

tion. The experience of such men is comforting and encouraging. Paul, that marvellous man and apostle, gives an account of his own inward life in the seventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans. There is no competent exegetical doubt. Evidently, the apostle didn't consider himself free from sin at that time. Up to that time his experience can be given in a few sentences of his own, "I find then a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." This is certainly not the language of a man who felt that he was free from sin. It certainly was not in harmony with the doctrine of sinless perfection. Some one might say, "That was the apostle's experience then, but not afterwards." Well, this is a matter that can be easily settled.

It is not a matter of opinion. It is not a matter of conjecture. The proof of it is at hand. I turn up to his letter to the Philippians, written at a much later period of his life. I find that his religious experience has undergone little or no change since he wrote his epistle to the Christians at Rome. Nothing could be plainer than his statement to the Philippians. Here is what he says: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul certainly was not a perfectionist. That's clear. Paul and the self-constituted sinless people have one thing in common. They both forget. They both forget something. But they both don't forget the same thing. Paul forgot what he had done in view of all that was still to be done. Perfectionists forgot all that was still to be done, in view of what they have done. He looked forward with humility, earnestness and zeal. They look back with no small degree of pride, self-complacency and delight. Profundity produces humility. Superficiality produces self-complacency. At the successful close of a life spent in scientific investigation, Sir Isaac Newton said: "I have been gathering a few little pebbles on the beach." A mere smattering of the subject would have led him to think that he had fathomed the depths of the ocean of science. So it was. So it ever will be. One feels constrained to quote the lines of Pope in this connection:

A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian Spring,
Their shallow draught intoxicates the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.

Some distinguished perfectionists make very light of Paul's experience. They set him aside with a wave of the hand. They see no difficulty in other men being perfect, even though he was far from being so. It is abundantly clear that the advocates of this theory are not over-burdened with modesty. It takes a good deal of hardihood to put Paul on one side of the spiritual scale, and one's self on the other, and then come to the conclusion that Paul was much the lighter of the two. Paul, when speaking to Christians, generally recognizes the fact that they are imperfectly sanctified. He says there is no harmony between the spirit as the source of spiritual life, and the flesh, the remains of the corrupt nature. There is a constant conflict between them. A verse from the fifth chapter of Galatians will make this clear. "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." These passages apply to all Christians. There is no reason why they should be restricted to the Galatians. Paul never intended such a thing. I have grave doubts of the goodness of any man who considers himself better than these passages. They give the experience of every honest, intelligent Christian. If a man thinks he has already attained that after which his fellow Christians are only striving, he has got in advance of much that is precious in the Bible. It is a dead letter to him. He has out-lived it. What use can he make of the Psalms? How can he adapt their language and pour out his heart in confession? What sympathy can he have with Isaiah when he says: "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." If there were any perfectionists in the days of Paul, how they must have pitied him! How it must have touched their hearts as they looked down from their lofty pedestal of perfection on the poor apostle, struggling in his imperfection with his infirmities and sins! And doubtless, the perfectionists of to-day pity us as they look down upon those of us who have not been able to get beyond the Pauline teaching on this subject. That man is an able Christian, who has the experience of the apostle Paul. Blessed is the man that believes and feels as Paul believed and felt. Blessed is the man that lives and dies as Paul lived and died. His warfare was soon to be over. The victory was soon to be his. His crown of righteousness he saw in the hands of the righteous judge. Looking back over an eventful life upon the service of the Master he was able to say: "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." (II Timothy iv 7, 8) Jesus Christ was the only perfect man that ever lived in this world. Looking too little at Him, and too much at ourselves is a fruitful source of perfectionism. It gives us too low a view of Christ and too exalted a view of ourselves. Now it is very remarkable that all the best saints never themselves knew their own perfection. Not one of them

ever claimed to be free from sin. They all saw too much perfection in Jesus ever to see very much in themselves. The late Dr. A. A. Hodge tells of a woman who was a member of his Church. She had washed her garments in the blood of the Lamb, and seemed ever to walk on the very verge of heaven. She was never known to speak of her own character or her own graces. One Sabbath morning, when the doctor came out of the pulpit, he found her on her knees in her pew perfectly absorbed in worship. He spoke to her. This was her reply: "Is He not holy? Is He not glorious? Is He not beautiful? Is He not infinite?" There was not a word about herself. She saw too much in Christ to see much in herself. A great deal of perfectionism is unsound to the core. All self-consciousness is of the very essence and nature of sin. A man who really has the love of God in his heart is always reaching forward to things which are before. The more he loves, the more he wants to love; the more he is consecrated, the more consecration he longs for. He has grand ideas and grand aims, but they lie beyond him in heaven. The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, of London, wrote a letter recently to a Presbyterian pastor, in a town where some "Spiritual perfect and sinless" folk are making a sensation. And from the tone of his letter, evidently the great preacher is not a believer in perfectionism. He allows his humour to play a little. He asks his Presbyterian brother to catch a specimen and send him on, marked right side up, as a curiosity for Londoners to see. He declared that he had known people who might have been thought perfect, but they always disclaimed it; and some who claimed it, while no mortal ever believed in their pretensions. What a man is, and what he says he is, are often two very different things.

THE AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS' FUND.

MR. EDITOR, I was one of the audience who listened to the report read by Mr. J. K. Macdonald, the respected convener of the committee having charge of the above fund. That report, sir, was disappointing, and as the Convener said, exhibited an "apathy and indifference" much to be deplored. Can it be that the Assembly, and members of our church have lost all interest in this fund, which an eminent minister designated as the "Ministers' Infirmary Fund?" It would look as if they had, for matters are in a most unsatisfactory state. There must be something wrong somewhere, and a radical change in the management of the fund is necessary to its existence.

