

(From the Boston Christian World.)

THREE PLAIN QUESTIONS, AND THREE PLAIN ANSWERS.

WHAT HAVE I BEEN DOING? I have been living without God in the world. I do not mean by this that I have ever doubted the existence of a Supreme Being, or that I have withheld acts of outward worship, or that I have ever profaned His holy name; but that for many, many long years subsequent to my early youth, my actions, words and thoughts were strictly conformable to this world. Those with whom I had to do, either in business or social relations, seldom if ever introduced the subject of religion as a practical thing,—something for reflection day by day,—something to lift the soul from the clay that would press it down,—something to unfold the certainty of a future being,—something to make one feel that in God we move and have our being,—something to set forth his attributes; his mercy, his benignity, his long suffering, his constant providence, his justice,—something by which to apprehend the perfect character of Him whom God sent into the world, by which to redeem men from all iniquity, and to be an example, that they should walk in his steps. No, I heard none of these things; therefore none of these things moved me. I lived with reference to my present being, influenced by these high and holy motives set forth in the Gospel of Christ. I was guilty of no outrage upon society; but I did not feel the importance of making that society better, whilst I formed a part of it. I attended the religious exercises of the Sabbath with scrupulous exactness, and I occasionally read the Bible at home. In these services I conformed, because habit prompted me. In a word I have been doing, as most young men and many older ones have been doing: living respectably, offending no one, attentive to business, pleasant in company, and dead in solitude,—seduced sometimes by temptation, without thinking of the value of resistance; giving up the body and the soul without a struggle; and never apprehending the meaning of the sentiment, that he who shall rule himself, that is, govern his passions and his thoughts, is possessed of a power inconceivably greater than he who conquers a city. In truth, sober truth, I have lived a moral paralytic,—a lover of the world rather than a lover of God.

WHAT AM I DOING? I bless God for his mercy which faileth not. He hath spared me to this present hour; He hath opened mine eyes; He hath visited my benighted soul with the rays of Divine truth; He hath revealed me to myself,—hath lifted the veil from the past—exposed to my view, my ingratitude, my thoughtlessness, my sins of commission and omission, and said unto me, repent! In sorrow I commune with my own soul. In penitence I lift up my voice in prayer. I invoke the Supreme Being to confirm my faith; to enlighten my mind; to elevate and purify my thoughts; to sanctify me wholly; to make the gospel of Jesus Christ my fortress against temptation; and by walking in his steps, imitating his example, and being clothed with his spirit, which is the Holy Spirit from God, I hope to attain at last to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, my Lord. Those things I am doing.

WHAT ARE MY PURPOSES FOR THE FUTURE? To live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world. By sobriety, I mean sincerity and earnestness in doing the will of God, without parade or affectation. I mean, God helping me to live my religion. It shall be manifested by general conduct rather than on particular contingent occasions. I will be earnest in my strivings after truth; and this truth I will speak, I will meditate upon. I will pray unceasingly that it may mingle with my business, and my pleasures. I will be sober-minded, by the grace of God; that I may have the means of enriching my own soul, and benefitting others.

By living righteously, I mean virtuously; to govern my thoughts, words and deeds, by the unerring teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles; to do right to the best of my ability. My purpose, then, is to wrong no man; to be honest in the sight of God and man; to speak with kindness even of an enemy; to harbor no selfish principle; to seek the welfare of others; to hide the faults I see; to interpose friendly counsel for the healing of the wrong-doer, whenever the time and place will permit; to be temperate in my living; and to strive in deceiving those who may be ignorant or thoughtless concerning the emphatic language of Christ, "Beware of covetousness"; and whether in eating or drinking, or in whatsoever else I may feel called upon to do, to do all to the glory of God.

By leading a godly life, I mean, that I must remember to whom I belong; that to God I owe every thing. Every blessing,

whether spiritual or temporal, is His gift. He unseals the eye-lids of the morning; He overshadows me in the night season; His providence sustains and defends me when exposed to innumerable and unseen casualties; His tokens of love are fresh every morning, and renewed every evening. I will also meditate upon the great truths,—God is a spirit, and that I am bound to worship Him in spirit and in truth; God is infinitely pure, and that I must humble myself before Him, for the sins that deface my soul, and beseech His pardon for the past, and His aid to overcome every adversary to my virtue in time to come; God is infinitely benevolent, for He hath sent His Son to seek and save that which was lost. I must strive to manifest the benevolent principle, by affectionately entreating all with whom I have to do, to look unto Jesus, sit at his feet, hear his instructions, imbibe his spirit, and do whatsoever he hath commanded. God is holy. He abhors sin. I will therefore abstain from all appearance of evil. I will countenance no indecent conversation or profane swearing. I will avail myself of the whole armour of God, in thrusting from my mind every unholy thought. I will remember the words of the wise man of Israel, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids, look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy feet from evil."

