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## MATERIALISM.

BY REV. W. B. CLARK, QUEBEC.

“But there is a spirit in man.”—Job xxxii. 8.

I believe there is a latent infidelity in the heart of every man, which can never be removed, till the Spirit of God quicken the dead soul into spiritual life. Man, in his natural state, being dead in trespasses and sins, can neither realize spiritual things, nor feel a sense of their supreme importance. There may not be a positive disbelief of divine things. Their existence may be admitted, and yet their power may not be felt. And hence it is that men, having a natural dislike to the truth of God, and an inability fully to realize it, are so apt to imbibe erroneous views, or fall into downright infidelity. Till the natural unbelief of the heart is removed, a man will always be ready to fall into outward and positive unbelief.

Unbelief has assumed different forms in different ages. During the last century atheism prevailed extensively. That has given way, in the present day, to pantheism, which denying the existence of a personal God, and representing God, in every thing, is scarcely, if at all any better. During the same period, among those who had not gone thus far, a disbelief of revealed religion had taken possession of the minds of many; and an utter contempt for it was expressed not unfrequently both in books and conversation. From the beginning of this century things took a turn for the better. Formal infidelity was written down; and the genuineness and authenticity of Scripture established by irresistible argument, so that among intelligent and well read men, disbelief in revelation scarcely dared show itself. It was an earnest time; and men were in earnest about religion, as well as

every thing else; and the effects of this are seen in the general respect manifested for religion, in the improved appearance of churches and church-going habits of the people; in the zeal for, and success of, missionary enterprises,—in the improved tone of moral feeling, and energetic efforts to promote the social comfort, and moral well-being of the masses. Again, the tide has turned, and the natural enmity of the heart to God's truth is just manifesting itself in another way.

Among unbelievers in the present day there is generally some respect expressed for the Scriptures, as venerable productions of antiquity, more or less authentic, as containing, among heaps of questionable matter, portions of truth, which may be sifted out, and ascertained by the careful exercise of reason. This view proceeds of course, upon the denial of the inspiration of the Bible, and tends to destroy all confidence in it; yea, to render it utterly worthless, and incredible;—for its authors claim inspiration, and if this claim can be disproved, then of course it follows that they are utterly untrustworthy.

There is another class of men, who profess great respect for the Bible, admit its divine inspiration, and express a desire simply to embrace and follow out what they believe to be its teachings, and yet reject some of the most important doctrines which the great body of Christians hold dear, and which have been embraced, with very few exceptions, by all the most learned and competent interpreters, both in ancient and modern times. One of the doctrines rejected by this class of men, is that of the

immortality of the soul of man, or to speak more correctly, that of the existence of the soul, as any thing separate, or distinct from the body. They regard man, not as a complex being made up of soul and body, but as a unit, and exclusively a material being. It follows therefore from this, that, when man dies, he does not fall asleep, but he ceases, as a distinct being to exist. For, if what we call the soul of man is nothing distinct from the body, when this body becomes lifeless, and is dissolved into its primitive elements; and the atoms of which it was composed pass into vegetables, and, through them into the bodies of other men and animals, it is clear that, though the matter of which the man was composed still exists, the man himself has ceased to exist. And such a thing as the resurrection of a mere material man, the matter of whose body has existed in many different bodies, is a physical impossibility. A new creation of a precisely similar man there may be, but the resurrection of the very same man, with his personal identity untouched, there cannot be.

This doctrine of materialism,—one of the most shallow and irrational which the misguided mind of man ever devised, the modern advocates of it pretend to find in Scripture. Here then I shall join issue with them, and endeavor to show, that such a doctrine does not receive the slightest countenance from the word of God properly understood. With this view then I shall consider, first the leading texts, to which these men appeal, in support of their materialistic views, and then, in the second place, bring forward the most important scriptural evidence, in support of generally received opinion concerning the immortality of the soul, and its capacity of existing in a state of consciousness and activity, when separated from the body.

First, then, our opponents appeal to the Pentateuch for negative arguments, in support of their peculiar views. It is admitted that, in the Pentateuch, there is very little direct reference to the future state of existence, no appeal made to men's feelings as immortal beings, and no inducements held out to obedience to God's law, drawn from a regard to a future state of reward and punishments. And on the absence of all appeal to the future state of existence, Bishop Warburton, one of the most powerful of English writers, founds his great argument for the divine legation of Moses. There is much force in the Bishop's argument; but I feel persuaded that there are indirect allusions to the immortality of the soul, in the Pentateuch, which show that the ancient Hebrews knew and received that great doctrine; and to these I shall afterwards refer. But the modern Sadducees are not content with endeavouring to draw negative arguments from Scripture, in support of their peculiar views: they endeavour to bring direct and positive evidence from the word of God that man is merely a material being, and so far as any immortal spiritual principle is concerned, no better than the beasts that perish.

Let us look at some of these passages. The passage to which I shall first direct your attention, is that which at first sight appears most strongly to favour the doctrine of materialism; you will find it in Eccles. iii. 18—22. In this passage the wise man is speaking of the vanity of man as mortal, and of the wickedness and folly of those who live only for a present world; and regarding the condition of such, he said in his heart, or prayed, that God might manifest them to themselves, and let them see that they are no better than brute beasts. Solomon does not express it as his opinion, as some ignorantly suppose, that man spiritually is no better than a

beast; but he prays that men indulging in sin, and living only for a present world, might be made to see, that they are acting the part of brute beasts, and reducing themselves to their level. And then he goes on to illustrate his meaning in the 19th verse: "For that," says he, "which befalleth the sons of men, considered us animals, befalleth beasts: even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath: so that a man, with reference to his animal nature only, hath no preminence above a beast: for all the pursuits of the natural man, living for a present world only, are vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." And then in the 21st verse he explains the true state of the matter, pointing out the grand distinction between the man and the beast, lamenting that so few consider it. "Who knoweth," says he, "the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" As if he had said, how few are there who show by their lives, that they know and consider the grand distinction between the man and the beast, which consists in this,—that the spirit of man goeth upward to appear before God's judgment-seat, while the Spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth. And then, in the 22nd verse, he states the conclusion at which he has arrived, as to the manner in which men should act with regard to the fruits of their own labor. "Wherefore" says he, I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in the fruit of his own works." This just means, that he had arrived at the conclusion, with regard to a man's conduct in this world, that he ought to take the comfortable use of the fruits of his honest industry, receiving nothing but what he could possess with a good conscience, and retaining nothing but what would afford him enjoy-

ment, and not uselessly heaping up wealth for those who are to come after him. For this he assigns two reasons. First, because this is the portion assigned him by God in the world, and he should enjoy it, and be thankful for it. Secondly, he should enjoy and dispose of it himself; for he knows not who may come into possession of it after him, or what use the future possessor may make of it.

It must be admitted that this is a somewhat difficult passage, but, far from countenancing the gloomy doctrine of the materialist, it brings prominently forward the spiritual nature of man, and states that the grand distinction between the man and the beast is this, that while the spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth, the spirit of man goeth upward to heaven. That this is the meaning of the passage is evident, from the parallel passage in the 12th chapter of this same book, where, at the 7th verse, the Preacher saith, "Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."—It will be universally agreed that an author best understands his own meaning; and consequently, when an obscure or dubious statement occurs in one place, it ought to be interpreted, according to the known opinion of the author, as more clearly developed in some other portion of his writings.

The spirit of this somewhat difficult passage is faithfully and beautifully expressed in the following paraphrase quoted from an anonymous author, in Dr. Clark's Commentary:

"Man was born  
To die, nor aught exceeds in this respect  
The vilest brute. Both transient, frail and vain,  
Draw the same breath; alike grow old, decay,  
And then expire: both to one grave descend;  
There blended lie, to native dust returned.  
The nobler part of man, 'tis true, survives  
The frail corporeal frame: but who regards  
The difference? Those who live like beasts, as  
such

Would die, and be no more, if their own fate  
Depended on themselves. Who once reflects,  
Amidst his revels, that the human soul,  
Of origin celestial, mounts aloft,  
While that of brutes to earth shall downward go?

There is a considerable resemblance between this passage and the 49th Psalm, which is urged also by materialists in support of their peculiar views. I have seen the 7th and 9th verses quoted with this view, omitting the parenthesis contained in the 8th verse. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption." It is difficult to see how this bears on the subject of materialism at all, and nothing but a most perverse ingenuity can press it into the service. I would observe that the Psalmist is here speaking of those worldly-minded men who trust in their wealth; and his object is to show the utter inability of wealth to ward off that death which such men most dread. None of them can, by their riches, redeem a brother from the grave, nor give to God a ransom for him, that he should not die and see corruption; but that he should live for ever. The parenthesis in the 8th verse,—“For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceases for ever,” is not very easily understood. The celebrated German critic Hengstenberg translates it thus—“And precious is the ransom of their souls, and he must put it off for ever.” Granting that this has no reference to the redemption of the soul, properly so called, which I do not think it has, but that the word soul here means simply a breathing frame, and that the expression refers simply to the impossibility of money purchasing a reprieve from death, what has this to do with the doctrine of materialism? Obviously nothing at all, in the estimation of men who, from their knowledge of

language, are capable of forming an intelligent opinion upon the subject.

The 12th verse of this Psalm is also pressed into the service of the materialists. “Nevertheless, man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.” The meaning of this is explained in the 20th verse, where the sentiment is more fully expressed—“Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.” That is, the man of wealth, who occupies an honorable position in this world, but understandeth not the relation in which he stands to God, is as stupid as a brute beast. This verse seems to me rather to prove the immortality of man. There is a contrast here implied, though not expressed, between the end of man and the end of the beast.—The beast perishes, man does not; and therefore more ought to be expected, in point of intelligence and religious feeling, on the part of the man than of the beast. And yet it is not so, in regard to these rich worldly-minded men, who trust in their riches rather than in their God; and in this respect, are no better than the beasts that perish.

There is a passage in the 146th Psalm, on which the materialists lay great stress, and which they think is decisive of the question in their favor. At the 4th verse, it is said—“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” It has been alleged that, if the soul is the living, thinking part of man, the statement here made that the day a man dies his thoughts perish, proves that, at that time, the soul or thinking principle perishes with the body. This is very puerile and shallow criticism, for thoughts are just as much distinct things from the thinking being, as words are from the man that utters them, or strokes from the hand that inflicts them. And surely a man's thoughts, or purposes,

or intentions, may perish, while the man who forms them does not.

This is a sufficient answer, so far as the present controversy is concerned. But the word *thoughts* does not here convey the true meaning of the original. The Hebrew word thus rendered, here properly means splendors, or glories. You will observe that the psalmist is exhorting men not to put their trust in princes, who cannot save themselves from death. And here he tells us that their *splendors* perish, the day their breath departs from them. They are then reduced to an equality with other men, and hence the folly of trusting in them.

*To be continued.*

#### A THOUGHT FOR BUSINESS MEN.

Business may thrive or languish, success or disappointment may attend your plans, wealth or poverty may bestanding at your doors—it is all one as to your *future* destiny. Every hour is bearing you on towards the judgment-seat of Christ; every transaction in which you engage, every calamity that sweeps over you, every auspicious venture that helps to fill your coffers, is helping to mould your character for endless blessedness or eternal woe. Whether you are oppressed by the leaden stagnation of trade, or elated by the ensigns of a luxuriant prosperity, there is *one* interest that never droops, one mighty Trafficker whose work never intermits. Invisible to mortal eyes, He is gliding about among you, alike active and unsparing in your seasons of depression, and in the palmiest days of your commercial triumph. While He keeps at a distance, you heed Him not: He may mow down His victims by thousands without disturbing your composure. But sometimes He crosses your path so near you—He strikes down a partner, a neighbour, a friend, so dear to your heart, or so closely affiliated with you in business, that you are startled: you feel like one who sees the ground torn up at his feet by a thunderbolt. For the time, you feel that life's misnamed realities are airy nothings.

