

The Breeze.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—ACTS XVII. 11.

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[Vol. I.]

Doctr.

REST IN JESUS.

"When round me a wild, desert land I survey,
Where enemies threaten my desolate way,
Oh, where can I look for sweet comfort and rest,
What hope can enliven my sorrowing breast?
When storms of temptation and conflict arise,
And fast flowing tears shroud with dimness my eyes,
Oh, where a safe refuge and strength can I gain?
Where seek for a mild healing balm for my pain?"

Oh why, my sad soul, dost thou comfortless roam,
When Jesus has offered a refuge and home?
To Him let me flee, in His mercy confide,
His name be my trust who on Calvary died;
With Him while I walk through this valley of
tears,
His peace be my comfort, all hush'd be my fears;
And soon, when my spirit shall wing its swift
flight,
From this dreary land to the regions of light,
His presence shall be my ineffable joy,
And songs of His praises my endless employ."
SIR G. G.

CHRIST, THE GOOD PHYSICIAN.

A SERMON

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"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our
sicknesses." MATTH. VIII, 17.

These words, my brethren, suggest topics of consideration which instantly come home to every man's bosom. Infirmities and sicknesses are things with which we all have had concern. We see them bowing down the weak and tender infant as well as the decrepit old man. Is middle life more privileged? How many delicate and feeble constitutions, how many pallid and sickly countenances, do we observe among the middle-aged! Yea, and how many, who for years together appeared robust and vigorous, are suddenly, in the very midst of life, struck by the hand of sickness, fixed helpless on their beds, and reduced to the feebleness of infancy. Sometimes the very air we breathe wafts sickness; the food, which should nourish health, foment disease; the exercise, which should minister strength, inflames the blood, irritates the nerves, and precipitates the incipient malady. None, brethren, are exempt in this warfare. The rich and the learned are as subject to sickness as the poor and the ignorant. Neither can the traveller escape its reach, nor the physician render himself invulnerable. The minister of Christ, one day in his study, or visiting the bed of sickness, in order to communicate comfort, or publicly preaching the gospel to others, is on the next, yea, or on the very same day, himself sent to inhabit the sick chamber, himself in need, to be ministered unto, himself preached unto, by affliction, and rendered, for weeks or months together, a silent preacher to all with whom he is connected.

And when, brethren, from bodily infirmities and sicknesses, to which we are all so subject, we turn our thoughts to the spiritual sicknesses, the moral disorders and infirmities of our nature, how affecting is the view, how humiliating the consideration! What is bodily sickness but an unsound habit of body, the want of a due correspondence and agreement between the various functions of the human frame? So is sin an unsound habit of the soul—the state wherein the affections, the judgment, and all the powers of the inner man are disordered; when the eyes of the soul are closed against the light of truth, the ear is deaf to the voice of God, the feet turn out of the straight way, the pulse beats not in love to God, while it beats high in the pursuit of vanity, and in love to unworthy and sinful objects. And the heart, meanwhile—here is the most alarming symptom—the very heart is diseased, the very springs of life are poisoned, the fountain-head is polluted. Oh, brethren, there is no exaggeration in the prophet's description of the moral state of a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters. Listen to his affecting statement: "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; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

Are there here any who think that now I am giving a strained interpretation to the text, in making it refer to the diseases of the soul? Let us read the text again, with its introductory clause: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Now turn we to the prophet: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." Observe, what the evangelist quotes in reference to bodily infirmities and sicknesses, the original words, and the whole tenour of the context in the prophet, apply to inward, spiritual griefs and sorrows, and connect with our transgressions and iniquities. Does, then, the evangelist misquote the prophet? Far from it; if Christ bore the greater burden, that of his people's sins, wrapped up in and attached to that burden was the less burden of our bodily infirmities. Does he sympathize with the nobler part; and has he no pity for the weaker part of man? Does he save the soul from hell? then may our flesh also rest in hope. But of this hereafter. Are there here any who deny, disbelieve, or doubt that man's moral condition is naturally so unsound, so

