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THE GREAT GIVER TEACHING TO GIVE.

BY REV. A. A. BONAR, AUTHOR OF "MEMOIR OF M'CHEYNE."

Believing men are to be not merely cisterns, but springs. "He that believeth on me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water." (John vii. 38.) One of these rivers which the Master declared should not fail to flow from his believing ones is delight in giving, or the gladsome habit of using all we possess as being stewards for the Lord, and not as proprietors of the same. When an Israelite had offered the sacrifice of atonement at the altar, he must orthwith bring MINCHA, or meat-offering, an offering in which he symbolically gave up to the Lord the possession of all his property. But we should not have said, "he must bring;" for it was all privilege—he was PERMITTED to bring his property, to give vent to his gratitude, to exhibit practically, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits?" So did Zaccheus at Jericho; so did the Pentecostal Church at Jerusalem.

Many do not seem to notice how often the Lord Jesus inculcated truth regarding this matter. His sayings on the point are very many; nor do we wonder that it should be so, considering that selfishness is in us a root of bitterness ever springing up to trouble us.

I. HE STATED THE DUTY.

And when He did so, it was done in startling terms. We read in Luke vi. 30: "GIVE TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH OF THEE." Have we read the words aright? Yes, the words are plain. Is there no other translation possible? No, they are too plain and downright to admit of any doubt. Is there no various reading, then? No, none; the words stare you in the face, "GIVE TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH OF THEE!"

Disciple of Christ, you are to be a light, ever dispensing its rays; you are to be a well, affording something to all who come. As you are to "Pray WITHOUT CEASING," and to "Give thanks IN EVERY THING," (1 Thess. v. 17, 18), so you are to have

an always giving heart and hand—a realization of that well over which was written:—

"Christian reader view in me,
An emblem of true charity,
Who freely what I have bestow,
Though neither heard nor seen to flow,
And I have full returns from heaven,
For every cup of water given."

While another, who is not a disciple, may be grumbling, "So many calls!" you are to reply, "Yes, very many; but they are all calls in providence to teach and cultivate in me a giving disposition." The Master had "many calls" upon Him for healing all disease, and helping all want, and "GAVE TO EVERY ONE."

Let us understand the context of this passage, Luke vi. 30. In the preceding verses, Christ inculcates, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you," (Luke vi. 27-28). This is the very mind that was in Him; this was what the Cross exhibited to the full; this is the heart of the Gospel, telling us the manifestation of God's love to enemies in the Beloved Son, who was made a curse for them that He might bless them. And surely this is the holy mind that disciples are expected to copy from their Master. Then in ver. 29, we see the meekness and calmness of Christ; "Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also." We, his disciples, are expected to possess a meekness of spirit and a self-control that would carry us this length, whenever circumstances required. And so ver. 30 comes in; "GIVE TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH OF THEE;" followed by the clause: "And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again." Surely, these are words that call for a GIVING MIND, and a readiness to let go the things that are lawfully ours! Can less than this be the meaning?

If then, we turn to Matthew v. 39-42, we have the same subject treated of in very similar terms. It bids us not revenge, but be prepared—"if one smite us on one cheek, to offer also the other"—not revenge, but rather, "if compelled to go a mile, to go two," should that be the alternative,—not revenge, but if unjustly dealt with so that "one sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also"—far better this alternative than exhibit the spirit of the world. Even so, "GIVE TO HIM THAT ASKETH OF THEE, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away," calls upon us to be ever ready to give, instead of being annoyed; as some are, by "so many calls." When asked, or when providence puts a case in our way, there must be no harsh denial, but an entire willingness to give, if the case of need be apparent.

In all this, who can fail to discern the spirit and tone of the Lord Jesus, whose charity sought not its own, but laid out even glory itself on us the undeserving?—Such a tone of character, therefore, must be essential to real holiness and the want of it a deformity, in as much as such a want is unlikeness to the Lord.

"Give strength, give thought, give deeds, give
Give love, give tears, and give thyself; [self,
Give, give—be always giving,
Who gives not, is not living.
The more we give,
The more we live."

II. HE STATED THE MANNER.

We are to give with a happy, cheerful feeling, as being privileged to do a blessed thing. "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE" (Acts xx. 35), are words of the Lord Jesus—words preserved and embalmed in the Church, words so well known that Paul could refer to them as in a manner proverbial, words that bear the peculiar and unmistakable characteristics of the soul and heart of Him from whose lips they fell. They are words that tell us not simply that "GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER" (2 Cor. ix. 7), but that God has implanted blessedness in right giving, so that the giver's face cannot fail to shine, if he knows what he is doing.—Yes, "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE," as Mary did at Bethany, "THAN TO RECEIVE," as Solomon did when his ships returned

laden with gold of Ophir, and every rare and precious thing.

Giving, it appears, is not to be reckoned self-denial at all. It would have been no wonder though the Lord had made this call on us for giving, even if every act of giving had been sore self-denial, a wrenching off a right hand. But it turns out that there is no self-denial in it to a soul fully imbued with the mind of God. To such a soul, "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE." We do no one a favour by giving; we bless ourselves, that is, we, in the very act, break open the alabaster box which pours on us its own fragrance and refreshing.

The grand illustration of this blessedness is to be found in the Godhead. Man likes to GET, God lives to GIVE; and it is God that is "blessed for ever." In the plan of Redemption, we find THE FATHER counting it "more blessed to give than to receive." He developes (so to speak) His own bliss by giving that immense, that infinite gift, His own Son. This is the rate at which He who is blessed in giving, delights to give. Here is a gratification of his giving heart; He bestows on man the unspeakable gift, the Beloved Son, and to Him He grants the gift of a multitude that no man can number, a countless flock of ransomed souls for their Shepherd's glory, while to each of the flock He gives not only the Beloved Son, but also the Holy Spirit with all His train of graces and joys. Then, also we find the Son's rate of giving to be in no respect less liberal. He gives Himself, "God manifest in flesh" for us, Himself with all His obedience, all His suffering and death, all His merit, and all that all these purchase and make sure. The price of the purchased blessings must not be forgotten; for He gave not only service, but anguish, woe, death, in short whatever justice sought—all in order to present us with grace and glory, without money or price on our part. O what giving is this! O my soul what giving is here! And the HOLY GHOST also (who in Psa. li. 12, is called "THE FREE," i.e. the princely, or generous, or liberal Spirit), He comes in the name of Jesus, and makes a gift of HIMSELF! and thus in one sum we are made to receive, "Love, joy, peace, goodness," in short, all

holiness, all excellency, and all that is contained in Eternal Life. What giving! we again exclaim. The full sea of Godhead-bliss flowing in upon man! And this GIVING is one of the forms of Godhead felicity. "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE." Men and Brethren, who would not taste something of this peculiar joy? "It is not your money I want" (says a man of God), "but your happiness."

III. HE STATED THE MEASURE, AND RULE.

"FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE," (Matthew x. 8.) Ye have got from your Master without His looking for requital in any shape; give ye to your fellow men without regard to the probability of requital from them. This is so far the force of "FREELY;" but then we must also remember the amount of what we received freely from Him. Who can forget how full, how frank, how generous He was! The pattern of our giving as to measure is to be THE LORD'S OWN measure; and in regard to that we know that He gives as prompted by His own loving, kindly, generous nature, not stinted by regard to the likelihood of getting thanks, or meeting with a return of benefit. Let none, therefore, excuse in himself an unreadiness to give by saying, "Possibly, it may be turned to little advantage by the person who gets"—that word "FREELY," enjoins you to copy the Saviour's example; to open wide your heart and hand even though your kindness be ill-requited, or never owned at all. Neither say; "I have stopt giving in the meantime, because others, equally able, are not giving up to their measure." What hast thou to do with what OTHER MEN GIVE? We ask again, what hast thou to do with what "other men give?" Thy part is to remember and to look upon WHAT THOU HAST RECEIVED; yes, what THOU THYSELF (leaving others out of view) HAST RECEIVED AT THE HAND OF GOD. Look at the largeness of that amount, and how it was given unstinted and ungrudged, in spite of His knowledge of selfishness in thee, which (like the sand drinking in the rain) would so quickly appropriate all and exhale upward almost nought. McCheyne quotes the saying of an old Divine: "What

would have become of us if Christ had been as saving of His blood as some men are of their money?"

And farther. When Jesus says, "ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU," (Matt. vii. 7. Luke xi. 9,) does he not suggest much as to the measure; especially when he adds; "What man of you is there whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" The measure here is simply the VERY THING REQUIRED. Christ gives not merely something but up to the supplying of the want; if we copy Him here, then as far as lies in our power we shall aim at giving as much as will meet the exigency, as much as will come up to the demand. You know we are only STEWARDS of all we possess; our money is not our own.—"Occupy till I come," is the superscription on every coin.

But reverting again to Matt. x. 8, "FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE," let us notice that the first application of that counsel was in reference to the preaching of the Gospel, the imparting to other men what they themselves had received. Go and tell your fellow-men these good news, however ungratefully the hearers may act toward you; for you yourselves were undeserving of such a blessing when the Lord sent it. Shew your estimate of what you have received by your efforts to impart it to others far and wide. Do this by personally telling it as opportunity occurs, faithfully, frequently, prayerfully.

But since you can do it very effectually, and far more extensively than your personal influence can reach, by HELPING OTHERS TO PROCLAIM the tidings of great joy, you must not, you cannot, fail to avail yourselves of this means of "FREELY GIVING." What, then, is the rate of your giving for the support of the Gospel ordinances at Home? Is it such that you can say: "You may fairly estimate my sense of the value of the Gospel by the measure of my giving?" We do not ask, Do you give ten shillings annually towards the support of the Ministry, or do you give ten pounds? but we ask, Is your giving such in its measure that God could point to it and say, "See! here is one who gives freely, because he feels that he has received

freely." As to our spreading the Gospel among the Jews and the heathen—what a melancholy calculation that is which was recently made in regard to the Communicants of two of the most numerous Presbyterian bodies in this land, viz.—that the yearly average for every Communicant amounted to somewhat like one shilling and no more! As if each communicant said, "I value my share in the Gospel at this rate. I give at the rate at which I received!" Shall the Lord judge any of us by this measure? Has He deserved no more than this at our hands?

IV. HE STATED SOME OF THE BENEFITS RESULTING.

These are His words: "*Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*" (Luke vi. 38.) Here is a promise of recompense, ay, of recompense for doing what is in itself most blessed! For such is the Lord's manner. How like Him who said: "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matt. x. 42.) "Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble." (Psa. xli. 1.) It was the same Lord who by the mouth of David said; "I have not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread: he is ever merciful and lenedth, and his seed is blessed"—where (you see) the *giving* characteristic of the man thus blessed is unmistakably held up to view—it is the generous, the "lending" righteous man. And how truly in keeping with His own manner was that saying of the Master to the Young Ruler, "Sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." (Mark x. 21.)

In point of fact, men and brethren, "giving well," is as needful to our souls prosperity as "doing well;" and on the other hand, as surely as "the doer of the work is blessed in his deed," (Jas. i. 25,) so surely is the willing giver of his substance blessed in his giving. Hearken, beloved brethren! "Thy prayers and

thine alms are come up as a memorial before God." (Acts x. 4.) Hearken yet again; "Not that I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account," (Philipp. iv. 17.) is the language used respecting the giving of the jailor at Philippi, the givings of Epaphroditus, Lydia, Euodias, Syntyche, and the rest who had ministered of their substance to Paul.

It was the experience of a godly Glasgow merchant in other days, that the liberal man is the man whose riches are likely to continue with Him. He quaintly remarked, in allusion to Proverbs xxiii. 5, that "clipping the wings," was the only way to prevent riches flying away as the eagle. There was deep meaning in his words; for the Master's words go thus far, and much beyond it, too. Notice the special terms of Christ's declaration; not only shall you get some requital, but you shall find "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over!" This is the recompense! What words are these! What a promise is here! The complete fulfilment shall reach us in the Kingdom, but even here we shall often get instalments.* And do you not think, brother, that you and I have good security for the loan which we may lend to the Lord?

