

Pastor and People.

Do You Pray for Your Minister.

A minister needs the prayers of his people. His work is of a very arduous character, and such as requires constant watchfulness, and not only constant, but earnest effort. His heart must be in his work, otherwise it will not be well done.

The messages delivered by him, in the Master's name, must come from a warm and feeling heart, or ordinarily they will fall cold and powerless upon those who hear.

So in the performance of ministerial duty outside the pulpit, he must, in order to any large or permanent good, display the same love for Jesus and care for souls required in the pulpit.

If then it be so desirable that he should maintain a spirit of godliness, how very important is it, that Christian people who have called him to break unto them the bread of life, should habitually remember him in their prayers at the throne of Divine Grace.

Your minister also has a right to expect an interest in your prayers. When you, with others, called him as your spiritual instructor and leader, surely it was not understood that you would not perform this plainly taught duty, without the performance of which you have no reason to expect his labors to be greatly blessed.

Let the minister feel the love and the power of truth in his own soul, and when his people, praying for him, look to him, as to the very ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ—it is then that mutual duties will be most diligently and faithfully performed.

Again, nothing tends to encourage a minister of the gospel amid the many discouragements which often surround him, than to know that his people remember him continually at the throne of Divine Grace.

Let the minister be earnestly and believingly praying for the people of his charge, and the people earnestly and believingly praying for God's blessing upon their minister, and upon his efforts in their behalf, and though no cloud may appear in the heavens basking rain, yet just so sure as God is faithful in the performance of his promise, so sure shall the windows of heaven be opened, in due time, and showers of blessings poured out.

Moreover, there is nothing perhaps so calculated to bind minister and people together in those bonds of Christian fellowship and holy sympathy, which promise the largest amount of good, from the relations sustained, as to be mutually remembered, and to know that they are mutually remembered, in the solemn exercise of prayer, when respectively they hold converse and communion with God, and offer up to Him the desires of their heart in the name of Jesus Christ.—Transylvania Presbyterian.

The Hopelessness of Unbelief.

Mr. M. D. Conway, the well-known lecturer and correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial, lately sent to that paper the following account of the last hours of Miss Harriet Martineau: "She had just been shown a letter asking if she believed in 'immortality,' and she replied: 'I have no reason to believe in another world. I have had enough of life in one, and can see no good reason why Harriet Martineau should be perpetuated.'"

Miss Martineau was of Huguenot descent, and a sister of the distinguished English Unitarian preacher and author, James Martineau, LL.D. She was a prolific writer of novels, tales and contributions to reviews and magazines. Her volume of Travels in the United States in 1835, made her name familiar to American readers. Late in life she abridged and translated one of Comte's works on Positivism. Her first publication was a volume of Devotional Exercises for the Young. Her literary career became more and more faithful until she died denying her own immortality, satiated with "one world" and without hope of another.

The New York Tribune in a strong article, earnestly protests against Mr. Conway's flippant and almost jubilant narration of this pitiful story, as a manifestation of "the Fanaticism of Unbelief," and as giving a rude shock to the religious sentiment of millions of people to whom the Christian's hope is dearer than life and the chief solace of early trials. It pertinently asks what is gained by trumpeting such negations over the land, and concludes that whatever may be justly said against religious fanaticism, there is nothing in it comparable to the blasting effects of the fanaticism of unbelief which takes away all religious principle and motive from human souls, and so removes moral restraints as well as spiritual consolations.

But on the other hand it is well that

people should know from the confessions and denials of unbelievers just what are the issues of their vaunted philosophy. The blank, dark, unknown and unknowable future of unbelief in any of its forms is terrible, but the utter fearfulness of atheism is beyond expression. Better, a thousand times better, were the faggot and the sword, and all the nameless horrors which her Huguenot ancestors suffered for "the hope of the resurrection," than the "thick darkness, that might be felt" in Miss Martineau's hopeless departure from this world at the end of her long life. No wonder that she took refuge in the idea of annihilation. From her standpoint, why indeed should she "be perpetuated?"

But Paul said, "I know whom I have believed and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing." Can any one give any good reasons why such a character as this should not "be perpetuated?" Of these two opposite views and lives which is the nobler and best?

