

CHRISTIAN EDIFICATION. A SERMON BY REV. BENJAMIN GILL, PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN WESLEYAN ACADEMY, WILBRAHAM, MASS.

"Edify one another."—1 Thess. v. 11. Some one has styled the universe a web of matchless splendor woven with figures of endless variety, yet of such magnitude, that we who see but isolated strands can form no fair conception of the design and expanse of the whole.

A somewhat similar idea runs through the New Testament in reference to Christ and his church. They are spoken of as "built together"—are exhorted to "build each other up"—are warned against those things which, though lawful, are "not edifying," do not build up—and one passage is particularly full and clear on this point, "ye are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundations of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."—Eph. ii: 19, 22.

You have seen the confused mass of stone and timber drawn to the site of some proposed building. These are and are not the building. They will become such only as they are built together so as to embody the original design and serve the purpose proposed. The most finely fashioned stone in all the pile will be quite useless unless it takes its proper place in the structure; the stoutest timber will be but the subject for fire or decay; while beauty and grace even, may be added to what now seems only very ordinary and quite unfinished. To illustrate this, we stood on the park at Hartford the other day gazing up at the new capitol. The figures that surround the dome and the "genius of Connecticut," which crowns seemed, each to harmonize with the whole vast building and yet to be delicately graceful and perfect in themselves. But afterwards in one of the lower rooms of the capitol we saw the plaster model of the latter figure and there was nothing finished or graceful or delicate about. In other words it was out of place and the delicate touches that would not have been missed at the top of the dome were now very clearly lacking, and coarseness produced the impression of coarseness.

Now we may look upon the mass of christianity in two ways. We may say as the tables do, of the world's population 394,000,000 are Christians. Of these so many thousands are Catholic, Episcopalian, Baptist or what not. But what a low view would this be if it were all. Or laying hold of the grand idea of the christianization of the world, comparing the present magnitude of Christ's church with the smallness of its beginning, finding the ratio of its increase and judging from that when we may look for the gathering in of the whole world—thus might we catch the spirit of its Founder and the scope of his design. For as every structure contains both a purpose and a type, so every christian, every christian church, yea the whole body of christians have a historic type and a prospective purpose. If we speak of a building as Gothic, Romanesque, or Greek in its general style we are looking at it historically. Our eye is thrown back to the origin and the author of its peculiar type. Its Doric columns carry us to the Parthenon—that gem of perfect architecture white as snow and set in the clear blue of an Athenian sky. Its Gothic nave and transepts overshadowed with interlacing arches and lighted by rich light streaming through mullioned windows seem almost like the petrified wild woods from which those old Goths issued to destroy the old civilization and to become the backbone of the new. And does not every christian thus stand as an historical embodiment of the good that God intended to mankind from all eternity? And is he not a proof of the fact that all men are to be co-laborers with Jesus Christ in the world's redemption?

How thoroughly christian is this word "edify;" you will look in vain for it before Christ's time,—I mean of course in its metaphoric sense. It was too magnificent too unselfish a word to serve as a name for any purpose that was at work under the old religions. Their master minds loved to wrestle with the question, "What is man's highest good?" of course. But they settled that question by saying, "Happiness is man's highest good," or fortitude; under suffering "is man's highest good." But the pursuit of goodness for its own sake—and this is christian edification—the building up of ourselves and others in righteousness,—this high purpose they never knew, much less pursued. They exalted circumstances; christianity subordinates them. Goodness is the multiple of which they are the factors; the high end is righteousness and other things are only insignificant, yet necessary, means. All things work together for goodness in this new order; we seek first the kingdom of God and his right-

eousness all things else are a mere addenda, accessories, things that can be dispensed with. We are edifying ourselves and others then, when we are teaching them obedience to God, holiness of purpose. I know how stale these assertions are. I flatter myself, however, with the thought, that the staled truths are the stablest; that obedience to God includes all else; that obedience to God is the lesson so repeatedly taught and so seldom learned all through the word of God; that this thought is the key that unlocks the hidden treasures of sacred history—a talisman whose value was not overestimated by one of old when he said, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken, than the fat of rams."