sickly, so disordered, as we represent? Let them examine themselves while I briefly point to what man would be, yea, to what man was, when spiritually sound and healthy. He would love God supremely; he would see an excellence, a beauty, a glory, in the holy character of God, which would ravish his affections and delight his soul. He would hate sin as a moral deformity, a blot in the creation, an act of foul ingratitude and base treason against the King of heaven. Then toward his fellow-man his words, thoughts, actions, would be full of kindness, gentleness, and love. While moving on earth, he would have his conversation in heaven; he would act as a spiritual being, not subject to fleshly lusts, not tyrannized over by the body. His daily walk would be with God; his intercourse with men would be the communion of saints, the sweet intercourse of piety, friendship, and brotherly affection. His soul would be alive to God, alive to eternity, alive to spiritual things, and dead indeed unto sin, dead to the world, dead to the flesh with its corrupt affections. Is it thus with men by nature? Has it been thus with you and me? If it has not, but if a willful ignorance of God, a perverse opposition to his will, a hatred of spiritual religion, a corrupt serving of the flesh, an inordinate and insatiable selfishness, a love of this present world, and a disregard of the next—if these things have too often and too much marked our spirit, then it is no over-statement, it is the plain and naked truth, to represent man by nature and by practice as full of moral disease and internal corruption.

But, brethren, the worst of man's sad state is not yet told. Sickness is connected with death; the infirmity of the body is the warning, the prelude, the preparative for the dissolution or severing of the soul from the body. Had no sentence of death been passed upon us, no sickness would ever have enfeebled our frames. But now, "death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The little infant is sickly, being born in sin, the inheritor of a sinful nature, having the seeds of all corruption within, which, soon, show themselves in frowardness and perverseness. The youth, the man, the aged person, are subject to sickness; for all are sinners, transgressors of the holy law, under a sentence of death. Yea, believers in Christ are as subject as others to sickness, for they also are sinners; their bodies have too long been the instruments of unrighteousness; their flesh needs to be mortified; they too must die; their house of clay, once infected with the leprosy of sin, must be pulled down; they must drop in the grave the sin-stained garments of mortality, and put on their robes made white in the blood of the Lamb.

But if bodily sickness, in its origin and issue, is connected with bodily death, moral sickness is connected with moral death; the sickness of the soul through sin leads to the death of the soul—if we may speak of the death of that which can never die—the death of the soul, which is the second death. And is it not death to a soul to be eternally banished from God and his delightful presence, to be a companion of devils, to be tormented by fallen spirits, to be for ever and ever a prey to remorse, and anguish, and self-reproach? Oh, brethren, pause here in spirit, and consider to what a point we are now come. Did you anticipate this when you heard the text—that the ailments, infirmities, and sicknesses of your bodies are so connected in their origin with sin, in their end with death; that the sins in which you have so freely and so thoughtlessly indulged, are connected, closely and by God himself connected, with all that is fearful, all that is painful, all that is miserable throughout eternity? Am I, think you, over-stating the matter now? Is this, think you, a gloomy picture which a morbid fancy has been sketching in the chamber of sickness? Is it, think you, the day-dream of fancy, or the spectre raised by superstition?—What says the word of His, who is subject to no morbid fancy, to no wild delirium, to no idle superstition? "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin is death." Brethren, I am unwilling to leave this portion of our subject, painful and humiliating as it is, without bringing you, under the Holy Spirit's teaching, to feel concern for the moral sicknesses of our nature. He who best knew man, said, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." And we find it so to this day. They who disbelieve the doctrine of the fall, who make light of sin, who feel not the burden of a polluted nature, these, in this frame of mind, never come to Christ as the good Physician. Oh, brethren, if you sympathize (I know you can and do sympathize) with a fellow-creature suffering under bodily disease, and brought even to death's door; if each symptom in his case is watched, heard of, and reported with the deepest anxiety, allow your ministers to feel deeply and strongly for the moral sicknesses of those among you, who know not, or knowing heed not, that death, all that is meant by that solemn word death, eternal death, is near—who can say how near—to every sinner.