If any thing can add to the gloomy hopelessness of unbelief it is when a woman glories in it. We more naturally associate it with the harder nature of man. Even in atheistic times the last refuges of the Christian faith have been in the hearts of the sex who were "last at the cross and first at the sepulchre." When wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters become infidel, it seems as if religion itself would die out in the ashes of their forsaken altars. As drunkenness, profanity, and other gross crimes take on a deeper dye when committed by women, so their irreligion and atheism are usually of the most determined type, and the blight is the more severe in the circles which most need the sway of all Christian virtues.—N. Y. Christian Intelligencer.

The Shorter Catechism.

BY H. P. AYRES, D.D.

Any Presbyterian who can call to mind the customs of his family thirty or forty years ago, will remember that the "Shorter Catechism" held a prominent place in the religious instruction of children. Parents felt it an incumbent duty to have their children instructed in it, as well as having them commit it to memory. It was expected that every boy or girl, when twelve or fifteen years old, would be able to repeat the greater portion of it, and the child who could not was considered greatly deficient in a religious education.

The children of that day, who are now our old men and women, are able to repeat large portions of catechism with Scripture verses and hymns. Those who have passed through such a period of religious instruction are now, in their approaching old age, amply paid for their labor, as the memory has a constant flow of food for the soul, when the "eyes are dim, and the sound of the grinding is low." It is a sad consideration, however, with those who are familiar with the former customs of the Church, that the present generation of children are growing up without this instruction; and the day is not far distant, at the present ratio of neglect, when the children of our Church will hardly know there is a Shorter Catechism, or Creed, belonging to their Church.

There may yet be portions of the Church, or localities, where catechetical instruction is faithfully given, but in the great body of the Church, such instruction is slowly but surely disappearing. For many years this omission, or neglect on the part of parents, pastors, and elders, was partially made up by Sabbath-schools requiring the children to commit the catechism, but the same blighting, decaying process is finding its way into our schools, and the greatest summary, or synopsis of religious truths, is gradually giving away before blackboard, object, and other lessons—not that we object to them, but that we are opposed to supplanting a long-tried custom, recognized and sustained by the great leading minds of the Church for many generations.

Committing the catechism to memory is now optional with the child, or nearly so. It should be a duty, and children should feel it to be so, otherwise they will throw it aside. They act just so with the multiplication table; no child learns it as a matter of pleasure, but from a sense of duty and obligation, and parents urge it from the fact that it is absolutely necessary for the child's future good.

Unfortunately, the argument so frequently used against the catechism, "Children cannot comprehend or understand it," is sometimes urged by Presbyterians themselves. As we have said, in relation to this point, when referring to the multiplication table, the argument does not militate against the utility of the catechism; if it did, we might abandon half the studies the child pursues. If such an argument would debar the child from committing the catechism, then might the old and young be debarred from nearly all the departments of learning, as there are, in all the sciences, problems and subjects which at first evade our grasp, or are only gradually unfolded to us as we mature in thought, or familiarize ourselves with the details of such problems.

The catechism is a rich mine of deep knowledge, and the child that commits it to memory has a storehouse of truth, which will be gradually unfolding to his mind up to manhood, then to old age, then through an eternity of years.—The Interior.

BEN-ISRAEL is the name by which a community of Jews living in India is known. It is claimed that their ancestors settled in India 900 or 1000 years ago. They wear the costume, use the language, and conform to the social habits and manners of Hindoos, but preserve the Jewish religion. They strictly observe the Sabbath, abstain from unclean fish or flesh, and observe the great fasts. Few of them are well versed in the Hebrew, but they have several books in the Marathi.

Church Bells.

BY EDWARD S. GOULD.

It has been frequently remarked that Poe's famous poem, "The Bells," describes sleigh-bells, marriage-bells, fire-bells, and funeral-bells, but omits church-bells. Those who have been "knolled to church by holy bells," and who delight in their Sunday tones, will be pleased to read our contributor's attempt to supply the "missing link" in Poe's popular verses.—Appleton's Journal.

Hear the holy Sabbath bells— Christian bells! What a world of consolation in their utterance dwells! They commemorate the day When the "stone was rolled away From the Sepulchre," where lay The Lord of Glory—slain for sin not his own! There He burst the bonds of death With Omnipotence's breath, And majestically rose, Triumphant o'er his foes, To the right hand of God—three in one— Where He maketh intercession For our manifold transgression, Evermore!

