

The BEREAN.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—ACTS XVII. 11.

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SPEAK GENTLY.

Speak gently!—it is better far
To rule by love than fear;
Speak gently!—let not harsh words mar
The good we might do here.

Speak gently!—love doth whisper low
The vows that true hearts bind;
And gently friendship's accents flow—
Affection's voice is kind.

Speak gently to the little child!
It's love be sure to gain;
Teach it, in accents soft and mild,
It may not long remain.

Speak gently to the young; for they
Will have enough to bear—
Pass through this life as best they may,
'Tis full of anxious care.

Speak gently to the aged one—
Grieve not the care-worn heart;
The sands of life are nearly run—
Let such in peace depart!

Speak gently, kindly to the poor;
Let no harsh tone be heard:—
They have enough they must endure,
Without an unkind word!

Speak gently to the erring—know
They must have toiled in vain;
Perchance unkindness made them so;
Oh, win them back again!

Speak gently!—He who gave His life
To bend man's stubborn will
When elements were in strife,
Said to them, "Peace, be still!"

Speak gently!—"tis a little thing
Dropp'd in the heart's deep well—
The good, the joy which it may bring,
Eternity shall tell.

A PRAYING FRIEND.

Every friend she then had, and every one with whom she held sweet fellowship in after-life, was conscious that in her they possessed a love which spent not itself on earth, or in the ordinary kindnesses of earthly friendship. They knew, they felt, that they were on her heart when she had access to the throne and the fountain of grace, mercy, and peace. As "a praying friend" she was highly valued by many, and this, as they acknowledged, gave a peculiar poignancy to their loss, when she was gone. Not only her personal wants and griefs drew her near to God, but every event, whether of common or individual interest, gave her a welcome occasion for seeking communion with "the Father of lights" from whom she well knew that "every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down." Was an infant expected or born in any family of her kindred? Her knee was bent in secret prayer for the little one and its parents. Where the young or the adult gathered into schools beneath her eye? Their instruction was watered with the dew of her prayers. Did her father, her brother, and, in after years, her husband, retire to their study to prepare for their ministerial labours, or go forth to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ? Unknown to them, perhaps, at the time, the daughter, the sister, the wife, gave herself unto prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon their souls, their discourses, and congregations. Did missionaries go out, to spend themselves among the heathen? Or did assembled hundreds listen to the details of their toils, and contribute of their substance to meet the claims of bible or missionary societies? All had her prayerful sympathy and ready aid. Was a king to be crowned, as the sovereign of her native land? He received, untold on earth, the most faithful homage of this his youthful subject; while prostrate before the King of kings, she implored a blessing upon the soul and the reign of the earthly ruler. Was a criminal condemned to die upon the scaffold, in the city where she dwelt? Through his few remaining days, and at his last awful hour, he earnestly prayed for in secret by the young daughter of the chaplain, who attended him to the place of death. Did an extensive parish, in all its temporal, moral, and spiritual state, rise before her contemplative mind, or did a solitary sinner stand before her, apart from the multitude, in the guilt, misery, and danger of his unconverted state? She poured out her soul at her Lord's footstool, and there left many a tear as a testimony of the generous grief and yearning desires of her heart, for mercy to be extended to the one or the multitude. Did a pupil enter or leave our habitation? In the same spirit of intercession she anticipated his arrival, or followed his departure. If, as we believe, nay, are assured, prayer, like the ladder in Jacob's vision, connects heaven and earth, and is the appointed means whereby innumerable and most precious blessings descend from the Lord to the children of men; who can imagine the amount of good, of which this ever prayerful child of God, was the favoured procurer? And who can imagine the amount of praise and glory she is now rendering at the throne above, for the mercies which she is permitted to know were granted in answer to her supplications?—From "Peace in Believing"—Memoir of Mrs. Ann East, by the Rev. John East.

GLEANINGS FROM WM. WILBERFORCE.

Sources of Self-Deception.

