

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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[WHOLE NUMBER 164]

ARISE, MY SOUL!

Soul, for the marriage feast

Heaven's bliss is perfect, pure;

Re. G. T. Bell.

PENTECOST,

COMMENCING THE SUCCESS OF THE APOSTLES IN RECRUITING THEIR MASTER'S CHARGE.

On the fiftieth day after his death they commenced. Beginning in Jerusalem, the very furnace of persecution, they first set up their banner in the midst of those who had been first in the crucifixion of Jesus, and were all elate with the triumph of that tragedy. No assemblage could have been more possessed of dispositions perfectly at war with their message, than that to which they made their first address.

These accounts are taken from the book of the Acts of the Apostles; but as this book is almost confined to the labours of Paul and his immediate companions, saying very little of the other apostles, it is very certain that the view we have given of the propagation of the gospel during the first thirty years, is very incomplete. In the thirtieth year after the beginning of the work, the terrible persecution under Nero kindled its fires; then Christians had become so numerous at Rome, that, by the testimony of Tacitus, "a great multitude" were seized. In forty years more, as we are told in a celebrated letter from Pliney, the Roman governor of Pontus and Bythia, christianity had long subsisted in these provinces, though so remote from Judea.

their whole might, to exterminate it, yet doth it flourish more and more."

There is no reason for diminishing the wonder which this rapid success of the gospel so necessarily excites, by the supposition that all these conversions, or the greater part of them, were little more than a change of profession and name; the substitution of a christian church, for a heathen temple—a mere transition from one system of religious ceremony to another. In times of fierce persecution the reality of a conversion is tried "as by fire."

SELF-DECET.

Having thus explained the nature of internal hypocrisy, and self-deceit, and remarked the occasions upon which it exerts itself, there are several things to be observed concerning it. That all of these sources to which it was traced, are sometimes observable together in one and the same person; but that one of them is more remarkable, and to a higher degree, in some, and others of them are so in others: That, in general, it is a complicated thing, and may be in all different degrees and kinds: That the temper itself is essentially in its own nature vicious and immoral. It is unfairness, it is dishonesty, it is extenuating guilt, that it is itself the greatest of all guilt in proportion to the degree it prevails; for it is a corruption of the whole moral character in its principle. Our understanding, and sense of good and evil, is the light and guide of life: "If, therefore, this light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?"

affairs, and this from a general knowledge that the condition of them is bad. These extravagant people are perpetually ruined before they themselves expected it: And they tell you for an excuse, and tell you truly, that they did not think they were so much in debt, or that their expenses so far exceeded their income. And yet no one will take this for an excuse, who is sensible that their ignorance of their particular circumstances was owing to their general knowledge of them; that is, their general knowledge that matters were not well with them, prevented their looking into particulars.

RELIGION IN HAYTI.

The Rev. H. A. Graves, one of the editors of the Christian Reflector, as our readers are aware, is spending the winter in Hayti, for the benefit of his health. From one of his valuable editorial letters we make the following extracts, relating to the religion of the singular inhabitants of that island: The Haytian Catholics refuse any allegiance whatever to the pope of Rome. They evidently regard the papal authority as opposed to their national and civil liberty; and, in consistency with their republican principles, they allow of no archbishops, bishops, or other church dignitaries, save the single order of priests; and of the appointing or deposing these, the president himself claims the right and power.

CIRCUMCISION, AND BAPTISM.

Circumcision was intended to shadow forth the New Testament ordinance of baptism. In Col. ii. 11, 12, the apostle not only draws the parallel between

them, but makes them to be the same thing—"Buried with him in baptism," and circumcised with spiritual circumcision. As circumcision was then the initiatory seal, baptism is so now. As the outward mark then was an excision of the flesh, so it is now the cleansing of it with water—both signifying the same thing.

To this, and all other purposes of the ordinance of circumcision, there is a deeply interesting consideration attached. The outward sign was nothing by itself, without the realization of the inward sense and meaning. The Scripture is too explicit upon this point to admit of misconstruction. Their circumcision might become uncircumcision; and our baptism might be no baptism. "If thou art circumcised, it profits thee if thou art a keeper of the law: but if thou be a breaker of it, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision." Rom. ii. 29. "Neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh."

glad—the waste become an Eden! True Christianity—the religion of protestants, promulgated by competent teachers, exemplified by holy lives—with education, can make this a prosperous and happy people. But nothing else can do it. Nature gives them every advantage in vain. We cannot express the grief and indignation we have repeatedly felt, looking on the numberless signs of ignorance, and reflecting on the vast moral power possessed by the priests, if they chose to employ it. Would they renounce their vices, awake to the spiritual and social condition of the people, and begin both to do and teach those things which the Saviour did and taught—would they open their mouths to instruct, and admonish, and so far as possible, reform the people—establishing character on the basis of the Christian system as revealed in the New Testament—what incalculable good might they accomplish! What great and happy changes might be effected in Hayti! With the ordinary blessings of Heaven on wisely directed effort, they could hardly ever fail to achieve a far more glorious revolution than even that which worked out the nation's emancipation. And it would be a peaceful and bloodless revolution. But instead of this, the Romish priests will be found, we apprehend, to be the most serious obstacle in the way of the country's advancement. They are said to be averse, even to the education of the people. They carefully prevent the induction of natives into the holy office. Says Mr. Chandler, who visited the island in 1840, "The priests from Europe have succeeded in keeping the common people in bonds of the grossest superstition, and have made them believe, to adopt a phrase in common use, well understood by the vulgar that coloured baptism will not stick." The emulments of this hypocritical priesthood, it seems, must be sacredly secured against Haytian infringement; they belong exclusively to foreigners, many of whom, when they have acquired a competence or a fortune, return to Europe to expend and enjoy it!—Prot. Churchman.

