

ORIGINAL.

1 JOHN III: 4.

"Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

The impossibility of the regenerated man sinning could not very well be more emphatically stated than it is in this scripture, and all the efforts to reconcile these words with the declaration of the same Apostle in the eighth verse of the first chapter seem to be very unsatisfactory:—"If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Macknight says:—"Cannot sin habitually." Dean Alford says: "Because the abiding force of the Divine generation excludes sin: it may be active, but it is not dominant." Whitby says:—"They may sin not unto death and therefore may still have the spiritual life remaining in them," while the Lutherans contend that all truly regenerated persons live without sin. These are only a few of the many varying efforts to explain away the meaning of the Apostle's words, and we propose modestly to give an exposition which appears in harmony with the connection in which the words are used, not inconsistent with the other passage quoted from the first chapter, and in accordance with other scriptures where the new birth is referred to.

"In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil, whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither (Kai, even) he that loveth not his brother," is John's own explanation in the next verse to the one we are considering, and we think Dean Alford is right in his note, in his Greek Testament, on these words when he asserts "Kai introduces the most eminent of the graces involved in dikaiosune (righteousness) the test of our belonging to the family of God is our love towards its members." Now if the learned Dean be right, and we believe he is, then is not the sin which the loving Apostle so emphatically declares the child of God cannot commit THE SIN OF HATING A BROTHER. This is the view taken by the pious Augustine more than fourteen hundred years ago, and by Bede, the most distinguished scholar of his age, twelve hundred years ago, but repudiated by all modern theologians.

The writer is convinced that this is the Apostle's meaning from the careful consideration of the effect ascribed to regeneration in the following scriptures:—"Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever," 1 Peter i: 22, 23. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God," 1 John iv: 7. "Whoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." Thus it is that the gracious and heavenly result of being born again of the incorruptible seed that quickens us to a new life with new emotions and that remains in us, is to love those who are born into the same family with an affection that makes it impossible for us to hate them, because to whatever extent we see the sweet traits of Christian amiability our hearts are proportionally drawn towards them in blessed response to our new views of what is lovely and loving; having, also, for our comfort and assurance the subjective evidence of our own awakening to the new life:—"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," 1 John iii: 14.

We know that the leading objection that might be offered to this view of the passage before us, is that no special sin is designated, and is only to be inferred from the connection, but this is also the case when Christ says concerning the Jews, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloke for their sin." Now Christ does not mean, as he afterwards explains, that they would not have had any sin if he had not spoken unto them, but they would not have had the sin of rejecting him.

But we must not exceed our space. The foregoing is presented, dear brethren, for your consideration. If this exegesis be correct, then there is no contradiction to 1 John i: 8. It is also in full harmony with the connection and also with the grand truth that instead of being hateful and hating one another that we have, by the manifestation of the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards us, been saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit from all iniquity and been brought into the family of God and the holy flame of fraternal love kindled in our hearts to make our fellowship

sweet and to give us the satisfactory experience that we cannot commit the sin of hating any of God's children.

Ridgetown.

E. SHEPPARD.

TO THE SISTERS OF ONTARIO.

DEAR SISTERS,—It is probably now known to all that an effort is being made to obtain united action on the part of the sisters of Ontario in the cause of Missions. All the churches have been written to, and many encouraging letters, expressing sympathy and willingness to co-operate in the work have been received, for which we are thankful to God and to our sisters. We approach this work with this prayer in our hearts, "Lord, if thy blessing be not with us, let us not go forward." As bond-servants of Christ it is our duty to make our service as fruitful and effective as our utmost powers of body, soul and spirit can attain to: it is with this desire that we take up this new line of work.

Some writer has said that the wisest people are those who learn by the experience of others. Let us be of that class, for we have much to learn.

