

WHITFIELD'S CONVERSION.

It is very instructive to notice how many eminent Christians have begun a religious life by penances and self-denials, hoping in this way to satisfy conscience and obtain peace. The effort has always failed, and only when the burdened soul has renounced all self-righteousness and trusted with a simple faith in Christ, has peace been found. The author of "The 'I Wills' of Christ" gives the following account of Whitefield's struggles.

The earnestness and austerity in religion of the little band of Methodists deepened to a wonderful extent, and exhibited itself in unbounded self-denials, charities, fastings, prayers, and labors, in all which they found no spiritual peace, yet persevered in spite of opposition, defamation and contempt.

"I now begin," says Whitefield, "like them to live by rule, and to pick up every fragment of my time, that not a moment of it might be lost. Like them having no weekly sacrament at our college, although the Rubric required it, I received it every Sunday at Christ Church. I joined with them in keeping the fasts, by fasting Wednesdays and Fridays, and left no means unused which I thought would lead me nearer to Christ. By degrees I began to leave off eating fruits and such like, and gave the money I usually spent in that way to the poor. Afterwards I chose the worst sort of food, though my place furnished me with variety. My apparel was mean. I thought it unbecoming a penitent to have his hair powdered. I wore woollen gloves, a patched gown, and dirty shoes.

"It was now suggested to me that Jesus Christ was among the wild beasts when he was tempted, and that I ought to follow his example, and being willing, as I thought, to imitate Jesus Christ, after supper I went into Christ Church walk, near our college, and continued in silent prayer nearly two hours, sometimes lying upon my face, sometimes kneeling upon my knees. The night being stormy, gave me awful thoughts of the day of judgment. The next day I repeated the same exercise at the same place. After this the holy season of Lent came on, which our friends kept very strictly, eating no flesh during the six weeks, except on Saturdays and Sundays. I abstained frequently on Saturday also, and ate nothing on the other days (except Sunday) but sage tea, without sugar, and coarse bread. I constantly walked out in the cold mornings till one part of my hands was quite black!"

This truly Romish course of penance exhausted nature, and threw him into an alarming illness, which lasted seven weeks. This sickness Whitefield calls in his Journal "a glorious visitation." He spent much of his time in reading the Greek Testament and in prayer. He gained more truthful, clear, and affecting views of his own sinfulness, and saw how hopeless was the effort to remove a sense of guilt by religious observances. "One day," he says, "perceiving an uncommon drought and noisome clamminess in my mouth, and using things to allay my thirst, but in vain, it was suggested to me that when Jesus Christ cried out 'I thirst,' his sufferings were near over. Upon this I threw myself on the bed, and cried out, *I thirst, I thirst*. Soon after I perceived my load to go off, a spirit of mourning was taken from me, and I knew what it was truly to rejoice in the Lord.

"When I said those words, *I thirst, I thirst*, my soul was in agony; I thirsted for a clear discovery of my pardon through Jesus Christ and the seal of the Spirit. I was at the same time enabled to look up with faith to the glorious Lord Jesus as dying for sinners, and for some time I could not avoid singing psalms wherever I was."

HOME LIFE.

The *People's Journal of Health* says: "Even as the sunbeam is composed of millions of minute rays, the home light must be constituted of a little tenderness, kind look, sweet laughter, gentle words, and loving counsels. It must not be like the torch-blaze of unnatural excitement, which is easily quenched, but like the serene, chastened light which burns as safely in the wind as in the stillest atmosphere. Let each bear the other's burden the while; let each cultivate mutual confidence, which is a gift capable of increase and improvement, and soon