A man says; "I do wish to get blessing for the ministrations of my pastor and for Gospel ordinances." And the man prays for blessing as well as diligently attends on ordinances. But the man must add to his plan; he must also "give," and not leave it to others to give all. He must have a hand in the sums gathered for upholding the ordinances, just as Cornelius had his "alms" ready, as well as his "prayers." They who do not give according to their ability to the sustentation of the ministry, need not expect to get the benefits they would otherwise obtain. "Give, and it shall be given unto you."

Another says: "I wish the congregation I am connected with to flourish; its schools, its schemes of benevolence, and all such

* Our version seems to convey the idea that the recompense is to be conveyed by the hands of men; "SHALL MEN GIVE UNTO YOU." But the Greek signifies simply, "It shall be given to you." They whose business it is to do it shall be employed by God to do it.

objects, I pray for them often and heartily." Well, but Cornelius would have added "alms" to "prayers." We do not shrink from saying, "You must put into the plate of what God has given you, as well as put your prayer into the censer of the High Priest. "Give, and it shall be given unto you."

Another says: "I am deeply interested in the cause of missions; I long for the day when Jew and Gentile shall all know the Lord." But do you, besides good wishes and prayers, give the help of your money? And not the mere mite which you never feel the want of, but the sum that testifies that your interest is really deep and practical?

But one of our poorer brethren puts in a question here. "Am I, then, necessarily a loser under ordinances, because I have not got the means of giving, and so cannot bring an offering?" No, not at all; your case is of the same class with that of the sick and feeble, stretched on beds of languishing, who cannot work and labour for God, but have "the will to do it."—The Lord knoweth the "willing" heart; and the willing one may rest assured that to him Jehovah is saying as to David when he would fain have built the Temple and was not permitted (1 Kings viii. 18), "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart." (2 Cor. viii. 12.) Only be honest and true with God in the matter. The man can work and labour in God's cause who can find time and strength for visiting friends and evening parties; so also the man is able to give to God's cause who can "spend" so largely on his family and domestic comforts, who can indulge himself in buying what is only a luxury, and who can lay up money in the bank less or more. Poor believer, "giving" is really "sowing;" you are a gainer by giving your few shillings. "A handful of seed sown may yield great increase."

Man of God, let us ask the Great Giver to teach us to give!

Anxious, unsatisfied soul, there are some whose secret unhappiness goes hand in hand with their want of a generous tone of mind. These persons are not able to discern the large-hearted grace of God; they judge God by themselves; their narrow hearts represent God as one who gives

indeed, but gives sparingly, or conditionally, or in consideration of previous desert.—Were your soul more generous in its tone, you might be better able to discern the generous freeness and fulness of God's giving; but a withholding, miserly soul is too likely to picture to itself a withholding God, who must be repaid for His gifts, and from whom blessings must be wrung by making out a claim. May the Holy Ghost give you a true discovery of our God who "giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." (James i. 5.)

Unsaved man; perhaps you are liberal and benevolent. You give well, because your natural disposition is amiable and kind; but you do not, in your givings even to religious objects, recognize Christ. If so, you will yet hear him say; "You did it not to me" (Matthew xxv. 45); you gave either to enjoy the luxury of complacent self-applause, or because you felt it pleasant to see others pleased."—Brother, in such giving the Lord Jesus takes no pleasure. Benevolence, charity, liberality, generosity, wash no sins away and form no righteousness. Will you listen to us when we invite your attention to the delight which the Lord Jesus has in your "receiving" from Him? Jesus would fain give Eternal Life—pardon, peace, purity, glory—to such undeserving ones as you, who make a righteousness out of your givings to men, and are withholding your consciences from the cleansing blood and your heart from His holy fellowship.

But, unsaved man, you may belong to another class—those who refuse to give a mite to religious objects, and who cry out about neglecting the poor at home. You say it is all waste to spend money on Gospel ordinances, on missions, and the like, though Jesus commanded and rewarded the woman who spent ten pounds, in order to anoint His head. (Matthew xxvi. 10-13.) Well, here is the truth; you give nothing to Christ because you know Him not. You set no value on perishing souls, because your own soul is unsaved. You have never seen your state of sin and death, and how near the brink of perdition you stand at this hour. You have never understood the free love of God, nor seen His glory. But stay, unsaved man; what voice is that which

reaches our ears? "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matthew xvi. 26.) Do you not know that the love of money is the love of sin? ay, that thy money shall perish with thee? and that thou shalt be so poor in eternity as not to be able to get one drop of water? One thing, however, let us tell you: a man enthralled to earth, to self, to sin, to Satan, may be delivered from them all, if he make haste. For the Holy Spirit sets free a soul by revealing Christ that died and rose again. This is the sight, this is the sun, that melts an earth-worm's and a miser's heart. The cross is still as powerful as when Paul said, that it was by it "The world was crucified to him and he unto the world."—(Galat. vi. 14.) It is still as truly "the power of God" as when Cowper sung of it;

"It was the sight of Thy dear Cross,
First weaned my soul from earthly things,
And taught me to esteem as dross
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings."

YOU NEED A GUIDE.

When men are travelling in the far East, over the burning sands of the desert, (where there are no railroads or stage-coaches such as we have), they go in *caravans*, that is, a great many of them together. Sometimes there will be hundreds of persons, and thousands of camels, that stretch out in a long line as far as the eye can see. But whether there are many or few, they are always sure to have one man going before them, whom they call the *hybeer*, or guide. If any company of travellers should think of going over the desert without him, they would be as foolish as if we were to try travel in the railroad cars without a conductor or engineer; and they would be almost sure to get lost by the way. This guide must be one who knows all about the country through which they are to pass. He must be able to tell when the dreadful simoom, or hot wind, is rising, so that they may be able to prepare for it. He must know where the sands are most firm, and where they are shifting, so that the men and beasts may not sink in them. He must know all about the wells and springs by the way, where they may drink and not die of thirst; and where the little oases, that is, the grassy resting-spots, are found. And he must be a man who knows the tribes of Arabs, and can keep them from robbing the caravan. Every one follows

and obeys this guide, until he has led them safe to the journey's end.

Now, I see before me a *little caravan*—a company of travellers, and where are you going? *To eternity.* Some of these little feet have only begun the journey, others have been longer on the way. Now and then one has dropped down by your side, and you have seen them no more; they have reached the journey's end before you. But just as fast as the minutes fly, you are all going on—on to another world.

And, like the travellers over the desert, do you not need a *guide*? Oh, yes, for there are many dangers before you. There are many wrong paths that do not lead to heaven, but lead far away from it; paths pleasant to look upon, but oh, their end is misery and death.

Yes, my little pilgrims, you need, and we all need, a strong, and loving, and wise *guide*; one stronger than any man, and who loves us so well that he will take us by the hand, and never let us go away from him; one who knows where the springs of living water are; one who can lift you over the bad places, and lead your tired feet to pleasant resting spots, and who can guide you to the heavenly home, and not let you get lost by the way.—*Little Crowns and how to win them.*

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

Thou deep abyss of blessed Love,
In Jesus Christ to us unsold,
Fire, which no finite heart could prove,
Depths, to no human thought reveal'd;
Thou lovest sinners—lovest me.
Thou blesset those who cursed Thee:
O great, O kind, O loving One,
What worthless creatures shin'st Thou on!

Thou King of light! our deepest longing
Is shallow to Thy depths of grace;
Deep are the woes to us belonging,
But deeper far Thy joy to bless.
Teach us to trust the Father's love,
Still looking to the Son above;
Blest Spirit! through our spirits pour
True prayers and praises evermore.

Jesus! Thine own with rich grace filling,
Thy mighty blessing on us shed,
New life through every member thrilling,
Diffused from Thee, the living Head;
Shew us how light Thy mild yoke is,
And how from self's hard yoke it frees.
If Thou wilt teach Thy household so,
The works the Master's hand shall show.

—Count Zinzendorf.

THE SINS OF THE TONGUE.

BY REV. J. E. L. CUYLER.

The gift of speech is a marvelous gift. For five whole days of creation's first week the almighty was clothing the new-born earth with light and verdure, and covering it with the myriads of animal life. But it was a voiceless world. At length God made man in His own image, with not only a soul to appreciate his Creator, but a *tongue* to give expression to his homage, and "as the new-formed being gazed around him, the silence was broken, and creation thrilled with the melody of speech."

Philosophers tell us that every uttered word produces a vibration in the atmosphere; an ingenious theory has therefore been bronched that these vibrations never entirely cease! If this were true, we should still be moving among the inaudible words of all our progenitors. This seems fanciful in natural philosophy; but there is a sense in which every uttered word *lives for ever*. It lives in its influence on the speaker—in its influence on others. Paul's voice echoes still; millions of God's faithful messengers, being dead, yet speak!

When Latimer was on trial for heresy, he heard the scratch of a pen behind the tapestry. In a moment he bethought himself that every word he spoke was *taken down*, and he says, that he was very careful what avords he uttered. Behind the veil that hides eternity is a record-book, in which our every syllable is taken down. Even the most trivial are not forgotten, for the Lord Jesus tells us that "every *idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the *Day of Judgment*." If our words have an eternity of existence—if good words have so potent an influence to save—if idle, or profane, or poisonous speech work such perennial mischief, how needful is the perpetual utterance of the prayer, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

I. Among the many sins of the tongue are *idle words*. "Avoid foolish talking," says the wise Apostle, "and let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." There is a peculiar sin in idle talking when we remember that the same expenditure of breath might be productive of so much

blessing. When we contemplate a Whitefield in the full rush of his resistless oratory—now starting a guilty sinner from his slumber on the verge of hell—now leading a bewildered wanderer to Christ—now kindling a saint into rapture, and now melting a rebel into penitence—we grow indignant at the thought that this prerogative of speech should so often be spent in silly jests and contemptible frivolities. Are time and eternity so lacking in themes of importance that we shall spend our precious breath in fuming emptiness? Surely, if we would but reflect how soon our tongues will lie silent in the tomb, and how speedily the dust will gather upon our lips, we should be awed into more sobriety, and purity, and carefulness of speech.

Shall we never jest? Does not a pleasant joke sometimes do good like a medicine? Very true. There is more marrow in a wise man's jokes than in a fool's solemn inanities. But a wise man "sets a watch on his lips" even when he utters a pleasantry. Especially, he never jests at the wrong time, or about sacred things. He utters no puns and parodies on the Bible; for what men have once laughed at, they seldom reverence. Heartily do I wish that I had never uttered a ludicrous application of a Scripture-line, and had never heard one; for the profane or indecent burlesque will often shoot into my mind in the midst of a sermon or a prayer. Wit and humor are allowable when controlled by good sense and by reverence for God; but when we venture into the sublime domains of Revelation, we should put our shoes from off our feet, for the ground whereon we stand is holy. From my soul I abominate *merriment in the pulpit*. Shall he court a grin who should be winning souls to God? When an ambassador of Christ descends to make sport in the sacred desk, the devil laughs.

II. Malicious words are cousins in sin to idle and profane words. Paul says, "Let all bitterness and *evil speaking* be put away from you with all malice." Kind words are the oil that lubricates every-day intercourse. They cost little. A phrase of common comfort, "that by daily use hath almost lost its sense, will fall upon the saddened heart like choicest music." We love to meet certain people.

They always have a kind, cheerful, inspiriting word for us. They make us hopeful, and heal our heartaches. Others we instinctively shun; they always have a sly thrust at somebody; they hatch mean suspicions in our minds; they are ever letting out a drop of *acid* on some character or cause that is dear to us, and the acid leaves an ugly stain. There was an ancient malediction that the tongue of the slanderer should be cut out; if that summary process were now enforced, we fear that some of our acquaintances might soon lose the "unruly member." A slanderer is a public enemy. One reckless tongue is enough sometimes to embroil a whole village and to set a church in a flame. "There are six things which God hates; yea, seven are an abomination unto Him." The seventh of the category is "the false witness who speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

III. In tracing of the sins of the tongue, we must not omit a word in regard to that feculent ichor that exudes from some lips in the form of obscenity. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and a filthy imagination—like a fever—comes out on the tongue. We have met people whose tongues were "coated" with smuttiness. In companies of youth, in shops and counting-houses, in rooms of colleges and boarding-schools, in ships, cabins and soldiers' tents, a vendor of obscenities is a walking pestilence. Long years do not obliterate the filthy memories; not even the converting grace of God can wholly purify the unclean chambers of imagery.

