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"WE CANNOT TAKE RICHMOND."

BY REV. DUNCAN MORRISON, BROCKVILLE, C.W.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."—PROVERBS XVI. 32.

* * * * *

In the second place, *the slavery in the one case is much more galling and degrading than the other.* The bondage which a feeble and conquered race has to endure is often all but insufferable. The history of war shows us too plainly how little the conqueror regards the feelings of the vanquished—how ruthlessly he enters into the quiet villages with fire and sword, and into the homes of defenceless citizens with iron tramp, slaying the mother with the child, glutting every foul and lawless passion until satiety. You need not be told how defeat is often aggravated by insult and violence, and how, when peace and order are restored, a heavy, grinding yoke of bondage is imposed, sometimes too heavy to be borne. Still a really noble and brave people are not thus necessarily degraded. History tells us of more than one nation overcome by numbers but not subdued, maintaining their true manhood and breathing the true spirit of liberty, which only bides its time to assert its independence. Such was the case with our forefathers when cooped up amidst their native hills—when smarting under a foreign yoke. And such is the case with the brave Poles at the present day. Overmatched and overcome by numbers they submit for the time, but the spirit refuses to succumb. In such a case there is subjection but no degradation, for there is no loss of self-respect, no base consent of the will or soft yielding to a state of oppression; but on the contrary the spirit loathes and reluctates against such a humiliation, and remains brave and free. It is the inward consent, not the outward pressure that defiles and degrades; and so long as a people refuses in heart and soul to yield, they cannot be debased. But it is otherwise with the bondage of sin—the rule and reign of evil principle. Take, for example, the slavery of gross sin—the case of the unclean man, the intemperate man, the

passionate man, the intensely worldly man, or the man who sells himself body and soul in order to advance his temporal interests. Is there no real bondage in such a case? If there be any one now listening to me of such a character, let him speak and he will tell you how hateful and galling is the slavery of sin—how against better knowledge, and many warnings and inward remonstrances, he is driven on and on like a galley slave to his haunts of vice—forced to rise early and sit late to feed passions that he cannot satisfy—holden by the cords of iniquity so that he cannot cease from sin. Place before such a man his peculiar temptation and he falls—yields as ready as the heavy, bending tree to the storm. There is one reigning principle of iniquity in the children of disobedience, sometimes taking one shape and sometimes another, but in every case it is the dominant principle, and all the powers of the sinner, body and soul, are laid under contribution to minister to it. Here it is passion, not high principle that rules—a pampered appetite, a debasing lust—not your nobler and better feelings and aspirations;—all these must yield and become the miserable hacks and drudges to grinding masters that never say enough. This is the form in which gross sin reigns over the soul, and with such cases we are all familiar; but there is a more common form with which we are all still more familiar: I mean an unregenerate heart. Here there is no gross sin overshadowing the life—no debasing habit lording over the soul; but here also the power of sin reigns no less supremely, though less conspicuously. You feel, O sinner, that your life, though fair in the sight of man, is all wrong in the sight of God—that you are not prepared to die, that you have no comfort in turning your thoughts to God as your Father in heaven, no delight in his law after the inward man. You have sometimes said in your more serious moments, "O that

I were a Christian—that I knew something of the glorious liberty of the sons of God!" But your longings were of short duration, like the morning cloud and the early dew which soon passeth away. You are conscious of a power that is carrying you away from heaven and holiness, and God and all bright and beautiful things—of a strong hand laid upon you, from which you have tried to escape in vain. Your best resolutions have failed, your best efforts were fruitless, and you now see the sun of your life setting in darkness, and your best days gone. There is a slavery here no less real than in the former case, a soft, easy compliance with the world's ways and the heart's desires, a quiet drifting with the tide, which will surely carry you to destruction. The enemy has you in his thralldom as really as the angler has the baited fish in his power. He does not harshly and violently drag his victim to the shore, but on the contrary gives him plenty of time and plenty of line—lets him play round and round with a narrower sweep and ever weakening strength, until he flutters helplessly at his feet. And so with the great enemy. He has his deceptive baits, his guileful arts, his cords of iniquity with which he holds the sinner, and will hold surely unless a mightier than he interpose. And yet all this in view of the provisions of the gospel, within hearing of a Father's voice, within reach of his outstretched arm. Here there is a real degradation of spirit, and an ever-growing weakness, which is sure to end in spiritual death. Here there is a desolation more awful to contemplate than that which follows the plowshare of the conqueror, or the lawless soldiery upon the eve of battle when intoxicated with victory. And if it would be a hateful thing to see the enemy enter your home, living daily under your roof, obtruding his hateful inspection even into your secret hours of retirement—if the ancient Jew hated the very sight of the publican sitting at the receipt of custom, because reminding him of his bondage—how much more odious and degrading is the constant presence of that enemy that enters the very soul; resides in our spiritual house not made with hands, defiling and overshadowing all its movements with his abominations! O say is

there not a slavery in such a case worse, more galling and unbearable, than any which pertains merely to the body; and would it not be a nobler and a better thing than even having a share in taking a city, if such an one were to strike for his liberty, to grapple with this mighty foe, to rise up from his degradation, and, in Christ's great name, lay hold upon eternal life, and enter upon a new career with full purpose of and endeavour after the new obedience? And O, if you only understood how strong you are in God, and how welcome you are to take unto yourself, dear reader, the whole armour of God that you may stand in the evil day, you might even rise up and walk forth in the glorious liberty of the children of God, and sing that old psalm with a deeper meaning than ancient Israel ever knew, "My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and I am escaped!" Such a triumph indeed would be a greater and a grander thing, the text assures us, than taking a city.

In the third place, *the victory in itself is more noble and the results more lasting and precious in the one case than in the other.* There is an inward slavery baser than any bodily servitude, and there is an inward ruling of a man's spirit far surpassing in dignity the pomp and splendor of earthly dominion. The highest rank to which we can rise is that of being made kings and priests unto God; and the noblest conquest is that of bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The inward transcends the outward strife. The moral surpasses the physical triumph. The power of command is greater in the one case than in the other, and the victory all the more honorable. *In the shout of triumph that goes up from the battle field there is often nothing more than the triumph of brute force,—the favorable conjuncture of circumstances—the overwhelming power of numbers—and the ascendancy of coarse and carnal elements; and there ever follows the proud and godless boast of the king of Assyria, "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom for I am prudent; and I have removed the bounds of the people, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man."* There is much self-

complacency and godless vaunting and vice and crime connected with every city that is taken, and there mingle with the shouts of victory many a widow's wail and orphan's tear, for every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood. But in those bloodless battles where no sound is heard and no smoke is seen, that pertain to self-conquest—in those triumphs over temptation—in those calm, holy acts of self-denial which the world cannot appreciate, and of which no human breast was conscious but your own—in the repression of ambitious longings and the calming down of swelling pride and passion, what a mightier than human power is present, what divine elements are brought to bear upon the strife, and how sweet and blessed the rest which ensues! Happy indeed is that man or woman that has learned so to rule his spirit—so to deny himself—so to look beyond man and things seen and temporal, and stay himself upon the Lord, and maintain that meek and quiet spirit which in his sight is of great price. That is a victory of a nobler kind, the text assures us, than taking a city; and many a one competent for the one, as well as the great Eastern conqueror, has failed miserably here, many a one that rules like a tyrant at home and on the field is weak and unstable as water,—easily put out of sorts, when agitated with troubles or pride or passion. And the loud voice and the angry frown and the violent, hasty word ever ready for utterance, show how weak he is; and his frequent regrets show how little rule he has over his spirit, and how little sympathy with Him who endured the contradiction of sinners; and who, when there were many to witness against Him, remained calm, possessing His soul in patience, and enjoying that peace of God that passeth all understanding. This is the high warfare which the text sets before us as a better thing than taking a city; and this is the warfare to which we would urge you on from day to day—all of you, for all, as the poet says,

All may have,
If they dare choose, a glorious life or grave.

And though the names of those that so distinguish themselves may never be known beyond the little circle in which they moved—

though they may never be inscribed on monumental brass or published in the lists of great conquerors, they will be found written in the Lamb's book of life, and they will be confessed by Christ on that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and when many who now occupy a large space in the world shall rise to everlasting shame and contempt. And let me add, that it is only here where this warfare can be waged. There is no conflict in heaven, for there entereth nothing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. There is no conflict in hell, for there every good principle is rooted out, and every noble aspiration is quenched—there all is defeat, desperation, despair. But here in this distant world, during our little day, the battle is to be fought which is to determine our everlasting destiny—whose issues are to reach forward through all ages, and whose fruits are at once peace to the soul and glory to God. No wonder that angels and archangels look down with holy wonder at the things pertaining to salvation, and watch with interest the result of those battles which are so sublime in their nature and so far-reaching in their consequences. We watch with interest the movements of great armies—the advancing column, the deadly onset, the gallant dash and the routed foe fleeing in dismay, like sheep without a shepherd upon the hills, and we gather something of the same enthusiasm which fires the conquering soldier ourselves, as we look on and witness his noble deeds; but O, how vastly more important must those battles be which engage the interest of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. And indeed when we remember the value of the soul, it is not surprising that there should be such an interest felt amongst them for its progress in holiness—that there should be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. It is the soul, the immortal soul, for which Christ died, that the battle is waged; and when that battle is won, which consists in bringing it under the reign of holy principle and not stormy passion, we can easily see the force of the text, "He that is slow to anger is greater than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

In conclusion, let me urge you to prosecute this holy warfare, and so to cover yourselves with a higher glory than pertains to this world. O, dull, dead souls, yielding softly to the words, ways, and besetting sins, will nothing rouse you to fight the good fight of faith? Will ye rather be ruled than rule? Will nothing constrain you to strike for your liberty, and come under the banner of Christ? We admire the brave men who come forward in the hour of their country's need to repel the invader, and we celebrate their praises with many a song and many a token of ingratitude; and were it otherwise with them—were they to prove recreant to their high trust and tamely submit to the foe, who would not join in their execration? But what cowards are those who shrink from the battles of faith and conscience, and basely yield to sin, whose servants they are? You have a victory to win—a nobler victory than taking a city. You have a foe to encounter that will require your utmost watchfulness—that will require you to take to yourself the whole armour of God, that you may stand in the evil day. Strive now, for the hand of a cruel enemy is upon you, that will not easily relax his grasp. Strive now, for there are passions within you ever growing in strength, and which, if unsubdued, will prove your everlasting tormentors. Strive now, not in your own strength, but in the strength of Him who can make you a conqueror and more than a conqueror. Under His leadership there is no such thing as failure. Often the utmost efforts to take a city are unavailing. Months and years of weary toil end in repulse and fearful slaughter. We have watched with some interest the movements and counter movements of two great armies for three successive summers, and noted the more conspicuous actions—cities taken and fields lost and won—which have attended this saddest of wars. We have seen especially the great army of the North drawing near to the chief city of the South, fighting bravely and waiting patiently, as men ought to do, for many days, under a scorching sun, and after all obliged to confess, in their most widely spread organs, **WE CANNOT TAKE RICHMOND**; but never shall the day come

when, in the prosecution of this holy warfare—in storming the citadel of sin, in scaling the heights of heaven's holiness and heaven's glory, in making good our position in that kingdom that cannot be moved—we must retire, we cannot take that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. That city has already been taken—that kingdom has already been won, for He that is the Captain of our salvation has already gone there and written His name and our names on its mansion of blessed rest, and His language to thee, O weak, wavering soul, is, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

WHICH IS BEST?

