

Practical Papers.



QUESTIONS CONCERNING PERFECT LOVE.



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No. III.

IS THE CONSECRATION MADE WHEN SEEKING PERFECT LOVE THE SAME AS THAT WHICH IS MADE WHEN SEEKING PARDON ?



LIKE the former questions which we have discussed in the pages of this magazine, this is one that is by no means fanciful, but presses upon some minds at least, asking for a satisfactory answer. Our first reply shall be somewhat of an affirmative character.

All religious consecrations, when sincerely made, partake of the same generic character, in that they are renunciations of sin, and movements toward God. Does any responsible being act or refrain from action singly and solely because God requires it at his hands ? Then *that* is a consecration in that case, and such acts following each other in continuous succession, are those that constitute and illustrate a true religious life. And such acts, as has been said, have a blessed sameness in their motive and their aim. They diminish the power of sin in the soul in all the stages of experience that precede entire consecration ; and in the subsequent experience they confirm the principle of loyalty to Christ, and become the fruits of holiness. But while in this original and general characteristic such actions are one ; yet there are important differences which, in order to the possession of clear views on the subject, have need to be noted and understood. Coming back to the two decisive religious experiences which are brought together in our question, we observe :—

1. *That the moral state of the person making the consecration is not the same in each case.* The seeker of pardon is a rebel and a criminal in his relations to God's law and government. His proper and predominating feeling is one of guilt and fear, and his intense desire is for reconciliation, forgiveness, peace with God. There may be, and no doubt sometimes there is, in the feelings of such seekers a sense of general impurity ; for the work of the Holy Spirit in giving the sense of sin, carries with it such a sight of

the true character of sin as to produce in the heart a hatred to it; but we think that this is not the predominant feeling at the time, but is overborne by the strong desire for pardon. So that we prefer not to use the word consecrate in that connection at all, but rather to employ the scriptural words repent, and repentance. Indeed, the word is nowhere in Scripture used in reference to the coming of an unforgiven sinner to God for peace and pardon; nor in any sense which implies a moral identity with the true repentance of an arrested rebel or returning prodigal. David, after the murder of Uriah, saying "I have done this evil in thy sight;" Mannasseh praying and confessing in his dungeon; the publican groaning "God be merciful;" the prodigal coming and crying "I have sinned;" Peter weeping bitterly outside Caiaphas' door; the Phillipian jailer and the Pentecostal seekers, from whom bursts the agonized cry, "What must I do to be saved?" these are Bible samples of the way in which sinners successfully sue for forgiveness. But when the words consecrate, consecrated, or consecration are found in the Bible, they are invariably used with reference either to *property* dedicated to religious uses, as in Exodus xxix. 22; 2 Chron. xxix. 33; xxxi. 6, and other passages, or to *persons* dedicated to special religious work, Exodus xxix. 9; Heb. vii. 28, and a few other places. It seems therefore a misuse of the term when it is applied to that renunciation of sin which precedes the pardon of a sinner. That many who use the word intend by it all that is meant by the word repentance, we have no doubt; but it ought to be remembered that the careless use of words will lead to confusion of thought and conception. And in so important a matter as the religious teaching of men, we can scarcely be too careful about the terms we use to describe those important crisis of religious history about which we are now writing. Impression depends upon expression; and although the condition of the hearer and the spirit of the speaker may modify the impression produced, yet still the verbal form that is used is the most powerful agent in shaping the ideas implanted. Certainly, the scriptural forms which our fathers used were mighty powers for good in their hands, and we will not add to our influence by diverging from them.

On the other hand, the seeker of perfect love is already a child of God, not a condemned criminal; a soldier of Christ, and not a rebel against his government. The word consecrate may be used with much greater propriety in his case, for the rebellion is forgiven, and he is already constituted one of a "royal priesthood," who offer up "spiritual sacrifices," and who are besought "by the mercies of God to present their bodies a living sacrifice"—an action which is of identical meaning with consecration. He stands therefore on higher ground toward God, and higher too in his own consciousness, and his desires centre on an object which has a character quite distinct. While the seeker of pardon cries "Hide thy face from my sins," his prayer is "Create in me a clean heart, O God." A different state in the consecrating party, and a decided difference in the object sought after, will necessarily make the consecrations to differ one from the other.

2. *The degree of spiritual knowledge is not the same in each case.* The believer is in possession of spiritual life, and one of the evidences of that

fact is, that he hungers and thirsts after righteousness. That appetite leads him to prayer and searching the Scriptures; his love of the brethren leads him into their fellowship, and by these means his knowledge of the ways of the Lord, and the needs of his own character increases, he "grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." While the penitent is groaning with Job, "O that I knew where I might find Him," the believer is like Phillip, who can joyfully say, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." He has been "walking in the light," and by that light has compared the perfect law with his own experience, and therefore possesses an amount of knowledge respecting privilege and duty which cannot be in the possession of those who grope and stumble in the darkness of sin. The alien cannot be expected to know the law of a country as well as the citizen; the stranger knocking at the portal knows but little of the inside glories of the palace, as compared with the family who dwell within. Those before whose affrighted eyes the flaming sword of a broken law debars the way to the tree of life, cannot know how luxuriant is its foliage, how rich and luscious is its fruit. The benefits of communion with God in Christ, benefits which are priceless and invaluable to the believer, are truly known only to him. His spiritual knowledge is therefore vastly greater than when he stood knocking at the outside door of mercy.

3. The consecration made in view of perfect love is therefore more comprehensive and complete than the analogous act of the penitent seeking pardon. From what has been advanced this will at once be evident. His moral position higher, his spiritual knowledge greater, and the gift that is sought for distinct from pardon in its nature, will require and qualify him to make a more complete sacrifice, a fuller consecration. He feels the force of the true and normal motives of the Christian life, he has seen the depraved depths of his own heart. He has handled the perfect law, applied it to his own spiritual state, and feeling the need of a complete consecration, he now presents himself, with all his inward tastes and ambitions, fears and hopes,—with all his outgoings of character, all that is inward in experience, all that is outward as to reputation, all that is actual in the present, all that is possible in the future,—the mind to be taught of God, the path in life to be marked out by God, the affections to centre on God, and the will to be blessedly mastered by "Him to whom our more than all is due." At this point we cannot forbear from quoting Wesley's familiar lines,—

"Take my soul and body's powers;
Take my memory, mind, and will;
All my goods, and all my hours,
All I know, and all I feel;
All I think, or speak, or do;
Take my heart;—but make it new!"

With such resolves and sacrifices does the seeker of holiness offer himself to the Master; and whatever more there may be, certainly nothing less will suffice.

Consecrations carelessly or hurriedly made are the bane and plague of the sanctification movement. Under the pressure of exhortation, some there are who rush to the rail appropriated to the use of seekers of holiness. They are told to consecrate their all, they do so in words, imagine they do so in reality, but for want of having looked the whole ground over, and counted the cost, find themselves failures in the pursuit of the pearl of great price. Some have unpardoned backsliding on the conscience, and ignoring that fact they knock at the wrong door. Others are satisfied with a cursory and hasty look at themselves, and still others have a pet standard of their own, and thus never fully reach the true door. In our opinion, much stress should be laid and much attention drawn to this subject in those special meetings for holiness which are now becoming numerous, for there should be in this matter especially, no "daubing with untempered mortar." If the consecration be right, the rest will soon follow. If the devil's furniture is all thrown out of the soul, and all the doors and windows flung wide open, the love of God which has been flowing around humanity ever since Pentecost, will surge right in, and the soul be "filled with all the fulness of God."

THE PRESERVATION OF THE REVIVAL ELEMENT IN METHODISM.

FIRST PAPER.



METHODISM is a revival of spiritual religion. There was less manifestation of human agency in it than in any of the great religious movements that preceded it. Great and good men were workers in it, but they were rather led by it, than leaders of it. Some very important doctrines, partly or altogether neglected, were brought prominently forward by it; but still it did not originate in theological controversy, nor was it carried on by that means. Throughout its history its chief characteristic was the awakening of men's minds to their need of personal salvation, and the actual leading of these awakened ones to the forgiveness of their sins and the regeneration of their hearts in righteousness. Its introduction into any village or town was usually made by some one who had lately been led from sin to the joy of pardon and a life of holiness, and if it gained any hold on the people of such village or town it was by some gracious work of the Spirit, in which wicked men were saved and became its most active adherents. The Methodist Churches of to-day are the product of such revivals. In the face of opposition and scorn, this method of advance has secured for them respect and power. Other peculiarities do exist, but this revival spirit is the most noticeable phase of their whole history. Other churches have had revivals, but the Methodist is the revivalist-church.

It would be a natural conclusion that as our church originated in, and has extended by revivals, so she must be perpetuated by them. But the spirit of

revival is not transmitted by any law of succession, and it is no doubt quite possible for the church to lose it. It must also be borne in mind that the more numerous its members and varied the classes of its people, and the more complex its machinery, so much the more difficult will it be to preserve this prime element of its existence. I am not of those who believe that the revival element has departed from Methodism, but I do believe it requires the most careful cultivation, inasmuch as it is more difficult to preserve it now than at the beginning of our history. Whatever has a tendency to repress the piety and godly simplicity of our people, has a tendency to drive away the revival element. It is little better than a false friendship to assume that we have no difficulty in this direction. The general piety of Methodists may be as great, and our power of aggression may be as conspicuous, as ever; but the revival element is not as prominent, if it is as general. It would not be difficult to assign reasons for the belief that this, the highest honor of our Methodism, is not as largely and as generally possessed by us to-day as it was formerly. But into such a question I have no need to enter; all our people are agreed that the revival spirit is of God, and is of priceless value to us. We might possibly hold our own beside the other churches of the land, by the common methods that are alike open to all, such as education, family connection and influence, church oversight and training. By these methods we might at any rate keep those that belong to us and their children after them, but this would be a very low conception of our mission, and a sad finishing of a very different and honored beginning. We do well to secure all the advantages of family influence, education, and church training; but we must not stop there. We want to be more than an educating church, simply bringing into our communion those who have grown up under our influence. Even though we could be sure these were all soundly converted, to go only thus far would not be in keeping with our past history. But in the absence of the revival element it may well be doubted whether the accessions which we would make to our ranks would really be of converted persons.