Now the bells are loudly calling, bidding every one repair To the sanctuary, where We may offer praise and prayer; Their reverberating tones, through the circum-ambient air, Are rolling, rolling, rolling, They are calling, calling, calling, In tones that are consoling And in tones that are appalling— To believers, consolation; To the scornful, condemnation, Evermore!

Still the bells are tolling, tolling, And their echoing notes are rolling Over vale and plain and mountain, Calling all men to the fountain Whence life and joy and peace are flowing evermore, Evermore!

Now their tones grow louder, deeper, They might wake the dullest sleeper On this peaceful Sabbath morning With their word of solemn warning—"Time! time! time!"

Their ponderous tongues reiterate, monotonously, "Time!"

Time! time! time! Time! time! time! Till the ending of the hour ends the chime. Thus each swinging Titan knells, As his music peals and swells From the tower wherein he dwells, His final monosyllable of "Time," Whose cadences fantastically rhyme To the rolling and the tolling of the bells!

Friendship of Christ.

Survey the great privilege which our Lord vouchsafes to believers, in calling and accounting them His friends. It includes, 1. Freedom of access. House and heart are open for the reception of a friend. The passage is easy and free from all obstruction, and not only admits, but even invites the comer. How different is the same man from himself as he sustains the person of a magistrate, or that of a friend. As a great officer, he looks himself up from all approaches, by the multiplied formalities of attendance; but when friendship, not business, demands an entrance, those formalities disappear. He offers himself to the visits of a friend with facility, and all the correspondent readiness of desire.

"This confessed that the vast distance which sin had put between the offending creature and the offended Creator, required the help of some great Empire and Intercessor to open him a new way of access to God; and this Christ did for us as Mediator. But we read of no mediator to bring us to Christ; for though, being God by nature, he dwells in the height of majesty, and the inaccessible glories of Deity, yet to keep off all strangeness between Himself and the sons of men, He has condescended to a consanguinity with us, that so He might subdue His glories to a possibility of human converse; and therefore he that denies himself an immediate access to Christ, affronts Him in the great relation of a friend; and as opening Himself both to our persons and our wants with the greatest tenderness and freest invitation. 2. This privilege includes a sympathy in joy and grief. See how Christ sustains and makes good this generous quality. He is "a merciful high-priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and no doubt with the same meltings of affection with which any tender mother hears and bemoans the groanings of her sick child, does Christ hear and sympathize with the spiritual agonies of a soul under desertion, or the presence of some stinging affliction. He not only knows, but, emphatically, He remembers also, that we are but dust.

Observe that signal passage of His loving consideration. As soon as He had risen from the dead and met Mary Magdalene, He sends the message by her, "Go and tell my disciples and Peter that I am risen." Why is Peter mentioned particularly and by himself, as if he were exempted out of their number? Why, we know into what a plunge he had newly cast himself by denying his Master; whence he is now struggling with perplexities and horrors of mind, lest Christ might in like manner deny and disown him before His Father. Thereupon Christ particularly applies the comforts of His resurrection to him, as if He had said—Tell all disciples, but be sure especially to tell my poor Peter, that I am risen from the dead; and that notwithstanding his denial of me, the benefits of my resurrection belong to him, as much as to any of the rest. This is the privilege of saints, to have a companion and supporter in all their miseries, in all the doubtful turnings and doubtful passages of their lives. In sum, this happiness does Christ vouchsafe to all His, that as a Saviour He once suffered for them, and that as a Friend He always suffers with them.—South.

WILLIAM TYNDALL, the early translator of the Bible, in Henry VIII's time, is to have a statue on the Thames embankment in 1876. He got a stake in Flanders in 1586.

Is Responsibility Endless?

If responsibility be not everlasting, then the relations of God and man may cease or change. They cannot cease, because God cannot deny Himself. They cannot change, because whether man shall be under law is not a question submitted to his choice or decision.

Neither can the relations of God and man change. A change must be for the better or for the worse. If they could change for the better, they would not now be perfectly right and holy. If they should change for the worse, they would cease to be perfectly right and holy.

If responsibility be not everlasting, then an intelligent creature may sin away his obligations and accountability.

If responsibility be not everlasting, then sin works its own cure, at least so far as not to be any longer punishable. It loses its guilt, by its enormity or inveteracy.