There are other heroes than those whose names grace the pages of written history,—heroes whose deeds are unwritten save by the pen of the recording angel. Each human heart is a battle-field; and every human being will, in the end, come off conqueror or conquered. Every day there is skirmishing, and sometimes heavy fighting, between the forces of right on the one hand, and of wrong on the other. The child standing with lips tightly compressed, lest the words of anger or passion should burst forth, is waging a hot warfare, and gaining a victory which his good angel will record with more joy than he would the most dazzling triumph of merely human power.

The teacher, patiently treading the round of school-room duties, and faithfully inculcating in the minds of her young charge lessons of piety and patriotism; the seamstress, toiling unwearingly over her needle, day after day, for the support of those dependent upon her; the soldier's wife, cheerfully bidding her husband God-speed, as he departs for the scenes of blood, and crowding back the tears lest they sadden his heart; all these are true heroines, and at last may wear brighter crowns than many a far-famed hero.

Other noble lives have been worn away under the stern discipline of suffering. At first the restless soul chafed, and beat

against the bars of its fiery prison; but as the furnace-fires burned higher and fiercer, though the whole being quivered with anguish, the subdued spirit whispered,—

“So I say, trusting, ‘As God will,’
And in his hottest fire, He still.”

And so, as the years rolled by, the lines of suffering on the pale face grew deeper, and the look of patience more settled, till at last the reward came, and as the Christian, perfect through suffering, went home to glory, the recording angel closed his book, and wrote upon it in shining characters, —“VICTORY.”

Thank God! a blessed life lies within the reach of all. It may not be for all to share in what the world calls glory. Every head cannot be graced with the crown of earthly honors. There are but few whose approach is welcomed with booming cannon, and the ringing tread of military display. But many an humble soul, weary and worn with its toil and warfare here, goes home to find a crown full of stars, and to meet the welcome of angel hosts.

Which is best worth the striving?—
Mother's Assistant.

NEGATIVE RELIGION.

In these latter days of ease from persecution, a profession of religion may be made, and a decent outside preserved without much cost. There is one class of professors, and that by no means a small one, made up of those who have received a religious education, have been trained up to an outward conformity to the precepts of the Gospel, who abstain from the open follies and corruptions of the world, but remain quite satisfied with a *negative religion*.

They do not profane the Sabbath.

They do not neglect the ordinances of God's house.

They do not live without a form of prayer.

They do not take the holy name of God in vain.

They do not run a round of gaiety and folly.

They are not drunkards.

They are not swearers.

They do not bring up their children without some regard to religion.

They do not cast off the fear of God.

BUT

They do not LOVE him.—Deut. v. 10, vii. 9; Matt. xxii. 37, 38; 1 John v. 3.

They do not delight themselves in him—Psalm xxxvii. 4.

They do not esteem his Word more than their necessary food.—Job xxiii. 12; Ps. cxix. 97, 103, 111.

They do not LOVE the habitation of his house and the place where his honour dwelleth, though they attend it.—Ps. xxvi. 8, lxxxiv. 1, 10.

They do not enjoy the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.—Phil. iv. 6, 7.

They are not temples of the Holy Ghost.—1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

They are not habitations of God through the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22); because

They have not been born again of the Spirit.—John iii. 3-5.

They have not passed from death unto life.—John v. 24. Consequently—

They cannot be new creatures in Christ Jesus.—2 Cor. vi. 17; Gal. vi. 15.

Therefore, alas! they cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—John iii. 5.

O that every reader may pause, and consider his own state before God, and be led to pray, “Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart; see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. xxvi. 2); and if convinced that he is *not* yet in the way, let him “seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”—Isa. lv. 6, 7.

“JACK, WE SHALL PRAY FOR
YOU.”

It was the last day of the year, and a ship lay at anchor off a large city. Weekly and sometimes nightly a few of the men met for prayer, and of late they had prayed earnestly for one of their number who carried his dissipation and recklessness beyond all limits. He never ceased deriding the “canting Methodists,” as he called

his godly companions, and his influence threatened to defeat their efforts for the spiritual good of the crew. Just before the sailor's watch on the last night of the year, one of his comrades said to him kindly, "Jack, we meet to-night to pray the old year out, and *we shall pray for you.*" Jack turned around perfectly enraged. "Make me your subject, if you dare, and I'll knock your brains out," was his answer.

All alone he kept his watch. Overhead shone the pure stars, and far away gleamed the lights of the city, and still the parting words of his comrade rang in his ear. "I wonder what they'll say," he thought at length, after his anger had died away.—"Well, if they mention all my sins, they'll have enough to keep them busy;" and one after another, scenes of sin came up before him, scenes from which many of the participants had been called away.—Rousing himself, he tried to shake off their memories, but in vain, "*We'll pray for you*" rang in his ear. All at once the texts learned at his mother's knee from his almost forgotten Bible came up before him. Vainly he whistled and sang, and tried to think of anything, everything else. God's Spirit will accomplish its work.—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die," said memory. "The wrath of God abideth on him;" and passage after passage came up before him. He saw himself a sinner before an avenging, slighted God; and despairing, trembling, he threw himself upon his knees. "Oh, what a long list of sins I've got scored up against me," he groaned; "I can't ever get it chalked out." He saw himself undone and helpless; but, as once of old appeared to Peter, walking on the sea, the blessed "Son of man," so across the wild waves of doubt, of anguish, and despair, came the heavenly Comforter into the heart of this poor sailor, saying, "Be not afraid; only believe;" and like the disciple Thomas, his heart responded, "My Lord and my God." Alone upon his knees he heard the far-off city bells toll out the dying of the year, and merrily chime in the advent of the new, and a "new creature" Jack arose from his knees; and grasping the hand of the comrade who came to relieve his watch, said with a fearful voice, "Ned, I'm a new man in Christ Jesus."

His conversion was indeed sincere.—God's Spirit perfected the good work begun in him; and as he contemplated the abyss from which he had been snatched, he could not sufficiently admire divine goodness. Jack was unwearied in his efforts to show his late companions the folly of their ways; and more than one had reason to hold in grateful memory Jack's *new year*. "He that sitteth upon the throne saith, Behold, I make all things *new.*"

WORK FOR CHRISTIANS.

SALVATION, THOUGH NOT OF WORKS, IS FOR WORKS.—"Show me thy faith by thy works," is the demand of St. James; "Be careful to maintain good works," is the counsel of St. Paul; and the testimony of the whole Bible is, that faith without works is dead. We are not called into the vineyard to sit idle, to fold our hands, and to go to sleep. They that sleep, sleep in the night; but believers are children of the light and of the day, and have much to do. In amending our habits, in cultivating our hearts, in resisting temptation, in conquering besetting sins, in fighting the good fight, to keep the faith, our banner flying, and, step by step, win the way to heaven, how much have we to do! So much that an idle were as great a contradiction in terms as a dishonest, a lying, or licentious Christian. In respect even of our own interests and spiritual welfare, may we not use the words of Nehemiah, and say to the world, when, with winning smiles or brow of care, it solicits our hearts and time, "I have a great work to do, therefore I cannot come down?"

But no man liveth to himself; no Christian, at least. And in a world bleeding from so many wounds, so brimful of sorrow, and suffering, and oppressiou, and ignorance, and wrong, and crimes—where sinners perish round us as in a great shipwreck, some dashed on the cruel rocks, and others drowning in the waves, and all by their dangers crying, Help, we perish!—instead of having nothing to do, might we not wish to have a thousand heads to plan, and a thousand hearts to feel, and a thousand hands to work; the zeal of Paul, the wealth of Solomon, and the years of Methuselah? Let us pity the world, and endeavor, praying and working, so to shine that others, seeing our good works, may be guided to heaven.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

WHO WILL STAND BY YOU?

A well-known judge lay at the point of death. He was in the prime of middle life. His mind was well matured. He gave indication of attaining great eminence as a jurist. His abilities for his position were unsurpassed. He was naturally self-reliant. But death had now come to him. Almost his last hour was reached. He was growing unconscious of that which transpired about his bed. His physician, who stood at his bed, said to him, "Do you know who stands by you?" "*Jesus Christ*," was the reply.

It showed where that strong mind was looking, and upon what it leaned—not to itself, not to his moral life and unblemished character as a judge, not to the mere mercy of God, but to *Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the sinner*. In the dark valley that rod and that staff comforted him.

Who will stand by your death-bed? *Your wife*—to receive your parting kiss, and close your eyes, and smooth your forehead? May it be so. *Your children*—that, like Jacob, your dying couch may be surrounded by your offspring, and a shower of tears from many eyes shall embalm your body? May it be so. But will these alone give comfort? Ah, you will need another friend than these. For these, like Christiana's children, can only stand on the brink of the river, and see you go in. You will want one who can pass into those waters with you. Only Jesus can do that.

All Christians cling to the Saviour in death. No matter what their intellectual endowments and attainments have been, with the spirit of children they trust in him. No matter what peculiar denominational tenets or doctrines they have been attached to, or identified with, these drop away, and *Christ* appears as the sole reliance.

Let us approach the death-bed of a prelate well known by his writings, and gifted with a mind of great clearness and of great logical acumen. A few months since, death came to the palace of Archbishop Whately. Friends, as they visited him, said with unbecoming praise, "You are dying as you lived—great to the last." He replied, "I am dying as I have lived,

in the faith of Jesus." Another remarked, "What a blessing that your glorious intellect is unimpaired!" Said the archbishop, "Do not call *intellect* glorious; there is nothing glorious out of Christ." At another time it was said, "The great fortitude of your character supports you." "No," he answered, "it is not my fortitude that supports me, but my faith in Christ." Thus the more mature the Christian's experience, the more does he come to a trusting repose and faith in Christ.

We have in the two cases here noted the testimony of strong intellects to the value of Jesus Christ and his salvation, as the only true source of comfort in the dying hour. No one can sneer at them as weak-minded, or enthusiasts.

Have you secured such a reliance for your death-bed? If not, would it not be well to do it? When heart and flesh fail, when the eyes are dim and the ear is heavy—when kindred can do no more than weep at your side—who then will stand by you?—*British Messenger*.

COMMUNION EXERCISES.

I.—FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

Exodus xx.

These are the unchanging requirements of the immutably holy Jehovah. I have five questions to address to my soul respecting them. My conscience be faithful in the reply. And may the Holy Spirit enlighten and sanctify thee!

1. Am I convinced that I have violated all these commandments? There is no doubt that I have done so. Do I see it in this light—that I have loved other objects more than God? That I have not worshipped him in a right spirit? That I have dishonoured him? That I have broken his Sabbaths? That I have been unfaithful? That I have indulged evil passions? That I have been impure? That I have been unjust? Calumnious? Discontented? Lord, show me the depth and extent of my depravity! Convince me of both original and actual sin!

2. Have I felt the condemning sentence of God's law? Many own they have broken it who are yet not alarmed for their danger and demerit. How is it with me? Has my experience at all corresponded with that of Paul, when he said—"I was alive without the law once, but when

the commandment came, sin revived, and I died?"

