

ever you will, and nine times out of ten, money is the topic. It is the leading and all-absorbing theme. The state of the stocks; the advance of property; the last speculation; how much can be realized? what did it cost? are the changes incessantly rung, not only in the markets but in our parlors, at our firesides, at our meals, aye, and in our churches too. * * * Can we doubt, then, that what thus takes possession of and appropriates to itself the soul, subordinating all its higher interests, robbing God of its homage, and shutting out eternity from its prospects; is sin, and sin that the Lord may well 'rebuke with flames of fire?'"

"But the righteous suffered as well as the wicked. The church blazed higher than the Exchange.' Very true, and far be it from me to say that it was a judgment upon all that suffered loss. I have not been speaking of individuals, but of prevalent and crying sin. It is the business of the preacher to show the sin, and point to the judgment. It is for the conscience alone to determine the individuals. In all the chastisements of Providence the good and bad suffer together. The good need them and the bad deserve them, and then there is this momentous difference in their effects: the good are made better by them, and the bad are made worse. To one they are the pillar of light, alluring and guiding to heaven; to the other they are the pillar of cloud, only frowning confusion and dismay. One bless them as mercy, the other curse them as wrath. They seem to say in those dreadful words, which the angel in the Apocalypse utters, in view of the long series of Divine judgments, ending only with the destruction of the world: 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.'

"Do any doubt whether I should speak of the fire as a rebuke of the Lord? Ought I to be careful how I pronounce it the angry voice of Heaven? No, no, my young friends. On the contrary, when I remember the iniquity there is in that city, along with this mad excessive spirit of money-making, and in a great degree the fruit of it; when I remember how the Sabbath is violated by rich and poor; how it is made a day by multitudes of more dissipation and crime than all the remainder of the week. When I think of the myriad of oaths, from young and old, going up every moment, offensive blasphemy in the ears of Heaven—when I think of the increasing licentiousness of their youth; men in vice while boys in years—their gambling rooms—the depraving influence of their stage, now more vile and indelicate than ever—their putrid sinks of infamy covered up from the eye, but sending up their vapors to heaven, as black and as foul as if they rose from Sodom itself, and worse than all, because encouraging all that spirit of infidelity aiming from its home in the metropolis at an empire in the land—when I think of these clouds of hell in the very sunshine of the Gospel I feel bold in speaking of judgments, and almost wonder that the flames are not curling to heaven to this very hour.—But there are glorious lights in the picture as well as these midnight shades. There, in that city, are the virtuous and holy, as well as the scoffers and profane; there are kind-hearted generosity and unbounded liberality, as well as sordid competition and avaricious enterprise; there spring some of the purest influences that bless the land; there are men as persevering and self-denying in the works of christian benevolence, as others for their own aggrandizement; there are the charities that are among the delights of Christendom—the hope of the world. There are the preachers of righteousness. There are the elect of God. There ascends the fragrance of the 'golden vials full of odors.' There are the prayers of the saints; and this day they have gone up to heaven; this day has the intercession gone up from crowded churches and humbled souls—'Spare us, O Lord, and give not our heritage to reproach.' For their sakes the devourer was rebuked. For let those prayers cease—let the righteous fail—let the guardian angel of christian influence wing its flight and leave it to the mercies of the infidel—let the city become a Sodom in its guilt, (as then it quickly would,) and then, not one night and morning would you watch the fire—but many a night and morning, till at last like Abraham, looking out for the cities of the plain, you would see only 'the smoke of the country going up as the smoke of a furnace.'

SUPERFICIAL PIETY.

The Church at this day, in respect to the depth of her piety, is far behind the model which was presented in the apostolic age; nay, may we not say that she falls short of that which has been witnessed at some periods since the Reformation, especially when she was beset with the terrors of persecution; and is there not some reason to fear from the present aspect of the times, that while such active efforts are making for the extension of the Gospel, and while the spirit of true piety is communicated in a degree to a much greater number of hearts than formerly, its depth is diminished somewhat in proportion as its surface is extended? Blessed be God there are a multitude of devoted Christians and ministers in the Church at this day? but when we read the writings of Baxter, and Flavel, and Owen, and Charnock, and Bates, and the Henrys, and many others of the same period, we are ready to say that there were giants on the earth then, such as we neither see nor look for in these latter days.

Without detracting from the present age any thing which it can fairly claim, and with our eyes open on all the favorable signs of the times, we venture to say that one of the greatest dangers of the Church at the present moment is, that she will content herself with a superficial piety. We refer not here so much to the danger of this arising from a prevailing spirit of worldliness, which is always the bane of spiritual feeling, as from certain tendencies which seem to be among the elements of her present religious character. For instance, this very spirit of action which seems destined to accomplish such wonderful purposes, and which has already well nigh moved the world, and in which every true Christian must devoutly rejoice, is fraught with immense danger: there is danger that Christians in laboring for the world without, will neglect the world within; that they will substitute the business of planning and contributing to send the Gospel to others, for the more personal and difficult and self-denying work of keeping themselves habitually under its influence. No doubt it is possible that a man may labor in a good cause with great ardour and perseverance, and may think that his soul actually burns for the salvation of his fellow men, while yet his motives are altogether earthly, and the prevailing sentiment of his heart is a desire to promote self-gratification. Let Christians and ministers then, especially those who are more immediately active in sustaining our religious and benevolent institutions, take heed that in doing all this, they also keep their own hearts with all diligence; and let them bear in mind that this is not less essential to prevent their decline in piety, than to ensure the best success of their benevolent efforts.