The great mass of our people have been converted in revivals, and have *thus* been gathered into the church. With our present organization and means of grace we are not likely to get them, in large numbers, in any other way. Converted they must be to be at home in the Methodist Church. The great mission of "spreading scriptural holiness" all over the land, which we have always accepted as ours, cannot be accomplished if we lose this spirit. Its possession has secured to us a converted people and an aggressive church. A revivalist church, possessed of the elements and agencies to conserve the interests of what it was, approaches nearest to the New Testament ideal. Such a church conserves, to the greatest degree, the general interests of our holy Christianity.

The Methodist Church of to-day possesses a great variety of appliances for carrying on the work of God, which in their very nature declare that she honestly intends to carry out her mission. A close insight into her organization will reveal the fact that it is formed on the supposition that the revival spirit is present with us. So much is this the fact that it may well be doubted

whether our organization and plans of work could be continued in the absence of it. Everything about us therefore proclaims our high duty of preserving this gift. Faithfulness to God, consistency with our history, devotion to ourselves, demand this at our hands. The enquiry, How may this revival spirit be preserved? is therefore a very practical and important subject. In such an enquiry there are two points that we should keep very clearly before us. First, that this revival element is a divine gift, and not the product of any particular form of church organization. Our itinerancy, class-meetings, love-feasts, prayer-meetings, and all beside, won't produce it. Second, that organization, plans of work, and particular means of grace have a very powerful influence on this phase of church life.

The foremost essential for the preservation of the revival element in our beloved Methodism is the possession of the highest type of religious experience. The membership of the church must be a converted membership; for unconverted people have little interest in revivals, and less qualifications for promoting them. Throughout our history we have been blessed with such a people. There no doubt have always been some unconverted persons among us; but the great mass have been joyful partakers of the forgiveness of their sins, and when this shall cease the glory will have departed, and a dead church, where no scenes of revival occur, will be the product. How are we to continue a converted membership? is therefore a question of much the same import as the one we are considering; yet they are not identical. It has sometimes occurred that a converted society among us has not had much, if any, of this spirit manifested among them. I therefore put it in this form, that not merely a converted people are necessary for the perpetuation of this spirit, but a people of high religious experience of the things of God. A people of deep and fervent piety are essential for the revival spirit. They have the elements of it in themselves, they long for its manifestation, and they are sure to secure it. A thousand obstacles may be in their way, but their holy fervor will break them down, and the pent-up fires will break forth and glorious triumphs of grace in the conversion of sinners will be the consequence.

Among those things tending to the preservation of the revival element among us may be mentioned the following:—

1. *A due appreciation of the value and honor of its possession, and our responsibility for its preservation.* A Methodist who does not prize this peculiarity of our history cannot be much in sympathy with Methodism, nor does he possess much, if any, of this spirit in himself. Aside from all other reasons, and towering high above them, this has been the main cause of the success of Methodism. Residing in its preachers, both itinerant and local, and in its officers and members, it has led them on to glorious conquests for the Master. The preachers have preached with "the tongue of fire," and the people have prayed with a fervency and power that nothing could resist. It is thus that the strongholds have been taken. Surely the Methodist that does not highly value this, cannot understand it. To realize its value is to have the strongest motive for its perpetuation. Holding it as our chief glory we must not yield

it without a struggle. If God gave it to us, He surely meant us to preserve it. And its possession ought to be easier to continue, than to acquire by those who have never had it. Its presence in any one denomination is of great advantage to all the others—presenting an illustration of the privileges of the Gospel and quickening all their energies. In this way its presence in Methodism has done much for Christianity in general, by infusing new life into all sections of the church, and leading to a higher type of piety everywhere. It must have been that God designed this to be the result; and while He honored us with such a mission, He held us accountable for its accomplishment. We need to feel that this is our mission. The churches and the world are as much in need of this influence to-day as ever they were, and Methodism should be as efficient in its exercise. To feel this obligation as our honor, is to gain a motive for the preservation of the revival spirit.

2. *The maintenance of our peculiar means of grace in the utmost purity and efficiency.* Those means of grace which are to a greater or less degree peculiar to us are class-meetings, lovefeasts, and prayer-meetings. By means of these the vital conscious experience of religion as the privilege of the believer has been kept most prominently before all our people. The highest forms of scriptural preaching could not have done it as effectively. Their very existence has implied that saving faith brings a personal and conscious experience of the things of God. Even to keep such a fact distinctly before a people is to do a great work tending towards its actual realization.

In addition to this, however, these means of grace have very efficiently helped in the preservation of the very warmest type of piety, which is the guarantee of the presence and power of the revival spirit. Class-meetings may become dead and formal things, and when that comes to pass they will do little towards the spirit of revivalism. But when they are what their institution intends them to be—means to help seekers into the kingdom of God, and means to help believers to help each other to work out their salvation—then they will do much indeed towards the perpetuation of the revival spirit. Each class then is a centre of light, a home of holy influences, a hot-bed of soul-saving agencies. And what the class is to the dozen or more who compose it, the lovefeast is to the society or the circuit. If one member, whether person or class, rejoice, all the others will rejoice with it, and will be most likely to share the common good.

There may be ground for doubt whether prayer-meetings are peculiar to Methodism. And it may be very readily granted that at present they are not, though in our earlier history they were. But if not the name, yet the character of the thing is peculiar to us perhaps as much as ever. A Methodist prayer-meeting is unlike any other prayer-meeting—dispensing with all stiffness and formality, it seems to say God's people are met for *prayer*. It does not demand the presence of the stiff and solemn man of the pulpit to direct its course. Much less does it require his wisdom to determine who is fit to pray. Such a meeting would not long pass for a Methodist prayer-meeting in the dullest society in our whole connexion. The Methodist idea of a prayer-meeting is one where all have an equal privilege and right to

lead in prayer—whether young or old, whether male or female,—and where all are expected to do so if opportunity offers. Such a meeting is a scene of religious life, and does much in promoting activity and piety in the church. Just such prayer-meetings Methodism has had, and they have stood side by side with the class-meeting and the lovefeast in preserving its life and power. Let this state of things cease, and one of the most potent agencies for perpetuating the revival element would be gone. For the full development of it these means need to be most efficiently maintained. A class-loving and prayer-meeting going church will never lose the spirit of revival.

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE DIRECT AGENCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.*



HERE is a large amount of spurious theology afloat among us, mingling and commingling with the pure streams of the water of life, which make glad the city of God. It aims at invalidating the simplicity and practicability of the most palpable facts. It assumes a similar likeness to the genuine kind,—with some of the more hard and objectionable features of truth and grace repudiated.

It professes to have supreme respect for the laws and statutes and ordinances of religion, while the authority and action of the Sovereign Lawgiver it practically ignores. It is of the same principle, or at least seems to have a kindred origin, and a kindred character, with another theory in creation. The one, in the department of creation, deifies the work which God has made; the other, in the department of revelation, deifies the word which He has written; and in each case, and from the same motive,—to do away with the ever-living and ever-acting energy of a personal God. The one makes nature—the receptacle and exclusive vehicle of the Spirit—the Creator; the other makes the Bible—the receptacle and exclusive vehicle of the Spirit—the Comforter and Sanctifier. That the Spirit, so to speak, has circumscribed His immensity within the bounds of revealed truth; so that, separately from that, there is no personal direct action of the Spirit upon the mind. Does not such a theory set the law above the Sovereign Lawgiver, the letter above the infinite Spirit, the lifeless, powerless instrument, which His hands have fashioned, above the omnipotent originator and mover of all instrumentality?

Such a theory not only outrages a man's understanding but contradicts it. It is not merely unreasonableness, but against reason. The teaching of the Scripture is, that the seat of the Spirit's operations is not in the body of the truth, but the free, rational, conscious, immortal soul of man. He connects himself with that which is of a nature kindred with His own, and alone capable of himself. This is the sphere where He fulfils His gracious offices and executes His saving work. It is mind operating upon

* See John xvi. 7-15.

mind; Spirit acting upon spirit; will working on the region of will. The teaching of Scripture is that the Spirit moves upon the disordered faculties of the human soul, quickening into life and beauty; that He enlightens and convinces, and draws towards God and holiness and heaven every one that cometh into the world; that He imparts, to those who seek it, the grace of repentance and faith; that He attests the pardon and seals the adoption of all believers; that He regenerates or renews their hearts in the Divine image, and unfolds their high destinies, and fits and qualifies them for the purity and blessedness of heaven. The texts of Scripture referred to in the heading of this paper, as well as many more which might be cited, are sufficiently explicit, that the Holy Spirit, by His own personal agency, operates immediately and directly upon the human heart, and not by any delegated virtue He has infused into the Word in the great work of human salvation. "The truth which He inspired," says a late writer, "is the means which He employs to accomplish this work. We do not, however, so interpose the truth, as that His influence shall act *through* it upon the mind. We hold that His influence is direct and acts upon the mind towards the truth." The plan and rule of the Divine economy of mercy is, that the Spirit condescendingly works with the truth, or by means of the truth; yet that in every case he so works that the saving action is not the action of the truth, but His own direct and personal action on the mind.

It may be objected that in the Scriptures there is assigned to the Word the rank not of a mere instrument, but of an agent operating by its own effectual power; indeed, that the same saving effects are ascribed to the Word as to the Spirit. Thus, 1 Peter i. 23,—“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.” Also, James i. 18,—“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.” Now these passages, carefully and critically interpreted, will be found not in the least to contradict what has been advanced, but to afford striking evidence in support. In the quotation from 1st Peter, the *efficient* cause and the *instrumental* cause are clearly discriminated. The efficient cause of the new birth is declared to be the incorruptible seed; and that by this expression we are to understand the grace of God, in its renewing agency, is obvious from 1 John iii. 9,—“Whosoever is born of God,”—born not of the truth, not of the Word, but “born of God,” [a phrase expressing the immediateness of the Divine operation on the soul in its regeneration,] “doth not commit sin; for this seed” [that is the mysterious principle of Divine grace by which the new birth was produced], “remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” The incorruptible seed, then, by which we are born anew, is what St. John calls the seed of God,—His grace in its renovating operations, the Word meanwhile being a subordinate instrument. We are said to be born again by the Word of God, so we are said to be saved by grace through faith, justified by faith, and purified by faith. But grace is the efficient cause; faith is the instrumental cause. It is not faith that saves us, or justifies us, or purifies us; but the grace of God operating through faith as the conviction. So it is not “the Word”

that regenerates us; but the grace of God acting with the Word as the instrument.

