

Contributions.

Ornamenting the Hidden Man.

(I. Peter III: 4.)

R. W. STEVENSON.

That which, in the sight of God, is of greatest price is the "hidden man of the heart" ornamented with a "meek and quiet spirit"—a very important feature in the Christian character.

Our attention is called to this by Peter. The words of the apostle strike a blow at an evil, which existed in the days of the writer, from which, seeing its pernicious effects, he endeavors to keep the Church of Christ free. It prevails very largely in our day—the ornamenting of the outer man to the neglect of the inner or hidden man of the heart.

Carpenters, cabinet-makers, piano-builders and others understand the work of veneering. This is done by plating with thin layers of wood used to cover defects in inferior material. These veneers are fastened on with glue, and so nicely is the work executed that it is with difficulty that you can determine the fact.

Very many of the things that we buy and use in our homes in these days are veneered either with plates, paints or washes—such as our pianos, organs, clocks, tables, chairs, knives, spoons, rings and bracelets. Now, this work of veneering is not confined to things but is practised on the persons of men and women. They evidently were accustomed to something of the kind in the days of the apostle; and it has not become one of the lost arts in modern society. The young, middle-aged and aged powder and rouge, so that what is considered a failure of nature's work is supplemented by cosmetics; but these adornments are like transient joys which depart at the falling of a tear, with this difference, however, they leave a trace behind.

Some men and women spend much thought, means and time in dress. Studying the fashion plates and the latest styles are considered among the chief accomplishments of society. The cut of the hair, the make of coat, shape of boot, style of bonnet, set of dress, length of glove and other things receive more thought than ornamenting the inner-man.

Perhaps the reason for this is, our taste for the beautiful is perverted. The outward adorning influences us over much. That we should care for our personal appearance is right and recognized by the religion of Christ; but it must not be allowed to rival the inner-man, and cause us to utterly neglect the culture of the latter and thereby foster a false pride at the complete destruction of that love which "suffereth long and is kind, vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up."

That person is the most beautiful who is cultured after the manner referred to by the apostle. The Saviour is sometimes represented to us as the "Lily of the Valley," and the "Rose of Sharon," the "Bright and Morning Star." These are beautiful figures descriptive of a most beautiful person, who was not so because He was a stylish young man and kept up with the latest fashions. He was not a duds. He had but one coat. He was dressed in such a manner as to be agreeable to both rich and poor. He associated with all classes, but we hear no complaints from either party concerning His dress. He had a coat that was good enough to be coveted by the soldiers who did cast lots for it.

His beauty consisted in His goodness. His inner-man beamed out through His humanity. His face was

illuminated by the spirit within Him. The hidden-man of the heart was ornamented with a "meek and quiet spirit." It was truly said of Him, "He shall not strive nor cry aloud, neither shall anyone hear His voice in the streets." "The bruised reed shall He not break nor the smoking flax shall He not quench till He send forth judgment unto victory." His presence distilled sweet influences on all in as rich profusion as the dews of heaven fell on Hermon and the Mountains of Zion.

Many of the great of earth have set the name of Jesus Christ above every other name. No other person can claim an equal interest with Him. Jean Paul Richter tells us, "He is the holiest among the mighty and the mightiest among the holy." Thomas Carlyle says, "Jesus of Nazareth our divinest symbol!" "Higher has the human thought not yet reached." And, we may safely add, higher the human thought will never reach!

To have the hidden man of the heart ornamented with a meek and quiet spirit, we must be followers of Jesus; to become followers of Him we must have His spirit dwelling in our hearts; to have His spirit an abiding guest, we must have our hearts changed and become sons of God; and to occupy that honoured position we must obey His commandments which are not grievous but delightful. His commands are the steps upon which we rise above our "old man" and gain freedom for the inner-man which grows thereby in the image of Him that has called us to this grace.

What a high attainment to have a "meek and quiet spirit" and made meet for the master's use and a fit subject for a heavenly existence. If any other spirit ruled us and we were permitted to enter heaven, the peace of that wonderful place would soon be disturbed and the legions of darkness reinforced with other fallen angels. It behooves us to cultivate this spirit of meekness and quietness as it will make life much pleasanter. Peace will dwell among men and the mission of Jesus will be largely accomplished in the earth. Then no time will be lost to the services of God and spent in fighting our enemies, but, as did the apostle, Paul, leaving the things which are behind we will press on to things before—"toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." A person of a meek and quiet spirit is one who prefers to suffer wrong rather than to do wrong. Webster says, "Meekness is mildness of spirit, not easily provoked, not irritable, given to forbearance under injuries, gentle, yielding, and specifically submissive to the divine will."

