

CONCERNING MOTHERS!

By Rev. R. C. Burr, M.A.

The writer was calling one Sunday afternoon on an invalid who had successfully undergone a serious operation, and in answer to the bell a little boy aged five came to the door, and said, "Mother's resting."

"The word, 'Mother,' arrested my attention. Thoughts came crowding into my mind. What touchingly beautiful thoughts are associated with the word! A mother's love, who can fathom it? Who can comfort, console, and sympathize as a Christian mother can? And when such a mother has left this world for 'the better land,' how sacred are the memories she leaves behind her. How her face and form are recalled to mind, and her sayings and doings are treasured up!

A Much Loved Mother.

The poet Cowper, the author of those beautiful hymns, "God moves in a mysterious way," "Oh! for a closer walk with God," "Hark, my soul! it is the Lord," lost his mother when only six years of age. He, a tender, sensitive little fellow, felt her death keenly. His life, afterwards so sad, and full of melancholy, might have turned out so differently had his mother lived to counsel him in his difficulties, and to console him in his sorrows.

A very tender love always existed between our late poet Browning and his mother. She is said to have been the "true type of a Scottish gentlewoman," and a true Christian. When he was a child, Browning's mother told him Bible stories, as she held him on her knee; and she excited his lifelong admiration by the tender care which she bestowed upon any poor hurt animals that came under her notice.

The Mother of Garibaldi.

The mother of Garibaldi was a woman of true nobility of character. In his late years he wrote of her:

"She was a model for mothers. Her tender affection for me has, perhaps, been excessive; but do I not owe to her love the little good that belongs to mine? Often, amidst the most arduous scenes of my tumultuous life, when I have passed unharmed through the breakers of the ocean or the hailstorms of battle, she seemed present with me. I have, in fancy, seen her on her knees before the Most High—my dear mother!—imploping for the life of her son; and I have believed in the efficacy of her prayers."

One of his favorite maxims is said to have been, "Give me the mothers of the nation to educate, and you may do what you like with the boys."

A Mother's Yearning for the Conversion of Her Boy.

The first thing a good mother longs for is the conversion of her children to God. This occupies the first place in her heart. If riches, rank, learning, prosperity are given, she esteems them all of small account, so long as the hearts of her children are estranged from God. That her children may give their hearts to God who loves them, and their lives to be spent in His service, is the highest object of her ambition. Such a mother was Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, the saintly Bishop of Hippo, in Africa. "He was the greatest of the Latin fathers of the Christian Church." In his youth, he lived a life of gaiety and dissipation, to his mother's deepest grief.

Although he gained the highest honours at the University of Carthage, his mother's heart was unsatisfied, as she mourned over his sinful life, and prayed for his conversion. For twenty years she prayed, and at last the answer came. She was greatly opposed to his going

to Milan, but it was there, in the providence of God, that his heart became changed, and his conversion to God took place. He came under the influence of the good Bishop Ambrose, and by means of his preaching, and the reading of God's Word, the change in his life was effected. St. Augustine was the author of that well-known sentence, "O God, Thou hast created us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." Thus his mother's life-long prayer was abundantly and wonderfully answered.

A mother's prayers are always answered, but it sometimes happens that they are not answered till after death. It is recorded that a mother prayed that on her death-bed she might be so composed and peaceful that her ungodly sons might be induced, when they saw how peacefully a Christian mother could die, to give themselves to God. It so happened that Satan was allowed to assail her with his "fiery darts." The sons argued that, if their mother, whom they knew to be a saintly woman, could be so tried at the last, how terrible would their last hours be if they died in their sins; and the manner of their mother's death was the means of their conversion. How truly wonderful are God's workings!

A Mother's Influence is World-wide

"The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." According as the mothers of today train their children, so will the world be for good or evil!

At a gathering of ministers of the Gospel it was discovered that the majority owed their conversion to their mothers. What tremendous power for good is possessed by Christian mothers!