From the nature of things it often happens that the religious principles of an establishment have been formed in the nation's best times, when men's minds [were] more under the influence of religion; and those sound principles [have been] preserved uniform through successive generations, and the fluctuations and mutabilities of human opinions and tastes. The evil necessarily is, that men are led, by the various motives that influence human conduct, to profess adherence to an Establishment, of which the principles have little hold on their hearts.—Besides, Christianity is of two kinds, external and internal, and the former may apparently exist in due decorum, while the latter, alas! is not to be found.

Hence, a decent observance of moral duties, more especially of such as are of the negative sort, is deemed a necessary ingredient in a good character. But then the defective interior,—the false principle within,—betrays its spurious nature whenever the religious or moral duty does not coincide with the

world's standard of morality. And there are too often particular things which are tolerated, or are even popular, and particular Christian virtues and graces which are unpopular.

Meanwhile, by a conventional courtesy, when- ever the exterior conduct and manners are not contrary to the Christian model, or where, by a moral balancing of accounts by which a positive amount of any Christian grace is to be set against a defect in another particular, the character may pass muster—the interior is to be presumed to be all complete, or at least, if not complete in degree, to be right in kind; and by a too natural self-deception, men are led into granting to themselves the same indulgent measure which candour requires them to mete out to others.

By an easy transition, inasmuch as the due performance of the duties of life may be compendiously stated to be a summary of religious and moral character, an appropriate set of principles and practices is considered to belong to each profession and department in life; and it is held to be enough if a man discharge these virtual engagements to society with adequate punctuality; and there again, what it may be only candid to concede to others we too easily are seduced into admitting as a standard for ourselves.

But Christianity is a system of a far higher order, it requires that its throne should be set up in the heart, whence it should prompt and control all the various movements of the entire machine. Its very essence and being is the formation of a peculiar character.

Another great evil, resulting from this natural habit of being satisfied with the exterior, is, that we fall into the practice of considering any real existence of the interior of religion as constituting a peculiarly eminent measure of moral excellence; as being more than the generality can be expected to attain. They may rest satisfied with a far inferior degree; and unhappily the abatement which we are insensibly, partly even from humility, led to admit, as from the imperfection of our nature to be expected in the completeness of our moral character, is admitted in the abatement of the purity and simplicity of its principle, of the main-spring or corner-stone of the machine or edifice; whereas there must be no such allowed deficiency there; and therefore Christ commands us to "be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect." We naturally say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" And our Saviour suggests the reply, "With man it is impossible, but not with God." Here comes in the need of being born again of the Spirit. There is to be the formation of the new creature which St. Peter calls a divine nature.

Suppose then a man eminent in his profession, and so far a benefactor to mankind; universally esteemed and admired, and not without a fair claim to esteem and admiration. The man has been in the habit of receiving marks of respect on all hands. How difficult must it be, even leaving out of our calculation the natural corruption of man, for such an one to feel himself a lost, and guilty, and helpless sinner, a slave to sin and Satan! To feel himself such, sufficiently to dispose him to come as a weary and heavy-laden sinner to the cross of Christ.

Besides,—Here another difficulty occurs. The morality of Christianity is so pure and elevated, that being a true Christian is become synonymous for leading a good life. Now the eminent professional man of whom we have been speaking is conscious that he is approaching to the term of his continuance in this world; consequently his life, be it good or bad, is already spent. On the principle of having so many talents committed to him, he has employed them diligently and creditably, and his account he considers as ready to be given in. What- ever therefore might have been to be wished, had he originally heard of the necessity of more attention to the doctrines of Christianity, and to the dispositions and affections of the heart, it is now too late he thinks for him to change the whole principle of the account. To use an every-day phrase—he is in for it, and the idea of beginning as it were to live his life over again appears to him utterly inadmissible. He has been in the habit also of taking his religious opinions upon trust; of his adopting his religious principles from some writer or some living authority in whom he has been used to confide. He has very little acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and if he reads them at all, it is as a religious duty to be performed, but not for the purpose of enquiring into and ascertaining their nature and force. The consequence is, that he remains ignorant of the gracious offers that are made to him; destitute of the high and glorious privileges that are offered to his acceptance. He knows not the infinite mercy and inexhaustible love of his God and Saviour.