3. Have I abandoned all hope of acceptance with God on the ground of my obedience to the law? It is not uncommon for sinners to own their depravity and condemnation, and yet say they hope, and intend to obey the law better in time to come, and so find favour with God.— Have I been delivered from this delusion? and have I fully acquiesced in the testimony that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified?"

4. Have I fled to Christ, that in him the demands of the law upon me may all be met? This is the grand question.— The first three may be answered according to truth, and yet the soul may perish. But if I can answer this question in the affirmative, my soul is saved. If I have accepted Christ, then I am "accepted in the Beloved." Let me make sure of union with him. This is the turning point in the salvation of the soul.

5. While I have abandoned the law as a ground of hope, have I embraced it as a rule of life? These exercises are not contradictory. It is the perfection of the law that leads to both. Do I love the law? Do I seek to obey it? Am I humbled when I fail to keep it? And do I resolve, by God's grace, to obey it in all things?

O God! I confess my sinfulness, my condemnation, and my helplessness. I dedicate myself wholly to thee in him.— And I desire to declare this my confession at the table of the Lord. Do thou accept me for his sake. Amen.— *By the Rev. James Morgan, P.D.*

The Bible and its Detractors.

"How often has God condescended, not merely to the feelings and thoughts of men, but even to their failings and their prejudices! But this very condescension (one of His highest marks of love to man), which is exhibited everywhere in the Bible, affords subjects of derision to those wretchings who look into the Word of God for displays of human wisdom, for the gratification of idle curiosity, or for the spirit of their own times or their own sect." *Hermann.*

CHRIST AND THE LITTLE ONES

"The Master has come over Jordan,"
Said Hannah the mother one day;
"He is healing the people who throng him,
With a touch of his finger, they say."

And now I shall carry the children,
Little Rachel, and Samuel, and John,
I shall carry the baby, Esther,
For the Lord to look upon."

The father looked at her kindly,
But he shook his head and smiled:
"Now who but a doating mother
Would think of a thing so wild?"

If the children were tortured by demons,
Or dying of fever—twere well;
Or had they the taint of the leper,
Like many in Israel;"—

"Nay, do not hinder me, Nathan,
I feel such a burden of care,—
If I carry it to the Master,
Perhaps I shall leave it there."

If he lay his hand on the children,
My heart will be lighter, I know;
For a blessing for ever and ever
Will follow them as they go."

So over the hills of Judah,
Along by the vine-rows green,
With Esther—sleep on her bosom,
And Rachel her brothers between;

"Among the people who hung on his teaching,
Or wanted his touch and his word,
Through the row of proud Pharisees listening,
She pressed to the feet of the Lord."

"Now why shouldst thou hinder the Master,
Said Peter, "with children like these?
Seest not how from morning till evening
He teacheth and healeth disease?"

Then Christ said, "Forbid not the children;
Permit them to come unto me!"
And he took in his arms little Esther,
And Rachel he set on his knee;

And the heavy heart of the mother
Was lifted all earth-care above,
As he laid his hands on the brothers,
And blessed them with tenderest love.

As he said of the babes in his bosom,
"Of such are the kingdom of heaven"—
And strength for all duty and trial
That hour to her spirit was given.

—*Julia Gilk.*

"IT LOOKED SO."

A few weeks since, I noticed an exhortation to Sunday School teachers to get acquainted with the habits of their scholars. I tried to make the advice of practical use to me; so when my class came to spend a few hours at my house one afternoon last week, I watched them closely, to see what little peculiarities I might discover. I had not done so long before I found that one, at least, had a habit in speaking which, if not absolutely wicked, was quite foolish, and painful for others to hear.

I had brought out several games and books of engravings to amuse the children; Hattie and Mary were busy with one of the latter. Whenever Mary came to a picture which she particularly liked, she would express her admiration by exclaiming, "My gracious, isn't that pretty?" And all through the afternoon, more than half of her sentences were prefaced by those two words, so that it was really painful to hear her. And yet I pitied her, for it was evident that she had, as children often express it, "done it so much that she didn't know it."

When the time came for them to go home, I detained Mary after the rest, and we had a long and serious conversation about it. She told me that she knew it was a very bad habit, and had tried very hard to break herself of it; that it troubled her mother very much, who had tried a great many ways to cure her, but all in vain. We suggested a great number of expedients, but finally I happened to mention a plan which had been very beneficial to me in my childhood. When I was quite a little girl, I had a trick of shaking my shoulders whenever anything did not suit me; and my mother had broken me of it by giving me a little blank book, and making me put a mark down every time I indulged in it. I told Mary of this, and as she fancied she should like to try it, I took a sheet of paper, made a little book, and she went home fully expecting to be cured of her bad habit immediately.

I must confess, that for myself, I had not much faith in the success of the experiment; more especially since, when I asked Mary if she had ever implored the aid of her heavenly Father, she replied

very confidently that she had a number of times, but it didn't do any good; he did not seem to hear her prayers. However, I waited with considerable anxiety for the coming of the next Sunday, when she was to report progress.

As soon as she came into school I saw by her bright countenance that she must have succeeded pretty well; but I was wholly unprepared for what she proceeded to tell me. She said she commenced using the little book the next day after her visit to me, and at night she found she had put down twenty-six marks. The tears ran down her cheeks, as she added: "I haven't said it once since, for I keep thinking of that book, and it looked so, I couldn't."

When she became a little calm, I gently reminded her of another book, where all our words and actions are written down, and how badly our sins must make its pages look; that whether we keep a record or not, that one is going on just the same, and to help her to remember, and also to encourage her in the right way, I made her learn the fifth verse in the third chapter of Revelation; "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

As I sat alone that night, thinking over the events of the day, I thought to myself that if we could only get a glimpse at that book, we should certainly try to lead different lives. The accounts there would so startle us that we should heartily echo little Mary's simple words, "it looked so, I couldn't."—*Quiver*.

ARE MINISTERS HIRELINGS?

"Are you the man we've hired to preach for us?"

"No, sir, I am not."

"I beg pardon; are you not the minister?"

"Yes, sir, I am the pastor of the church here; but do you really think I have been hired to preach for you?"

"Why, yes, sir; I was at the meeting when the vote was taken to raise the money. Did you not come here expecting to receive a salary?"

"Certainly: and so does the governor of this state enter upon his duties expecting to receive a salary, but would you say that he is hired to govern the state?"

"Not exactly."

"And the reason is exactly this: the governor is elected to fill a certain office, and when you speak of him you think more of his office, than you do of his salary. You do not hire him to do whatever you may wish to set him at, but you elect him to an office, fixed beforehand and expressly defined in the Constitution, and then you fix a salary that he may attend to his duties without embarrassment. The same is true of a pastor. You do not hire him to do a job of preaching for you. You elect him to an office ordained by Christ, and defined in the constitution of the church, and then you affix a salary that he may give himself wholly to the duties of his office."

"Your theory appears very well; but what practical difference does it make?"

"Just this. When you hire a man you expect him to *do as you say*. When you elect a man to an office you expect him to do what the constitution says."—*Tract Journal*.

WHY AM I NOT A CHRISTIAN?

1. Is it because I am afraid of ridicule, and of what others may say of me?

"Whoever shall be ashamed of Me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed."

2. Is it because of the inconsistencies of professing Christians?

"Every man shall give an account of himself to God."

3. Is it because I am not willing to give up all to Christ?

"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

4. Is it because I am afraid that I shall not be accepted?

"Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

5. Is it because I fear I am too great a sinner?

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

6. Is it because I am afraid I shall not "hold out?"

"He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ."

7. Is it because I am thinking that I will do as well as I can, and that God ought to be satisfied with that?

"Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

8. Is it because I am postponing the matter, without any definite reason?

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

CHOOSE!

"There's a blessing or a curse in store for you my boy, which shall it be—which will you choose?" As the superintendent of a Sunday school was going down the stairs which led from the school-room, he placed his hand upon the shoulder of a boy who before him, and repeated these words. He passed on, and soon forgot the little seed he had thus dropped by the wayside. Several years went by. The faithful superintendent and teacher had removed to a distant part of the country. There he became acquainted with a young man who was noted for his active piety, and the zeal with which he engaged in doing good. One day he asked his young friend what first led him to devote himself to the service of God.

"Have you forgotten," replied the young man, "that I was once a member of your Sunday school at C—?"

"I do not recollect you there," was the answer.

"Do you not remember telling a boy one day, as he was going down the stairs after school, that there was a blessing or a curse in store for him, and bidding him make choice of which it should be? I was that boy; and although the incident has passed from your memory, I have never forgotten it. Whenever I have been tempted to do wrong, your solemn words have come up before me, and I was finally led to ask myself the question, 'Which shall I choose, the blessing or the curse?' Thanks be to God, he has given me the disposition and the strength to choose the blessing."

THE HONOUR DUE TO ALL MEN.

As honouring ourselves is the first rule that I would give, so the second is, seek to practise yourselves in honouring others. God has so formed us, that our spiritual and moral cure is to be wrought by the blessing of his grace upon our practical efforts. We must gain tender, sympathetic hearts, hearts which, indeed, honour our brethren, not by cultivating abstract sensibilities, but by practising kindly actions. It is not in the cell of the meditative monk, but in him who mingles always the night watchings and prayers of the Mount of Olives with daily ministrations to a suffering multitude, that the earnest reality of sympathy is most surely to be found. If, then, you would have large hearts, if you would truly honour all men, begin by practising the lower measures of this grace in your conduct towards those around you. Strive to remember who and what they are with whom you mix in the commonest details of household offices. Be they wife, or children, or friends, or dependants, or superiors, look at them as souls, redeemed souls, true men—as persons, not as things; as those whose aid you may never use lawfully as if they were things, but always with an eye to their good as much as to your own; as those in whom a spiritual cure is begun, or in whom a spiritual pestilence is raging. Watch yourselves in your conduct with them, lest sensuality, or sloth, or indolence, or vanity, or any other evil thing, poison your intercourse. lead you to treat them unworthily of their high calling, and of the spiritual influences which in the Church of Christ are around you and them; of the high destiny for misery or joy which is eternally before you.

Great opportunities, brethren, are in your hands in these common things. The kindly actions of family life may be sanctified, until they become the props by which your spiritual affections are trained heavenward. Learn by a Christian use of them this blessed lesson. You may grow by God's help able to see through the course common features of ordinary life, the great spiritual realities which lie beneath them, to be, indeed, "kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another."

Another great branch of this self-healing practice, is that of which an opportunity is set before you here. If you would "honour all men," you must learn to sympathise especially with the weak, the suffering, and the sinful; and this power you must gain by practice; by labouring for them, by taking willingly upon yourselves a portion of their burden; by denying yourselves, that you may help them; that you may tread, indeed, in his

footsteps, "who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." You must follow him who "himself took our infirmities and bare our sickness." This is especially needful for maintaining the health of your own souls in a state of society like ours.—Who has not felt amongst the crowds of our great towns the paralysing effect of meeting daily with multitudes with whom he has no bond of common sympathy? It is hard to break through the cold separation which such intercourse creates—to feel that we and they are brethren, sharers in the same life, and, as we trust, heirs of the same inheritance; yet, unless we do break through it, we must grow unmanly and ungodly. We should, therefore, use eagerly every means for keeping alive within ourselves these powers of spiritual perception. And amongst these none is, under God's blessing, more effectual than the active ministries of a loving spirit in behalf of others. Happy are they who can thus keep ever new within their hearts the springs of sympathy and pity, by a personal attendance on the needs of others.—*Bishop Wilberforce.*

"I AM READY."

