

The Provincial Wesleyan

Published under the direction of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Eastern British America.

Volume XXV.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 1873.

Number 20

THE AUSTRALASIAN CONFERENCE.

(From Melbourne Wesleyan Chronicle.)

The Ordination Service was held in Wesley Church, Chippendale, which was crowded to excess. The church itself is by very much the handsomest edifice belonging to Methodism in Sydney. In style it is Gothic, with a good deal of elaboration. The pulpit is placed at the side and there are galleries around the side and two ends. We cannot say that we like the arrangement, but we were informed that the ground upon which the church stands necessitated the adoption of present form and arrangement. The interior of the solemn service was increased by the ordination charge being given by the Rev. W. B. Boyce, but its effectiveness cannot be realized when stripped of its accessories. It was as follows:—

The Rev. gentleman took for his text the words, "For it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 21).

You are to preach Christ to the world that is now in a world which differs from what it was in the days of our fathers. Then, while there was much wickedness and indifference to the truth, there was little speculative infidelity, men were at that time "orthodox" sinners. Now the case is otherwise, and you must try to understand the tendencies of the age in which you are living, and adapt your preaching accordingly. We must look at the current speculations respecting Christianity, which have to some considerable extent tended to lessen its influence over the educated mind of our day. With some it is regarded as a failure; to them it is a worn-out effete system, which the world has outgrown, and they point to the present condition of the world, and especially of the nations which are nominally Christian, in corroboration of their views. Our reply is that as yet Christianity has never been brought fairly in contact with the world which it was sent to save. Its application has been partial, but that in all cases where the genuine article has fairly grappled with our fallen humanity, it has produced results to which we can appeal as proofs of the divinity of a system which we believe to be the "wisdom of God." Even in its indirect influence, Christianity has been the originator of all that is good and great in the civilization of our day. Our higher standard of morals, the superior purity of our domestic life, the dignified position of our women, the general purity of our literature, the tendency of our legislation towards that which is just and equal, the deepening feeling of respect for man as man; all these characteristics of our modern civilization are traceable to the growth of a Christian sentiment which is left even where Christ himself is not fully recognized. Consider, too, the brief period of 1800 years which has passed since the Gospel was first preached, in connection with the hindrances which have had to be removed, and which have yet to be removed, before the grand and unselfish principles of Christ and his apostles can achieve their full triumph. The withering blight of Roman Imperialism, the fierceness and ignorance of our barbarian ancestors, who, on the ruins of the Roman Empire laid the foundations of the kingdoms of modern Europe, the comparative darkness of the medieval period of European history, the gradual corruption of the Christian Church, the superstitions and shortcomings of the great Reformation in the 16th century, all these facts must be taken into account, and when fairly estimated, the conclusion arrived at will not be that Christianity has been a failure, but that it has accomplished already far beyond what might have been anticipated, and that past results encourage us to look forward to that happy period when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." Let us, then, persevere in our mission, preaching Christ, knowing Him to be "the power of God," and the only efficient remedy for all the evils which afflict our humanity.

2. Christianity is, we are told, opposed to modern thought, that wayward product of a Pantheism which alarms and yet fascinates it, of a physiological metaphysics which degrades it, and of a natural science which knows nothing of a Creator. We are to receive as truth things contradictory—that the Creator and creature are one, that mind and thought are the products of material organization, and yet that matter has no real existence; that all life is mere phenomena of mind; that all life has originated in a pre-existent, immanent, and immortal being; that all life is found alike in the blood of a human being and in a nut; that our physical organization and that of all animals is traceable to an *ascidian mollusk* (a lump of almost insensible matter known only to naturalists); and that we must recognise the gorilla or the monkey as our nearest and more modern ancestry—from which we have gradually developed? I must confess that I have not faith enough to trust to these conclusions of science which have helped to saturate and intoxicate what is called modern thought. Many of these speculations are ingenious; they may, as theologians respecting the *modus operandi* of discovery and the lead to the further investigation and discovery of much that may be interesting and even useful but they will not produce a new foundation for our faith, or show us how we can find rest to our souls. We, and not men with us, shall still believe that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—that God made man in his own image, and breathed into him the breath of life, and that then man became a living soul. We have nothing to fear from modern thought. It is the more the more we understand its vagaries, and guard against its optical delusions.

