

From "Memory's Tribute."

THE BAPTISM.

Chap. IV.

"The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."—*Acts of the Apostles.*

"THREE months after the occurrences just related," at length, said Mr. Heyden, keeping his eye still fixed upon the consecrated spot of earth to which it had been turned, "THREE months after the occurrences just related, there might have been seen, in a log school-house, that then stood on the very spot where yonder church is now built, fifteen persons kneeling to receive the hallowed symbols of the body and blood of Christ. Mr. Northend, his wife, and myself, were among the number. O, I shall never forget that man, whose ashes slumber beneath yonder hillock of earth. He was the successful messenger of God to my soul, and to the souls of many others in the settlement. Many, through his preaching, were brought to a knowledge of themselves as sinners, and led to seek mercy at the foot of the cross. When I die I desire to be buried by his side, that in the morning of the resurrection, my body may go up in company with his, to meet in the air that Jesus whom he taught me to love.

"Yes, through the labours of the Rev. Mr. P—, much good was done. The morals of the whole settlement were greatly improved; an Episcopal Church was organized, and for a while every thing promised well.

"With Mr. Northend and his family, literally *old things had passed away, and all things had become new.* Through the enlightening spirit of God, he had been enabled to cast at the foot of the cross, that burden which at first pressed him down, and so find 'peace and joy in believing' on the Lord Jesus Christ. I never knew a character so perfectly changed as was his. His temporal affairs were conducted upon a new and improved plan. Previous to this, he had allowed things to run at loose ends. He was considerably in debt, and made but slow progress in clearing up his land; but a new impulse seemed now to have been imparted to his character. That natural indolence which formerly hung about him, was shook off. He became from principle, uniformly industrious and attentive, to business; and the greatly improved condition of his temporal affairs, was a striking commentary upon that divine declaration, 'that godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.'

"After this change in his religious character, his intellectual faculties seemed altogether of a new order. Energies of mind that had always lain dormant seemed now roused and called into active exercise. In a few years it was universally conceded, that no man in the settlement thought more deeply, or reasoned more correctly, than Henry Northend. His manners, also seemed to acquire a suavity and refinement which they did not before possess. These, singular as they may appear, I can assure you are facts."

Unwilling as I am to interrupt the progress of this narrative, I cannot withhold the remark, that I have often witnessed a change exactly coincident with that here stated.

Persons reputed to be below mediocrity in point of intellect, and distinguished for every species of habitual incivility and discourteousness, have, when brought under the influence of religion, developed new faculties of mind, and acquired a character for great amiability of manners. This can be accounted for, without supposing the intervention of any miraculous power.

It has been said, "that he who has read and fully understands *one* well-written book is a learned man. If there be any truth in this remark, it must apply with great force to the reading of the word of God. This book contains the elements of all learning and knowledge. It is impossible for the human mind to dwell upon its truths, and to examine its pages with that intensity of feeling, and earnestness to discover its hidden treasures which characterise the returning sinner's perusals of the word of God—it is impossible for the human mind to meditate often upon the truths of revelation, and to reflect much upon the "deep things of God" without acquiring, and in time evincing, new and more vigorous powers of thought. The mind being disciplined by religious meditation, be-

comes better fitted for thinking accurately upon all subjects; for habits of deep thinking upon any one particular subject, are likely to induce the same habits in reference to all other subjects. The astonishing effect which the reading of the scriptures and pious meditation are capable of producing upon an unlettered and uncultivated mind, is strikingly displayed in the letters of this Dairyman's daughter, addressed to the author of that excellent tract. And when the true spirit of Christianity is imbibed, and that "charity which suffereth long and is kind, which doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, and is not easily provoked" becomes the animating and controlling principle of our actions, it cannot fail to produce a corresponding gentleness of manners. But I have already kept the reader too long from the narrative.

"In all things," continued Mr. H., "Mr. Northend acted agreeably to his Christian profession. No man ever brought the influence of religion to bear more universally upon all, even the minutest actions of his life. In the management of his children he now evinced great judgment, and showed how deeply he felt the awful responsibility that rested upon him in relation to this matter. He seemed to consider himself sacredly pledged and solemnly bound, agreeably to the exhortation in the baptismal service, 'to see that his children were taught, so soon as they were able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise and profession, they had made at their baptism, by him.'

"It was a uniform custom with him, from which he never departed, to devote two or three hours every Lord's day to the instruction of his children in religious things. They were not only taught to recite from memory the catechism, but were taught to *understand* it. The nature of baptism was often explained to them—the privileges of a covenanted state—the advantages of being united to Christ, their spiritual head the fearful condition of those who by wicked works deny that Jesus to whom they had been brought, and by whom they had been blessed, in infancy; these were subjects often discoursed upon at great length.

"Mr. Northend endeavoured not only to *instruct*, but to *interest* his children in these things. He read the scriptures with them, and selected those parts which were calculated to fix their attention, and make a lasting impression upon their mind. Those scripture narratives that are peculiarly tender and touching, and which are related with a simplicity suited to the capacity of childhood; those examples of devotedness to God, where true piety appears most lovely and interesting were not only read, but made the subjects of conversation between this father and his children. In these efforts to rear up these young and tender plants for immortal glory, he did not forget that it is God alone that can give the increase. He often prayed with and for his children.