Oh, how often have such characters made the heart of real Christians to bleed for them! How often have they drawn tears from their eyes!—From a paper of Mr. Wilberforce's, containing Hints either for a new work on religion, or for some chapters supplementary to his work on "Practical Christianity."

Lowliness before God consistent with bravery before the enemy.

"I knew that the coincidence of Bonaparte's declaration about ships, colonies, and commerce, with the deprivation he sustained by them, would not escape you. I was delighted with Collingwood's general orders for a day of humiliation and thanksgiving. The latter I had heard of in the case of Lord Duncan's victory and some others, but I do not remember to have ever heard of the mention of imploring pardon for sins, as well as returning thanks for blessings. The former pleased me particularly, for nothing can more magnify goodness than its being unmerited, and that, on the contrary, punishment has been rather deserved. But, my dear Muncaster, how abominable it is, that though, as we have recently learned, Lord Nelson and several others have ordered general thanksgivings on ship-board after victories, yet that these orders have never till now appeared in the Gazette; and consequently they have not been known, and have not produced their proper effect on the public mind. And this opens a large chapter of our government's misconduct. I mean that of our foolishly (for it deserves no better name) despising fanfare and gasconade so much, and being so much afraid of be-

coming liable to the dreadful shafts of quizzers, as to neglect effect altogether, and the importance of carrying along with you the body of your people; and for that end, taking all proper occasions of warning and animating them, and again, of endeavouring to conciliate the good will and depreciate the envy of foreign nations. It is, really, provoking in the highest degree to hear that, on the continent, some of those very countries which have suffered the most from French domination, have yet wished success to the arms of France in consequence of the supposed hauteur of our court and all its ministers and agents. I heard some remarkable instances of this from a very intelligent man, who last year travelled through Italy and Germany.—Letter to Lord Muncaster.

Dangers of highly intellectual, but irreligious Society. [Diary]

"I have consented to dine with Madame de Stael; I could not well do otherwise. Bowdler said much to persuade me. Let me try to speak plainly though tenderly to her. 15th March. Dined with Madame de Stael—her son and daughter, and two other foreigners, Lord Harrowby, Lord and Lady Lansdown, Sir James Mackintosh, Lord and Lady Granville Leveson were to have dined, but Lady Spencer died that morning. She asked me to name the party. A cheerful, pleasant dinner.—She talked of the final cause of creation—not utility but beauty—did not like Paley—wrote about Rousseau at fifteen, and thought differently at fifty. Evening assembly, but I can no way at half past eleven. A brilliant assembly of rank and talent." "The whole scene," was his next day's reflection. "was intoxicating even to me. The fever arising from it is not yet gone off, (half-past 8, A. M.) though opposed by the most serious motives and considerations both last night and this morning. How dangerous then must such scenes (literally of dissipation, dissipating the spirits, the mind, and for a time almost the judgment) be to young people in the hey-day of youth, and life, and spirits! How unfit for those who are to watch unto prayer, to walk soberly, to be sober-minded! Something in my own case may be fairly ascribed to natural high spirits, and I fear, alas! much to vanity, and a good deal to my being unaccustomed to such scenes; yet after all for these weaknesses and peculiarities, must not the sobriety of my age, my principles, my guard, (prayer preceding my entering enchanted ground,) be fairly considered as abating the effect, so much as that I may be a fair average sample of the effect of such scenes on young people in general of agreeable manners, and at all popular ways and characters? I am sure I do not often venture into these scenes. Then the question is so high that it would render all quiet domestic pleasures insipid. Even poor Paley used to say, (though I hope jokingly.) "Who ever talks to his wife?" This showed even in him the danger of being fascinated by social gaiety. O Lord, enable me to view last night's scene in its true colours, and shapes, and excesses. I have not time to trace out the draught. May I remember that they and I are accountable, dying creatures, soon to appear at the judgment seat of Christ, and be asked whether we avoided temptation, and endeavoured to preserve a frame of spirit suited to those who had to work out their salvation with fear and trembling?"