In conclusion, I would ask the reader to propose the same questions to himself, which I have ventured to put to my own soul, and fearlessly answer them. Let him not imagine that I am writing as an editor, or to gratify personal vanity, or for hire. O, no; I am a man in active business; I have been encompassed by temptations like other men, and shall inevitably go astray again, unless I avail myself of the only means under God,—namely: a solemn and habitual dedication of soul and body to his service. Will you say that this service is hard. I tell you from my deepest conviction, that in it there is perfect freedom,—freedom from the slavery of sin. As a test of the present servitude of your mind and heart, I will ask you if you do not feel the importance of prayer, without having the spirit of prayer? When you have attempted a suitable arrangement of the thoughts, has not memory disclosed such hideous recollection of sins, that for the present comfort, and for the present distress, have you not shrunk from the picture, and hid yourself from yourself? Have you not forged chain after chain, thinking them only silken cords, which you might snap at any convenient season? Believe me, the only convenient season to break with sin, is the present moment. Not because life is frail or uncertain, but because habit is strengthening the good or evil of our condition, every hour that we live. If we habitually aim to be what God and Christ require, we shall find the soul exercising, day by day, a new power; and which shall make the promise of scripture to be truly fulfilled in us,—"When thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet." If, on the contrary, our habits of mind are unfavorable for meditation; if the reading of God's word and prayer are irksome; and if our hours have been spent in one or more absorbing worldly considerations, the task of becoming what we must become if we would be happy, is rendered more and more formidable every returning day. We know not the force of a current until we attempt to stem it; and as the current of sin is dashing us on with a fearful rapidity, how reckless is the man that shall refrain from contending with it, until he finds himself in that broad and fathomless ocean, where no beacon-light is lifted up to guide him through its trackless waters!

Heed my warnings, I beseech you. I have experienced the fluctuations of mortal things; I have drunk from the cup of worldly pleasure; I have enjoyed what the world calls feasts of reason and flow of soul; I have been in good society; but let me tell you, that no outward good, no splendor of life, no fashionable amusements, no intellectual greatness, no political distinction,—none of these are to be named for one moment, in comparison with that fruit of the Spirit which is joy,—joy in believing; joy in the confidence with which we may approach our Father in Heaven; joy in the assurance that though our outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day; and above all, joy in the faith, hope, and love which makes us aspire after Heavenly things,—even that immortality which Christ has revealed. I say, then, if you would be happy, in the true meaning of that word, be pious. Religion, personal religion, supplies the means for obtaining a power over the selfish principle. It represses anger; it makes us kind and benevolent; it makes us honest; and amidst the cares of a busy world it makes us thoughtful, lest in

prosperity or adversity we should forget God. Men in more active business, particularly merchants, are perpetually obliged to play deep games, and are obliged to shift their position every day, to meet the motions of others, as knowing as themselves. In these struggles, collisions, and bargains, they deem untiring watchfulness to be absolutely necessary; and that nothing short of self-devotion can circumvent the possible, nay, probable, deep-laid plans of their competitors. There are exceptions to this general experience; and it may be said that it is folly to limit, however uncertain their issues, the enterprises of men; that we were made for great efforts, and the world could not go on, if men were too much governed in such matters. I confess that no rules can be given but those contained in the Bible. That holy book declares for what we were created: that the earth which we inhabit is a school to discipline and prepare us for heaven; that we brought nothing into this world, and that we can carry nothing out; and that as money is only a means of doing good;—whenever a man's experience shall convince him that the coveting of more is blinding his eyes, and hiding from his vision the glories of that heavenly Jerusalem set forth in the Gospel of Christ, as the prize of his high calling, then, O, then, it is a duty to pause. A conviction of this truth is important to every man in business. It is only sure refuge amidst the storms that rage without and within him.

THE WAR SPIRIT.

The following sentiments adverse to war, are from the London Times, a journal which, doubtless, exerts a greater influence on the affairs of the world than any other single paper. It is a good sign that in future wars will be few:

"We have done much for mankind by ceasing to punish mankind for involuntary religious faith, by breaking down the artificial barriers that have so long prevented the cordial intercourse of man and man, and forbidden that interchange of physical and intellectual wealth, which God ordained when he gave to every land its climate and to every soil its fruit. But much as we have accomplished, there is yet still more to do. Above all, there is one achievement before us, without which, every other must be insecure and of questionable value. It remains for the most powerful, the bravest, and the freest people on the globe to proclaim and establish the virtue and beauty, the holiness and necessity of universal peace, and that they will proclaim it in due time, we entertain no doubt. It has already occurred to the thinking masses of this great country, notwithstanding the humanizing creed which we profess, the civilization that we boast, and the increased intelligence of all classes of the population, that the ferocity of warfare is as brutal to-day as in the remotest times of savage ignorance; that the Christian and Heathen are, to all intents and purposes, one and the same when they meet as destroyers in the battlefield; and that what we call the glorious victories of British arms, are scarcely to be distinguished from the butcheries of barbarous ages that we pity, and of more barbarous fighting-men, whom we think proper to condemn. And it must be so! You cannot redeem, under any circumstances, the naked, horrid, aspect of war, the offspring of brutality and civilization's adopted child. War in itself is a mighty evil—an incongruity in a scheme of social harmony—a canker at the heart of improvement—a living lie in a Christian land—a curse at all times. Custom, that makes us view all things that are essential to our well-being, and the true exponents of a country's greatness, has taught us to regard systematic war as necessary to our condition, and reason and revelation appeal against custom in vain. We confess that we regard with infinite satisfaction every endeavour, come whence it may, to destroy the supremacy of a cruel deity, acknowledged on every ground. Kings, who preach to their subjects the advantages and sacred character of peace, are more than kings. Men who unite to promulgate the same doctrine, feeble instruments though they be, and liable to ridicule, claim respect for their mission. But neither kings nor small societies of well-meaning men are strong enough to grapple with a power as firmly rooted as the rock. Before the reign of war can cease, education and mental liberty must have an empire co-extensive with the evil. It is not this nation that must be convinced, but all nations; not this division of the world, but every part of it—for war is every where. But it is time to begin. One step—it is but one—has been taken by ourselves, and we hail it as a presage of a good omen. In the nineteenth century it is sud-

denly discovered that the soldier is a human being, with faculties and passions like other men; that, being something more than a useful machine, he deserves to be treated rather better than a common brute. Books are written to maintain the fact, and to claim for the warrior the rights—moral, social, and intellectual—that you do not deny to the law-breaker and the felon. Convince the warrior that he is henceforward to enjoy them, and believe us, the war-god himself is shaken on his throne."

A GREAT DISCOVERY.—Luther had been two years at the University of Erfurth, and was twenty years of age. One day he was opening the books in the library, one after another, in order to read the names of the authors. One, which he opened in its turn, drew his attention. He had not seen anything like it till that hour. He reads the title: it is the Bible, a rare book, unknown at that time. His interest is strongly excited. He is filled with astonishment at finding more in that volume than those fragments of the Gospels and Epistles which the Church has selected to be read to the people in their places of worship. Till then he thought that they were the whole word of God; and here were many pages and many books of which he had no idea. His heart beats as he holds in his hand all the Scriptures divinely inspired. With eagerness and indelible feelings he turns over the leaves of God's word. He returns home with a full heart. Oh! thought he, if God would give such a book for my own! He soon returned to the library to find his treasure again; he read, and re-read, and then, in his surprise and joy, he went back to read again. The first gleams of a new truth then arose upon his mind.

This event had a sublimity in it, because that the impulse which the discovery gave to Luther's mind, was to be communicated to the millions of other minds; because the whole Reformation lay hid in that Bible. This book, on the unknown shelves of a dark room, was, through his mind, to become the book of life to nations. It had now fallen into the hands of its translator, who was about to give it tongues to speak to all Europe.

The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, SEPTEMBER, 1846.

THE NEW GERMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Accounts from the continent of Europe still show us that the movement in Germany against the authority of Rome, and certain doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, is giving hopeful evidence of activity, and making progress. In an earlier stage of the movement, we quoted in the columns of the Bible Christian, a symbol of faith agreed to by a body of the new German Reformers, and at the same time remarked that there was nothing in it to which a Unitarian might not subscribe. In a country of so much intellectual vigour as Germany there is every reason to hope that the minds now aroused to inquiry on religious subjects, will not be satisfied with renouncing the authority of the Pope, merely to take refuge among some of the manifold creeds of conventional orthodoxy. This reform of the nineteenth century will be far different from that of the sixteenth, for now we live in a far different age. Europe is not now emerging out of the night of barbarism, as it was then. The men of this age have the superior advantage of three centuries of constantly increasing light. We should reverence the memories of the Reformers of the sixteenth century. They did the work of giants in their time. But the accumulated errors and corruptions of fifteen hundred years could not be swept away at one blow. The men of the present time will be more likely to proceed at once to the simple truth of the Gospel. They have the experience of three hundred years of creed-manufacture before them. They have seen how creeds have multiplied strifes and divisions in the Church;—they have seen how they have cramped the human mind, and kept it in bondage as effectually as ever a Pope did;—they have seen how they have discouraged the pursuit of truth,—how they have perpetuated and embalmed absurd and obsolete dogmas, long after the age had out-