But it may be objected that the direct action of the Spirit upon the soul involves the principle of irresistible grace,—that it is not compatible with the freedom of our moral agency. If it could be proved that God could not act directly upon the mind without bringing the whole of his omnipotence to bear upon it, or by an “overwhelming power of saving grace,” so that man’s will was compelled to submit, the objection would have weight; but in that case man would be degraded to an irresponsible being. Moral responsibility and moral trial would be excluded. The moral nature which God has implanted within us is sacred in his eyes; He cannot infringe laws which His own wisdom has arranged and His own goodness approved; therefore, in all the operations of His grace His power will be tempered and regulated with the perfections of His nature and the principles of our own. There are mysteries in grace as well as in nature and the Bible; but the mysteries of nature do not invalidate the truth that God is the Author of nature, or the mysteries of the Bible that He is the Author of the Bible, nor yet the mysteries of grace that God is the Author of grace. We may not always understand the mode of His operations. “The wind bloweth where it listeth; thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.”

This was the most prominent, the most impressive, doctrine of our Lord’s ministry. In preparing his disciples for his approaching departure, and for the dispensation of glory that should follow, He fixed and concentrated all their attention and hopes on this great gift. He set it before them as the provision on which the interests of his kingdom entirely depended, and on which they were to rely for maintenance and success. He taught them that in the gift of the Spirit resided the one power that could enlighten, and renew, and save the world. “Nevertheless,” he said to His sorrowing servants, “I tell you the truth,”—the sober unexaggerated truth,—“it is expedient for you that I go away.” It is not only inevitable but “expedient” also; it is even desirable, it is profitable for you: “for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. If ye loved me, ye would not only be reconciled to my removal from you, but ye would rejoice because I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I,” and He will supply my place with one whose presence shall be more abundantly beneficial and effectual. In what way could Jesus have given to his disciples loftier impressions of the transcendent greatness and preciousness of the gift of his Holy Spirit? With all the privileges and weight of blessedness, with all the presence and glory that had marked his own presence and glory, he assured them that the presence and power of the Holy Spirit would be much more abundant. In conformity with this teaching he commanded his disciples, after his resurrection, “that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which,” saith he, “ye have heard of me; for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” The commission

had been given to preach the Gospel to every creature ; but not a single step must be taken until the Spirit had been given, on whose presence the whole success depended. The witnesses had been trained and disciplined for their work ;—all the facts necessary to complete their testimony were accomplished. The sufferings and sacrificial death of Christ was no longer a subject of prophetic anticipation ;—the great oblation had been offered, and the earth trembled beneath its power ;—the sun had waned at the sight ;—a wretched dying sinner had rejoiced in its efficiency ;—the rising dead had borne testimony to its divinity. One thing was still necessary. The machinery was all complete and perfect, but was motionless ; and this one necessary thing was that sin-conquering, life-giving power from on high—the power of the Holy Spirit. The suspense that intervened between the completeness of the Saviour's redeeming work and the full work of salvation, teaches us that while every other constituent of the Christian religion was present, until the element that gives life and efficacy to the whole was added, the essential condition of all spiritual success was absent. With it, so mighty ; without it, powerless to the conversion of one sinner.

This is the voice that sounds through the Sacred Word, the history of the Church, and the events of time, from the day of Pentecostal power and glory,—“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” No pope, no cardinal, no bishop, no priest, can effect any change after this fashion.

It is highly important that we grieve not the Holy Spirit by withholding from Him the proper homage due to His name. There may be, even among professedly orthodox Christians, a readiness at all times to render all honour and praise to the First and Second Persons in the Trinity ; while to the Third Person, although equal in majesty and glory, such homage may (unintentionally) be partial and defective. He is sent on his mission of mercy into this world, as Christ was sent on his. He is the administrator of all the redemptionary rights and privileges secured by Christ. He is not establishing an independent kingdom for himself apart from the Father and the Son ; but the *Trinity* are in *Unity* in the affairs of the Church as in all other things. He is the great inheritance of the Church, giving life and power to its members, adjusting and distributing its gifts and qualifications severally as he will. He “binds” or confirms all acts of discipline that are in accordance with his will. He sustains and strengthens the Church in times of privation and suffering. He controls the elements of factious opposition and persecution, for the establishment and extension of his Church in the world. He perfects all our individual virtues and graces and works ; harmonizes our differences, and makes all one ; inspires our prayers and communicates our blessings. He works in us “both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.”

It is also important that we daily acquaint ourselves with the teachings of God's Holy Word. To be ignorant of the truth, is to be morally and spiritually blind ; to be indifferent about it, is represented as being content to

sit "in darkness and the shadow of death." While a "knowledge of the truth," or "understanding the truth," is in immediate connection with our salvation, "God hath chosen us unto salvation through sanctification of the truth." Religion presents something to be known as well as experienced. There are truths which it is necessary we should know in order that we may be saved. Knowledge is essential to faith,—“He that believeth shall be saved.” Whatever is essential for us to know in order that we may *believe*, is essential for us to know in order that we may be *saved*.

In order to faith, we must know the purity of the Divine law in such a degree as shall convince us that we have violated it and incurred its penalties. We must know our inability to make atonement. We must know so much of Christ as to receive him as the divinely-appointed Redeemer. This knowledge is necessary for mere salvation, but we are far from saying that a higher degree of saving knowledge is useless. A higher degree of knowledge is indeed necessary to a confirmed faith, to enable us to resist the temptations of the devil, to meet and answer the obligations of unreasonable and wicked men "whose mouths must be stopped," to qualify us to instruct the ignorant, to be the means of carrying us up to high attainments in religion, and to prepare us for extensive usefulness in the Church.

MINIMUS.

A'KEMPIS ON THE HIGHER LIFE.

BY REV. JOHN RIDLEY.



JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU, poring over the "Imitation" of A'Kempis far into the night, until the candle just flickering in its socket, and the grease streaming down upon the well-thumbed page, forces him to retire, is a picture well worth a study. What was the sequel of this intense application? What the secret of this wonderful book? Here was a man whom the world knew was an infidel, the champion of all doubters and sceptics, and the sworn foe of our Holy Christianity,—held spell-bound by the simple utterances of a devout Augustine monk, the very first sentence of which was an expression of a contrary faith to his own. It is indeed a mystery that one so deficient in his teachings, and the very leader of the sensuous religion of the passions, should be so enamoured with the book, every page of which urged the subjection of the body to the Spirit, and the subjugation of the flesh. Strange, indeed, that he should feast on that which he called poison, and drink down with seeming relish the very draught he professed to abhor!

Alas! poor Rousseau! unhappy misanthrope! misguided man! May it not have been that during those hours of seclusion which he so much prized, and which extended over the last thirty years of his unsettled and unhappy

life, he saw in the simple rules of A'Kempis faint glimpses of a happiness for which he pined, but against which his insane vanity ever rebelled? May he not have thought seriously of what he read? and may it not have caused that restlessness and agony which so often disturbed his daily thoughts and midnight slumbers, of which he himself says:—"When my sufferings make me measure sadly the length of the night, and the agitation of fever prevents me from enjoying a single instant of sleep, I often divert my mind from my present state in thinking of the various events of my life; and repentance, sweet recollections, regrets, emotions, help to make me for some moments forget my sufferings." It is pitiful to see the man of three score years, whose impassioned eloquence thrilled all Europe, dying—as he lived—a champion amongst sceptics, and the greatest doubter of modern times.

Let us cast a mantle over his memory and turn to the little volume over which, strange to say, he loved to pore; a volume which has been prized by all classes and creeds, and which has found its way to every part of the civilized world. Few, if any, of the sceptics have become so widely known, and their writings so universally admired, as Thomas A'Kempis and his "Imitation." Neither the rapid strides of literature nor the onward march of centuries have caused it to die—it still occupies a place amongst books, and survives after the lapse of four hundred years. To say that the "Imitation" seems more a production of Divine Inspiration than any other book, the Bible alone excepted, is saying a great deal, yet such is the encomium passed upon it by Dr. Stevens, the historian of Methodism; while Fontenelle declares it to be "the most excellent book that ever came from the hand of man." It certainly is capable of doing a great amount of good, and no earnest reader can peruse it carefully without being benefitted. It was the "constant companion" of Wesley, the "fast friend" of Whitfield, the "daily remembrancer" of Fletcher, and the "prized volume" of Payson. Each of them studied it, each valued it, and each had been greatly benefitted. Surely such a recommendation is to us a sufficient guarantee; let us then sit humbly at the feet of this devout Augustine monk, and learn such lessons of piety, devotion and courage, as may enable us to seek and attain, the "Higher Christian Life."

"A man," says A'Kempis, "is raised above earthly things by two wings—*simplicity and purity*. "Simplicity must preside in the intention, purity in the affection; simplicity strives after God, purity apprehends and enjoys Him. No good action will hinder thee, if thou be free from every inordinate desire. If thou desire nought but the will of God, and the advantage of thy neighbour, thou wilt enjoy internal freedom. If thy heart were right, then would every creature be a mirror of life, and a volume of holy doctrine. . . . If thy heart were good and pure, then wouldest thou see everything without let or hindrance, and wouldest well comprehend all. A pure heart penetrates heaven and hell. Whatever a man is, will influence his judgment of all around him. When a man begins to grow lukewarm, then he dreads trifling labor, and seeks external consolation. But when he begins to master himself thoroughly, and to walk manfully in the divine path, then he cares less about those things which he used to think troublesome and grievous."