You are ready to exclaim, with the great British statesman, "What shadows we are! What shadows we pursue!" But how transient, too often, are these impressions! You miss that familiar form in your walks, but the crowd closes in, and, after a few days, fills up the void produced by his removal; and though *he* may not be at once forgotten, the solemn and tender reflections awakened by his death, are soon merged in the absorbing secularities of your profession.—Is this to act as becomes your rational nature? Can you appeal, in its vindication, to these maxims of prudence which govern you in your business arrangements. While you are contriving how you may increase your property, you may be summoned to that world where all the gold that was ever mined could not purchase a drop of water to cool your parched tongues. While you are hanging with suspense upon the mails and the telegraph, for intelligence which is to consummate or blast your earthly hopes, the voice of God may fall upon your ear. "This night thy soul shall be required of thee!"—I speak as to wise men. You need a portion which is satisfying and inalienable; which neither life with its temptations, nor death with its disruption of all mortal ties, can take from you. Such a portion is to be found only in the Gospel of Christ.

"This is the field where hidden lies  
The pearl of price unknown:  
That merchant is divinely wise,  
Who makes the pearl his own."

To secure it, is to have God for your Father, Christ for your Saviour, and heaven for your heritage. To neglect it, is to peril your everlasting felicity on the uncertainties of every fleeting hour. Yield while you may, to the strivings of the Spirit, and accept the proffered mercy: for "the redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever!"—*The Bible and the Counting House, by Dr. Boardman.*

It makes a difference to God how we act. His happiness is affected by the conduct of His children; for His heart is the heart of a father. If, when my child sins, a pang goes through my own soul, and I fly to rescue him from further iniquity, it is because God struck into my breast a little spark of what in Him is infinite.—*Beecher.*

## LITTLE SINS.

Little sins are really *sinful* as larger.— They are foxes, and they spoil the vines. One flaw ruins us in the eye of God. We recognise and act upon this in other things; sad and strange that we should fail to do so in higher. "Who does not see that the tiniest flaw or fracture in a diamond vitiates the whole gem, be it a very Koh-i-noor—that the smallest streak or stain sets aside the marble block of Carrara, that is like the driven snow—that the slightest spot or speck dims to rejection the whole polished lens—that the most insignificant leak is perilous? In these cases it will not arrest the verdict to allege the fault is so very small. Actual transactions establish this.

Once a famous ruby was offered to this country. The report of the crown jeweller was, that it was the finest that he had ever seen or heard of, *but* that one of its facets—one of the "little" cuttings of the face—was slightly fractured. The result was, that almost invisible flaw reduced its value by thousands of pounds, and it was rejected from the regalia of England.

Again. When Canova was about to commence his great statue of the great Napoleon, his keenly-observant eye detected a tiny red line running through the upper portion of the splendid block, that at infinite cost had been fetched from Paros, and he refused to lay a chisel on it.

Once more. In the story of the early struggles of the elder Herschell, while he was working out the problem of gigantic *specula* or telescope lenses, you will find that he made scores upon scores, ere he got one to satisfy him. A scratch like the slenderest spider-line sufficed to vitiate what had cost him long weeks of toil and anxiety. Again. In the "leak" of a ship, the measure of the ship to resist the shock of wave or the strain of the wind is not its strongest but its weakest part.

The tremendous issues contingent on the attention or non attention to the slightest "leak," was illustrated in a recent incident in the present deplorable civil war in America. One of the Federal war ships had what seemed a merely superficial "leakage," and, though noticed, it was not thought necessary to countermand

the order that she should take part in an approaching conflict. *At the crisis of the encounter* it was found that the sea water had got oozing into the gunpowder magazine, and rendered nearly the whole useless. On that powder hung victory or defeat.—The "little leak" went uncared for, and an inferior force won.

I would have you see and know assuredly that nothing in or about sin can be—except in the relation of words—"little," that sin is and ever must be sin, and sin only, and sin absolutely, and sin eternally. The smallest neglected spark of fire has flashed out into a conflagration; the smallest neglected leak has sunk the proudest ship; the smallest neglected sickness has "brought down" to the grave; and the smallest consciously neglected, unconfessed, and *therefore* unpardoned sin will loose you, O man! O woman! thy soul! Only when our sin has been carried to the Lord, in penitent confession been placed beneath the "sprinkling blood," is there deliverance.

Spencer, in his "Things New and Old," furnishes us with a quaint but pat citation from Ludovicus de Granada:—"By the want of one nail the iron shoe is lost; and the shoe being lost, the horse falleth; and the horse falling the rider perisheth.—Such are the dangers that he incurreth that neglecteth 'small things.' The neglect of the lesser maketh way but for the greater evil; and he that setteth light by 'small things,' falleth by 'little and little,'" Also another, even more apposite, from Philippus Boskierus, "A little rope sufficeth to hang a great thief; a little dross abaseth much gold; a little poison infecteth much wholesome liquor; a little heresie corrupteth much sound doctrine; a little fly is enough to spoil all the alabaster box of ointment. So the smallest sin, the least *peccadillo*, WITHOUT GOD'S MERCY, is sufficient to damn our souls to all eternity."—*Mr. Grosart on "Little Sins."*

Take from the Bible the Godship of Christ, and to me it would be but a heap of dust. I would as soon have all Egypt raked into a heap, wherein not a stone of its cities, nor a trace of its inhabitants could be found, as that book, if its Christ be not God.—*Beecher.*

## ON PEACE WITH GOD.

BY AN OLD AUTHOR.

1. It must be owned that no question has ever been moved of greater consequence to our peace and comfort than this, *how shall a professor come to a true satisfaction about his state towards God.* Or how shall he be ascertained as to his interest in the blessings of the covenant and the eternal safety of his precious soul.

We know that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. As soon as the King of terrors has given the mortal stroke, our souls must launch out into an unknown eternity, and must be landed in a state of everlasting happiness or misery. Yea, our own consciences sometimes place us beforehand in the presence of God the judge of all. And a time will speedily come when we shall approach to the very borders of eternity. If conscience be now awake, the question presses upon the mind with the greatest importunity, "How can I be satisfied as to the concerns of my immortal soul." If Christians in general were but thus brought solemnly to realize these important matters, they would presently apprehend in their very hearts that nothing less than a foundation entirely *safe*, and a hope absolutely *sure*, would serve their purpose.

2. But where is that to be found which is sufficient to support the soul and conscience in the agonies of death, and the prospect of an eternal state? Where is that which will give satisfying relief to the conscience, and a clear confidence before God? I know you will immediately say, *in Jesus Christ alone.* But do not your thoughts still leave room for such questions as these, "how shall I come at Christ, or how shall I be assured of my interest in him? What shall or what must I do to obtain it, or what must I experience or practise in order to gain satisfaction." Here come in abundance of perplexing queries, and a score of important difficulties not easy to be solved. So that you are almost as much at a loss about your everlasting state, as if you had heard nothing of Christ and his work for sinners. This important question then still returns unanswered.

To solve it to our satisfaction, we set

about examining our own hearts and ways, our past conduct or past experience, in hopes of finding something there which may be the means of allaying our pains and easing our consciences. We look with eagerness and solicitude into every corner of our hearts to see whether in the midst of all the *bad* we find there, we cannot find something *good* wrought in us, or something truly gracious in our experiences, that should be a proper satisfying proof of our especial interest.\* All which pains are taken chiefly with the view of obtaining ease to our minds and consciences. Upon inquiry we perhaps discern some probable evidences in our favour, or think we have felt some distinguishing experiences; and thus we obtain ease and relief. But what if it should appear after all that these evidences are attended with *uncertainty*, or that there is some reason to suspect that they may be delusive. How then can the mind be eased or the conscience pacified upon *this* plan?

And let us here seriously reflect that while we are thus anxiously employed to get rest to our souls, we are under a strong bias to think the best, and make the best of what we find and feel. How then can we know but that, under the influence of such a propensity, we may actually put a cheat upon ourselves, through a fond desire to apprehend that our state is at bottom safe and good. And what if our deceitful hearts should operate in this case to bring us into a delusion? Where are we then?

I know that these thoughts at first view seem to take away all use for marks and signs. But they do not, as we shall soon see. However that may be, no one, I think, can deny or evade the force of these observations, how searching or discouraging soever they may seem to be. But there are some further thoughts equally alarming which must not be omitted. Have not many made a shining profession, and in their own and others' apprehension been favoured with the most distinguishing experiences, who yet have turned out hypocrites and apostates? Have not many talked high things about the witness, seal, and earnest of the Spirit as enjoyed by

\* "The saints of God often forget that the basis of the assurance of sense is the assurance of faith. They must rest on God's Word, without sense, if they would have sensible assurance."—*J. H. Evans.*



themselves, and yet have been in the event found liars? Again are there not counterfeit graces, comforts, and experiences? Can these things be denied? Upon this plan for obtaining peace, we must therefore distinguish, divide, and subdivide very nicely, before we can be supposed to arrive at any degree of certainty, by distinguishing what is genuine from what is counterfeit, and after all, most probably, the matter must remain in doubtful, sad suspension. How then can we have any solid peace? Again, perhaps we are in such circumstances as to the distress of our souls, or as to approaching death, that a speedy answer *must* be given, or the soul sinks under its load, and runs almost into desperation. Many inexpressible struggles are produced in the soul, perhaps when there is neither time nor capacity to examine the matter sufficiently. And yet, in the midst of these unhappy circumstances, if a person discerns the infinite importance of his soul's affairs, he sees that nothing short of a certainty upon which he may immediately rest, will afford him satisfaction.

3. But does the Divine word leave us in such a perplexity as this? If it does, where is our hope, our rest, our confidence?

Must not Christianity be, upon this plan, a very uncomfortable thing—a very uncertain scheme for hope and peace toward God? And does it not in this way actually leave us, yea, and *oblige* us, to take the chief part of our hope and comfort directly from what we may be supposed to have felt or done? But, behold! in the midst of all these inextricable perplexities, the Gospel proclaims the Lord Jesus Christ and his salvation, open and free for the sure relief and hope of the distressed and guilty soul. If this be discerned in its beauty and importance, how necessary, how valuable, encouraging, and attracting must the hope of the Gospel appear! Now while everything else proves uncertain, this is certain; when every other refuge and support fails, this appears sufficiently firm and free: it is found a safe retreat, a sure foundation, a sufficient stay, detached from every other thought and consideration.\*

\* In Brook's *Cabinet of Jewels*, there is mention made of a dying saint who testified that the peace he had enjoyed through life "did not so much arise from a greater measure of grace than other Christians had, or from an immediate witnessing of the

But perhaps your anxious minds will here object, "How can I be satisfied with-

Spirit; but because he had a more clear understanding of the covenant of grace than others, having studied and preached it so many years." And, in Fraser's *Life*, we have this testimony, "that which did me most good was, a more full discovery of the covenant of grace, meditations on the gospel on Christ's gentle nature."—*Select Biographies*, vol. 2, p. 217. "About eighteen years ago, I fell into a deep and dreadful oppression of spirits, the very remembrance of which is ready to make me shudder even to this day. There was some great disorder of body, but my mind was still more disordered, and felt the weight of all. Everything of a distressing and terrifying nature, as to my spiritual concerns especially, seemed to be present with me. I thought myself the most miserable being on this side of hell. I often wondered to see people afflict themselves about the common calamities of life; they appeared mere trifles, infirmities that might be easily borne; but mine was a wounded spirit, torn with the clearest apprehensions of the malignancy of sin, and the displeasure of an Almighty God. I not only could not see any interest I had in his pardoning mercy, but feared I was given up by him to the tyranny of my corruptions, so that I should certainly fall into some gross and scandalous sin, as a just judgment upon me, and so be left to perish with the most aggravated guilt, a monument of the Divine resentment against false pretenders to religion. I often wished to die, even though I dreaded the consequences. I sought the Lord by prayer and other means of grace day and night, but he still hid his face from me: now and then a glimpse of hope would break in upon me, but it was of short continuance. The Bible seemed as a sealed book, in which I could meet with no comfort, though often much to aggravate my distress and increase my terrors. I endeavoured to examine myself, and search for the evidences of renewing grace in my heart, but all in vain; the more I searched, the more dark, and confounded, and distressed I grew. I continued to preach indeed to others, but very often with this heart-sinking conclusion, that *I myself was a castaway*. Sometimes, even in the midst of my work, the melancholy darkness would rush in upon my soul, so that I was ready to sink down in the pulpit. Though for the most part I was tolerable during the exercise, yet I generally went to the pulpit and returned from it with trembling heart and knees. Many passages in the book of Job, and the Psalms, particularly the 88th Psalm, I felt, as I read them, with peculiar sensations. Thus I continued for more than twelve months, enjoying scarcely two comfortable days together.

