

Sin is represented too often as the mere imperfections of a rather imperfect humanity, and condoned as if it were not of the grave nature set forth in the word of God. The old Scotch Covenanters, from whom have sprung some of the best and noblest and purest of humanity, were so alive to the true nature of sin in themselves that, on some occasions, out of a congregation of five hundred communicants on a sacramental day, only two or three would go forward to sit down at the table of the Lord. This may have been the extreme of examination of self, but it is calculated to produce very desirable and noble traits in the individuals exercised thereby. A little more of this noble spirit would be quite seasonable in the present-day church. How is it possible for us to rise nearer to God while we look lightly upon that which prevents our upward growth? This weak and unhealthy theology is having a bearing upon our political life, for leaders seem to have lost sight of the fact that righteousness only exalteth a nation, and hence we have those demoralizing practices that must, sooner or later, bring us to national humiliation if allowed to go on. Are we as individuals going to show a lack of true greatness by passing over sin as a light matter, either in ourselves or in others, or are we, as citizens, going to place men in the places of public trust who rule not according to the principles of righteousness, because of their loose views regarding the nature of evil? God forbid!

3.—Again, John the Baptist may be accounted great because he found the solitary place the most congenial. We read of him that he went out into the wilderness. This is a point to be well considered at the present day. Our civilization, at its present stage, is not beneficial in some respects. It has brought about such a condition of things, that men find it almost impossible to retire to the solitary place, from time to time, to regale their spirits and strengthen character for the conflict of life. Besides this, there seems to have come with the electric age such a tendency to superficiality in character building, that even those who are in a position to go aside period-