Is any sin of speech worse than this? Yes, one; and that is *profane swearing*. This is the most gratuitous and inexcusable of sins. It gratifies no appetite and feeds no lust. The libertine or the drunkard may find some wretched excuse for their vices in the clamor of animal appetite; but who was ever born with a lust for oaths? The man who swears turns speech into a curse, and before his time rehearses the dialect of hell. He waits for no bait; but "bites at the devil's bare hook." The shrewd Quaker's advice to the profane youth, "Swear away, my young friend, till the devils all that bad stuff out of thee," points to the real source of the vice; for it

is out of an evil heart that proceed evil thoughts, false witness, and blasphemies.

We fear that the purest tongue will need much purifying before it is fit to join in the celestial praises of God's upper temple. For that worship let us attune our voices by ceaseless prayers, by words of love, by earnest vindications of the right, by habitual "speech seasoned with salt" of divine grace. The melody of Heaven will spring from a *harmony of hearts*; each voice there will bear a part in the song of Moses and the Lamb.

WINTER.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER,

January! Darkness and light reign alike. Snow is on the frozen ground.—Cold is in the air. The winter is blossoming in frost-flowers. Why is the ground hidden? Why is the earth white? So hath God wiped out the past: so hath he spread the earth, like an unwritten page for a new year! Old sounds are silent in the forest and in the air. Insects are dead, birds are gone, leaves have perished, and all the foundations of soil remain. Upon this lies, white and tranquil, the emblem of newness and purity, the virgin robes of the yet unstained year!

Already, snow-birds are fluttering for a foothold, and showering down the frosty dust from the twigs. The hens and their uplifted lords are beginning to wade with dainty steps through the chilly wool.—Boys are a-glee with sleds; men are out with shovels, and dames with brooms.—Bells begin to ring along the highway, and heavy oxen with crunching sleds are wending towards the woods for the winter's supply of fuel. The school-house is open, and a roasting fire rages in the box-stove. Little boys are crying with chilblains, and little girls are comforting them with the assurance that it will "stop aching pretty soon," and the boys seem unwilling to stop crying until then. Big boys are shaking their coats, and stamping off the snow, which peels easily from sleek, black-balled boots, or shoes burnished with tallow.—Out of doors, the snow-balls are flying, and everybody laughs but the one that's hit. Down go the wrestlers. The big

ones "rub" the little ones; the little ones in turn "rub" the smaller ones. The passers-by are pelted; and many a lazy horse has motives of speed applied to his flank sides. Even the schoolmaster is but mortal, and must take his lot; for many an "accidental" snow-ball plumps into his breast and upon his back before the rogues will believe that it is the schoolmaster.

But days go by. The snow-drifts,—fences are banked up ten feet high. Hills are broken into a "coast" for boys' sleds. They slide and pull us again, and toil on their slippery pleasure. They tumble over and turn over; they break down or smash up; they run into each other, or run races, in all the modes and experiences of rugged frolic. Then comes the digging of chambers in the deep drifts room, upon room, the water dashed on over night freezing the snow walls into solid ice.—Forts are also built, and huge balls of snow rolled up, till the little hands can roll the mass no longer.

We have sat and watched the fall of snow until our heads grew dizzy, for it is a bewitching sight to persons speculatively inclined. There is an aimless way of riding down, a simple, careless, thoughtless motion, that leads you to think that nothing can be more nonchalant than snow. And then it rests upon a leaf, or alights upon the ground, with such a dainty step, so softly, so quietly, that you almost pity its virgin helplessness. If you reach out your hand to help it, your very touch destroys it. It dies in your palm, and departs as a tear.—*American Messenger.*

THE BELIEVER FREE.

The Government packet of England was leaving the port of Bahia, in the Brazils, when a boat came alongside, and my interest was excited in a negro woman who entered the ship. There was nothing to attract attention in a mere negro slave, for the city was full of slaves; and the streets were very much left to themselves, as if the town had been their own. They were a fine race of men. Taken from the centre of the torrid zone, on the other shore of the Atlantic, and still living within it, they were as black as ebony, so that other negroes seemed only men of colour in con-

trast with the raven hue of their Ethiopian skin. They were tall, broad-chested, athletic; and some of them were said to have been chiefs under their own African sun, with their clansmen still ready to respond to their call. As we looked on the ruins of stately houses, not decayed by age, but consumed by fire, they seemed by their lofty bearing to reply,—You gaze at that mass of ruined houses; they were the mansions of our lordly masters; it was our hands that set them on fire, and reduced them to naked walls, for there is a limit to our submission, slaves though we be.

But though we had seen almost none but slaves in the city, this negro woman at once awakened our interest from the burden she bore, or rather from her manner of bearing it. She followed her mistress, a delicate English lady, whose little boy of three or four years she carried upon her side. The sight immediately recalled the ancient promise in Isaiah,—“Ye shall be borne upon her sides; ye shall be dandled upon her knees;” for she bore the little one, not in her arms, nor on her shoulders, but literally upon her side above the thigh-joint. On shore our pity was awakened for a marmot, which had been killed, and thrown over a garden wall. Being too well known to the people, it had been dealt with as a robber of the dairy or the hen-roost; but being unknown to us, it excited our interest; and we were touched to find one of her young, alive and unhurt, still clinging to the side of its dead mother. Much after the same manner did the little English boy cling to his Ethiopian nurse, as she climbed into the ship, sitting astride on the hollow of her side,—a seat quite familiar to him, and often occupied afterwards with great apparent comfort.

The illustration of the text having riveted my regards on the African bondmaid, I remarked to the captain, “That woman will be set free as soon as she lands on the shore of England.” “No, she will not.” “Why?” “Because she is free already.” “Then is she not a slave?” “She was a slave just now at the ship’s side, but the Queen of England has no slaves; and the moment she set her foot on the planks of this ship she was free. Her mistress may change her mind, and return to the shore, but she can’t now take that

servant back without her own free will. She is welcome to remain here if she please, for she is already a free woman." Between us and the haven of our rest, the land and the home of freedom, thousands of miles of ocean were tossing their restless waves, yet from the moment she passed the gangway of a British ship, all the powers of earth could not bring that poor African woman into bondage again, except over the silenced guns of the fleets of England.

Even so, believer, the King of the kingdom of heaven has no slaves and the moment you entered the ark of his mercy, and trusted yourself to the great Captain of your salvation, you were liberated from sin and death, and became for ever free. Your freedom is not postponed till you reach the land of liberty above;—a stormy ocean rolls between you and that home of the free, the haven of your rest; but already "the Son has made you free, and you are free indeed." All earth and all hell will in vain combine to bring you into bondage again; all the power of the Almighty God is pledged for your safety and freedom, and because Jesus reigns you can never more be enslaved by Satan, or by sin, or by any power of evil. Let it never be said, that of your own will you returned to your old taskmaster, and that by your free consent you "are entangled again with the yoke of bondage."—*Rev. A. Moody Stuart.*

DOES THE WORLD HATE PIETY ?

Sidney Smith says, "It is not true that the world hates piety. That modest and unobtrusive piety which fills the heart with all human charities, and makes a man gentle to others and severe to himself, is an object of universal love and veneration. But mankind hate the lust of power when it is veiled under the garb of piety; they do not choose to be insulted; they love to tear folly and impudence from the altars which should only be a sanctuary for the righteous and the good."

This sounds well and plausible (says an unknown but sensible writer,) and has but a single flaw, *it is not true.* Athens had once a citizen of unblemished virtue, whose stern integrity and winning and blameless life excited universal comment, but so far from being "an object of universal love and veneration," Aristides was banished in disgrace to foreign land. At a later day she met a second citizen, whose lofty example infused fresh life into

social morals, and whose eloquent teachings allured young men from the haunts of vice, and the snares of evil companionship, yet Socrates did not become "an object of universal love and veneration," but died in prison, a martyr to his personal goodness.

Several centuries later there appeared in Judea, a man, whose "modest and unobtrusive piety," even Sidney Smith would not venture to call in question. His "charities" were universal, his tenderness more winning than woman's. His character was harmoniously rounded, wholly free from the rough edges and inequalities which inhere in excellent men, when governed by a single idea; equally free from the bitterness of spirit and rude personality which excite aversion in many reformers. "He went about doing good," healing the sick, comforting the troubled, sympathising with the outcast, raising the dead. "He spake as never man spake." He lived as man never lived. But did Jesus Christ become "an object of universal love and veneration?" Let the secret snares of his untiring enemies answer. Let the treachery of Judas, and the malice of the Pharisees, and the mockery of Herod with his men of war, and the shouts of the populace in the streets of Jerusalem, answer. Let Golgotha, with its bloody cries and its bitter jeers, "He saved others, himself he cannot save," answer. Let his own words answer, "They hated me without a cause." "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father." If the world does not hate piety, the life of our blessed Saviour in whom it appeared in the most winning form of incarnate love, would be quite inexplicable.

Sidney Smith was not a competent witness. He was a man of genial temper and ready wit. But of the nature of true piety, as rooted in a heart renewed by the Holy Spirit, he seems never to have conceived. The very idea of such a piety excited his derision, and he sought to riddle it through and through with the keenest shafts from the quiver of his wit. A higher authority has said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." One must have overlooked the teachings of the New Testament, and have misread strangely apostolic history, and the dark annals of the martyrs of the churches, and have looked with a dull vision into the inner chambers of the human heart, if he denies that the world hates piety. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"

ABSENCE OF GOD IN PRAYER.

"O that I knew where I might find him!"—Job. xxiii. 3.

"If God had not said, 'Blessed are those that hunger,' I know not what could keep weak Christians from sinking in despair. Many times, all I can do is to complain that I want him, and wish to recover him."

Bishop Hall, in uttering this lament two centuries and a half ago, only echoed the wail which had come down, through living hearts, from the patriarch, whose story is the oldest known literature in any language. A consciousness of the *absence of God* is one of the standard incidents of religious life. Even when the forms of devotion are observed conscientiously, the sense of the presence of God, as an invisible friend, whose society is a joy, is by no means unintermittent.

The truth of this will not be questioned by one who is familiar with those phases of religious experience which are so often the burden of Christian confession. In no single feature of "inner life," probably, is the experience of many minds less satisfactory to them than in this. They seem to themselves, in prayer, to have little, if any, effluent emotion. They can speak of little in their devotional life that seems to them *like* life; of little that appears like the communion of a living soul with a living God. Are there not many "closet hours," in which the chief feeling of the worshipper is an oppressed consciousness of the absence of reality from his own exercises? He has no words which are, as George Herbert says, "heart deep."—He not only experiences no ecstasy, but no joy, no peace, no repose. He has no sense of being at home with God. The stillness of the hour is the stillness of a dead calm at sea. The heart rocks monotonously on the surface of the great thoughts of God, of Christ, of eternity, of heaven,—

"As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean."

Such experiences in prayer are often startling in the contrast with those of certain Christians, whose communion with God, as the hints of it are recorded in their biographies, seems to realize, in actual

being, the spiritual conception of a life which is hid with Christ in God.

We read of Payson, that his mind, at times almost lost its sense of the external world, in the ineffable thoughts of God's glory which rolled like a sea of light around him, at the throne of grace.

We read of Cowper, that in one of the few lucid hours of his religious life, such was the experience of God's presence which he enjoyed in prayer, that, as he tells us, he thought he should have died with joy, if special strength had not been imparted to him to bear the disclosure.

We read of one of the Tennents, that on one occasion, when he was engaged in secret devotion, so overpowering was the revelation of God which opened upon his soul, and with augmenting intensity of effulgence as he prayed, that at length he recoiled from the intolerable joy as from a pain, and besought God to withhold from him further manifestations of his glory. He said, "Shall thy servant see thee and live?"

We read of the "sweet hours" which Edwards enjoyed "on the banks of Hudson's River, in sweet converse with God;" and hear his own description of the inward sense of Christ which at times came into his heart, and which he "knows not how to express otherwise than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and rapt and swallowed up in God."