If responsibility be not everlasting, then there is a word or a state where God may be insulted with impunity. If this is so, retribution is in any case wholly arbitrary, and is not required by righteousness.

If retribution be not everlasting, then sin is either an evil which in the long run becomes unmanageable, and God at length connives at it, because He does not know how to deal with old transgressors; or else the evil now declared to belong to unrighteousness is an exaggeration, and who will dare to say that?

If responsibility be not everlasting, then it will not be so bad to offer insults to God in some other worlds or state as it is in this world, or in the present state.

If responsibility be not everlasting, it must be that God's moral government shall by and by be impaired or fail in some respects.

If responsibility be not everlasting, then by parity of reasoning the fact that one life is justly punishable does not show that many lives shall be punished.

If responsibility be not everlasting, then righteousness may cease to be righteousness, both in the Judge of all the earth and in some of His creatures, especially those who offend atrociously.

There is no such thing as a creature being rounded out in good or evil in any sense that renders further growth impossible. Where is there any ground for such belief? It is not found in God's Word. Give us chapter and verse. They cannot be found. The reverse is taught in the oracles of God: "They proceed from evil to evil;" "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse."

When the Scriptures speak of our being held accountable for the deeds done in the body, they warn us that our responsibility is begun in this life. We are now acting under law. We are now under moral government. So that it is a solemn thing to live. But God's Word nowhere says or hints that our obligations to God, or our accountability to Him, will terminate when we leave this world and pass to another. Is not moral government in its very nature universal and endless, because it is righteous, and because God changes not? His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is without end. Is not this sound speech that cannot be condemned? Let God be glorified; let man be abased.—Wm. S. Plumer, D.D., in the Interior.

The Comforter.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost," the blessed Comforter. He is divine, the author of life, renewer of sinners, revealer of truth. He dwells in the saints, makes them his temple, never leaves them, unfolds the things of Christ to their minds, sheds love into their hearts, imparts the spirit of prayer and praise, of sonship and trust; strengthens their judgment, reason, conscience; helps them in all virtuous endeavors, yielding love, joy, peace, a numerous cluster of fruits. His work in our hearts is according to faith; believe freely and we receive largely. Self-trust and selfishness grieve him and restrict his aid. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit," and must be crucified, kept under, and the whole soul devoted to purity and goodness, or his work is hindered. He does not impose his services where not desired; but gives generously when asked earnestly; works mightily where co-operation is prompt and cordial; fills every apartment of the mind when ardently welcomed. It is glorious to be "filled with the Spirit," "walk in the Spirit," and enjoy his companionship, in all religious services, business cares, social relations, joys and sorrows, conflicts and triumphs, perplexities and trials; to be able to consult him, enjoy his aid, receive his comfort. Such is the privilege of the saints.—Selected.

Consecration.

Submission is a strong word, consecration still stronger. Surrender is cessation of resistance, consecration a transfer of all we are and have to Christ for active service. It covers person and property, talents and opportunities, and accepts of Christ as leader, manager, friend, and Saviour, present, active, and efficient in all the minutiae of life. There are degrees of consecration, and even entire consecration is progressive, for new interests, cares, burdens, capacities, opportunities, rise and await disposal, and Christ is revealed in new relations, making new demands, offering new privileges, and these await trustful acceptance, so that ever and anon the proposition to devote all to Christ and receive all from Christ claims fresh attention. Many commit spiritual interests to his care, and worry on alone with temporal concerns; they trust him to save their souls, but hesitate to ask his aid in business; expect daily grace, but doubt respecting daily bread; rejoice in Christ as a Saviour, but fail to apprehend him as a brother, companion, present, constant friend. Consecration is not absolutely perfect until the fullness of life is devoted to him, for every revelation of Christ calls for new devotion from us; the consecration must be as broad as the apprehension, covering the fullness of Christ and fullness of man.—N. Y. Baptist Union.

Random Readings.

The death of prayer is to deal in generalities.

The great end of this trial is thy sanctification—pray it out.

Thy love of outward things! Oh, it implies an inward vacuum.

When God reproves by His Spirit He wishes the believer to speak to Him through the cross.

ASSENTS for a time must not be condemned as apostates for ever; Thomas is not Judas.—M. Henry.

A MAN can never thoroughly look his sins in the face but as he stands beneath the cross of the Son of God.