In edifying one another we learn

I. The substantial purpose of God underlying all our affairs. Not that they may be happy has God placed his children here; nor that they may be well; nor free from very burdensome responsibilities; nor that they may be suited; but that they may early learn to hear and obey his voice and to appreciate the value of righteousness. It seems to be the philosophy of Hebrew history and we may open where we will—that "the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land." Was Abraham a happy man? One has said, that no man ever struggled in harder circumstances than he to maintain a growing conviction among the heathen in Ur of the Chaldees when this principle of faith in God first dawned upon him. But he wrestled for the principle successfully and became the father of the faithful and the friend of God. Was Moses without responsibility? Doubtless no man ever wrestled so successfully with great legislative problems. But Moses endured all this as seeing him who is invisible. And think how after a life faithfully spent in trying to reform the vices of Israel the prophet Elijah stood in voluntary banishment on Horeb the mount of God while from his wrung heart broke forth the words,— "It is enough Lord, take away my life, I am not better than my fathers. I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars and slain thy prophets, with the sword and I, even I, only am left and they seek my life to take it away?" What are our griefs in comparison to such men's?" We may, like them, be permitted to see only discouragement and apparent failure and yet if we grow not in any spiritual triumphs over death and the grave shall crown our labors. It is useless to specify farther examples of the working of this law of righteousness. The catalogue of names was so full that one of old was brought to a dead pause and broke off in the midst of his utterances by saying that the time "would fail" him to tell them all. Brief though it be, however it might have been enlarged; as it is, its names excel the catalogue of other names. The empty votaries of power and honor, the Cæsars and Napoleons pale into mere shadows before the might of Moses and of Joshua of Daniel and of Paul. While this mighty principle is having its way among men, they will not usually win renown from their co-temporaries but they will win the favor of God and the reverence of them that follow. Some phases of national and individual Hebrew history are grand beyond conception for the very reason that they recognize this principle and are based upon it; while however much odium may be cast upon the Jews for their baseness in later days the world must always honor them as having been the first to reach the conception of this high principle—God at work in human affairs to bring men to love righteousness.

The Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, all fell short of it; the Jews even in the mass, had not depth of conviction enough to save them from idolatrous practices—they may be classed as a whole among idolaters, at least until the captivity with just a few intervals of true religious life. But thank God, the principle was at work among them shining in the examples I have mentioned, in the wonderful book of Job, in the Psalms, in the Proverbs, in the prophets. What other literatures save those which have been based on the Hebrew—make the edification of men in righteousness their theme? What other people saw this as the purpose of God in human life—that men should be made good, pure, holy? How far inferior are the gods who figure on the pages of Homer with the God of the Psalms of David! How low are the passions which actuate them in comparison with the sublime design of God as shown on every page of his holy word.

II.—This up-building of ourselves and others in righteousness is the only adequate inspiration we can receive for our souls. Life must have its inspirations, without them our actions have no force in the performance, no significance in the result. Sometimes a motto deep moral significance is the inspiration of a lifetime; sometimes a happy utterance or timely act become, for the moment, an impetus to action, as when Nelson said "England expects every man to do his duty," as when Sheridan riding down from Winchester to Cedar Creek falling upon his flying troops said "Turn boys, turn we're going back" and back they went to victory.

Such motives and utterances at work sometimes for a moment only enoble lives that are otherwise far from blameless. As when Nelson a profane man and not over religious, covered himself with glory by his death at Trafalgar. He wore his stars of honor on his breast all that day, resolved to do his duty and to stand on an equality of danger with the other men on his fleet. A shot from the Redoubtable struck the epaulette upon his left shoulder and immediately they proceeded to take him below. His presence of mind did not leave him, he noticed that tiller ropes had been shot away and ordered new ones to be brought to take their place, then that he might not be seen by his men and discourage them he took out his handkerchief covered his face and his badges on his breast and they carried him below. Three hours he lingered and ever and anon he said, "Thank God I've done my duty. Thank God I've done my duty" and these words were his last. What a high motive truly is that of duty; among the noblest of our inspirations! But there is a higher motive still. Herodotus says of three hundred Spartans who went to Thermopylae, two suffered from eye disease and Leonidas had sent them off to Alpeni with the privilege of going home to Sparta, if they wished. But one of them named Eurystus learning that the enemy had closed up the pass called for his arms and put them on, then ordered his helot slave to lead him out into the midst of the fighting, which he did, and then ran away, while the blind hero hacked down his enemies at random and fell, sword in hand.