We read of such instances of the fruits of prayer, in the blessedness of the suppliant, and are we not reminded by them of the transfiguration of our Lord, of whom we read, "As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and glistening?" Who of us is not oppressed by the contrast between such an experience and his own? Does not the cry of the patriarch come unbidden to our lips, "Oh that I knew where I might find him!"

Much of even the ordinary language of Christians, respecting the joy of communion with God,—languages which is stereotyped in our dialect of prayer—many

cannot honestly apply to the history of their 'own minds. A calm, fearless self-examination finds no counterpart to it in anything they have ever known. In the view of an honest conscience, it is not the vernacular speech of their experience. As compared with the joy which such language indicates, prayer is, in all that they know of it, a dull duty. Perhaps the characteristic of the feelings of many about it is expressed in the single fact, that it is to them a duty as distinct from a privilege. It is a duty which they cannot deny, is often uninviting, even irksome.

If some of us should attempt to define the advantage we derive from a performance of the duty, we might be surprised, perhaps shocked, as one after another of the folds of a deceived heart should be taken off, at the discovery of the littleness of the residuum, in an honest judgment of ourselves. Why did we pray this morning? Do we often derive *any* other profit from prayer, than that of satisfying convictions of conscience, of which we could not rid ourselves if we wished to do so, and which will not permit us to be at ease with ourselves, if all forms of prayer are abandoned? Perhaps even so slight a thing as the pain of resistance to the momentum of a habit will be found to be the most distinct reason we can honestly give for having prayed yesterday or to-day.

There may be periods, also, when the experiences of the closet enable some of us to understand that maniacal cry of Cowper, when his friends requested him to prepare some hymns for the Olney Collection:—"How can you ask of me such a service? I seem to myself to be banished to a remoteness from God's presence, in comparison with which the distance from east to west is vicinity, is cohesion."

If such language is too strong to be truthful to the common experience of the class of professing Christians to which those whom it represents belong, many will still discern in it, as an expression of joylessness in prayer, a sufficient approximation to their own experience, to awaken interest in some thoughts upon the CAUSES OF A WANT OF ENJOYMENT IN PRAYER.

The evil of such an experience in prayer is too obvious to need illustration. If any light can be thrown upon the causes of it, there is no man living, whatever may be his religious state, who has not an interest in making it the theme of inquiry.—"Never any more wonder," says an old writer, "that men pray so seldom. For there are very few that feel the *relish*, and are enticed with the *deliciousness*, and refreshed with the *comforts*, acquainted with the *secrets*, of a holy prayer." Yet, who is it that has said, "I will make them joyful in my house of prayer"?—*Still Hour*.

BE PUNCTUAL.

By punctuality we do not mean the merely being in time for lectures, dinners, &c., but that spirit out of which punctuality grows—that love of accuracy, precision, and vigour which make efficient men and women—the determination that what you have to do shall be done, in spite of all petty obstacles, and finished off at once and finally. We believe there is a story told of Nelson and his coachmaker, which is worthy of being recorded. When he was on the eve of departing for one of his great expeditions, the coachmaker said to him, "The carriage shall be at the door, punctually at the door, at six o'clock."—"A quarter before," said Nelson. "I have always been a quarter of an hour before my time, and it has made a man of me."

The punctuality which we recommend involves and comprehends the exact arrangement of your time. It is a matter on which much depends. Fix how much you will spend on each object, and keep all but obstinately to your plan. "Method," says Cecil, "is like packing things in a box. A good packer will get in half as much again as a bad one." Ponder well upon these things, and call on God to help you in arraying yourself in these qualities. If you mean to be effective, you must set about it earnestly and at once.—No one ever yet yawned it into being with a wish. You must make arrangements for it; you must watch it; you must notice when you fail, and you must keep some kind of journal of your failures.

PIOUS RESOLUTIONS.

WRITTEN SHORTLY AFTER CONVERSION.

I will no more a wanderer be,
With heart estranged and far from thee,
Nor serve the world, when I am free
From its dread chains and drudgery.

Henceforth, will I thy glory seek,
Henceforth, will I thy praises speak,
Henceforth, will I, though I am weak,
Thee strive to praise and glorify.

Henceforth at life's pure cleansing stream,
My soul shall wash and e'er be clean,
And thy white robe, void spot or seam,
My soul shall clothe and beautify.

Henceforth to Thee for daily bread,
My soul shall look and e'er be fed;
Henceforth thy love shall be my bed;
O that will be true luxury.

No more the world's alluring joys,
Shall snare my heart and feast my eyes,
But henceforth Christ shall be the prize,
For which my soul strives vigorously.

No more a bond-slave but a prince,
My steps through grace shall still advance,
Till waking from life's fleeting trance,
I bathe in endless ecstasy.

ROCKWOOD.

A. N.

I DON'T LIKE PROFESSIONS.

This is the reason which many give for not acknowledging Christ. They say, when urged upon the point, that they 'don't like professions.' A strange reason this for not obeying the express command of the divine Saviour. What if they do not like professions, do they equally dislike obeying commands? If so, they had better say, 'I don't like obedience to the commands of God.' But they profess to be well disposed to obey; it is only to *professing* that they object. Well, then, let them obey all the precepts which they find in the Bible, and we will not trouble them about a profession. Why should we? In that case, they will obey the precept which enjoins a profession; they will do the thing appointed in remembrance of Christ.

But 'I don't like professions.' And who does like mere professions? Who ever contended in favor of a man's professing to have what he has not? Professions are very different from mere professions. Suppose a

person has what he professes to have, what then? What is the objection to a profession in that case? I see none. If a man loves the Lord Jesus, I can see no harm in professing or declaring his attachment to him. It is very natural to declare it. We profess attachment to others—to relatives, friends, benefactors, pastors, civil rulers—why not to Christ? How does his being the subject of the profession constitute such an objection to it? Is he the only being to whom we may not profess attachment?

'Don't like professions?' Why, yes, they do. Professions of friendship, of patriotism, and of loyalty, they like. Why not of religion? Why should not religion be professed as well as other things? Are attachment to the gospel, love to Christ, regard for the authority of Jehovah, and adherence to his government the only things never to be professed?

I do not see any objection to professions, but I see propriety and utility in them, even if it were optional with us to make them or not. If it were left to our choice, it strikes me we ought to choose to profess love and obedience to Christ. But suppose it is required, does not that alter the case? Will these persons say they do not like what God requires? And does he not require a profession? His inspired apostle twice exhorts Christians to *hold fast* their profession. Does not that imply that it is made, and ought to be made? How is a person to hold on to that of which he has never taken hold? Is not the public confession of Christ required when it is made a condition of salvation? 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Rom 10: 9. Does not divine authority require it, when to the doing of it is made one of the most precious promises in the whole Bible? 'Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.' Is not that duty, against the omission of which such a threatening lies as this: 'But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven?' Matt. 10: 32, 33. It is very plain that God requires professions, though some men do not like them.

'You don't like professions.' Then Joshua, a man that followed the Lord *fully*, falls under your censure, for he professed the service of God. 'As for me and my house,' said he, 'we will serve the Lord.' Are we to think the worse of him for this? Some ask what is the use of a profession. If they will observe what followed Joshua's profession, they will see the use of it. They will see that it brought out all Israel. 'We will also serve the Lord,' said they; and

they entered that day into a covenant to serve him, Nor did their practice belie their profession: for it is recorded that 'Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua.' So much for a profession. It is agreed on all hands that that professing generation, in piety and devotion to God, surpassed any other during the national existence of Israel.

We read in 1 Tim. 2: 10, of certain things which are said to become "women professing godliness." It would seem from this, to be the duty of women to profess godliness. And if of women, of men also, I suppose. What case of *real* subjection to the gospel of Christ do we read of, which was not also a case of 'professed subjection' to it? Paul, in 2 Cor. 9. 13, speaks of some who glorified God for the 'professed subjection' of others unto the gospel of Christ. It appears then that God is glorified by these professions. And I should presume, from certain passages in the Bible, that he is not glorified when a profession is withheld. There were, in primitive times, some who did not like professions. It is no new thing not to like professions. In John 12: 42, 43; we read, that 'among the chief rulers many believed on him, but, as they did not like professions, because of the Pharisees they did not confess him; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' It is no honorable mention which is intended to be made of another, of whom it is said that he was 'a disciple of Jesus, but *secretly*, for fear of the Jews.' John 19. 38. Fear made him decline a profession for a time; but at length he came out openly on the side of Christ, and besought Pilate for the body of Jesus.

If they who say they do not like professions, mean that they do not like false, or loud, or ostentatious, or *barbly verbal* professions, let them say so, and we will agree with them; but let them not mean this, and say, without qualification, they "don't like professions."

It is truly strange, because some now, as in apostolic times, 'profess that they know God, but in works deny him,' that others will never profess to know him. Because men have professed friendship, and have proved no friends, therefore they will not only not profess friendship, but they will abstain from certain acts and expressions of friendship, because they involve a profession of it. It is a pity that men who are going to give an account of themselves to God, should reason and act thus?

Well, they must do as they please; but of one thing I am sure. The hour is coming when, however they may now dislike professions, they will like them. They may not now like to confess Christ before men, but they will then like to have Christ confess them before his Father. They may not

like to call him now the beloved of their souls, but they will like to have him call them, on that day, the blessed of his Father.
—W. Nevins, D.D.

SONG OF THE INCARNATION.

This is the day the Lord hath made;
Let all the world thereof be glad!
Praise Him, ye heavens, and thou, O earth,
Proclaim the wonders of His birth.

The nations waited long for Thee,
Until the time fulfill'd should be
When God sent down from His high throne
The world's Redeemer, Thee His Son.

When this event my soul surveys,
'Tis lost in wonder and amaze,
And seeks in vain to grasp a love
All human thought so far above.

Thou dost, O Lord, Thyself abase,
That sinners may receive Thy grace,
And our weak flesh and form assume,
To save us from impending doom.

Thy King, O Zion, comes to Thee:
" 'Tis written in the book of Me,
I come, O God, to do Thy will,
And perfectly Thy law fulfil."

Lord, who didst come on earth to dwell,
The Prince of Peace, Emmanuel,
Whom long the fathers hoped to see,
Messiah, God, I worship Thee!

Our Saviour and our highest good,
Thou join'st Thyself to flesh and blood,
Our Friend and very Brother here,
That we may be God's children dear.

Oh, thought sublime and truly great,
'Tis thine the soul to elevate!
Oh, blessed thought, 'tis also thine
To fill the heart with joy divine!

By one man's sin the world first fell,
By One it is redeem'd from hell.
Then wherefore fear?—at God's right hand
Our Saviour and our God doth stand.

Rejoice, ye heavens, from which to earth
Were brought the tidings of His birth;
And earth, who seest now this day,
Oh sing to Him thy sweetest lay.

This is the day the Lord hath made;
Let all the world thereof be glad!
Praise Him, ye heavens, and thou, O earth,
Proclaim the wonders of His birth.

C. F. GELLES.

—British Herald.

CHRIST IN THE HEART.

The rush of an evil heart's affections, like other swollen streams, will not yield to reason. When God by his Word and Spirit comes to save, He saves, by arresting the heart and making it new.

An engine, dragging its train on the rail, is sweeping along the landscape. As it comes near, it strikes awe into the spectator. Its furious fire and smoke, its rapid whirling wheels, its mighty mass shaking the ground beneath it, and the stealthy quickness of its approach—its whole appearance and adjuncts make the observer bate his breath till it is past. What power would suffice to arrest that giant strength? Although a hundred men should stand up before it, or seize its whirling wheels, it would cast them down, and over their mangled bodies hold its unimpeded course, with nothing to mark the occurrence but a quiver as it cleared the heap! But there is a certain spot in the machinery where the touch of a little child will make the monster slacken his pace, creep gently forward, stand still, slide back like a spaniel fawning under an angry word at the feet of his master.

