

Contributors and Correspondents.

THE ANSWERS TO DISSENT.

Mr. Editor.—With your permission I now come to the consideration of the answer to third reason of dissent, and in entering on it I do so with feelings of deep sorrow and regret, when I see attached to the document as convener of the Committee who draw up these answers, a name I highly esteem and revere, and who is moreover a teacher in our Theological Institute. I feel that there is cause for alarm when the training of our future ministry is entrusted to those who give such an uncertain sound on this vital principle, for if there is one position more clearly set forth in the standards of our Church than another, it is that the Word of God alone is the final judge in all controversies, and that the authority of that Word is requisite to the adoption of any doctrine or practice by the Church, not only that it be not forbidden, but that it be duly sanctioned and authorized, either by precept or approved example, and has not been superseded or annulled; yet we are given as an answer to the Reasons of Dissent, the following statement: "If the use of instrumental music in aid of public worship is prohibited neither in the Scriptures, nor in the subordinate standards of the Church," &c.

THE CHRISTIAN TRIUMPHANT.

BY THE REV. W. SMART, PRESCOTT.

2 Timothy, iv. 8. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day."

all the nations shall know the Lord—when men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed." It was the governing desire of this devoted Apostle, in any way to be the means of introducing this happy state, and ultimate design of the gospel in reference to this world. But his great object was to win souls spiritually to Christ, and those who, like him, had given themselves to the Redeemer, were his real crowns of rejoicing. The Holy Spirit rendered the labours of Paul the aged wonderfully successful in turning many from darkness to light. And now, in review of his past and eventful life, in full view of the bloody death before him, a scene opens to his believing mind full of resplendent glory and rapturous joy. Though handcuffed and chained in the prison of Nero, and surrounded with all the signals and apparatus of death, he exultantly exclaims, "I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day."

The text may further suggest the following:—  
Firstly. The Christian's joy, comfort and strength in the closing scene of life, and the prospect of immediate death. "The time of my departure is at hand."  
Secondly. The Christian's triumph in the survey of the victories he has achieved as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. "I have fought a good fight."  
Thirdly. The Christian's confidence in the solemn hour of death that he has secured and is about to receive the inestimable prize promised. "I have finished my course."  
Fourthly. The Christian's devout exercise of gratitude, love and praise, in the conviction through divine grace that he has in all fidelity espoused and maintained the cause of Christ. "I have kept the faith."  
Fifthly. The language of the text presents to us the results of the labours, toils, conflicts and fidelity of the Christian in the glorious reward that awaits him at the close of life. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me."

1. The Christian's joy, comfort and strength, in the solemn scenes of life, and the prospect of immediate death. "The time of my departure is at hand."  
Death, on our departure from time with all its interests and attachments to eternity, has always been to wise men a subject of serious and anxious reflection and inquiry. Without a divine revelation this subject must always be shrouded in darkness, and viewed with painful uncertainty, if not with horror or alarm. This is especially the case when the mind has any just conception of the nature, character, and government of the Creator, and when guilt awakens the conscience, and remorse fills the soul with bitterness and woe, until one is led to cry out, "Man dieth and giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" To the smitten and impenitent sinner revelation removes the covering from the grave, and presents the fearful retributions of eternity in the threatenings and warnings of the Word of God and the decisions of a final judgment. To the serious and anxious inquirer after truth, to the humble believer who receives and trusts the promises of a bleeding Saviour, who has brought life and immortality to light, and who is the resurrection and the life; revelation lifts up the veil, removes the cloud, and presents to the confiding follower of the Lamb a scene of ineffable love and beauty in the grandeur and glories of an immortal world beyond the tomb. The light of eternity shines on the dark recesses of its terrors. While, therefore, the Pilgrim believer is brought to the verge of the unseen world, and in view of the Valley and Shadow of Death through which he has to pass, under the guidance of the Shepherd of Israel he enters with a firm and steady step; with a humble, but with cheerful and confident reliance on the atoning sacrifice and all complete merits and work of Christ, the Christian traveller goes forward, addressing himself to his Divine Leader. "Yea, though I walk through the Valley and Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod (sceptre) and staff comfort me." It should be, my friends, our earnest desire, accompanied with fervent prayer and effort, by sovereign grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, to be prepared to meet our death in some such manner as this, either with calm serenity or joyous triumph.