3. The views which the Christian Church has entertained of the divine origin and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures have within the last century been questioned by what is now called Rationalism. The learned critics of Germany, with their English followers, as Kalah, Davidson, Colenso, &c., have been, and are yet labouring to prove that the Pentateuch, is not the product of the age of Moses, but of a later period, which Dr. Colenso places at the return of the Jewish people from the Babylonian captivity! Of this much mistaken but honest, outspoken gentleman, I would wish to speak with all respect, much as I regret the hallucination, amounting to a sort of monomania, which compels him to arrive at what must be foregone conclusions. Take one specimen. In the 16th chapter of Leviticus there are certain words and expressions which frequently occur in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. We ordinary mortals would naturally account for this on the well-grounded supposition that the law of Moses was so diligently studied the law of Moses, as to have adopted, as a matter of course, the phraseology of the writer. But Dr. Colenso, forgetting all the historical testimony opposed to his theory, assigns Leviticus to the authorship of Ezekiel, and fancies that most of the laws attributed to Moses originated in the reforms instituted by Ezra and Nehemiah! We must do him the justice to state that he does not finally deny the Divine mission of Moses, or the truth of the main facts of the Old Testament History, or that God spoke to the fathers by the prophets he simply denies the authority and inspiration of the documents. We believe that he and his coadjutors and teachers, the German Neologists, are altogether mistaken; though we do not regret the discussion which has already, and which will for years to come, disturb the quiet of the Christian world; anything is better than stagnancy; the speculations of Rationalism though at first better than the indifference which won't trouble to think at all. We are not afraid of the final conclusions, even of modern thought on these questions—the more the Old Testament is studied, the more thoroughly we sift and understand it, taking for our guide the Lord and his inspired Apostles, the more we shall be convinced that it is the record of a Divine revelation, and the better we shall know how to use it aright. The books which our Lord received, it is not for us to cast aside. What satisfied Him, may surely satisfy us. Meanwhile, let us beware of dogmatism in reference to the erratic speculation of Rationalism, or scientific scepticism. The human element in the inspired writings is fairly open to learned research, and will suffer no injury by the process. The scientific references in the Bible are, no doubt, adapted to the childhood of our race, and could not have been more explicit and more scientifically precise without being altogether unintelligible, and unwieldy to the moral purposes for which the revelation was given. It is possible, also, that the deductions of modern science, as well as our interpretations of the few references to science in Scripture, may prove to be not only defective, but erroneous. Let us wait. Meanwhile, "Let God be true, and every man a liar." 4. Another intellectual freak of our age is to deny the standard evidences of Christianity as altogether unsatisfactory. Our Land, Lardners, and Paleys, and Butlers are not refuted; they hold their own, with no competent adversaries to contend with them. No one was attempted to meet these giants and dispute point by point with them. Modern thought, however, professes not to be satisfied. Perhaps no amount of evidence can satisfy those who foster and cultivate the art of doubting as the most dignified and valuable of all mental exercises. Perhaps, too, the champions of our faith have erred in attempting too much, in taking up every objection, however trifling, instead of confining themselves to the impregnable positions, the occupying of which is decisive of the issue of the contest. Of the facts of Christianity, the Christian Church is the grand witness. It is impossible to set aside its testimony. Before scepticism can rid itself of all misgivings as to the possible truth of Christianity, it must be able to account for the life of Christ, and for the early progress of Christianity. The evangelical record of the ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ is our reply to the cavils of scepticism. We may challenge the learned of that school to account for the phenomena of Christianity on any other grounds than those exhibited in the four Gospels. Jesus Christ is the great puzzle of the world. Hundreds of lives of Christ have been put forth in the present century, in which the attempt is made to set aside the fact of the incarnation and divinity of Christ without impugning the perfection of his character. The vulgar, blasphemous infidelity of the last century has disappeared. Unbelievers compliment Christ; they would betray the Son of Man with a kiss! Thus, while the downward progress of the world is towards scepticism, thank God! the perfect character of Christ stops the way. So much for the world to which you are set apart to minister as teachers. Let me now address you as such.

Preach Christ simply as a sacrifice for sin, and a Saviour from sin, as set forth in the New Testament. Be thoroughly imbued with this Spirit, and you will find that he is the power of God unto salvation. To do this effectually you must give yourselves to study. Do not read Wesley, Fletcher, and our other standards merely perfunctorily. Feed upon their writings and their Hymn-book, next to the Word of God, or you are not fit to be Wesleyan ministers. Beware of the miserable affectation of underlining either the standard or periodical literature of your Church. Acquaint yourselves with the masterly writings of the great divines of the Church of England, of the Puritans, and other Nonconformists. Be on your guard in reference to modern sensational theories, whether of the English, American, or continental press. Just as in the third century the Alexandrian school of Christian teachers engraved upon the Gospel, to the manifest injury of its simplicity, the popular Neo-Platonism of their day, so now the attempt is being made to corrupt the fountains and to defile the currents of orthodox English thought, by pouring into it the hazy sentimentalism of a moonshine theology, which, without formally denying, practically ignores the great soul-comforting doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ. In this cloudy and misty teaching no sinner can learn where to find rest. You have to preach Him who invites men to come to Him that they find rest to their souls. But while cleaving to the old theology, you must not neglect to study the times in which you are living, or to look around you and observe what the devil is doing in fostering that polite indifference to religious truth which characterises even the respectable newspaper press, and the periodical literature of our day. This unhealthy atmosphere pervades not only worldly society, but more or less affects injuriously the spiritual life of Christian professors. Our churches are

