

RELIGIOUS REST.
ITS NATURE—ITS PEACE.

In spite of our failings, positive and negative, our simulation and dissimulation, our faces are, after all, a good index of our soul. Here and there, the parents have interfered too much, and it is the father's character that you see imprinted on the silent face, the man's own face not being the man's own work; but as a general rule the face is the index of the soul, and the simple-hearted, the pure-hearted man reads us through the front from height to depth. Look at the man's face and read that; and then study the record of his acts; ask them the question; and you will find very few men who have attained entire composure, entire self-possession and rest for their souls. This young man is waiting until age shall somewhat chill the fire in his blood before he aims to settle himself down; calm and self-collected, to rest. This old man finds the habit of unrest growing upon him from childhood and manhood, and he also is discomposed; and though the snows of seventy winters have passed over his head, yet still his face does not tell you of a soul at rest.

Yet Nature tends everywhere to equilibrium. There is no oak tree growing in all the hill-sides of New England but puts out an arm upon one side and another just as long and heavy on the other side, and so it stands erect and in even poise. God has so distributed things in the heavens that the planets balance one another; and, though they make the most complicated motions, there is always just as much weight on the one side of the sun as there is upon the other, and so the balance is not disturbed. Their centre of motion is in their centre of magnitude, and with the smallest expenditure of force, they move in groups most beautiful and never miss their way. So when the air becomes light in Boston, all the two and thirty winds rush hitherward to restore the balance.

The same thing appears both in the material and spiritual world, because they are all rooted in the same soil and the same God has made the whole. The unconscious planets, by attraction, obey the same law which gently draws us conscious creatures towards goodness and towards God. So, looked at from a point of view that commands the world of matter and the world of spirit, piety is only the gravitation of a conscious soul tending directly to its balance and to God.

He that is not happy in his home, says the proverb, goes for satisfaction to his friends. And so he that has not rest in his own bosom need not journey for the rewards of heaven. He walks in paradise. He eats of the tree of knowledge without sin and without shame, and hears his Father's voice, not frightened at the call. What a light in the life and religion of such a man. Religious faith and love, these are the rest. The absence of these and the presence of sin, is disquietude of mind. With that in your conscience there is no rest. There is no peace for the wicked, because there is no peace in them. To escape from that, to make that escape, is regeneration—is to be born again. To forget and to outgrow that estate, that is forgiveness and to return to God. To obtain this rest will cost something. It will cost self-denial, watchfulness, and toil. Yet it is richly worth what it will cost. You need not abandon anything manly in man or graceful in woman. It is rather man's manliest manhood and woman's loveliest grace. With them you shall bear easily the crosses of life. When the blind archer shoots the bolts of misfortune at a venture, you are triply armed against them. You shall rise fresh from the grave of sorrow, and bravely confront the dangers, toils and disappointments of your life. You shall not despise nature, but honor it. You shall not shun the broad way and green of life, which winds so pleasantly amidst the sweet charities of this world. You shall walk there with your fellows in the heat of the day, and shall tread down the dangerous shadows which at first sight lie as giants in your path. You shall woo for yourself the spirit of God, which shall come to your breast and be married to your soul for ever and ever.

I do not say this is a thing to be done at once. It took longer for God to make a diamond than the flower that blossoms in a day. It takes longer for a great man to become balanced and settled. These strong natures, capable of so much good and which may be perverted to so much ill, take longer to become at rest, as the strongest wine is the longest in its fermentation. But I do say this is possible for every man, and possible in a much shorter time than is supposed, if men will devote themselves to it. Then, if this be done, what a superiority it has given him over others. His action is harmonious, in triple harmony with himself, with his brother, with his God. He works not only because he must, but because he can and because he will. The free volition of God attaches to him. Like God's, his own action is calm. He moves easily, because his centre is sus-

tained. He acts where, he acts when, and he acts how he will. With a little power he shall rapidly surpass men of superior ability, from the tranquillity of his work.

He is come near to God. Christ and the Father of Christ dwell in him and work through him. Trouble will not easily disturb this man. Fear will not readily make him afraid. Nothing can make him despair; not sorrow, or suffering, or sin of any kind. The great angel of misfortune, with blinded eyes, draws his bow and deftly shoots his arrows at a venture; but upon hearts thus fortified the arrow fixes not. They leave no rankling wound. Such a man's life is a midsummer's day, in which there may be clouds indeed, but they only give picturesqueness to the landscape, and in which every storm is rounded off with a rainbow at last. The possession of this rest for the soul is the very highest beauty of the soul. As beauty of person consists not merely in beauty of features, complexion and expression alone, but in the general result of all three, so beauty of soul does not depend wholly upon the strength of mind, the will, imagination, conscience, piety, but in the perfect union of all these. This beauty appears in man's whole action, thought, feeling, inward and outward life.

