

CHRISTIAN CHILDHOOD.

BY J. P. NEWMAN, D. D.

Children belong to Christ. If not to him, to whom do they belong? Who is willing to accept the alternative? There are but two masters: the One above, the other below. A good Arminian, we reject the notion of special election, and assert the doctrine of universal redemption. As good anti-Anglicans and anti-Romans, we reject infant baptismal regeneration, and believe that all children are in a state of grace by covenant relations, and that baptism is the sign and symbol thereof. As we do not baptize an adult to make him a child of God, but because he is such; so we do not baptize an infant to make such the child of God, but in recognition of the fact. This is the doctrine of Holy Scripture and of our church. In the days of his flesh parents brought little children to the Lord that he might bless them. His disciples thought them too young to receive spiritual grace, and rebuked the parents; but Jesus justified the parents and rebuked the disciples, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." This is a cordial invitation to parents to bring their little ones to him for spiritual influences, for they compose the kingdom of heaven in fact, and as types of adult Christians, they are in a state of grace by virtue of his death. They are innocent of any transgression. His merits cover any demerits they may have inherited from their parents. He said "such," or, they compose largely my church. "He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." What was that blessing? Some impartation of divine influence which inclined them to himself. It may be, we shall find all those favored ones high in the kingdom of glory.

Our Book of Discipline reflects this Scriptural view: "We hold that all children, by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement, are members of the kingdom of God; and "we regard all children who have been baptized as placed in visible covenant relation to God, and under the special care and supervision of the church." How grateful and beautiful these sayings! And like a careful, tender shepherd of the lambs, the church commands, "The preacher in charge shall organize the baptized children of the church, at the age of ten years or younger, into classes, and appoint suitable leaders (male or female), whose duty it shall be to meet them in class once a week, and instruct them in the nature, design, and obligations of baptism, and the truths of religion necessary to make them 'wise unto salvation'; and whenever such 'shall have attained an age sufficient to understand the obligations of religion, and shall give evidence of piety, they may be admitted into full membership in our church, on the recommendation of a leader with whom they have met at least six months in class, by publicly asserting before the church to the Baptismal Covenant, and also to the usual questions on Doctrine and Discipline."

Many and mighty reasons urge us to the faithful application of this disciplinary plan. Christ will be honored by our faith. He justly claims his own at our hands. The children are the purchase of his blood and the subjects of his grace. They are all members of his invisible church, and we should gather them into his church visible. The mustard-seed of grace is planted in the kindly garden of the heart, and we should not sleep, lest the "enemy come and sow tares" therein. Our neglect is their ruin. We must not multiply the chances of their destruction. We are in duty bound to increase the probability of their eternal safety. We have too long neglected his "little ones." His lambs are not fed. Sabbath-school teaching and home instruction can never be a substitute for this higher churchly duty. Hereby we can prevent the departure of the youth from the Sunday-school and the church. Parents, pastors, and teachers should teach the children from the earliest dawn of thought that they are Christians, and by baptism are members of the church. Their formal reception should not be delayed.

Pagans are wiser than we. I have often seen parents in heathen temples in Japan and India teach their children to kiss the idol and throw flowers on the shrine. Hoine is the stronghold of idolatry, and mothers are the most zealous supporters thereof. This is the secret of the perpetuity of Confucius in the faith of the millions of China. He laid his hand upon the childhood of that vast empire, and its impress abides. Christ did more, but we have done less. The Greek and Roman Churches are wiser than their Protestant sister. They renew their strength and perpetuate their power by their great doctrine—that their children are born in the church.

Facts call us to duty, and figures inspire us to action. Samuel, Jeremiah and John the Baptist were filled with the Holy Spirit from their birth. Good King Josiah knew the Lord when but eight years old. From a child Timothy had "known the Scriptures." Polynepe fell a martyr at ninety-five, but he told his persecuting judge that he had served the Lord eighty-six years. How old was he when he began? Baxter was converted at six; Edwards at seven; Watts at nine; Matthew Henry at eleven, and Robert Hall at twelve. Childhood is God's seed-time. He wants to gather the first fruits. Let us "gather them in—gather them in" for him.