"At length I came to this resolution, namely, to give up the point of proving myself a child of God already (which was what I had been labouring at all along), as a necessary medium of my comfort, and grant that I was a vile, sinful, and every way unworthy creature, admit the whole charge brought against me, and seek my remedy in Christ. For I argued, There was forgiveness with God for the chief of sinners. The blood of Christ could cleanse from all sin—and therefore from mine. He came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance—sinners without distinction of degrees, sinners as such, and because they were such. It was said, that *whosoever would, might come and take of the water of life freely, and that he would in no wise cast them out*. Hence I was led to observe, that, if I could not go to him as a saint I might go to him as a sinner. I resolved, therefore, to lay aside my inquiries after the evidences of my interest in him as one of his renewed people, and to look entirely to him, from whom all renewing grace, and the evidences of it, must come—to look to him as a guilty, polluted, perishing creature, that had no hope, no succour, but in the pure mercy of God through him. And thus I was led to such views of the all-sufficiency of the great Redeemer and his willingness to save even the worst of sinners, such as I concluded myself to be, as silenced all my doubts, scattered my fears, and gave the most delightful peace and joy to my conscience. I now learnt indeed

out an assurance of my own *special* interest in Christ, which this general declaration of the Gospel cannot afford me, because it bears an equal aspect to all sinners as such?" But I would ask again, What kind of assurance do you want? Do you want to be so fully certified of your everlasting welfare as to be set at rest from all sort of fear—an assurance that shall determine your state, whether you love and obey Christ or not? Do you want to be able to say, My mountain stands strong, and I shall never be moved? Do you want such assurance as shall allow you to think yourself safe, in any other way, than that of a constant, immediate, absolute dependence upon God in Christ for all you want and expect, and so trusting, loving, and obeying him accordingly? If so, get this assurance of interest and safety where you can: the Word of God does not give it you, because it does not assert directly concerning any individual now living, that he shall certainly be saved; neither can you obtain it by any positive certainty arising from duties or experiences, since the heart is always deceitful. But see here in the Gospel such a certainty afforded, as brings the soul into a state of immediate dependence upon God, and cleaving to

what I thought I had (and perhaps really had) learned before, namely, *to live by faith alone upon the Son of God—to make his sacrifice and righteousness my constant refuge, and draw all my consolations thence.* I found I had unawares laid too great a stress upon evidences of grace, and looked too much to them for my comfort, and too little to Christ. I plainly saw, that with all the brightest evidences of grace about me, I was still a sinner and must apply to my Saviour as such, in order to give life and vigour to my consolations and hopes; and that the spiritual life in me must be perpetually supplied from the same fountain whence I had derived what I had already experienced. I found that the seasons of *darkness* were not the proper seasons for seeking after evidences; but that the immediate and leading duty was, *trusting in the Name of the Lord.* I saw more clearly than ever, that in the great business of acceptance with God, I could bring no righteousness of my own that would avail; but that as a creature utterly undone myself, I must look to him *who takes away the sin of the world.* That God never rejected any that seriously and in earnest applied to him, because they were *more guilty and unworthy* than others, or accepted others because they were less so; and, in a word, that as the *best must*, so the *worst man*, come to him, through a penitent faith in the precious blood and righteousness of his Son, with equal assurance of a gracious welcome. And from that time to this (I bless God for his great mercy) I have never had any long-continued doubt of my interest in his saving love. Whenever darkness and distractions assault me, I am enabled to look to him who is the light and consolation of Israel: and to remember that his grace is as free to me as another, and that he is as willing as able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him."—*Letter from an old Minister.*

Him alone, assuring us, that in resting on Him we are safe, and nowhere else: that while we in our hearts esteem God in Christ as our own only hope and portion, our everlasting interests are secure, not merely in the purpose of God, according to the everlasting covenant, but likewise according to the open promise of the gospel. Yea, we are assured, that in knowing and obeying the gospel, the Spirit witnesses with our spirit, that we may enjoy everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.

4. The Scriptures most comfortably declare the gospel to be of such a nature that *whosoever believes it shall be saved*; while they aver, with equal solemnity, that *he who believeth not shall be damned.* So that our greatest concern lies here: lest our faith should not be the faith of God's elect; lest our hope should not be the hope of the gospel; and lest our obedience should not be the obedience of faith. Whether our faith, hope, and obedience be of the right kind, can only be known by its being produced, supported, or influenced by the gospel. Let us then look a little closely into this matter. Every person, except one that is in despair, has some hope; and that hope of his is supported by some thoughts or sentiments in his mind and heart. Now, I say, that if the sentiment which gives a person his peace of conscience be anything opposite to, or separate from, the gospel, as proclaiming a free and perfect Saviour, he does not believe it; but he has, or desires to have a satisfaction which the gospel does not administer. Perhaps it is an enthusiastic satisfaction, formed upon a persuasion or appropriation wrought by some spirit, which speaks to him more than, or aside from, what the gospel, properly understood, will consent. Or perhaps his satisfaction is *antinomian*; such as affords him reason to fear sin less than otherwise he might see a necessity for, if he had not this hope. Whereas we must always take it for granted, if we can dare to sin, or can dare to neglect our duty, under an apprehension of the safety of our state, however obtained, or however proved, that we do not now understand the true grace of God; for that makes all who understand it to know and feel, that it teaches them to deny all ungodliness and

worldly lusts, &c. The satisfaction which the gospel affords is such, that a person cannot indulge sin without losing that satisfaction; because in so doing his heart says that not Christ, but self and sense are his hope and portion. Or perhaps a person's peace may be Pharisaical or self-righteous in some shape or other, supported by some species of self-confidence, saying in his heart, "I cannot be contented with a saviour freely and openly proclaimed; I do not like to be set upon a level with the vilest of sinners, and to receive my hope and comfort upon the same plan with such—I will not stand upon the same footing with them." Or else he will say, "I have, or I must have something distinguishing in me, some mark or sign, or I will not, I dare not, believe and rest upon Christ."

But after all, you may say, "How can I be satisfied, unless I am conscious that I believe *truly* and *savingly*, since the Scriptures say, He that believeth not shall be damned? Must I not, then, by examination and proof, have it appear to my conscience that I am a true believer, before I can have any well-grounded satisfaction?"

This I find to be the grand objection frequently made and urged against the present view of the gospel; and since it may be considered as a case of conscience, by which many are perplexed in their souls, as well as a sentimental objection whereby many may be stumbled, I shall therefore take the more particular notice of it in the following observations.

5. If we attend, then, to common sense and constant experience as to the nature, manner, and proof of believing or seeing, we shall find that these things are of such a nature that they entirely resolve themselves into their objects, so far as experience is concerned therein. A person is no farther conscious that he *sees* an object, than as the obj<sup>t</sup> seen does some way affect him; neither is a person properly conscious that he *believes* a proposition of importance any farther than what he believes impresses him. When we behold an object, in common cases, our minds are not employed in thinking about the manner of our seeing, or the motion of light, but are only led to attend to the object seen; and as in believing, we are not thinking about any exercises of our own minds therein, but

only about the thing believed. So that a person comes to know that he sees or believes, not by reflection upon, or examination into anything in himself, but by finding or experiencing that what he sees or believes affects his mind. Thus there is produced a sort of experimental union between him that sees and believes, and what is seen or believed by him; so that he is affected with pleasure or pain, according to the light in which the thing appears that is seen, heard, or believed. Now, let us apply this plain thought to the report of the gospel.

6. The doctrine of free grace in Jesus Christ to sinners, as such, proclaimed in the word, is in itself most joyful, comfortable, encouraging, and soul-pacifying news; therefore we cannot know that we believe it, but by feeling, or becoming conscious that we are comforted, encouraged, or pacified thereby. Accordingly, the first effect of this belief must be peace of conscience before God through the blood of Christ, and some sense of the Divine favour through the righteousness of Christ, proclaimed as free in the gospel. This must be, more or less, the necessary consequences, unless there remain in the mind some ignorance, doubt, or mistake, about the gospel itself; or unless the mind be drawn off to something else distinct from it, or opposite to it, whereby the efficacy of the truth proclaimed may be enervated or undermined. When this appears to be the case, nothing can be more suited to remove any impediment in the way of its efficacy, than the declaring, explaining, proving, or vindicating the truth, with its importance. If this method be rendered effectual by the Spirit of God, who alone can do it, then the mistake is rectified, the mind enlightened, and the doubt solved; whereupon the person is encouraged and comforted by the blessed word, on which he is caused to hope.\*

\* "What qualification can a guilty, polluted, impotent creature bring to his Saviour, beyond a *sight* and *feeling* of his misery, and a *desire* of deliverance? Holiness in principle, and the fruits of it in practice, are necessary to the final enjoyment of eternal life; but not necessary to our believing the gospel promises; because that belief itself is necessary to our holiness; for the heart is said to be *purified* by faith. The proper answer to every one that says, *What shall I do to be saved?* is that of the apostle, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* Believe what God has testified concerning his Son, as the *great propitiation for sin*, and you will find that the experience of the efficacy of His blood, to purge the

7. Though what the person now sees and believes, be in itself a general truth, openly proclaimed, yet the effect produced in believing it is a *peculiar* experience of spiritual peace, rest and refreshment; so that while others may be supposed to remain strangers to it, or to disbelieve it, or to be under some mistake about it, he that believes it, according as it is declared in the Word, becomes possessed of a distinguishing experience, whereby he differs from what he was before, and from what many others are.

8. This distinguishing experience is of such a nature, that it contains or produces, more or less, an experimental consciousness of an interest in, and enjoyment of the blessings comprehended in the declaration of free grace.

For when a person sees the Son, and believeth on Him, as freely exhibited, he therein and thereby becomes conscious that what he sees in Christ becomes *his* light; that Christ in whom he believes becomes *his* hope; that his soul is supported *by that* on which he trusts and leans; and that he is quickened and attracted by that glorious gospel which he believes and loves.\* This is the way in which all spiritual blessings come to be experienced and enjoyed by us. In this way we may arrive at satisfaction and support. And it is in vain, and unsafe for us, to desire to seek after any other knowledge of special interest than what arises out of, and is accompanied with, this sense and experience of a vital union and connection between our souls and Christ in a way of believing. Christ is brought so exceedingly near to us in the gospel of his grace, that he is no sooner seen and known, as thus exhibited, but this peace must arise in the soul more or less; otherwise, neither Christ, nor the gospel, nor the Divine grace, as revealed, can be said to be *quite free*.

conscience from dead works, and of his power to save us from our spiritual blindness and depravity, and every evil, will follow. It is for want of entering thoroughly into this distinction, and mistaking the nature of faith, and the order and place appointed for it in the great affair of salvation, that so many sincere Christians live such great strangers to the solid and lasting consolations of Christ."—*Letter from an old Minister.*

\* "Do you ask me, beloved, what it is that chiefly strengthens faith? It is having much to do with Jesus."—*J. H. Evans.* Again, "How is faith strengthened? By being much exercised with the object of faith."—*Do.*

*To be continued.*

## PRAYING MOTHERS.

A clergyman from California related the following incident, in connection with his own experience and observation: As he had a large circle of friends and acquaintances at the East, and as it was known that he was traveling to a great extent over California, he received many letters from anxious friends, begging him to hunt up a brother or a son, and endeavour to bring them to Christ. Many an earnest letter of this kind he had received. Among the rest was one from a mother, so urgent, so full of entreaty, that it took a deep hold upon his heart. The letter told him how she had agonized and prayed for a son in California, until she had lost all traces of him, and begged of him that, on her behalf, he would endeavour to look up the lost boy, who she feared was in the broad road to ruin, and, as he loved souls, do all he could to save him.