The Hope of the world, who came to give us rest in this way, dared to say, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, for it is the fairest gift he brings, and yet how little prized because so seldom won, and won so rarely because not oftener sought. Seek this peace and you shall obtain it. Then when all your winged schemes, hopes and fancies fly out from the golden nests of your expectations and elude your grasp and vanish out of sight, then peace shall remain, a household deity at your side to charm and bless you—to transfigure your own soul into the image of God—to give you His peace and His tranquillity forever.—*Theodore Parker.*

MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE USE OF HIS ORGANS.

The generous and provident Creator has given to man all the organs and vital machinery necessary for carrying on the operations of life. But he has left it to man, to set and to keep some of these in motion.

He has supplied man, or has given to him the means and the power of supplying himself, with all the materials and the elements upon which these organs are to operate. All directly or indirectly are supplied to us, and nothing is wanting for the support of our lives.

We are supplied with the digestive apparatus, by which dead food is to be converted into blood and flesh; and the same hand has furnished us with the elementary principles out of which that food is to be made. But it is assigned to us to select that food, to determine its quantity and quality, the times and the manner of eating, and to adapt the whole to the peculiarities of our individual constitutions.

We have given us lungs to breathe, and the air to enter them; but it is left to us to see that air is always pure, and fitted to effect the due changes in the blood.

We receive our skins from the Creator's hand, but we are to make and adapt the clothing and protection to their wants.—We are to give them the needful cleaning and friction.

The muscles and the rest of the locomotive apparatus are made to our hands; but how much or how little these shall be exercised, is left to our control.

The brain and the nervous system are the creation of God. But how, and to what degree, these shall be worked, to what purposes they shall be applied, it is left to our discretion and our volition to determine.

Thus we see, that in carrying on these functions of life, we are co-operators with the Creator. He has done one part toward this work, and left us to do the rest; and he has put into our hands the means and the powers to do what he has required of us.

What God has done for us is well done. So far nothing is deficient, and nothing is redundant. What we do, is done well or ill according to the degree of our intelligence, of our knowledge of the organs with which, and of the material upon which they are to operate, and according to the conscientious faithfulness, which we apply to our part of the work.

Seeing then that we are co-workers with the Creator in the work of sustaining life, it will be our first duty to learn what has been done, and what is left for us to do; to know the nature, powers and wants of our bodily organs; the purposes to which they can best be applied, and their capacity of endurance. We should also ascertain the nature and fitness of the material upon which they are to operate. Without this knowledge we may err and stumble; we may supply our organs with improper material, or apply them to improper purposes; we may thus create weakness instead of health.—*Jarvis.*

THE WORKING MAN'S DAY.

Man was not made for unceasing labor.—Neither his body nor his mind can stand it.—We do not need the testimony of physiologists and medical men to prove to us the necessity of periodical repose from labor, and the pernicious results flowing from the absence of it. Experience teaches us that man can no more go on smoothly for months and years without the rest of the Sabbath, than he can go on day by day without sleep by night.—Some persons may be able to hold on for a few days by taking only occasional repose, as others may for years by occasional times of relaxation; but the tone of the constitution, both of body and mind, will be far best kept up in the way provided by the God of our nature, by taking regular sleep every night, and regular rest every Sabbath.

When the curse came upon this earth on account of sin, the Lord, mercifully remembering man's frame, suffered not the curse to fall on that seventh day which he had blessed and sanctified. For that day, at least, the sentence was repealed, which doomed man to toil in the sweat of his brow till he returned to the ground. Six days he was to labor, but to rest on the seventh.

Those who, in the providence of God, are placed above the necessity of hard personal labor, cannot enter into the gracious beneficence of his enactment. The Sabbath is specially the poor man's privilege, the working man's day. Is it not a sublime spectacle, this Sabbath in England! More than four millions of working men over the land secured in one day's rest out of every seven! they and their families guaranteed a maintenance on that day, without the toil and care of the rest of the week, and left free to recruit their bodies by rest, and to refresh and purify their spirits at the fountains of heavenly truth! Blessed is he who seeks to enlarge the privileges of the working classes in this hallowed day! Cursed is he who in any way tries to remove the old landmark of God's merciful ways to the children of men!

During the French Revolution, the Sabbath was abolished for a time, and one day in ten was appointed as a national holiday. But it was soon found that the public health and the commercial prosperity of the country were alike injured, and the ancient and divinely appointed day of rest was publicly resumed.

We could easily prove, by statistical facts, that with nations, as with individuals, the proceeds of work during any lengthened period would be greater from six days of the week, than from the whole seven; that by due observation of the Sabbath, the amount of human labor would be greatly economized, and the average length of human life throughout the country materially increased; and that by the better economy and application of labor, by the diminution of crime and its concomitant expenses, by the improvement of public health and morals, a vast annual expenditure would be saved; or, in other words, a vast revenue added to the treasure of the country. Verily, even in a commercial view, "in keeping of this commandment, there is great reward."

Voltaire, toward the end of his life, remarked to some of his infidel associates, that all their labor must be lost, and that it was utterly vain to try to put down Christianity, so long as there was the Sabbath; so long as every seventh day men were compelled, more or less, to have their thoughts turned to the things of religion. Truly, therefore, even its enemies being judges, the Lord's day may be reckoned one of the chief bulwarks of the social, as well as of religious, constitution of this land.—*English Presbyterian Messenger.*

JUST VIEWS OF HUMAN NATURE.