On this present occasion, brethren, I feel that it would be a false humility to forbear all allusion to my own case, familiar, as I cannot but know that it is, to all your minds, and exciting, as I know it has done, your anxious and affectionate sympathy. I have, indeed, been sick, nigh unto death. In mercy God has heard the prayers offered for my recovery, and permits me to resume my ministerial duties. But when I shall indeed rest from my labours; when my voice shall indeed be no more heard among you; and this feeble frame shall indeed moulder into dust, shall my spirit, returning unto God who gave it, have

to complain of you, "Who hath believed our report?" Will my late sickness, and recovery almost beyond hope, add no new weight to my entreaties this day? Shall it be for nothing, or without effect, that I re-appear among you as a herald sent back when my commission seemed closed; sent back for a few brief moments longer, to invite again, more earnestly than ever, my fellow-sinners to be reconciled to God? Shall it be said of any of you, "Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead?"

But if you do, indeed, feel your spiritual infirmities, and are bowed down in heart with a sense of your moral sicknesses, then have I a more pleasing message, yea, glad tidings of great joy to communicate. You have it in our text: "Himself," Jesus himself, the Son of God become incarnate, "himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Look at the literal fulfilment of this gracious truth. When Jesus was on earth, with what affectionate sympathy did he view, and with what promptness of love did he heal, the bodily infirmities and sicknesses of men. In the verse preceding our text we hear, "When the even was come, (the evening, brethren, of a day in which he had performed other works of mercy,) they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick." So in an earlier chapter, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them." He healed, remember, sick, whom no physician had been able to heal. No disorder baffled his skill; he gave up no case as incurable. Leprosy, dropsy, fever, blindness, deafness, dumbness, palsy, demoniacal possessions—was any thing too hard for the Lord? Did he not with equal ease raise to life the ruler's daughter, who was recently dead; the widow's son at Nain, when being carried to his grave; and Lazarus, when he had been dead four days? Observe here his omnipotence. Man's skill can do much; but it has limits which it cannot pass. It is the language of Omnipotence, or of Deity incarnate, to say to the leper, "I will; be thou clean;" to say to the dead, "Lazarus, come forth;" to rebuke a great fever, and be instantly obeyed. The leper was cleansed; he that was dead came forth: the fever left Simon's wife's mother. But observe, also, his tender sympathy. He sent none away unpitied and unrelieved: he exercised compassion as well toward blind Bartimeus, sitting by the way-side begging, as to the nobleman's son at Capernaum; he sighed over him that was deaf; he went to the grave of Lazarus. "Surely," they who were the subjects or the witnesses of his benevolent healings must have departed saying, "Surely, he himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

But you may say, brethren: In all this we have no interest. Jesus is not now personally present to whom we may carry our sick friends. What is it to us that he, eighteen hundred years ago, healed all that were sick? It is much to you, in many ways. Is it nothing to you that scarcely a disease can visit your bodies, which may not sensibly call to mind the divine power and sympathy of Jesus once exercised on a similar poor sufferer? Is it nothing to you, in an age of much scepticism, to know that here, in the miraculous healings of Jesus, you have one proof out of many, that your religion is from God? Who but God incarnate could perform such miracles as Jesus did in his own name, and by a mere word, a look, a touch? Were ever any miracles so varied, so open to common observation, so much matter of fact, so benevolent in their character, so exactly in agreement with prophecy, as those of Jesus? Thus in your own bodily infirmities, at the season when faith is sometimes languid, and the enemy of souls is busy in suggesting doubts—Is religion a delusion; and Christianity a fable? and if not, am I sure that I have not mistaken the character of its founder? Is he infinite in compassion also? Is he God, able to save to the uttermost; and man, able to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities? At that very season, in your own bodily infirmities, you may have sensible and affecting mementos of a great and noble proof of the truth of your religion, and also of the omnipotence and fulness of sympathy which characterize the all-sufficient Saviour.