Moses was a man of great meekness—above all men that were upon the face of the earth in the enjoyment of that grace. Because he was so endowed did not lessen his force in carrying on the work of God, but gave a complete success. All through the Scripture is the kind of spirit recommended by Peter approved of. "The meek," says the Psalmist, "shall eat and be satisfied." "The meek will He guide in judgment." "The meek," says Jesus, "shall inherit the earth."

Great men are generally the meekest. They spend no time in attending to the petty annoyances and injuries that may be done to them, but proceed with the work they are called upon to do. Like Nehemiah of old they are doing a great work and have no time to come down.

The meek and quiet spirited feed heartily on the Word of the true God and need no veneering. Only counterfeit or half-breed Christians need veneering, which is done most gener-

ally by the outward adorning of the person to the utter neglect of the inner-man. We may dazzle and deceive our fellow men by flash and glitter, but not the God who made us. He knows the issues of our hearts better than we ourselves do. We may be whited sepulchres full of decay and death, as were the Pharisees of old. All the hypocrisy of the world is not confined to the days of Christ and the people called Pharisees but is one of those evils that exists wherever men are found.

To ornament our inner-man with a meek and quiet spirit requires careful, watchful and prayerful effort on our part. There is a continual conflict between the inner and outer man, and one or the other must gain the mastery. If the flesh or the outer man shall become ruler then the works of the flesh shall become manifest, "fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factious divisions, heresies, envying, drunkenness, revellings and such like" of which we are warned that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruits of the spirit, if the inner-man prevails, shall come forth "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance" against which there is no law, for they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof.

Let us strive earnestly to vitalize the teaching of the Holy Spirit, for just in proportion as we do so will the Word of God be a direct benefit to us in making us free. The old and new man cannot dwell together in peace only in proportion as the former is subject to the latter. The flesh is a good servant but a ruinous master. If the latter, it robs of true happiness here and in the world to come. But if the spirit of Christ rules in our hearts, how enriching and peace-giving! And this body which served so well as an instrument in glorifying God on the earth shall not be allowed to be lost but be raised and glorified. May God help us in the work of keeping and beautifying our bodies and spirits which are His with "a meek and quiet spirit" which, in the sight of God, is of greatest price. Syracuse, N. Y.

"A Good Conscience."

R. SHEPARD.

The writer, when a boy, met with the assertion "A good conscience is a man's best earthly friend." It has never been forgotten and has been of incalculable value to him all through life, for the knowledge of divine truth and the sanctions of a religious life have tended to largely exemplify and enforce this valuable maxim. Paul says that "the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." If a person is in bad company, as a general thing, he can get out of the way of it, but no man can get away from himself or shun the company of a bad conscience; while, on the other hand, no matter what are the unpleasant outward surroundings of a Christian who has a good conscience, he enjoys the pleasant serenity of a contented mind, of gratified affections, and, what is still better, an assurance of the smile and favor of his God and Saviour.

Having these considerations embalmed in the memory, the temptations to do wrong lose much of their power and the inducement to do right are rendered effective and through the divine assistance, virtue and Godliness are triumphant.

A good conscience not only consists

in doing what we think or feel to be right but in knowing what is right.

Conscience does not discern the right from the wrong, but, as a monitor, smiles upon when we do what we judge to be right, and frowns when we do what we fear is wrong.—"The soul's opinion of its actions and duties."

Thus, then it is not only important that we follow the dictates of our conscience, but that we studiously and prayerfully strive to know our duty to God and to our fellowmen, that its admonitions may be correct.

A Catholic has a good Catholic conscience when he abstains from meat on Friday, or when he has confessed his sins to the priest and received absolution, but, however sincere he may be, he has not the good conscience which is "the end" of the commands of Christ.

Paul had a good conscience as a Pharisee when he was persecuting the Church of God, but in the sight of God his conscience was only right after he had obeyed and began to preach Christ. We would observe, however, just here that when Paul declared before the counsel that he had lived in all good conscience before God until that day, that he is only referring to the doing of what he believed was right as a Pharisee, and not, of course, to the good conscience that is associated with charity out of a pure heart and of faith unfeigned, the enlightened Christian conscience.

