

THE TRUE GLORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

How prominent are the several miraculous incidents of the Gospel! They stand out like the minarets of Milan, and can be seen from afar. Miracle is essential to a divine religion; that is, it seems consistent with such a religion; and when one is performed it gives solid support to it. How they help one's faith in Christ! How strong Paul must have felt when going into Corinth or Ephesus he knew that the Holy Spirit could endow him to attract the Philosopher as well as the common citizen, and that if need be he would be helped by miraculous power. How striking, as well as numerous, are the miracles of the Gospel; and as credentials of its divine authorship they may be justly held as sufficient. We are silenced into astonishment, or moved with awe, or filled with joy, as we see water transmuted into wine, or a devil cast out, or a Lazarus leap from the grave, or the blind man recover his sight; and we ask, "What other religion can present such a series of wonders, or group together so many strange and astonishing incidents of divine power? Christianity has its startling evolutions of physical grandeur, its unique manifestations of omnipotence, its glorious unfoldings of heavenly mercy. The miracle-basis attraction, and is it not surprising that thousands in Christ's day conjectured that Christianity consisted largely in the display of miraculous wonders.

But great as are these physical tokens of the Gospel scheme, stupendous as were some of these events, and splendid as were the acts of omnipotence in the life of Christ, they are subordinate, and superficial. The eye must look beyond them to that which they demonstrate to be true and illustrate to be excellent. Jesus is more than a wonder-worker; Christianity is more than a system of miracles. Prophecy is a garlanded pillar of Christianity. A religion whose teachers could unfold the future, predicting events with absolute certainty, must be divine. The Bible prophets were in league with omniscience, and how could they foretell as they did, and hundreds of years in advance, and without any human help, the destruction of Sodom, Babylon, Egypt, Tyre and Jerusalem? How could Isaiah declare the advent of the Messiah, describing minutely the characteristics of his person, the characteristics of his death, and the spread of redemption? Daniel saw the throne of monarchies quaking, their occupants losing their balance, and sinking beneath the ruins. Looking the vista of time these same prophets tell us of the end, not only of the downfall of despotism, of the extinction of popery, but of the triumph of the Gospel, of the approach of the last day, of the splendors of a universal resurrection, of the terrors of judgment, and the irrevocable issues of eternity.

What wonderful panoramic scenes these Bible prophets give us! How they excite curiosity! How they quicken faith in the religion they support! Can any religion do more in the way of prophecy? Has any religion done as much?

But, after all, these are but a part of the objective splendors of Christianity; they constitute the attractive externalism of our religion; they are the tapestry, the ornamentation, the garlanded pillars of the temple—the temple is something else. Christianity is something more than a system of miracles on the one hand, or of prophecies on the other. Likewise is it something more than a system of ordinances, which, at best, can only symbolize truth. Christianity does not crystallize in ritualism, however beautiful; in forms of worship, however artistic; in sacraments, however solemn; nor in any thing but the truth. Nor is Christianity alone an aggregation of the best civilizing and social forces in existence. For while it alone furnishes an adequate basis for civilization and social life it proposes something still better. Its great aim is the achievement of spiritual results. Let us not glory in its superficial wonders, but rather in its essential excellencies and the sublime renewal and purification of souls, which it proposes to accomplish, and to prepare for the new heaven and the new earth.

SUPERFICIAL GLORIES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Christianity, like an ancient city, must be entered by its well-guarded gates and viewed from within if its magnitude, its divine character, its exhaustless riches, its wondrous power, be fully apprehended. To stand out side the walls and point a telescope at it is not sufficient. True, something may be seen, some of the glories of the Gospel may pass within the range of our glass, if we look towards it from a distant standpoint; but we shall have the nearest glimpses of its greatness—very shadowy outlines of its purposes, and the most imperfect and unsatisfactory realizations of its stupendous mysteries. As we view Christianity, externally, or externally, we shall have the poorest or the best conceptions of what it is able to accomplish.