"A child of between four and five years of age, the daughter of a poor cottager, near Barnet, sickened and died. She knew several little hymns, which she (in her last moments) continually repeated. Only a little more than an hour before she died, she rallied and rose, and asked for her best clothes and her *dean shoes* and hat, for she was going a long way. Her whim was gratified, and she paced the floor of her chamber repeating that hymn, 'Gentle Jesus.' Great weakness supervened, and she was again put into bed, when she again rallied slightly, and raising herself turned to the wall with her hands uplifted and kept repeating, 'I'm coming, I'm ready,' and her spirit took wing, and was soon on the upward, onward flight to her heavenly Father's nursery of saints."—*Extract from a Letter.*

The Perfection of Christ's Teaching.

"In all the varieties of Christ's instructions and expressions, there is not a single word upon which can be fastened the slightest imputation of weakness, or folly, or frailty."—*Anon.*

THE FIVE PRECIOUS THINGS OF PETER.

CHRIST (1 Pet. ii. 4, 7)—HIS BLOOD (1 Pet. i. 7)—
THE PROMISES (2 Pet. i. 4)—FAITH (2 Pet. i. 1)
—THE TRIAL OF FAITH (1 Pet. i. 7).

How precious is the FAITH that gives
A precious CHRIST to me,
And precious makes the BLOOD He shed
On the accursed tree.

And precious and exceeding great
Are all the PROMISES;
"Yea and amen in Him" Inscríb'd
On what each promise says.*

Precious, beyond conception, FAITH!†
It with the promise deals;
And for the soul appropriates
The blessing each reveals.

Not only it the eye which sees,
But it the hand which takes,
And every promised blessing mine
Inalienably makes.

Faith is the outstretched hand which holds
The golden key to open
The storehouse of divine supply,
Both for itself and Hope.

Are all things possible to Faith? †
How precious Faith must be!
And precious all that makes that Faith
To "grow exceedingly!" †

Earth's costliest metals to the fire
Their preciousness unfold;
The fining-pot for silver is,
The furnace is for gold. ‡

Heav'n, too, a great Refiner hath,
Who by His "fire" doth "sit,"
Watching the faith He puts therein,
While purifying it. ||

Not only preciousness He stamps
Upon the faith thus tried;
But preciousness upon the means
Whereby 'tis purified.

Discerning this, each TRIAL will
Courageous Hope inspire;
While Faith reminds—the trial is
But "the Refiner's fire." ¶

Let me in the Refiner see
The rod-appointing God,**
And "for a season if need be" ††
Decipher on that rod.

My verdict, then, on all He doth
Is that of Job, of old,—
"When He hath tried, and tested me,
I shall come forth as gold!" ††

—British Herald.

TACT IN SEEKING SOULS.

Every Christian should study the art of leading sinners to Jesus. Love to Christ will make a Christian desire to save souls, but will not necessarily give him skill to do the work. That he must acquire by thought, prayer, observation, and practice. The remark is suggested by an incident with which I have just met in my reading.

A pious physician had access to a jail, and tried to minister both to the souls and bodies of his patients in prison.

One day he pleaded with a murderer to seek pardon. He urged all the motives of the gospel to repentance he could command, and threw his whole soul into the plea. The murderer was cold and obdurate; excused his crimes by quoting the example of David, Solomon, and other Scripture characters. In fine, he said, "I don't know that I have much to repent of."

This from a murderer was terrible. The physician left his cell thinking the case hopeless.

Anxious, however, to do all he could, he invited a dear friend—an aged, devoted man—to visit him. The old man consented, and when after some time the doctor again ventured into the cell of the murderer, he was surprised to hear him say, "Doctor, you don't understand your business. You come here to do good, to benefit the souls of us poor prisoners, but you don't go about it right. You always urged me to 'repent,' to 'repent.' But, doctor, do you suppose there is one poor fellow in this prison who doesn't know he must repent if he would be saved? That dear old friend of yours that you left behind understood his business. He came here, sat right down by my side. He looked indeed like a really good man. With a look full of tenderness he said to me, 'John, wasn't it gracious goodness on the part of the Almighty that he should have loved us so much as to send his only begotten and well-beloved Son into the world to save such sinners as you and I? Why, doctor, that word I killed me. It killed me dead. I couldn't get over it. That that holy, venerable man should put himself on the same level with me, a vile murderer, neither fit to live nor to die! I cannot keep it out of my thoughts. It is working its way to my heart."

* 2 Cor. i. 20. § Prov. xvii. 3. ** Micah vi. 9.
† Mark ix. 23. || Mal. iii. 2, 5. †† 1 Pet. i. 6.
‡ 2 Thess. i. 3. ¶ Mal. iii. 2. †† Job xxiii. 10.

How great is the value of *tact* in soul-seeking! The doctor's *direct* appeal only stirred his depravity. The old man's *indirect* but *adroit* address, mingled as it was with exquisite tenderness, conquered him. The doctor was faithful but unskilful, and failed; his aged friend was both faithful and skilful, and he prevailed—he was *wise to win souls*.

Seek this divine wisdom, Christian; so shalt thou win many to righteousness. Dost thou need motive power? Get more love to Christ, until thou canst busy yourself in the work, saying, "The love of Christ *constraineth* me." Consider, also, "that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Alas, alas! that we should take so easy the destruction of souls around us, and sometimes even "the destruction of our kindred!"—*British Messenger*.

IS MAN THE CREATURE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

It is the nature of fallen man to prefer present pleasure to the prospect of eternal happiness, the favour of the world to the favour of the Almighty; to love himself and forget his Creator. In adults this nature is fortified by its own developments; by habits and connections which all tend in its own direction. When a man's nature in boyhood produced fruits of vice and trouble, when his advancing years have steadily answered the impulse of the same nature, and his present associations are all based upon an alienation from heavenly ties; to bring him into immediate and permanent conformity to a divine ideal of life, requires the ultimate Power of the universe, the power which rules NATURE, and through nature circumstances. Set before all the wise and good of this world one man of thirty years or upwards, whose life has been wicked or worldly; and tell them by a word, a warning, or an appeal, infallibly to change him then and there to a pure man or to a pious man, and they will each be ready to exclaim, "Am I God that I should do this?"

To say that man is the creature of circumstances, is as much as to say that he is destitute of a nature; for where a nature

is, there is a power, a power of which circumstances are often the mere effect but are never the masters. Let all the circumstances under heaven conspire against the force of nature, as embodied in a seed of thorn, and they can never defeat it; all the gardeners, manures, heats, and waterings possible would fail to make it produce fir. Heap upon it every advantage which art and creation can give, and it will speedily turn all to thorn, hopelessly incapable of rising above its nature.

Change your treatment and endeavour to debase it, and the same superiority of nature to circumstances continues to manifest itself. You may starve it to death, you may stunt or blight it, but by no adversity will it degenerate to briar; thorn in spite of allurements upward, thorn in spite of repulses downward: as it can never rise above, so it can never sink below, its nature. Circumstances are the creatures of natures, not natures of circumstances.—*Arthur's "Tongue of Fire."*

GOD WILLS NOT THE DEATH OF A SINNER.

Should a prisoner, led to execution, hear the judge or sheriff call to him and say, "Turn back, put in sureties for thy good behaviour hereafter, and live;" would he not suddenly leap out of his fetters, embrace the condition, and thank the judge or sheriff upon his bare knees? And what can be thought if God should send a prophet to preach a sermon of repentance to the devils and say, "Knock off your bolts, shake off your fetters, and turn unto the Lord, and live." Would not hell be soon broke loose and rid, before the prophet could make an end of his exhortation? Such a sermon the prophet Ezekiel now maketh to all sinners. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O House of Israel?" Shake off the shackles of your sins, quit the company of the prisoners of death, and galley-slaves of Satan, put in sureties for your good behaviour hereafter, turn to the Lord your God and live; yea, live gloriously, live happily, live eternally.

THE CURSE of an EVIL ANOESTRY.

BY REV. WILLIAM FERRIE, A.M.

"For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."—Exod. xx. 5.

History is full of illustration of this truth. In Adam all die; the posterity of Cain did not survive the flood; the children of the antediluvians perished with their parents at the time of the deluge. The descendants of Esau were visited in Idumea fearfully for their patriarch's guilt. The offspring of Simeon and Levi had to the last to walk behind those of Judah, because of the cruelty and deceit of their ancestors. Every Bible reader knows how the families of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and Achan, suffered death along with their wicked heads, and how the desolating consequences of the treachery of Saul to the Gibeonites could only be arrested by the slaughter of seven of that monarch's sons. The death of the seventy sons of Ahab, too, was the consequence of Ahab's enormities—even as before his day the rending of the kingdom of Israel during the reign of Rehoboam had come of Rehoboam's father's disaffection to the single-eyed worship of the God of Israel. Solomon had divided his homage between God and vanities, and God divided Solomon's kingdom in Rehoboam's day between his son and his servant.

And how full is the history of the dynasties of the kings of the ten tribes of Israel of similar instruction. Jeroboam made golden calves at Bethel and Dan, and told his people they had but to worship these in order to do sufficient homage to the God that had brought their forefathers out of Egypt; and with one exception all his sons were put to the sword by Baasha. Baasha, walking in his predecessor's footsteps, entailed upon his own house the very same slaughter he had meted out to

Jeroboam's. Each king of Israel was about as bad as his predecessor, with the one exception of Jehu (who, too, was not what he should have been), and the descendants of Jehu alone were to be found upon the throne in the days of the fourth generation. How terribly was the guilt of Zedekiah (the last king of Judah before the captivity) visited upon his posterity when they were put to death in cold blood before their father's eyes, and just before these eyes were put out for ever. Surely, if the Old Testament seems full of indirect illustration of any statement, it is of such a statement as that of our text and its kindred verses in the books of Proverbs and Psalms, "the name of the wicked shall rot," but "the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance."

But we have not necessarily to quote the pages of Scripture to find the echo of the text in the voice of history. Look at the annals of any nation, and if these be but ample and correct, we shall not want abundant illustration.

This text has evidently ruled the succession of the royal houses of every kingdom. Look for example at England. Edward the Elder usurped the throne to the prejudice of his uncle's son, and out of fourteen children he left but one son (Edmund the Elder) that had posterity. This Edmund (who, by the way, was stabbed by a robber in his own house) left like his father but one son that had posterity, and that son was none other than the hateful Edgar, the virtual murderer of Edwy's wife, and the debaucher of the wife of a murdered nobleman. This horrid man had one of his two sons stabbed whilst unmarried, and became grandfather by the other of four male descendants, none of whom left posterity, and three of whom were slain. Thus terminated the Saxon dynasty in the days of the fourth generation of the usurper Edmund.

The Danes who succeeded ruled only a short time after the ascent of Harold to the throne; the son of the treacherous Earl Godwin. Harold fell at the battle of Hastings, and the Norman dynasty supplanted his.