Young men and brethren, that may read this article, be careful to maintain a good conscience by a strict adherence to everything that is true and right, whether it be popular or unpopular; whether you be approved by men or persecuted by them, and you will find, as the writer has found, that a good conscience is a man's best earthly friend.

Walkerton, Ont.

What is the Difference.

H. BROWN.

Several letters have passed between the Rev. Mr. Waddell and myself respecting the difference between the Baptists and Disciples. It was proposed by my friend that this correspondence be published in the EVANGELIST. I, accordingly, submitted the subject matter to the Editor, leaving it to his judgment. The manuscript was very kindly and courteously returned, as not of sufficient interest to the religious public to warrant its publication. "So say we all." More recently our good brother suggests that his remarks on my letter, which appeared some time ago in the Canadian Baptist, be published in the EVANGELIST, and that I reply to them. He proceeds to say "I, in that letter, mention and affirm seven points of difference between Baptists and Disciples. If you take exception to what I affirm you can proceed to reply at once." The rev. gentleman has given the public the benefit of the "seven points," but has not stated which side he is on. The only point he has "affirmed" is that there is a difference between Baptists and Disciples. Well, perhaps there is. There was a difference of opinion between Paul and Barnabas about the propriety of associating with them Bro. John Mark, in the work of the ministry. Bro. Paul "thought it not good to take him." Barnabas "determined to take him," Acts xv. "The contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other." I presume the next time they met they greeted each other with a holy kiss, and no doubt broke bread together at the Lord's table. I will suppose that Bro. W. believes in the doctrine

of "hereditary and total depravity," and I doubt, therefore, we must not sit together at the Lord's table. We do not just agree in opinion about the "perseverance of the saints," therefore, we will not meet in the same house. We differ slightly as to the "nature of the faith in regeneration." "The prerequisite to the privileges of of church relation," etc, etc. Therefore, we will not recognize each other as brethren. Notwithstanding we are both sound in the faith of the Gospel, believing with all the heart that Jesus is the Christ, that He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He rose from the dead and is now exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins, that we have each "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that has been delivered to us, being then made free from sin," both have been "baptized into Christ" and are "servants of righteousness," and realizing that, "There is, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. It matters not about all this; we differ in opinion about "hereditary and total depravity," and, therefore, we cannot unite as brethren. Now, this is just the position my dear brother occupies. I am really sorry for him. I hope he will see things differently by and by. The Baptists and Disciples, yea, all obedient believers are going to unite, notwithstanding our good brother's objections. I don't know just when or how, but it will be done, and no doubt they will be called Christians, perhaps first at Hillsburg, Ridgetown, May 22, 1890.

Words of Wisdom.

To wait upon the Lord is to submit ourselves to His will, to do or suffer as He may order.—Central Baptist.

Cheerfulness is the product of faith—of implicit confidence in God's wisdom and goodness, and filial acquiescence in His will.—D. McD.

No crowned queen, or general leading great armies, could do more than be faithful, and every little child even can do so much as that.—Farwell.

The rest of Christ is not that of torpor, but that of harmony; it is not refusing the struggle, but conquering in it; not resting from duty, but finding rest in it.—F. W. Robertson.

Prayer is so mighty an instrument that no one ever thoroughly mastered all its keys. They sweep along the infinite scale of man's wants and God's goodness.—Hugh Miller.

When a brother comes to deal with the mistakes of a brother, he should remember his own frailties, and in gentleness rebuke, in kindness instruct, and in love admonish.—Joseph E. Cain.

The church is not to be as a lake without any outlet—a mere glass in which the sky is reflected—but a reservoir that yields what it receives for the health of mankind.—C. D. W. Bridgman, D. D.

Cheerfulness is the bright weather of the heart. Pleasant, cheerful conversation should be the rule at the table. It is a breach of good breeding for one member of the family to sit down at the table and silently read the daily paper.—Saxe.

That which satisfies the deepest wants of the heart is not an abstraction or a mere idea, but a concrete and living person, whom it can trust and love. This demand is fully met in Jesus Christ. He is a person who can be loved, trusted, admired and adored, and who, when thus trusted, completely meets the profoundest necessities of the soul.—Independent.