Then the speaker went on to say, "I hunted for that son a whole year. I made inquiries for him everywhere. I determined to find him, if possible. At last I found him in a gambling saloon, at the card table, deeply engaged in play. In the midst of his game I approached him, and told him I wished to speak with him. We descended into the street together. I told him how long I had been on the hunt for him, and it was all about the salvation of his soul. He laughed me to scorn. He assured me I used my time and money to very poor advantage in looking for him, and as he would take good care of himself, he did not know but thanks for all my painstaking would be superfluous. He said much that indicated that he looked upon my efforts with haughty disdain and contempt. But I had a commission to fulfill. So I requested him to go with me to the temperance room and there sign the temperance pledge; and then I wished him to go to the prayer-meeting with me. He flatly refused to do either. Stepping up close beside him, I placed my hand upon his shoulder and said, 'Charlie, I believe you have a pious, praying mother. I am here at the request of that mother. All this long year have I sought you, from place to place, in obedience to a request of that mother. I have the letter in my

pocket asking this of me; would you like to see it? The young man was struck dumb for a moment with astonishment. I ran my hand into my pocket for the purpose of showing him the letter. 'O,' said he, 'don't show it to me; don't produce the letter. I cannot bear to see it. If any young man owes a debt of gratitude to a mother, none more than I.' I asked him again to go with me. He answered, 'Let me go back and finish my game, and then I will come and go with you.' He went back and played out his game, and, good as his word, he came out and went with me. We first went to the temperance rooms, and he signed the pledge. Then we went to the prayer-meeting. The man was soon in great agony of spirit.

"To make a long story short, that young man became hopefully converted, and witnessed a good confession before many witnesses. He was a liberally educated young man. He was, in process of time, chosen to be a judge of the court of the county in which he resided. He was a conscientious judge. One day he was trying a man who was indicted for gambling and similar offenses—just such as he had before been guilty of. The man at the bar was a desperado, and shot the judge upon the bench. He was mortally wounded, and life was fast ebbing away. He sent immediately for me," continued the speaker; "I had just time to reach him and receive his last words. O, what precious words they were. 'Tell my dear mother,' said the dying young man, 'that I am dying in the assured hope of a glorious immortality beyond the grave. Send to her a thousand thanks that she sent you that letter, and O, a thousand thanks to you that you so faithfully followed me up, and hunted that whole year for me. Tell my darling mother I thank her for that love which never tired, and for the prayers which were never omitted for her far-off son. I am going—going to heaven. I shall meet her there. O, who can value a mother's prayers? And who would complain of the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God, if they would give him no rest, as did this mother—my dear, dear mother? Farewell.'"—From *Five Years of Prayer and the Answers*, by Rev. S. Irenæus Prime, D.D.

### "THE DAY IS AT HAND."

They tell me that a day will be,  
A dark and wondrous day,  
When earth, with every herb and tree,  
Red fire will burn away.

They say the stars from yonder sky  
Like withered leaves, will drop,  
The sun will shut his golden eye,  
And in his journey stop.

They say the silver moon will fall,  
Like blossom from a bough;  
And palace-gate and steeple tall,  
Will wasted lie, and low.

And there will be loud trumpet sounds  
To waken from their sleep  
The bones beneath the churchyard mounds,  
In the cold graves and deep.

And Christ our Lord from heaven will come,  
That dark and wondrous day,  
To take his happy people home,  
And send the bad away

Into a place of fire and pain,  
Of tears and many a cry;  
Where years, and years, and years again,  
No comfort will be nigh.

What should I do, a feeble child,  
If soon that day should rise,  
With the red fires and tempests wild  
Of judgment in the skies?

O Saviour Christ, Thou wilt descend  
A great and mighty King;  
And yet Thou art the help and friend  
Of many a feeble thing.

O Lord of angels! Lord of men!  
Teach me thy way to seek;  
And in thy mercy save me then,  
Though I be young and weak.

There is an anger that is damnable; it is the anger of selfishness. There is an anger that is majestic as the frown of Jehovah's brow; it is the anger of truth and love.

If a man meets with injustice, it is not required that he shall not be roused to meet it; but if he is angry after he has had time to think upon it, that is sinful. The flame is not wrong, but the coals are.—*Beecher.*

### THE TEACHING OF CHRIST'S MIRACLES.

Had Christ appeared upon earth with no superhuman power, the world might have justly asked for proofs of his high commission. When an ambassador goes from any nation to a foreign court the first thing he produces are his credentials. So with Christ, he did not come to earth unaccredited. He both confirmed faith, and confounded unbelief by his wonderful works. And that Christ's miracles were genuine, there is all the evidence which at this remote period of time could be desired. He who insinuates that they might have been nothing more than well planned impostures, must be prepared to admit, that his own perception is keener than that of the whole Jewish nation of Christ's day, for no one then denied their reality. The testimony even of his enemies was, "This man doeth many miracles." We have as strong proofs that Christ performed miracles, as most of us have of the existence of foreign countries. We all believe that there is such a place as Japan, although we have never been there ourselves, nor yet conversed with any one who has visited it. And upon what grounds do we believe that there is such an island? Simply upon the testimony of others. Why then call in question the same proof with regard to the miracles of Jesus? The people of his day were no doubt as apt at detection as what we are now, and they believed them to be genuine.

Some eminent men of our own times contend that Satan can grant the power to work miracles, and they point to the miracles of the Egyptian magicians as an instance; and they say a miracle only substantiates one of two things, that its performer is either assisted by God, or by Satan. Be this as it may, one thing we know, that the miracles attributed to Satan differ widely from those attributed to Christ. If

Satan has performed any miracles at all, he has performed no miracles of mercy, what Christ's all were, with one solitary exception—the cursing of the fig tree. A corrupt fountain cannot send forth pure water, neither do men gather grapes of thistles, nor figs from bramble bushes.

The miracles of Christ then, taken in connexion with his own assertions, prove him to be the Son of God with power. Behold him treading in majesty the white crested waves of the Galilean lake, while the vessels of the mariner are tossed as playthings upon its bosom. He asks for peace, and sooner than said, the boiling surges hide their heads, and the howling winds fly back to their mountain homes. Say is not this the very God of the storm. See him, at the marriage at Cana of Galilee, where the water reddens into wine at his command: there he stands forth as the bountiful one, who at vintage time hangs up the clustering grapes upon the vine, and in the desert of Bethsaida, where the five barley cakes swell out mysteriously to feed the hungry multitudes, does he not show himself to be identical with Him, who, in his unbounded beneficence, causes the harvest to rise up yearly from grains beneath the soil. How glorious is his person! A healing virtue is bound up in the skirts of his garment. The wonder is not that there was one Zaccheus, who got up into the sycamore tree to look at him, but the wonder is that there were so few. For death yielded up its charge, the grave sent back its festering dead at his word, and disease fled at his touch. Multitudes followed him from city to city, and strange multitudes these! The cripple from the womb stood up straight, and walked by his side; the dumb sung hosannas to his name, the deaf listened to his sermons, and the born blind gazed with wonder at his volume speaking eye. Never man wrought works like this man for he only is the God-

man, who turned the laws of nature at his will, even as he turneth the rivers of waters. Let those who would deny his divinity, study his acts afresh, and if they cannot discover in them the mercy and the might of a God, it is because their understandings are wilfully blinded, and they will not see.

X. Y. Z.

### OLD SIMEON.

Forty days after Christ's resurrection he entered the tabernacle not made with hands, a glorious conqueror, and what a contrast was that entrance with his entry into the typical temple on Mount Moriah, forty days after his birth. Then he was a poor helpless babe. The rich went thither to present their first-born sons, in the courts of the Lord's house, with the redemption lamb bleating by their sides, but the poor carpenter and his wife could only bring with them the humbler gift—a pair of young pigeons. Mary's heart, however, brought more than her hands, for she could say, "My soul doth magnify the Lord." And such a gift at God's altar he will ever honour. And he did it then. The high-born Jewish matron might look disdainfully upon Mary, her poor gift and poor son, while she prided herself upon her own wealth; but methinks she would be somewhat taken aback with surprise, when the president of the Sanhedrim, Simeon, son of the illustrious Hillel, entered the temple, for he passes by her son of high blood, and stops beside the wife of an artizan from Nazareth, who is paying down her five shekels (which she can ill spare) to redeem her infant from the Levitical service. He looks at her son, and as he gazes a voice from within says to him, as it afterwards said to John at the banks of the Jordan, "Behold the Lamb of God." Still he scans the little one in amazement: but that is not enough; he must handle him, and now he has him in his arms, and is bestowing upon him the best blessings of his heart, which is throbbing with gratitude to God. Old Simeon asks not for a sign; he is convinced at once. He is fully persuaded that this is the seed of the woman—the Lion of the tribe of Judah—the

Root and the offspring of David. He gazes yet again, and the look inspires his old age with all the poetry of youth. For, standing upon the verge of the grave, he sings "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Having seen the king in the beauty of childish intocence, Simeon now wished to shut his eyes for ever upon all earthly objects. Like old Jacob, who said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is yet alive," Simeon says, "It is enough; Jesus, the Messiah, has now appeared. I have seen him, and I am now contented to die." This good old man was now prepared to die. He had seen Christ, and he rejoiced in him as his Saviour. And no one is prepared to die, until like this old man he has seen and embraced the Lamb of God. No one is prepared to depart in peace, until by faith he has seen that child, which "is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." And it is to them who, like Simeon, are "waiting for the consolation of Israel," that he is thus revealed.

X. Y. Z.

### THE UNFETTERED CALL OF INFINITE LOVE.

*By the Rev. Horatius Bonar, D.D.*

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" Without delay, or doubting, or lingering, Come! You are a wanderer in a wasteful desert. Above you, the scorching sun; beneath you, the burning sand; around, the dreary wilderness. No pleasant verdure, no refreshing palm-tree, no sheltering covert, no shadow of a great rock in all this weary land! You have sought water, and there is none, and your tongue faileth for thirst. Whither shall you turn? You have gone to the desert-fountains and found them dry, or filled with the salt and bitter water which only increased your thirst. Oh, turn in hither and see this great sight, a fountain opened in the desert,—opened for you.—Go no longer from one broken cistern to another. Draw near this living fountain

which flows for you. Drink, yea, drink, abundantly of this full, this free, this freshly-flowing fountain! It is truly a refreshing fountain from which the weary spirit drinks and thirsts no more. It is a living, life-giving fountain, and wherever its immortal waters flow, they send through the fainting, dying spirit their stream of immortality. It is a pure river, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and he that drinks of it is at once transformed into its own transparent purity.

Oh, then, poor sinner, for what are you lingering? Why should you tarry one moment? Not for invitation, nor for liberty, for there is no exclusion, no unwillingness, yea, all gladness to receive you, and the invitation is proclaimed most freely to you, to all. Not for entreaty, for now are you entreated, as often before you have been, to come and take the water of life freely. Do you wait till you can bring something along with you to purchase the offered blessing? I tell you again, it is without money and without price,—most absolutely free! Are you waiting till you are thirsty enough? I tell you that you are thirsty enough already, and that no one could be otherwise who has lived a single day in a parched land like this.—And besides, if you think that your thirst is to qualify you for receiving Christ, you are miserably deluded. It makes you feel your need of Him, but that is all. It cannot qualify you for receiving Him.—Nothing in you can do that. Do you wait till you have wrought some improvement upon yourself? If you tarry till you have made yourself better, you will tarry forever, you will never come at all. Would the sick man think of making himself better before he came to the physician? You say, had I not been so guilty, I might be received; that is to say, you suppose there is a certain amount of guilt which might be forgiven, but every addition to it casts the balance against you; and you are to be condemned, not so much because you have not believed on Christ, but because you have committed a few sins more than another, and that other is forgiven, not so much because he has believed on Christ, as because he has

committed a few sins less than you. You say again, were I innocent, I would feel no hesitation in hastening to the Saviour. Were you innocent, you would not need a Saviour to hasten to, you could do without Him. In short, were you really to have, before coming to Christ, the preparation which you are seeking, when you came to Him you would find Him to be no Saviour at all for you, for He came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.