The low conceptions of human nature that have prevailed are as injurious as they are false, their direct tendency being to destroy self-respect, and, along with this, whatever is worthy in thought, feeling, and conduct.—Scarcely any thing do men in general more need, in the formation of character, than the motive furnished by the elevated views of the capacities, powers, and qualities, which, through God's grace, belong to the nature whereof they are partakers. From the liberal doctrine on this subject, vast multitudes, it is known, dissent, and some believers in it seem to doubt the expediency of making it a frequent topic of instruction. But, for myself, I as decidedly differ from the latter class as from the former. The doctrine seems to me not only true, but of great practical importance; and the prevalent modes of thought and action show that there is much need of its being often inculcated and earnestly enforced. Who can suppose that mankind would conduct themselves so unworthily as they do, but for the degrading notions they have been taught to entertain of their nature? How can they be elevated in morals and religion, unless it be

impressed upon their minds that they are capable of high attainments, that it is really in them, as a law and force of their natural constitution, aided by the Gospel, to rise to eminence in virtue and piety? As for thee, my brother, my sister,—whoever thou mayest be that readest these pages,—if thou feelest within thy soul any desire to be and do all that, and only that, which becomes thee, then, first and at once, know and understand what God hath created thee, what he hath taught thee to aspire after, and what thou canst, under him, make thyself. Such knowledge, gained betime, will be to thee one of the best safeguards against vice, and one of the most efficient quickeners of virtue. Till thou learnest something of thy higher nature, of thy chief end, and of the greatness of thy moral powers, there can be little hope that thou wilt act worthily. True, indeed, it is to be borne in mind by thee, that thou hast thy weak points, that thou art liable to disobey God's holy law, and that actually thou art a transgressor of it in thought, feeling, and conduct. Yes, and more than this; abhor thy sins, cast them far from thee; lament in dust and ashes thy short-comings, and bow in all contrition and humility before the throne of divine grace. But whatever be the defects of thine own character, however undeserving thou mayst at times deem thyself, never cast reproach on human nature. Think of Him who made it what it is, and honor the Creator by respecting his work. Next to God and his Son Jesus Christ, reverence thy nature; stand in awe of it; guard it from error and pollution more carefully than thou protectest the safety of thy life. Turn away from those who would rob thee of the conviction that thou hast within thee, as the gift of an all-wise and benevolent God, capacities and principles which ally thee to the spirits on high. Crave association with those who recognize and delight to speak of the native greatness, the immortal growth, of the human soul. At all times and in all places, remember,—or, if thou chance to forget it, seek to be reminded as soon as possible,—that a mere animal thou art not, but a being of a higher order, made "a little lower than the angels," created in the image of God, and of "his own eternity;" and with full comprehension of what that language of Holy Writ means, see to it that thou art up to all which it implies.

RELIEF OF THE POOR.

If Unitarians have not taken a strong interest in foreign missions, nor furnished as liberal contributions as we might desire for the spread of Christian truth in their own land, they have never shown an unwillingness to relieve the necessities of the poor. In their attention to the bodily wants of the destitute around them, they have discovered a ready and generous spirit worthy of notice. Nor have they neglected to make provisions for the intellectual and moral wants of those who came under their immediate observation. We have often referred to the Ministry-at-large here, and the similar institution, under the name of Domestic Mission, in England. We have no doubt, that, in proportion to their numbers, the English Unitarians do more, in their Free Day and Sunday Schools, for the education of the poor, than any other denomination. Here, our system of public schools renders private effort for this purpose comparatively needless; yet the evening schools for our adult foreign, or native, population, and the sewing schools for girls, which are kept in connection with the chapels of the Ministry-at-large, are very useful. Institutions for the relief of indigence and the employment of the friendless multiply among us; an acquaintance with their condition reveals their necessities. Two such institutions have gone into successful operation in this city within the last two years,—the "Temporary Home for the Destitute," where persons without money or friends in the city may find comfortable accommodation, till, through their own efforts, or the assistance of others, they can procure permanent employment,—and the "Needlewoman's Friend Society," which provides work for females who depend on their needle for support, and pays them a fair price for their labor. An institution of a similar character is sustained by the members of the Unitarian societies in New York and in St. Louis, and probably in other places. Sewing Circles for the benefit of the poor are common. The Massachusetts General Hospital, with its ample endowments and admirable management, attests the liberality of Boston. The last Report of the Managers of the Seamen's Aid Society shows what a beauty of sentiment may be thrown around a wise beneficence. We do not wish to claim on behalf of our denomination any praise for their good deeds, but when we are taunted for not giving evidence of interest in religion, we are tempted to quote the words of an apostle, who has said, to "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction"—by which, we suppose, he meant to describe a practical sympathy with those who are in want and trouble—is a part of "pure and undefiled religion."—*Boston Christian Examiner.*