For, speaking accurately, it is two-sided; it has an outward physical form and an inward spiritual essence; it has a body and a soul—a shell and a kernel; and evidently the outward, the material phase of Christianity, is less important than its inward spirit. But the tendency of the human mind, until trained, in perceiving the difference, is naturally to discover the external, the tangible, parts first; and unless the inner spirit is soon observed it will be lost in, or be beclouded by, the splendors and manifestations of the outward and the material. This is an obstacle to true progress which the religious teacher must aim to overcome, namely: The attachment of the mind to the spectacular externalism of religion, and its reluctance or inability to perceive, understand, and appropriate its inner and truer power.

Idolatry addressed itself to the eye, the ear, the physical senses, and became superior in its authority over conscience, the will, and the life. A purely spiritual religion, bereft of an attractive externalism, barren of gewgaws and visible ornaments, could hardly compete with the old-time, well-blessed pagan religions.

This was a standing trouble in the time of Christ. On the introduction of Christianity, it was important to establish in the popular mind the thought that it was a religion of spiritual qualities, intended for the soul, and to guard the mind against devotion to any of its physical manifestations. How to do this was a perplexing problem. The publication of Christ's works of healing, of the thirty-three miracles recorded in the New Testament, tended only to fasten the mind upon the physical aspects, the science glories of a religion that was essentially spiritual. The outward, the material, the spectacular was subordinate and to prevent it becoming supreme required the exercise of consummate wisdom, not to say divine skill. But, great as was the danger of confounding the outward and the inward, of mistaking the external for the essential, and requiring infinite care to overcome it, the divine Master was equal to the emergency, and sought to keep the material phases and physical glories of his mission in the background. They are not the chief, the essential part of Christianity. To the leper whom he had healed he said, "See thou tell no man," as much as to say curing the sick is not my great work.

There is a difference, then, between the superficial and the essential elements of Christianity. There is a difference between Christianity, as it is in itself, and all those things that are related to it, such as proofs, illustrations, and the material glories which encumber it, on the other. However dazzling the outside, however architectural the scaffolding, however fine cut the stone wall of a temple, it is not the temple. The cathedral of Milan does not consist alone in its magnificent exterior, in its cloud-piercing minarets, in its stained windows, in its rare filigree work, in its stupendous arches or imposing front, all of which make it an object of curiosity and interest; but not until the traveler has entered and beholds it under illumination does he realize what the cathedral is. Then his eye as if touched by a wand is opened to beauties of which the outside gave no signs, and of which he would forever be ignorant had he not crossed the threshold and perceived them himself. We need to dwell less upon the external glories of Christianity, and to contemplate more its inward beauty and power. But we are prone to attach great importance to the externalism of our religion, thinking it is inseparable from religion, and forgetting the greater glory of that which is internal.

DEAN STANLEY ON THE ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD.

At Westminster recently the very Rev. the Dean of Westminster preached from 2 Kings 2: 15:—"The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." He said he proposed to consider some of the lessons which were derived from the departure of Elijah and the succession of Elisha. They had to take a lesson from the departure of every good and eminent man from amongst them. Such a lesson came to them, as, for example, when they heard of the sudden death, the tragical death, which had, as it were by a flash of lightning, illuminated lives hitherto perhaps almost unknown to them—when they sorrowed for the loss of their brave countryman perishing amidst flames and carnage in a desperate fight at Cabul. Thoughts of another kind must occur from time to time in that great sepulchral church, as for instance, with respect to the death of that inestimable benefactor of his countryman and of mankind, the solemnities of whose funeral recently closed over his life. It was one of the purposes of such deaths that they recalled the lesson of each life that passed away. The same hand of death which rested upon a beneficent existence turned the lamp of truth on the character of him who was gone, and for the first time they fully recognized how much they owed to the self-denying, incessant struggling against the sluggishness, the incredulity, and the self-inter-