"I am now engaged to many parties, yet I must not go on thus. It visits my mind for private devotions, and makes me too late, steals me from my children, and even from my business, which from my weak health I must do by contrivance. O Lord, guide me; let me not do anything contrary to the liberal and social spirit of Thy religion, but let me have wisdom to see what is really required from me, and resolution to perform it. My own soul would doubtless be my first object, and combined with it, my children,—how much better might I serve them if I cultivated a closer connection with God! my business, and doing good to others. I am clear it is right for me to withdraw from the gay and irreligious, though brilliant, society of Madame de Stael and others. I am I hope thankful to God that I am not given up to these pleasures. O let me labour that I may not be merely gratifying an indolent spirit by staying away. Let me cultivate a spiritual mind, that if any be really in earnest I may then approximate and show them that I can feel; and oh! may God touch their hearts also. How surely is every one who is in earnest useful to others!"

His state one to be desired by others.

"This session," he says, "I met again Lord—, whom I had known when we were both young, but of whom I had lost sight for many years. He was just again returned to parliament, and we were locked up together in a committee-room during a division. I saw that he felt awkward about speaking to me, and went therefore up to him. "You and I, my Lord, were pretty well acquainted formerly." "Ah, Mr. Wilberforce," he said cordially; and then added with a deep sigh, "you and I are a great many years older now." "Yes, we are, and for my part I can truly say that I do not regret it." "Don't you," he said, with an eager and almost incredulous voice, and a look of wondering dejection, which I never can forget.—"You must allow that Mr. Wilberforce is cheerful," said some of his friends to one who had just spent a week in the same house with him, and who was fixing on religion the odd charge of dullness. "Yes," she said in a tone intended to convey reproach, "and no wonder: I should be always cheerful too, if I could make myself as sure as he does that I was going to heaven."

THE PASTORAL CONNECTION.

Evil of its frequent interruption.—From Address to the Convention of the Diocese of Vermont, by Bishop Hopkins, 15th Sept. 1847.

"You will hardly think that I say more than is reasonable upon this painful subject, when I add the result of a simple inquiry into the history of ministerial changes during the period, not quite fifteen years, of my official connection with this diocese. Of the sixteen Churches which were then strong enough to have a minister, nine have had five different Rectors apiece, two have had six, one has had three, three have had two, and two only, the parish at Rutland, and my own parish, have the same man

* Mr. (now Lord) Brougham.

still officiating! Besides this, most of them have suffered from considerable vacancies, when their Churches were closed altogether. Now I need not tell you how injuriously this must operate upon the mutual confidence of both ministers and people. On neither side can there be a fair opportunity to form the intimate acquaintance and affectionate regard which are so important for the proper influence of the Gospel. And if something is not done to produce a better state of things with regard to the permanence of the parochial connection between the pastors and their flock, we shall be compelled to lament an increasing loss of religious power, or seek for the only practicable resource in an itinerating ministry.

"I am far from wishing to be understood, however, as desiring to lay the whole fault upon the laity. It is beyond all dispute that many of the changes to which I have referred were imputable to the clergy themselves. For the evil, unhappily, is almost episcopal throughout the Church at large. Our ministry only share in the restlessness which marks our whole national character, and this restlessness, perhaps, should be regarded as a necessary part of the spirit of progress or enterprise, which makes the age we live in so emphatically an age of movement and of change. Still, while I have every disposition to make allowance for the cause, the effect upon our religious stability and growth is none the less disastrous. And it is my solemn duty to present the evil to your assembled wisdom, in the hope that something may be done to lessen its injurious operation, if not to effect its cure."

VIA MEDIA, BUT NOT QUITE IN THE MIDDLE.

Non-Episcopalians, for the most part, have no prescribed devotional forms whatever. All is left to the extempore discretion of the minister. Many worship in this way, doubtless, with great edification and acceptance. But this way is not only liable to the following evils, but they actually exist to no small extent. The unguided are subject to hesitation and embarrassment in prayer, or to improprieties of expression, which, although readily excused by an audience, yet this very process of excusing draws off the hearer's mind from devotion. Extemporaneous prayers are also very apt to be disconnected and fragmentary, and what is a greater infelicity, they are liable to be hortatory, didactic, and even controversial, the minister thinking God that disputed points in divinity are just as he conceives them to be, or praying for that (in cases of dispute) which a portion of his hearers are deprecating. It further comes to pass also in practice, to a considerable extent, (although contrary to the theory and intention) that the prayer is something which the congregation listen to as they do to the sermon, rather than something which they join in, equally with the minister. Such is the mode and the disadvantage of worship in non-Episcopal Churches.