Do this, and we will revive class-meetings all over the land. The next generation of Methodists will go to class from love and education. Let us not be deterred by the fear that this plan will fill the church with unconverted, formal Christians. There is some danger here, but not much. Some of our members, converted subsequent to youth, are now formal Christians. They have not developed their spiritual life. With many of us, conversion was a very small beginning, but we have grown in grace. This will be true of the children. Counting head for head, there are more formal Christians among the adults than among the child members. The testimonies of these "little ones" would reflect credit on those of riper years. God comes very near to them, and out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaks. When Jesus heard in Jerusalem the children shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" he said: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." The happiest hours of my pastoral life are when with these children members in class. To me it is a fact of immeasurable joy that two-thirds of the population on the globe are Christians because they are children in the covenant of grace. Add to this number the saintly adults, and Christ has the majority. These proportions have been true of all the ages. And as two-thirds of the race pass away in childhood, how innumerable the company in heaven!—Chris. Adv.

METHODIST MISSIONS IN ITALY.

One of the most pleasing and profitable acquaintances I have made in Rome is with Rev. Dr. Vernon. He came here as you know, to take charge of the missionary work of the Methodist Church of the United States in Italy. And he is, indeed, the right man in the right place. A more fitting representative of his denomination could not be found. Full of zeal and energy, ardent and active, he has also great executive ability, full command of the beautiful Italian tongue, and tact in dealing with men, so that he imparts life and force to the work in his hands.

The Methodist chapel is filled with an interesting congregation of Italian worshippers, who have been led to turn away from the miserable husks of Romanism to feed upon the bread of Life. But this is only one of fifteen stations where the gospel is preached by faithful and able men under Dr. Vernon's general superintendence. Congregations have been gathered in Naples, Terni, Perugia, Arezzo, Florence, Bologna, Milan, Venice, and other places, and unto them the gospel is proclaimed with simplicity and boldness by men well trained and qualified to preach.

Dr. Vernon does not encourage the support of secular day-schools, and in this I think he is wise and right. The public schools of Italy are well conducted, and are not under the control of the Roman Catholic clergy. It is not desirable to set up schools to divert the children from those of the State, and as we oppose Romish schools in the United States, so we should not encourage Protestant secular schools in Italy. By preaching the word, by Sabbath-schools, by visiting from house to house, by doing the work of evangelists and pastors, these men are winning souls to Christ and laying the foundations of a true Church in Italy. Their work encounters marked opposition, and it would be very strange if it did not. Converts from Romanism are often subjected to the loss of their daily food, being deserted by friends and discharged by their employers, but the work goes onward steadily, and is taking hold on the people.

I heard Dr. Vernon making addresses in Italian and in English. He has great power as a public speaker, and never fails to make a deep impression. Under his superintendence the missionary work might be greatly extended in Italy, and it will be just as fast as the means are furnished for the support of Christian workers.

Other denominations as well as the Methodists are in the field; but none are doing better work than Dr. Vernon's missions. The Wesleyans of England sustain an efficient mission in

the hands of Mr. Piggot. They have about thirty stations, with nearly 2,000 Church members. It has been a great refreshment to me to meet these Christian ministers and fellow-workers for Christ in the city of Rome, and I thought you would not be unwilling to hear of their usefulness in the great mission on which they have come.

Yours, very truly,
S. IRENEUS PRIME.

THANKING GOD.

There was once a little girl who had lost her father. The night after her father died she knelt down at bed-time to thank God for taking care of her during the night. Then in her prayer she got to the place where she was in the habit of asking God to bless her father. But she now stopped; her little hands were unclasped, and with a sad heart she looked at her mother and said, "I cannot pray for father any more." The mother waited for some moments, and then told her to go on. The little girl then with a voice that faltered, said, "O my mother, I cannot leave him all out. I will say, thank God that I had a dear father once; so I can still go on and keep him in my prayers; and so she does whenever she kneels down to pray. She showed that she felt that God is good, and that He would hear her when she thanked as well as when she asked a favor. She showed that she knew what it is to be thankful. She was like another little girl who, when she had lost a sister, and some one spoke to her about it, said, "Yes, it was hard for me to give up my sister, but God has left me another sister and a good father and mother."