And how long did the Norman dynasty prevail? Only till the days of the daughter of Henry the First, that king who had usurped the throne which his brother Robert should have held, and put that prince in prison till his death. Little, probably, did this bad man think of the hand of God in his history, when, some time after this, his only son, William, with the flower of the nobility of England, was lost at sea, crossing from Normandy to England. This catastrophe occasioned the crown's passing to an heiress, who, by her marriage with Geoffrey Plantagenet, introduced another dynasty.

The Plantagenet dynasty ended with the death of Richard III., who had put to death the children of his brother, Edward IV., in the Tower. The death of these babes is very generally lamented; but it is not as generally considered that, inasmuch as their father Edward had caused the death of the young son of Henry VI. for merely declaring that he had come to England to defend his father's rights, there was an illustration in the death of these children of the Lord's economy in acting according to our text.

To the Plantagenet succeeded the Tudor dynasty, and this came to an end in the days of Elizabeth, the daughter of the infamous Henry VIII. Need we mention why her brother Edward VI. died in youth. The son of such a monster, notwithstanding all his piety, was evidently removed that no more of his father's race should be sown upon the earth.

The Stuart dynasty, which next succeeded, terminated on the death of Queen

Anne, whose son had predeceased her and whose father had been the bloody James II. The Hanoverian dynasty now rules, but is just about to expire and give place to that of Saxe-Gotha: and no wonder, when we consider what was the character of many of the ancestors of our Queen—always excepting George III.

The more one wisely considers the past, the more will he be struck with the amazing amount of illustration afforded by it of this important text; and were anybody but to look with Christian eyes at a fully drawn pedigree of his own family, he would find the text by means of that pedigree explaining to him many singular coincidences, which he could never otherwise have understood: and perhaps he might also receive certain hints as to what, in virtue of his connection with some ancestor bad or good, might reasonably be expected to be the character of his own future destiny. Happy the man whose father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather have, like Ephraim's and Manasseh's, all been godly; but let not the descendant of any wicked man, however godly himself, be surprised although again and again he meets with trouble, or feels as if changes were ever pursuing him.

“ILLUSTRATING,” WITHOUT “ENLIGHTENING.”—It is well known that Rev. Thomas Scott, the celebrated commentator on the Bible, published an edition of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, with expository notes. A copy of this work he benevolently presented to one of his poor parishioners.—Meeting him soon after, Mr. Scott inquired whether he had read it. The reply was, “Yes, sir.”—“Do you think you understand it?” “O yes, sir,” was the answer, “and I hope before long that I shall be able to *understand the notes*.” There is a moral in the reply, which some of the writers of our day would do well to study.

THE TRIAL OF THE HEART.

(Concluded from page 454.)

(4). *The dispensations of God's Providence* cannot of themselves heal the heart. His *mercies* cannot. Some persons may, during the course of a long life, scarcely ever have known what it is to be in sickness. They have always had sufficient to eat and to wear. They have the society of many kind friends. They have had many hair-breadth escapes. Yet if not avowed, they are at least practical atheists. Neither can the *judgments* of God heal the heart. Men may see their fellow-beings dying awful deaths, it may be, the effect of sins in which they are themselves indulging: yet, they may go on in their old ways. For example, how many die every year through debauchery, yet, how few of those with whom they were wont to associate, take warning therefrom! Yea, when God lays the rod of affliction on them, they are, perhaps, only as the stubborn bullock which kicks against the goad.

We have thus directed your attention to some of the proofs by which the indictment here brought against the human heart is supported. To every candid mind they cannot but be irresistible. How natural then the question here asked—"Who can know it?"—that is, who can see through all its treachery? who can fully understand how deep-rooted is its corruption? Now no man can. This statement may appear to some untrue. But, experience proves it to be perfectly true. Men have made and are every day making, great attainments in other departments of human knowledge. Yet, in self-knowledge, they are as defective as when Jeremiah penned these words—"Know thyself" is a maxim which not man ever has been able to carry out fully. Even the holiest and the wisest of men are comparative strangers to their own hearts.

Ah! the heart is a vast cavern. However far we may enter into it, there will ever be countless chambers which we have not seen. It has been justly observed, that we could know our hearts fully, only by being exposed to every possible variety of temptation, or, at least, knowing what the result would be if we were. But, the one we never can be,—the other we never can know, and, therefore, the answer to the question in these words ever must be—"no man can." But, there is One who searches the heart and tries the reins. He is fully acquainted with its deceitfulness and corruption.

Now, Reader! the passage before us is one which deserves thy frequent and most serious consideration, for the statements contained in it, apply to thee as much as if thy name were expressly mentioned, it matters not how moral, how amiable, yea how holy thou mayest be. Canst thou trace the slightest difference between thy heart, as it is by nature, and that of the most degraded outcast from society? What effect then should the study of these words have on us?

(1). Are our hearts deceitful above all things and desperately wicked? Then *we should be humble*. Some persons speak great swelling words about the native goodness of the human heart. They, however, understand not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. No—if God were to leave us to ourselves, and we were to be tempted to it, there is no sin too abominable or too horrible for us to commit. Perhaps, Reader! thou art now saying to thyself—"Ah! that is going too far. That does not apply to me. We have however said only what is perfectly true. We dare not speak otherwise. How foolish then—how pitiful, is he who thinks that he is by nature better than, at least some others. Well worthy of our imitation is the example of the martyr Bradford who was wont to

say when he saw a criminal taken to execution, "There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God." The fact that we are by nature no better than others should make us love the sinner while we abhor and condemn the sins which he has committed. This effect it will necessarily have, if it makes us humble.

(2). Are our hearts deceitful above all things? Then *we should ever be suspicious of them*. It is an awful thought that we may be self-deceived. Let us beware then of trusting in our own hearts, for he who does so is a fool. Should a fellow-being profess to be our friend, we should be suspicious of him, if we had reason to believe that he was our enemy, however fair his professions might be. Surely then, we should be on our guard against our own hearts, when the word of God gives us warning. We must not, however, trust in our own wisdom. We must pray with the Psalmist, "Search me O God and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." As He alone is fully acquainted with the deceitfulness of the heart, so He alone can keep us from being led astray by it, and He will do so if we trust in Him.

(3). Are our hearts desperately wicked—incurable by any ordinary means? Then *we should take them to the great Physician*. He is able to heal them.—Their depravity cannot withstand the special operations of His Spirit. He promises to heal our hearts if we bring them to Him. Faithful is He that hath promised. Reader! if a good work has been begun in thy heart, still thou needest to go daily to this Physician. Does not each succeeding day give thee new and clearer proofs of the desperate wickedness which is natural to thy heart? If thou art still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, seek at once the help of this Physician. How aw-

ful the thought that thou hast in thy heart a slumbering volcano—a part of the elements of Hell! God alone knows what thou wouldst suffer if the evil in thy heart had full scope. This it shall have if thou diest in thy present state. Thy heart must therefore be healed, before thou canst be fit for heaven. If this does not take place whilst thou art in this world, it never will take place at all. Go then at once to Jesus we again beseech thee. Ask Him to heal thy desperately wicked heart. Tell Him that thou relyest wholly on His power, His grace and His faithfulness, and thou shalt be enabled from experience to unite with the Psalmist in singing "Bless the Lord O my soul * * * who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases."

HOLD UP JESUS.

A painter once, on finishing a magnificent picture, called his artist friends around him to regard it, and express their judgment concerning it. The one in whose taste the author most confided came last to view the work. "Tell me truly, brother," said the painter, "what do you think is the best point in my picture?" "O brother, it is *all* beautiful; but *that chalice!*—*that* is a perfect masterpiece—a gem!" With a sorrowful heart the artist took his brush and dashed it over the toil of many a weary day, and turning to his friends, said, "O, brothers, if there is anything in my piece more beautiful than the Master's face, that I have sought to put there, let it be gone." Thus, brethren in Christ, teachers in the Sabbath-school, if, in your instructions, anything seems to stand out more prominent and more beautiful than the glory of Jesus, forget it all, dash it out. If, in your labours as a teacher, anything seems to reflect more loveliness, or excite more admiration or desire than Jesus, however beautiful the work may seem, blot it out. Let Jesus be all and in all. Hold him up to your own soul. Hold him up to your scholars, and your work shall be judged perfect in its beauty, and you shall not fail of your reward.—*S. S. Times.*

YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT.

A minister was preaching from these words, "Be sure your sins will find you out." He said many awakening things about sin finding out those who committed it; and among others this: "If you do not find out your sin, and bring it to Jesus, to get it pardoned and washed away through his blood, be sure your sin will find you out, and bring you to the judgment-seat, to be condemned and sent away by the Judge, into everlasting punishment."

A little girl, who had told her mother a lie before she came to hear the minister, was listening, and she thought, "O, that lie; I must either find it, and bring it to Jesus, or it will find me out at the great day."

The child was greatly alarmed. She became very anxious about her soul's salvation. She cared for nothing earthly; her mind was entirely occupied with thoughts of eternal things. She could not rest until she went and told the minister all she felt and feared. She walked several miles to speak to him, and the burden of her errand was this: "O! what shall I do with my sin?" He said, "Lay it upon the spotless Lamb of God, and he will take it entirely away. Let us now lay it upon Him," said the kind pastor; and with that he kneeled down with the awakened child, and commended her to "Jesus that great Shepherd of the sheep." He spoke to her of the love of Jesus, and she went home.

The next time the minister saw her, she came to him with a bright and happy face. He took her by the hand and said, "Well, have you laid your sin upon the spotless Lamb of God?" "O yes," she replied, "and I'll never lay any more." She meant that she would never sin again—she would never more tell a falsehood. Her heart was so full of love to Jesus for taking away her sin, that she could not think it possible that she should sin again. And that is the true mark of a Christian, that she resolves to "sin no more."

Dear children, have you laid your sins on Jesus? A sure mark of it will be this, that you wish, with all your heart, never to have any more to lay upon him.

The minister told this little story many

miles from where it happened, and the minister's wife told it again to her class, when a young woman was awakened by it to care for her soul.—*Gospel Trumpet.*

FAITH AND REASONING.

The faith which saves a man is not the result of logical argument. It is the gift of God. Argument has its due place and function. Its province, however, is not to convert the soul from its natural unbelief, but to strengthen the soul, when by a power from on high, it is constrained to believe in the great truths of a supernatural revelation. The gospel is foolishness to the heart which has not been subdued by the grace of God; when the latter has occurred, it becomes the highest and purest reason. Every man is by nature an infidel. The whole scheme of redemption is regarded by him as fabulous, and will so continue to be until his heart is touched and melted by the Spirit of God. Then he requires no reasoning to convince him that he is a sinner, and that he needs an Almighty Saviour. All his opposition, which he once thought was founded on impregnable argument, melts into mere air. By one simple and yet mysterious operation, the Spirit of God has broken down all his defences and routed him from all his strongholds, and, in his helplessness, he casts himself on the arm that has conquered him.

He is now a believer, not by a process of reasoning, not by having each step of his progress fortified by proofs such as he once demanded, but he is, he scarcely knows how, brought to a hearty belief of that which he once scorned to credit. In looking back, he can readily see the flimsiness of the arguments on which he justified his want of faith, and as he ponders on the system of revealed truth, from his new position, he finds his sanctified reason approving the whole. Hence, if a man remains outside of the kingdom of God until he can reason himself into it, he will continue there: but if he asks faith of God as the preliminary step, the shadows will flee away, and all will become plain. Ministers of Christ should ever remember this, that saving faith is the gift of God.—*Presbyterian.*

IS THERE A HELL.