On the other hand, the public worship of the Romish Church differs as widely from our own, not only in the outward form, but what is of far more consequence, in doctrinal theory and intention. In non-Episcopal Churches the theory and intention (and to a certain extent in their practice agrees with it) is, that their public prayer shall be common prayer, the people joining in the form, (with which the person officiating supplies them as he proceeds) and making it their own.

But in the Romish Church there is not the idea or intention of common prayer. There are many forms of prayer carried on simultaneously. The notion of the prayers in which the priests and their immediate assistants are occupied, is that of a sacerdotal mediation between the people and God; and hence they are not esteemed less efficacious for being in Latin or unadvisedly pronounced. The people not only do not join them, (except momentarily at one or two points) but they are not expected to listen to them. They are occupied meanwhile in their private devotion by a prescribed form. And taken as a whole, there is scarcely the notion of common prayer, any further than that the worshippers are in the same building. Romish Catholic public worship does not answer at all the idea of united devotion conveyed in the New Testament, aside from the matter of the prayers which embraces the most pernicious errors in doctrine.

It is not necessary to tell Episcopalians wherein our own method of public worship differs from both those described, or how much better we consider it than either of them. It is in some sense a medium, sufficiently so to be called *Via Media*, though not strictly equi-distant from the two, for every candid person must admit that on the whole the difference in worship between us and non-Episcopalians is not so great as between us and Roman Catholics.—*Episcopal Recorder*.

EARLY WORKING OF IMAGINATION.

Infancy has not ceased, before the restless workings of this faculty are seen in all their mischievous development. Observe your own girl in the nursery, surrounded by her toys and her dolls. Mark how her steps, though tottering, have learnt the air of a mistress, and how that tongue, yet lisping, hath caught the accent of command. Hearken to her dialogue with her mute wooden companion, and see how she rejoices in her conscious superiority. When her mind has become enkindled with the visions of its own fancy, you may observe how she is dressing up some gay scene of future happiness, in which she is to act by far the most conspicuous part. And, O, now were she a little older, or a little taller, or had one other dress, or one more beautiful toy, how loftily would she then carry herself, and how full would be the cup of her joy. And if she muse yet further into futurity, she is thinking about houses and wealth, and domestics, and equipages, and she is sagely conjecturing how she will act when all these things are hers. Thus is her soul, just entering upon being, bewildered in its own deceivings, and feeding its own vanity with the foolish fictions of an infantile imagination.

Or you may look upon your little boy, sauntering along in his errand, and gazing at every shop-window, and admiring every passing equipage, and wondering at every dwelling of opulence and splendor which he beholds, and which seems to him inhabited by beings with whom he would hardly dare to speak. What is it that occupies his thoughts and retards his steps, as he slowly moves on his appoint-

ed duty? Ah! he is thinking of what he would do, were he as strong as Samson, or were his arm as mighty as the giant's of whom he has read in his story book. If this were the case, how fearlessly would he move through these streets by day, and by night, too, and how would all the men and the boys tremble at his frown! Or it may be, he is thinking what he would do if he were rich. If he should now find a purse of gold, or if in some of his rambles, he should stumble, as some of whom he has read, did once stumble upon a mine of silver or a heap of diamonds; how would he then put to shame all the magnificence which he here beholds about him! O, if this were once to happen, how much richer should be his house, how much more splendid his equipage, how much more numerous his retinue, and how he would stuff all the boys and all the men of his acquaintance with the gorgeous exhibitions of incalculable wealth! Or, if the sound of martial music fell upon his ear, and a military show passed before him, another form of power is added to the list of his many accomplishments. He is thinking how he would order these men, were he only their captain, and how promptly these thousands should move at his well pronounced word of uncontrollable command.