What a motive it is to die for one's country one's national honor! But there is a nobler motive even than this. It is related of Cleobis and Biton that, on the day of the festival to Juno at Argos where their mother was unable to get the oxen from the field to draw her cart to the feast in time, they yoked themselves in and drew her six miles arriving in time. But they fell exhausted; the crowd of lookers on, however, were then permitted to see that sometimes it is better to die than to live. They counted the young men happy in their strength; the women praised their mother that she had borne such sons. But she standing by the altar the altar of the goddess, prayed that the best things might happen to her boys that might happen to men. And while the vows were being offered and sacrifices slain the boys died by the altar of the goddess where they had fallen asleep. And the Argives made their statues and they set them up at Delphi as offerings of honor to men who were most noble. And truly noble are the motives of filial affection. But there is a higher still. It is the motive of doing good—of teaching men to love righteousness. You cannot see this? But tell me, you who object to each of the part? And will not the principle I have mentioned include in its operations, filial affection, self sacrifice, patriotism, devotion to duty? The Decie on the eve of battle called for the priest that they might formally devote themselves to destruction; his whole life however in whom this principle is at work is one of constant devotion. Deeds of glory usually require illustrious fields either to call them forth or give them a name; but the quiet operation of this principle makes hundreds of heroes in every day life. Fame that product patriotism or heroic devotion requires many months to spend itself but the quiet self-consciousness of having done what we could for God, is a more ennobling, a more satisfactory emotion.

Who surpasses or subdues mankind Must look down on the hate of those below. Byron "He that has light within his own clear bright May sit in the centre and enjoy bright day." Milton (To be continued.)

EXTRACT.—For persons suffering from exhaustion of the powers of the brain and nervous system, from long and continued study or teaching, or in those cases of exhaustion from which so many young men suffer. I know of no better medicine for restoration to health than Fellows's Compound Syrup of Hypobosites. EDMOND CLAY, M. D. Pugwash, N. S. Dr. I. S. Johnson & Co., Bangor, Me., the proprietors of Johnson's Anodyne Linctum, will send free to all who will write for it reliable information how to prevent diphtheria, the most to be dreaded of all dreadful diseases. Write your name, post-office address, county and State plainly.

An English Veterinary Surgeon, now in this country, says that Sheridan's Cavalry Condition Powders are superior to any he knows of in England, as they are absolutely pure. He denounces the large package fraud and warns people not to buy them.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. EDITOR.—The Christian Messenger of January 7th, contains an article from the pen of Rev. J. H. Robbins, Baptist minister, who visits Port George occasionally, to which we are in duty bound to call the attention of your readers.

The article consists, chiefly, of implied, and half uttered charges, and reflections upon the Methodist denomination, at Port George, and elsewhere, for Mr. Robbins says "there are several of such cases."

Hence he proceeds to charge the Methodists with sophistry in obtaining deeds of churches. With violating pledges, in reference to church privileges. With shutting Baptists out of Methodist meeting-houses, as soon as God gives them (Baptists) converts. Of a "sister of another denomination (from the Baptist) hoisting a mill-gate, and draining off the mill-pond just before the hour of baptism, &c. &c."

Now, sir, will you oblige your readers, who, doubtless, desire to form a correct judgment in the case, by publishing in your paper the following facts, in evidence that the above insinuated charges are utterly unfounded, so far as Methodism in Port George is concerned.

1st.—Mr. Robbins, after attempting to describe how "deeds" are obtained, says, in cautioning Baptists, "be not deceived by such sophistry." Does Mr. Robbins mean to say that the Port George Methodist deed, was obtained by sophistry? you would suppose he did mean it, from reading his "Caution to Baptists." Now, sir, this charge is certainly false.

The said deed was given by Mr. Alexander McInnis, and Jane, his wife, who personally appeared before G. B. Reed (J. P., of Port George), and solemnly swore, that they "did voluntarily"—(that is, by choice, willing, spontaneously, and of their own accord)—execute the said deed, of the church ground of Port George. These honored members of the Methodist Church are still living, we believe, in K-nville, Kings Co., N. S. If Mr. Robbins means that Mr. McInnis was overcome by sophistry, in giving said deed, it would greatly enlighten, and improve, his mind, on the question, were he to call upon and question that Christian gentleman on the subject. We will ensure the Rev. Mr. Robbins a kind and brotherly reception, and a very warm dismissal.

Now, in view of the honorable and upright manner in which deeds are obtained by the Methodists, we challenge Rev. Mr. Robbins to prove his charge, in reference to the Port George deed, or stand reproved for misrepresentation in the case.

2nd.—Rev. Mr. Robbins charges the presiding minister and trustees, with the violation of an original pledge, given to the Baptists, in reference to the Methodist Church at said place.

Now, Sir, the paragraph of Mr. Robbins containing the charge of violation of such pledge, is false throughout. It implies—

1st.—That the Trustees excluded the Baptists to the house.

2nd.—That a new board of Trustees was necessarily "constructed."

