

There is no excellence without labor."

CANADA

"Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord."

CHRISTIAN WORKER

H. B. SHEPHERD, Editor.

"WORK WHILE IT IS CALLED TO-DAY."

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CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

SINCERITY SEEKING THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

CHAPTER III.

After the conversation with Mr. H. in the previous chapter, our young friend, *Sincerity*, retired to his sleeping apartment, but not to sleep. He laid himself upon his bed, and soliloquized with himself as follows:

"I see that I am awfully dejected. I had supposed it was a very plain matter to become a Christian, and, therefore, indifferently put off this important work, till, in all probability, a majority of my days are numbered. I am perfectly astonished and overwhelmed to find that now I am anxious to seek the salvation of my soul, and the whole matter appears involved in obscurity. Is it possible that the salvation of the world is wrapped up in so much mystery and obscurity as this? Is it possible that a learned ministry, called and sent of God to preach the gospel, can throw no clearer light upon the subject than my friend, Mr. H., has given me? I supposed, when he advised me to read the Psalms of David, that I should there find the account of the conversion of those vast multitudes of whom I had heard the preachers speak so frequently, and how they were converted, but, to my utter astonishment, I found nothing in regard to these matters, nor anything showing how I might become a disciple of Christ. I am equally astonished, that now I am resolved to read the Bible through, and have read the five books of Moses, I have been unable to find anything relating directly to myself, or showing me the way to heaven. I found these ancient records filled with matters of great interest; but how am I to know the way to heaven from these lengthy records of antiquity?"

"I am perfectly confounded, and know not what to do. It is certainly true that I am a sinner, and must be lost if I am not pardoned. I am equally certain that Christ is the Lord and Redeemer of men; and that he invites all to come to him is equally true. Why is it, then, that no way is pointed out by which to come? Would the Lord invite men to come to him, knowing that they would be lost if they did not come, and yet point out no way to come? He certainly would not. He could not do this, and then declare the way so plain that 'the wayfaring men, though simpletons, need not err therein;' nor could he, if no way is pointed out, say that 'he who seeks shall find.' Why is it, then, that I cannot find the way? I certainly could see the way if it had been pointed out to me. I certainly desire to find the way, and know the truth. I cannot see, then, why I should be left in this state of despondency."

"I cannot understand Mr. H. He has always appeared to me to be a good man, and I have tried to treat him kindly. Yet he appeared to speak once or twice, in our conversation, as though he thought I was uncandid. I cannot see why he should be unwilling to refer me to the passages that speak of mourners coming forward to pray and be prayed for. I recollect that he would not refer me to the place where I could find an account of the conversion of such vast multitudes. It appeared to me rational, as I desired to come to the Lord, to read the accounts of such vast numbers coming, and see for myself how they came. Why, then, did he evade, and fail to point out to me those passages? He certainly knew where they were. I cannot understand this."

"Such were the meditations of *Sincerity*, after his retirement. Early in the morning, Mr. H. rapped at his door. "Good morning," said Mr. H., "how do you do this morning?"

"S. My general health is good, but I could not rest last night. I am in much anxiety and greatly confounded in regard to my salvation. I was surprised and confounded, Mr. H., when you failed to point out to me, from the Scriptures, how I should come to the Lord. Can you, my dear sir, give me the source to which I am to apply for the evidence of pardon?"

"H. You must have the evidence within."

"S. How am I to know that it is within?"

"H. You must feel that your sins are forgiven."

"S. What kind of feelings must I have, as an evidence of the pardon of sin?"

"H. Good feelings—joyful feelings, as a matter of course. You must feel that your load of guilt is gone, and that the Lord has spoken peace to your soul."

"S. And that is the evidence of pardon?"

"H. Yes, sir. When the Lord converted my soul, it appeared to me that a mountain had been taken off of me. It appeared to me that all nature changed, and that all the trees, the green fields, the fowls of heaven, and the fish of the sea—that everything in heaven and upon earth, praised God, and I was enabled to say, 'I know that my Redeemer lives,' and that 'Jesus has power on earth to forgive sins.' This, sir, is the evidence of pardon—the witness in myself that I am a child of God."

"S. What is the cause of your rejoicing?"

"H. Because I have got religion, thank God."

"S. What is the evidence that you have got religion?"

"H. My joyful feelings."

"S. Is that the way that matter stands in the Bible?"

"H. My young friend, I am afraid you are skeptical. It appears to me that you are inclined to doubts. I would advise you to pray that you may be delivered from unbelief. The religion I have, of course, is Scriptural."

"S. I may be skeptical, but I do not think I am. At all events I desire to believe and desire to be a Christian. But I cannot see how you make my inquiry, whether you make feeling the result of religion, or religion the result of feeling, an indication that I am skeptical. I simply desired to know whether feeling is the Scriptural evidence of pardon."

"H. My dear young friend, I must say to you candidly, that I have, from our first conversation, feared that you are skeptical, but shall be happy to find that you are not. But that feeling is the evidence of pardon, is manifest both from Scripture and reason. Seek the Lord, that you may find the salvation of your soul, and feel the power of pardoning love. I must see those persons who came to the mourners' bench last night, and see if they have found peace with God. Come to meeting to-night. Good night."

"While *Sincerity* was reflecting on this conversation, a Romanist came in, to whom he said, 'Where do you find Scripture to prove that the priests can forgive sins?'"

"Romanist. I do not ask for Scripture to prove that the priests can forgive sins; I know that the priests can forgive sins."

"Sincerity. How do you know it?"

"R. How do I know that the priests can forgive sins? why, sir, when I am laden and pressed down with my numerous sins, I go to the priest and humbly confess—unbosom my whole soul to him, and the holy father forgives me. I know that I am pardoned, because I feel that the great burden—my oppressive load of guilt—is gone. I feel that I am delivered, and return to my home happy."