In one of Sister Pearre's letters to us on "Woman's Work in the Church," she sums up the experience of our sisters "across the line" during the twelve years in which they have been engaged in similar work. Lest some may have forgotten, let me repeat a sentence or two. "The activity thus awakened has reacted upon the churches engaged in it, the waste places are being re-built, the spirituality of the church is rising steadily higher, trust in God is growing stronger, the joy in the church is becoming inexpressible, in short, the changed condition of things can be called nothing less than phenomenal." Truly we would be "dull of soul" if we could learn no lesson or catch no inspiration from such words as these. Again she says, "The outcome of our woman's endeavor in twelve years has been \$93,500.00 put into our treasury for the work of the Lord, to say nothing of the greatly increased giving of our women to other enterprises in the church." Concerning our proposed organization, some have said that it will weaken the hands of the Ontario Co-operation, by less money being put into their treasury. Let those who think so note the latter part of the sentence just quoted.

A similar objection was made by friends of the G. C. M. C. to the organization of the C. W. B. M. and the F. C. M. S. in the States. Let us see what are the facts in their case as given by Bro. Errett in the Standard of Nov. 5th, "So far from the work of the G. C. M. S. or that of our other home missionary organizations being hindered or injured by the F. C. M. S. or the C. W. B. M. it has been helped and strengthened in a remarkable manner. When the G. C. M. S. had the field all to itself, there was a constant decrease through a term of years; but when the C. W. B. M. and the F. C. M. S. came in to occupy the field along with it, there was a constant increase in the receipts of the G. C. M. S. and a quadrupling of its funds within the last five years." Again, "Every enlargement of our work, whether at home or abroad, has proved a help and not a hindrance to all our missionary enterprises."

These facts ought to re-assure the most timid, and convince the most sceptical amongst us. We may, and will meet with many discouragements and hindrances, but it is written, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." It was thus the Master sowed the precious seed through all His life ministry, and the servant is not above his Lord. Perhaps He suffered most of all from lack of sympathy and appreciation from His own, and so may we often meet with censure where we expect encouragement and assistance. But these things are not worthy to be mentioned or even thought of when compared with the high honor, the gracious privilege that is granted us of being co-workers with the Master, and thus partakers in His joy. Our great need seems to be a deeper sense of personal responsibility in regard to the Lord's command to "preach the gospel to every creature." We read of women who followed the Master and ministered to Him of their substance, and of others who labored with Paul in the gospel; our duties and privileges are not less than theirs. We can still minister to the Lord of our substance, for many have gone out in His name to carry the light of life to the dark places of the earth, and many more are willing to go if we are willing to help them with our money and our prayers.

We need such a spiritual awakening and renewing as sister Pearre describes; we all desire it, we pray for it. Shall we work for it, and do it now.

Yours in Christian love,

S. M. BROWN.

SELECTIONS.

BESETTING SINS.

"Latus lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." "Whatever the period of life, and whatever its besetting sin, it is just that upon which the religion of Christ is to act. And yet, brethren, so it is; people go through life, indulging the sins, pleasures and vices of each period, as they pass through it, and yet take credit to themselves for religion and virtue, because they are free from the sins and vices which belong to another stage of their journey, as if it were a proof of the power of religious principles to live in youth free from the vices of age." We cannot help being amazed at the delusion and deceptions which mankind are so apt and ready to practice upon themselves.

From the besetting sins of conditions and periods of life, let us turn for a moment to the besetting sins of individuals. The individual lies open to besetting sins arising from natural constitution, from temperament, from special occupations, and from business pursuits. One is disposed to anger; his feelings are quick, the slightest opposition to his wishes, the least cross and contradiction, the most trifling circumstance, in fact, is enough to excite his passion, and kindle his wrath. Another is unforgiving and revengeful; the most petty offence given, a fancied injury even, and he burns with the spirit of retaliation. Another is prone to intemperance and sensual pleasures. Another is wrapt up in worldly amusements, and devoted to gaiety and dissipation. Another is fond of money, and is tempted to take undue advantage in business transactions.