est he had to contend with. They felt that such men were the "salt of the earth," which saved them from corruption. Such solemnities in the Abbey, of necessity, came but seldom. It was now fifteen years since he had presided over the Abbey, and the number of eminent men who had been interred within its walls has been but fourteen—hardly one in the course of each year. It was this rarity which gave a significance to each occasion, and as they looked back over these fourteen funerals they saw that each had its peculiar physiognomy, each struck different chords in the heart of the country, and each revealed to them a new character. The event was the same to all, but the result which each left behind was very different. The vigorous politician and statesman, the humorous and philanthropic novelist, the world-mourned astronomer, the high-minded soldier and historian, and in the same grave his fellow-soldier and historian, the gallant soldier of Afghanistan, the resolute statesman of the Punjab, the brilliant student of literature, the indefatigable explorer of earth's primal structure, the unflinching missionary traveler, the sweet musician, the restorer and builder of our churches, the reformer of postal communication of the earth—these, each as they passed away, gathered round their graves separate recollections, and each left a peculiar vacancy to be supplied by those who followed. That led him to the second part of the lesson to be derived from this subject, namely, the succession of gifts by which the purposes of Providence were carried on. They heard it powerfully stated last Sunday what was the aim of one Christian man to benefit his race and in this respect the example must encourage them, because it showed how strenuously he laboured to be the instrument of that social improvement which he seemed to know was within his own peculiar grasp. This lesson exhorted them in a thousand directions, and was placed before them in the extreme diversity of the forms of genius and philanthropy which existed in each succeeding generation. And yet the spirit of the departed was in outward respects quite unlike that of their masters. They might follow this through all the departments of social life. It was so in the constant succession of the poets. Cowley was not like Spenser, nor was Gray like Milton, and yet each was devoted to his predecessor. And so in the case of social reform of him whom they had laid to rest by the standard-bearer of Agincourt, beside the governor of Calais when Calais was still ours. The contrast of the gifts of such benefactors as James Watt and Rowland Hill was as wide as it was possible to conceive, and yet both alike were enrolled in the like service of their country and their God.

Who of us in the course of his life has not seen some remarkable examples of this working faith? God be thanked that instances of it are never wanting! There is scarcely a church in which, if you enquire for them, you may not find one or more of the style of Christians we are speaking of, men who would feel utterly distressed if they were not consciously, and with specific aims, toiling in Christ's field; who have a passion for work which can not be restrained, and are always busy somewhere in some way, doing service for the Master. These persons are known and noticed. Their faith characterizes them, and renders them conspicuous. In all active operations for the advancement of religion, the churches rely upon them, and all eyes are turned to them.

This working faith is manifested in very different degrees. Sometimes it is developed in a martyr's blood, and you have a man like Paul, like Francis Xavier, like Henry Martyn, like Luther, like John Knox, like the Wesleys, like Whitfield, Sumnerfield, Robert Raikes, Harlan Paige and others innumerable, whose names are household words in all Christian lands. Instances of the faith have been found, and are found now, in all sections of the church, and in all stations from the most exalted to the most lowly. It is not high birth that has distinguished the famous soldiers of the cross, nor eminent position, nor great talents, nor extraordinary advantages and opportunities; but only an extraordinary faith—not the faith that made them saints and heirs of the kingdom, which they had in common with all God's people, but a faith beyond that, working in them mightily to will and to dare and to do great things for the Lord that bought them.

A DISTINCTION IN THE NATURE OF FAITH.

Is there not a distinction to be made between the faith that secures salvation, and that which makes men conspicuously useful as Christians? We are accustomed to speak of a saving faith; but is there not also, quite distinct from this—never indeed apart from it, yet not identical with it—what may be called a working faith, a faith that inspires its possessor to undertake great things for God, and that gives him power to do them?