WHAT an awful thing for a man to know that there is not a perfection in God but excludes him from bliss!

How holy is the principle which conscientiousness is placed amongst the worst of sins! how it shows the sanctity of our work!

He that in his own righteousness thinks to scale heaven must annihilate Deity! It must be upon the ruins of Jehovah's throne that that mercy can be exhibited which tramples upon God's law.

The apostles were but ambassadors—and who ever heard of an ambassador legislating! The Church is but a witness, and she bears witness to what the Lord says, and to what the Lord commands.

How few there are who think for themselves! It is so easy to make the creed of another mine, to lie down beneath a father and a mother's shadow, to go where they went, and think as they thought.

The first duty of the worshipper is personal prayer. It is not necessary that he should kneel to pray; even the bowed head may be a poor substitute for the bowed and waiting heart. All forms fail; nothing but the personal outreaching of the mind and heart after God will meet the want.

When faith gets a view of the unsearchable riches of God's grace in, by, and through Jesus Christ, then the believer longs to be in heaven, to behold the Fountain-head of all grace and glory. Faith longs to cease to be faith. This is a strange and strong act of faith, a strange desire in a believer. Oh! when shall I cease to be a believer, and become a seer? When shall the glass be done away, and the full-eyed vision of glory succeed? When shall both faith and hope cease, and love fill their room?—Traill.

NEVER yet did there exist a full faith in the Divine Word, by whom light as well as immortality was brought into the world, which did not expand the intellect while it purified the heart; which did not multiply the aims and objects of the understanding, while it fixed and simplified those of the desires and passions.—Coleridge.

The secret mysteries of a Divine life—of a new nature—of Christ formed in our hearts—they cannot be written or spoken. A painter that would draw a rose, though he may furnish some likeness of it in figure and color, yet he can never paint the scent and fragrance, or if he would draw a flame, he cannot put a constant heat into his colors; he cannot make his pencil drop a sound. Neither are we able to enclose in words and letters the life, soul, and essence of any spiritual truths, and, as it were, to incorporate it in them.—Oudworth.

Love descends, not ascends. The might of a river depends not on the quality of the soil through which it passes, but on the inexhaustibility and depth of the spring from which it proceeds. A parent loves the child more than the child the parent, and partly because the parent's heart is larger, not because the child is worthier. The Saviour loved His disciples infinitely more than His disciples loved Him, because His heart was infinitely larger. Love trusts on, ever hopes and expects better things, and is a trust springing from itself, and out of its own deeps alone.—Rowland Hill.

TRANSFIGURATION did not so change Christ, nor shall glorification so change us that we shall not be known. There is nothing to convince a man of error, nothing in nature, nothing in Scripture, if he believe that he shall know those persons in heaven whom he knew upon earth; and if he conceive soberly that it were a less degree of blessedness not to know them, he is bound to believe that he shall know them; for he is bound to believe that all that conduces to blessedness shall be given him.—Dr. Donne.

THERE are no stories so beautiful, so wonderful, so interesting as the Bible stories. There is no book in which we find such grand and touching poetry, such terse and deep sayings. Here is something for everyone. The soldier, who likes to read of battles; the sailor, who likes to read of storms and shipwrecks; the lover of nature, who likes descriptions of scenery and the glories of creation; the philosopher, who likes to study the anatomy of the human heart; the sorrowful, the weak, the sick, the aged, the dying,—all find here food for their minds and comfort for their souls.—Adolph Saphir.

MAX MULLER thinks that "what the present generation can and ought to learn, the young as well as the old, is spirit and perseverance to discover the beautiful, pleasure and joy in making it known, and resigning ourselves with grateful hearts to its enjoyment. In a word, love, in the old, true, eternal meaning of the word, only sweep away the dust of self-conceit, the cobwebs of selfishness, the mud of envy, and the old German type of humanity will soon appear, as it was when it could still 'embrace millions.' The old love of mankind, the true fountain of all humanity, is still there. It can never be quite choked up in the German people. He who can descend into this fountain of youth, who can again recover himself, who can again be that which he was by nature, loves the beautiful wherever he finds it. He says, with Schiller, 'for all that, life is beautiful.' He understands enjoyment and enthusiasm—if not the 'thundering ocean,' yet in the few quiet hours which he can win for himself in the noisy, deafening hurry of the times in which we live."