to avoid being misled by this self-partiality, and to get acquainted with our real character: To have regard to the suspicious part of it, and keep a steady eye over ourselves in that respect. Suppose then a man fully satisfied with himself, and his own behaviour; such an one, if you please, as the Pharisee in the gospel, or a better man. Well, but allowing this good opinion you have of yourself to be true, yet every one is liable to be misrepresented. Suppose then an enemy were to set about defaming you, what part of your character would be single out? What particular scandal, think you, would he most likely to fix upon you? And what would the world be most ready to believe? There is scarce a man living but could, from the most transient superficial view of himself, answer this question. What is it all these things, that faulty behaviour, which I am acquainted with me, would be most likely to lay to my charge, and which the world would be most apt to believe? It is indeed possible that a man may not be guilty in that respect. All that I say is, let him in plainness and honesty fix upon that part of his character for a particular survey and reflection; and by this he will come to be acquainted, whether he be guilty or innocent in that respect, and how far he is one or the other.

Cures effected by the imagination. A note in the "Philosophy of Magic" presents the following instructive facts. In the fourteenth century a disease appeared in Europe which induced those afflicted with it to leap and dance. It was called St. Vitus's dance, from a firm-rooted belief that the shrine of St. Vitus possessed the power of curing it; and from the influence of this belief on the mind, many were cured. The legend whence this belief arose, taught that St. Vitus, before he bent his neck to the sword, at his martyrdom, prayed that the Deity would protect from the dancing mania all who should solemnize the day of his commemoration, and fast on his eye; whereupon a voice from heaven was heard saying, "Vitus, thy prayers have been accepted."

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The cures effected by the imagination, and the money (716, see *Excerpta Historica*, p. 87, &c.) given to each person touched, were due solely to the influence of confidence operating as a powerful tonic on the animal system, labouring under the relaxation of benefit scarcely chiefly depends; the anticipation also of which caused an increase of nervous energy equivalent to that effected by physical excitation. The celebrated Flamsteed the astronomer, when a lad of nineteen, went into Ireland to be touched by a celebrated empiric, named Greatracks, who cured his patients, without medicines, "by the stroke of his hand." Flamsteed says, "he was eye-witness of several cures;" although he himself was not benefited. (*Bailey's Life and Observations of Flamsteed*.) He awaited, but did not anticipate the result.

A more impudent quack than Greatracks has seldom appeared; he flourished in the seventeenth century. The belief in his power was general, from the most highly born and educated, to the most abject and illiterate mendicant. All sacrificed at the altar of Credulity, and relied on the healing touch of Greatracks. In a letter to Lord Conway, this prince of impostors thus expresses himself:—"The virtuosi have been daily with me since I wrote your honour last, and have given me large sums and testimonials, and God has been pleased to do wonderful things in their sight, so that they are my hearty and good friends, and have stopped the mouth of the court, where the sober party are now most of them believers, and my champions. The king's justices' belief sent three out of the hospital to me, who came on crutches; but blessed be God! they all went home well, to the admiration of all people, as well as the doctor. Sir Henage Finch says that I have made the greatest faction and distraction between clergy and laymen that any one has these thousand years." Such was his boast; there is reputation in this world as well as in the next; the reputation of Greatracks soon afterwards declined as suddenly as it had risen.

But we need not go to the seventeenth century for examples of the power of imagination as a curative agent. In the early part of the present century, a Miss Fancourt was cured of a spine complaint in answer to the prayers of a Mr. Greaves. She had been ill eight years, and during the last two years had been confined to her sofa. She was apparently cured; she again walked; and the only question was, how was the cure effected? Dr. Jarvis, a very sensible physician, remarks, "that her disease had probably been some time previous subdued, and only wanted an extraordinary stimulus to enable her to make use of her legs." Both my friends, Mr. Travers and the late Mr. Parkinson, concurred in thinking that there had been nothing in the illness or the recovery but what might be accounted for by natural causes." Mr. Travers, in a letter on the subject, says—"Credulity, the foible of a weakened, though vivacious intellect, is pioneer of an unqualified and overweening confidence; and thus prepared, the patient is in the most hopeful state for the credit, as well as the art, of the pretender." Or: the same principle are we to explain the cures performed by the metallic tractors, mustard-seed, brandy and salt; the prayers of prince Hoheloh, the embrocations of St. John Long, the miracle performed by mesmerism on my talented friend Miss Martineau, and a thousand cases in which hysteria played a notable part, and which only required full-confidence in the prescriber to effect a complete cure.

The means employed as the remedial agents in these cases are very varied; but they were all fully

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Acts: iij. 11. + Acts: iv. 4. + Acts: v. 14; vi. 7. Acts: xii. 4; ix. 31. See Paley's Evidences. Acts: xxi. 20. Πρωσι μυστιδος. Gardner, iv. 13-15.

Origen cont. Celsum. + Gibbon, ii. xv. 133-3.