Looking about us on those in the circle of our acquaintance who profess faith, we do see many whose sincerity we cannot call in question, excellent persons, exemplifying the gospel by the purity and peaceableness of their lives, and by the patient steadfastness of their trust in God, who nevertheless are not conspicuously useful? Unless they are not, of course, for no true child of God ever lives in vain. The example of their Christian profession, and of their unblamable deportment at home and before the world, is a testimony for the truth whose influence cannot be lost. The world is better for their being in it, and the church is thankful for them, making use of them in many ways in carrying forward her work. They may be ordinarily counted on with great certainty to stand where they are placed and do the work that is set to their hands, for they are loyal; but they have no spirit of enterprise for God. They are never self-moved workers. There is no zeal for work in them that ever pushes them forward on their own account to engage in Christian labours, and if at any time they are led to engage in such labours, they are easily discouraged, and cease from them. They long for good to be done, and when it is done they rejoice, but it seems never to occur to them that they particularly are the men to do it. In fact, they appear in some way to have got the impression that they are not the men to do it, that they are not called of God to do it, and could not if they would. They have no confidence in themselves, and shrink away from all undertakings that demand a brave heart, and that imply responsibility. If ever an apostle is wanted, it is not from this class of disciples that we look for one to say, "Here am I, send me," and least of all for one to "run before he is sent." If any of them should be asked, at any time, what just now they are endeavor-

ing to do for the Master, it would greatly perplex them to give an answer, and the probability is that very few of them are conscious of ever having been directly instrumental in the conversion of a soul.

It is pitiable that all these persons have saving faith. We may cherish the hope for them that they are of "the wise who shall shine as the firmament" in the everlasting kingdom of God, but they certainly are not of those who having "turned many to righteousness, shall shine above the brightness of the firmament, as the stars, forever and ever." They have received Christ, and love and trust Him as their Saviour. They have confessed Him before men, and do daily confess Him, and He surely will confess them "in the presence of His Father and before the holy angels;" but they have not the faith whereby mighty works are done in His name. The faith by which all things are cared and by which "all things are possible," to them that have it, which makes men valiant soldiers for Christ, and sends them forth to a ceaseless battles and victories—of this they are destitute. Not one of them is a David to go out against the Goliaths of this world and to prevail over them. There is no Samson among them, no Gideon, no Jephtha, no Deborah, no Barak.

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What is this working faith? We have said already that it is never found separated from the faith that saves. Only Christians can have it in whose hearts there is love for God with sincere gratitude for His unspeakable mercies, begetting a true desire to glorify Him. Perhaps it implies a deeper work than is common of the saving faith. We are willing to speak qualifiedly on this point, for we are not sure. We are sure only that while the working faith always implies the saving faith, the converse does not hold.

The working faith is not unlike what we call the faith of miracles. It is the taking hold of God's strength especially for work. It is the assured crediting of the divine promise that whosoever "goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him," and of all sayings like this of Christ, "Have faith as a grain of mustard seed, and nothing shall be impossible unto you." It is the faith which for working strength, and for all the success of work, over-looking all self-weakness and insufficiency, looks only to God, and causes him who has it to be courageous and strong in the strength of God, counting nothing too hard for him because he has an Almighty helper.

Christian reader, you have not this faith. Have you earnestly sought for it? Have you sincerely asked God to bestow it on you? Can you think He is not willing you should have it? Does He not want workers? Our Lord does say if we "have faith as a grain of mustard seed nothing shall be impossible unto you," but he says, "have" it. It is His commandment. It tells you what your privilege is, and your duty.

THE Treasurer at Washington reports that the total amount of standard silver dollars thus far coined is \$42,757,750. The amount on hand in the Treasury office is \$31,703,680. The amount outstanding in circulation is \$11,054,070.

THE Post-office Department at Washington is still considering the lottery question with a view to determining whether a post-master can hold letters arriving in large quantities for persons connected with a lottery, although not so stated in the address.

OBITUARY.

WILLIAM W. GILL, ESQ.

Mr. Gill was born in Shelburne, N. H., in the year 1795. He passed his childhood and youth receiving what was then considered a good education. In 1815 he left the place of his birth, seeking to better opening for his business than his native town afforded. After some hesitation as to a locality, he settled in Liverpool, and shortly after became engaged in the West India trade, then beginning to be actively prosecuted in this place. In 1816 he married a widow Mrs. Barnaby, a lady highly esteemed for her many virtues, and whom he survived several years.

