

ter" admit the applicant to or reject him from the membership of the Church? Surely our Baptist friends will not go the length of arrogating this power of discerning a man's spiritual state; especially as they do not believe in falling from grace, and must admit that some who have been members of their churches were not believers and regenerate, although received into the Church as such. The second part of the definition refers not to the invisible Church, embracing only believers and regenerate persons, but to those who "have made a profession of their faith" and submitted to immersion. We do not intend to comment on the "immersion" part of the business, although there is not a passage in God's Word, from Genesis to Revelation, which says that any one went under water when baptized; nor is there a passage that would justify the idea of "submission" in the privilege of receiving baptism as though baptism were a cross or a burden or a trial to the true believer. On the contrary, baptism is a blessed privilege for which converts asked (Acts viii 36): the sign of a blessing God had conferred (Acts iv 18: x 47: Matt. xxviii. 18). Baptism is not the act of the person baptized, an act of submission; it is the act of God's minister, an act of bestowal. The candidate receives baptism, he does not perform baptism by submitting. But this by the way.

The point we wish to make clear is that the visible Church consists of those "who profess their faith in Christ and their obedience to Him (Presbyterians would add "together with their children"). These persons ought to be regenerate: but alas, they, even in apostolic times, were not all or always such. Among "professed" Christians there are unregenerate men and women who are mere professors and not regenerate believers. But they are members of the visible Church and must be so regarded and dealt with. Thus the visible Church is not co-extensive with the invisible. Some true Christians are not found to belong to any visible Church and some professing Christians do not belong to the invisible Church.

If we wish to avoid error we must distinguish between the two. To confound them in one definition, as Mr. McGregor did, and as it seems the members of the Union approved of doing, is simply to prevent any clear conception of the nature of God's Church. Our Plymouth brethren are consistent. They deny that any visible Church exists, they acknowledge only "saints" in their isolation, sometimes meeting in an assembly under the presidency of the Holy Ghost, and breaking bread from house to house, but they acknowledge no Church during this dispensation, except the bride, the lamb's wife, that is, the invisible Church of God, scattered through the world without any organization. Hence they denounce as unscriptural all Churches. This is consistent with the Baptist definition, and our Baptist brethren will find it hard work to hold to the definition and escape from its logical consequences, viz., Plymouthism. L.

#### MARRIAGE WITH THE SISTER OF A DECEASED WIFE.

MR. EDITOR,—In the closing part of my last letter I mentioned certain inferential additions, which it is claimed must be made to the list mentioned in Lev. xviii., and notably such as marriage with a daughter, a wife's brother's wife, and a niece. The defenders of the law of the Church as it stands, maintain that marriage with the sister of a deceased wife must be understood as prohibited, for if not, then none of the alliances above mentioned can be shewn to be forbidden. Now let us examine this position calmly and carefully, and try to ascertain what force there is in it. Does Moses directly forbid marriage between a man and his daughter? I reply, yes; the defenders of the law, as it stands, say no, he forbids it only indirectly or inferentially. I find such an unnatural and revolting alliance directly prohibited in the sixth verse, when it is said, "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him," etc. All the prohibitions throughout this marriage statute are addressed to men, and no woman is so near of kin to a man as his daughter, so that a daughter's being not forbidden to marry her father amounts to nothing, if the father is forbidden to marry her. But it will be said that this method of proving such an alliance forbidden is the inferential method in reality after all. I reply that no prohibition could, to my mind, be more direct, and that the case was so clear that Moses did not con-

sider it necessary to mention the word daughter, seeing that all who are near of kin are prohibited, and none stands so near as she. Again, if we accept the English translation as it stands in the seventh verse, we have a direct prohibition; but above all doubt it is forbidden in the seventeenth verse, when a man is forbidden marriage with the daughter of his wife, i.e., even with his step-daughter, but much more surely with the daughter of his wife and of himself. If a man is absolutely forbidden marriage with the daughter of his wife, then to say that he is only inferentially forbidden marriage with his own daughter, is equivalent to affirming that the latter is not the daughter of his wife. And yet this is one of the inferential additions! an alliance nowhere expressly forbidden in the Word of God! And if the kind of proof adduced against marriage with the sister of a deceased wife be not admitted as conclusive, then how appalling the consequences you see, for it is only remotely and inferentially that even father and daughter are forbidden to marry!

I now come to deal with another improper marriage alliance, which, it is alleged, is not expressly forbidden, but must be added on inferential grounds, viz., marriage with a mother's brother's wife. It is held that this marriage is nowhere expressly forbidden by Moses, and that therefore it must be made one of the inferential additions to the list, being precisely parallel to certain marriages that are forbidden. In other words it must be understood as forbidden, though not expressly forbidden. Now all are agreed that this marriage is forbidden; the only point in debate is whether it is directly forbidden or only by implication. Is it by the help of analogous cases that we come to the conclusion that this marriage is forbidden, or have we a direct prohibition? My impression is that the prohibition of this marriage is about as direct as that of father and daughter, and that neither the one nor the other can fairly be claimed as an inferential addition. Marriage with an aunt is forbidden expressly in the fourteenth verse, and if so on what ground can it be claimed that marriage with a mother's brother's wife is to be reckoned one of a class of inferential additions? If the reason why marriage with your father's brother's wife is forbidden is that "she is thine aunt" then is not the principle expressly stated that marriage with an aunt is prohibited as wrong. Specimens of the application of the principle are cited, illustrating what kind of relation an aunt is; but an absolute prohibition of marriage with an aunt is expressly recorded. But because every form of aunt is not mentioned, though three samples are given, is it fair reasoning to claim that any other samples of aunt are only inferentially included, though marriage with an aunt is absolutely forbidden? If marriage with an aunt is forbidden, because "she is thine aunt," then does not every aunt come under that prohibition directly and not simply inferentially? But if it be admitted that marriage with a daughter is directly forbidden, and marriage with an aunt directly forbidden, then the argument for inferential additions is so far weakened, and the probability of the completeness of the Mosaic statute, as it stands, is so far strengthened; and if these positions are sound then the kind of argument, used by those who urge that marriage with a brother's wife being forbidden, must include marriage with a deceased wife's sister, becomes intensely suspicious. But here I must pause for the present.