in danger of becoming mere valleys of dry bones. Pray to the Head of the Church that His breath may purify the deleterious atmosphere, so that the spiritually slain dry bones may live again.

Observe, my young brethren, that you are set apart not as ministers generally, but as ministers of the Wesleyan Church; not, therefore, necessarily sectarian, for we acknowledge love, and are ready to work with the ministers of all Churches which hold the Headship of Christ, and the saving truths of the Gospel, in the present imperfect condition of Christianity, as professed amongst us, there must be divisions amongst us, but there need not be dissensions. It is our weakness that we differ, it is our sin if we quarrel. Keep peace with all men. Keep in mind that, as Wesleyan Methodist ministers, you occupy a peculiar position in reference to your brother ministers. You have to work in the same Church with them, to be co-pastor, and to have co-pastors, and to practice daily the difficult duty of "submitting yourself to one another," to sink, in fact, your individuality in all cases where principle is not concerned; and if you cannot do this cheerfully, you are not fit to be a Wesleyan Minister however valuable you may be in other respects. So to submit is our point of honour, in which we value our usefulness, and desire the confidence of our brethren and of our people, we must not fail. We must also learn to rejoice in seeing others preferred to ourselves and to live happily under almost daily mortification of vanity and self-love, so long as you see defects of character exist in us. Our current is one which we ought to receive, as I have heard an old brother remark, more kicks than compliments. But never mind, this is wholesome discipline, and you will find the life of a Methodist minister a very happy one, if you are content to be simply a Methodist preacher, and as such, "to serve your generation by the will of God." You stand in an intimate relation to our people and they soon find out what you are; they speedily take your measure. Not censoriously, but they are ready to receive the truth you are for genuine; no sham, can deceive them; they will overlook many faults if they see a real love for souls; but they won't believe that you love their souls if you never get near them. Study is a good thing, but the time given to a sympathetic pastor is much better, and with good management one duty need not interfere with the other.

Be careful how you marry. A man requires his wife's consent to be respectable and useful. Let your wife be an example to the flock in reference to decency and propriety of dress. You do not want a woman who is a milliner's show stick, but one who so far respects the image of God in woman, and respects too much her husband's office and the rules of the Church to which she belongs, to detect that image by earrings and other so-called ornamental articles of jewellery, which though they may be suitable for savages, or for duchesses, are utterly out of place on the person of a wife of a Methodist preacher. It is high time that the ministers and officers of the Methodist Church should make a stand against the absence of good taste and decency which characterises the fashionable costume of our day. This is not a trifling matter which might be left to be corrected by satire. It has a moral bearing upon the higher interests of all classes of society, especially upon that very numerous class who with small means are, by the example of those above them, tempted to an expenditure and display equally ruinous to their purses and their character. Let our women beware lest they are not aware of what they deem their Christian liberty in their dress, the blood of souls be required at their hands.

And now as to your ministry. Be not discouraged if you are not what is called a "popular" preacher. You may if you choose allow to be acceptable and useful. The Head of the Church is very chary in bestowing great gifts upon those whom He calls to labour in the ministry, lest the excellency of the power should appear to be of man. He sees how highly the churches are to be trusted with highly gifted men, how they spoil them, how little they profit by them, and how often men so endowed are comparatively little use in bringing sinners to God. To this, of course, there are many notable exceptions, both in the Church here and at home. If your talents are not, but one, yet if you use that one wisely, preach short and lively, and after the service go with a good prayer meeting, you will hold your own, and ensure a blessing upon your ministry. Be encouraged; it is the average man that do the real work for Christ in the churches. At home about a thousand or more of our ministers keep to their own circuits, and mind only their own proper work, are the life and glory of Methodism. You may be like these men, genuine, experimental Christians, preaching so that your hearers are convinced that you yourself believe and feel what you preach to them. Well it is when, in the words of our hymn, we can say—

What have we felt and seen,
With confidence we tell.
Much more I might say, but the time is gone,
Your own moral supply the shortcomings of this address. Be meth of faith and prayer, and God will bless you and make you a blessing. The charge secured the fixed attention of the congregation, was strongly characteristic, many of the truths were expressed in homely but pointed phrase, and we do not think it will soon be forgotten by any one who heard it; and we trust those for whose benefit it was especially intended will profit by its counsels and cautions.