A ship driven by fierce winds is gliding with all the momentum of great bulk and great speed forward—forward upon a sunken rock, where the gurgling breakers greedily, gloomily predict her doom. What apparatus can you bring to bear upon the devoted vessel? What chain thrown around her bows will briug her to a stand? The massiest cable coming across her course will snap like a thread of tow! But a touch by a man's hand on the helm will turn the huge mass sharply around, and leave it standing still upon the surface, with its empty sails flapping idly in the wind.

These great works of man laugh to scorn every effort to arrest their course by direct obtrusive force; and yet they are so constructed that a gentle touch in a tender place makes all in an instant still.

This greatest work of God, more wonderful by far—this man—this self of me—moves with a greater impetus to a deeper, longer doom. Moving from birth in the direction of death, the immortal gathers momentum every hour, bursting through

all the resolutions and efforts of himself and neighbours, as Samson broke the withes that were twisted round his wrists. How Paul wept when he found that his wild heart would brook no restraint of his better judgment. I find a law in my members, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. No power in heaven or earth will arrest that downward fall, unless it be laid upon the heart. The human being is so constituted that a touch there may turn him, but nothing else will. Oh, to be arrested by the heart! Unless Jesus cast the bands of his love about that heart, as we are rushing past, there remains nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment. Lord, grasp me there! Lord, save me, I perish! Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

When they told the blind beggar at the wayside that Jesus was passing by, he rose and ran, and cried, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!" *My heart, Lord! arrest it; subdue it; make it new!*—"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."—*Rev. W. Arnot.*

POLYCARP'S DECISION.

When he appeared before the proconsul, the latter said to him, "Swear, curse Christ, and I will set you free!" The old man answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and I have received only good at his hands! Can I then curse Him, my King and my Saviour?" When the proconsul continued to press him, Polycarp said, "Well, then, if you desire to know who I am, I tell thee freely, *I am a Christian!* If you desire to know what Christianity is, appoint an hour and hear me." The proconsul, who here showed that he did not act from any religious bigotry, and would gladly have saved the old man if he could silence the people, said to Polycarp, "Only persuade the people." He replied, "To you I felt myself bound to render an account, for our religion teaches us to treat the powers ordained by God with becoming reverence, as far as it is consistent with our salvation. But as for those without, I consider them undeserving of any defence from me." And justly too! for what would it have been but

throwing pearls before swine, to attempt to speak of the gospel to a wild, tumultuous, and fanatical mob? After the governor had in vain threatened him with wild beasts and the funeral pile, he made the herald publicly announce in the circus, that Polycarp had confessed himself a Christian. These words contained the sentence of death against him. The people instantly cried out, "This is the teacher of atheism, the father of the Christians, the enemy of our gods, who has taught so many not to pray to the gods, and not to sacrifice!" As soon as the proconsul had complied with the demand of the populace, that Polycarp should perish on the funeral pile, Jew and Gentile hastened with the utmost speed to collect wood from the market places and the baths. When they wished to fasten him with nails to the pile, the old man said, "Leave me thus, I pray, unfastened. He who has enabled me to abide the fire, will give me strength also to remain firm at the stake." Before the fire was lighted he prayed thus: "O Lord, almighty God, the Father of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received a knowledge of Thee! God of the angels and of the whole creation, of the whole human race, and of the saints who live before Thy presence! I thank Thee that Thou hast thought me worthy, this day, and this hour, to share the cup of thy Christ among the number of thy witnesses!"

NEGLECTING SALVATION.

Most of the calamities of life are caused by simple neglect. By neglect of education, children grow up in ignorance. By neglect, a farm grows up to weeds and briars; by neglect, a house goes to decay; by neglect of sowing, a man will have no harvest; by neglect of reaping, the harvest will rot in the field. No worldly interests can prosper where there is neglect, and may it not be so in religion? There is nothing in earthly affairs that is valuable, that will not be ruined if it is not attended to: and why may it not be so with the concerns of the soul? Let no one infer, therefore, that because he is not a drunkard, or an adulterer, or a murderer that he will be saved. Such an inference would be as irrational as it would be for a man to infer that because he is not a murderer his farm will produce a harvest, or that because he is not an adulterer therefore his merchandize will take care of itself. Salvation would be worth nothing if it cost no effort—and there will be no salvation where no effort is put forth.

UNHALLOWED PRAYER.

"What is the hope of the hypocrite? Will God hear his cry?"—JOB xxvii. 8, 9.

An impenitent sinner never prays. In an inquiry after the causes of joylessness in the forms of prayer, the very first which meets us, in some instances, is the *absence of piety*. It is useless to search behind or beneath such a cause as this for a more recondite explanation of the evil. This is, doubtless, often all the interpretation that can be honestly given to a man's experience in addressing God. Other reasons for the lifelessness of his soul in prayer are rooted in this,—that he is not a Christian.

If the heart is not right with God, enjoyment of communion with God is impossible. That communion itself is impossible. I repeat, an impenitent sinner never prays. Impenitence involves not one of the elements of a spirit of prayer. Holy desire, holy love, holy fear, holy trust—not one of these can the sinner find within himself. He has, therefore, none of that artless spontaneity, in calling upon God, which David exhibited when he said, "Thy servant hath found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee." An impenitent sinner finds no such thing in his heart. He finds there no intelligent wish to enjoy God's friendship. The whole atmosphere of prayer, therefore, is foreign to his tastes. If he drives himself into it for a time, by forcing upon his soul the forms of devotion he cannot stay there. He is like one grasping in a vacuum.

One of the most impressive mysteries of the condition of man on this earth, is his deprivation of all visible and audible representations of God. We seem to be living in a state of seclusion from the rest of the universe, and from that peculiar presence of God in which angels dwell, and in which departed saints serve him day and night. We do not see him in the fire; we do not hear him in the wind; we do not feel him in the darkness. But a more awful concealment of God from the unregenerate soul exists by the very law of an unregenerate state. The eye of such a soul is closed even upon the spiritual manifestations of God, in all but their retribu-

five respects. These are all that it feels.—These are all the thoughts of God which it has faith in. Such a soul does not enjoy God, for it does not see God with an eye of faith,—that is, as a living God living close to itself, and in vital relations to its own destiny,—except as a retributive Power.

The only thing that forbids life, in any of its experiences, to be a life of retribution to an impenitent sinner, is a dead sleep of moral sensibility. And this sleep cannot be disturbed while he remains impenitent, otherwise than by disclosures of God as a consuming fire. His experience, therefore, in the forms of devotion, while he abides in impenitence, can only vibrate between the extremes of weariness and of terror. Quell his fear of God, and prayer becomes irksome; stimulate his indifference to God, and prayer becomes a torment.

The notes of a flute are sometimes a torture to the ears of idiots, like the blare of a trumpet. The reason has been conjectured to be, that melodious sound unlocks the tomb of idiotic mind by the suggestion of conceptions, dim, but startling, like a revelation of a higher life, with which that mind has certain crushed affinities, but with which it feels no willing sympathy; so that its own degradation, disclosed to it by the contrast, is seated upon the consciousness of idiocy like a nightmare. Such a stimulant only to suffering may the form of prayer be in the experience of sin. Impenitent prayer can only grovel in stagnant sensibility, or agonize in remorseful torture, or oscillate from one to the other. There is no point of joy between to which it can gravitate, and there rest.

It is not wise that even we, who profess to be followers of Christ, should close our eyes to this truth, that the uniform absence of joy in prayer is one of the threatening signs in respect of our religious state. It is one of the legitimate intimations of that estrangement from God, which sin induces in one who has not experienced God's renewing grace. A searching of ourselves with an honest desire to know the truth, and the whole of it, may disclose to us other kindred facts, with which this feature of our condition becomes reasonable

evidence which it will be the loss of our souls to neglect, that we are self-deluded in our Christian hope. An apostle might number us among the "many," of whom he would say, "I now tell you, even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ."—*Still Hour.*

FAST ASLEEP.

BY REV. J. C. RYLE, D.A.

Reader, the book of Jonah tells us, that when the ship in which he was fleeing to Tarshish was almost lost in a tempest, Jonah was down below, *fast asleep*.

How strange that sounds! The wind was howling above. The waves were roaring beneath. All around him were at their wits' end with fear. Death was close at hand. Jonah was not ready to die. He was fleeing from the presence of the Lord. Yet Jonah lay *fast asleep*.

Reader, are you sure you are not doing just the same thing about your soul?—There is a sleep of the soul, as well as a sleep of the body. There are multitudes buried in this soul-sleep, and hanging over the brink of hell. Reader, perhaps you are one.

I dare say you are wide awake about temporal things. You read the newspapers. You have your head stored with earthly wisdom and useful knowledge.—But very likely you have no heart-felt sense of sin, no peace or friendship with God, no experimental acquaintance with Christ, no meetness for heaven, no delight in the Sabbath, the Bible, and prayer.—And yet you are a sinner, a dying sinner, an immortal sinner, a sinner going to meet Christ, a sinner going to be judged!—What, I would put it to your conscience as an honest man, what is all this but being asleep?

How long is this to go on? When do you mean to awake and live as if you had a soul? When will you cease to hear as one who hears not? When will you give up running after shadows, and seek something substantial? When will you throw off the mockery of a religion which cannot satisfy, cannot comfort, cannot sanctify,

cannot save, and will not bear a calm examination? When will you give up having a faith which does not influence your practice—having a book which you say is God's word, but treat as if it was not—having the name of a christian, but knowing nothing of Christ? O! reader, when, when shall it once be?

Why not this very year? Why not this very day? Why not at once awake and call upon your God, and resolve that you will sleep no longer? I set before you an open door. I set before you Jesus Christ the Saviour, who died to make atonement for sinners—Jesus, who is able to save to the uttermost, Jesus willing to receive. The hand that was nailed to the cross is held out to you in mercy. The eye that wept over Jerusalem is looking on you with pity. The voice that has said to many wanderers, "Thy sins are forgiven," is saying to you, "Come to me." Go to Jesus first and foremost, if you would know what step to take. Think not to wait for repentance, and faith, and a new heart, but go to Him just as you are. Go to Him in prayer and cry, "Lord save me, or I perish. I am weary and sleeping; I would fain sleep no longer." Oh! awake thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light.

Sun, moon, and stars are all witnessing against you; they continue according to God's ordinances, and you are ever transgressing them. The grass, the birds, the very worms of the earth, are all witnessing against you: they fill their place in creation, and you do not. Sabbaths and ordinances are continually witnessing against you; they are ever proclaiming that there is a God and a judgment, and you are living as if there were none. The tears and prayers of godly relations are witnessing against you; others are sorrowfully thinking you have a soul, though you seem to forget it. The very gravestones that you see every week are witnessing against you; they are silently witnessing "life is uncertain, time is short, the resurrection is yet to come—the Lord is at hand." All, all are saying, Awake, awake, awake! Oh! reader, the time past may surely suffice you to have slept. Awake to be wise.—Awake to be safe. Awake to be happy. Awake and sleep no more.

ARE YOU A SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHER?

I am a little apprehensive that the title of this article will be read by some who will give no hearing to the article itself. There are those who, being professors of religion, or at least well disposed thereto, are not Sabbath-school teachers, and yet strongly suspect sometimes that they ought to be. Such are not fond of reading an enumeration of the reasons why they should engage in this benevolent employment, because these reasons are apt to appear more cogent than their objections to it. After such a perusal, they are very prone to feel as if they ought to take hold of this good work; and not being prepared to do that, it is rather more agreeable to them not to have the feeling that they ought. It is uncomfortable to carry about with one a sense of obligation which he is not disposed to discharge.

But I hope my apprehensions will be disappointed; so I proceed to the article. Are you a Sabbath-school teacher? If you are, you are engaged in a good work. Yes, it is good, both as acceptable to God, and as profitable to men. It is good in its direct operation, and good in its reflex action: It is not merely teaching the young idea how to shoot, but what is still more important, it is teaching the young and tender affection what to fix upon, and where to entwine itself. Nothing hallows the Sabbath more than the benevolent employment of the Sabbath-school teacher. It is more than lawful to do such good on the Sabbath-day. It has great reward. Continue to be a Sabbath-school teacher. Be not weary in this well-doing. Do not think you have served long enough in the capacity of teacher, until you have served life out, or until there shall be no need of one saying to another, "Know the Lord." What if it be laborious? It is the labor of love, in the very fatigue of which the soul finds refreshment.