3rd.—That the "newly constructed Board" duly deliberated upon the Baptist exclusion.

4th.—That after due deliberation, the Trustees "partially" recalled their excluding act.

Allow me to assure your readers that from the day the church was opened, till this day, the Baptists have never been excluded the church by either ministers or trustees. Nor had there been, up to the time to which Rev. Mr. Robbins refers, any change in the Board of Trustees; any exclusion of Baptists, or any reconsideration, or recalling of any act, in reference to the Baptists. But to the contrary. The Baptists have had the use of said church, with full consent of ministers and trustees, for the past eight or ten years, or since it has been finished.

We leave your readers, therefore, to judge of the character of the above implied charges. We feel they are unwarranted and untrue.

3rd.—Rev. Mr. Robbins charges the Methodists with shutting him out of the Methodist Church. "as soon as God gave him converts." We are sorry to be forced to say that this charge is as groundless as the former.

Please note the following facts: 1st.—The late lamented Rev. Willard Parker preached regularly in the Methodist Church, and God gave him converts, and he baptized them, as Mr. Robbins says, "in the right way," and Rev. Willard Parker was never shut out. No, nor any other Baptist minister who preceded him, but all went on in peace and harmony, till the said Rev. J. H. Robbins came to take the place of the late Rev. Mr. Parker.

2nd.—Shortly after the induction of Rev. Mr. Robbins, he broke up the Port George "Union Sunday School," which had been collected, supported, and taught, chiefly by Elder Stephen Wordworth; and out of this Union School of Mr. Wordworth's, Rev. Mr. Robbins organized a Baptist Sunday School in the Methodist Church.

3rd.—He (Rev. Mr. R.) withdrew his regular appointment from his own church, about a mile off, and brought it into the Methodist Church.

4th.—He, a short time ago, appointed a Baptist Bible-class, or a "new version" Bible class, as we are informed, in the Methodist Church; and then,

5th.—As he makes his discourteous boast, without consulting Rev. Mr. S., trustees, or any other person, "he went out to battle."

Now, all this unwarrantable liberty with the Methodist Church, congregation, and society, was borne by our minister, and people, in comparative silence.

Your correspondent, Rev. Mr. R. tells us, that he found, "before he went out to battle," three young women, having an earnest desire for salvation; and though he finds this hopeful state of things in a Methodist Church—and mixed congregation—where there are regular Sabbath services, by the Methodist ministers on the circuit, yet he does not think well to advise with the ministers on the circuit,

the trustees, or any other person, about union services, but committing himself to the fatal blunder of mistaking the deceptive "water for blood," 2 Kings, 31 chapter, cries, "Moab to the spoil," as if repeating, "We tried union services once, and took the smaller share without molestation," but now we will have the whole, and molestation besides, and on he goes to battle.

The three young persons whom Rev. Mr. R. found earnestly seeking salvation, before he went to battle, were soon baptized; at which time Rev. Mr. R. in the Methodist Church, gave one of his characteristic sermons on immersion, as the only Scriptural mode of baptism.

The meetings went on from October till the last of December; and up to the closing of his battle the Methodist Church was comfortably prepared for him and his congregations.

And though he baptized the three young persons in the early part of his meetings, and preached his views on what he calls "the right way of baptism," he adds as soon as God gave us converts "we were shut out" of the Methodist meeting-house.

Now what about this "shutting out?" Permit us to say that during the meetings Mr. Robbins had two occasions of baptism, and of preaching his views of the "right way."

On both occasions his remarks on the mode of baptism were, according to the judgment of other denominations, exceedingly uncharitable and severe. Charging others with disobedience as to the great command, applying to them Jas. 2, 10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point of immorality, he is guilty of all—that is guilty of every sin of omission and commission—"Guilty of all."

We need not say that under these uncharitable attacks many good people went home from their own place of worship pitying the preacher and grieved in spirit, whereupon the sexton, when he closed the church doors the night Rev. Mr. Robbins closed his special services, declared he would not open them again for Mr. Robbins till authorized by the trustees.

On the following Friday evening Mr. Robbins found the church closed against his service, but, remember, on the sole authority of the sexton; and when Rev. Mr. Robbins questioned him upon his authority for closing the door, the sexton told him "he had the highest authority for doing it"—the sexton meaning the qualifying clause in the "Deed," and Rev. Mr. Robbins understanding him to mean either the Minister of the Circuit or the Trustees of the Church.