"RETRENCHMENT SOCIETIES."

Among the donations recorded upon the books of the treasurer of the American Board, three-score years ago, are several from auxiliary associations in various localities bearing the name of "Retrenchment Societies." No explanation of the name is given. It is easy, however, to understand its significance. Those were days when young people and others were taught to economize in as many directions as possible, in order that the money thus saved might be given as an offering to Christian benevolence, which costs something to the giver. Accordingly they retrenched, not merely out of luxuries, which were few, but from conveniences and even from the ordinary necessities of daily life—not infrequently from food and apparel—so that the fruits of their Christian frugality should appear in the proclamation of the Gospel in foreign lands. This was the "plain living" in which they believed as a help to "high thinking" and generous giving.

Some such "retrenchment societies" as these doubtless still exist in churches and homes. Economy honored as a Christian grace for the one purpose of increasing Christian benevolence is as genuine to-day as ever it was. To such economy we are probably indebted for a large proportion of the gifts which send the bread of life to the perishing. When such "retrenchment societies" as these are multiplied throughout the land, and every Christian disciple cuts his own expenditures down with glad self-denial in order that the missionary expenditures abroad may not be cut down, it will be retrenchment at the right end of the line. How distressing a thing it is, at the missionary end of the line, is partly told in the present number of this magazine. When shall we learn that the place to retrench is in personal expenditures, and the place to enlarge is in benevolent gifts, and that the two are vitally connected?—Foreign Missionary.

PROFANITY.

E. WENTWORTH, D. D.

"Because of swearing," said Jeremiah, "the land mourneth." Profanity was one of the symptoms, the evidences, the outcroppings, of the desperate wickedness of the Jews before the captivity. "Priest and prophet are profane." "In My house have I found their wickedness," said the astonished God! "By swearing and lying, killing and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out—blood toucheth blood and the land mourns." Vices, like virtues, go in clusters, and profanity is one of the most wicked and harmful of the black kinship. The strongest tendencies of fallen humanity to special sins are those which are curbed with sternest prohibitions in the Decalogue. Profanity is one of these, and to the positive forbiddance is appended the "N. B.," the "nota bene,"—the "mark it well,"—"God will hold him guilty," namely, a criminal in the sight of heaven, who "takes His name in vain." The profanity command stands high up in the Decalogue, but men have rearranged the order of the divine commands and given this prospect a low place; if not a respectable place, at least, not so disreputable as many others. Christ re-enacted the law, not

only in letter, but in spirit, and one of the foremost dicta of the Christian system from the mouth of its great Leader, was, "Swear not at all," not "by heaven" (a very common oath), because "it is God's throne;" not "by Jerusalem" (a very innocent looking expression), "for it is the city of the great King;" nor even "by the head," "for thou canst not make one hair white or black." Let your conversation be simple "yea and nay." Let your "yes" be yes, and your "no" be no, without qualification or asservation.

Swearing is a world-wide habit, and it is hard to convince civilized and Christian people of its folly and enormity. There is a wide spread feeling, that

"Oaths as but words and words but wind." In moments of surprise or anger, ejaculations are instinctive, and this gives rise to the oath ejaculatory. The ejaculation is irrepressible, the necessary ebullition of suddenly generated passionate force, the scape-valve, the safety-valve, whose start saves from destructive explosion! Why should ejaculation take the form of heaven-offending oath? Why should men yoke the name of the Highest with the merest trifles? The common plea is "everybody does it." It is regarded as a harmless piccadillo and not as a fearful sin. Yet all who use profane language feel impelled to make apologies for it when their attention is called to it: "I don't make a practice of it," "I swear sometimes when I am provoked," "I do it without knowing it."

If so, why is it that the swearer swears only among swearers? Why does he, if a gentleman and not a blackguard, refrain from swearing in presence of ladies? How is it that so many boys and young men swear commonly among their comrades and "father don't know it;" "mother don't know it;" "sister don't know it." The swearer's instinct tells him instantly in whose society profanity will be tolerated, or agreeable, or a mark of courage or manhood or wit, and in whose society it will be an offence against both morality and good manners. The wide spread scepticism of the day favors profanity. If there be no God, there can be no offence in taking his name in vain.

