

Family Reading.

RIGHT NAMES.

It is time that some things were called by their right names, as downright laziness, or miserable sham and hypocrisy! There is not a day in the year when people cannot attend church if they will. They go on all days to business, and on all nights to parties and places of amusement. This miserable habit of neglecting church is a shame and a disgrace. To "profess to call themselves Christians," and then treat the worship of Almighty God as they would scorn to treat a secular appointment is not a hopeful piety. When one's religious duty is put on such a low basis, how can he expect to get any inspiration from it? Does he believe what he professes? Are Jesus Christ and the Gospel and the sacraments and salvation and eternal life, realities? Then why place them down below your worldly plans and pleasures? Why degrade them by making them subject to your whims and conveniences? Is there no such thing as duty? Can you neglect in this way and expect your religion to come to your aid in a time of trial and misfortune? Can you invoke it in your last sickness and die in its comforts? If people so degrade their religion, by putting it in an inferior place, do they consider that it, in that case, degrades them? In other words, it is to every one what he makes of it.—*Living Church.*

CONVERSION.

In an article under this head, suggested by a recent revival movement in Honolulu under sectarian auspices, the *Anglican Church Chronicle* says:

We use the occasion however as affording an opportunity to inquire for the benefit of our readers into the character of the spiritual fact which we call *Conversion*. It is charged against the revival system generally that it is responsible for a great crop of errors in the field of Christian tillage, and that among them error as to what *Conversion* really means is sadly prominent. It is undoubtedly true in many cases, especially when revivals have been carried on under the stimulus of powerful excitement by men of magnetic power and fervid heart-searching oratory. It has been forgotten that conversion to God is not with all men, nor with most men, a sudden act. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus by a vision from heaven was a sudden act, but we have no warrant in Holy Scripture for inferring that his conversion was typical, and that all men turn to God alike. The change in Saul was not from sin to holiness at once. It was from Saul the persecuting Jew to Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. Conversion means turning about, but it is nothing unless a man stays turned. To one the turning process may be quick and sharp, the change in his feelings may be very sudden. A present hope is blighted, an earthly idol is shattered, a wasting sickness arrests him in a career of exceeding sinfulness, an earthly life dearer than his own is taken from him—in some way the reality of things unseen breaks upon him—it may come in the still small voice of a word spoken in season by some friend, a sermon, a prayer, a glowing and emotional service. The sudden change is exceptional, the change is for most men gradual. The sinner comes to himself usually, after many warnings to which he has not been altogether indifferent, after many blows which have wounded him, and after having stifled many good impulses. Divine grace has gradually been bringing him to the conviction that he must change his life or lose heaven. By degrees he comes to the point of resolution and action, and then and there changes his mind. He turns around. The things which he hitherto loved to his spiritual hurt are behind him. The new life, the new light on the old duties, the new strength for the old conflicts, the heaven on earth, and the heaven in the world invisible, are before him. He has placed himself resolutely on the royal road but finds it hard to keep there. The habits of sin have a strong hold upon him and pull him back. He is weak and finds it difficult to rise. He sometimes strays from the safe road. But as

long as his will is to do the will of God concerning him, and as he perseveres and turns ever to the true sources of strength he is a converted man, a saved man. He will be constant in prayer, he will thankfully receive the grace of heaven in the ways and means of God's appointment. The baptism for the remission of sins, and "the bread which cometh down from heaven" will be spiritual facts of inestimable value to his soul. The converted man will become more and more permanently converted. He will be less and less entangled with the affairs of this life. He will breathe a purer, sweeter air, borne as it were on gales from heaven. He will anticipate the heavenly harmonies and the triumphs of a son of God, who goes through life repenting daily of each day's transgressions, repenting deeply after every occasional fall into the guilt of the old life, brought by repentance to true conversion and kept by repentance in that state which is made imperative by Divine command on every one who will enter into life. "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven."

FAITH—AN ANECDOTE.

A little boy once sailed down the waters of the St. Lawrence. He was about six years old, and images of beauty floated for him on every distant cloud.

The day wore on; the islands were passed, and now the boat began to descend the rapids. A head wind lifted the breakers; the sky darkened, but the child and mother felt the excitement of the scene. Like a living human creature the strong boat kept its way. It took a manly pride, it seemed, in mastering the obstacles to its course, and as it rose and fell with heavy swing, a sense of power filled the hearts and souls of the passengers.

The boy stood still. Tighter and tighter he grasped his mother's hand, and with blue eyes darkened with earnest thought, looked upon the face of the water. Soon the rain began to fall heavily, the water was still more agitated, and the mother felt that when the keel grated against the rocks visions of storm and wreck passed through the little one's mind.

