

Suppose, on the other hand, a meek and quiet spirit is indicated as the natural growth of the soil,—and there are such spirits which, even before the work of regeneration, seem to have "less of earth in them than heaven." It may not be needful to stimulate such a soil to secure a more rank vegetation, but it may be quite important to encourage the growth of active and energetic virtues, which are quite consistent with that meekness and gentleness, which might otherwise degenerate unto indolence and pusillanimity.

There may be indications of a bad and intractable soil, in which to attempt to sow good seed seems almost a waste of time. Perhaps a peculiar implement is needed to grub up the fallow-ground, and the wise husbandman will not spare time or pains till he finds or makes it, and by its skilful use, prepares the ground for casting in the seed. An extra hour of instruction, or reproof, or admonition; a timely visit, or other exhibition of human kindness or Christian love, may have a softening influence upon a very hard heart and open furrows into which the incorruptible seed may be cast with every promise of germinating.

We could easily pursue these analogies, but a thoughtful teacher can do it without help from us, and probably much better than with it.—*Exchange Paper.*

## SELECTIONS FOR THE YOUNG.

### I.—THE POWER OF A BAD HABIT.

A Sabbath-school teacher going one day to inquire after an absent scholar, went into a chandler's shop, where a man partly drunk was buying a piece of tobacco. The shopkeeper tore a leaf from an old Bible, and was about to wrap the tobacco in it. "Excuse me, sir," said the man, "I should be glad if you would put the tobacco in another piece of paper for I cannot bear to see the Bible used so."

Such a remark from such a man surprised the by-standers, and the Sabbath-school teacher asked how it was that he, who professed so much outward respect for the Word of God, was not trying to live according to its pure and holy precepts. "I know your meaning," said the lover of rum and tobacco, "I am sensible of what I am doing, and where I am going; I know it as well as you can tell me; but," he continued with terrible emphasis, and bouncing his fist upon the counter, "I love the drink, and the drink I will have."

In spite of conscience, in spite of reason, in spite of the Bible, in spite of friends, in spite of every effort to save him, this man will go down to a drunkard's grave. The appetite for strong drink has got hold of him, and will drag him to ruin. Let the young men and the boys,—for I am sorry to say there are such,—who are just beginning to drink and to smoke, mark this well. Now you may save yourselves. Now you can take a stand, and resist these habits. Now you can conquer. Wait a little, delay a little, tamper with the glass and the cigar, and they will gain the mastery over you, and you are lost. The power of habit is stronger than the strongest chain. The Scripture says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright: at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."—*Child's Paper.*

### II.—"IT IS TRUE, AND IT MAKES ME GLAD."

A rich gentleman of Silesia imbibed a bitter hatred against Christianity. The conversation of bad men, the reading of infidel books, and the sinful pleasures which he loved, led him to believe that the Bible was untrue, and religion a delusion.

One day, when he was walking over his grounds, he heard the sweet voice of a child reading aloud. He followed the sound, and saw a little girl, with a book in her hand, sitting on a low stool at her cottage door. Her eyes were filled with tears.

"Why do you weep? are you not well, my dear?" asked the gentleman, in a kind tone, as he walked towards her.

"O yes," she replied, smiling through her tears, "but I weep because I am happy, so happy!"

"How can you weep, if you are so happy?" said the gentleman, surprised.

"Because I have been reading about the Lord Jesus Christ, and I love him so much."

"Why do you love him so much? He has been dead a long time; he can do you no good."

"No, sir, he is not dead; he lives in heaven."

"And even if this were true, what benefit is it to you? If he could help you, he would give money to your mother that she might buy you better clothes." It was easy to perceive by the little girl's dress that she belonged to a very poor family.

"I do not wish for money, sir; but the Lord Jesus Christ will take me one day to himself in heaven."

"It is your mother, or some such person, who makes you believe this?"

"No, no," said the child, earnestly, "it is true, and I am glad!" These simple replies, and this happiness in poverty, struck forcibly the gentleman's mind. He gave the child some money for her mother, and went away. But he could not forget what she had said to him. It seemed very strange to him, that such a little girl should love the Saviour, and that the thought of his love should make her so happy; for he felt that she had spoken as she felt. He tried to account for it, but he could not.