On the giving up of our "all" to God, and in loving Jesus above all others, he writes:—"Happy is he who knoweth what it is to love Jesus, and to despise himself for Jesus' sake. For this Beloved One we must give up what we love, for Jesus will be loved above all. The love of the creature is deceitful and unstable; the love of Jesus is faithful and enduring. . . . Love Him and keep Him for thy friend, who, when all go away, will not desert thee, nor will suffer thee to perish in the end. Sometime or other thou must be separated from all else, whether thou wilt or not. Hold thou, living or dying, unto Jesus, and commit thyself to Him who can and will help thee when all others fail. Such is the nature of thy Beloved, that he will admit of no rival, but will have thy heart to Himself, and like a king will sit upon His proper throne. If thou could'st purge thyself from worldly affections, Jesus would willingly dwell with thee."

On pure and complete resignation to Christ, and the necessity of feeling that—

"Every moment we need
The merits of His death."

he says:—"My son, renounce thyself, and thou shalt find Me. Give up all choice, all personal inclinations, and thou shalt ever be the gainer. For greater peace shall be given thee as soon as thou resignest thyself unalterably." "O Lord, how often shall I resign myself, and in what respects am I to renounce myself?" "Always, every hour; in small things as well as great ones. I except nothing; but wish to find thee in every respect naked. How otherwise wilt thou be able to be Mine and I thine, unless thou have been deprived of every personal inclination, respecting either external things or internal feelings? The sooner thou doest accomplish this the better it will be with thee, and the more completely and thoroughly thou doest this, the more wilt thou please me, and the greater wilt be thy gain. Some men resign themselves, but with some exception, for they do not trust God completely. . . . Some men, again, at first offer up themselves unreservedly, but after a time, assailed by temptation, they return to their former state, and thus make no progress in the Divine life. Such men will not attain the perfect liberty of the pure in heart, and the favour of a delightful intercourse with me, without first sharing complete resignation, and daily self-renunciation: without these the blessed union does not and will not exist."

Concerning the unwillingness to become "singular" for Jesus, and the great heed that we are apt to pay to what the world may say of us, which God knows, is the cause of many a "barren and withered" soul to day, A Kempis thus tenderly admonishes:—"My son, bear it not ill if some have thought evil of thee, and have said what thou wouldest not willingly hear. Thou oughtest to think worse of thyself, and to believe that no one is weaker than thyself. If thou walk by the inner light thou wilt not take much heed to flying words. . . . Let not thy peace depend upon what men say; for whether they think well or evil of thee, thou art not therefore another man. Where is true peace, where true glory? Are they not in Me? . . . My son, fix thy heart firmly on God, and fear no human

judgment, if thy conscience pronounce thee good and innocent. Thus to suffer is good and blessed, nor will it be grievous to the heart that is humble and trusteth in God more than in itself. Many men have many minds, and therefore little importance is to be attached to their opinions. It is impossible to please all. Although St. Paul studied to please all men, yet even he said, —‘With me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment.’ He labored as much as in him lay, for the edification and salvation of others, but he could not avoid being sometimes judged or despised by others. Therefore he committed all to God. Set thyself, therefore, like a good and faithful servant of Christ, manfully to bear thy Lord’s cross; thy Lord for love of thee was crucified. ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.’”

To walk by the “Inner Light,” in the “Higher Life,” was the great aim and desire of A Kempis. The following is the out-burst of his overflowing soul. O may it be ours to exclaim,—“Even so, Lord Jesus!”

“O Lord God, Holy Lover of my soul, when thou hast come into my heart, all my reins shall exult. . . . Free me from evil passions, and cleanse my heart from all inordinate desires; so that healed within and thoroughly purged, I may be made prone to love, strong to bear, patient to endure. . . . “Behold I stand before Thee, poor and naked, asking grace, imploring mercy! Refresh thy poor hungering suppliant! Remove my coldness with the fire of Thy love; enlighten my blindness with the light of thy presence! O that thou wouldest *thoroughly* purge me by the fire of Thy presence, burning out all that is dross in me, and melting me into Thyself; so that I may be one with Thee, and that my spirit may be like unto thine! . . . O Eternal Light, transcending all created lights, send down from on high a ray which shall penetrate the inmost recesses of my heart, make my spirit pure, make it joyful, make it clean, make it active; thus by Thy power shall it cleave to Thee with joyful rapture. . . . O, when will that blessed, joyful, longed for hour arrive, when Thou wilt satisfy me with Thy presence, and be to me all in all? . . . Display, I beseech Thee, Thy power, and let Thy right hand be glorified, for I have no hope, no refuge, but Thee, O Lord my God.”

Thus he continues, in these pious and exultant strains, wafting the soul heavenwards, amidst its atmosphere of purity and love. O that God would stir us up to the same fervour! Would that we, who profess the name of Jesus, were as he. “except his bonds.” Seclusion and mysticism, such as he practiced, are not necessary nor essential; but brethren, are not the love, the ardour, the purity, the zeal, requisite and necessary?

Brethren! shall that poor Augustine monk, who had but few of the advantages that we have, outstrip us in his piety? Shall he whose home was a cloister, and whose associates were few, out-do us in his zeal?

O let us value our superior advantages, prize our higher privileges, and with the open Bible in our hands and the world for our sphere, let us go forth as champions of the Lord of Hosts; having our hearts saturated with his

ove, our souls on fire, our faces glowing with his glory, and upon our brows, enscribed in characters more legible than words, —“Holiness unto the Lord.”

“Not in the tombs we pine to dwell,
Not in the dark monastic cell,
By vows and grates confined;
Freely to all ourselves we give,
Constrain'd by Jesu's love to live
The servants of mankind.

“O let our faith and love abound ?
O let our lives to all around
With purest lustre shine ;
That all around, our works may see.
And give the glory, Lord, to thee,
The heavenly Light Divine.”

For “*Earnest Christianity.*”

THE VOICE OF THE PEBBLES.

BY THE REV. JAMES ROY, B.A.



PEBBLES outstretch the waters of the mighty sea,
While shadows flit across its varied green ;
Winds fill the whitened sail, and bend the yielding tree ;
Bright glints the sun from hurrying clouds between.

Slow roll the long-drawn waves upon the pebbly shore,
Beating their solemn bass-notes on the strand ;
The pebbles, rounded to one model more and more,
Wail feebly, crushed 'neath Ocean's moulding hand.

Yet, is there no sweet music in the mingled tones
Of beating wave, and grinding pebbles' wail ?
Sing they not low and tenderly of crushed hearts' groans
That mortals send to Heaven in plaintive tale ?

Hear thou, my heart, the lessons of the pebbly shore :
“ Heaven has a blessing in all griefs that are ;
Though sorrow's waves sweep o'er us in the tempest's roar,
They mould us to one perfect character.”

THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY REV. W. E. BOARDMAN.

PART III.—PROGRESS AND POWER.

CHAPTER I.—STAGES OF PROGRESS.

STARTING POINTS NOT STOPPING PLACES.



DO not like this idea of a definite point to be gained. I have no faith in any stopping place in the Christian course this side of heaven."

The tone of this remark had a shade of impatience and contempt, accompanied by just the slightest curl of the lip and all the emphasis of a finality.

The young gentleman who made it had the day before—it was now Monday morning—been trying the new-fledged wings of his recent licensure, and was just returning in the cars to the halls of theological lore, to make a new sermon or mend the old one, against the time of the next invitation from an over worked pastor needing respite, or a vacant church seeking supply.

The gentleman to whom it was made was one of some dozen years' experience as a minister of the gospel, seated by his side in the cars. The two had providentially met a few moments before in the depot, and been introduced by a mutual friend. Seated together, and whirling along toward B., they beat about for a while in desultory conversation upon various things, general or personal, but soon settled upon the topic of the higher walks of the Christian life. Some turn in their talk had called out this remark.

"No," added the young gentleman deliberately, with a peculiar emphasis of a deep downward inflection on the word hate—"No, I *hate* the idea of a certain fixed point to be gained—a resting place—the all in all to be aimed at or expected by the Christian."

His travelling companion, in the softened tone of a mellow experience of the love of Christ, and of a developed patience with the foibles of mortals like himself, suggested that perhaps his friend had yoked together a right idea with a wrong one, and was condemning the innocent with the guilty, simply from having himself unwittingly placed it in bad company. "You are certainly right in rejecting the idea of any stopping place for the Christian this side of heaven; but are you sure that a definite point in experience is a stopping place?"

"We are rushing along in the cars at the rate of twenty miles an hour towards A., and I have no thought of stopping until it is reached; but we have just now past the very definite point B. in our journey, and have been doubly advertised of the fact by the car whistle as we were halting, and the clear voice of the conductor calling out B., in the long-drawn manner to be heard over all the din of voices and clatter of feet, and also by the name B. in large letters upon the front of the depot. And in a few moments again we shall come to C., another very definite point, both on our checks and on the bills, known and read of all journeyers by rail. And yet beyond the moment spent in wooding and watering, and stretching our limbs, are they in any proper

sense stopping places, much less the all in all aimed at and expected by journeyers to A.? Are they not mere stages in the journey, new and nearer starting points for home? You do not believe in conversion perhaps?"

"Oh yes, *indeed I do*; and teach it too. I believe in it, and urge it with all my might upon everybody as a distinct experience, the privilege and necessity of all, known by signs before and signs following, clear and easy distinguishable."

"Well, is the new birth a final stopping place?"

"Oh, no indeed! Too many, it is to be feared, think they have gained all, when once they have gained clear evidence that they have been born again, until they are afterwards reluctantly taught better; but it is only the *starting point* of the Christian race."

"Well, may there not be another period as well, the new starting point of a higher progress, just as distinctly marked as conversion itself, and the second no more a stopping place than the first?"

The young gentleman was interested—not convinced—and eager and more eager, as they rushed on toward the moment and place of separation, to have his car companion unfold his ideas of the unfolding Christian life.

Willing rather to put his young friend upon the permanent track of a higher happiness and of a nobler usefulness than merely to gratify any momentary curiosity, the servant of Jesus graphically delineated the two stages of experience as they have been given to the world by eminent men from their own personal history, Luther and D'Aubigne amongst the number. Each stage he described as the definite attainment of an actual progress—the first as the victory conquering peace, and the second as a new start, both in a richer peace and a more expansive wisdom and beneficence.