But perhaps you are not a Sabbath-school teacher. "No, I am not," methinks I hear one say. "I am not a professor of religion. You cannot expect me to be a teacher." You ought to be both; and your not being the first, is but a poor apology for declining to be the other. The neglect of one obligation is a slim excuse for the neglect of another. You seem to admit, that if you professed religion, it would be your duty to teach in the Sabbath-school. Now, whose fault is it that you do not profess religion? But I see no valid objection to your teaching a class of boys or girls how to read the word of God, though you be not a professor of religion. I cannot think that any person gets harm by thus doing good. Experience has shown that the

business of teaching in the Sabbath-school is twice blessed—blessing the teacher as well as the taught.

But you are "not good enough," you say. Then you need so much the more the reaction of such an occupation to make you better. The way to *get* good, is to do it. "But I am not a young person." And what if you are not? You need not be very young, in order to be a useful Sabbath-school teacher. We don't want mere *novices* in the Sabbath-school. If you are not young, then you have so much more *experience* to assist you in the work. Do Sabbath-school teachers become *superannuated* so much earlier in life than any other class of benefactors—so much sooner than ministers and parents? There is a prevailing mistake on this subject.

But you are married, you say. And what if you are? Because you have married a wife or husband, is that any reason why you should not come into the Sabbath-school? Many people think that as soon as they are married, they are released from the obligation of assisting in the Sabbath-school. But I do not understand this to be one of the immunities of matrimony. As well might they plead that in discharge of the obligation to every species of good-doing. Such might at least postpone this apology, till the cares of a family have come upon them. And even then, perhaps the best disposition they could make of their children on the Sabbath, would be to take them to the school. I wonder how many hours of the Sabbath are devoted to the instruction of their children, by those parents who make the necessity of attending to the religious culture of their families an apology for not entering the Sabbath-school; and I wonder if their children could not be attended to in others than those usually occupied in Sabbath-school instruction; and thus, while they are not neglected, other children who have no parents that care for their souls, receive a portion of their attention. I think this not impossible. But perhaps the wife pleads that she is no longer her own, and that her husband's wishes are opposed to her continuing a teacher. But has she ceased to be the Lord's by becoming her husband's? Does the husband step into all the rights of a Saviour over his redeemed? If such an objection is made, it is very clear that she has not regarded the direction to marry "only in the Lord."

But perhaps you say, "There are enough others to teach in the Sabbath-school."—There would not be enough—there would not be any, if all were like you. But it is a mistake; there are not enough others. You are wanted. Some five or six children, of whom Christ has said, "Suffer them to come

to me," will grow up without either learning or religion, unless you become a teacher. Are all the children in the place where you live gathered into the Sabbath-school? Are there none that still wander on the Lord's day, illiterate and irreligious? Is there a competent number of teachers in the existing schools, so that more would rather be in the way than otherwise? I do not know how it is where you live, but where I live, there are boys and girls enough, aye, too many, who go to no Sabbath-school. It is only for a teacher to go out on the Sabbath, and be readily collects a class of children willing to attend; and where I reside, there are not teachers enough for the scholars already collected. Some classes are without a teacher; and presently the children stay away, because, they say, they come to the school, and there is no one to attend to them. He who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," knows this and he knows who of "his sacramental host" might take charge of these children, and do not. They say, every communion-season, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and the Lord replies, "Suffer the little children to come unto me;" and there the matter ends.

I visited recently an interesting school, composed of colored adults and children. It is taught partly by white persons, and partly by intelligent colored persons. It is languishing now for want of teachers. There were present some twenty-five or thirty females, and only *two* female teachers. I wondered to see no more than two there, of those who were last at the cross and first at the sepulchre. I thought it a little out of character. One of those told me that often there had been forty present; but as two could not attend to them all, they had gradually become discouraged, and had dropped off one after another. They found they must give up learning to read, though they wanted very much to learn to read the Bible. Some large classes of fine-looking boys sat there without any teacher. No man cared for them. I said it was a *pity*, but I thought it was a *shame*. The church with which this school is connected, abounds in able-bodied professors of religion, who could easily supply this want. But they don't do it. They say they *can't*; but the truth is, they *won't*. I know some have an antipathy to the colored; but as I suppose they are comprehended in that "world" of which we read, John 3: 16, that God loved it, and certainly in that "whole world," of which we read, 1 John 2: 2, as connected with Christ's propitiation, I have none. As for those, however, who are so much more fastidious than their Lord, there are white children enough to employ them.

But I hear one say, "I was once a teacher;" and do you not blush to own that you became weary in this species of well-doing? "But I think I taught long enough." How long did you teach? Till you could teach no longer? Are you dead? If not, you are resting from your labors rather prematurely. This excuse resembles one which I heard of, as from a lady of wealth, who having for several years been a subscriber to the Bible Society, at length ordered her name to be stricken off, alleging that she thought she had done her part towards disseminating the Bible. The world was not supplied; O no not even the country; and her means were not exhausted. But she had done her part, Had she done *what she could*? The woman whom Jesus commended had "done what she could." But this is a digression.

But one says, "I want the Sabbath for myself; for rest and for improvement." And who does not? Are you busily employed all the week? So are some of our most faithful teachers. You ought to be "diligent in business" during the days of the week. "Six days shalt thou labor." "But is there any rest in Sabbath-school teaching?" The soul finds some of its sweetest rest in the works of mercy, and often its richest improvement in the care to improve others.

But perhaps you say, though with some diffidence you express this objection, that you belong to a circle in society whose members are not accustomed to teach in the Sabbath-school. Do you mean, that you are *above* the business? You must be exceedingly *elevated* in life to be above the business of gratuitously communicating the knowledge of God to the young and ignorant. You must be exalted above the very throne of God itself, if you are above caring for poor children. "But I should have to mingle with those beneath me in rank." Ah, I supposed that Christianity has destroyed the distinction of rank, not indeed by depressing any, but by elevating all. Should Christians, all cleansed by the same blood and Spirit, treat other Christians as common?

"But I am not qualified to teach." If you are not in reality, you should undertake teaching for the sake of learning. The best way to learn any thing, is to teach it. If you only think yourself not qualified, your very humility goes far towards qualifying you.

"O, it is too laborious. There is so much self-denial in it." And do I hear a disciple of Christ complaining of labor and self-denial, when these are among the very conditions of discipleship? Is the disciple above his-master? Can you follow Christ without going where he went? And went he not about doing good? Pleased he himself?

Ah, I know what is the reason of this deficiency of Sabbath-school teachers, and I will speak it out. It is owing to a deplorable want of Christian benevolence in them who profess to be Christ's followers. They lack the love that is necessary to engage one in this labor of love: They have no heart for the work.—*W. Nevins, D.D.*

THE WONDROUS LOVE OF CHRIST.

THE HOUR COME.

Our great and glorious Redeemer having, as the man of sorrows, the servant of the Father, and the representative of his people, finished his work of teaching, and his active labours for his people; and being about to endure the curse, sustain the punishment of their sins, and make an infinite atonement for them, presented himself before them as the *great Intercessor*. In his address to his Father in their hearing, he opened his loving heart, disclosed the depth of his sympathy, and gave utterance to his unbounded desires for their welfare. How sublime his language! how exquisitely tender his pathos! how profound his thoughts! May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, lead us to meditate on his wondrous prayer to our own profit, and his glory: "*These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.*" (John xvii. 1). Observe—

What Jesus did. "*He lifted up his eyes to heaven.*" This was expressive of desire, confidence, expectation, and reverence. Of *desire*,—for as when we speak to any one, and desire a reply, we naturally turn to that one, and look him in the face; so Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, the place of his Father's throne, the home of his Father's glory, where he had lain in his Father's bosom from everlasting. The deep and intense desire of his soul directed his eye upwards. Of *expectation*,—for he expected a reply; and *we*, when we expect a reply, look toward the party we address. Hence David says, "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." When we desire anything of God, which he has promised in his word, and which we believe will be for our good and his glory, we should look up, and expect to receive it. Of *confidence*,—he had

the strongest confidence in his Father, and therefore he lifted up his eyes, and looked for sympathy and a reply. So we should have confidence in God. He loves to be trusted. He has given us many exceeding great and precious promises, to which he has added innumerable proofs of his faithfulness, to induce us to exercise confidence in him. Let us, therefore, ask in faith, and believe that our God will give us the desires of our hearts. Of reverence,—Jesus in the model worshipper. In him we see strong desire, earnest expectation, unquestioning confidence, and profound reverence. He was all solemnity; yet there was no dread, no terror, no slavish fear. How different to the unhallowed freedom of some professors! How different to our own approaches to God at times! He lifts up his eyes to heaven, and with a soul burning with zeal for his Father's glory he said,—or poured out his whole soul, for himself, for his disciples then present with him, and for his people down to the very end of time. Let us notice,—

What Jesus said. He said, "*Father,*" or My Father. He came to God as a son—as a son conscious of his father's love—as a son who had been doing, and was now about to suffer, his father's will. He realized his relation to God, which was peculiar; for he was the Son of God as none other ever was, or ever will be.—Angels are the sons of God by creation, and we are the sons of God by adoption and regeneration; but he was the only-begotten of the Father, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. How the Son was begotten of the Father I know not, do not ask to know. What precise idea is to be attached to the word begotten, when applied to the co-equal and co-eternal Son of God, I know not, do not expect to know. That it implies sameness of nature, is clear. That it does not interfere with the independence of the Son, I believe. Each of the divine persons possesses the whole Godhead,—each is equally, eternally and essentially God; therefore equally the object of trust, reverence, and religious worship. The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father; and yet the Son is as really, truly, and eternally God, as the Father. Thus he

stands before his Father clothed in flesh, one with his people, acting for his people; but though clothed in flesh, he is the Son of God, one with God, and acting for God. But I would rather stand and adore, than try to understand or set forth so great a mystery; for the mystery of godliness is confessedly great,—“God was manifest in the flesh.” His relation, while it is peculiar, is perpetual. He will always be the Son, the Son of God. To him the Father said, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” The Son of God is both divine and human; and as such, “he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, *the hour is come,*”—the hour fixed upon in the councils of eternity, and decreed before time began—the hour predicted by the inspired prophets—the hour anticipated and expected by patriarchs, and men full of the Holy Ghost—the hour on which so much depended, as to heaven and earth. It was the hour when Jesus was to drink the cup of woe, conquer the foes of his Church, meet the claims of divine justice, and glorify God in the highest possible degree. “Father, the hour is come; *glorify thy Son.*” This included, sustaining him under all he had to suffer, delivering him out of the hands of all his foes, raising him from the dead by his glorious power, and enthroning him at his own right hand. All this the Father did. “Glorify thy Son, *that thy Son also may glorify thee.*” Upon this his heart was set. For this he came into the world, and for this he was prepared to suffer and to die. He wished to glorify his Father in his government, reconciling all the claims of that government in the salvation of his people. He would glorify his Father's character, harmonizing all his perfections; that so he might appear the just God while he was the Saviour. He would also glorify his Father in his purposes, by removing every obstacle out of the way of their accomplishment, and securing their complete and glorious fulfilment. Precious Saviour! the glory of thy Father lay near thy heart: may thy glory ever lie near to mine! Oh, for grace, that I may glorify Jesus, in body, soul, and spirit!

