

seeking after it, in his troubles, when he cried out to the Living God: "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation!"—*Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.*

TRUTH THE MEASURE OF VITALITY.

However it be as to the survival of the fittest in the animal kingdom, the survival of the truest in human society and in human philosophy is a sound maxim. We must believe that God is not false, and that the Judge of all the earth will do right. All rightly-constituted minds have at least that much faith in the order of the universe. Hence the common saying, "Truth is mighty, and it will prevail." None but the incurably virious believe that the Devil will triumph, and even they do not believe it; they are only unwilling to concede victory to Righteousness and Holiness because they feel that they have thrown in their lot with the fortunes of the Prince of the Power of the Air. These thoughts were suggested by observing a paragraph in a newspaper about Turkey—a letter describing the fearful disorganization which exists in that country. After the capture of Constantinople in 1453 by Mahmoud II., the Turks, not content with the capital of the Greek Empire, under Selim, the grandson of Mahmoud, added Syria and Egypt to their dominions; and yet later Solymán the Magnificent, the most accomplished of all the Ottoman princes, conquered the greater part of Hungary, and extended his sway in Asia to the Euphrates. This was about the middle of the sixteenth century, and at this period the Turkish Empire was unquestionably the most powerful in the world. "If you consider," says the historian Knolles, who wrote about two centuries since, "its beginning, its progress, and uninterrupted success, there is nothing in the world more admirable and strange; if the greatness and lustre thereof, nothing more magnificent and glorious; if the power and strength thereof, nothing more dreadful and dangerous, which wondering at nothing but the beauty of itself, and drunk with the pleasant wine of perpetual felicity, holdeth all the rest of the world in scorn." They were the terror of Europe, and in 1683 had pushed their arms to the walls of Vienna, where they were defeated by John Sobieski, from which time their power began to decline.

Charles V. was the contemporary of Solymán the Magnificent. The power of the Italian Church was at its acme, and the bugles of the Reformation had just been sounded. Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Titian were adorning the churches of Rome, Florence, and Venice with their paintings. John de Medicis, Pope Leo X., made Italy the centre of literature and the arts. It was in 1519 that the building of St. Peter's was commenced—carried on subsequently by Michael Angelo, who, speaking of the grand dome which he had conceived in his mind, remarked that "he would suspend the Pantheon in the air."

Where are Constantinople and Spain and the Church of Rome now? "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee." Judgment appears about to be visited on the Beast and the False Prophet alike.

Mohammedanism has had a wonderful career in the world. It penetrated into Europe; it took possession of North Africa; it spread itself into India, Persia, Tartary, and among the islands of the Malay Archipelago. It has lived as a powerful system through 1,200 years. It could not have lived so long except on the principle of the survival of the fittest—it was truer than anything else with which it came in contact. There are some fine features about the religion of Islam—its unrelenting monotheism and its intense earnestness. The Turk may be very wrong in his religious ideas, but he at least believes them; there is no scepticism in Islamism—no indifference. It is a downright positive thing; it is among false religions like Calvinism among the true. Before it inferior types of religion disappeared.

The Roman Catholic form of Christianity—despite its great corruptions—has run a parallel career. They commenced about the same time—and they are likely

to end about the same time. Romanism was better than Paganism; it announced many glorious truths; and the truth which it held has imparted to it its wonderful vitality.

But strong as were Islamism and Romanism, overloaded with error they carried in themselves the seeds of decay. They shone like luminaries in a dark age; they paled before a pure form of Christianity as did the old light-houses on our coasts as compared with the calcium electric lights. The history of Europe since the Reformation continues to illustrate our argument. Those nationalities which embraced the Truth are precisely those which constitute to-day the powers of Europe. The little realm of Scotland has grown under its stern Presbyterian convictions to be one of the most notable communities in the world. England, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, have completely overshadowed Spain, Portugal, Italy, Austria. France is a powerful and prosperous nation, but even here the elements of strength are derived from the weakening of the power of Ultramontane thought, and the elements of weakness are due to the absence of strong religious conviction.