As the conversation went on, and the point of separation drew near, the fire kindled in the ingenuous heart of the young man, and shone forth in his noble face.

Hope—a *new* hope of gaining for himself, Luther like, a deeper, stronger vital union with the True Vine, and a more generous fruitage in the vineyard of his Lord, just now opening out before him, sprang up in his soul. He frankly confessed his fruitless struggles and sad disappointments in the past, and as frankly owned his now newly awakened hope for the future. Many things said by his companion struck deep into the generous soil of his ardent young heart, and clear and active mind: nothing however more deeply than the twofold significance of the text which became the Reformer's watchword and talisman, "The just shall live by faith." The just shall be *made alive* first, and *afterwards learn to live* by faith. The just shall be *justified before God* first, and afterwards learn the way to *become just also in heart and life*, by faith. This twofold significance of the text, illustrated by its suggestion the first and the second times in the Reformer's heart, as by a celestial voice within, with the interval of years between the two, and meeting in each case a want so different, caused the young man to exclaim, "Oh the depth of the riches of the Word of God! What hidden force it contains! We get but half of it at most, and then too often think we have all!"

Was it not just such conversations, in just such places, that the prophet Malachi referred to, when he said, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels. And I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him?"

While upon this subject of stages and starting points, there are yet two or three questions to be answered.

First, Why speak of stages in the Christian life at all? Is it not a thing

of gradual growth, like the plant, from the blade to the full corn in the ear, and of steadily unfolding progress, like that of the light, from the first gray dawn of the morning twilight onward to the perfect day, rather than a thing of steps and stages at all?

Here, again, is another maladjustment of ideas; not now, however, the yoking together of two ideas not yoke-fellows at all, the one true and the other false, and so of condemning the true with the false, as the young man in the cars did, but the separation of two ideas both alike true, and true yoke-fellows, and pitting them one over against the other, like David and Goliath arrayed in mortal combat.

The Christian life is, indeed, plant-like, a thing of gradual growth; but then it is also none the less plant-like as a thing of stages.

Conviction is its first stage and starting point. The truth, like the seed sown by the husbandman, may have lain long buried under the soil of youthful levity, or under the hard crust of a heart often reproved; but at last, when the rain and the sunshine of heaven come down upon it, it begins to feel the power of a divine energy within, and swells and bursts its cerements of worldliness, and pushes upward, feeling after the light of heaven until it comes forth "*the blade*," a new creature born of God into the kingdom of light.

Conversion is a new and a higher starting point, from which, plant-like, the Christian life unfolds, joint after joint, leaf after leaf, stretching upward and onward for fruitage and fulness of stature, until at last it gains the fruit-bearing status of true Christian manhood and majority and liberty, and rejoices in that stage of its progress marked by our Saviour as "*the ear*."

Having now learned the way to live by faith, it goes on ripening its fruit for the golden harvest, and the heavenly garner of its Lord, and becomes in due time the "full corn in the ear," ready for the sickle of the angel reapers.

Or, taking the figure of the light, increasing more and more to the perfect day, you have the same two ideas of gradual growth, and yet of stages of progress, harmoniously and beautifully blended and expressed. For while the light pours in upon us, in ever-increasing flood, through the opening gates of day, from the first rays gladdening night's darkest hour, onward until, in noontide splendour, the day is perfected, yet is there not first the *dawn*, then the *sunrise*, and finally the *noon* of the perfect day? Strange that an argument for the rejection of the idea of distinct stages in the Christian life should ever have sought its basis in these comparisons, which so beautifully and clearly express and illustrate the very ideas sought to be condemned by the argument!

The same idea is also given by the apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans i. 17, "For therein (in the gospel) the righteousness of God (to all and upon all that believe, Jew and Greek) is revealed (made manifest) *from faith unto faith* (from stage to stage), as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

And how vivid the living comment and confirmation of Luther's actual progress by stages in connection with this very text!

Expressed again also by the apostle to the Corinthians, second Epistle, iii. 18, by a figure which gives the true philosophy of the whole glorious mystery of our sanctification or transformation into the image of God by a single dash of the pen—"But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image *from glory to glory*, as by the Spirit of the Lord." That is, the Holy Spirit, as promised by our Lord to his disciples, takes of the relations of Christ to us, and unfolds them before us, while we behold his glory, and his glorious fitness exactly to meet each want of our souls, as in turn, one after the other, they unfold and press.

upon us, whether of justification from the law, or of sanctification to God, or of glorification in his presence above; and thus we are changed by the view of Christ into his image from glory to glory. The same thing is expressed also by the apostle in another form in 1 Cor. i. 30, where the various relations of Christ are unfolded in order to us as they do actually open out in experience, to meet our unfolding wants from stage to stage—"Made of God unto us WISDOM," that is, conviction of folly and sin, conviction, as Jesus himself says, because they believe not on me. The fear of God which, according to King Solomon, is the beginning of wisdom—**RIGHTEOUSNESS**, that is, justification from sin—**SANCTIFICATION** that is, transformation into the likeness of God—and **REDEMPTION**, that is, transfiguration from the earthly image of the Lord to the glorious image he bears now in heaven, and translation to heaven.

The answer, therefore, to the question, "Why speak of the Christian life as a thing of stages at all?" is first of all because *it is so*, and so to speak of it is to speak truth.

But this is not all. There is another reason impelling it, because it is a fire in the bones—it must out.

And another and a better one still, because it is the way of all ways to arrest attention, and induce men to pass for the experimental apprehension of that which is set before them.

The preaching of John the Baptist had this striking feature, that it was distinct and clear above all who had gone before him, and therefore his success was greater, insomuch that the Saviour said that amongst those born into the world a greater had not risen than John. His trumpet had the clarion ring of an Elijah in its power. And it had also the clear ring of an apostle almost in the definiteness with which he presented the one stage of experience, "*metenoye*," change of heart.

The force of John's preaching is in some measure hidden to us by the translation of the word *metenoye* as repentance, whereas its full meaning is new birth or change of heart. But as we, in imagination, bend the ear and listen to the prophet on the banks of the Jordan, proclaiming to the gathering crowd coming from far and near the baptism of repentance, the need of a change of heart to escape the damnation of hell, we might almost imagine it to be Whitefield on Bristol common, reiterating the Saviour's words, "Except ye shall be born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God," and urging his message by depicting the wrath to come. It was just this vivid apprehension of the truth, and this definite presentation of it, which gave both the Judean and the Anglican prophets such power and success.

The success of the apostles in winning men to the higher experience—the baptism of the Holy Ghost—first received by themselves, and then definitely proclaimed by them to others, as the privilege of all who would believe on the Lord Jesus, was due also, in a great measure, to the definite vividness with which they set this stage of the Christian life before men as an object of desire and attainment.

There are those who seek to muffle the arrows of truth, lest their naked points should pierce the heart and hurt the feelings; but arrows must be *sharp* in the hearts of the King's enemies, or they will not fall under them.

It is the lack of a definite experience, first, in our own hearts of the fact and truth that Christ is made of God unto us *sanctification*, and then the consequent lack of a clear and vivid presentation of it to others, as an experience within sure and easy reach of all who will make it a point, and urge their way to it, which, more than anything else—love of the world not excepted—keeps the church back from receiving and living in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace.

(*To be continued.*)

FALLACIES OF MODERN SCEPTICISM.



HE student of theology needs both to explain and to define the doctrines of Christianity. The different schools of sceptics unite in claiming reason and science as their impregnable citadels.

The opposition of scientists is based on the alleged uncertainty of the evidence of revealed religion, as contrasted with the assumed certainty of scientific truth. A perfect science excludes all speculation and rests on positive evidence. Is there any such science outside of mathematical science? Scientists admit that there is no such perfect science—they, with others, believe in the progress of science. A particular system is promulgated and clung to for centuries, and a discovery is made that overthrows it, and it is supplanted by another; for example review the different well-known astronomical theories. In other sciences, much so-called progress consists in the abandonment of old ideas for new ones. Contrast with this the truths of revelation with physical science. Revelation is one structure built by prophets and apostles with Christ as the chief cornerstone. The law that came by Moses fifteen hundred years after was set aside by His grace. Christ came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil. The Bible contains the science of God. Its sixty-six books, the work of forty different authors, all teach the same truths. The only change in sixteen hundred years is simply an increase of light.

AN OBJECTION CONSIDERED.

It is objected to revelation that it involves a deviation from the established order of nature—matter is eternal or it had a beginning. If it had a beginning God created it—a deviation from the course he had pursued. If men stood in need of direct divine communication, it is reasonable to suppose these communications would be made, and accompanied with proofs. Only atheists deny a power outside of Nature to furnish such proofs. He who ordained the order of events can suspend that order. Astronomy that has done so much to establish the doctrine of uniformity, yet gives us no unvarying type in the structure, surroundings and even movements in all the celestial orbs. It is not for us to prescribe the limits of Divine action, and deny the existence of a supernatural system of moral truth. It is said that many of the doctrines of revelation are

MYSTERIES THAT REASON CANNOT UNDERSTAND.

Such are the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and Regeneration. That the meaning of religion is not defined, whether it is belief, feeling or action—whether it is based on a knowledge of a God or a sense of obligation to him. The inability to give an exhaustive definition does not rule anything out of existence. Naturalists do not agree on the definition of matter. The definition that makes it a form of thought does away with matter altogether. The philosopher was considered wise, who, when his daughter asked him: "What is mind?" answered, "No matter," and when she asked "What is matter," said, "Never mind." Herbert Spencer has great honor for having discovered the principle of all life in "Persistence of Force." He gives the ailments of bodies, oxygen, hydrogen, etc., with their affinities. These reveal the conditions of life, but they do not constitute the life principle nor account for its various forms. His definition of life is, "the definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive in correspondence with external co-existence and sequencies." And afterward a briefer one—

"the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations." If a man adjusts his body to external clothing, is that the life principle of the body?