Nor is this all the comfort which we in our bodily sicknesses may gather from the subject before us. They come upon us at his bidding or permission. If not a sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father, much less can sickness bow down to the earth any of Christ's people without his permission. Surely this thought may work submission and resignation. Men may labour to account for our sicknesses in this way or in that; but let us look through the means, above the means and occasions employed: there we see a Divine hand ordering and arranging the instruments; there we hear a Divine voice, My servant needs an affliction. Go, mortal sickness; go, burning fever; go, lingering consumption, and lay him low; withdraw him from the world; be my instrument to bring him nearer to me, crying, Abba, Father; to unite him more closely to the Saviour; to make him more earnest in seeking the purifying grace of the Holy Spirit. He speaks, and it is done.

To be continued.

Isa. liii. 1. Luke xvi. 31.
Matt. iv. 23, 24. Matt. viii. 3.
John xi. 43.

UPON CERTAIN AMUSEMENTS.

The House of Bishops, solicitous for the preservation of the purity of the Church, and the piety of its members, are induced to impress upon the clergy the important duty, with a discreet but earnest zeal, of warning the people of their respective cures, of the danger of an indulgence in those worldly pleasures which may tend to withdraw the affections from spiritual things. And especially on the subject of gaming, of amusements involving cruelty to the brute creation, and of theatrical representations, to which some peculiar circumstances have called their attention,—they do not hesitate to express their unanimous opinion, that these amusements, as well from their licentious tendency, as from the strong temptations to vice which they afford, ought not to be frequented. And the bishops cannot refrain from expressing their deep regret at the information, that in some of our large cities, so little respect is paid to the feelings of the members of the Church, that theatrical representations are fixed for the evenings of her most solemn festivals.—From the Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, 1817.

Both to the clergy and to the laity we desire to say, but most pointedly to the former, that the Christian profession exacts a greater abstraction from the world than that which consists in the abstaining from acknowledged sin. There are practices so nearly allied, and so easily abused to it, that we conceive of a professor of religion in duty bound either not to countenance in the least degree; or, as is allowable in regard to some of the matters contemplated, to avoid the so employing of time, and the so lavishing of affection, as puts into a state of sin, although not necessarily belonging to the subject. We would be far from an endeavour after an abridgment of Christian liberty. But we cannot forget, that in a list of the classes of evil livers, there is introduced the description of persons who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;" nor, in respect to the female professors of religion in particular, the admonition, that "she who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." We are aware of the difficulty of drawing the line between the use of the world and the abuse of it: that being conceived of by different persons equally pious and virtuous, according to the diversity of natural temperament, and of the states of society in which they have been placed by education or by habit: but we know, that where the conscience can reconcile itself to the drawing as near to the territory of sin, as it can persuade itself to be consistent with the still standing on secure ground, deadness to spiritual good at the best, but more commonly subjection to its opposite is the result.

In speaking of subjects of the above description, we would not be understood to class among them any practice which is either immoral in itself, or so customarily accompanied by immorality, that the one is necessarily countenanced with the other. Of the former description, is gaming in all the variety of its exercise: and the like may be said of whatever involves cruelty to the lower animals of the creation. If the same cannot be affirmed of works of fiction, and of putting speeches into the mouths of feigned characters, for the purpose of instruction or of entertainment; yet, as the question is applicable to the exhibitions of the theatre, such as they have been in every age, and are at present; we do not hesitate to declare, unanimously, our opinion, that it is a foul source of very extensive corruption. We lay little stress on the plea, that it is a matter practicable in social institutions, to purge the subject from the abuses which have been attached to it. When this shall have been accomplished, it will be time to take another ground. But, in truth, we are not persuaded of the possibility of the thing, when we consider that the prominent and most numerous patrons of the stage are always likely to be the least disposed to the seriousness which should enter into whatever is designed to discriminate between innocence and guilt. While the opinions and the passions of such persons shall continue to serve the purpose of a looking-glass, by which the exhibited characters are to be adjusted to the taste of so great a proportion of the public, we despair of seeing the stage rescued from the disgusting effusions of profaneness and obscenity; and much less of that mean of corruption, more insinuating than any other—the exhibiting of what is radically base, in alliance with properties captivating to the imagination.