Here we see the Mediator standing between the two parties, his Father and his

people pleading with the one, and preaching to the other. Blessed be his name, he stands between them still; for we have one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus! He acts in character as a Son. Of old the Lord proposed the question to Israel, "If I be a Father, where is mine honour?" But there is no room to ask the question here; for the perfect Son seeks above all things to honour his beloved Father, even when he was about to hide his face from him. He looks up, his eyes beaming with love, and his heart filled with reverence, just when he heard his Father saying, "A wake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd;"—just when "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief." Oh, what filial submission! more, what resignation! more, what acquiescence in the Father's will! more still, what preferring the Father's will to his own, though it cost him an agony and bloody sweat,—a cruel, shameful, and lingering death! He looks beyond the cloud to glory, and for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame. He observes order: first he preaches to his disciples, then he pleads with his Father for them, and then he suffers in their stead. He aches us to meet the hour of affliction, or suffering, or death, with patience, and with hope. His hour, that tremendous hour, is past; our hour is yet to come. Oh, may we meet it with fortitude and courage! Oh, may we be enabled, by the gracious teaching and enabling of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus did, to lift up our eyes to heaven, full of ardent desire, well-founded expectation, scriptural confidence, and holy reverence, and say, "Father, the hour is come; the honour thy child by sustaining and delivering him, that he may honour thee, by testifying for thee, and preferring thy will in all things to his own." Jesus was sustained, by keeping one object only in view, and that was his Father's glory; which in glory, he knew, was bound up with the salvation of his people. On that one object may our minds be set; and to promote that, may all our desires, prayers, efforts, and sufferings tend. Oh, to glorify God all through life's weary pilgrimage!

STEADFAST CONFIDENCE.

I am not unacquainted with your perplexities, and I shall tell how my mind used to work in producing them. I thought, with myself, "Since I have professed the gospel, I have acted inconsistently with it—more so, I fear, than a Christian could." If I am a Christian now, I was one then; for no change has happened in my views of the Gospel; therefore I fear I am not one at all." Thus was I ready to be led either to despair on the one hand, or to a confidence founded on my Christian character on the other.

But this kind of reasoning goes opposite to the whole tenor of the Scriptures. Consider, as the sum of those texts to which I refer, the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. iii., verse 14:—"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steady to the end."

What the beginning of the confidence of these Hebrews was, and which they are here exhorted to hold steadfast, we see in Acts ii. They had lately murdered the Son of God. Convinced that they had done so, they were pricked in their hearts, while at the same time they received the word gladly. These effects of the down-pouring of the Holy Ghost as a comforter, and as the Spirit of adoption, in opposition to the Spirit of bondage under the law, are conformable to the account which Christ gave of the effects of the Comforter, or Spirit of adoption, when he should come, John xvii 7-9. We see these Jews, in Acts ii., convinced of sin because of their unbelief, and pricked to the heart; while at the same time, convinced of righteousness by the resurrection of Christ, they received the word gladly, and rejoiced; and doubtless this was the first period of the Spirit of adoption. These persons, looking back to their former lives, saw there the blackest scene of iniquity which ever disgraced the annals of mankind—the rejecting, betraying, and murdering the everlasting Jehovah manifest in the flesh. In themselves, therefore, they were altogether in despair, and perceived no ground of confidence in God for the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, but what the righteousness manifested in the resurrection of Christ, and the love displayed in

it, afforded *them*. On the other hand, notwithstanding all the aggravations of their sins, they saw nothing more to prevent their hope than that of the apparently most virtuous. Assured that the blood which they had shed cleansed from all sin; certain that Christ had entered into rest, had overcome every obstacle which could oppose the vilest, or prevent the weakest, and had promised salvation to every one that believed; they could not but trust in God for the remission of sins, deliverance from their power, and entering along with Christ into his rest. To these Hebrews, then, after (in consequence of receiving the word gladly) they had for many years continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, this apostle writes, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." We have seen *what this beginning was*. Now this it is which they are exhorted to hold fast.

And we shall evidently see how much occasion there is for an exhortation of this kind, if we attend a little to the danger Christians are in, of turning aside from the testimony they are commanded to hear: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

When persons at first believe the gospel of God, looking back to their former lives they see nothing but one scene of unbelief, or making God a liar, by rejecting the testimony he has given of his Son, and consequently of loving the world in preference to God. Despairing *then* in themselves, they think not at this season of building the smallest hope upon anything they ever did or could do; while on the other hand (and which is inseparably connected with the former) none of their sins, however great, can appear in the least degree to affect the most lively hope of salvation—which comes unmasked, which supposes sin, and which is conferred by the love of God through a divine righteousness, without the smallest respect to human worth. So that *that very thing* which shuts them up from all hope in self, occasioning the most thorough self-despair (that is, all men being in one common situation before God, God not respecting human worth, or any thing whereby one man stands distinguished from

his fellow, but according to his sovereign grace, choosing some to eternal life in distinction from others); I say that very thing which shuts up from hope in self, effectually takes away all that despair of salvation which greatness of sin, or any other thing could produce.

Thus it is with Christians hearing the word of God, and free from the doctrines and commandments of men, when they first believe the gospel. But alas! how often may it be said, "How is the gold become dim, how is the most fine gold changed!" When men believe the gospel, *they receive the truth in the love of it*; for the natural consequence of seeing nothing between them and eternal misery, but the work of Jesus Christ, is above all things to love and prize Him, who, that he might become a refuge from every storm, "though he was in the form of God, took upon Him the form of a servant, became obedient to the death of the cross, and hid not his face from shame and spitting." Again, the necessary effect of love is, *the feelings of love*, and the natural consequence of both, the *pleasing the beloved object*, which, with regard to Jesus Christ, consists in keeping his commandments. The necessary consequence, also, of believing the glad tidings that Christ has become a sacrifice for sin, and that in this Jehovah is well pleased, *is the hope of a participation of all things which Christ was manifested to bestow*. The natural consequence of seeing God manifesting his justice, as well as his mercy, in the remission of sins, is hope in God's mercy, as nothing but the justice of God can appear to oppose this. The consequence of knowing the purpose of the manifestation of the Son of God to deliver from sin, and the eternal design of God to save a people from all iniquity, to have fellowship with him in the contemplation and possession of his perfections, is *the earnest desire of sanctification and conformity to Christ*; while the effect of knowing, that Jesus, in overcoming every obstacle which could oppose his entering into rest, overcame at the same time every obstacle which could prevent the chief of sinners, *is the hope of entering into the same rest*. Further, the necessary consequence of this hope is *joy and peace*. And once more, the natural effect of the belief of his hwm-

fiation, who, on account of sins,—not his own, but his people's—endured at once the hiding of the Father's countenance, the temptations of the devil, and the persecutions of men, must be *repentance and Godly sorrow* for those sins which thus brought the Son of God to the cross. Thus then are love, obedience, hope, repentance, produced by the faith of the gospel; and so far all is well, and in its proper place. But alas! how often and how sadly is the whole reversed. It is true, that all these things are the inseparable evidences and effects of the truth being believed; but the heart of man is desperately wicked, and deceitful above all things, ever prone to set the truths of God at variance. Under the pretence of examining by these things whether or not the truth is believed (which is not improper, but often enjoined in Scripture), these things are put instead of that truth which produces them. The intention and nature of self-examination seems to be this: when a man has firm belief in God's mercy, and thinks that his hope is altogether founded upon the work of Jesus Christ, he is called to examine whether or not it produces those effects which hope upon the true foundation ever must produce. But it often happens that men, instead of examining themselves in consequence of the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and while enjoying the sense of the remission of sins through his sacrifice, examine their evidences of Christianity, that is their love, obedience, hope, joy, peace and repentance, *when their consciences are burdened with a sense of guilt*, and so plainly put these evidences in place of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Here let us pause. Is the beginning of the confidence thus kept steadfast? or rather, do not all such give up the confidence and rejoicing of the hope, being moved away from the hope of the gospel? When the gospel was first believed, when they were oppressed by a sense of guilt, and destitute of every evidence of Christianity, they had then no other resource but the blood of Jesus. He was then as rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. But now—they have other waters and other rocks besides him; now, when oppressed by a sense of guilt,

they can fly away to their evidences, slighting the evidence of the good pleasure of God in the work of his beloved Son, manifested in his resurrection from the dead! Thus there is a distinction made between themselves as sinners before they believed the gospel, and themselves as Christians since they believed, in a respect wherein the Scripture warrants not the smallest: namely, in the way of relief from a sense of guilt, and in the ground of their encouragement in approaching God. When sinners, they sought *nothing more* to relieve their guilty consciences, *nothing more* wherewith to approach God, than what assured them that God had accepted of, and was altogether well pleased in the work of Christ. Now, let this be as it will, they cannot be comforted, they cannot approach, before they see that they believe this, and that it produces proper effects upon them; things, the one of which can only be known, and the other only produced in the way of having their whole confidence founded on the blood of Jesus, and by this being altogether and fully encouraged to draw near unto God. In fine, they are no more helpless sinners pricked in their hearts, receiving the word gladly, and so approaching God; but good Christians, proud of their evidences as distinguishing them from other men, and coming to God in consequence of presenting their Christian character instead of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Here, then, we see one way in which the beginning of the confidence is not kept steadfast to the end. For surely all must allow, that there is a material difference between the *beginning* and the *end* of this confidence; a beginning and end as different as trust in God and trust in self; as different as glorying in the person and work of Christ, and glorying in our own persons and our own works.

But there is yet another way intimately connected with the former, in which the beginning of the confidence is not kept steadfast to the end. To put love, obedience, hope, joy, peace, repentance, in place of the work of Christ, is evidently to destroy them all. For instance, when we think we see, or wish to see, other things than the work of Christ between us and misery, love to him as the only refuge must be impaired in proportion; hope also must be lost; joy

and peace too cannot be kept alive, or deceit alone preserves them; nor shall we mourn much on account of those sins, of which anything else but the work of Christ gives us the confidence or prospect of forgiveness. Here, then, are the effects of the gospel gone; and thus forsaking God, the fountain of living waters, we must hew out to ourselves broken cisterns which can hold none. The mind of man is formed for activity, and the desire of happiness is there a first and necessary principle, and wher we do not find happiness in the Creator, we must be seeking it in the creature. Forsaking the love of Christ, we must be placing our affections on opposite objects, that is, upon somewhat in the world, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life." Forsaking the hope of the gospel, we must be seeking a hope in this world, producing a correspondent joy and peace, and our former godly sorrow will give place to "the sorrow of this world which worketh death." Thus are self-righteousness and the love of the world inseparably connected. But will the conscience of such a man be easy? Alas! no. The remembrance of his departed hope, love, and joy, will haunt him, hand in hand, with the consciousness of his present alienation; and while he has lost hope from the gospel, and cannot take comfort from what he is, he will strive to obtain some glimpse of hope from what he was. Tell him "the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin," he will grant it in words, when in fact he denies it. Granting that the greatest sinner, at first hearing the truth, may, and ought to set his hope in God; he will doubt, if one long professing the gospel, and long in works denying it, has the same ground to do so. Here, then, is a denial that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. *Formerly* (that is, when the truth was first believed), comfort and hope sprung from the truth, in the very worst views entertained of sin; *now*, unless he be free, as he thinks, from sins inconsistent with Christianity, no hope can be entertained. *Here then, again, the beginning of the confidence is not kept steadfast unto the end.* Formerly, whatever godly sorrow sin might produce, no sin, however great, occasioned distrust for salvation, the gospel removing every cause of it. Formerly, no unworthiness could make

us judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life, knowing that God viewed us still more unworthily than we could possibly view ourselves. Now, sin produces not so much godly sorrow, as despair.

What is there, then, which can recover from such a situation? What can again restore to hope? The Lord will indeed restore the souls of his sheep: but it will not be by their getting a better opinion of themselves; nay, we may safely say, on the contrary, that it will be while they entertain a worse. *That same truth* (which levels human pride and abases human worth, while it sets forth God as our boast, and God as our righteousness; that same truth, which first quickened to lively hope in God when dead to all other, and destroyed every degree of hope in self once entertained; *that very truth alone*) can now revive the same. Let us then, when falling into unbelief, and consequently into the love of the world, and so either having hope in our own righteousness, or repining for want of it; let us, while thus asking that question, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and how myself before the high God?" or that in Romans x. 5, "Who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend into the deep?" let us, I say, remember, that "the word is nigh us, even in our mouths and in our hearts," that which we profess to believe; and neither having, nor wishing to have, hope founded upon our own righteousness, but confessing ourselves the chief of sinners, let us take comfort from that word, which to us, as such, brings salvation. The effect is sure: we shall again, through the resurrection of Jesus, have lively hope; we shall again be filled with joy and peace in believing; we shall, above all things, love Him who is free from all variableness and shadow of turning—the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. This love also will constrain us powerfully, not to live unto ourselves but unto him; pouring contempt upon all that the world holds excellent and worthy of love. This unchangeable love and kindness, contrasted with our own ingratitude and backsliding, will then too produce that godly sorrow, which leads to repentance never to be repented of. Thus then do men live by faith; thus do they fall by unbelief; and thus are they again restored to live by faith; that is, by that

very truth, by the faith of which they formerly stood, and by the unbelief of which they fall.

