

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE.

Our religious principles should be enlightened, unwavering and practical. True Christian principle is to the mind, what gravitation is to the universe; it keeps all our powers, appetites and hopes within the orbit of devotion and beneficence. Christianity is the best friend of man. In disclosing the hand of an all-wise and all-gracious Providence, dispensing prosperity and adversity, and bringing good out of evil—it presents the prospect of an hereafter, where the ravages of sin and death shall be repaired—and finally by awakening all our active powers to the prosecution of the most valuable ends—it fills up every chasm—dissipates every painful impression—the whole compass of nature brightens around—our tears may continue to flow, perhaps flow faster, but our consolations flow as fast. To the breast which has been visited by the peace of God, the bitterness of grief is over: and few traces of it are to be seen, but those improvements which it has made in the soul, and that manly thoughtfulness—not melancholy—which remains the true ground work of an estimable character.

For it is not the momentary sparkling of a volatile imagination—it is not the illusive attractions of a gay exterior, set forth with all the dazzling circumstances of outward show, that confer true happiness, or command lasting esteem. The silent, steady march of duty; the constant, unbroken flow of right and good affections; the life filled up with acts of real kindness and solid usefulness; diffusing harmony and comfort through each social, domestic scene; glorifying God alternately by cheerful obedience and placid resignation; amidst the tide of flowing fortune, humble and benign; serene amidst the decay of nature; in death itself peaceful and happy—these are indeed just claims to our affection and respect, that deserve to live in our remembrance—proofs of sound judgment, of substantial worth—the result of daily study and delight in God's holy law—of following its dictates with conscientious care—of transcribing the best of precepts, the divinest of examples, into the tablet of a pure mind.—And is not this true happiness? a soul which dissolving nature, and even the hand of death cannot unharmonize—is it not strung higher, attuned to a loftier tone, than they who know no other than earthly and transitory good, can reach, or easily imagine.

While fortune favors, and the world continues to smile, happier than the happiest of its votaries are the children of virtue and piety: and when the world dissolves and passes away, there yet remains a happiness to which all its splendors are but vanities.—When the scanty rills of transitory enjoyment are dried up—Lo! the ever-flowing ocean of eternal goodness rolls before them.—When each beloved object vanishes from the closing eye—when the accents of true affection sink in silence—“when flesh and heart fail.” God is the strength of their hearts, and their portion forever.

O let not God's word and providence—his bounties, his judgments, and his compassions, speak to our hearts in vain. May each, and all of us “be followers of those, who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises.”—Brooks.

DEATH NOT A PAINFUL PROCESS.

We think that most persons have been led to regard dying as a much more painful change than it generally is; first, because they have found by what they experienced in themselves and experienced in others, that sentient beings often struggle when in distress; hence, struggling to them is a sign, an invariable sign of distress. But we may remark, that struggles are very far from being invariable signs of distress; muscular action and consciousness are two distinct things, often existing separately; and we have abundant reason to believe that in a great proportion of cases, those struggles of a dying man which are so distressing to behold, are as entirely independent of consciousness as the struggles of a recently decapitated fowl. A second reason why men are led to regard dying as a very painful change, is because men often endure great pain without dying, and forgetting that like causes produce like effects only under similar circumstances, they infer that life cannot be destroyed without still greater pain. But the pains of death are much less than most persons have been led to believe, and we doubt not that many persons who live to the age of puberty, undergo tenfold more misery than they would, did they understand correct views concerning the change. In all cases of dying, the individual suffers no pain after the sensibility of his nervous system is destroyed, which is often without much, and sometimes without any previous pain. Those who are struck dead by a stroke of lightning, those who are decapitated with one blow of the axe, and those who are instantly destroyed by a crush of the brain, experience no pain at all in

passing from a state of life to a dead state. One moment's expectation of being thus destroyed far exceeds in misery the pain during the act. Those who faint in having a little blood taken from the arm, or on any other occasion, have already endured all the misery they ever would, did they not again revive. Those who die of fevers, and most other diseases, suffer the greatest pain, as a general thing, hours, or even days before they expire. The sensibility of the nervous system becomes gradually diminished; their pain becomes less and less acute under the same existing cause; and at the moment when their friends think them in the greatest distress, they are more at ease than they have been for many days previous; their disease, as far as respects their feelings, begins to act upon them like an opiate. Indeed, many are already dead as it respects themselves, when ignorant bystanders are much the most to be pitied, not for the loss of their friend, but for their sympathizing anguish. Those diseases which destroy life without immediately affecting the nervous system, give rise to more pain than those that do affect the system so as to impair its sensibility. The most painful deaths which human beings inflict upon each other are produced by rack and fagot. The halter is not so cruel as either of these, but more savage than the axe. Horror and pain considered, it seems to us that we should choose a narcotic to either.—Charles Knowlton M. D.

AN APPEAL TO THE YOUNG CONCERNING EARLY PIETY.