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Ps. ix. 17).

[Written by a servant girl, a member of the United Presbyterian Church, and sent to us by her minister.]

Two men were sitting one day in a public-house, the one said to the other, "I hope you are not so foolish as to believe that there is a hell—a place composed of fire and brimstone?" "Of course not," said his comrade; "the ministers themselves are not preaching so much about it now, but just a few bigoted ones of the Free Church preach that doctrine."

Reader! are you one of those who believe there is no hell? You believe there is a heaven, because it is a place of happiness; but you desire to follow your sinful pleasures here, and go to heaven when you can follow them no longer. But were God to permit you to do so, it would be no heaven to you. The song of the redeemed would be a strange language to you. If you cannot enjoy the company of saints here, you would find their company even more a cause of misery to you there. If your wicked heart will declare there is no hell, then let conscience speak. When sickness seizes you, and when you are brought face to face with death, what does conscience say? Does it say all is well with your soul; do you find Christ with you to lead you through the dark valley? Ah, no, conscience thunders—there is a hell, and thither are you bound; there is a God, and a just God, too. He has long knocked at the door of your heart, but you have refused to hear his call; you have refused to believe the terrors of his just law, and now he comes to execute vengeance on you, and that justly. O sinner! will you dare to trifle longer with that great and almighty God? Turn, I beseech you, while his mercy lasts; come as you are, with all your sins, "though as high as a mountain," come to that blessed Saviour who has shed his precious blood that you might have eternal life. It is through his blood, and through his blood alone, that you can find acceptance with God. He bore the curse of God for sinners, and all who rely upon this great fact are not only saved from going down to that awful place, but are reconciled to God and made heirs of heaven.

Come, then, poor sinner, and come now. It is not to-morrow. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."—"To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Do you say, I do not know the way to come? "Jesus saith, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so must the Son of man be lifted up." You may be in life and health to-day, and to-morrow you may be in eternity. What says the wise man? "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (John iii. 14; xiv. 6; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Heb. iv. 7; Prov. xxvii. 1).

"Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requires
Is to feel your need of him."

I BLAME MY FATHER FOR IT
ALL.

An old grey-headed man lay sick and weary on a bed of straw. That barn, which had been for the night his resting-place, was his only home. On God's earth he was a wanderer, without a friend; and what made the case so truly sad, without God in the world. It was a melancholy sight to look upon a wreck like this,—a poor child of earth on his way to the grave, whose life had been spent in misery, and whose sun seemed soon to set in darkness.

"Where is your home?" I asked him.

"I have none."

"How came you here?"

"Last night, sir, I was weary and ill, and as I lay by the wayside, unable to go farther, some men passing by kindly carried me and laid me here."

"Are you happy?"

"No."

"Have you any hope for another world?"

"No, sir, I cannot say that I have?"

"Do you know that you may very soon have to go and meet your God at the judgment-seat? I would like to tell you of the Saviour of sinners."

"Oh, I have often heard all about that!"

"Well, have you not listened to the glad tidings, and, as a poor sinner, accepted of Jesus as your Saviour?"

"No. I have sinned against all the privileges I have had; and there is no use in doing anything now, for God would not receive me. None of the invitations of the gospel are for me."

"Do you ever pray?"

"No. I have prayed in my life, but never now."

"Have you a Bible?"

"No."

"Would you not begin now to pray, and read the Bible, and seek the Lord?"

"It would be of no use."

"And do you really mean to live on thus, without God in the world, and wander on alone and useless, till you drop into the grave, and pass into the eternal world?"

"Well, I know that when I leave this, I will just go along the road swearing and cursing God, and I cannot help it, for I feel the devil within me forcing me to it; and I will tell you what, sir, *I blame my father for it all.*"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that my father's example drove me to a wicked life; and what could be expected, when his house was like a hell upon earth. I blame my father for it all."

And the wanderer went on his way, carrying with him a Bible now, which may yet, by the blessing of God, guide his feet into the path of life; but my thoughts could only picture the poor wanderer's journey ended, and the meeting between parent and child in another world, and the fearful upbraiding uttered there,—"*I blame my father for it all.*"

Parents, is this a solitary case? Are there not more wanderers on earth, whose cry might be as they pass along to ruin, "*I blame my father,*" or, perhaps, "*I blame my mother for it all.*"

"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"—(Deut. v. 29.)

Mental prayer is not unheard—"*Hannah spake in her heart.*" When the heart is so full of grief that it can only groan in prayer, yet God writes that down: "*My groaning is not hid from Thee.*"—*Watson.*

UPWARD AND ONWARD.

(ISAIAH XL. 31.)

Upward and onward,
Heavenward and sunward,
Rises the lark, as he joyously sings;
With music thrilling
All the air filling,
Bearing a message of praise on his wings.

Like this sweet singer,
Let us not linger,
Clinging and cleaving to earth's weary sod;
But upward springing,
Our tribute bringing,
Strive to draw nearer and nearer to God.

Upward and onward,
Heavenward and sunward,
Soars the strong eagle, his flight speeding on;
With heart that quails not,
With eye that fails not,
Steadily fixing his gaze on the sun.

So our hearts rising,
Singing and praising,
Looking to Jesus, the sun of the soul;
Our strength renewing,
Our way pursuing,
Let us press on till we reach the bright goal.

—*British Herald.*

THE BELIEVER'S STRENGTH IS IN CHRIST.

The man, that is under the law joined to it as his head, hath no strength for his work, and the law gives him none; and so he cannot live to God; but the believer can say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Others have no strength for spiritual actions; sin domineers over them, and they have no ability to shake off the yoke of sin, their strength being but weakness. The believer hath strength in his Head; all things are possible to them that believe; they can do all things through Christ strengthening them: O believer be strong in the grace that is in Christ. O it is strange that the grace that is in him, is in thee, as the life in the heart is in all parts of the body. The believer's grace is in Christ; and the grace that is in Christ is in the believer. Here is a mystery to the world, but yet this mystery lies wrapt up in that word, "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." If the grace that is in Christ, were not in the believer also according to the measure of the communications, how could he be strong in the grace that is in Christ? "My grace shall be sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be perfect in thy weakness."

ARE YOU TIRED?

Reader, I believe there are many persons who are weary and tired of everything in this life, and yet have nothing to cheer them in looking forward to the life to come. Are you one?

I believe there are many who are thoroughly unhappy in their own hearts, though they will not confess it—unhappy because they know that they are not living as God would have them—unhappy because they know that they are not fit to die. Are you one?

There is rest for the weary even in this world, if they will seek it. There is repose for the tired and heavy laden, if they will only apply for it in the right quarter in time.

There is a real, solid, lasting happiness to be had on this side of the grave, if people will but inquire for it where it is to be found.

Where is this rest? Where is this repose? Where is this happiness? It is to be found in Christ Jesus. It is given by him to all children of mankind who will confess their need and humbly ask him to receive them. It is enjoyed by all who hear Christ's voice and follow him. It is the privilege of all who believe on Jesus.

"Come unto me," he says, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "We which have believed do enter into rest," says his servant Paul (Matt. xi. 28; Heb. iv. 3).

Reader, I invite you this day in my Master's name to come to Christ and be his disciple, if you want to be happy. Cease to seek happiness in the vain things of this world. Give up pride, the self-will, the sinful stubbornness of your own ways. Come to Jesus as a humble sinner, and cast your soul on him, and the rest I have spoken of shall be your own.—*Rev. J. C. Ryle.*

THERE WILL BE A LAST KNOCK.

"Behold," says Jesus, "I stand at the door and knock." Does not this imply His readiness and willingness to come in? Nor is this all. He calls, "Open unto me—open unto me." Nor is this all. He

says, "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in." He positively declares that He is willing. Nor is this all. You may say, I am such a great sinner, I have rejected Him so long that He will not receive me now. But what says the Saviour? "If any man hear my voice," vile as he may be, if he is on this side of hell—"if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."

If you are not now a Christian, permit me to say, that you have never yet heard His voice, nor opened the door, nor been willing to receive Him. The Saviour is ready and willing, but you will not come to Him that you might have life.

Behold your *danger!* The Saviour stands at your door. He does not sit. He stands—ready to enter or ready to depart. How long would you stand at the door of your neighbour asking for admittance, if he should bar and bolt you out? And how long has Christ stood knocking? Even till His head is filled with the dew, and His locks with the drops of the night. But He will not stand long. *There will be a last knock.* The Saviour can do without you, but you cannot do without Him. He may say, as He once said to the Jews, "I go my way. Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. How often I would, and ye would not." "Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

Reader! how solemn is this: there will be a last knock at the door of your heart!

To-day, if ye will hear His voice,
Now is the time to make your choice;
Say, will you to Mount Zion go?
Say, will you have this Christ or no?

Ye wandering souls, who find no rest,
Say, will ye be for ever blest?
Will you be saved from sin and hell?
Will you with Christ in glory dwell?

Come now, dear soul, for ruin bound,
Obey the Gospel's joyful sound;
Come, go with us, and you shall prove
The joy of Christ's redeeming love.

Once more we ask you in His name—
For yet His love is still the same—
Say, will you to Mount Zion go?
Say, will you have this Christ or no?

—*Herald of Mercy.*

CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY.

The most successful Sunday-school teachers are not always those of the greatest intellectual abilities, not those who are most fertile in inventions for pleasing and diverting the children. Something more than this is needful to make a person successful in winning the attention and influencing the lives of his hearers.

The useful teacher is a humble teacher. The one who has the deepest sense of his own insufficiency, and relies most entirely on a heavenly Helper, will always be the most successful. The gifts of a Paul or an Apollos are nothing without this blessing of the Lord, which alone can give the increase. We cannot too deeply impress ourselves with the truth which formed the whole body of theology of a poor, unlettered believer—

"I am poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

When we begin to feel great satisfaction in our own abilities and attainments, we may regard it as a very good indication of our deficiency. The wisest of the heathen, Socrates, said that the only thing he knew was his own ignorance. If you speak to a young fellow when undergoing an examination, and say, "Well, how have you done?" you may be quite sure that if he answers with confidence that he has done well, he will be far below the poor lad who goes about lamenting his shortcomings. "With the lowly is wisdom." What difficulties and disturbances often arise from the indulgence of an opposite spirit! One Diotrophes will often disturb the quiet of a whole school. Oh, there will be a fearful reckoning for those who thus hinder the Lord's work! If we would be true followers of Him who washed the disciples' feet, we must be content to take the lowliest place in his service. He regards with no complacency that proud, dissatisfied disposition which insists on having the pre-eminence. Such a temper can never enter into the kingdom of heaven. We must learn that lesson so important for those who would work together harmoniously for God's glory: "Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves."

Those who are unwilling to be guided by the good counsels of others are out of place in the Sunday-school. Are they not also out of place in the Church of Christ, who has bid us "be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility?"—*Quiver.*

A COMMON REASON OF FAILURE.