2. The Christian's triumph in thought of the victories he has achieved as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. "I have fought a good fight."  
The Christian on a dying bed not only surveys the path through which he has travelled, and by his heavenly guide safely arrived at the threshold of his heavenly home, but his life has been a warfare, a conflict not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickedness in high places. Fully equipped with the armour of righteousness, he went forth in his spiritual campaign, and in the strength of the Lord of Hosts he manfully fought the battles of his Lord and Saviour. Earth and Hell were in alliance against him, "but when the enemy came in like a flood, the Lord lifted up a standard against him," and by divine strength imparted in the hour of peril he overcame and resisted the allurement of the world, the temptations of Satan, and the corruptions of his depraved nature. Led on by the Captain of his salvation, he conquered and subdued his spiritual enemies. When hard pressed by temptation, unbelief, doubts and fears, the Lord Jesus and his precious promises were as an entrenched camp to his soul. "His place of defence was the munition of rocks." Such have often been the power and numbers of the foes of his soul, peace and comfort, and their determined assaults, that he has frequently been despirited, and ready to surrender, and give up all for lost; but, nervous by the conviction of the momentous results of the conflict, he applied for fresh arms and ammunition, and with renewed vigor he would rush with a shout to the conflict. "Rejoice not over me, O my enemy, though I fall: I shall arise, though I sit in darkness, the Lord

will be a light unto me." He has just been engaged with his last enemy, DEATH! Led on by the Prince of Darkness, the struggle has been hard, but the believer has come off more than a conqueror through Him that loved him; Death is not only disarmed but is destroyed! On the brow of the faithful Christian soldier is the wreath of immortal honor and victory. "The chariot of Israel and the horses thereof" are waiting for him. Enter the chamber of death, look on the dying saint; it is the place of weeping with family and friends. The last battle has been fought and won. His trials and troubles are over. All is calm, composed and serene. He opens his eyes! He tries to raise his hand; he makes an effort to speak; he rallies! Raising his pale and death-like hand, and with a look of tenderness and love on those dear ones around him, in a clear and distinct voice he says, "O, wonder of wonders, I am a sinner saved! By the grace of God, I am what I am, an heir of glory!" Taking the hand of her who had shared with him in his trials and sympathized with him in his Christian experience, he says,—"I have passed the valley. I am on the borders of the heavenly land; the pearly gates are open. I shall see the King in His beauty. I shall soon be in the hand where the wicked cease from troubling, where the weary are at rest, and where the inhabitant shall not say, 'I am sick.' I am ready to be offered; the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith. I have finished my course; and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me!" A convoy of angels have been in attendance. See! He is taken up in a chariot of fire! "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" "Let me die the death of the righteous, and my last end be like his."

3. The sentiments of the text viewed as those of a believing mind are expressive of the inestimable prize the Christian has secured as one that has run the race set before him, and is about to receive it from the hands of his God and Saviour at the close of life. "I have finished my course."  
The setting out of the Christian in the divine life is scripturally, and very beautifully compared to a race, in which he is to contend for the prize of his high calling. The prize to be won is based on the pole of the gospel, and is no less than eternal life, accompanied with a crown of righteousness, with all the distinguishing honors and immunities of immortal royalty, in the palace and court of heaven.  
The King, who at an infinite price has purchased, and freely bestows the prize assures the racers, that "those who overcome shall sit down with him on his throne, even as he has overcome, and has sat down on his father's throne." And to animate them in the contest, that it is not as in other races where only one can succeed to gain the prize, but in the heavenly race all who so run and reach the goal shall win the prize and be crowned.

At the commencement of the race, the Christian felt athletic and full of ardor. He set out determined by divine and gracious assistance to win the prize; he gathered up his garments, he girt himself with the girdle of truth, stripped himself of every encumbrance, laid aside every weight, and especially the sin that more easily beset him; he formed a resolution; he covenanted in divine strength to "run with patience the race set before him, looking unto Jesus." But by the length of the course, the heat of the sun, the clouds of dust, and various other impediments that frequently arose, the opposition, difficulties, and discouragements that were often thrown in his path, the ungenerous hissings, sneers, and taunts of the spectators, the frequent jostling of those that were running in the same enterprise, he was often tempted, and even ready to give up the contest; but a sight of the prize ahead, and Him who holds it in His right hand often cheered him in his efforts, and nerved him with renewed strength, and animated with the sublime hope of immortality and glory he steadily persevered in the path of "enduring His path too was sometimes darkened with clouds and storms, was often beautifully illuminated by the light from above, the "light that shines more and more unto the perfect day." Altogether he is so running that he will obtain the prize.  
He is now in full sight of the prize, a little more exertion, a little more proving, a little more of strong faith, a little more stretching forth and pushing forward, and all will be well. In full sight of the goal, fatigued and wearied, faint and exhausted he falls; but at the feet of Emmanuel, in whose hands is the shining prize. He falls, but he has reached the winning post, and won the prize. In a feeble, but clear and distinct voice, without excitement, in holy calmness looking up, he is heard to say, "I have finished my course."