The gospel not merely presents itself to you, but it comes to you. It does not ask you to meet it half-way. It meets you all the way. It is not a voice which speaks to you from afar, but one which comes to your very ear and heart. All that it asks of you is just that you be willing to take freely what is so freely given. Poor burdened sinner, hear this, and be of good cheer! You would fain have the gift, the precious, the immortal gift, which is more to you than the wealth of worlds. Well, here is the gospel, which announces the gift. It tells you that that gift is not more precious than it is free, free in itself, and free to you; free to you as you are, not as you hope to be after some weeks' or months' preparation; free to you this very moment, all impenitent, all unbelieving, all ungodly as you are; free to you as a sinner, not merely *although* you are a sinner, but just *because* you are a sinner!

“But my heart, my hard, my impenitent, my unbelieving heart, surely I must have it softened and subdued a little before I can venture to go to Christ.” And who, then, we ask, is to do this for you? Can you do it yourself? “No; not myself.” Can any created being do it for you? “No; not any created being.”—Who, then, can do it? “Lord to whom can I go but to Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” It is plain, then, that the *first*, the very first thing you have to do, is just to go to that Saviour who thus invites you, that He may deliver you from all that hardness of heart, from all that unbelief over which you mourn. The existence of these within you is the strongest of all reasons for going straight to Him without delay, that all which you lament may be taken away,



## I MUST PRAISE MORE.

The title of a recent article was, "I must pray more;" and in it I expressed wonder that we pray so little, and gave reasons why we should pray more. But it strikes me that we ought to *praise* more, as well as pray more. I do not know how it is with others, but I know that I have a great deal for which to be thankful and to praise God. I feel that it will not do for me to spend all my breath in prayer. I should thus, it is true, acknowledge my dependence on God; but where would be the acknowledgment of his benefits conferred upon me? I must spend a part of my breath in praise. O, to be animated from above with that life whose alternate breath is prayer and praise. God has been very good to me. Yes, he has exercised goodness towards me in all its various forms of pity, forbearance, care, bounty, grace, and mercy; or to express all in one word, "God is love," and he has been love to me. I do not know why he should have treated me so kindly. I have sought, but can find no reason out of himself. I conclude it is because he "delighteth in mercy." His nature being love, it is *natural* for him to love his creatures, and especially those whom he has called his children. O, the goodness of God. The thought of it sometimes comes over me with very great power, and I am overwhelmed in admiration. Nothing so easily breaks up the fountain of tears within me. Those drops, if I may judge from my own experience, were intended as much to express gratitude as grief. I think I shall be able, without weariness, to spend eternity on the topic of divine love and goodness.

Reader, can you not adopt my language as your own? Has not God been the same to you? And shall we not *praise* him? Shall all our devotion consist in prayer? Shall we be always thinking of our wants, and never of his benefits—always dwelling on what remains to be done, and never thinking of what has already been done for us—always uttering desire, and never expressing gratitude—expending all our voice in supplication, and none of it in song? Is this the way to treat a benefactor? No, indeed. It is not *just* so to treat him; neither is it *wise*. It is

very bad policy to praise no more than Christians in general do. They would have much more success in prayer, if one half the time they now spend in it were spent in praise. I do not mean that they pray too much, but that they praise too little. I suspect the reason why the Lord did such great things for the psalmist was, that while he was not by any means deficient in prayer, he abounded in praise. The Lord heard his *psalms*; and while he sung of mercy shown, showed him more. And it would be just so with us, if we abounded more in praise and thanksgiving. It displeases God that we should be always dwelling on our wants, as if he had never supplied one of them. How do we know that God is not waiting for us to praise him for a benefit he has already conferred, before he will confer on us that other which we may be now so earnestly desiring of him? It is wonderful how much more prone we are to forget the benefit received, than the benefit wanted; in other words, how much more inclined we are to offer prayer than praise. For *one* who offers genuine praise, there may be found *ten* that pray. Ten lepers lifted up their voices together in the prayer, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us;" but only one of the ten "returned to give glory to God." The rest were satisfied with the benefit—this one only thought gratefully of the benefactor. His gratitude obtained for him, I doubt not, a greater blessing than ever his prayer had procured; and praise has often, I believe, in the experience of the people of God, been found more effectual for obtaining blessings than prayer. A person being once cast upon a desolate island, spent a day in fasting and prayer for his deliverance, but no help came. It occurred to him then to keep a day of thanksgiving and praise, and he had no sooner done it than relief was brought to him. You see, as soon as he began to sing of mercy exercised, the exercise of mercy was renewed to him. The Lord heard *the voice of his praise*.

Christian reader, you complain perhaps that your prayer is not heard; suppose you try the efficacy of praise. Peradventure you will find that the way to obtain *new* favors, is to praise the Lord for favors received. Perhaps, if you consider his

goodness, he will consider your wants. It may be you are a parent, and one child is converted; but there is another, concerning whom you say, "O that *he* might live before thee." Go now and bless the Lord for the conversion of the first, and it is very likely he will give thee occasion shortly to keep another day of thanksgiving for the salvation of the other. Some of us are sick. Perhaps it is because we did not praise the Lord for health. We forget that benefit. We do not forget our sickness. O no. Nor is there any lack of desire in us to get well. We pray for recovery. And so we should; but it strikes me that we might get well sooner, were we to dwell with less grief and despondency on our loss of health, and to contemplate with cheerful and grateful admiration what God has done for our souls; the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins; and how he spared not his own Son, that he might spare us; and gives us now his Spirit, to be in us the earnest of heaven, our eternal home. If we were to think such thoughts, to the forgetfulness of our bodily ailments, I judge it would be better for the whole man, body and soul both, than any other course we can pursue. If the affliction should still continue, we should count it *light*, aye, should rejoice in it, because it is his will, and because he says he means to make it work our good.

There is nothing glorifies God like praise. "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me." Psa. l. 23. Prayer expresses dependence and desire; but praise, admiration and gratitude. By it, men testify and tell all abroad that God is good, and thus others are persuaded to "taste and see that the Lord is good." Praise is altogether the superior exercise of the two. Prayer may be purely selfish in its origin, but praise is ingenuous. Praise is the employment of heaven. Angels praise. The spirits of the just made perfect praise. We shall not always pray, but we shall ever praise. Let us anticipate the employment of heaven. Let us exercise ourselves unto praise. Let us learn the song now, "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness." But above all, "let the *saints* be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds." I charge thee, my soul, to praise him, and

he will never let thee want matter for praise. "While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being."—*Nevins*.

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### "HE SHALL NOT LOSE BY IT."

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So said Mrs. B., in our presence the other day, in reference to an act of kindness shown her by a shop-keeper. She was in need of a very small quantity of a certain article, which, from special circumstances, was of much consequence to her, but must have seemed a trifle to the shopman. She was not a regular customer of his, and he did not even know her name. Yet he left his place of business, and went in person to a wholesale house at some distance, and succeeded, after much trouble, in providing the desideratum. His obliging disposition in the circumstances was considered remarkable, and in return Mrs. B. resolved that he should "not lose" by his kindness. She will purchase more largely than heretofore, and will recommend him to her friends. The shopman will find in the end that his trouble about a trifle was a good operation as a business transaction. It is possible that, as a far-seeing man, he may have had an eye to the future at the time; if so, his sagacity will not have been in vain.

The above is a good illustration of the principle that kindness brings its own reward. Not a few seem to act upon the idea that a friendly and obliging disposition is altogether unnecessary in business operations,—that whatever is done out of the ordinary routine through mere kindness, is so much dead loss. This is a great mistake. The mass of people are won by even the smallest indications of a spirit of accommodation. A trifling favour wins the gratitude and confidence, and makes a lasting impression. As a mere matter of self-interest, therefore, a generous and obliging policy commends itself to all business men as the best. Then, how much more pleasure is afforded to all parties. The shopman who took the trouble to oblige a transient customer in a small matter, was none the worse off in feelings, any more than he was in purse. He doubtless felt all the better, because he was doing what he knew would give pleasure. His success was rewarded at the time by a cheerful

smile and hearty thanks. It was a ray of sunshine in two hearts. How much even the petty details of ordinary traffic would be transformed from mere hard toil to the means of cultivating the kindlier feelings, did this spirit generally prevail! How wise and benevolent that word of our blessed Lord, if carried into all the concerns of life, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." No one, in any sense, "would lose by it."—*Presbyterian.*

### BLESSED ARE THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD.

"Blessed are the dead." Blessed?—The life-tide swiftly coursing through the veins—the bounding pulse, the strong frame, the gladsome heart, are such pleasant, precious things—how can the *dead* be blessed? For Death is such a dread mystery! All that we know of it inspires us with fear. The sealed eyelids, the dulled ears, the unresponding lips, the stony brow, the stilled heart! The spirit quails at thought of all these; and very naturally, for we so love life, so joy in its excess, so cling to it, above all else. And then the impenetrable mystery of death so awes us. We can imagine what the faintness, the dimness, would be, but *afterward*, when the familiar scenes around are shrouded in darkness—when loved voices grow indistinct, and then altogether lost—when the last slight cord is snapped—*what then?* Whither goes the naked spirit? Is its trackless flight alone? or what kind of beings accompany it?—Standing on the edge of a rock, beneath which roars and foams an unfathomed sea of darkness, what becomes of it when the unseen Hand strikes it off, and the cold wave envelopes it? Oh! is it any wonder that we start back affrighted from the touch of death? How can the *dead* be "blessed?"

"*Who die in the Lord.*" Impossible to be blessed without, but *in Him*—enfolded in His arms who is the Resurrection and the Life—even to *die* is "*blessed.*"—For then the darkness is not profound, His smile enlightens it—the passage is not

cold, His love warms it. The conscience sprinkled with the atoning blood has no fear of death. He who feels the everlasting arms around him cannot be unsafe or lonely. It is not "a leap in the dark" to him. Faith penetrates the mist, and descends the celestial city in its glory only a little way off, and knows that a momentary plunge into the river, and the other side is gained—a shout of welcome heard. Ah! yes, for those "who die in the Lord" *ALL is well!*

"*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.*" Thrice blessed. Holy hands will wipe away the hot tears, and the aching, weary heart will be at rest, and for ever. No more yearnings unsatisfied, no more being misunderstood, no more neglect and unkindness, no more unappeased heart-hungerings. Never more will the burning blush dye the cheek at thoughts of unfaithfulness. Never more shall sin-blots darken the heart that loves Jesus. Never more will His disciples grieve or leave the Saviour. They shall behold Him face to face, shall sit at His feet among the many mansions of the Father's house, and be perfectly, changelessly, sinlessly happy.—Yea, "*blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord.*"

"At midnight there was a cry made." Dear reader, some time there will come a cry to you, a cry that shall summon you to appear before the Almighty. It is not, perchance, a pleasant thought. You do not like the idea of leaving all you love, and who love you, and going forth into the unseen world. Yet it *must* be one day, and none may say how soon. Will death be a *blessed* thing to you? Will it find you ready to depart and be with Christ? or will your spirit start back affrighted from it? Better than life is the Christian's death, for it introduces him to glory ineffable. Are *you* a Christian? Do you believe in and love the Lord Jesus? Will He befriend you in that fearful hour? If so, you are very happy, if not you are very miserable. "How will you do in the swellings of Jordan?" There is but one safe answer: "I will fear no evil, for *Thou* art with me." Can you say so?—If not, go at once to the Saviour. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*"—*Marianne Farningham.*

## LIGHT-HOLDERS.

BY REV. THO. L. CUYLER.