On Thursday, January 29, on the subject of the Chinese mission in Melbourne, the Rev. W. B. Boyce addressed the Conference and said: Properly speaking, I come as a deputation from the Missionary Committee in London to this Committee. I can therefore, speak with the greater freedom and confidence. Some reference has been made to-day to your home mission and foreign work. You were recently a mission—wonder at your efforts, but let there be antagonism between your home and foreign work. At home we prevent our home and foreign missionary meetings coming into collision by the Conference appointing deputations for both, so that they do not trespass on

each other's pastures. The Church must stand on its two legs—home and foreign missions. Some good brethren have feared that home and foreign mission efforts would interfere with each other; that fear was felt by our fathers, who were not half as wise as their children. When the mission fund falls off, all others fall off. The more people give, the more they will love giving; they will get into the habit of giving. Some churches have become so prudent about giving, that they have died of prudence. We are anxious at home to come to some arrangement with you in reference to your missions. Men in business can't tell that there is nothing so unpleasant as an element of uncertainty in the amount of the drafts which are to be drawn upon them. Some time since we were at the Mission-house in this position; the Canadian, the Eastern British, the French, the Australasian Conferences, doing what they pleased and then drawing for their deficiencies upon us. The plan we adopted at home now is to have an estimate of expense for each mission district, and we want to know the least amount of the cost of the affiliated Conferences. We are willing to come to the most liberal terms. We'll pay to any amount that may be agreed upon, pay it to you beforehand, if necessary, only put us out of our misery, and let us know what we shall have to do. I should propose that your Executive Committee should confer with me, and see if we cannot adopt some plan to be submitted to your Conference for its acceptance. Something has been said about new missions. We at home are frequently called to consider new schemes. We have been offered thousands of pounds if we will take up Java, New Guinea, or Gondokoro in Central Africa; and of the last I may say that it might take a man three years to get there, and he would probably die six months after his arrival! Many of these propositions are mere delusions. We have learned some wisdom from our mistakes. As to Japan, there are several men of sister societies already working there, or rather preparing to do something, and when they have opened the work, then you may go and join for the good of the work. I have heard of the old fields which God has so wonderfully blessed. There is nothing recorded in Christian history to surpass the wonderful success which has followed the Methodist missions in North America, South Africa (where men as black as your boots speak the English language as well as any of us), and in the Friendly Islands and Fiji. I am very glad you have organized a Chinese mission in Victoria, and of its success. Our shrewd Victorian brethren or friends will expect a glimpse of a word of results for every pound they give.

The general interest in missions in the colonies is not so great as it was, though there is much more money given for religious purposes now. You in some of your colonial districts do not raise as much for the Mission Fund as you did sixteen years ago. No doubt there are many calls upon you in your home work, but still I do think you might do a little more without injuring yourselves. If the superintendents were to throw a little more enthusiasm into the mission cause, it would not lessen their circuit incomes. There never was a Church which was so liberal in its support of missions and at the same time behind in other things. It is desirable that you should take a little more fatherly interest in missions; that you should interest and secure the aid of your laymen. You would do much if you would enlist sympathy, especially of the women—But I forget, there are no women in the colonies, they are all ladies! The mission work is a great one; and the missionary is engaged in a great work—the thought that fills him is that which fills the heart of the God-Man. This thought is the convertor of the world. The travail of his soul in heaven is not yet satisfied; and thus "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." We should share that sympathy, for without it there can be no fitness for the enjoyment of heaven. My experience is that Methodist people give rightly if they feel rightly, and the right feeling is not the result of mere impulse. I have little faith in "the Star" system; its influence is very temporary. You may get your popular men with their fine eyes and their grand meetings; but that will accomplish little. The Lord seldom converts except by the ordinary ministry. He will bless you most when you stay in your own circuits and do your own work. My own opinion is that our stationary condition in England is partly owing to the neglect of their proper circuits by these "stars." Not that I blame the men; they are the victims of a system. "When the cat's away the mice do play," the devil won't "pair off" with these "stars" while they are away from their circuits; he never leaves his work, nor should we. If I had my will, the Conference would require every minister to spend eleven months of the year in his own circuit, and the result would be the conversion of thousands of souls. Stick to your work. Mind your own circuits. As an old man and as your first President, I have taken the liberty of thus speaking to you. I do hope that you will consider the proposal to appoint a Committee to confer with me, and I assure you that we do not wish to get rid of you on unreasonable terms; we will deal liberally with you, as we always have done. A final settlement as to all our relations with you is desirable, as the time is not far distant when the old men who know the history of the past will be gone. It will be well that your position in reference to us, and ours to you, should be fully understood. Do let all things be arranged before the old men die.