While we address this alike to the clergy and to the laity, we consider it as especially hostile to the usefulness of the

former. And even in regard to some matters confessed to be innocent in themselves, their innocency may depend much on many circumstances, and professional character among others. The ear of a clergyman should always be open to a call to the most serious duties of his station. Whatever may render it difficult to his own mind to recur to those duties with the solemnity which they require, or may induce an opinion in others, that such a recurrence must be unwelcome to him from some enjoyment not congenial with holy exercise, ought to be declined by him. If it be a sacrifice, the making of it is exacted by what ought to be his ruling wish, the serving of God, and the being useful to his fellow men, in the discharge of the duties of the ministry.—Pastoral letter from the House of Bishops to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CONFIRMATION.

On this important point I solicit the most careful attention and self-examination of the reader.

On the subject of qualifications for Confirmation, there are among us two erroneous tendencies, both productive of infinite mischief. Not unlikely the reader may be under the influence of one or the other of these tendencies.

One tendency is, to regard Confirmation simply as an outward form or custom of the church, to be received at a certain age, as a matter of course, without regard either to qualifications or privileges.

The other tendency is, and at the present day it appears to be becoming a prevailing tendency, to put off religion and Confirmation until the candidate has first passed through a period of intense excitement, and undergone a certain stated process of despair, agony, and then rapture, and until it has been clearly revealed to him, by the Holy Ghost, that his name is actually written in the book of life.

Now if, as is sometimes said, there was in years gone by, a tendency too much to overlook the inward qualifications for Confirmation; so, on the other hand, the danger seems to be, of committing two errors instead of one, and of giving up now, also, the external forms of religion altogether. Nay, there is every reason to fear that many parents, under the influence of this impression, are unconsciously but really yielding themselves up to this dangerous, soul-destroying tendency of the age, and forgetting those solemn vows which they have taken, in behalf of their children.

What then, let the reader now ask, are suitable qualifications for Confirmation?

These qualifications are three in number, and by these three qualifications will the reader carefully and prayerfully try himself.

First, are you willing, and are you resolved, to give up all your past sins, to renounce all your past transgressions? This is the first qualification. That you are a sinner, you cannot doubt: a sinner by nature, and a sinner by practice. There are sins of omission, and sins of commission; sins of thought, sins of deed; sins against God's law, and sins against God's grace. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us."

Let the reader now test himself by this qualification. Is he willing, is he so far convinced of the folly, the guilt, and the danger of his sins, that he is thoroughly resolved to "renounce them all, and will endeavour hereafter not to follow nor be led by them?"

This question is a simple one; it is based upon the present, honest, deep convictions of your own heart and conscience. The question is simply this, "Do you, as far as in you lies, renounce heartily all your past sins?"

Second. The second qualification by which the reader may try himself is this: Do you heartily believe and embrace the great plan of salvation in the gospel, as that plan is summarily contained in the "Apostles' Creed?"

Do you cordially choose God the Father, to be your Father? and Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son, who was crucified, dead and buried, who rose from the dead, who ascended up and now sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and who will come again to be your final Judge;—do you choose that incarnate, suffering, glorified Son of God to be your only Saviour? And do you look for forgiveness of sins only through his merits and satisfaction? and do you heartily believe in the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier?

This is the second qualification. Renouncing all dependence for pardon upon your own merits, can you adopt the language of our church as your own, and say, "Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, most merciful Father, for thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive me all that is past?" or, that closing petition of our Litany which breathes forth the language of every truly contrite heart, "Oh Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me?" Ponder well these petitions, and see if you can heartily adopt them as your own.

Third. The other, and third qualification by which the reader is to try himself, is this: Is it contained in the language of the catechism: "Wilt thou obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?"

This test is that of obedience, and may be termed evangelical obedience, as including the requirements of the gospel, as well as the

Isaiah i. 5, 6.
Isaiah liii. 4, 5.

Rom. v. 12.
Ezek. xviii. 4, 20.
Matt. ix. 12.

Isa. liii. 1.
Matt. iv. 23, 24.
John xi. 43.

Luke xvi. 31.
Matt. viii. 3.