Every voyager through the British Channel will remember the famous light-house that stands near the gates of the Atlantic. It rises from a rock in the midst of the waves; its beacon-blaze streams far out over the midnight sea. The angry waves, for many a long year, have rolled in—thundering against the tower's base. The winds of heaven have warred fiercely around its pinnacle; the rains have dashed against its gleaming lantern.—But there it stands. It moves not, it trembles not; it is founded on a rock. Year after year, the storm-tossed mariner looks out for its star-like light as he sweeps in through the British Channel. It is one of the first objects that meets his eye as he returns on his homeward voyage; it is one of the last which he beholds after his native shores have sunk beneath the evening wave. On the base of its tower is this inscription: "*To give light and to save life.*"

That tower of Eddystone is a LIGHT-HOLDER to all who come within its range. It does not create light, it only sheds it, and "giveth light" to every passer-by on his watery way. This image of a light-house may have been in the Apostle's mind when he wrote to the Phillipians of the surrounding heathen and idolaters, and said to them, "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world."—Some translate the word *torch-bearers*.—Others hold that it refers to stars in a dark night. All the interpretations look to the same idea, viz., that *Christians are Christ's light-holders to their fellow-men*.

The lantern of a light-house is not self-luminous. It has to be kindled by a hand from without itself. By nature, every Christian is as unfitted to give spiritual light as the empty tower on Minot's Reef or on Sandy Hook would be to guide the mariner at midnight. God creates the natural power, the mental faculties, as the builder rears the stone-tower of Eddystone or Sandy Hook.—Neither natural heart or stone-tower are self-luminous. A hand from without must bring them light.

Conversion by the Holy Spirit is a spiritual illumination of the soul. God's grace lights up the dark heart. Sometimes suddenly, as in the case of Paul. Sometimes, as in the case of John Newton, there is at first a feeble germ of light, like the little blue point of flame on a candle-wick, and this germ of light grows into a clear, full blaze. The beginning of true religion is in the first acts of sincere penitence—the first breathings of

earnest prayer—the first hungerings after God—the first honest attempt to do right and to serve the Lord. God's grace, remember, is the only original source of the light that makes any man a luminary in society. And when a man has once been kindled at the cross of Christ, he is bound to *shine*.

And in order to do this, he need not be conspicuous in society for talents, wealth, or intellectual culture. The modest candle by which a housewife threads her needle shines as truly as does the great lantern that burns in the tower of a City Hall.

An humble saint who begins his day with household devotions, and serves his God all day in his shop, or at his work-bench, is as truly a light holder as if he flamed from Spurgeon's pulpit or illuminated a theological class from a professor's chair. To "shine" means something more than the mere possession of piety, or the enjoyment of piety; it is the *reflection* of Gospel-religion that makes the *burner*.

Martin Luther was an Eddystone-tower to bewildered Europe. On the other hand, the humblest tract-visitor or mission-school teacher is a lantern-burner to guide some lost wanderers toward heaven. Harlan Page, the pious carpenter, never talked with a person for ten minutes without saying something to benefit his soul. He was a steady burner; so was Deacon Safford, of Boston. Thomas Dakin, a poor pensioner of Greenwich Hospital, distributed over one hundred thousand tracts every year, and when at last death smote him down suddenly, his pockets were found filled with tracts entitled "Are you prepared to die?" Dr. Nettleton carried his gospel-lamp from town to town—held it forth every evening to gathered companies of anxious souls—and during his lifetime guided many thousands to a knowledge of the Saviour. Oh! what a heaven Nettleton will have!

If every Christian who trims his lamp and keeps the oil of grace up to its full supply is such a blessed benefactor to others, what a terrible thing it is for a Christian to let his light go out! A traveler who once visited a light-house in the British Channel said to the keeper, "But what if one of your lights should go out at night?" "Never," said the keeper, "never—impossible. Sir, yonder are ships sailing to all parts of the world. If tonight my burner were out, in a few days I might hear, from France or Spain, or from Scotland or America, that on such a night the light-house in the Channel gave no warning, and some vessel had been wrecked. Ah! Sir, I sometimes feel, when I look at my lights, as if the eyes of the whole world were

fixed on me. Go out! Burn dim! never, Sir, never!"

How closely this incident comes home to us all. Perhaps in eternity I may hear that some precious soul was wrecked, because my pulpit was not a faithful light-holder to my congregation. Some Gospel-burners were neglected and grew dim. One man perhaps, stumbled into a drunkard's grave, because I did not warn him soon enough against the peril of the first glass. Another broke God's Sabbath for want of keeping the fourth commandment trimmed and burning. Before another was not held up the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and Jesus, the light of the world, may not have been set forth aright to wandering sinners. "Go out—burn dim!" God help me to say "*Never—NEVER!*"

I know of certain households in which I fear the lamp is out. That boy would not be seen so often on his way to the theater, or the drinking-saloon, if father and mother help up the torch of loving warning! That giddy daughter, who was once thoughtful about her soul, might now be a Christian, if there had been a light-holder near at hand, to guide her to Jesus. There was a lamp of profession in the house. It *did not shine*. The oil was out. Love of the world had extinguished it. That dark lantern left the house in midnight.

Thank God! some lights never go out.—Death cannot quench them. They shine forever. Luther's great lantern, "*the just shall live by faith,*" still gleams from Wartburg Castle. John Bunyan's lamp twinkles yet through the gratings of Bedford Jail. Old John Brown is still lighting ten thousand fugitive footsteps to liberty. Pastors, parents, teachers may be called home to heaven; but, like the good mother of the story, they "set a light in the window," to guide souls to the mansions of glory.

"Then gird your loins, my brethren dear,  
That distant home discerning;  
Our absent Lord has left us word,  
Let every lamp be burning!"

### YOUNG PEOPLE MUST HAVE THEIR AMUSEMENTS.

The world make a great mistake in imagining that religion would debar them from enjoyment. It only debars from pleasures that corrupt: while it opens, in the stead of these, others that are far higher and more satisfying—pleasures that bring with them no satiety, and leave behind no sting. Read in illustration of this, the following:—

"Young people must have their amusements," said a young lady of nineteen, whom I met in one of my parochial visits. Her

parents were members of the Church, and very quiet, respectable people. Her father, a man of few words, was industrious and honest, but concerned himself very little about the spiritual welfare of his children. In maintenance of family worship he was irregular.—Her mother talked a great deal about religion, but seldom in such a way as to interest others. This daughter was immoderately devoted to dress, and to frivolous pleasures. Her mother would often say to her, "I wish, Amelia, that you could think and feel as I do about these things; but you will never do so till you be-think yourself." "Mother," Amelia would reply, "I do not wish you to worry about me, or to pray for any change that will spoil my pleasures. Young people, you know, must have their amusements."

At the time of my call, circumstances favoured conversation upon religious subjects, and having gained Amelia's attention, I urged upon her importance of her immediate consecration to Christ. She admitted the truth of all I said but evaded the force of every appeal, by referring to the fact that she was young, and declared that she could not, at present, give up the pleasures which were to her so interesting. The postulate upon which she fell back was, "Young people, you know, must have their amusements." The interview was closed with some plain and earnest remarks upon the claims of the Saviour, and the danger of delay.

By the grace of God an impression was made that resulted in her conversion. The work of the Spirit was deep in her heart, and she soon sought the counsel and prayers of her pastor. A clearer case of conviction of sin I have never witnessed. Her ultimate reception of Christ was cordial and complete.

Some four months afterwards, as she requested admission into the Church, I examined her closely as to the characteristics of her experience, and was gratified by the evidences of a thorough change. She was manifestly "in Christ, a new creature." "Well, Amelia," I said, "what do you now think about amusements as necessary to young people?" She felt the point of the inquiry, but was not disconcerted, and replied, "I still think that they are necessary to the young; but the difficulty is, we make a wrong choice; those in which I once indulged were only the refuges of an unhappy mind. I enjoyed them, because, for the time, they made me forget myself, my mortality and my destiny. Your preaching made me miserable, and I tried by such expedients to quiet an uneasy conscience. I now see how trifling and wicked they were. Christ has given me employments that make me happy. I find more pleasure than I can tell you, in

gathering eight poor children whom I have gathered into a Sabbath class. I find pleasure in the distribution of tracts, and conversation with the ignorant and poor. I find pleasure in our meetings for social devotion. I find pleasure in the study of the Scriptures, and in communion with God at the mercy-seat.—These are now my happiness. They are necessary to me. All others are insipid and odious. Oh that all our young people knew the pleasures of experimental and practical religion!"—*Watchman and Reflector.*

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## SPEAKING TO THE DEAD.

BY THE REV. DR. GUTHRIE.

Did you ever see a dead child laid out by tender hands, or even sculptured in cold marble? With its air of calm repose, how beautiful it looks! Here death seems divested of his terrors. It looks so living—I had almost said angel-like—that it needs, as it were, but that we should touch it, or speak, to wake it up, and wake again the voice that often cheered a mother's heart, and woke her from happy slumbers. It is hard to believe that the child is dead; yet there is something harder to believe. With no bad passions stamped on its open brow, an infant looks so guiltless, and is so guileless; looks so innocent, and is so ignorant of evil—that kneeling at a mother's feet, with sunbeams falling on its golden locks, its little hands held up to heaven, its lips lisping a simple prayer, it is hard, a very hard thing, to believe that this creature, is dead in sin; and that, as storms lie sleeping in the calm bosom of the deep, and thunder and lightning in the clear blue heavens, a thousand crimes are sleeping in that infant bosom. Yet so it is. It is dead in sin! and so are we all—"death has passed on all men, because all have sinned."

If so, you may say, how useless to speak to sinners! Who speaks to the dead? It seems in that case, as useless to address unconverted men, as it were for me to go and take my stand in a churchyard, and turning a grave-stone into a pulpit, address myself to the hollow skulls and mouldering bones around; and in that case preaching seems as mad as a mother's cries when she hangs over the dead, and calling her boy by name, implores him to speak to her. Yet, "I am not mad, most noble Festus." Not mad—no! Have not I seen life spring up under almost as unlikely circumstances? No longer ago than last winter, when the ground lay covered with hugging snows, and the earth lay bare, cold, and wan, like a shrouded corpse, came a sudden thaw, to reveal what it was most curious

and wonderful to see—a plant, fair herald of the spring, had risen up, and leafed, and blown out into full beauty, beneath its snowy crust. Is God less omnipotent in one kingdom than another? My trust is in him who has wrought greater wonders in the realms of grace than in the fields of nature.

Truc, I am no Christ to repair to the grave, saying, Lazarus, come forth! or go to churchyards with voice as mighty to awake the dead as the dormant. Still, I do not stand here like the king of Israel, when, with the letter in his trembling hand, he looked on the loathsome leper to exclaim, "Am I a god to kill and make alive, that this man is sent to me to be cured of his leprosy?" Peter was no "god, to kill or make alive," yet he entered the lonely chamber; walked up to the pale, dead body; knelt by its side; looked on the fixed and filmy eyes; took the cold hand of Dorcas into his own, and saying, "Tabitha, arise!" repeated the miracle of Bethany. Was such power imparted by God to a human voice? then why should I, who am called to speak to dead souls, have less faith than another man, as weak, as fallible, as mortal, who is called to speak to a dead body? God can give you life though you were dead—dead as a grinning skull. Therefore I preach in the name of him whose heart is love, and whose word is life; who saith, and it is done; who commandeth, and it standeth fast

"Repent," therefore, "and be converted, every one of you." Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Awake thou that sleepest, and call on thy God. Awake to salvation; *time is pressing.* Awake to prayer; *the door is shutting.* Awake to work; *the night is falling.* Awake to flee! the treacherous tide is creeping round and round you. Awake to believe! who does not, is damned; who does, is saved.

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## "THE HOLY GHOST SAITH TO-DAY."

It is not Paul that says this in his own name; it is the *Holy Ghost*. It is not David that says it; it is the *Holy Ghost*. The words occur in Ps. xc. 7, "*To-day, if ye will hear his voice!*" and they are the words of God to men. Yes; remember these are the words of the *Holy Ghost*; for so it is written, Heb. iii. 7, and iv. 7.