A MISSION STORY.

In 1839 the Maharajah of Punjab, Northern India, died, and according to the cruel custom of the country, eleven of his wives, some of whom were young girls of fifteen, were burned alive on his funeral pile. They were marched to the fatal spot in procession, and placed with the corpse on a pile of sandal wood. They were then thickly covered with jungle grass saturated with oil, and the whole mass was consumed. The heir to the throne, Duleep Singh, was then a boy four years old. Ten years later, the regents who governed in his place, engaged in a war with the English, and lost forever the sceptre of Punjab. The young

Princes, then fourteen years old, was placed on a pension by the British Government, and sent to school at Fetteghur, where he came under the influence of the Presbyterian mission. Although his father had strongly opposed Christianity, this had become interested in a Bible borrowed from a young companion, and soon gave his heart to the Saviour.

He withdrew his confidence from the Brahminical priests, and from that time associated more and more with the missionaries. On the 8th of March, 1855, he was baptized in the presence of all the servants of his retinue, and the missionaries, native Christians, and European residents at the station. He was clad in the royal costume of his country, and when he took off his jewelled turban and bowed his head to receive the rite of baptism, many a heart offered prayer that he might have grace to keep his solemn vows.

Duleep Singh has proved faithful to the present time. Immediately after his baptism, though but eighteen years of age, he founded the Duleep Singh Dispensary and Labour, and placed them under the care of the missions. And now, though he resides in England, he supports about a dozen missionary schools in his native land—thus showing that however indifferent some of us may be, he for one appreciates the great value of such a work among the Indian youth.

In 1865 I had the pleasure of meeting Duleep Singh at Cairo, in Egypt, together with his wife "Bamba." As she also illustrates the good which can be accomplished by teaching a little benighted child in a mission school, I must tell you something about her. Her mother, who had been an Abyssinian slave, lived in a narrow street in Cairo, and dressed and ate like the Arabs; but she sent Bamba to the girl's school at the mission house of the United Presbyterian Church. The little pupil proved to be very bright and attractive, as I can myself testify, and not only acquired a fair education, but became an earnest Christian, and at length engaged in teaching a class in the mission Sabbath school.

In 1865 Duleep Singh passed through Cairo on his way to India. He was on a singular errand. His mother had died in England, and he was at her request returning to India to bury her body. Being detained at Cairo, he visited the mission Sabbath school, where he very unexpectedly saw Bamba. He at once became so deeply interested in her that he afterwards sought a fuller acquaintance, and at length engaged her to become his wife, when he should return to India.

As he would return in a few weeks, the missionaries took Bamba into their own household in order to teach her to speak English, to wear the European style of dress, and to eat her food with a knife and fork, which native Egyptians seldom do. In the June following Duleep Singh and "little Bamba" were happily married, and she who had always lived poorly in a back street, and eaten her food from her hands, received a dowry of tens and hundreds of thousands besides bridal presents of jewels from her mother and equal to those of an Empress. The wedding fee given to the Mission was \$5,000.

The elevation of Joseph in that same land from slavery and a prison, to the second place in the government, was scarcely more remarkable. When I saw Bamba two years later in Cairo, where she and her husband were spending the winter, she had become a refined and attractive lady. They were both liberal supporters of the Mission, as they have been ever since.

In looking over some of my notes written in Cairo in the winter of 1865, I find this passage:—"Ten days since our little party engaged a dahabeh (Nile boat) for a voyage up the river. Subsequently Prince Duleep proposed to purchase for an occasional family hunting excursion—donating its use for the remainder of the time to the missionary couple for their work. As he offered to hire for us an equally good and more expensive one, we on every occasion consented; and to-night while I write in our little saloon, as we wait on this a glossy smooth and moonlight Nile, till a good wind shall waft us up to Thebes, there shines not far away the cheerful light of another boat. Enter its snug cabin and you shall be handsomely greeted by the Indian Prince and his happy little wife. They also are bound up the Nile."