Novels favor profanity. Many writers pepper their pages with oaths to picture the low life in which they revel, and good Mrs. Stowe could not get through "Uncle Tom" without an oath to point the tale! Our limits will not allow us to describe the different classes of swearers, the occasional swearer, the habitual swearer, the gentlemanly swearer, the vulgar swearer, the bold blasphemer, whose oaths make the blood curdle, whose conversation is made up of oaths, and who cannot open his mouth without venting a torrent of vulgarity, profanity and obscenity. Queen Elizabeth swore "by the life of God," and Andrew Jackson's favorite oath was "by the Eternal." Each, like many others in power, added the sanction of high places to a violation of the laws they were set to execute, as well as to flagrant violation of a conspicuous law of God. "Above all things, my brethren," says St. James, enforce the words of Jesus, "swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yea be yea, and your nay, less you fall into condemnation." In theory and practice, in word and deed, even in the use of comparatively harmless ejaculations, let the Christian abstain from, and discourage profanity. Let the wicked do all the swearing.

THE INDIANS OF CANADA.

The report of the Minister of the Interior for the past year contains much valuable information with regard to the Indians of Canada. From this report and the appendices thereto, it appears that the Indians of Canada on the 30th of June, 1878, numbered 99,690 souls, divided among the several Provinces and districts as follows:—

Table with 2 columns: Province/District and Population. Ontario: 15,731; Quebec: 10,947; Nova Scotia: 2,122; New Brunswick: 1,459; Prince Edward Island: 316; Manitoba and Northwest Terr.: 27,204; Athabaska District: 2,398; British Columbia: 35,153; Rupert's Land: 4,870. Total: 99,690.

The Indian population of Canada, of which accurate returns are kept from year to year, does not decrease, notwithstanding the nomadic life which many of the tribes lead. Mr. Vankoughnet, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, reports that the condition of the Indians settled on the reserves within the old Provinces is encouraging, more inclination for, and greater progress in agriculture being observable of late. Intemperance has become of more rare occurrence; and the physical health of the several bands during the year of which he reports was for the most part good. In the newer Provinces and more remote Territories of the Dominion, the Indians have not yet learned the value of agri-

culture. It is clear, however, that they will presently be forced to turn their attention to it, by reason of the growing scarcity of game and fish. The Deputy Superintendent General thinks that the Government should adopt early and energetic measures to prepare the Indians for the change in their mode of life, and that instruction in farming or herding and raising of cattle should be furnished to the red man, so that, they may learn, in as short a space of time as possible, to become self-supporting.

The most interesting portion of the report, however, is that which deals with the numbers of the various Indian tribes. All the Indians of Nova Scotia are Micmacs, as well as all the Indians in Prince Edward Island. In addition to these there are 913 Micmacs in New Brunswick and 600 in Quebec, so that the Micmac race numbers in all 3,714 souls. The Malacites of New Brunswick, number 546, but they are the same people as the Amalictes and Abenakis of Province of Quebec, who number 522, so that the Malacites of the Dominion foot up to 1,068 souls. The Iroquois of the Province of Quebec number 3,057, and they are well advanced in civilization. The Montaguees of the same Province number 1,255, and the Naskapees, of the lower St. Lawrence, 2,860. The Hurons of Lorette, a feeble tribe, the remnants of the once great Huron nation, are reduced now to 290 persons, and seem doomed to extinction. The only other considerable race in Quebec is the Algonquins, numbering 5,163. They are allied both to the Micmacs and the Malacites of the Maritime Provinces. In the Province of Ontario the Iroquois number 4,608. They are represented by the Oneidas of the Thames, Mohawks of Bay Quinte, and Six Nations on the Grand River. The Chippewas are the most numerous tribe in Ontario numbering 9,570 souls, although this enumeration includes a few Ottawas and Pottawatamies. The Algonquins of Ontario number 614, and the Messaesaquaws 728. None of the other tribes are sufficiently numerous to be worthy of mention. In Manitoba and the North West territories the Chippewas are the most numerous tribe. The Crees and Salteaux are also numerous, the Blackfeet number 4,928 and the Sioux, all of whom are emigrants from the United States, 1,200, and very unwelcome immigrants some of them have been. The mere mention of the names of these tribes, many of whom are very warlike and have been famed for their cruelty in bygone years, suggests the heavy responsibility which is cast upon the Government of Canada in keeping them at peace with each other and the white settlers. It is to be hoped that Canada may be spared the infliction of such Indian wars as our neighbors of the United States have so frequently experienced.