He prosecuted his business for many years with considerable success, but at length met with some severe losses from which he never recovered. Shortly after he retired from his mercantile pursuits and confined himself to the duties of the magistracy, to which position he had been appointed in 1843. These duties he continued to discharge with intelligence and fidelity until old age compelled him to desist, since which time he has lived in comparative retirement.

He became a member of the Methodist congregation about the year 1834, during the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Cooney, and in the year 1844, during a revival of religion, under the Rev. Henry Pope, now in heaven, experienced religion, and united with the church. Henceforth his life, always upright, became more decidedly Christianlike, and he adorned the Gospel of his Saviour to the end of his life. He was for many years a trustee of the church, discharging the important duties of that office as long as his health permitted.

For several years past the infirmities of old age prevented his regular attendance upon the services of the sanctuary, but with meek resignation, he bore uncomplainingly his affliction, and always spoke with pious emotion of the goodness of God, and of his entire confidence in the Saviour.

Though he had reached the advanced age of 87, yet we did not think him near his end. His last illness was sudden, and it was at once evident that he could not live. Death, however, had no terrors for him. He spoke calmly and confidently of his hope in Christ; expressed, with deep feeling, his sense of obligation to the divine Redeemer; bore his affliction with exemplary patience; and, after giving every evidence he was of the elect of God, at length "fell asleep" on Sunday Sept. 28th, 1879. W. C. B.

MISS CAROLINE SMITH.

Sister Smith, daughter of Mr. Robert Smith, of Black Point, near Liverpool, was born in the year 1834. She was a ways thoughtful, and whilst still quite young, was convinced of sin and entered into the "liberty of the children of God." She did not, however, cease at once to church fellowship, but continued for several years to serve God in quiet and unobtrusive practical piety. At length she was persuaded it was both her duty and valuable privilege to become a prominent member of the visible church, and she once connected herself with the Methodist Church of this town, then enjoying the fruitful ministry of the Rev. Jos. Cox, and became one of the most regular attendants upon all the ordinances of religion.

She was for years the comfort and stay of her aged parents, lightening their burdens of sorrow and care by her assiduous attentions, pious and cheerful demeanor, and filial faithfulness. Her health had appeared very good until a few weeks ago, when she took a severe cold which did not yield to the usual treatment. A physician was summoned who pronounced her seriously ill, and prescribed for her case. Her disease, however, continued to make progress, appearing as rapid consumption, and on Tuesday, the 7th inst., she entered into rest. W. C. B.

POSITIVE RESULTS.—There are numerous remedies that cure sometimes and become trusted as useful, but none have ever proved so effectual—cured so many and such remarkable cases—as Dr. Ayer's medicines.

The Cherry Pectoral has restored great numbers of patients who were believed to be hopelessly affected with consumption.

Ayer's Compound Extract of Sarsaparilla eradicates scrofula and impurities of the blood, cleanses the system and restores it to vigorous health. By its timely use many troublesome disorders that cause a decline in health are expelled or cured.

Ayer's Pills and their effects are so well known everywhere to require any commendation from us here.—Scranton (Pa.) Times.

ISAAC R. DORAN, M. D., of Logan Co., Ohio, says:—"Allen's Lung Balm not only sells rapidly, but gives perfect satisfaction in every case within my knowledge. Having confidence in it, and knowing that it possesses valuable medical properties, I freely use it in my daily practice and with unbounded success. As an expectorant it is most certainly far ahead of any preparation I have ever yet known."

FELLOWS' HYPOPHOSPHITES makes an old person look years younger. "The witness is true." Would that I could more widely make it known for its many virtues. Long may its inventor live to see the happy fruits of his invention.

ALEX. CLARKE, D. D. Amherst, N. S.

LAST WINTER we warned our readers against buying the large packs of worthless horse and cattle powders, and as it is now time to begin to use them, we again urge them not to throw away their money. Sheridan's Powders are strictly pure, but we know of no others that are.