The Convener stated that the Rev. William Burns and himself have endeavoured to the utmost of their power to improve the condition of the fund, and judging from the number of eloquent addresses which they have delivered before Synods and Presbyteries, the ministers at least should be awakened to a sense of their duty to the fund. But I question if ministers are the class to whom appeals should be made on this question, as very few of them have surplus funds to give for such an object, besides it is a delicate subject for ministers to speak of to their people, and indeed very few will touch the subject at all. To whom then should we go; most decidedly to the wealthy men of our Church, of whom there are a large number, well able to place this fund in the position which its best friends desire, and there is no one more suitable than Mr. Macdonald, the very able Convener. He is an elder of our Church, an eloquent speaker, and connected with a prosperous financial institution. It is hardly the business for a minister, as it seems too like pleading his own cause, besides his salary would be a large item in the expenses.

Then, sir, I think the fund should be managed either on a strictly financial basis, or that of a benevolent fund, pure and simple, from which indigent ministers could draw at pleasure, and, judging from appearances, there will always be plenty of these.

That such a fund at this moment would warrant such a report, as that read by the Convener, is disappointing to many, and surprising to as many more, who look forward to the fund as the main provision for old age. I am no grumbler, Mr. Editor, nor am I a disappointed office seeker, but the condition of things revealed by the Convener is such as to cause alarm, and it is not too soon to urge the committee to lose no time in making an effort to improve matters, for on the success of this fund depends the comfort of many of the excellent of the earth.

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN has always taken a lively interest in the Schemes of the Church, and especially in the general welfare of our ministers, and I would like to have a suggestion from it on this most important topic.

June 20.

DELEGATE.

It was a very beautiful tribute, says the New York Independent, that the Princeton class of 1879 paid Dr. McCosh at its decennial reunion last week. The class presented the college with a mural statue by Mr. St. Gaudens, which represents the ex-President in high relief and life-size in his natural pulpit position. The likeness and the workmanship are declared excellent. The statue is placed in Marquand Chapel. There was an address of presentation by the Rev. Dr. Halsey, of the class of 1879, and an address of acceptance by President Patton; but the best words of all were Dr. McCosh's in acknowledgment of the tribute to himself. It is gratifying to see that the recent graduates of Princeton have a full appreciation of the great debt which their *alma mater* owes to Dr. McCosh.

Pastor and People.

TRUSTING.

Through all strifes and tears
I have a Friend;
He'll safely guide and comfort
To the end.
Through sickness, pain and death,
He has my hand;
He'll bring me safely through them all,
To Canaan's land.
What care I if the way is hard and cold?
He knoweth best:
When I am faint, and can no further go,
He'll give me rest:
And such a rest as that is worth
All pain and tears:
In Him I'll rest and feel secure
From all my fears.
So take and lead me, Lord, where'er Thou wilt,
But bring me safe at last
To Zion's hill,
Where I no more shall know what here
Is ill:
And there, with loved ones and my Saviour blest,
I'll lay my weary burdens down
And take my rest.

PREPARING THE HIGHWAY.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

To have real joy in living the Christian life, there must be the laying "aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us." There must be a sacrificing the idols of the heart, and a subjection of the will to the Lord. Not only a saying, "Thy will be done," but a doing the will of God, cost what it may.

Sometimes Christians are found who set out with this truth clearly defined in their minds, and who feel the power of it in their hearts, and whose lives bear witness to its sway; but usually it takes some time filled up with painful and sore experience ere ordinary Christian professors see their way to the highest joy and power. They go on grasping after it, with direct or indirect attempt, according to the measure of their earnestness and desire to be entirely the Lord's. And to the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. But often, how thick is that darkness through which the light must needs break. A darkness of wrong teaching, of prejudice, of self-will and self-conceit, of custom, of old and fixed fashions in religion, of what men have done for so long in the past, and of what they are expected to do still. A heavy darkness of the old nature and traditional religion conjoined. But it disperses and melts away by and by under the clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness. In His light we see light. Oh, what a joy it is to walk in the light! It is to have fellowship with Christ Jesus, and to have a clear and realizing sense of the cleansing power of Christ's blood. Then comes in this sweet word of the Lord. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

The Christian life is a life of duty, and duty is the door to privilege. It is a way hedged in with precepts, and these precepts open on the broad and beautiful areas of the promises. "What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose." God brings the obedient one into a large place—a place of green pastures and of still waters, where the whole nature is refreshed and invigorated, where there is peace.

There can be no solid, satisfying and enduring peace, while there is not entire subjection to the will of the Lord. The hindrance to this may lie in something preferred to the Lord, something that is an idol of the soul. Something, therefore, that ought to be, I do not say put away, but subordinated to God's will. God must be first in thought, feeling, worship, and everything else second. Then there will be no jar, no conflict. When we present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God, all duty becomes easy. That is the reason why that act is insisted on in the first verse of Romans xii. All Christian duty follows it; and is possible, and enjoyable, only when that is done. That changes the place and power of every idol of the heart, and makes it a servant of God, rather than a master to man. That transfers the regard and consideration given to it, to the worthier one. That prepares the highway and gathers out the stones over which there is for long and weary years so much stumbling and falling, and which bring so much discouragement and dismay.

Cowper unfolds to us his own bitter experience, in a poem we sing in words that speak the truth of many a heart's experience: "Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord?" etc., And then he offers the prayer.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from the throne,
And worship only Thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

This must be done to have peace. Until it is done, there will always be a sense of unrest, of want of harmony and of entire affection. God is ever saying: "My Son, give me thine heart," that is, the whole heart, the undivided affection. Anything that is in the way of this full surrender is not a friend to the soul. It cannot bring good, but only evil, however innocent it may appear.

The Countess of Huntingdon on one occasion wishing to build a chapel and not having the means available, disposed