The whole design of what has been said, is to inculcate the great necessity of glorying, first and last, entirely and exclusively, in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is freely admitted, that it is highly proper for professors of the faith to examine themselves by their fruits, but then of what are these fruits the evidence? Of their faith in Christ, and hope in him alone for salvation; and therefore no works can afford any evidences of those that perform them being the people of God, unless they are conscious that these works flow from the faith and love of the gospel, as the sole ground of their confidence. It is of the last importance for professors of the faith to be fully convinced, that when they backslide from God and his ways, they can only be recovered by that truth which first quickened them, and that the free and sovereign grace of God can alone renew their hope and joy.

To this purpose we have many examples in the word of God: and particularly the case of the Churches in Asia is exactly in point, recorded in Rev. chapters ii. and iii. The Ephesians, having left their first love, are called on "to remember from whence they had fallen, and to repent." The Church in Sardis, having departed from their liveliness in God's ways, is exhorted "to remember how they had received and heard, and to hold fast, and repent." And the Laodiceans, having fallen into a self-righteous and lukewarm state, highly offensive to Christ, are counselled by him "to buy of him gold tried in the fire that they might be rich, and white raiment that they might be clothed, and that the shame of their nakedness might not appear, and to anoint their eyes with eye-salve, that they might see."

It is then a comfortable and safe doctrine, that Christians, in all their defections and sins, must have immediate recourse to the blood of Jesus for pardon and peace of conscience. They may perhaps have, at times, reason to doubt if they ever knew the truth, and this may be a state of mind salutary to their souls in certain circumstances, but they ought at all times to be convinced, that the gospel is true, and suited to their case, although they themselves

should have been self-deceivers, and thus to be encouraged, while it is called to-day, to draw near to God, and call on his Almighty name, who has assured us that none shall ever do so in vain. Rom. x. 13.

PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

Preach Christ crucified! Turn not aside from this, under the temptation of meeting some question of the day, or some bearing of the public mind. There is much mystic verbiage, which some esteem to be of transcendental depth. There is much pantheism which some regard as original and sublime. Your versatility will often be urged to follow after these conceits. You will be told of their amazing influence. They really are nothing. They are the bubbles of the hour. They cannot boast even a novelty. I conjure you, care little for them. Yours is not a discretionary theme. It is unchanging. Keep to it. Abide by it. It is one, but it is an infinite one! It is the word of Christ, divinely true! Its rigidness can never hamper your thought. Its reiteration can never weary your inquiry. At no point can it restrict you. It is a large place. It is a boundless range. It is a mine of wealth. It is a firmament of power. Whither would ye go from it? It is the unwinding of all the great principles. It is the expansion of all glorious thoughts. It is the capacity of all blessed emotions.

O Calvary, we turn to thee! Our nature, a wreck, a chaos, only canst thou adjust! We have an aching void which thou canst only fill! We have pantings and longings which only thou canst satisfy! Be thou the strength and the charm of our inward life! Be thou the earnestness of our deepest interest! Be thou inspiration, impulsion, divinity, and all! Our tears never relieved us until thou taughtest us to weep! Our smiles only mocked us until thou badest us rejoice! We knew no way of peace until we found our way to thee! Hope was banished from us until its dove flew downwards from thee upon our heart! All was dormant until thou didst stir; all was dull until thou didst excite us! Our eyes are still lifted to thee to the hill from which cometh our help! Our feet shall stand upon thee, O high mountain! and thou shalt make them beautiful while we publish the glad tidings of "Christ crucified."—Rev. W. R. Hamilton, D.D.

Sabbath School Lessons.

April 10th, 1864.

JEPHTHAH.

Read Judges xi. 29-40.

I. What happened before the Victory.

Ver. 29. *The Spirit of the Lord came on Jephthah.* God was grieved for the misery of his idolatrous people (see chap. x. 16), and he thus endowed a man with all the requisite courage to lead Israel to success. *Pasrad* over Gilead—it lay on the east of Jordan; *Manasseh* on the west; *Mizpah* at the extreme north-east of Gilead—his levies were concentrated there.

Ver. 30, 31. He had now done all his duty—he looks to God—the God of battles. *His vow.* It was common to make such vows—Jacob—Hannah. *Whatsoever cometh forth to meet me—a most rash vow!* What could come forth to meet him but some of his family? *A burnt-offering.* The law appointed death as the mode of consecration to God.

Ver. 32, 33. The victory was complete. The pursuit extended twenty miles south-east, from Aroer, on the plains of Jordan, to Minith, in the country of Ammon.

II. What happened after the Victory.

Ver. 34, 35. The triumphant Jephthah returned to his city and his home at Mizpah. None knew of his vow. He might have warned his daughter, but it would have been an infringement of his vow.

Imagine the scene. With flying banners and sounding trumpets the victors approach Mizpah—its gates are thrown open—forth stream old and young to welcome their deliverer—the horsemen advance through the crowd—the general's war-chariot, surrounded by his guards and gay with trophies, draws near—when forth to meet it comes a band of young damsels, with cymbal and dance, with flowery wreaths and songs for the victor—the first and fairest is his own daughter—his eye catches hers—he covers his face with his hands, and turning away, bitterly exclaims, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low!¹⁹

It was customary for the women thus to celebrate a victory—David's over Goliath—Miriam at the Red Sea.

Cannot go back. He would have willingly faced any foe to save her, but he could not go to God. The righteous man is ever true to his promise, Psalm xv. 4.

Ver. 36, 37. *The magnanimous answer of his daughter—her country is safe—she will willingly die.*

Ver. 38-40. What was done is matter of

dispute. Some think he consecrated her to the service of the Lord, as one of those females who waited on the temple, Exod. xxxviii. 8. Others that she was really slain. The Jews hold this. Whichever way, Jephthah performed his vow, and with a bleeding heart. *Did with her according to his vow.*

APPLICATION.

1. *God's Spirit fits for duty.* God's Spirit raised up and fitted Jephthah and the other judges. Saul, 1 Sam. x. 9; Paul, Eph. iv. 11. Nothing can be well done without God's Spirit, John xv. 5. Not even a common day's work (see Bezaleel, Ex. xxxi. 2, 3). Seek God's Spirit for your daily duties.

2. *Be slow to promise.* Jephthah suffered for his rashness. Never promise hoping to escape from performing your promise. He that keeps his word with God will keep it with men, Eccles. v. 5. God hates liars.

3. *Be sure to perform.* How nobly Jephthah stood to his vow!—had he said nothing, men would never have known though he had broken his vow. It always costs most to break your promise—it costs God's favour. Have you said you will serve Christ? Remember you cannot go back. Fearing men makes us lie.

4. *God never calls us to suffer needlessly.* Jephthah made his own sufferings—"troubled" his daughter and himself without being so required. God sought no such vow—he sees no excellency in suffering for its own sake. Try to keep God's law with your heart, and you will have work enough, Matt. xv. 9; Deut. xiv. 1.

5. *Seek a large loving heart.* Jephthah's daughter, a youthful girl, could die willingly for her country, though she could not fight for it; so Eli's daughter-in-law, 1 Sam. iv. 21. Simeon rejoiced when he saw the Saviour of the world, Luke ii. 30-32. Do you feel happy when others hear the good news of Christ, and believe in him?

SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. How true death is the only way to God! ver. 31—"dead to the world."

2. How submissive to her father was that daughter! ver. 36.

3. How becoming a daughter—an only daughter—to sympathise and rejoice with her parents! It makes them happy.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

April 17th, 1864.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

Read Luke xv. 11-32.

I. The departure, ver. 11-13.

God is the Father of all, Isa. lxiii. 16. All

are really brethren, Rom. iii. 29. The elder son represents the Jews, and especially the Pharisees; the younger the Gentiles, particularly the publicans and sinners. Sometimes sons got their portions during their father's lifetime, Gen. xxv. 6. *Give me.* Evidently he was a kind and indulgent father to his children, and yet he might have refused this undutiful son such a demand. *Gathered all.* Changed it into money, and went far away from his father's eye or control.

II. The absence, ver. 14-19.

The prodigal spends all in eating, drinking, dressing, and bad company; forgets his soul, his father, and his home.

Poverty drove away his companions, and now he must either work or starve. He hired himself to feed swine, a most abominable trade to a Jew. His master did not give him sufficient wages, and famine reduced him to starvation, so that he envied the swine their food. *Husks*, signifies the fruit of the carob tree, a coarse production used to feed swine in Palestine.

He came to himself. As if hitherto he had been out of his reason. He remembers his father's goodness, his own sins, and resolves to return.

III. The return, ver. 20-32.

He immediately does what he resolved. Describe his journey; barefooted, hungry, ragged, with a heavy heart, begging for food, he retraces every step, a long weary way. His father sees him; recognizes his long lost son; runs and embraces him; prevents his confession; has no syllable of reproach; loads him with kindness, restores him to his place. *The best robe:* The robe for festivals. *The ring:* His authority in his father's house again recognized. *Shoes:* Servants wore none. *The fattened calf,* Gen. xviii. 7. All rejoice over him as one alive from the dead.

The elder brother will not rejoice; reproaches his father and his brother; yet his father answers him kindly.

APPLICATION.

1. *God is a kind Father to all.* He creates and preserves all. He opens His hand liberally, Psalm cxlv. 16. Feeds the young ravens, the young lions, the sparrows, Psalm cxlv. 9; Matt. x. 29. How much more will he care for a child, Matt. vii. 11. Even to wicked children He is most kind, Isa. i. 2. He hears with them, Exod. xxxiv. 6. His sun shines on all—it shone on Cain—on the murderers of Jesus. All they have is from God, Matt. v. 45; James i. 17.

2. *God welcomes a returning sinner.* He watches for his return—longs for it, Ezek.

xviii. 31. Reproaches him not, James i. 6. Forgives him, Neh. ix. 17. Clothes him with righteousness, Isa. lxi. 10. Raises him to his rank, 1 John iii. 2. Rejoices over him, and fills heaven with joy.

3. *How the sinner treats God.* He has, you have, such a Father, and you take all from His hand—every breath—and yet you forget Him, do not love, obey, or pray to Him. Your heart has left Him, 2 Kings v. 26; Matt. vi. 21; Isa. xxix. 13. You spend all He gives you, health, strength, money, and life, in pleasing yourself, without God, and without His blessing, Psalm iv. 6; Job xxi. 14. Beware, Luke xii. 19. Belshazzar, Dan. v. 2-6.

4. *What the sinner should do.* What you should do. Return to God. Let your thoughts, your heart, return to God. Down on your knees. Confess your sins. Sin no more, Psalm li.; Hosea xiv. 2. God will pardon love, and bless you evermore, Hosea xiv. 4. Heaven will be glad. Will you do so?

5. *Beware how you treat a penitent.* Despise him not. Many see no faults in themselves, many faults in their brethren, Luke xviii. 11. They have no love to souls, do nothing for them, they have no joy in their salvation. Jonah.

SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. How foolish to hate the restraints of a father's house, or seek to leave it, Prov. i. 8; v. 12.

2. Begin by sinning against your parents, and you will end in woe, Prov. xxx. 17.

3. A sinner is "beside himself," Act. xxvi. 11.

4. They that indulge their evil passions are feeding swine.

5. How blessed to be driven to God, though by sore suffering and want, ver. 18.

6. Fellow-teachers! pray for a compassionate heart towards the lost.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

There is no religion in the Bible—no hope if there are any reporters here, that they will wait until I finish my sentence before they run to the — paper—any more than there is a road upon the guide-board. The Bible is the rule, the direction, by which man is to work out his own salvation, as the guide-board is the direction by which he is to walk out his journey. Religion is *in the man*, or it is not anywhere.—*Beecher.*