She saw that he was frightened, and began to question whether it would not be best to carry him to the cabin, and by song and story beguile his excited mind. Just at this moment he gently pressed her hand, and looking down upon him, she saw the expression of serious thought give way; a sweet smile dawned on his lips as he said, softly to himself rather than to her, the following lines:

"Then the captain's little daughter
Took her father by the hand,
And said, Is not God upon the water
Just the same as on the land?"

The mother felt thankful for this pleasing proof of her little son's confidence in His heavenly care, and prayed that the same sweet, trusting spirit might cling to him through life.

KINDLY IMPULSES.

Has it ever occurred to you, when you have felt a sudden impulse to do a kindly deed, that perhaps God is using you as His instrument to answer some one's prayer?

He sends His angels on such missions, and to human hearts also. He permits this great honor of doing His will. Thus again and again, when an earnest prayer has gone up from one in trouble, sorrow, or need, He moves some gentle heart to go and carry help and comfort. We have often heard the glad words over some little gift or pleasure: "That's just what I have been wanting!" and possibly the same lips might add, "and just what I have been asking God for."

Therefore, unless those older and wiser than we assure us that we have mistaken an unwise thought of our own for one of these promptings of God, let us never check these impulses by the words, "Oh, I don't know that it is worth while. It might as well be left undone." You may be sure our Heavenly Father can find some one else to do His bidding, but you will have lost a golden opportunity of serving Him.—*Young Christian Soldier.*

WHAT IS BEING RELIGIOUS?

"It is very hard to be religious." So men say, and from their point of view, true. But we shall not get to the "true inwardness" of it until we find out what "religion" is. Religion with most persons is going to church, or sacrament, or reading the Bible, or saying prayers. Sometimes religion is enlarged a little, until it means teaching Sunday-school class, or visiting the sick and poor, or giving money to church purposes. And the "good" or "religious" life means to such some or all of these things; and the more of them the man does the more religious is he. Let us see.

St. Paul understood what the "good" or "religious" life is; and he writes to some slaves in Ephesus thus: "With good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men; knowing whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same (i.e., good thing) he shall receive of the Lord." The Apostle is not talking about what men call religion at all; talking of the work these slaves were doing and made to do. "Whatsoever good thing;" whatsoever good ploughing, or reaping, or waiting on table, or running on errand—no matter what the work these slaves were ordered to do, if they did it not merely because their masters commanded them, but because the Lord commanded them—this was a good work in the eyes of God; and for this good carpentry, or farming, or serving they would receive a reward. If true for slaves, true for free. If true for servants, true for masters. The carpenter who works good carpentry as to the Lord will get reward; the father who does work to please God; the mother who does nursing for the Lord and housekeeping; the child who learns his lessons as for the Lord; all these are doing "good works;" all these done for the Lord are religious works; he who does these is religious, if he does them for the Lord. For doing these things the Lord will reward him, even as he promised to reward the slaves at Ephesus for doing their work. In other words, whoever does the daily work given him to do, doing it for the Lord, that is religious work, that is a "good work" and to be rewarded. This is the religious life, doing whatever we do as to the Lord and not to men.

THE COMPASS TO STEER BY.

"Well, my boy, so you are going to try your fortune in the city? I tell you it is a dangerous ocean to launch your craft on," said a man to his neighbour's son.

"Yes, sir," answered the lad, taking his Bible from his pocket; "but, you see, I've got a safe compass to steer by."

"Stick to it, stick to it," cried the man; "and the enemy may blow hot or blow cold, and he can't hurt so much as a hair of your head."

ENGLISH CLERGY NOT STATE PAID.

Mr. Gladstone, Lord Salisbury and Earl Granville have replied as follows to the inquiry of an Accrington correspondent—Are the Bishops and Clergy of the Church of England, State paid? Mr. Gladstone's secretary writes:

"Sir; Mr. Gladstone, in reply to your letter, desires me to inform you that the clergy of the Church of England are not State paid." Lord Salisbury's secretary writes: "Sir: I am directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter. In reply, I am to say that the Bishops receive no grants from the State, but they receive a revenue from ancient endowments given to the Church." Lord Granville's secretary says: "Sir: In reply to your letter I am desired by Lord Granville to state that tithes existed in England before Acts of Parliament, though the present mode of assessment and payment was settled by the Tithes Commutation Act, 6 and 7 William IV. c. 79, and subsequent statutes. I am to add that you will find a short summary of the origin of tithes, which is very complicated, in 'Blackstone's Commentaries,' or other text-books of English law, or in most encyclopedias."