation; all is silence, except when occasionally interrupted by the seabird's cry, the barking of the Turcoman's dog, or the impressive tones of the Muezzin from the ruined towers of Aisaluk; and the remains of the temples, churches and palaces of Ephesus, are now buried beneath the accumulated sands of the Cayster. The Sardians and Laodicians were found degenerate and lukewarm; and to a similar doom of subversion they were to be subject. There are now no Christians in either. A few mud huts in Sart represent the ancient splendour of Croesus; and the nodding ruins of its ancient Acropolis, with the colossal tumuli of the Lydian kings, impressively teach the littleness of man, and the vanity of human glory. But in Laodicea the scene is far more cheerless and dreary. No human being resides among its ruins; the abandonment threatened has indeed overtaken it; and neither Christ nor Mohammed has either temple or follower upon its site. The fate of Pergamos at Thyatira has not been so severe; but the foretold apostasies here triumphed over evangelical truth, and they now groan beneath Turkish cruelty and despotism. But the fortunes of Smyrna and Philadelphia have most remarkably corresponded with the disclosures of the apocalypse. In every age that has revolved, they have experienced an 'hour of temptation;' the heathen priest, the Roman emperor, and the Turkish handit, successively inflicted the tribulations announced; while, notwithstanding the devastations of war, earthquakes, and persecution, according to the original promise, the faith has survived in both cities the injuries it has suffered."

Little more of the Christian Church exists at Smyrna and Philadelphia, than the form and name. The light is extinguished; only the candlestick remains. But the light which shone upon the Waldenses, when the rest of the world was shrouded in gloom, was brought from the golden candlesticks of lesser Asia. In after ages, when the Seven Churches were suffering the righteous judgments of God, this light shone bright upon the waters of the Rhone, and into the deep neighbouring valleys of Savoy.

*Usher's habit of Catechising.*—"He found the fruit of this to be very great and pleasing, even among the ordinary sort of people, upon their coming to receive the Lord's Supper; because they, bringing in their names, had constantly some account taken of their fitness, which was found to be considerable, and to derive itself very much from frequent catechising. He used constantly to have his own family instructed every Friday in the afternoon, for a full hour together, and the younger part of his auditors every Lord's day before the evening prayer and sermon. He found catechising an excellent way 'to build up souls in the most holy faith,' and that none were more sound and serious Christians, than those who were well instructed in these fundamental principles. This was the way Reformation was advanced in Europe, and Christianity in the primitive days; and this will be found the principal way to keep them alive, to maintain their vigor and flourish. The first Reformers from the Popish defection laboured abundantly in this, and saw and rejoiced in the great success thereof. It is affirmed by Hegesippus, in his ecclesiastical history, 'That by virtue of catechising, there were few nations in the world, (I think he says none) but had received an alteration in their heathenish religion within forty years after the passion of Christ.' And I have read it as a usual complaint of some Jesuits, 'That they found there was but little hope of bringing back to the Romish Church, or of unsettling or decomposing such Reformed Churches as were constant and serious in the use of catechising.'"

## From the Christian Witness.

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.—James i. 22.

I am not one of those light and airy beings who have the faculty of rendering themselves invisible, like the inhabitants of fairy land, or the genii of Eastern story; but am a substantial reality, and possess organs of sight and hearing. So quietly and inoffensively do I use them, however, that people seem to think of me, as they practically do of little children, that they are both blind and deaf, and therefore cannot be contaminated by the examples of deed and word, which are so often manifested in their presence.—Thus I become a spectator of much which passes current in the world for piety; but which, if tried in the crucible of the gospel, would evaporate into a mere shadow, and become such stuff as dreams are made of:—a religion, which plays around the imagination, but is not incorporated with the life.

In this privileged character, I was a few days since admitted into a household, where all bore the name of Christ. Four ladies of the family, upon whose cheeks the roses of youth had faded, were swallowing their hasty meal, and conversing with great earnestness of the astonishing gifts of an itinerant preacher, who was then holding a four weeks' meeting in the community, which they attended day and night. They talked as if he was little less than an Apostle; as if his name, and religion, were synonymous. To differ from him was heresy; and to abstain from hearing him, and joining in his measures and machinery, was to oppose every thing good. I sat listening to their denunciations, and comparing them with that blessed spirit of charity, so beautifully and eloquently described by the Apostle, in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians, which "thinketh no evil." In the midst of them, a lady entered, one of those visions of love and goodness, which but occasionally light upon our earth. She had pursued the "even tenor of her way," and let the torrent of novelty and fanaticism pass by her. But these zealous adherents, overwhelmed her with descriptions of the talent and eloquence of this 'new light,' and "Why have you not attended upon his preaching?" was the unanimous question.

'The cares of my family,' replied she meekly, 'absorb much of my time. My little children are at that tender age, when they require a mother's watchful eye to form their habits rightly, and to lead their young affections into a proper channel. The Lord has placed them under my stewardship; and I have no right to abandon the charge, or resign it into the hands of those, who would be less interested, and therefore less vigilant. In a month they might imbibe contamination; which it would require years to counteract. The young mind is so pliant, that it may be moulded into any likeness; and we be to the mother, who, not feeling her infinite responsibility, leaves her charge to hirelings; or neglects to stamp upon the infant character, the image of her Lord and Saviour.'

'I called,' continued the gentle visiter, 'to bring something to tempt the appetite of your poor invalid. Can I see her?'

'Yes! you will find her in her chamber. I don't think she can continue many days. But do attend the meeting this afternoon, you will find it very interesting.'

'Thank you. I must try to see your neighbour. Mrs. White, who is very ill of a fever.'

'Indeed! I did not know she was sick.'

'I am surprised at that. She has been helpless for a fortnight, and you know is very poor.'

'Well, I believe you go about doing good. The bell will ring at the appointed hour. You had better go to meeting.'