"The effect of this religious training was truly happy and salutary in reference to most of his offspring; but the unfortunate boy whom we mentioned as having concealed himself in the corn-field to avoid receiving baptism, was extremely obstinate and wayward. While his little brothers and sisters were listening in delighted admiration to the religious instruction of their father, he always seemed restless and uneasy, glad when the exercise was closed, and ever anxious to escape it. This aversion to religion showed itself at a very early period. So opposed was he to the receiving of baptism, that he declared it should never be done but by force. His father did not think fit to use coercive means, as he was now upwards of twelve; so James Northend was never baptized. And I have sometimes thought that the sad and painful end to which he finally came, was the testimony of God, designed to warn those who despise the ordinances of the Most High. All the other children of Mr. Northend became pious at an early age."

To be continued.

The heathen and Mahomedans offer up prayers and praises to God, and by the light of nature apply themselves to infinite power for the relief of their necessities, and return their thanks to infinite goodness, as the source from whence they receive all their blessings.—*Nelson.*

My soul! when I shake off this dust,
Lord! in Thy arms I will entrust:
Oh! make me Thy peculiar care;
Some mansion for that soul prepare.—*Kenn.*

From the Diary of an Old Clergyman.

THE MISTAKE CORRECTED.

Dec. 19, 1820:—"Mr. T. requests the Rev. Mr. A. to call on him immediately. He is in a very dreadful and agonized state of mind. The long delayed lightnings of divine wrath are just gleaming above him, just ready to strike his reprobate soul to hell. Come without delay, and witness the dying anguish of an unforgiven sinner." Such was the tenor of the note which I found on my table, when I returned from a long round of morning parochial visits. It was from a parishioner to whose bedside I had been frequently summoned by messages of a different character. He was an excellent man, but of a morbid temperament. For many years he had been a steady, consistent communicant of my church, humble and unostentatious in his Christian character, benevolent and charitable, prompt both with his money and his services in the cause of the Church, weaned from the world, domestic in his feelings and habits, scriptural in his views, loving mercy, doing justly, and walking humbly with his God. He was taken sick during the existence of a great religious stir in the city where he lived, and whilst weakened by disease, had received the kindly-intentioned visits of a teacher more zealous than skilful in his profession, to whom his unobtrusive piety was entirely unknown, and who sought to rouse him, as he said, from a state of "legality" in which he feared the good man was resting. By the aid of bold denunciation, new phraseology, strong terms, and a stern visage, he had contrived to put Mr. T. into very considerable fear. He set up a new standard of Christian character—a standard mixed up of animal feeling and mental excitement, having no reference to those fruits of holiness to which I had been accustomed to refer my parishioners as the best evidences of Christian piety. He assumed the broad ground that, upon his principles, Mr. T. had no religion—he must be converted, or go to hell. A repetition of these visits and conversations for several days, during a temporary absence from my people, to which circumstances had constrained me, had, in the enfeebled state of Mr. T.'s body, produced a powerful effect upon his mind. Doubts were stirred—fears very much roused. I had taught him while he rested exclusively upon the merits of the cross of CHRIST for pardon, grace, and acceptance, and looked to the HOLY SPIRIT for renewal, direction, and assistance, that he must still, as if all depended upon himself, be found "*working out his own salvation*," "careful to maintain good works," and striving to "*make his calling and election sure.*"

The new views imparted by my young clerical brother had made him doubt the truth and correctness of my instructions; and when I first saw him after my return, instead of the meek, patient, subdued man, distrustful of himself, looking to God in CHRIST, welcoming me with a kind and cordial look, with Bible and Prayer-book at his pillow, I met as I entered his chamber, a stern and gloomy look, a cold reception, a constrained and gruff, "How do you do, Sir?" which I could not comprehend. I took a seat beside him, and expressed regret at finding him still in bed, though glad to see him look better. "The body is well enough, but you have ruined the soul," was the stern reply. I looked at his eye, for it struck me in a moment, he was crazed. There was, however, no sign of delirium in it. A harsh and gloomy expression sat upon his countenance, but there was no indication of a disordered intellect—the peculiar aspect of even incipient insanity was not there. The view and conviction afforded indiscribable relief, and I was glad to look elsewhere for the explication of the revolution that had taken place in him. "Mr. R. has just left us," said his wife, "he has been very kind in calling during your absence." Before I could express what was just starting to my lips—a grateful feeling for Mr. R.'s attentions—my friend broke out, "Yes, and a faithful and honest minister of God he is. Would to God I had always been so faithfully dealt with. I should not now have been on the borders of hell. All my false supports have been struck from under my soul, and I am just finding out that God is a consuming fire. Oh, my poor deluded, unpardoned soul!"

I began now to perceive what was the matter. It was no new case to me. His last observations were, of course, a deep reflection on my faithfulness and