"S. But where is the Scripture for that?"

"R. What need have I for Scripture? Don't I know when I am pardoned, when I feel that my load of sin and guilt is gone?"

"After the Romanist had gone, our young friend said to himself: 'Is it possible the Romanists have the same evidence of pardon as other people? I am unable to understand how this is. If feeling is the evidence of pardon for anything I can see to the contrary, this Romanist has proved that a priest can pardon, just as Mr. H. proved that the Lord pardoned him. Am I to have no evidence of pardon only such as a Romanist may have to prove that a priest can pardon him? Have Protestants no higher evidence of pardon than Romanists? This involves me in worse confusion than ever. Am I blinded by unbelief, as Mr. H. seems to think, or what is the matter. I am perfectly astonished at the condition of religious matters. My confusion becomes worse and worse the more I think upon the subject.'

Our young friend passed along up the street and heard a man preaching in an old, dilapidated house, with some three small windows, and he seated himself in the house. It turned out to be an Anti-Means Baptist, preaching upon the words, 'Whom he will, he hardeneth,' to an audience of about fifteen persons, several of whom were soundly asleep. He was pretty much through his discourse when *Sincerity* entered. But in summing up his discourse, he insisted 'that God passed by the non-elect, made no provision for them; that Christ did not die for them; that the Lord hardened them, blinded them, sent them strong delusions that they could not, in any event, turn to God, or be saved.'

Sincerity walked away, saying to himself, 'Perhaps I am one of the non-elect and blinded. I cannot think that I am hardened, or that I am given over to believe a lie. If I know my own heart, I desire to know and believe the truth. I thought preachers were designed to enlighten the world; but if they are, I cannot understand them. I fear that I am lost!'

(To be continued.)

STNSHINE OF LIFE.

How true those lines of Mrs. Hemans are: "Few are the hearts, whence one same touch Bids the sweet fountains flow."

The ardent admirer of Nature meets not many kindred spirits, who can enter heartily into his feelings, as before some array of beauty or grandeur the thoughts of his soul find utterance, but instead, the vast majority, who have never striven to unclasp the book of Nature, or if they have, found the pages written in an unknown language, closed it, and wondered what existed there to call forth such rapturous exclamations.

He, who can read and enjoy that illuminated manuscript, and not raise his thoughts to the Author of a work so glorious, often draws his Pharisaic mantle closer round, and the unspoken language of his heart is, "I am thankful that I am not as other men are."

Mingling, in his worship of Nature, exist how little, of His spirit, who from among the lowly and illiterate of the earth, those the wondrous Twelve, opened their eyes to see the beauties of "this our world" and to those of that land, whose inhabitants shall all realize "the loveliness of the One among ten thousand," whose ravished eyes shall feast continually on the Jasper sea, pearly gates, and golden streets of the New Jerusalem.

If more of the Master's spirit prevailed, lovers of Nature would find the many rather than the few, who might be taught in some degree, to enjoy, if not with an artist's eye, the magnificence of a sunset, the grand old forest in its changing tints of emerald and crimson, hear in the many-toned wind-voices, music, now wild and plaintive, sad and jubilant;

and who might be taught above all, to say through these mediums, my Father hung in the western sky that glowing picture, from His jeweled-casket, He produced that crown of glory. Earth's tree-diamond, hung the bronze branches with rubies and opals; and in the sound of "many waters," has made His voice heard.

But apart from Nature in the abstract, a broader sympathy for Humanity would make the world better and brighter. "Rejoice with those that do rejoice," is the sun whose rays would illumine life's pathway; under an influence so benign, the roses of life would blossom fair and lovely, the music of glad hearts make countless echoes in the genial air, and the clouds from which no sky is always free, would pass away in that gentle rain, "Weep with those that weep." It is only casting our bread on the sea of humanity, when the dark days come, the storm-clouds rise, and our barque is well-nigh wrecked, over the black waters come the life-boat of kind actions and kind words; we recognize old-time faces in its noble crew, as those who perchance saved from the sea of adverse circumstances long ago. So, if no higher motive than mere selfishness actuated us, it is to our advantage to be kind and sympathetic.

In "blessing, ye shall be blessed," there, the reward is simultaneous with the gift; He whose life was love, who understands the nature of those whom his infinite tenderness yearns to bless, has made the experience of his followers a glorious testimony to the fact that "the ways of wisdom are indeed ways of pleasantness;" that the heart is not wearied with longing expectation for a promised reward at the end of time, the joy of doing good comes with the deed, and affords a sweet foretaste of the happiness those will feel to whom are addressed the precious words worth an eternity of waiting, "Well done good and faithful servant."

MAN loves the mysterious. A cloudless sky and a full-blown rose leaves him unmoved; but the violet which hides its blushing beauties behind the bush, and the moon when emerging behind a cloud, are to him sources of inspiration and of pleasure. Modesty is to merit, what shade is to a figure in painting—it gives boldness and prominence. Nothing adds more to female beauty than modesty. It sheds around the countenance a halo of light which is borrowed from virtue. Botanists have given the rosy hue which tinges the cup of the white rose the name of "maiden blush." This pure and delicate hue is the only paint Christian virtue should use—it is the richest ornament. A woman without modesty is like a faded flower diffusing an unwholesome odor which the prudent gardener will throw from him. Her destiny is melancholy, for it terminates, in shame and repentance. Beauty passes like the flowers of the albatross, which bloom and die in a few hours; but modesty gives the female charms which supply the place of transitory freshness of youth.—*Ann.*

Yes, my son, make all the friends you can in this world. It will amuse you to see them desert you in your time of necessity.