Many of you are ready to postpone all thought of religion; and this might not be unwise or censurable, could you postpone it will the realities, the facts of religion. But this is not within your power. You cannot evade, reject, or defer them. They are the system under which you must live, whether you will or no. The being, the Providence, the law, the government of God, are as real to the most heedless youth as to the most venerable Christian. If there be a God, an eternity, the presence of that God, the shadow of that eternity waits on every step of your lives. They are the nearest and most essential facts of your being, (not one whit the less so because you disregard them;) and the interests which now engross you are less than nought in comparison with them. With these momentous facts thus bearing upon you, you are forming your principles, shaping your habits, moulding your characters; and this is a work which you cannot help doing—to live is to do it. And must not a great part of this work be badly done; must not your principles be lame, your habits faulty, your characters defective, if formed with no reference to these facts? If there be a God, can there be a principle worthy of the name, unless it embody regard to his will and desire for his approval? Can there be blameless habits, unless habits of devotion and of religious obedience be among them? Can there be a character, symmetrical and perfect, which is not founded on that most essential of all relations, in which the soul stands to its Almighty Witness, Rewarder and Judge? In this view, religion, so far from belonging chiefly to riper years, and meriting to be postponed till then by those who would shudder at the thought of utterly rejecting it, makes its strongest appeal to the young, and presents its claims as the very last that they should set aside.

To illustrate your practical inconsistency, in acknowledging the truths of religion, and at the same time postponing all serious heed to them till later years, let me present to you the reflection of your own characters in a parallel case, on which you will readily pass judgment. Suppose, then, a youth, the child of affectionate and faithful parents, who contracts no vicious habits, incurs no public disgrace, holds a faultless reputation in every out-of-door relation and duty, who yet vacates his place near his father's and mother's heart, has no home affections, performs no filial offices, manifests no filial gratitude, pays no deference to the wishes of his parents, treats them as if they were on the outermost verge of his circle, but all the while avows his intention, at some future period of less engrossment and more abundant leisure, to canvass the claims of filial piety, and to atone by late reverence and assiduity towards his parents, for his early and protracted neglect of them. What better than a whited sepulchre would this youth be deemed? Who would respect his seeming virtues? Who would tolerate him in the society, of which, in every other aspect of his character, he might be the ornament? But in passing judgment on him, are you giving sentence against yourselves? Is it not thus that you seem in the sight of God, of angels, of your sainted parents, if you have those who sleep in Jesus, of your innocent and holy kindred now in heaven? If there be a God, a Father, if you are the children of his love, the objects of his unslumbering Providence, can you think without deep

self-reproach of that relation on his part to which there is nothing on yours that corresponds,—of his presence without your recognition, his love without your thanks, his care without your trust, his counsel for your eternal good without an upbreathing of your soul to him as your Refuge and Strength for the ages of immortality?—Andrew P. Peabody.

INTERNAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

I may say, wherever I open the Christian volume, I find some direction, which, if properly observed, would render me a good neighbour, a good member of society, a good friend, and a good man. Is it then possible for me to doubt the divine original of a system which furnishes such rules, and contemplates so glorious a project?

If the prohibitions of Jesus Christ were universally regarded, and his laws obeyed, what blessings would pour in on society? There would be no war among the nations of earth. There would be no oppression. There would be neither tyrants nor slaves. Every ruler would be just; every artisan would be honest; every parent would be faithful to his charge; every child would be dutiful; the purest affection would recommend domestic life; and neighbours would be mutual blessings. Under the dominion of Christianity, envy, pride, and jealousy would give way to the most enlarged benevolence. Human nature would recover its dignity, and every man would reap the present reward of his own virtues.

From these facts others may draw their own conclusions; my inference is, that such a system of morals cannot be the work of human wisdom. That these laws originated with God, and that Jesus Christ was commissioned to promulgate them, appears to me a much more rational supposition. The more I inspect them, the less am I inclined to compliment human ingenuity with so glorious a production. If, then, I continue to believe thus in this age of refinement and free inquiry, it is because I am unable to resist the evidence arising from the transcendent excellence of the Christian precepts. I think it infinitely more probable, that they should be a communication from God, than that philosophy should justly claim the honor of the invention.—Rev. John Clark, 1796.

Many who reject the claims and deny the miracles of Jesus Christ, admit the moral excellence of his character. A greater inconsistency cannot be conceived! what, is it no offence against the laws of morality to appeal to works never performed, and to pretend to the exercise of powers which never existed? Are deliberate falsehood, imposition, and hypocrisy to be erased from the catalogue of crimes? Is impiety no stain? To die with an obstinate and inflexible adherence to false pretensions, is there nothing immoral in such behavior? I confess, I have very different views of right and wrong, and I feel strong conviction that falsehood and deceit, for whatever end they may be directed, are to the last degree, criminal and disgraceful.