The besetting sin is as various as the character, the temperament, and the pursuits of men. But whatever it be—anger, revenge, licentiousness, dissipation, pride, avarice—that is just the point upon which religion, if there be any truth, strength and earnestness in it, is to concentrate its forces and level its battery. It is just there that the man is to labor, struggle, do battle, and win the moral triumph.

He may have many virtues, the practice of which costs him nothing. Out of doubt, these virtues may be great and noble, and by their beauty and excellence may challenge the approbation of God and man; but in the way of demonstrating the strength of religious principle, a steady struggle with, and resistance of the besetting sin, is worth them all. One is easy, the other difficult; one is the unresisted play of nature, the other a battle with propensity—a sustained effort of self-denial. Religion is not obedience in things easy, and disobedience in things difficult. It does not allow us to select any Christian precepts which we will take, and any which we shall reject. It is the propensity of mankind to be satisfied with a religion which costs them nothing—no effort either of body or mind; and to turn away from that which demands sacrifices of care, comfort, profit or pleasure. Men are willing enough to follow Christ so long as the path is smooth and easy; but the moment He lays the finger of prohibition upon this project of gain, or that indulgence of pleasure, or summons them to gird up the loins for a difficult duty, that moment they "turn back, and walk no more with Him." But, brethren, follow Christ—follow Him through the rough places as well as the smooth—through the trials, crosses, duties, and self-denials of life. He is an able, generous, wise and noble Leader: ready with help in every time of need.

Guided by His wisdom, strong in His strength, we shall be enabled to lay aside every weight, and the sin that most easily besets us; nay, to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye even, if they should stand in our way to the kingdom of heaven.—Sunday at Home.

What would be wanting to make this world a kingdom of Heaven if that tender, profound and sympathizing love, practiced and recommended by Jesus, were paramount in every heart? Then the loftiest and most glorious idea of human society would be realized.—Krummacker.

We cannot measure the distance between the throne of glory and the accursed tree, between the Heaven of heavens and Mount Calvary, the Father's bosom and Joseph's sepulchre, yet our thoughts should be employed, like Jacob's angels, ascending and descending as far as we can.—Maclaren.

THESE very feet of ours are purchased for Christ's service by the precious drops which fell from His own torn and pierced feet upon the cross. They are to be his errand-runners. How can we let the world, the flesh, and the devil have the use of what has been purchased with such payment?—F. R. Davergal.



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EDUCATION it has been said is the golden key that unlocks the door of Success. Within certain limits and with certain qualifications the saying is undoubtedly true. But to the young, in this age, whose preparation for the arduous conflict of life is as yet unfinished, it is an important consideration in what direction their efforts shall tend. The struggle for fortune, fame or even an independent competency is for various reasons more difficult at the present day than at any former time. The age is past when the spending of years in storing the mind with classical legend or metaphysical subtleties is likely to prove a prudent or profitable investment to the great majority of young men or women. The field for the exercise of such attainments is exceedingly limited, and at the same time crowded with competitors for the laurel of success. It is to the wider fields of Agriculture, Manufactures and Commerce that attention must be directed in this comparatively new and prospectively great country of ours, with a view to having scope for the exercise of talent and ambition and opportunity for making life both useful and successful. It is obvious that the education necessary for effective work in either of the latter spheres must be special, comprehensive and thoroughly practical. It is not intended here that the accumulation of wealth is, or ought to be the main object of human activity, but the acquisition of a certain amount of wealth, in some form, is not only a duty but also a necessity to every individual who would live honestly. The Guelph Business College, Guelph, Ont. is a popular Institution, designed to impart that practical education that prepares the individual for the successful management of financial affairs, the proper adjustment and comparison of losses and gains, and for the intelligent performance of the varied transactions that the merchant, the manufacturer and farmer must meet in the regular course of business. To the young man or woman possessed of energy and ambition a course at this institution is commended, as opening up the way to a career of independent usefulness and success. Circulars giving full information are mailed free to any address, on application to M. McCORMICK, Principal.