There is danger also from the superficial character of the reading of the age. Some indeed have a relish for sound and extensive theological works; but far the greater number are satisfied with occasionally looking into some of the lighter religious periodicals. The consequence is, that while there are many who know a little concerning the benevolent operations of the day, (would to God that they knew much more,) there are comparatively few who have any connected view of the doctrines of the Bible, and a still smaller number who have the ability to defend them against the attack of gainsayers. Far be it from us to object to religious periodical reading: we know it has its uses, and very important use too; we only object against its being substituted for reading of a more solid character. Let every family count it a privilege to be statedly visited by one or more such publications; but let not this be a reason why Edwards, and Dwight, and Witherspoon, and Baxter, should be passed by as the antiquated rubbish of other ages.*

And if we do not greatly mistake, there has been much in the fanatical movements that have prevailed, and still prevail to some extent, in connexion with revivals, to foster the evil to which we are referring. To say nothing here of the vast numbers who in consequence of this machinery have no doubt been admitted to the Church utter strangers to the pow-

* The writer might have mentioned some good but neglected 'rubbish' from our side of the house, in the works of Horne, Tillotson, Leighton, Barrow, Pearson, Bull, Jeremy Taylor, Hall, Beveridge, and a few other Episcopal 'giants' who happen just now to be looking down from our shelves as if in contempt of some pigmy book-makers of later times, whose works are scattered upon our table.—[Ed. C. C.]

er of religion—who that is acquainted with these peculiar measures can fail to perceive that their tendency is to elevate some of the mere circumstantialities of piety, at the expense of casting into the back ground its more substantial elements? How much dependence is placed on the exciting influences of external circumstances, and how little comparatively is thought of the more retired duties of searching the heart, of reading the Scriptures, and of performing other duties which belong to the very essence of religion! Abundance of talk on the subject of religion we have reason to fear is often thought more of as a test of piety, than the abiding fruits of the Spirit; and hence we see one and another pointed at with the utmost confidence as examples of unquestionable conversion, not on the ground that they appear humble, and seem disposed to give God all the glory, but because they converse in respect to their own feelings with confidence and fervor, where possibly true Christian propriety might require that they should not converse at all. Let genuine revivals prevail, and nothing will do more to elevate the standard of Christian character, and produce a deep, intelligent, all-pervading piety; but mere spurious excitements, or those which are chiefly of this character, though they may bring multitudes into the Church, will ultimately be found to have incumbered it by a heavy mass of worldliness and spiritual death.—*Albany Journal and Tel.*

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL MISSION AT ATHENS.

Extract from a Letter from Mrs. Hill, wife of Rev. Mr. Hill, to a lady in New-York, dated Athens, July 30th, 1835.—Our work goes on well, and we are now supported under our increased labors, by the prospect of a speedy accession to the Mission. We have now fourteen young females in our family, and others are daily expected. I assure you, my dear friend, I tremble when I think of our responsibilities, but I cannot but think it is of the Lord—he has appointed us our work, and he will give strength to accomplish it. You who are so much interested for Sunday schools and other means of religious education, can realize what a great advantage we possess in having so many young persons confided to our care, at an age when they are most likely to receive good impressions. I hope that we shall always be remembered, in the prayers of our young friends at home—let them remember that the numerous means of obtaining a knowledge of God, which they possess, the youth here are entirely deprived of—it is only where the influence of missionaries exists, that there is any knowledge of religion at all. An aged father said to me as he commended his daughter to my care—'I am thankful that she will be in a situation where she will learn what true religion is. I begin to feel that it must consist in something more besides making the sign of the cross.' While he said this his eyes were suffused with tears. I asked him if he had read the Scriptures in the modern tongue. 'I have seen some parts of them, and they made my heart burn within me.' He is a man in authority;—I asked him if he would be willing to take some copies with him to his part of the country, he said he would with great pleasure—that his heart had been so melted by what he saw and heard in Athens, that he felt he could not be engaged in a better work than distributing the word of God.

We have from time to time some very interesting instances of the power of the word of truth, and we feel that we do not labor for nought while we facilitate its circulation. The last year we have in our schools distributed one hundred and fifty copies of the scriptures to new readers, and we know that they are read at home as well as in school.

A little Girl in the Valley of Death.—A letter from a gentleman in Paris, lately received, mentions the following interesting facts:—Rev. Dr. McAuley, of New-York, when he was here, at a meeting, stated that a little girl, on her death-bed, said to him as he entered the room, 'I am just going into the valley.' 'Doesn't it look very dark?' said Dr. M. 'No,' said she. 'But is not the shadow of death there?' 'Yes,' said she, 'but the Sun of righteousness shines right down upon it, and it is very light,' and again she said, 'It is but a little way through it.—How do you know?' said Dr. M. 'Because Christ said to the thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," and it was almost night then—so it can be but a little way.'