On his return home, he was serious and thoughtful. He began to imagine that there was, perhaps, after all, a reality in religion. About a week afterwards, he heard the church bells ring; and learnt that it was for the children's festival. There was to be a sermon preached to them. He thought he would go and hear it. The minister delivered a touching discourse on the text.—"Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou has perfected praise?"—(Matt. xxi. 16.) That discourse deeply affected and convinced the gentleman. He could no longer doubt and disbelieve. He felt then, as he had never felt before. The question which the persecutor Saul addressed to Jesus on the way to Damascus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" arose in his heart; and from that time the name of the Saviour—a name which he could not hear formerly without contempt, became to him infinitely dear and precious.

That gentleman marches now faithfully under the holy banner of Jesus Christ. He can echo now the saying of the little girl, "It is true, and it makes me glad."—*Ch. of Eng. Sab. Scholar's Magazine.*

## SOLUTION OF DOCTRINAL DIFFICULTIES.

A world of difficulty and of theological controversy might be saved, if the mind, instead of employing itself upon particular points, could be conducted at once to the grand source of the solution of all difficulties. Many have difficulties about the doctrine of election; or the sovereignty of God; or the terms of reconciliation to God. Those difficulties seem to inhere only in the intellect; and it is natural to think that verbal explanations may remove them. But, as they result from the blindness that is in the heart, the only effectual way to remove them is to secure the removal of that blindness. This remark may have illustration in the recorded experience of Dr. Merle D'Aubigne, historian of the Reformation. When a student in Germany, he was

perplexed with doubts, and applied to an old and experienced teacher with a detail of the difficulties of which he wished a solution. The teacher refused to touch them, saying, "Were I to rid you of these, others would come. There is a shorter way of annihilating them. Let Christ be really to you the Son of God, the Saviour, and the Author of eternal life, and the light of Christ will disperse your darkness, and the Spirit of Christ will lead you into all truth." The inquirer says:—

"He had shown me the way, I saw it to be right. But it was hard to follow it. But afterwards, when studying the Epistle to the Ephesians with two others, we came to that passage—'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,' &c; &c; the expression, 'exceeding abundantly,' he says fell upon his spirit like a new revelation. They all knelt in prayer, and their supplication, deep and thrilling, penetrated the heavens. 'When I arose in the room,' he says, 'I felt as if my wings were renewed like the eagles.' From that time, I comprehended that my own syllogisms and efforts were of no avail; and that Christ was able to do all by the power that worketh in us. The habitual attitude of my soul was to lie at the foot of the cross." The experience of D'Aubigne in this case has been the experience of thousands.

For the solution of all our difficulties, Christ offers himself through his spirit, as our effectual teacher, who shall lead us into all truth. He says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He is the teacher of the truth in that he is the life. In giving us divine life, he opens a light upon the soul which dispels its darkness. His Spirit is the living soul of the whole system of Christian truth. Christianity is not simply a doctrine, or a theory, or a habit. It is a life; and its doctrine comes effectually to the mind, only as it comes along with the life. And life comes only from Christ's Spirit of life. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, that sets us free from the law of sin and death. Life only can produce life, as it is fire that kindles fire. The transformation of the soul, and with it the true enlightening of the mind, is by "the power that worketh in us." The soul that receives Christ, receives him as a sun, throwing light over the new creation. The Spirit, in now-creating the soul, fixes its attention upon Christ, and sheds abroad the glory of Christ.—He first prepares the heart for the discovery of Christ, and then makes that discovery open upon the mind as a rising sun. The preparation consists in convincing the mind of its sin and misery. After this conviction comes the discovery of the work of Christ in its true glory.

The work, then, of solving difficulties of doctrine, is properly a work done upon the heart by the Spirit of God. It does not follow from this that ministers should never attempt the solution of doctrinal difficulties; but rather that they should attempt it in a way to direct the sinner to the true source of all effectual relief and satisfaction in such perplexities.—*Puritan Recorder.*

## RECEIPTS FOR THE RECORD.

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