Admitting the difficulties in naturalism and supernaturalism there are certainties in both. Science has its axioms and theology its postulates—facts independent of the knowledge we gain of them. If revelation be rejected because of its mysteries, science must be on the same ground. It is objected to revelation that

WE ARE DEPENDANT ON HUMAN TESTIMONY

for its truth. Is not the belief of the natural science based on the reliability of human testimony? How much of chemistry is known to the world through personal experiment? The doctrines of revelation bear an inherent probability. Would a benevolent God open so many departments to scientific investigations and keep the great departments of religious truths closed? Should secular history be subjected to the same objections, ancient literature would be swept away: yet the basis of sacred writings is by far the strongest. Witness the predictions of the fall of Ninevah, Babylon and Tyre; the history of the dispersion of the Jews could not be more accurately written to-day than it was eighteen hundred years ago. The sacred scriptures rest upon a foundation that is invulnerable. Another proof is the effects of Christianity, Christendom to-day with its strength, wealth, literatures, commerce, is rapidly disarming the sceptic. The "persistent forces" are but the outgoings of Him to illustrate revelation. Who will enlist them for the enthronement of Him who said: "All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth."—*Rufus W. Clarke, D.D.*

HINDRANCES TO HOLINESS.

"For neither did His brethren believe in Him."—*John vii. 5.*



HOSE who have tried to lead inquiring souls out of darkness into the light and liberty of Gospel truth, are at times astonished that their words are not comprehended by those whom they would wish to see rejoicing in the liberty of the sons of God; but is it not still more amazing to find those who thus complain of others' blindness failing themselves to see the more excellent way of holiness, even when its peculiar features are plainly marked out in the Gospel, and when they are exhorted to "Leave the principles, and go on to perfection?" Strange that they should ridicule the idea of Christian perfection being attainable in this life, yet consider themselves perfectly sincere and consistent when praying as they are often heard to do, "for a heart from sin set free;" or

"A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love Divine;
Perfect and right and pure and good,
A copy, Lord, of Thine."

We do not call such people hypocrites for uttering expressions in prayer which they do not expect or believe will be answered, nor yet for singing such

sentiments in hymns; but we do maintain that they are more inconsistent than those they affect to pity as weak-minded or self-deceived for professing to have a faith which overcomes the world, the flesh, and the devil, and keeps their minds in perfect peace at all times. It is sad to hear some sincere Christians groaning over their spiritual maladies, as if there was no balm in Gilead and no Physician there; and in class-meetings to hear them bemoaning their sins, as if they had not an advocate with the Father, or as if the blood of Jesus could not cleanse from all sin. And thus they bring in a bad report upon the goodly land.

No wonder that unconsecrated people, when invited to attend the Gospel feast, "beg to be excused." Thousands there are of these faint-hearted ones who have escaped the thralldom of Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, drank of the sweet waters of Elisha, and even tasted the grapes of Eschol, but who, when commanded to go up and take full possession of the land flowing with milk and honey, are deterred because of the seeming difficulty. There are "Anakims" to contend with; and instead of looking to the "hills from whence cometh their strength," they look to their own native weakness; and, of course, very justly conclude themselves but as "grasshoppers," and still wander in the desert, feeding on a daily portion of manna, instead of feasting on the fat things of Canaan, that

" Land of corn and wine and oil,
Favoured with God's peculiar smile,
With every blessing blessed."

One of the many "Anakims" which bewilder these timid ones is the theory, that as sanctification, or Christian perfection, is a growth in grace, it therefore cannot be a distinct blessing. And some even misinterpret portions of Scripture into teaching that because human nature is prone to evil, there is therefore a necessity for sinning, and speak disparagingly of those who profess to enjoy a blessing which seems to condemn their feebleness of Christian life.

We speak what we do know by experience, that sanctification is as distinct from conversion as an ear of corn is from the stem on which it grew; or as a cistern of water, however large in quantity or pure in quality, differs from a fountain or flowing river.

The joy of a newly-converted soul is proverbially happy; but when this joyous feeling subsides, as it usually does in a longer or shorter time, then begin the groanings and lamentations in which the generality of Christians indulge, instead of exercising that faith in the merit of Jesus which would make their peace flow as a river. The Lord visits them occasionally, and manifests himself to them as He does not to the world, and thus they have seasons of refreshing; but they have not an abiding peace, they have not attained to the rest which remaineth. As soon as a trial of their faith comes, then all their goodness evaporates like the morning mist or early dew. They are continually looking to themselves and their own helplessness, instead of looking unto Christ, who is the Captain of our salvation, and rejoicing to know that by grace they are able to do all things.

No Christian should rest satisfied until he has an abiding consciousness of being raised superior to every conflict by a simple, unwavering faith; and enabled to live with a conscience void of offence in all things; and know by experience that there is no condemnation to those who walk not after the flesh; and be able to rejoice always, even in tribulation; and not only be resigned, but acquiesce in all the dispensations of God's providence, believing that *all* things work together for *good*. What a pity it is that so few practically believe the literal meaning of such hymns as—

Earnest Christianity.

“ Lord, I believe a rest remains
To all Thy people known ;
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,
And Thou art loved alone.

“ A rest where all our soul’s desire
Is fixed on things above ;
Where fear and sin and grief expire,
Cast out by perfect love.”

In Joshua xviii. 2-4, we read : “ And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you? Give out three for each tribe, and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them.” If these things were written for our instruction, is it not a perfectly legitimate inference to say that these Israelites had a different sort of faith from what many Christians entertain regarding sanctification, when they say it is not a distinct blessing?

Those different tribes were all equally the real children of Abraham. They had all come out of Egypt, thus figuratively describing conversion in these “ latter days,” and yet how very different were their circumstances. More than half their number had not their particular portion of the promised inheritance clearly defined, and consequently were not in the conscious enjoyment of all those privileges which were already provided for them by the Lord. And is there not as great a proportion of God’s people living beneath their privileges in the present day, because they have not a clearly-defined idea of their inheritance, and what full salvation means? Their notions regarding this doctrine are as erroneous as Philip’s were concerning the means necessary to feed the five thousand in a desert place. He thought the multitude should either be sent away or two hundred pennyworth of bread be brought to them from the neighboring villages. And just so, when people are urged to seek sanctification, they see such poverty in themselves, and think so little about that Power that is able to save to the uttermost. Many plausible reasons are assigned for the decline of Methodism, but the real cause is a decline of spirituality and lack of faith. The enemies of Israel never triumphed except when the Lord had a controversy with His people. Methodists in former times were more successful, simply because their prayers and preaching were accompanied by more personal holiness and self-denial, and with more individual effort to save souls. Let these conditions be complied with now, and see if the result be not the same. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out such a blessing that there shall not be room to receive it. But if we are to prove the Lord, it must be from right motives—not for the glory of Methodism, but the glory of God.

“ Except the Lord conduct the plan,
The best concerted schemes are vain,
And never can succeed.
We spend our wretched strength for nought,
“ But if our works in Thee be wrought,
They shall be blessed indeed.”

Miscellany.

SELECTIONS.

THE DAYS OF THE YEARS OF OUR PILGRIMAGE.

We dwelt of old in a laughing vale,
Where the breezes were soft and warm,
We heard the rush of the mountain gale,
But we felt not the mountain storm.
We looked with hope on the dizzy height
When first we began to climb,
And soon we looked down on the valley bright
That we loved in the olden time.

We gained the height—but the wished-for hill
That we thought was crowned with gold,
Was lonely and bare, and the breeze was chill,
And the sunlight was dim and cold.
A loftier height was before us now,
And a brighter summit shone;
And for it we toiled—though the sunny glow
Of our earlier hope was flown.

And it was gained—and its sparkling crest
Was a crown of clouds and snow;
And the avalanche rolled from its icy breast
To the shivering plains below.
No rest was here for the pilgrim's feet,
And Hope led us onward still,
For the sky was blue, and before us yet
Shone a loftier lovelier hill.

Still—still the same—as on we climb
In the track of the same bright sun,
We change our place with changing time,
Yet never the goal is won.
The barren heights around us spread,
But toil and tempests bear;
But a constant sky shines overhead
And we know that our home is there.

There are mists and showers in the vale below,
There are storms on the mountain's height,
Yet onward and upward the travellers go,
For the sky above is bright.
And our weary footsteps would not stop,
While the cheering hope is given,
To sleep at last on the mountain-top,
And awake to rest in heaven.

KEEPING THE HEART TENDER.

I was much interested in a conversation that took place, this summer, at a friend's house. The subject under discussion was the propriety of giving to the numerous itinerant organ-grinders, peddlers, boy violinists, harpists, etc., that resorted to the village. "It's all wrong," exclaimed one gentleman; "it's just encouraging vagrancy: why it's nothing but the sheerest laziness, for a strong, hearty man, to go around, from door to door, twisting an organ handle!"

"Oh, Mr. S—," said a kind-hearted young girl, "I can't agree with you. In the first place, I have hardly ever seen a 'strong, hearty, organ man,' and, in the next place, I think it's anything but easy and pleasant for them, this hot weather, to walk for miles around the country, with a heavy organ on their shoulders. Their music is often very good, too, and I am sure, the poor things earn the few pennies they get."

"But, Miss L—," said another gentleman, "surely from principle, you wouldn't give anything to those little Italian-boy performers; you must have heard how their masters bring them over from Italy, treat them like slaves, and live on the money the poor children get."

"But how, Mr. R—, is my withholding a penny or two, going to alter anything? If I could get at their masters, you may be sure, I would try and bring them to justice. But as I can do nothing for the children in that way, who knows, but I may, by giving them a few cents, sometimes save them from the beating which, no doubt, await those who go home empty-handed."

"I am happy to say, all these people keep pretty clear of our house," laughed Mr. S—, "they soon learn to know where to go and where not to."

"Oh! Miss Christiana," exclaimed Miss L—, "why don't you say something? Didn't I see you buying pins

and buttons of that little Italian boy peddler to-day, and sending out a huge sandwich to the old organ man, yesterday! Say, are these things right or wrong?"

"To tell the truth, my dear," she answered, "I never stop to think which; I make it a point to give a trifle, at least, to everyone, because I am afraid."