The outlook for Protestantism in France was never fairer than it is to-day. No other country in Europe offers so hopeful a field for spiritual religion. The great burden of civil disability which has interfered with all the efforts of the Protestant Churches is fully removed. The language of President Grevy, "The Reformation is the source of modern liberties and of democracy in Europe," must strike the ear of thousands in France as a new and strange utterance. But Protestantism will fail to do its proper work in this grand field if it busies itself in seeking civil favors and wastes its strength in mere antagonism, however successful, of the Roman Catholic Church. Its chief work is to preach everywhere the Gospel of Christ. The redemption of France is not a new and better church organization, not a change from one creed to another, but faith in Christ, a true spiritual life that shall give a new significance to Christianity throughout Europe. If only one with the spirit, the uttering zeal and genius for organization that Wesley possessed, were to appear, the greatest harvest of modern times could be gathered.—Central Advocate.

EDUCATIONAL TALK.

If talk could rule the world and hasten the millennium our planet would be abundantly ruled, and the good time coming would not be long on the way. Vast systems of iniquity are periodically attacked by organized bands of paid orators, who in set phrases and round delivery demolish the strongholds of evil, and right the wrongs of an abused world by the strong force of an convincing logic. . . . It is work not talk that lifts up this world. We need more intelligent, energetic actors, and less lazy orators and essayists. We have many more eloquent preachers than good pastors, and a thousand-fold more self-piased teachers than aggressive organizers. If our systems of instruction are to be improved, recognized, uplifted, we must stop resolving and go to working. Legislatures are composed of men who care very little about education in the concrete. Let a Horace Mann or a Florence Greeley go after them, and they will stop and listen and do something; but they care just as little about a string of resolutions, engrossed or engraved, as about the rights of the Heathen Chinese.—Barnes' Ed. Monthly.

BIBLE SECONDARY A. D. 59. Lest or, A Fair July 20. EXPLANATION. He imagines not which not to be proud them in antipathy to show that a pendent of Tongues of the tollage a possession of guages, or in manner which of angels. St. Cor. 14. Some discussion of it has ceased in needed for the pel, it is difficult manifest and unfortunate in "charity" has liberality of giving, while in its wisest Sounding brass but ringing on power. The posed of gold for its reason bal. A clang instrument, in which were str So the voice of them without no power to tot hearts rather ed in the Churc 2. Peopcey, vine will, wh tion or instru secrets of the All knowledge, hension of tr clearest penetr God, with the 4. It is not our minds, it u as the motive True saving fa not exist with peculiar confide Napoleon or a work wonders the reference oles," that wh in his wonder 19, 13. Remo ion here quote use, to repres facts of faith. are not confine the cases of I witch of Endor 5. Not what m are, makes the "Satan may h power than any he is Satan stil 3. Though I refers to acts w generosity and thing without There may be ity; but they who bestow the is, "Though I mouthfuls," w perpetuate fan without the ins and men. Give the sacrifice of or principle. It or has often be ods of persecut unworthily ha martyrdom fo need more cou to die for his c That sacrifice vain glory, or obstinacy, is of ven and the fa bought by gif deeds. 4. 5. Charity lew presents varied relations tient endurance ness to do good, done evil. Ther of Christian tra the self-seeking ed among the C its application particular. En his Master is n graces enjoyed eth not. The w no braggart. grace are in da of pie. Beh endeavors to tious, landly, radiant with th eth not her on about the inte