Yet this accusation must be brought against Jesus Christ, if he did no miracles, and was only a self-commissioned reformer. He certainly did profess to work miracles, and he did appeal to them as divine attestations to his sacred character. If he insisted that he was sent of God to enlighten and save mankind, he was careful to add, “The works which I do bear witness of me.” I must therefore deny that he was that excellent person which some modern unbelievers profess to esteem him, or, I must admit the reality of those miracles to which he so often, and with much solemnity, appealed. There is no other alternative. It cannot be, that he was a splendid pattern of pure and sublime morality, whilst his mission and supernatural powers were an artful pretence.—Rev. John Clarke, Boston, 1796.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.—On one occasion, travelling in the Barbary States with a companion who possessed some knowledge of medicine, we had arrived at a door, near which we were about to pitch our tents, when a crowd of Arabs surrounded us, cursing and swearing at the “rebellers against God.” My friend, who spoke a little Arabic, turning round to an elderly person, whose garb bespoke him a priest, said, “Who taught you that we are disbelievers?” He then repeated the Lord's Prayer. All stood amazed and silent, till the priest exclaimed, “May God curse me, if ever I curse again those who hold such a belief! nay, more, that prayer shall be my prayer till my hour be come. I pray thee, O Nazarene, repeat the prayer, that it may be remembered and written among us in letters of gold.”—Hay's Western Barbary.

When young, we trust ourselves too much, and we trust others too little when old. Rashness is the error of youth, timid caution that of age.

VENERABLE OLD AGE.—Toward the close of a discourse last Sunday on the Christian measurement of life, and the Christian uses of old age, in reference to the recent death of Joseph Lovering, Esq., the Rev. Mr. Huntington, alluded to the small proportion of persons of advanced age in his congregation. “You are all aware,” he said, in substance, “that even this small number has within the last week been diminished by the departure of one conspicuous as being the oldest of us all.

He had come nearer to the completion of a century than is often seen or expected in our modern estimates of longevity. Ninety years is no ordinary period to be an inhabitant of this earth and a subject of its probation. A little more than twenty such lives would cover all the centuries since Christ walked in Palestine! The single life of our friend reached back to the time when this city—of which he was one of the first board of officers—now crowded with this dense and thronging population, and the centre of such vast commercial relations, maritime and inland,—was but a provincial town.

That life, even after its manhood, saw this population expand, from less than three thousand persons, which was all it numbered during the Revolutionary war—to more than a hundred and twenty thousand—I find that at the census taken near to the time of his birth, (1752, Boston contained but two thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine polled persons.

By the census of 1845, the entire number of inhabitants was one hundred and fourteen thousand three hundred and sixty-six. What mighty and multiplied changes have been gathered within the limits of this one mortal pilgrimage!

Let the striking spectacle of so prolonged a career, while it awakens our gratitude for its usefulness and its industrious labors, impress on our minds more deeply th; true end for which life is both given and preserved. And while we see the supplication of the text—“Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth”—answered and fulfilled upon the fathers, we will trust that it shall be answered upon the children and the children's children.”—Boston Transcript.

In the Austrian Empire, one man out of seventy-eight is a soldier; in the Kingdom of Great Britain and its dependencies, one to 425; in the United States, one in 2,947.—Boston Rec.

FACTS ABOUT PRISONERS.—Charles Spear, one of the Secretaries of the Prisoner's Friend Society, says that the number of prisoners now confined in the United States, is about 30,000, of whom about 5,000 are in State Prisons. The number discharged yearly from the prisons averages about 20,000, of whom some 2,000 are convicts discharged from State Prisons. There are 12,000 women in prison. In most of the States women may be sent to State Prison; but in Massachusetts they can only be sent to jails and houses of correction. A large number of the prisoners are young, and some of them quite small boys. The State of Massachusetts employs an agent to look after discharged prisoners, and authorizes him to expend a certain amount of money in each case to aid the man in obtaining employment.

THE MOURNER.—I saw a pale mourner bending over a tomb, and his tears fell fast and often. As he raised his weeping eyes to heaven, he cried: “My brother! oh, my brother!”

A sage passed that way and said, “For whom dost thou mourn?”

“One,” replied he, “whom I did not sufficiently love whilst living, but whose inestimable worth I now feel.”

“What wouldst thou do if he were restored to thee?”

The mourner replied, “that he would never offend him by an unkind word, but would take every occasion to show his friendship, if he could come back to his fond embrace.”

“Then waste no time in useless grief,” said the sage, “but if thou hast friends go and cherish the living, remembering that they will soon be dead also.”

MORAL EVIL.—I remember once being in company with the excellent Mr. Newton, when a forward young man asked him,—“Pray, sir, what do you think of the entrance of moral evil?” “Sir, I never think about it,” said he, “I know nothing about it. I know there is such a thing as moral evil, and I know there is a remedy for it; and there, sir, all my knowledge begins, and all my knowledge ends.”—Poynder's Literary Extracts.

BOLDNESS.—This is well to be weighed, that boldness is ever blind, for it seeth no danger and inconvenience; therefore it is ill in counsels, but good in execution; for in counsels it is good to see dangers, and in execution not to see them, except they be very great.—Lord Bacon.