This took place on Friday evening. The following Saturday evening Rev. Mr. Robbins had a conversation with our Superintendent Minister on the subject, our minister assuring Mr. Robbins that he knew nothing of the matter whatever, and also assured Mr. R. that he would call a trustee meeting in the early part of the next week, and let him (Rev. Mr. Robbins) know the decision of the trustees.

The said meeting was called on the following Tuesday in the church, but some of the trustees not being able to attend through infirmity and age, a second meeting was called on Friday, where all could attend, which they did. After the business of the year had been adjusted, the question of "closing the door," on the last Friday evening was introduced, whereupon the sexton defended his act upon the qualifying clause in the deed, &c.

The trustees (the old Board, not a newly-constructed Board, as Rev. Mr. Robbins is pleased to state) passed a unanimous Resolution, granting to Rev. Mr. R., and his Baptist friends all the privileges desired by his pious and peaceful predecessor, the late Revd. Willard Parker, viz:

1st. The Methodist Church may be used by the Baptists for Conference Meetings once a month.

2nd. For preaching the Gospel in on the Sabbath once a month.

3rd. For funeral services as often as required; and

4th. That these arrangements would continue till further notice.

And yet, good people, in the face of these facts, your correspondent, Rev. J. H. Robbins, has the affrontery to publish broadcast, through the columns of the Christian Messenger, the shameful untruth, namely: "That as soon as God gave him converts, &c., he was shut out of the church. And what makes it worse on his part, he makes this statement after he is assured that neither ministers nor trustees had authorized the sexton to do as he had done, and the above Resolution had been placed in the hands of Mr. Robbins by our minister. Do you, as christian men, accept and defend the statements of Rev. Mr. Robbins in the case? We believe you cannot, and will not.

Nor can your correspondent close his memorable article without "molesting" the christian reputation of a female church member, and says, "but just before the hour of the second occasion of immersion a good sister of another society hoisted the gate and drained the pond."

It is well for Rev. Mr. Robbins that he does not presume to mention the good sisters name—he would not probably find her good husband as long-suffering as the Trustees, but might have to pay a price, for such liberty with christian character. Your readers are hereby assured that the said gate was hoisted by a workman who was repairing the mill—and that it was hoisted, he thinks, the Friday or Saturday, previous to the Sabbath, the ordinance was to be performed—and without any knowledge the "well filled pond" would be required for the Sacrament of Baptism. Yet Mr. Robbins declares, it was done by a sister of another society just before the hour of Baptism. Come forward Mr. Robbins, for your own sake, and prove your statement—or beg the Lady's pardon.

In conclusion, have not the readers of the column "of Caution to Baptists" inferred that the Baptist denomination had paid one half or two thirds of the cost of said meeting-house—but what are the facts in

the case?—bought by... would have... eight dollars... Dist. Church... Rev. Mr. R... Regs., and... Methodist... Robbins, he... and untruth... Baptists,"... Hence we... with bearing... neighbor... article of... to Baptists... if he apply... namely... 1st.—As t... "Deeds,"... 2nd.—As t... other depou... 3rd.—As t... out of Met... God gives th... 4th.—As t... ation drain... bath day to... Baptism. In behalf... Port Geor...

Handley M... Jan. 2... UNCLE DIC... A STORY OF... BY THE...

IN WHICH...

The adver... means with... guard. The... ter's day w... young giant... with all its... was gone, a... dreadful pain... or foot.

The bustle... strong big w... rough kind... him speaking... as the child... and the prid... life was in... When he cam... ter, bruised... nobody welc... umph as his... hands with d... arms, she no... and claimed... tory. "Me a... to do it, an' u... Yet clean, h... as well as he... there was not... ish who could... side, or lay u... did young D...

Now as he... thing for him... him with the... and holding... thirsty lips, D... "Mother,"... "just like bein... it?" "Little chie... ever else was... Poor Dick su... big, strong D... hope that he... Then as the m... she was one of... not a gift for... nothing—she... moaning and... strange. At f... dreaming, or h... his head. An... words that Dic... tainly would h... suspicion.

"Please, Lo... Curnow was... just a little ch... me all gentle... Amen." But coming... him once, in t... his mother as... talkin' too, the... "I was a tal... pered Dick. To the moth... was the surest... death. To pray... was not learn... was what she... driven to when... to be done. Grief, and she... "La, my dear... to die yet, yo... haven't a give... go doin' such... Thinking of... ever, to be pre... mother propos... send for the p... Dick startle... he would soon... At once the r... fiereness came... "The old Ja... 'ee mean, cha... amazed and m... could Jan Trelo... he's cutting o... an' mendin' ca... to know any... brought up to... any eddycatin... voice and man... "No child; I...