"Afraid!" sneered Mr. R——, "of what, pray? Of 'beggars' curses,' perhaps?"

"No, sir; I am afraid of those words, 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat;' and I am afraid, besides, of hardening my heart. It is a very easy thing for the heart to grow hard; and this spiritual petrification is such a gradual process, that we never dream the heart within our breast may be turning into stone. We may begin, it is true, 'on principle,' to withhold our charity from street beggars; and, at first, it pains us to refuse the earnest petition, but it gradually becomes less hard, and then it grows easier and easier, until at last, our cold glance comes to freeze the beggar's story on his lips. Our indifference soon becomes no longer confined to what we deem 'unworthy objects,' but even when one, undeniably worthy, is brought before us, the tale of suffering wearies us; we have no sympathy with it. We may give something, it is true, but it is more to be rid of the unpleasantness than from any motives of charity. If this gradual hardening be allowed to go on, how stony our hearts may become, I dare not think. You understand now, why I dare not pass by any object that appeals to my sympathy. No doubt I am often imposed on; but a morsel of food or a penny or two, to the most unworthy, can surely do no harm to them, and it keeps my heart tender; and to do that is my constant aim."

Whatever may have been my own opinion on the subject, I could not but think of Christiana's words. It does indeed require an earnest effort to keep the heart tender amid the coldness, and deceit, and ingratitude of this world. Would that it were a part of everyone's work to strive to do so; but especially, of every woman's work. A true woman's heart should be all tenderness, all pitifulness, all sympathy; and when we find her grown cold, suspicious and unsympathizing, much, very much of her influence for good is gone.

THE SABBATH-BREAKING CLERGY.

Does Providence really forbid a minister to keep the Sabbath day? He may not have the same day of the week as other people, but ought he not to have one day in seven for rest from the business of his calling? Do not his brain and body as imperatively demand a weekly cessation from labor as those of the lawyer, merchant, or carpenter?

God is the author of the laws of nature, as well as of the Decalogue. We preach to seven-day drudges of other professions that the end of seven-day drudgery is death. We tell them that omnibus horses, that will last eight years if allowed Sabbath rest, run down in five years and a half when worked on Sabbath. We tell lawyers and merchants that dyspepsia and insanity and paralysis are the predestined results of brain work uninterrupted by Sabbath rest. And we say to Congressmen and legislators that perpetual fervor of political excitement, without the cooling influences of a peaceful Sabbath, generate fanaticism, monomania, political bigotry, disregard and ignorance of public opinion, and a general narrowing and ultimate loss of common sense.

Now the question arises—does not the severe law of periodicity, which blinds the whole range of activity, from that of railway axles to that of statesmen, also obligate clergymen to rest one day in seven? If any man says no, he is bound to produce facts to show that God, by a miraculous interference with the laws of nature, exempts clergymen from the consequences of their transgression. No clergyman can, with a clear conscience, argue the universal obligation of the civil Sabbath, as founded in a law of universal periodicity, which includes human nature, who refuses himself to rest one day in seven.

The voice of God's providence is emphatic on this subject. We have seen the eloquent and zealous evangelist preaching seven days in the week, and three times on Sabbath, to admiring and awe-struck crowds, return, after a few years, uttering feebly the merest commonplace exhortations, exhausted by Sabbath-breaking drudgery. The perpetually occurring break-downs of the most zealous ministers are largely trace-

able to Sabbath-breaking The lamentable insanity and suicides of some of our most zealous Sabbath school superintendents might have been averted, had they remembered that no man can work more than six days in the week.—*Dr. Patterson.*

—
BECKONING.
—

AT the memorable supper in that upper chamber in Jerusalem, the beloved John leaned on Jesus' bosom. He had only to turn his head to whisper in Jesus' ear. Peter was farther off than John, and when he would know about a certain matter, he beckoned to John, that John might ask the Saviour for him.

How often is this scene repeated in common life! There are many who are so far from Christ, that in an emergency they never think of speaking to Christ themselves, but beckon to some one who, in their apprehension, is leaning, like John, on Jesus' bosom.

One morning, almost before I was dressed, a ring at my door-bell announced a stranger. Entering the parlor, I found a youth with tears in his eyes, and this message on his lips:

"Mother has gone blind, and we wish you to come and pray for her."

I went, and found that sudden inflammation in the eyes had extinguished the sight, and in the darkness that shut in the soul of the sufferer, she had discovered also that she was spiritually blind.

Now, there were in that house several grown-up children, but not one among them who could pray for a poor, blind, sin-stricken mother! They were so far away from Christ themselves, that they had to go to their neighbors to find some one who could ask Jesus in their stead for blessings which only he could give to a blind, trembling mother.

Once, in a chamber of sorrow, a child lay dying in convulsions. She had exhibited no decided evidences of piety. A large company of relatives and friends stood and sat around the bed of death. The mother, a daughter of Israel, in an agony of distress for her child, looked about the room, and, with clasped hands, cried out:

"Oh! any of you who can pray—pray for the soul of my child!"

There stood a sister—she could not pray. There stood brothers—neither of them could pray. There sat a father, who could weep, and wring his hands, in the anguish of his heart, but he could not pray for a dying child!

Perhaps, some who read these lines, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, are in such a spiritual state, that should one of the household fall sick to-night, and become sick unto death, they would feel themselves utterly unfit to offer prayer for the soul or body of the dearest of all earthly objects. Oh! let not another sun arise upon your soul in such position. In faith and repentance pillow your heads on Jesus' bosom.

Then, to what Christians do men flee for aid in times of sorrow? To the inconsistent, careless, worldly-minded professor, or to those whose heads they see pillowed on Jesus' bosom? Ah! we care not for the prayers of the mere professor; we covet theirs who pray daily and who love to pray.

Fellow Christians, this office of intercessor for our fellow-men, which we fill by virtue of our priesthood—"He hath made us Kings and Priests unto God"—is a blessed office! Let us get near, and keep near to Jesus, that we may be always ready when some finger beckons us to prayer.—*S. S. Times.*

—
SOCIAL PRAYER.
—

TO-NIGHT has been an epoch in my Christian experience. I have come home from the prayer-meeting with my heart thrilled with

"that sweet repose
Which only he who feels it knows."

I shall ever remember this night as one of those baptismal seasons in which God sometimes bathes afresh the Christian's heart with the influence of the Holy Spirit, and seals it anew as its own.

For more than fifteen years I have been in the habit of attending the prayer-meeting, and yet never until to-night have I had the courage to try to lead the devotions of others. I have been conscious all these years of enjoying sweet communion with God in

private, but I feared that in public my prayers would be cold and unreal.

So I had concluded decidedly, and, as I thought, irreversibly, that God did not call me to serve him in this way, and from real fear of offending him had been silent in the prayer-meeting year after year. And to-night, when I think over the hour just spent in the house of prayer, I can hardly believe that it was really I myself who was one of the few that prayed with voice as well as heart. I am surprised at myself, and not more surprised than thankful and rejoiced.

My irreversible conclusion has been reversed. I have been led to believe that not one of God's children is so weak, so low in attainment, as to be unable to offer at least a few simple, earnest words of prayer to the Lord in the presence of his people. I have concluded that this offering is one we have no right to withhold; that we owe it to God to worship him, to work for him, to serve him, not in *one* way, but in every practicable way. I have concluded, too, that the leader of the prayer-meeting, be he pastor or layman, needs the co-operation of every member; and that it is better for the prayer-meeting that several brief prayers should be offered, rather than one or two at great length.

I have made the trial, and have found the presence of God to be as real, when I have tried to pray to him in his house, as when I have been in the solitude of my own room. A new fountain of joy has been opened in my heart, a new phase of work given me to do for the Master.

It is in the hope of leading others into the same experience of joy and service, of leading them to bring *all* their tithes into the storehouse of the Lord, that this true and simple record of Christian experience has been transcribed.—*Messenger*.

"FATHER," cried Johnny, running to the potato patch where his father was hoeing, "a lady gave me this twenty-five cents for the bunch of flowers I picked on my way home from pasture;" and his chubby face was glowing with delight.

"What are you going to do with it, Johnny?" asked his father.

"First thing, I shall take some for

Jesus," said Johnny. "Ten cents will go right into my give-away box."

"Right, Johnny," cried his father; "pay God first."

OUR LOVEFEAST.

"I DO NOT ASK."

I do not ask, O Lord, that life may be
A pleasant road;

I do not ask that thou wouldst take from me
Aught of its load;

I do not ask that flowers should always spring
Beneath my feet;

I know too well the poison and the sting
Of things too sweet.

For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead:
Lead me aright—

Though strength should falter, and though
heart should bleed—
Through peace to light.

I do not ask, O Lord, that thou shouldst shed
Full radiance here;

Give but a ray of peace, that I may tread
Without a fear.

I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see;

Better in darkness just to feel thy hand,
And follow thee.

Joy is like restless day; but peace divine
Like quiet night.

Lead me, O Lord, till perfect day shall shine,
Through peace to light.

HOLINESS AND POWER.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

THE need of entire holiness in my case, as a personal conviction, sprung mainly out of the consciousness of pulpit weakness. Not that my ministry was barren of good and honest fruit, but such fruit was unquestionably scanty. This sense of personal unprofitableness was deepened in its painfulness by the saddening fact that it seemed to be typical, for in all parts of the Methodist Connexion there were complaints of the lack of converting power. Several ministerial meetings for conversation on this affecting circum-

stance only intensified the conviction that what I needed most was to be fully surrendered to God, and filled with the Holy Ghost.

At last I was thoroughly roused, and determined to seek this grace of God. I turned to our doctrinal and experimental literature on the subject, and read devoutly and prayerfully. Difficulties arose. On the one hand I saw the truth explicitly taught in Holy Scripture, that love was holiness, and that a heart all love was a heart all holiness. If I had wavered here, I must and would have surrendered my ministerial position in the Methodist Churches. But on the other hand, the relation of temptation to sin, the relative character of Christian perfection itself, the exact change which it was to accomplish in my spiritual experience, and the method and assurance of its attainment, puzzled and perplexed me. For several years I sought light on these points, but failed fully to reach it. One excellent minister, whom I plied with questions, pitied my morbid sensitiveness and introspection, and informed me that he had once been in a like experience, when he "needed somebody to take him by the shoulders and give him a shaking." Sometimes I became sadly discouraged, but happily never gave up praying for this blessing; and though during all these years I never had a faith bold enough to claim it at once, yet my prayers for it gradually raised the tone both of my spiritual life and of my public ministry.