Satan cares not where we run, if we are not on a specific errand for the Lord Jesus. He listens delighted to eloquence that saves no one. He will lift the latch for you at each door in your district, if you will go in and only speak of books, and men, and sermons, and health. He does not fear your wringing some religious remarks out of your own dry heart. It is the power of the Holy Ghost he dreads.—If you hold not the hem of a present Saviour's garment in the one hand, and reach out the other for a hold of a needy sinner's hand, cry: "in heart to the Spirit of love to make them meet, no harm is done in that house to the cause of the enemy. One powerless mention more of the Saviour, one failure more to record—this is all.

Foolish labourers that we are, if we come in for all the toil, the preparation, the prayer, the sacrifice, the ill-will, the self-denial, and only miss THE CROWN!

SATAN'S CUNNING.

The world is Satan's bait. He seldom throws out a naked hook. Let murder, fraud, lying, or idolatry be presented in their undisguised turpitude, and few of good education and correct morals can be taken captive by him. But he conceals the hook in a goodly bait, and like a skilful angler. He knows how to use that part of the world which is best suited to our taste, and most likely to decoy. For one he has a golden bait; for another, pleasure; for a third, worldly consequence and honour. And his line is thrown out in every place,—in the place of business, in our families, studies, and at our tables, and on our pillows.

GOD'S WAY OF PEACE

By Rev. H. Bonar, D.D.

God's Testimony concerning Man.

God knows us. He knows what we are; he knows also what he meant us to be; and upon the difference between these two states he founds his testimony concerning us.

He is too loving to say anything needlessly severe; too true to say anything untrue; nor can he have any motive to misrepresent us; for he loves to tell of the good, not of the evil, that may be found in any of the works of his hands. He declared them "good," "very good," at first; and if he does not do so now, it is not because he would not, but because he cannot; for "all flesh has corrupted its way upon the earth," (Gen. vi. 12).

God's testimony concerning man is, that he is a *sinner*. He bears witness *against* him, not *for* him, and testifies that "there is none righteous, no, not one;" that there is "none that doeth good;" none "that understandeth;" none that even *seeketh* after God, and still more none that *loveth* him. (Psa. xiv. 1-3; Rom. iii. 10-12.) God speaks of man kindly, but severely; as one yearning over a lost child, yet as one who will make no terms with sin, and will "by no means clear the guilty." He declares man to be a *lost* one, a *stray* one, a *rebel*, nay a "HATER OF GOD," (Rom. i. 30); not a sinner occasionally, but a sinner always; not a sinner in part, with many good things about him; but wholly a sinner with no compensating goodness; evil in heart as well as life, "dead in trespasses and sins," (Eph. ii. 1); an evil doer, and therefore under condemnation; an enemy of God, and therefore "under wrath;" a breaker of the righteous law, and therefore under "the curse of the law." (Gal. iii. 10).

Man has fallen! Not this man or that man, but the whole race. In Adam all have sinned; in Adam all have died. It is not that a few leaves have faded or been *slacked* down, but the tree has become *corrupt*, root and branch. The "flesh," or "old man"—that is, each man as he is

born into the world, a son of man, a fragment of humanity; a unit in Adam's fallen body;—is "corrupt." He not merely brings forth sin, but he carries it about with him, as his second self; nay, he is a "body" or mass of sin (Rom. vi. 6), a "body of death" (Rom. vii. 24), subject not to the law of God, but to "the law of sin," (Rom. vii. 23). The Jew, educated under the most perfect of laws, and in the most favourable circumstances, was the best type of humanity,—of civilised polished, educated humanity; the best specimen of the first Adam's sons; yet God's testimony concerning him is that he is "under sin," that he has gone astray, and that he has "come short of the glory of God."

The *outer* life of man is not *the man*, just as the paint on a piece of timber is not the timber, and as the green moss upon the hard rock is not the rock itself. The picture of a man is not the man; it is but a skilful arrangement of colours which look like the man. So it is the bearing of the soul towards God that is the true state of the man. The man that loves God with all his heart is in a right state; the man that does not love him thus is in a wrong one. He is a sinner; because his heart is not right with God. He may think his life a good one, and others may think the same; but God counts him guilty, worthy of death and hell. The outward good can not make up for the inward evil. The good deeds done to his fellow-men cannot be set off against his bad thoughts of God. And he must be full of these bad thoughts so long as he does not love this infinitely loveable and infinitely glorious Being with all his strength.

God's testimony then concerning man is, that he does not love God with all his heart; nay, that he does not love him at all. Not to love our neighbour is sin; not to love a parent is greater sin; but not to love God, our divine parent, is greater sin still.

Man need not try to say a good word for himself, or to plead "not guilty," unless he can shew that he loves, and has always loved God with his whole heart and soul. If he can truly say this, he is all right, he is not a sinner, and does not need par-

don. He will find his way to the kingdom without the cross and without a Saviour. But, if he cannot say this, "his mouth is stopped," and he is "guilty before God." However favourably a good outward life may dispose himself and others to look upon his case just now, the verdict will go against him hereafter. This is *man's day*, when man's judgments prevail; but *God's day* is coming, when the case shall be strictly tried upon its real merits.—Then the Judge of all the earth shall do right, and the sinner be put to shame.

There is another and yet worse charge against him. He does not believe on the name of the Son of God, nor love the Christ of God. This is his sin of sins.—That his heart is not right with God is the first charge against him. That his heart is not right with the Son of God is the second. And it is this second that is the crowning, crushing sin, carrying with it more terrible damnation than all other sins together. "He that believeth not is condemned already; *because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God,*" (John iii. 18). "He that believed not God, hath made him a liar; *because he believeth not the record which God gave of his Son,*" (1 John v. 10).—"He that *believeth not shall be damned,*" (Mark xvi. 16). Hence it was that the apostles preached "repentance toward God, and *faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,*" (Acts xx. 21). And hence it is that the first sin which the Holy Spirit brings home to a man is *unbelief*; "when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, *because they believe not on me,*" (John xvi. 8, 9).

Such is God's condemnation of man.—Of this the whole Bible is full. That great love of God which his word reveals is based on this condemnation. It is love to the condemned. God's testimony to his own grace has no meaning, save as resting on or taking for granted his testimony to man's guilt and ruin. Nor is it against man as merely a being morally diseased or sadly unfortunate that he testifies; but as guilty of death under wrath, sentenced to the eternal curse; for that crime of crimes, a heart not right with God, and not true to his Incarnate Son.

This is a divine verdict, not a human

one. It is God, not man, who condemns, and God is not a man that he should lie. This is God's testimony concerning man, and we know that this witness is true.

MAN'S RELIGION AND GOD'S RELIGION.

Man's religion keeps God at a distance—God's brings him nigh. Homage to God, but not communion with Him, is the object of the former; nearness of fellowship and companionship, coupled with lowliest reverence, is the aim of the latter.—Man says, "God is my enemy, and must be appeased; or, He is at the best a doubtful friend, and must be kept at a distance: He is incomprehensible and unapproachable, and therefore can have no common sympathies with me: I will lay my gift upon His altar, and retire out of His presence." God says, "Man is my creature, and though he is a sinner, dreading, but not loving me, I will not leave him in misery; I will come nigh; I will speak with him in love; I will win back his confidence, and teach him to love me; I will make him feel that I am not his enemy, but his friend; I will show him that in my favor is life, and that companionship with me is the joy and health of his being."

Man's religion begins by enjoining worship—God's by preparing the worshipper. And here the difference is as wide as it is striking. The main idea that man has in connexion with worship is, that it is the means of securing repentance, and effecting reconciliation with God. He brings his gifts as the bribes or payments of the criminal, not as the thank-offerings of the forgiven. He worships in order to pacify God, and persuade Him to extend His favor towards him. In God's religion, this order is reversed. The *worshipper* is accepted first, and then his *worship*. The person is first taken into favor, and then all services are acknowledged as well-pleasing. This is the divine order of things; and the reversal of this order not merely *injures* worship—it wholly invalidates it. God's order is absolutely essential to that which *He* recognizes as religion. He will receive no offering, save from the hand of an accepted worshipper.—*Bonar on Man.*

"WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS LIBERTY."

1. There is *liberty of access*,—access to God. In Paul's letter to the Hebrews, in the 10th chapter, you have the liberty described. There, with no more conscience of sins, we have boldness to enter through the blood into the Holiest, of which scene, it is said, that *there*, before God, "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more."

Let me here call to mind a very beautiful truth regarding Aaron the high priest. You know Aaron was as Christ; and you remember that when Aaron entered into the holiest, he had a golden plate on his forehead, "*Holiness to the Lord*," was inscribed on it. But Israel in itself, was anything but "*Holiness to the Lord*." Israel was simply a people of *sinners*.—But mark the plate on the Aaronick brow. Aaron, for Israel, was "*Holiness to the Lord*" and was accordingly permitted to go in before God; but there was one thing necessary to this. It was the atoning and sanctifying blood of the victim, which he sprinkled before the Lord. The standing of that blood was the standing of Israel. They were before God according to His estimate of it. And so the shekinah, before which he sprinkled the blood, shed down its peaceful, glorious beams on the golden plate, on which was, "*Holiness to the Lord*." As I have often said to you, the Jewish army might have been striking, or perchance pitching their tents, but this was the attitude of Aaron for Israel; and, adds the sacred writer, "*It shall be always on his forehead, that Israel may be accepted.*"

Now, there is this difference in our case. Aaron was only allowed to go in before the Lord "*once a year*," but we who believe in Jesus are once and for ever accepted; once and forever risen and seated together with Christ in heavenly places,—once and for ever, we have "*boldness (liberty) to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*." This, beloved, is our right of entrance! The blood that cancels sin, and puts away transgression, is that which lays open the very presence of God to us, and gives us boldness of access to Him.

2. And there is liberty of conscience.

We read—"*No more conscience of sins*." Not no more consciousness of sin; not that I do not feel deep sorrow on account of sin, but what the apostle means is this, before I saw the wondrous love of God in the sacrifice of Jesus, which was the expression of that love before I saw my sins on the cross, I had the dark load on my own conscience, and the condemnation of them in me; but since I beheld the Lamb of God, who not only took away sins, but condemned sin in the flesh, that load is gone, I have "*no more conscience of sins*," but rest and peace of conscience; rest and peace in Jesus.

3. And there is liberty of *FELLOWSHIP*.

There are some Christians who have never yet had full liberty in prayer—calm, confident freedom in speaking with Christ. And why? Because they have never yet had perfect peace as to the question of their being in Christ. How, then, can they have unfettered fellowship? Such cannot speak to God with unflinching lips as to their Father; cannot, in unflinching accents, thank Him for their salvation—thank Him for peace. "*Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ*." Liberty for fellowship must come from the solid ground of the truth of His testimony concerning our salvation as settled and complete, and of having believed that testimony concerning Christ and our own salvation.

4. "*Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*" of *OBEDIENCE*. As Luther said, "*I now walk justly, because I am justified*; not I walk justly that I may be justified, but because I am justified." It is marvellous the joy a believer may have in serving God in obedience when he knows where he is, and what he is in the presence and grace of God. But if he know not where he is, his services will be rather the result of fear and of dread, and not of liberty and love.