The words express a wish—a strong wish—an earnest desire—a vehement anxiety; and this wish, desire, anxiety, is *God's*. It is the *Holy Ghost* that says

to you, "*To-day, if ye will hear His voice!*" The words are like Exod. xxxii. 32, "And now, if thou wilt forgive their sin!" that is, Oh that thou wouldst!—Oh if such a thing might only be! Or they are like Christ's pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, "If thou hadst known!" that is, Oh that thou hadst but known!

The Holy Ghost here shews us God urging men to hear the invitation of mercy. Ye sons of men, oh that you would hear! And oh that you would hear *To-day!* Not at any time, not a future time, but *To-day*. Not after Satan has had time again to ply his arts on you—not after you have again tried the world—not after conviction has been once more dulled, and deadened, and stifled by business, by pleasure, by care—but now, *to-day*, while the words of God are ringing in your ears.

*To-day, to day*—while the great sacrifice of Christ is within view, while Christ still waits at the right hand to "make intercession for all who come unto God by Him." *To day, to-day*—while you feel your need, while you still are sensible of your own inability to be your own Saviour; *to-day, to-day*, while the Holy Ghost still strives.

"*Hear His voice!*"—the voice that says, "Come, let us reason together"—the voice that says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink"—the voice that says, "Look unto me, and be saved, all ends of the earth"—the voice that says, "I am the bread of life"—"I am the Light of the world"—"Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

Oh that you would hear! Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. "*Harden not your heart*" as Pharaoh did—as Israel did in the provocation in the wilderness. Sin is secretly gnawing the vitals of your soul. Repentance for sin is a duty now; forsaken sin is a duty; confessing sin to the Lord is a duty, and a duty *to-day*.—Pardon is ready *to-day*; for the fountain is full to the brim. Purification is ready *to-day*; for the Holy Spirit is in the gift of Jesus. "*Harden not your hearts.*"

Remember He who says "*To-day,*" limiteth the time—draws round you a

circle, as the Roman ambassador did to the king, saying, "Decide for peace or war ere you pass from the spot." He *limiteth* a certain time; and the word "*To-day*" points out how far the circle extends. Long-suffering has an end, even the long-suffering of God. "Oh, then, "*If ye will hear His voice!*" It is not man, but the *Holy Ghost*, that so speaketh.

*To-morrow* is not as this day. *To-day* the Holy Ghost says, "Hear His voice;" and shews us God in Christ inviting, calling, urging sinners, imploring them, beseeching them. As to "*To-morrow,*" the Holy Ghost shews us God, as Judge, shutting the door, setting the flaming sword at the gate of Paradise, declaring, with uplifted hand, "*They shall not enter into my rest.*"—A. A. Bonar.

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#### ANECDOTE OF WHITFIELD AND THE POOR NEGRESS.

"Imprudently going out, I caught cold, immediately relapsed, and was taken, as every one thought, with death, in my friend Mr. Sherburne's house. In my own apprehension, and in all appearance to others, I was a dying man. I preached, the people heard me as such. The invisible realities of another world lay open to my view. Such effects followed the word, I thought it was worth dying for a thousand times.

"Though wonderfully comforted within, at my return home I thought I was dying indeed. I was laid on a bed upon the ground near the fire, and I heard my friends say, 'He is gone.' But God was pleased to order it otherwise. I gradually recovered; and soon after, a poor negro woman would see me. She came, sat down upon the ground, and looked earnestly in my face, and then said, in broken language, 'Master, you just go to heaven's gate; but Jesus Christ said, "Get you down, get you down, you must not come here yet; but go back, and call some more poor negroes." I prayed to the Lord, that if I were to live, this might be the event."

## WHERE DID HE GET THAT LAW?

An aged lawyer of great eminence and talents, who, from early life, had imbibed infidel principles, one day met an elder of the Presbyterian church, who was also a lawyer, and said to him, "I wish, sir, to examine into the truth of the Christian religion. What books would you advise me to read on the evidences of Christianity?"

The elder, surprised at the inquiry, replied, "That is a question, sir, which you ought to have settled long ago. You ought not to have put off a subject so important to this late period of life."

"Is it too late?" said the inquirer; "I never knew much about it, but I always supposed that Christianity was rejected by the great majority of learned men. I intend, however, now to examine the subject thoroughly myself. I have upon me, as my physician says, a mortal disease, under which I may live a year and a half or two years, but not probably longer. *What books, sir, would you advise me to read?*"

"The BIBLE," said the elder.

"I believe you don't understand me," resumed the unbeliever, surprised in his turn: "I wish to investigate *the truth of the Bible.*"

"I would advise you, sir," repeated the elder, "to read the Bible. And I will give you my reasons. Most infidels are very ignorant of the Scriptures. Now to reason on any subject with correctness, we must understand what it is about which we reason. In the next place, I consider the *internal evidence* of the truth of the Sacred Scriptures stronger than the external evidence."

"And where shall I begin my investigation?" inquired the unbeliever. "At the New Testament?"

"No," replied the elder; "begin at the beginning—at Genesis."

The infidel bought a commentary, went home, and sat down to the serious study of the Scriptures. He applied all his strong and well-disciplined powers of mind to the Bible, to try rigidly but impartially its truth.

As he went on in his perusal, he received occasional calls from the elder. The infidel freely remarked upon what he had read,

and stated his objections. He liked this passage—he thought that touching and beautiful—but he could not credit a third.

One evening the elder called, and found the unbeliever walking the room with a dejected look, his mind apparently absorbed in thought. He continued, not noticing that any one had come in, busily to trace and retrace his steps. The elder at length spoke:

"You seem, sir, to be in a brown study. Of what are you thinking?"

"I have been reading," replied the infidel, "the moral law."

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked the elder.

I will tell you what I *used* to think," answered the infidel. "I supposed that Moses was the leader of a horde of banditti; that having a strong mind, he acquired great influence over a superstitious people; and that on Mount Sinai he played off some sort of fireworks to the amazement of his ignorant followers, who imagined, in their mingled fear and superstition, that the exhibition was supernatural."

"But what do you think *now?*" interposed the elder.

"I have been looking," said the infidel, "into the *nature* of that law. I have been trying to see whether I can add anything to it, or take anything from it, so as to make it better. Sir, I cannot. It is *perfect.*"

"The first commandment," continued he, "directs us to make the Creator the object of our supreme love and reverence. That is right. If he be our Creator, Preserver, and Supreme Benefactor, we ought to treat Him, and *none other*, as such. The second forbids idolatry. That certainly is right. The third forbids profanity. The fourth fixes a time for religious worship; and if there be a God, he ought surely to be worshipped. It is suitable that there should be an outward homage, significant of our inward regard. If God be worshipped, it is proper that some *time* should be set apart for that purpose, when all may worship Him harmoniously and without interruption. One day in seven is certainly not too much, and I do not know that it is too little. The fifth defines the peculiar duties arising from family relations. Injuries to our neighbour are then *classified* by the moral law. They are



divided into offences against life, chastity, property, and character. And," said he, applying a legal idea with legal acuteness, "I notice that the greatest offence in each class is expressly forbidden. Thus the greatest injury to life is murder; to chastity, adultery; to property, theft; to character, perjury. Now the greater offence must include the less of the same kind. Murder must include every injury to life; adultery every injury to purity, and so of the rest. And the moral code is closed and perfected by a command forbidding every improper *desire* in regard to our neighbours.

"I have been thinking," he proceeded, "where did Moses get that law? I have read history: the Egyptians and the adjacent nations were idolaters; so were the Greeks and Romans; and the wisest and best Greeks or Romans never gave a code of morals like this. Where did Moses get this law, which surpasses the wisdom and philosophy of the most enlightened ages? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous, but he has given a law in which the learning and sagacity of all subsequent time can detect no flaw. Where did he get it? He could not have soared so far above his age as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he obtained it. It came down from heaven. I am convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible."

The infidel,—infidel no longer,—remained to his death a firm believer in the truth of Christianity.—*Arrive.*

#### THAT VOICE IN ETERNITY.

A minister, while attending church in a strange city, was struck with the surpassing sweetness of the voice of a young lady who sat near him. Being afterwards introduced to her, he inquired whether she loved the Saviour. She replied, "I am afraid *not*." "Then, my dear young friend," said the minister, "what will you do with that voice in eternity? Shall it be spent in uttering the wailings of the lost forever?"

The question sent conviction to her heart, and she rested not till she had found peace in believing.

Reader, you often sing as you best can, perhaps you sing well. What will you do with *your* voice in eternity?—*American Messenger.*

#### "WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?"

Some time ago, I was standing in front of a shop window where several nice paintings were hung up for sale. As I was gazing, first at one picture, and then at another, a friend came up and tapping me on the shoulder, said, "What are you looking at?" I told him, of course; and after a few more words had passed between us, we separated. Long after this did the gentle tap and the friendly inquiry come into my mind, and I feel a strong desire to put the same simple question to each of my little readers—"What are you looking at?"

Perhaps you think it is no matter at all what you look at; but let me tell you a story.

I have read of a person who was never known to be out of temper—who always seemed happy. The world treated him just as it treats other people; but whatever took place, he was the same quiet, unmoved man. A person of his acquaintance inquired of him one day the secret of his undisturbed happiness, when he replied, "I am happy because I make a good use of my eyes." What he *looked at* so affected his conduct as to make him what he was. He was asked to explain how it was that his happiness depended on the use of his eyes, and he gave the following answer: "When I look *around* me, I see a great many persons who are worse off than I am,—when I look *down*, I think of the grave where I must soon lie,—and when I look *up*, I long to be in heaven, where I hope to dwell for ever with Jesus. Thus by making a good use of my eyes, I am always happy."

Again, then, my dear children, let me ask, "What are you looking at?"

The Bible tells us a great many things about the use of the eyes. Solomon says, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee."—(Prov. iv. 25.) So that *how* a person looks, or *what* he looks at, is taken to show what his conduct is. Sin is a crooked, zigzag path,—goodness, an open, straight way; and the wise king would have us remember, that if we would *walk* straight, we must *look* straight. Again, then, I ask, "What are you looking at?"

Are you looking at the *improvement of your minds*? You will soon have to take a part in the world's work. Are you fitting yourselves for that work by striving to become intelligent, thoughtful, and wise?

Are you looking at your *sins*? Every one *has* sins to be mourned over, prayed over, and striven against. The longer our sins remain unlooked at and unchecked, the greater they become, and the harder they are to resist.

Are you looking to *Jesus*, for the forgiveness of your past sins, and for the help of his Holy Spirit to enable you to love and serve him day by day?

Are you looking at the *condition and wants of others*, and doing all you can to make every one happier and better?

If you are not looking at these things, I must ask again, with all earnestness, *What are you looking at?*

Remember, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—*The Teacher's Offering.*

### THE ENDLESS REST.

There are no weary heads or weary hearts on the other side of Jordan. The rest of heaven will be the sweeter for the toils of earth. The value of eternal rest will be enhanced by the troubles of time. Jesus now allows us to rest on his bosom. He will soon bring us to rest in his father's house. His rest will be glorious. A rest from sin; a rest from suffering; a rest from conflict; a rest from toil; a rest from sorrow. The very rest that Jesus enjoys himself. We shall not only rest with him; we shall rest like him. How many of the earth's weary ones are resting in His glorious presence now! It will be undisturbed rest. Here the rest of the body is disturbed by dreams, and sometimes by alarms; but there are no troublesome dreams or alarming occurrences there. Thanks be unto God for the rest we now enjoy! Ten thousand thanks to God for the rest we shall enjoy with Christ! Wearyed one, look away from the cause of thy present suffering, and remember there is a rest remaining for thee. A little while, and thou shalt enter into rest.—*The Prayer Meeting.*

"I DO THAT WHICH I WOULD NOT."

"If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."—(Rom. vii. 16, 17.)