Sir John Kirk, who was recently knighted by King Edward for his magnificent work among the helpless, friendless cripples for forty years, speaks thus of his mother. "A palace would have been a prison without mother. When she came in at the door, my sorrow went out by the window." The cripples of England little know how much they owe to Sir John Kirk's mother!

Thanksgiving for a Good Mother.

Everyone possessing a good mother should not forget to render thanks to God for the gift—even to Him Who says so graciously, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

It is related that, "At the end of a battle, the chaplain was called hastily to see a dying soldier. Taking his hand, he said, 'Well, my brother, what can I do for you?' He supposed that the young fellow would want his to cry to God for help in his extremity. But it was not so. 'Chaplain,' he said, 'I want you to cut a lock of hair for my mother, and then, chaplain, I want you to kneel down and return thanks to God for me.' 'For what?' asked the chaplain. 'For giving me such a mother. Oh, she is a good mother! Her teachings are my comfort now. And then, chaplain, thank God that, by His grace, I am a Christian!' 'And so,' said the chaplain, 'I knelt by his bed, with not a petition to utter—only praises and thanksgivings for a good mother, a Christian hope, dying grace, and an eternal home in glory.'"

Mothers! seize the opportunity, while you have it, of training your little ones for heaven. Sons and daughters! never cease to give thanks to God for Christian mothers. Remember the message that your mother gave you on her death-bed, to meet her in heaven!

Christianity, if it means anything, means honesty in all dealings, purity in all conversation, a charity as broad as the race, unflinching integrity, sympathy, humanity to man, loyalty to God.

TRUE PENITENCE*

Some Bible Hints.

"Conviction" before conversion. True penitence begins with knowing sin and acknowledging it (v.3).

Our sins toward man are great, but God is so much greater than man that the wrong we do Him swallows up the thought of the other wrong (v. 4).

The only cure for sin is the heart that has no more desire for sin (v. 10).

The proof of conversion is the missionary spirit, the longing to bring others to the same healing (v. 13).

Suggestive Thoughts.

Would you commit your sin again if there were no God, and no hereafter, and no man knew?

Do you fear sin, or its consequences?

One that is truly penitent is willing to suffer the penalty, rejoices in God's justice, is finally on God's side against his baser self.

The penitent not only finds confession no hardship, but counts it a privilege.

A Few Illustrations.

"Repentance," said the little girl, "is being sorry enough to quit."

A man sold a farm, but reserved a distant corner and the right of way to it. Thus too often, when we yield to Christ, we allow Satan to reserve a corner of our hearts, and the right of way to it.

The undying effects of sin have been illustrated by the holes left by nails, even after the nails have been pulled out. Such are the nail-holes of the Cross; but we are glad to have them, as memorials of God's mercy and warnings against our weakness.

Are our penitentials well named,—places for arousing repentance?

To Think About.

Am I sorry for my sin, or its punishment?

Do I go as near to my old sin as I dare?

Do I love God's ways more and more?

A Cluster of Quotations.

Repentance is the golden key that opens the palace of eternity.—Milton.

True repentance has a double aspect; it looks upon things past with a weeping eye, and upon the future with a watchful eye.—South.

True repentance consists in the heart being broken for sin, and broken from sin.—Thornton.

If you would be good, first believe that you are bad.—Epictetus.

DAILY READINGS.

M., June 1.—Repentance is sorrow. Acts 2: 27, 28.

T., June 2.—Repentance is humility. Jas. 4: 8-10.

W., June 3.—It involves confession. Lev. 26: 40-42.

T., June 4.—It bears fruit. Matt. 3: 4-9.

F., June 5.—It is turning from sin. 2 Chron. 6: 24-27.

S., June 6.—It leads to God. Acts 3: 14-19.

Sun., June 7.—Topic: Songs of the Heart. VI.

What is true penitence? Ps. 51. (Consecration meeting.)

A beautiful form is better than a beautiful face; a beautiful behavior is better than a beautiful form; it gives higher pleasure than statues or pictures; it is the finest of the finest arts.—Emerson.

* Y.P. Topic, June 6—What is true repentance? Psalm 51.