PRESBYTER.

LET it not be imagined that the life of a good Christian must necessarily be a life of melancholy and gloominess; for he only resigns some pleasure, to enjoy others infinitely greater.—*Pascal.*

AS the eye which has gazed at the sun, cannot immediately discern any other object, as the man who has been accustomed to behold the ocean turns with contempt from a stagnant pool, so the mind which has contemplated eternity, overlooks and despises the things of time.—*Edward Payson.*

WHEN a man is told the whole of religion and morality is summed up in the two commandments, to love God, and to love our neighbour, he is ready to cry like Charoba in Gebir, at the sight of the sea, "Is this the mighty ocean? Is this all?" Yes! all. but how small a part of it do your eyes survey! only trust yourself to it; launch out upon it, sail abroad over it; you will find it has no end, it will carry you round the world.

## PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

### POPULAR AMUSEMENTS.

READ BEFORE THE PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL BY T. L. CUYLER, D.D.

The law of the Church is the law of Christ. The chief end of the Church is to do Christ's will and to advance Christ's kingdom. I propose to discuss the much-contested question of popular amusements simply in their relation to the Church, and seek to ascertain their bearings upon Christian liberty and the Christian life. A Christian is Christ's freedman; and he is quite too free to be in bondage to many things which the children of this world lust after. He who has sat at the king's table need not stoop to the husks. Let this dying world "bury its dead;" our orders are to go and follow the Master. In keeping His commandments there is great delight; at His right hand are pleasures for ever more.

Let it be understood, at the outset, that the law of Christianity is not an iron-clad asceticism. God never made man to be a monk, or this bright world to be a monastery. If life has its times to weep, so hath it times to laugh. Our blessed Lord more than once shed tears; but may He not have often smiled, or even indulged in the good old Christian liberty of laughter? Holiness signifies wholeness, *wholth*, health; and health breeds innocent mirth. If mirth may be innocent, recreation is not only innocent, it is *indispensable*. Martin Luther relieves his stern polemics with the Pope by cheerful songs at the fireside and by decorating Christmas trees for the children; old Lyman Beecher lets off the steam, after an evening's work at revival preaching, by capering to the music of his violin, until his prudent spouse protests against his saltatory exercises, lest he wear out his home-knit stockings; Gladstone, the king of living statesmen, recreates with his axe; Spurgeon, the king of living preachers, recreates with his game of bowls; the saintly McChyne, of Scotland, with his gymnastic poles and bars. All these were *men*; not angels. God has ordained that man should play, as well as labour. The friction of the care and toil requires this lubrication. Childhood is a type of wholesome piety, both from its fund of faith and its fund of innocent playfulness. It is a true saying that "no creature lives which must not work and may not play."

What is recreation? We reply: Everything that *recreates* what is lost by daily life's frictions and fatigues. Whatever makes the body healthier, the mind clearer, and the immortal powers more vigorous, is Christian recreation. To deny ourselves such wholesome reanimations may be hazardous folly; but to restrain others from them is an infringement upon Christian liberty. The rights of Christian conscience are sacred here, as elsewhere; but conscience requires solid principles of truth for its guidance.

We lay down, then, this principle: That whatever tends to improve the body and mind is right; whatever endangers the moral health and inflames the evil passions is wrong. The one strengthens; the other only stimulates and often poisons. The one refreshes, the other ruins. To drink pure water satisfies lawful appetite and promotes health. To drink an alcoholic beverage inflames a morbid appetite and promotes disease. In the one case the drinker seeks a recreation for the bodily man; in the other case the drinker seeks fiery stimulation and the whole course of nature is "set on fire of hell." Just what water is to the body is true recreation to the whole man. Just what wine and whiskey are to the body, such are evil amusements to every one who aims to enjoy pleasure and yet escape its consequences.

Now, to the tribunal of this simple test we bring every amusement, whether of a personal or social character. Does the amusement recreate the body and mind, or does it minister to the evil passions? If it recruits my physical and moral nature, it is right. But if it stimulates any fleshly lust, if it weakens conscience, if it unfits me for the service of my God, and defaces my spiritual nature, then it is a forbidden amusement. I cannot take my Master with me into it, or ask His blessing upon it. Wherever a Christian cannot take Christ with him he has no right to go.

Every popular amusement which invites God's people must submit to the tests which a Bible conscience imposes. For example, the theatre constantly bids for the support of Christian people, and of late there has been an increasing tendency among church members to be drawn within its glittering and godless