I must describe to you the last scene in which I beheld this interesting couple, because it suggests a very marked contrast. It was on the Sabbath. Bamba had been up to the mission house to attend the morning service, and was riding down the river Nile bank on a richly bedecked dahabeh to join her husband on the dahabeh. He helped her on board with great gallantry, brought up from the saloon an easy chair, which he placed for her under an awning, and as we viewed the scene from our boat, a picture was presented which I can never forget. Duleep stood conversing with his wife in the kindest and most affable manner, while the puts from his sgar rolled up around his face and wreathed his red fez cap. In the background was the yellow old Nile bank with a few palm trees, while beyond rose through the lurid air the great pyramids whose solemn majesty is the same that looked on Joseph and his brethren. The surroundings were worthy of the strange romantic history of Duleep and his wife; but most significant of all was the contrast suggested. Think for a moment of that funeral pile in India, where the heathenism claimed the sacrifice of eleven living wives in honour of a dead husband. Imagine the horror of the scene, and then your thoughts again to the kind and loving husband who stands on the deck of the Nile boat. In the one case it is the latter; the other it is the son. In the one case it is heathenism; in the other Christianity. They are another generation apart, and the magic power which has wrought the great change in so short a period is the simple Word of God, taught to a little boy in India and a little girl in Egypt. Now, my dear children, if you ever thought that it was of little use to attempt the reform of the heathen, I hope that all your doubts will cease when you contrast these scenes. We cannot promise you that every one of our six thousand youth will prove one of a Duleep or a Bamba. Do not expect too much. But try. In the morning show your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."—*Evangelist*.

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.
River, I stand on thy grassy bank,
And I watch thy waters play,
While to and fro o'er thy bosom flits
The light of an April day.
And while shadows are chasing the sunshine
Over thee far and wide,
Memory looks o'er the past, and lo!
'Tis like light and shade on thy tide.
Sorrow that saddened my youthful soul;
Gleams of some happy day;
There are frowns of the dark December,
And smiles of the gleesome May.
But for all that was dark and stormy,
For all that was calm and bright,
I thank Him who first pronounced them good—
The darkness and the light.
For though stern, they were I rely teachers,
All the sorrows that have been;
And thrice blessed holy comforters,
Were the joys that came between.
And I've learned, yes long ago I've learned,
Whichever of the twin may come,
'Tis a ministering angel sent of God,
To fit me for my home.
As the light and the shadow that fit above
The river and April frowns,
Are fitting the earth for the glory,
That shall come with the summer hours.

AGNES PARK.
PREPARING TO DIE.
A wealthy merchant said to me a few days ago, "I am now sixty years of age, I sometimes feel as if I ought to retire from business and worldly cares, and prepare to die." I sympathized with the feeling, but not with the plan suggested; and simply asked, "How would you prepare to die?" "Why," said he, "of course by prayer and study of the Bible, and close examination of the ground of my Christian hopes." "But," said I, "is not life governed by Christian principle, and consecrated daily to Christ, a better preparation for death than any morbid anatomy of one's feelings and hopes?—As not the Protestant idea of doing service for God and man a higher type of piety than the Catholic idea of solitude and ascetic mortifications?" "I agree with you," he replied, "my judgment leans that way, I can honestly say I struggle to make my life bolder and more useful. I wish to have my last years my best years in purity and fruitfulness, but I sometimes long to get away from toil and responsibility, and live in quiet retirement." "God has given you wealth," I answered, "and influence, and your duty is plain, to make the most of them for his service to the end of life. No one can put off the harness till he is laid in the grave. Effective service for Christ is the best preparation for death."

He agreed with me in the general view and we parted. I have since thought of the matter much, with a deeper conviction that the principle stated is the only one recognized by the New Testament. A holy life prepares for death; but a holy life is not one given to prayer and self-sacrifice; but one in which self-will is subordinate to God's will, and selfish aims are supplanted by thought and labor for others. "He went about doing good," is the pithy biography of Jesus. This is the ideal of life to which every Christian should aspire. Piety is strengthened not by a morbid analysis of motives, but by cheerful toil and sacrifice for some noble object; not by fasting and stripes in a convent cell, but by sympathy with suffering, and efforts to save from temptation and ruin.

A distinguished lawyer and jurist died not many years ago. He had stood among the leaders of the bar in an eastern city, had won honor upon the bench, and taken high position in the lower house of Congress. He was, above all, a sincere Christian, with an intelligent faith in the doctrines of revelation, and a holy character moulded by his faith. Some years before his death, he gave himself diligently to the duties of preparing to die. He relinquished all duties to his clients, declining even to give advice in important cases where his aid was sought; withdrew from the common associations of friendship, and the simple duties of society, and gave himself to reading, and meditation and prayer. He read the Bible with devout enthusiasm, having for an intimate friend an eminent biblical scholar and interpreter, with whom he discussed its teachings. He made himself familiar with the great works on the evidences of Christianity, with the masterpieces of Christian thought in all ages, and with writers on devotion and practical piety. History, science, law, political economy, and elegant literature were all laid aside, and no books or papers were on his table but those of a strictly religious character. With the earnestness of a strong mind and will, he gave himself singly to the work of preparing to die.

