

which exercises such a lamentable sway over the human heart, and treads continually whispering in the ear of selfishness, like Milton's Satan in the ear of dreaming Eve. But a man can never obtain this knowledge *practically*, without connecting *himself* with its acquisition, and watching with a jealous eye the views, the aims, the desires, the versions of his own mind and will, and the discordant movements that find their sphere within the precincts of his own bosom. These he must contrast with the blessed character of the Divine Saviour, and compare them with His actions. He must also ascertain their moral value in the eye of Infinite Purity. He must take the Book of God in his hand, as Moses took his rod when he went into the presence of an ungodly king, and by its unerring test try them all, and assign to each the character stamped upon it by the sentence of Him "who searcheth the reins and the heart," and who can neither flatter nor deceive. He hath said; "Be ye holy; for I am holy." He must therefore seek to measure himself by the awful standard of His perfections, and lift his admiring eyes towards the habitation of His holiness."—The Christian Minister should ever remember that, "This is it that the Lord pake saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me."

If in all things it behoved him who knew no sin to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining unto God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; how much more does it behove sinful "dust and ashes" to whom the ministry of His reconciliation is committed, to be made like unto his master in things pertaining to his office? Practical religion as a way of its own, which never can be known by any but the truly pious. It is in that peculiar way that the Christian Minister becomes properly *learned* in the discharge of his duties. As a scholar, he may arrive at great attainments; but a habitual course of religious exercises with the divine blessing on them must impart to other acquirements the *unction*,—the *power of utility* in his intercourse with the people. Without this there is an awkwardness—a left-handedness in the private duties of his calling which never fails to have a chilling effect. Man being naturally averse to true religion, he will be still more indisposed towards it when he sees that his pastor exhibits but little of its influence in his own life; and he will always be ready to conclude unfavorably of him whenever he fails to "make full proof of his Ministry."

One who is truly sensible of the value of practical religion to himself, and on whose heart and life it has exercised its divine transforming influences, is by so much the more enabled to give practical effect to his teaching. By studying the workings of his own heart and its passions, he effectually studies his fellow-men, and is enabled to give a word in due season as occasion may require. Duly estimating for himself the religion of the cross, and setting upon it an inestimable value, he is prepared to have compassion on them that out of the way, and unreasonably oppose themselves. His own sense of the danger of sin will animate his warnings, and give force to his exhortations. His experience of the riches of the grace of Christ, and his love to his cause, will constrain him to exhibit the mercies of redeeming love; to pray men to be reconciled unto God; to call sinners to repentance; to strengthen the weak-hearted; to confirm the doubting; to establish the wavering; and to bear patiently with all their waywardness. "A bruised reed will he not break, and smoking flax will he not quench." Grace in the heart is many times a tender and delicate plant, and requires the utmost skill of the husbandman to keep it alive. The flame of divine love is often trembling like a dying taper, and must be fed with encouragement or "the Spirit" will be "quenched." And who is *sufficient* for these things? Allowing other things in their due proportion, the *sufficiency* is found only with him who "gives himself wholly to them;" who meditates day and night on the duties of his calling, and properly makes them his study and delight. He never should pass an hour with a fellow-creature without making some observation in connection with the word of God, and endeavouring to lay up something in the treasure-house of Christian experience. The honour of Christ should be dear to his heart; the good of souls should be uppermost in his mind; and the credit of the sacred profession should share with them his most serious and anxious thoughts. What a happiness would it be to him at the close of his labors to be able to "wash his hands in innocence," and feel that his garments were clean from the blood of all men!—"I am now ready to be offered up, 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." This was the language of a particularly pious Minister and faithful servant of the Church near the close of an arduous and eminently useful life: and we are told that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for re-

proof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." His life is therefore an excellent comment on the gospel which he preached, and is profitable for the correction and instruction of others. He had Christ before his eyes, Christ in his heart and life, and Christ the object of his future hope in the day of the Lord Jesus.

How important then is true piety in the man who enters the sacred profession! And what a miserable life must he lead who knows his duty and who does it not; whose conscience is so far alive within him as to be at war with his negligent and reprehensible conduct.

ERIEUS.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

OXFORD. J. Parker; LONDON. J. and C. Rivington.

[Continued from page 51.]

Let us turn to another strain which will be read with tears by many a grateful heart. What would become of us without the ceremonies of religion? How they strengthen the piety out of which they spring! How, by concentrating all that is holy and divine around their outward forms, do they purify and sanctify the affections! What a change on his infant's face is wrought before a father's eyes by baptism! How the heart of the husband and the father yearns as he sees the wife and mother kneeling in thanksgiving after child birth!

Churching of Women.

"Is there in bowers of endless spring,
One known from all the seraph band
By softer voice, by smile and wing
More exquisitely bland?
Here let him speed; to-day this hallow'd air
Is fragrant with a mother's first and fondest prayer.

"Only let Heaven her fire impart,
No richer incense breathes on earth;
'A spouse with all a daughter's heart,'
Fresh from the perilous birth,
To the great Father lifts her pale glad eye.
Like a reviving flower when storms are hushed on high.

"O what a treasure of sweet thought
Is here! what hope and joy and love
All in one tender bosom brought,
For the all-gracious Dove
To brood o'er silently, and form for heaven
Each passionate wish and dream to dear affection given.

"Her fluttering heart, too keenly blest,
Would sicken but she leans on Thee,
Sees thee by faith on Mary's breast,
And breathes serene and free.
Slight tremblings only of her veil declare
Soft answers duly whisper'd to each soothing prayer.

"We are too weak, when Thou dost bless,
To bear the joy—help, virgin horn!
By thine own mother's first caress,
That waked thy natal morn!
Help by the unexpressive smile, that made
A heaven on earth around, the couch where Thou wast laid!"

Such poetry as this must have a fine influence on all the best human affections. Sacred are such songs to sorrow—and sorrow is either a frequent visitor, or a domesticated inmate, in every household. Religion may thus be made to steal unawares, even during ordinary hours, into the commonest ongoings of life. Call not the mother unhappy who closes the eyes of her dead child, whether it has smiled lonely in the house, the sole delight of her eyes, or bloomed among other flowers, now all drooping for its sake—nor yet call the father unhappy who lays his sweet son below the earth, and returns to the home where his voice is to be heard never more. That affliction brings feelings unknown before in his heart; calming all turbulent thoughts by the settled peace of the grave. Then every page of the bible is beautiful—and beautiful every verse of poetry that thence draws its inspiration. Thus in the pale and almost ghostlike countenance of decay, our hearts are not touched by the remembrance alone of beauty which is departed, and by the near extinctions of