And now, surveying the whole field of history and philosophy from the beginning, what system is it which has, in comparison with all others, exhibited the greatest amount of vitality? has held its own and continued to grow amid the wreck and decay of all other systems? Friend and foe will at once recognize that that great ENDURING system has been CHRISTIANITY. In three hundred years Paganism—all the culture and philosophy of the Roman world—fell before it. Gradually—even in a corrupted form—it pushed its way over the entire continent of Europe, and made that continent what we see it to-day—without any parallel as an example of civilization in the history of the world. The same Christianity in its Protestant form has created a similar civilization in this western world, and is building up another highly civilized community in Australia—not to speak of the influence it begins to exert in India. Every other form of religion vanishes before its touch. It is plain to see that Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Tào-tse-ism, venerable as they are, and though counting their adherents by scores of millions, will succumb to its impact. The most stubborn resistance it has ever encountered has been from its elder brother—Judaism. Note the vitality that lay in the revelation of the Old Testament, maintaining itself from the days of the Pharaohs against Assyrian, Greek, Roman, through the Middle Ages, down to the present time, in every country on the face of the globe. Prophecy assures us that it will nevertheless be merged in the higher revelation.*

If Christianity manifests this indestructibility—and this conquering power—assailed as it has been too by every form of philosophical speculation as well as by the sword and the power of the State for eighteen centuries—is it not because it is impossible to extinguish the torch of truth?

It is engaged in a great conflict now, with Infidelity. Suppose the sceptical philosophers like Huxley and Haeckel should triumph, do we not all know that we should have Chaos? Is not this a guarantee that Infidelity will not triumph? Can the mother of Chaos devour the child of Mary, whose precepts are the bond of modern society, and whose faith has awakened the sweetest affections that ever melted with charity the human heart? Can LOVE be banished from the world? and shall the Pure in Heart be driven away as a lie from the bosom of society?

PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK.

Most of us talk more or less about "turning over a new leaf" with the beginning of the year, or on our birthday, or some such anniversary. The "old leaf" is not pleasant to look upon. It is blurred and blotted. There are imperfections here and mistakes there. Some of the lines we should be glad to permanently erase. Even if the sins whose impress

*Three religions have been founded in whole or in part on the Old Testament; Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism; and how strong each one has been. Christianity has this for its background.

it bears have been blotted out and are remembered no more against us, it is still a sad and humiliating record. The best of us cannot look upon it without a sigh for the past and a prayer for help and guidance in the future.

It is well to make good resolutions, even though we know that heretofore we have signally failed to keep them. In our own strength we are certain to fail. If these failures lead us to God, they are not wholly in vain. Paul gives us from his own rich experience a key to the secret of his mastery over self. He was accustomed to make good resolutions. "This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Past failures with him were therefore only stepping-stones to success. His pressing forward was a part of that mysterious training in grace whereby human weakness was lifted into contact with divine strength. It enabled the same man who once cried out in bitterness of soul, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" to exclaim in full assurance of faith, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" It is the secret of that triumphant song of victory which the old warrior sends down to the listening ages after his long conflict with sin: "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 at that day."

Let us, then, "turn over the new leaf" thoughtfully, reverently, prayerfully. As yet it is white and unblotted. Only the constant and present help of the Holy Spirit can keep it so. The Saviour has declared that God is more willing to bestow this supreme mark of His fatherly affection than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. Heaven help us all so to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" that "the new leaf" of the coming period may show that we are indeed "growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth."—*Western Recorder.*

"I DON'T LIKE THE MINISTER."

Perhaps he does not like himself any better than you like him. Perhaps he may be thoroughly convinced that there is need of some change in his make-up. But how to bring it about is the question.

We cannot see that your staying away from church will improve him. On the contrary, it will probably add to his discouragement. And discouragement is not the soil most favourable for the growth of excellence. If you would like to see your pastor abler, freer, more whole-souled and cheery, stand by him. Make him feel the stimulus of a warm friendship. It will put him upon his best for progress.

We are at a loss to see how your absence for the above reason can improve the church. Absenteeism is not a curative. It creates many ills, but we do not know of its curing any.

Least of all does it appear how your staying away from church and prayer meeting because you do not like the minister will help your own soul. Christian graces do not flourish under the deadly nightshade of a dominant criticism. There is one further view to be taken. How will your continued absence from the sanctuary where you are covenanted to worship, please the Master? It is related that for us He did some things which were not pleasant. Perhaps we may in return do for Him a thing even so very hard as to attend church although we do not like the minister.

It is said that a monthly magazine is to be started in England, which will be the organ of the Evangelical Party of the Church of England.

A SOCIALIST named Sanoff is said to have roasted himself slowly over a petroleum lamp, left in his prison cell at Odessa, until he had burnt enough of his flesh to insure death. His action was only discovered by the smoke issuing from his cell. Neither at the time nor afterward did he utter a word or cry, and he died as he intended.