What was the result of this brooding and self-inspection? Precisely what might be expected from an invasion of God's law: "No man liveth by himself." In some respects his aim was successful. His faith in the Bible as an inspired revelation from God, was strengthened. He felt that all the objections of our skeptical age were feeble, that none of them were novel or original, but only the reproduction of old forms of unbelief. He accepted Christianity as a divine revelation, adequate for the race in all ages, and certain to prevail as his intellect found perfect rest in Christ. His intellect found perfect rest in Christ. He was satisfied also with the reality of his own hopes. He saw clearly that he had been born again, and that character and life had been changed by the indwelling of the Spirit. With a peaceful trust in Jesus as a personal Saviour, he waited the summons to a better life in heaven. But the religious tone of feeling was not cheerful and thoughtful for others. He grew capricious and desponding, distrustful of the piety of associates, lost interest and confidence in great Christian enterprises, and thought that Christianity was losing power in the Church and in the world. He criticised sharply the failings of old friends, had no charity to forgive the mistakes of weaker natures; and gave little from his large wealth either to the

poor or to Christian objects. Tried in the balance of the New Testament it must be said that the piety of his latter days was narrow and unlovely; absorbed in self, and forgetful of others. When he died the bulk of his property was left to relatives, not to the needy, or to the religious institutions of the church with which he had long been a communicant. The will, like his closing years, gave proof of an unhealthy mind, whose piety was warped with strong prejudices.

The illustration confirms the principle with which we started. A holy life is found in action, not in brooding.—*Harold and Presbyterian*.

REASONS FOR TOTAL ABSTINENCE.
In a sermon on "The Christian serving his Generation," by Rev. Wm. M. Taylor, published by the National Temperance Society, strong arguments are presented on the temperance question and prohibition. A part of his discourse touched the question of the duty of the Christian to become a professed total abstinence on the ground that it is necessary to save the drunkard. He brings in a pertinent anecdote to illustrate his position, which we quote:

"It will not be disputed by any Christian that we should endeavor to save the drunkard; nor will it be denied that there is an urgent call upon us to use all the means in our power for this purpose, from the immense number of those who are addicted to intemperance. The only question is as to how to do it. Now, there are here a few plain principles which have always been very satisfactory to my mind, and seem to settle the case. Abstinence is for the drunkard a physical necessity, if, at least, he would conquer his habit. For his habit is an appetite as well, having this peculiarity, that the least quantity of ardent spirits taken by him will act as a spark on gunpowder, and set the whole man on fire with the desire for more. Hence, if I wish to deliver him, I must endeavor to get him never to touch strong drink. But before I can prevail on him to be an abstinence, I must make his position, as such, an honorable one. He will never assume it if his doing so be cast up to him as a disgrace. He will rather die in his intemperance than become an abstinence to be pointed at by the drunkard and the moderate drinker alike, and to hear it said regarding him: 'That man had to give up drinking strong drink to save himself from tanneries.' As Lieutenant Blackmore discovered that the poor fallen woman, much as she loathed her degradation, loathed still more the prison system that prevailed in the penitentiaries, and preferred to die in her sin rather than to be saved in such a way; so have we found it to be with the drunkard. If we mean to save him, therefore, we must start him on the same platform with him. Just as the Son of God, when he wished to save man, stepped himself to be a man, yet without the sin of man, so—I speak it in all reverence—woe, if we mean to deliver the drunkard, must stoop to put ourselves on a level with him, while yet we are not partakers in his sin. We must make abstinence respectable by ourselves joining with him in his abstinence. We must do with him what we ask him to do for himself. The old temperance societies of thirty years ago failed because the drinks they permitted, fed the appetite they wished to destroy. But in like manner the moderate drinker of our day will also fail to cure the drunkard by asking him to abstain, if he do not so far identify himself with him as to abstain along with him. Somewhere about thirteen years ago, the Sailors' Home, one of the noblest institutions in Liverpool, was discovered to be on fire. It was past midnight; all the inmates had retired to rest, and were startled out of their slumber by the terrible alarm. The flames spread rapidly throughout the building, and from every door and window volumes of smoke streamed forth, so that, when the fire-brigade appeared upon the scene, it was as one appeared that nothing could be done to save it, and the whole energies of the force were directed to the rescuing of those who were as yet within.