The King upon the throne announces the event, stoops from his august throne, and with his own hand places the unfading crown on the victor's head, and with the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"; a thrilling acclamation runs through the multitude of angels and the General Assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect. "The universe rings with Alleluias to him that sits upon the throne. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

4. The text presents the Christian in the exercise of devout gratitude, love and praise, in the conscious conviction that through divine grace he has in all fidelity been enabled to espouse and maintain the cause of Christ. "I have kept the faith."  
The sacred deposit of the truth, and its possible avowal in an open profession is committed to every believer, fidelity in keeping it from any mixture and alloy of human wisdom, or to make merchandise of it. The Christian will keep the faith once delivered to the Saints as a precious deposit in the purity of its doctrines, as a sweet, and gracious experience of its power and influence on his own heart, mind and conscience. And also in its exhibition in his daily walk, character and conversation before the world. Such a high value does he put on a saving acquaintance with the truths of the glorious Gospel, that he can

truly say, "Yea, doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."  
The Christian, having been divinely instructed, and made wise unto salvation, having been made free by the truth as it is in Jesus, and thereby emancipated from the thralldom of sin, having shaken off the servitude of Satan, has become the servant of God. Having been delivered from a form of religion of traditions and ceremonies he became a disciple of Christ. Inspired with a burning zeal for the honour of his God and Saviour he will consecrate his life, his position in society, his learning, and his talents to the spread and triumph of that truth that has made him a blood-bought son, and procured for him his freedom from the law of sin and death.

If the Christian is a minister, he will not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but will declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or forbear. He will spend, and be spent in maintaining, and proclaiming the faith once delivered to the Saints, and thereby distribute among men the unsearchable riches of Christ. He will hold up Christ in his death as the only atonement for human guilt. His perfect obedience and imputed righteousness is the only ground of a sinner's justification. The power of divine truth, accompanied by the influence of the Holy Ghost, the only and infallible way by which sinners can be savingly enlightened, regenerated, sanctified, redeemed and glorified.

5. After the labours, toils, conflicts and fidelity, the text presents the Christian triumphant at the close of life in the full assurance of the glorious recompense of reward. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me."

My dear fellow Christians, amidst your sorrows and difficulties, think of the happiness, and blessed termination at the time of your departure, from a life of suffering, mortality and sin, to enter on the sinless and immortal life. From the wearisome road you are journeying to the rest of eternity. From the present perishing objects with which you are surrounded, to the crown of righteousness which shall fade not away which the righteous Judge shall give you. Are you faint in the conflict in fighting the good fight of faith? Are you wearied in the race set before you? Do you feel alarmed lest you should not be found faithful unto death? Look unto Jesus; He has promised to strengthen you for the combat, and give you victory, to nerve you for your race; in and by him you shall win the Prize. Commit your all to him, and all shall be well. Yes, when the time of your departure is come, you shall receive the crown, and be admitted into His "presence where there is joy, and at His right hand where there are pleasures for evermore."

O blessed! O glorious state! There those hands that were weak in conflict to wield the sword shall be strong to wave the palm of victory. There their eyes that were often dim with tears and sorrow shall see the King in His beauty, and shall gaze with wonder and with rapturous delight on the resplendent glories of the heavenly world. There that head that has been so often full of pains and aches shall be encircled with an unfading wreath of everlasting light and glory. There those feet that were tired with the length of the journey of life and weary with the toils and fatigues of the race shall ascend the Mount of Zion, enter the New Jerusalem, and walk the golden streets. There that tongue and voice that were often faint and inarticulate in your pilgrimage shall be sweetly tuned to accompany the harps of gold in the sweet and heavenly music and praise of Him that loved you, and washed you from your sin in His own blood. There your garments shall no longer be soiled with sin, arrayed in robes of spotless white, eternal purity. There in your Father's House, there in the Palace of the great King your Saviour, there in your everlasting and blessed Home the royal Diadem shall be given you, and placed on your head. There in those glorious regions, in this blessed Home, you shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on you, nor any heat. The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and shall lead you unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes. Be cheered then in the believing view of this triumph and blessed end of a Christian life. "And when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall you and all who love his appearing, appear with him in glory."

KEEP THY TONGUE.

For all the disorders of the tongue, the remedy must begin at the heart. Purge the fountain, and then the streams will be clear. Keep thy heart, and then it will be easy to keep thy tongue. It is a great help in the quality of speech to abate in the quantity; not to speak rashly, but to ponder what we are going to say. "Set a watch before the doors of thy lips." (Ps. cxli. 3.) He bids us not to build it up like a stone wall, that nothing may go in or come out, but he speaks of a door, which may be sometimes open, oftentimes shut, but will to have a watch standing before it continually. A Christian must labor to have his speech as contracted as can be in the things of this earth; and even in divine things our words should be few and wary. In speaking of the greatest things, it is a great point of wisdom not to speak much. The Apostle James makes it a great character of a Christian's perfection, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." But where is that man? Seeing we find men generally, and most of all ourselves, so far from this, it cannot choose but work this, to stir up ardent desires in us to be removed to that blessed society where there shall never be a word amiss, nor a word too much.—Leighton.

Some men are called sagacious, merely on account of their avarice; whereas a child can clench his fist the moment it is born.—Shenstone.

When it is not despicable to be poor, we want fewer things to live in poverty with satisfaction, than to live magnificently with shame.—St. Bernard.

George McDonald says: "One thing is clear to me, that no indulgence of passion destroys the spiritual nature so much as respectable selfishness."