Thus early do we become the slaves of our own imaginations. So soon do we learn to forget the present and the actual, and to meditate only upon the doubtful and impossible. Instead of thinking what he is, he is thinking of what he might be. O, if he were this, or if he were that; and thus are the intellects of the very infant bewildered and deluged in the misty atmosphere of all-pervading *ifs*.—*Christian Witness*.

A NURSERY FOR ETERNITY.

We do not rightly appreciate this world, if we consider it as more than the nursery for eternity. As concerns this life, and the things of this life only, we are not long in arriving at maturity; such maturity at least as is compatible with our present finite and imperfect capabilities, and necessary for the appointed purposes of this brief and preliminary state of being. For the purpose *only*, the teaching and experience of a few short years enable us to "put away childish things." (1 Cor. xiii. 11.) But there is no period of our mortal existence at which, with reference to our eternal welfare, we can be said to have passed the infancy of being, or be safely left to shift for ourselves. Our state here even to the close of the longest life, is but a state of continued tuition and dependence, when viewed in relation to the ultimate object, and the never-ceasing duration of our existence.

Nor is it sufficient merely that we feel this world to be only a nursery for eternity. It is essential also, that we should be duly impressed with the infinite superiority of the Teacher and Guide over those who are to be taught and led—superiority in wisdom, goodness, truth; in short, in every attribute which qualifies one intelligent being to be the director of the destinies of another. For we may assume it as a truth, which no reasonable person will be disposed to controvert, that certainly no well-informed Christian will object, that the difference as to helplessness and want of capacity, between a new-born babe and the most intelligent of earthly parents, is inexpressibly less than that between that parent and the supreme being. It would greatly assist our meditations on the parental character of God, and his dealings with man in that character, if we kept this truth constantly in view; not as a barren though undeniable fact, to be recognized only in theory, but as an active operative principle, exerting a daily and hourly influence on all our conceptions of the Deity. However humbling the consideration may be to the proud and presumptuous spirit of the natural heart, however prone we may be to imagine that our moral or intellectual *Abel* may be made to approach very near, if not actually to reach the heavens, the word of truth invariably sets forth the strength of man as utter weakness, and his wisdom as mere "foolishness" (1 Cor. iii. 19, 20); and why? Because it speaks of his relation to him who is ALL-wise and ALL-powerful; so that the declaration would have been incomplete, the description inadequate, had it ascribed to man any strength or wisdom of his own, when compared with Him who sitteth in the heavens and "filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 23.)—*Sir Edward Parry*.

CURE FOR NERVOUS EXCITEMENT.

A friend once told me that, amongst other symptoms of high, nervous excitement, he had been painfully harassed by the want of sleep. To such a degree had this proceeded, that if in the course of the day, any occasion led him to his bed-chamber, the sight of his bed made him shudder at the idea of the restless hours he had passed upon it. In this case it was recommended to him to endeavour, when he lay down at night, to fix his thoughts on something at the same time vast and simple,—such as the wide expanse of ocean, or the cloudless vault of heaven,—that the little hurried and disturbing images that flitted before his mind might be charmed away, or hushed to rest by the calming influence of one absorbing thought. Though not at all a religious man at the time, the advice suggested to his mind, that if an object at once vast and simple was to be selected, none could serve the purpose so well as that of God. He resolved then to make the trial and to think of him. The result exceeded his most sanguine hopes; in thinking of God, he fell asleep. Night after night he resorted to the same expedient. The process became delightful; so much so, that he used to long for the usual hour of retiring, that he might fall asleep, as he termed it, in God. What began as a mere physical operation, grew by imperceptible degrees into a gracious influence. The same God who was his repose at night, was in all his thoughts by day. And at the same time this person spoke to me, God, as revealed in the gospel of his Son, was "all his salvation," so inscrutable are the ways by which God can "fetch home again his banished."—*Rev. Henry Woodard*.

IMPORTANCE OF A HAPPY HOME.

The main endeavour of those who desire their children's spiritual welfare, should be to provide them with a happy home. It is in vain to expect that young persons can be brought to love what is not amiable in itself. If religion be presented to