Nearly five years ago I came into an agony for it, and one Sabbath, at the beginning of the year, I announced that on the following Wednesday evening I would deliver an address on the subject. During this interval I kept on reading, studying, and praying. I took down from my study shelves Mrs. Palmer's "Way of Holiness"—presented to me, when in the Theological Institution, by the late Rev. Thomas Collins. At the time of receiving it I had read a portion of it, but its theology seemed to me inconsequent and muddy, and therefore I put it away. I began to read it again. I was more susceptible of its teaching, and was specially struck with the counsels on the mode of its attainment. I turned to Mr. Wesley's unparalleled treatise on Christian perfection, and saw the mode yet more clearly expounded,

and went with him step by step in his instructions. I could not even now overcome all my difficulties. Some had disappeared, and I felt that the others could only be solved in the experience of the blessing itself. I brushed them all aside, and resolved, if possible at all, I would gain the experience before delivering the address. Hour after hour sped away in pleading importunity, when I began to repeat, as I paced to and fro in my study—

"I cannot wash my heart,
But by believing Thee,
And waiting for Thy blood t' impart
The spotless purity."

I saw that Christ *must* do it, *would* do it, and that I must just let Him do it *then* and *there*. I therefore flung my whole heart into the prayer—

"While at thy cross I lie,
Jesus, Thy grace bestow,
Now Thy all-cleansing blood apply,
And I *in white* as snow."

In the last line of the prayer, the grace Divine filled and purified my heart. Almost instantly, on the heels of this great salvation, came the tempting thought, "The grace you have got you cannot keep;" but as instantly came the reply, "Faith can keep what faith has won." All glory to God and the Lamb!

With a joyful and triumphant faith I went to the service that evening, and spoke to them of this blessed truth of a full salvation, concluding with the narrative of God's mercy to me. A holy power rested upon us, and the communion-rail was crowded with penitent seekers after this "perfect grace" of God. And though my ministry is not yet what I desire, yet, praised be God! ever since it has stood on a higher elevation of usefulness. *Holiness is power.—King's Highway.*

A MINISTER was recently called upon by a man, who said:

"I come, sir, to inquire if Jesus Christ will take me into the concern as a silent partner."

"Why do you ask?" said the minister.

"Because I want to be a member of the firm, and do not wish anybody to know it," said the man.

The reply was, "Christ takes no silent partners. The firm must be 'Jesus Christ & Co.,' and the names of the Co., though they may occupy a subordinate place, must all be written out on the signboard."

Editor's Portfolio.

ALONE! YET NOT ALONE.

ALONE! yet not alone ;
For thou, my God, art nigh :
Thou wilt not leave thy child
In this lone, desert wild,
Alone! for thee to sigh.

Alone! yet not alone,
With Jesus by my side :
"I love thee," hear him say,
"I'm with thee day by day,
And shall with thee abide."

Alone! yet not alone,
The Comforter has come !
He fills my heart with peace,
Bids every trouble cease,
And gently guides me home.

Alone! yet not alone,
The Triune God is here !
The Father, Spirit, Son,
I claim now for my own :
My own, for ever near.

Alone! yet not alone,
The earnest has been given
Of unseen things above ;
The peace, the joy, the love,
The antepast of Heaven.

Alone! yet not alone,
In life, in death, in Heaven :
In life I fear no foes,
No dread my spirit knows,
For victory shall be given.

Alone! yet not alone,
In death I'll triumph too !
E'en now by faith I sing
"O death! where is thy sting?"
God's grace shall bring me through.

Alone! yet not alone,
In Heaven I soon shall be!
There with the white-robed throng
Shall sing the new, new song,
And my Redeemer see.

D. Winter.

INSTANT HEALING.

THE miracles of Jesus were not only manifestations of Divine power: they were also symbols of spiritual blessings; and they are legitimately employed in the pulpit, or elsewhere, when used as illustrations of Christ's ability and willingness to save. We were thinking to-day of the case of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. He had been sick for eight and thirty years, when Jesus found him. Had he lived in the nineteenth century, he would have been sent to a "hospital for incurables,"—unless he happened to be very poor, in which case he would probably be left to die where he liked. But eight years, or thirty-eight, are all one to the Great Physician.

This man was in one of the porches, [veranda] which skirted the margin of the pool, and with him was a "great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water." What a picture of the church of to-day, with its "porches" still full of impotent folk! Some "blind:" they "cannot see far off, and have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins;" some "halt," as Jacob did, after he wrestled with the angel, but from a very different cause. There are any number of lame Christians around. Some "withered,"—the freshness of their spiritual life all dried up—spiritual mummies, in fact. And these all "waiting for the moving of the water,"—waiting for a revival to heal their maladies; missing blessed opportunities just within their reach, and "waiting" for what may never come to them.

"Infirmities," are of various kinds. Some have a "spirit of infirmity," like the woman in the gospel, who "could not lift up herself,"—they have never been able to "stand up for Jesus." Some have the "withered hand:" they can't lift it up in prayer, or stretch it out in charity. Some are as dumb in regard to religion, [they can speak glibly enough about

other things,] as was Zacharias. Oh, Lord, cast out the "dumb spirit," and make the tongue of the stammerer speak plainly!

The man at Bethesda had a pretty good excuse for not being healed before. *That* pool had virtue enough to heal only one at a time. When one was healed, its power was exhausted. Not so with the "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness." Though ten thousand should "step down before" us, we can follow, and be healed all the same. Still it is in an important sense true that every man has his opportunities, which, if unimproved, pass away, and the angel returns not again to "trouble the pool."

What is to be done with the "multitude of impotent folk" who, fill our "porches" to overflowing, and hang like a dead weight on the neck of the church's activities? There's only one hope for them: peradventure *Jesus* may pass by that way. Brother, has he been invited lately to come your way! Has the pleading cry reached his ear—"Come down e'er my child—my husband—my neighbor—die!" We've tried a good many other plans. We've thrust them into the pool, (the church,) hoping that would heal them; we've given them the sacraments, hoping to exorcise the evil spirit out of them. With what effect! They're as impotent as ever. What can we do more? Cry to *Jesus*: O Lord, come and heal, for thou alone hast the power!

When *Jesus* came by and saw the man, the work of healing was soon accomplished. It needed but a word: "Wilt thou be made whole?" "Yes, Lord." "*Rise!*" And in a moment the work was done. The man was healed, and departed to his home.

Reader! "I have a message from God unto thee." "Wilt thou be made whole?" Are you conscious of your need, and do you ardently desire the boon? "Wilt thou be made whole?"—completely, entirely, forever whole? "Yes," you say, "but it will take a long time for that." Not if *Jesus* does it. Holiness, like pardon, is not wages to be earned, nor a reward to be merited; but a gift to be received by faith. Put yourself fully into the hands of the Great Physician; trust his love and power, believe His word, and thou shalt be made whole.

Do not fear the frown of the world. When a blind man comes against you in the street you are not angry at him; you say, He is blind, poor man, or he would not have hurt me. So you may say of the poor worldlings when they speak evil of Christians—they are blind.—*M'Cheyne*.

A SUCCESSFUL SEEKING.

—
"Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." (Jer. xxix. 13.)
—

A FARMER, who had long neglected the house of God, and indulged in the use of profane language, one day lost a bank-note in his barn. He searched for it in vain. At length he said, "That note is in the barn, and I will search for it until I find it." Accordingly he went to the barn, and carefully moved the hay and straw, hour after hour, till he found the note. A few weeks before this he had been awakened to a sense of his need of a Saviour, and had earnestly sought to live a better life. His anxiety increased. A short time after he lost the note, he sat by the fire musing on the state of his soul, when he turned to his wife, and asked, "What must one do to become a Christian?" "You must seek for it," she replied "as you sought for the bank-note." It was "a word fitly spoken." He followed the direction; and, through the mercy of Christ, he found the "pearl of great price," and rejoiced in the hope of the glory of God.

THE SINNER'S FRIEND.

—
You were sick the other day. The physician looked very grave, and whispered something to your wife. She did not tell you what it was; but your life trembled in the scale, and it is a wonder you are here to-night. Shall I tell you why you are here? Do you see that tree yonder? It has been standing in its place for many years, but it has never yielded any fruit, and several times the master of the garden has said: "Cut it down." The other day the woodman came with the axe: he felt its edge: it was sharp and keen enough, and he began to cut, and the chips were flying, and he made a deep gash. But the gardener came by,—one who had watched over the tree, and had hope of it even yet,—and he said: "Spare it—spare it yet a little longer; the wound thou hast made may heal; and I will dig about it, and dung it, and if it bring forth fruit, well. Spare it another year, and if not, then cut it down." That tree is yourself. The woodman is Death. That chopping at the trunk was your sickness. *Jesus* is he who spared you. You had not been here to-night—you had been there in hell among damned spirits, howling in unutterable woe—if it had not been that Friend of sinners had spared your life.

DAY BY DAY.

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."

*Words anonymous.]**[Music by C. W. COATES.*

1 Day by day the man - na fell; Oh, to

learn this les - son well! Still by con - stant

mer - cy fed, Give us, Lord, . . . Give us, Lord,

Give us, Lord, . . our dai - - ly bread.

1 Day by day the manna fell;
Oh, to learn this lesson well!
Still by constant mercy fed,
Give us, Lord, our daily bread.

2 Day by day, the promise reads,
Daily strength for daily needs;
Cast foreboding fears away,
Take the manna of to-day.

3 Lord, our times are in Thy hand;
All our sanguine hopes have plann'd,
To Thy wisdom we resign,
And would mould our wills to Thine.

4 Thou our daily task shalt give;
Day by day to Thee we live;
So shall added years fulfil
Not our own, our Father's will.