It looks, I have no doubt, an apparent puzzle to the understandings of many, that a man should do what is wrong while he wills what is right; and more especially, that he all the while should be honestly grieving because of the one, and as honestly aspiring and pressing forwards, nay, making real practical advances, in the direction of the other. And yet you can surely figure to yourself the artist who, whether in painting, or in poetry, or in music, labours, yet labours in vain, to do full justice to that model of high excellence which his imagination dwells upon. He does not the things that he would, and he does the things that he would not. There is a lofty standard to which he is constantly aspiring, and even constantly approximating,—yet along the whole of this path of genius there is a perpetual sense of failure, and a humbling comparison of what has been already attained with what is yet seen in the distance before it, and a vivid acknowledgment of the great deficiency that there is between the execution of the hand and those unreach'd creations of the fancy that are still floating in the head. And thus an agony, and a disappointment, and a self-reproval, because of indolence, and carelessness, and aversion to the fatigues of watchful and intense study,—all mixed up, you will observe, with a towering ambition, nay, with a rapid and successful march along this walk of scholarship.—How often may it be said of him that he does the things which he would not, when one slovenly line or careless touch of the pencil has escaped from him, and when he falls short of those pains and that sustained labour by which he hopes to rear a work for immortality. Yet is he making steady and sensible advances all the while. This lofty esteem of all that is great and gigantic in art is the very steps, in his mind, to a lowly estimation of all that he has yet done for it; and both these together are the urgent forces by which he is carried upwards to a station among the men of renown and admirable genius who

have gone before him. Now, what is true of the scholarship of art is just as true of the scholarship of religion. There is a model of unattained perfection in the eyes of his faithful devotees, even the pure, and right, and absolutely beautiful and holy law of God; and this they constantly labour to realise in their lives, and so to build up, each in his own person, a befitting inhabitant for the realms of eternity. But while they love this law, they are loaded with a weight of indolence, and carnality, and earthly affections, which cumber their ascent thitherward; and just in proportion to the delight they take in the contemplation of its heaven-born excellence, are the despondency and the shame wherewith they regard their own mean and meagre imitations of it. Yet who does not see that out of the believer's will pitching so high, and the believer's work lagging so miserably after it, there cometh that very activity which guides and guarantees his progress towards Zion,—that therefore it is that he is led to ply with greater diligence the armour which at length wins him the victory,—that the babe in Christ is cradled, as it were, in the agitation of these warring elements,—that his spiritual ambition is just the more whetted and fostered into strength by the obstacles through which it has to fight its way,—and rising from every fall with a fresh onset of help from the sanctuary, does he proceed from step to step, till he has finished the faith, till he has reached the prize of his high calling.—*Chalmers.*

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### SAVING FAITH.

True saving faith is daily *growing*, and constantly *persevering*. Faith lives; but because its life is imperfect, it still grows and increases. It is said that 'the Righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel from faith to faith.' That is, as Faith grows more and more capacious and quicksighted, so God's righteousness is more and more discovered to it. The Apostle commends his Thessalonians, and thanks God for this,—that 'their *Faith groweth exceedingly.*' And Faith so grows, as that it perseveres. 'It fails not.'—It draws not back to perdition, but believes

to the saving of the soul.' It makes 'faithful to the death, and so 'the believer receives the crown of life.' If thy Faith grow and persevere, that is true faith indeed. False faith is like the picture of a man on a wall that grows not, and like a blazing star, *it continues but for a time.*—*F. Roberts, D.D., 1651.*

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### A PRAYER WRITTEN IN THE TIME OF A TRYING DISPENSATION.

In our trouble, Lord, be near us,  
We go mournful all the day;  
Oh! let not thy judgments fear us,  
Shield us, Lord, we humbly pray.

Bless to us this dispensation,  
Let thy blows no more descend,  
Grant us grace and consolation,  
Keep us faithful to the end.

We are sorrow-worn and fainting,  
Satan, sin, and fears prevail;  
Let thy tender heart, relenting,  
Yield us succour, lest we fail.

We are feeble, poor, and dying,  
We have nothing sure but Thee;  
While our woes are multiplying,  
Near us, O our Father, be.

And while storms and darkness gather,  
Lightnings flame, and clouds amass,  
In thy bosom, Heavenly Father,  
Let me nestle till they pass.

And in every dispensation,  
With which thou art pleased to try,  
Give us grateful resignation,  
And more meetness for the sky.

And when done with time forever,  
Earth and all terrestrial things,  
Take us home, no more to sever,  
To be with thee, priests and kings.

Rockwood.

A. A.

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God, in arranging his purposes of mercy, has been pleased so to honour the supplications of man, as to constitute them a part of his plan, and to give them a place antecedent to the actual bestowment of grace.—*Rev. Jas. McGill.*

**Sabbath School Lessons.***March 13th, 1864.***GIDEON'S SIGN.—JUDGES VI. 28-40.**

We are in this lesson incidentally informed of the lamentable fact, that the worship of the gods of the heathen was freely practised in Israel, and that among the very family from which Gideon, the appointed deliverer, was chosen. The very night after the divine appearance, a message came to Gideon, well calculated to test his faith, and the extent of his obedience. He was to throw down the altar of Baal that his father had. Though this altar seemed to belong to Gideon's father, whose name was Joash, it was destined for the common service of the town. It is probable that Joash was the actual leader of this rebellion. After having thrown down the altar and cut down the grove, Gideon was to build an altar to Jehovah, and offer sacrifice thereon.

This work Gideon did in the night.

When the citizens arose betimes, perhaps to pay their morning devotions to Baal, and saw what had taken place, they were speedily informed that Gideon had done it, and nothing but his blood could satisfy the persecuting rage of these infatuated idolaters.

Joash, though himself guilty of idolatry, was unwilling to have his son punished; and probably by what he had done he was convinced of the sin and folly of worshipping an idol, particularly a god which could not defend himself.

It is generally agreed, that under Baal the power of the sun was personified. Baal had temples and images, as well as altars and groves;—but in this case we read only of the elementary apparatus of his worship—the altar and the grove.

At the proper moment the Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon with authority and power. He blew the trumpet for volunteers, and the Abi-ezrites, the men of his own clan, were the first to join him.

Having gathered what seemed to him an adequate number of troops, Gideon wished for a sign. He now required it; not, perhaps,

so much for the confirmation of his own faith, as to authenticate his commission in the eyes of the strangers who had responded to his call.

The sign he made choice of was remarkable: "If thou wilt," &c., ver. 37. This is an experiment natural enough to occur to a man of few and simple ideas, and these connected chiefly with agriculture. The thing came to Gideon as he had desired. It is not stated that the ground about the fleece was quite dry, but that is implied.

Gideon, for further assurance, and with a becoming apology for his presumption, ventured to ask that the miracle might now be reversed—the fleece to be dry and the ground to be wet.

This of the two was the stronger proof of supernatural interposition, seeing that it is the property of wool to absorb whatever dew may fall, and its dryness when the ground about was wet with dew, was altogether a miraculous thing.

God granted him this request also.

Observe—I. The condescension of the Most High God. Though God ordered Gideon to go forth to the deliverance of Israel, yet He had compassion on His weakness, and granted him various tokens for the purpose of establishing his confidence.

II. The efficacy of prayer. The signs Gideon asked were not promised, neither were they forbidden. God heard and answered his prayer.

III. If God help us we need fear no evil.

*March 20th, 1864.***THE GREAT SUPPER.**

Read *Luke* xiv. 15-35.

I. *The invitation rejected*, ver. 15-20.

*Blessed is he that shall eat, &c.* This guest heard Christ mention "the resurrection of the just," and having the Jewish idea of the Messiah's temporal kingdom, thus expressed himself. Christ replied with this parable, to show that instead of joyfully accepting the invitation to God's kingdom of grace, the Jews with one consent rejected it.

*A great supper.* Supper was the chief meal among Eastern nations, Mark vi. 21. The heat prevented such entertainments dur-

ing the day. It was often most sumptuous and luxurious, and thus represents the rich varied blessings of Christ's gospel, Isa. xxv. 6. *Bade many.* This refers to the many promises and invitations addressed exclusively to the Jews in Old Testament times. *All things are now ready.* It is still the custom in some countries to send a second messenger to the guests. Christ might refer to the invitations given by Himself and his apostles, Matt. x. 5-7. — "Beginning at Jerusalem," was his rule. Ver. 18. None openly refused to come, but all made excuse. The excuses were most insufficient; none of the circumstances precluded acceptance of the offer. Those invited evidently did just what they liked best, yet the things for which they rejected the invitation were all in themselves lawful. Oxen were used in ploughing, 1 Kings xix. 19.

#### II. *The house filled,* ver. 21-24.

Ver. 21. All was reported to the Lord, Isa. liii. 1.

*Being angry.* Nothing so provokes God's anger as sinners refusing to be saved!

The servants were first sent to gather the offscourings of the city, and when there was still "room," they were sent further into the country, "highways and hedges"—to gather guests till the house was "filled." Ver. 24. The Jews are a monument of God's wrath to this day.

#### III. *Who cannot be Christ's disciples,* ver. 25-35.

Ver. 25. Christ seems to have left the Pharisee's house, a great multitude following Him. He stopped, turned, and evidently still pursuing the line of thought suggested by the case of those who, giving their hearts to other objects, sought to be excused from serving God, addressed to the crowd the impressive words, "If any man," &c., ver. 26. Christ uses the word *hate* to imply that the love we were bound to give even to father or mother, was "hatred" compared with the love due to Christ! *Bear his cross*,—a symbol of shame and death. Christ saw his own "cross" lying across his life-path; his people must be partakers with him.

Ver. 28-30 is a solemn warning to count the cost of serving Christ. Ver. 31-33, tells how greater still the cost, and how great the folly of attempting to fight against God. Ver. 34, 35. One who professes to be Christ's, and yet does not so follow Him, is like salt that has lost its savour.

#### APPLICATION.

1. *God has prepared a feast for us.* Christ is himself the feast, Matt. xxvi. 26-28. In Him is all a poor sinner can require, 1 Cor. i. 30. "Come unto me," Matt. xi. 28.

2. *How free, full, and frequent the invi-*

*tation!* Rev. xxii. 17; Isa. lv. 1; Prov. i. 20-23. How often have you been invited by the Bible, minister, parent, or teacher?

3. *Beware of rejecting Christ.* Few openly and plainly say they will not have Christ to reign over them; many make "excuse." "I am too young," Eccles. xii. 1. "Too happy with my pleasures," Eccles. xi. 9; Matt. xvi. 26. "Some other time," Acts xxiv. 25; 2 Cor. vi. 2. "None of my companions are going to Christ," Prov. xiii. 20; viii. 36. Beware, God will never excuse you! nothing makes Him so angry, Luke xiii. 25; Prov. i. 24-28.

4. *Are you really a disciple of Christ?* If so, then, *first*, you have counted the cost and know the folly of fighting against God! ver. 31; Isa. xxvii. 4. *Secondly*, You have counted the cost and are willing to give up all for Christ. It is not easy to do so. "The young man," Matt. xix. 21. Peter. Yet Abraham gave up his son—and many their lives for God, Heb. xi.

5. *False disciples of Christ are like salt that has lost its savour*, fit for neither this world nor the next, ver. 35. Has your life a "savour" of Christ?

#### SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. Fellow teachers! see you bear your Lord's invitation to whom and as He sends it—Tell Him if it is rejected.

2. We perish by abusing lawful things!—putting them in Christ's place.

3. "Yet there is room"—in Christ's love and grace, and in heaven too—and God will have it filled with ransomed sinners. How many stand without, ver. 23, 25. Oh, compel them to come in.

4. Though you lend an ear to nothing else, "hear" this, ver. 35.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

It is not death but life that we long for when we sigh to flee away and be at rest.

When we think of the grave, of the chill and ghastliness of death, we cannot say that we are so willing to try it; but when we *leap the grave*, sink the very memory of it, and land safe over in heaven, then, indeed, are we ready, ay, longing to depart.

How skilfully does Paul sail past the two unpleasing points, without touching too hard on either: "It is not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon."

It is not desirable to be borne away alone; he and moulder in the cold, damp grave; but it is desirable, soon as may be, to enter heaven.—*Beecher.*