A dense crowd of onlookers had already gathered round, and many stout-hearted men came forth and volunteered their services in the perilous enterprise. A company of marines landed from a man-of-war at anchor in the Sloyne, and gave themselves right earnestly to the same noble work, until at length ninety-seven souls had been snatched by them from the jaws of death; and it seemed as if the whole were saved. And now men breathed freely as they looked upon the gorgeous spectacle of that massive building wreathed in fire; but hark! a piercing shriek is heard high over the shouts of the multitude; and yonder, on the upper ledge of the building, five men are seen calling for help. As soon as possible, the longest ladder on the spot is placed against the wall, right underneath where they are standing; but, alas! it reaches only to a point some twenty feet below the parapet where they are. An agony of disappointment wrings the heart of every onlooker as he sees their deliverance sinking fast into despair. "Stand back," cries a resolute and courageous man, as with another ladder on his shoulder, he places his foot upon the lowest round, and prepares with it to ascend to their relief.

On him now all eyes are fixed. They watch him until he has reached the top of the long ladder, and there he joins to it the one which he has borne with him. But, ah! how bitter the disappointment again! it also is too short. What now is to be done? There is no time to lose; so taking the ladder up, he raises it until it rests upon his shoulders, and there at the height of well-nigh fifty feet from the ground, standing on the one ladder, and adding his own length to the other which he carried, he calls to them to come down over him. The multitude beneath hold their breath in astonishment, afraid to utter a sound, lest they should mar the self-possession of the man; but when, one after another, they have descended in safety, the air is rent with a most deafening cheer, which makes the welkin ring. Thus, brethren, must we save the drunkard from the devouring fire—the ladder even of abstinence will be too short which we carry; if it and make over ourselves a pathway for him into safety.

AGNES PARK.
PREPARING TO DIE.
A wealthy merchant said to me a few days ago, "I am now sixty years of age, I sometimes feel as if I ought to retire from business and worldly cares, and prepare to die." I sympathized with the feeling, but not with the plan suggested; and simply asked, "How would you prepare to die?" "Why," said he, "of course by prayer and study of the Bible, and close examination of the ground of my Christian hopes." "But," said I, "is not life governed by Christian principle, and consecrated daily to Christ, a better preparation for death than any morbid anatomy of one's feelings and hopes?—As not the Protestant idea of doing service for God and man a higher type of piety than the Catholic idea of solitude and ascetic mortifications?" "I agree with you," he replied, "my judgment leans that way, I can honestly say I struggle to make my life bolder and more useful. I wish to have my last years my best years in purity and fruitfulness, but I sometimes long to get away from toil and responsibility, and live in quiet retirement." "God has given you wealth," I answered, "and influence, and your duty is plain, to make the most of them for his service to the end of life. No one can put off the harness till he is laid in the grave. Effective service for Christ is the best preparation for death."

He agreed with me in the general view and we parted. I have since thought of the matter much, with a deeper conviction that the principle stated is the only one recognized by the New Testament. A holy life prepares for death; but a holy life is not one given to prayer and self-sacrifice; but one in which self-will is subordinate to God's will, and selfish aims are supplanted by thought and labor for others. "He went about doing good," is the pithy biography of Jesus. This is the ideal of life to which every Christian should aspire. Piety is strengthened not by a morbid analysis of motives, but by cheerful toil and sacrifice for some noble object; not by fasting and stripes in a convent cell, but by sympathy with suffering, and efforts to save from temptation and ruin.

A distinguished lawyer and jurist died not many years ago. He had stood among the leaders of the bar in an eastern city, had won honor upon the bench, and taken high position in the lower house of Congress. He was, above all, a sincere Christian, with an intelligent faith in the doctrines of revelation, and a holy character moulded by his faith. Some years before his death, he gave himself diligently to the duties of preparing to die. He relinquished all duties to his clients, declining even to give advice in important cases where his aid was sought; withdrew from the common associations of friendship, and the simple duties of society, and gave himself to reading, and meditation and prayer. He read the Bible with devout enthusiasm, having for an intimate friend an eminent biblical scholar and interpreter, with whom he discussed its teachings. He made himself familiar with the great works on the evidences of Christianity, with the masterpieces of Christian thought in all ages, and with writers on devotion and practical piety. History, science, law, political economy, and elegant literature were all laid aside, and no books or papers were on his table but those of a strictly religious character. With the earnestness of a strong mind and will, he gave himself singly to the work of preparing to die.