5. One thing more:—"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" of *UTTERANCE*. I would like to be practical here. When Bunyan was converted, Dr. Owen, then vice-chancellor of Oxford, chanced to step in to a "*conventicle*," and there sat listening to him; and he afterwards wrote, "*I would rather be able to preach one sermon like Bunyan, than to*

have been the author of all my voluminous works." And O beloved! the understanding one has of it is this—that "out of the abundance of the heart" of that converted man God gave him the utterance that was so mighty—that marvellous power he had in and over his generation. Ah, yes, "where the Spirit of the Lord is" (where He dwells within) "there is liberty of utterance." Not, beloved, that the chancellor had not the Spirit; he had the Spirit; but there are degrees of that Spirit, and degrees, too, of that Spirit in the same man. How have I preached! I hardly knew at times *what* I preached! I felt as if the Lord were not with me. At another time one could preach for ever, and sinners seemingly could hear for ever.—Where is the difference? "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" of utterance. Oh! who does not pray—

"Ah, Lord, enlarge my scanty thought
To tell the wonders Thou hast wrought;
Unloose my stammering tongue to tell
Thy love immense, unsearchable."

BISHOP BEVERIDGE ON HIS DEATH-BED.

When the pious Bishop Beveridge was on his death-bed, he did not know any of his friends or connexions. A minister with whom he had been well acquainted, visited him, and when conducted into his room, he said, "Bishop Beveridge, do you know me?" "Who are you?" said the Bishop. Being told who the minister was, he said that he did not know him.—Another friend came, who had been equally well known, and accosted him in a similar manner: "Do you know me, Bishop Beveridge?" "Who are you?" said he. Being told that it was one of his intimate friends, he said he did not know him. His wife then came to his bed-side, and asked him if he knew her. "Who are you?" said he. Being told that she was his wife, he said he did not know her. "Well," said one of them, "Bishop Beveridge, do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Jesus Christ," said he, reviving as if the name had produced on him the influence of a charm; "Oh! yes, I have known him these forty years. Precious Saviour, he is my only hope!"

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT.

"I would give all I have in the world to know that I am certainly a child of God!"

Our heavenly Father will not sell the assurance you desire at that or at any other price; but he will make you a free gift of it, simply upon your complying with certain conditions which are indispensable.

"What are those conditions?"

The first is that you shall be a child.—It is plain that you cannot certainly know yourself to be a child until you are a child.

"I hope I am that now."

A well-founded hope is an excellent possession; but I understood you to wish for more; you wished to know absolutely. This implies, does it not, that you are not entirely satisfied with your hope?

"That is true; I do wish to convert hope into certainty."

This can be done only by complying with the treaty of the Apostle Paul:—"I beseech you, therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." For one who covets conformity to the worldly ways and worldly principles of those about him; for one who is unprepared to give himself wholly and entirely away to Christ, it is quite useless to sigh for the spirit of adoption—to long for the certainty of being a child of God. That certainly arises from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. He will not dwell with idols; he will not make his abode in a heart that is not wholly and heartily surrendered to him. But into every heart that is thus wholly and heartily offered to him—that is made ready for him by the power of the Holy Spirit, he will come, and come at once. He will feed the soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness; for he says such are blessed, and that they shall be filled.—*Quiver.*

He knows there is no absolute perfection in this life, yet is continually reaching after it, Phil. iii : 12, 13, 14.

Sabbath School Lessons.

October 2nd, 1864.

THE BARREN FIG TREE.

Mark xi. 19-33.

Ver. 19. Jesus returned from Jerusalem to Bethany, after having cleansed the temple on the second day of the week.

Ver. 20, 21. *In the morning of the third day* Jesus went early to the temple to teach the people, Luke xxi. 37, 38. *From the roots;* this showed that the withering had not taken place so soon from ordinary natural causes.—The disciples had heard Christ speak, Mark ii. 14, but perhaps did not give much heed, or allowed it to pass from their minds as not to be followed by anything remarkable.—Peter probably was the spokesman for the rest, Matt. xxi. 20.

Ver. 22-24. *Have faith in God.* This is what Jesus designed to teach by his practical parable of the fig-tree. It showed his divine power and authority. "He spake and it was done." "He can do according to his pleasure," John v. 17. It was giving a motive for having perfect faith in him. Unless we had a God that can do all things, we could never place implicit confidence in Him, John xvii. 2. Jesus has given every proof of His Almighty power and will to help us, "to heal our diseases," Matt. viii. 27; to bring us to himself.

This mountain, be thou removed: "mountain" may refer to Mount Olivet, but is figuratively used for anything very difficult and impossible-looking to man, 1 Cor. xiii. 2.—Man is easily cast down, when he has nothing to look to but his own strength and the greatness of the obstacle before him, 2 Kings vi. 16.

Shall not doubt; this shows the state of mind in which God will answer the prayer of faith. *A faithless prayer God will not receive,* James i. 6, 7. Christ's miracles showed the necessity of faith in the persons receiving the benefit. *He shall have;* the answer to such a state of mind is sure as the promise itself, 1 John v. 15; Psa. cxvi. 1.

Believe that ye receive them; we are to ask God as a kind and loving father who will not deny what is good for us. "A world lying in wickedness" receives many of God's gifts without asking, Matt. v. 45; how much more those that pray in sincerity, *believing.*

Ver. 25, 26. *Forgive;* this shows the spirit in which we should pray. It is the very essence of Christianity, Acts vii. 60; Luke xxiii. 34. No one can pray aright without this Christian spirit. God will not hear

a prayer from an unforgiving heart, more than from one without faith. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath," Matt. v. 23, 24; Matt. v. 16.

Ver. 27. *As he was walking;* teaching and preaching, Matt. xxi. 23; Luke xx. 1.

Ver. 28-32. The insincerity and hypocrisy of these men showed itself plainly here—afraid to say that John's baptism was from heaven, lest Christ would at once speak of him as witnessing of Him—afraid to say of men, lest they might lose the favour of the people, Prov. xxix. 25.

We cannot tell; the hypocrisy becomes a full-grown lie at last. These men were striving against their own convictions; God had favoured them with light, knowledge, and opportunities above many others, yet, for their own selfish ends and supposed personal advantage, they are but too willing to sacrifice every good and honourable principle!

Neither do I tell you; Jesus could, but did not: speaking in reply, not to their words alone, but their secret thoughts. The answer was significant and pointed, silencing them better than even if he had directly charged them with their dissimulation.

See how dangerous it is to have men without principle as the religious leaders of the people, "blind leaders of the blind." Those that once fairly begin a course of dissimulation are in Satan's hands, Psal. lxxviii. 3; John viii. 44.

Be honest, truthful, and sincere. Never let conduct or words place you in the list of liars. When called on to do so, state the truth openly, frankly, and fearlessly; God will be on your side; fear not the consequences. Never be ashamed to own what you believe to be the honest truth.

Never trifle with your convictions.—God "will not always strive with the children of men," Heb. x. 29-31.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

October 9th, 1864.

THE ARK RETURNED.

Read 1 Sam. vi. 1-21.

I. The Proposal, ver. 1-9.

Israel was without the ark seven months; they seem to have made no effort to recover it. Ekron first proposed the return of the ark, chap. v. 11.

The lords were in doubt how to return it, and the priests were consulted on the question. Perhaps some thought of making Israel pay a ransom for it. The priests give wise and honest counsel—generally false priests were bitter enemies to all that was God's: "See Christ's history. The offering was a confession of their shame and guilt; and would keep it

in remembrance. The mice are not mentioned before—it was a plague like some of Egypt's. The Philistines conquered Israel—the mice shall conquer the Philistines. They afterwards sent a large number of golden mice, ver. 18, one for each village or city.

The history of Egypt was known and improved, ver. 6. The lingering hope that it was a chance had not disappeared yet, ver. 9.

Beth-shemesh. A city of Judah belonging to the Levites, ten miles west of Ekron.

II. The Ark leaves Ekron, ver. 10-14.

Without further debate or delay, the plan is adopted. The kine were very unlikely to go willingly to Beth-shemesh; yet though unaccustomed to the yoke, though on an untrodden path, deprived of their calves, their udders strained with milk, they, guided only by God, took the ark to its destination, the field of Joshua beside the great stone; not to idle men, but to busy reapers. God was not obliged to give this sign, because the Philistines chose to try him thus.

III. The Ark at Beth-shemesh, ver. 15-21.

The Levites—were inhabitants of that city. None but Aaron's family could touch the ark, Num. iv. 15. The sacrifices were made probably on the rock, or on an altar of earth—it was irregular to offer them out of the tabernacle.

The lords of the Philistines seem to have followed with the retinue to see what reception the ark would get.

50,070 men. This number is supposed to be erroneously copied. Some copies have it 5,070. Some suppose it to include those smitten among the Philistines. It is very unlikely that so many as 50,070 could be guilty. The mystery that usually hung over the ark made it now an object of curiosity. God did not smite the Philistines for touching or looking into the ark—they knew no better. The Israelites are as glad to get quit of the ark—as the Philistines were.

APPLICATION.

1. *We should be more anxious to get quit of sin than of suffering.* The Philistines were not so. Yet sin will surely end in suffering. To get quit of sin is a radical cure. Sin—not poverty, not ignorance, not pain—is the greatest evil. The world does not think so; but write it in your heart, act on it—rather suffer than sin. Joseph, Daniel—all the martyrs. Are you getting quit of sin itself?

2. *God will conquer at last.* How foolish to contend with him! "Harden not your hearts like Pharaoh," was a good advice. It is mercy to the sinner, not God's weakness, that lengthens out the contest, Psalm ii. 10. "The stone," Daniel ii. 35. How long have you contended? Is it over now?

3. *How to appease an angry God is a difficult question.* The Philistines found it so, ver. 2. Man will find it so always. The Bible has answered it, Micah vi. 7; Matt. v. 25. It must be by the "one offering," the "only way."

4. *God will secure His honour though man dishonours Him.* Mice can overcome his enemies. The oxen will serve Him, Psalm i. 12; Job xxii. 2.

5. *God will not accept any service instead of reverent obedience,* ver. 19. He had forbidden any to touch the ark; and though they were joyful, and showed their devotion by many sacrifices, these men were fearfully punished. Our God is a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 2-9. So Aaron's sons, Lev. x. 1. Uzzah, 2 Sam. vi. Are you willing to serve God in his way, not your own? By poverty, by suffering, by difficult disagreeable duty. Jonah; Abraham, Gen. xxii. 2.

SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. How foully men cling to the doctrines of "Chance"—how unwilling to believe in God's universal government! ver. 9.

2. How much more strictly God visits sin in his own children than in strangers! Israel felt this, ver. 20. So for one heart-sin, Moses and Hezekiah suffered.

3. We need a Mediator to stand before "this holy Lord God," ver. 20.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD."

The joy of the Lord is the strength of His people. Faith displaces fear in every member of the little flock. Its appropriating power enables each of them to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Wondrous word! I am a creature of yesterday—yet the eternal God is my keeper! I, a frail and dying mortal—yet the Self-existent is my Preserver! His hand has led me all my life long; His bounty has supplied my wants; His, long-suffering has borne with the perverseness of my heart; His gracious Spirit has spoken comfort to my soul.—Marvellous has been the love of Christ! He came from heaven to seek me; He called with His voice to find me; He brought me into His fold to secure me; He shed His blood to cleanse me; He has sent the Holy Spirit to revive me. His fullness shall supply me; His wisdom shall direct me; His power shall preserve me; and into His everlasting fold He shall receive me, for He is "my Shepherd."—*Rev. J. Street, serm.*

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