

THE CANADA CHRISTIAN MONTHLY.

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Editorial.

THE THIRD GREAT EPOCH.



CHRISTIANITY, in relation to the kingdoms of this world has seen (as a distinguished historian, Philip Smith, has suggested) two great epochs—the *founding* of Constantinople in 324, and its *fall* in 1453. It sees now, with that famous city still as the centre, a third epoch which may be called the *regeneration* of Constantinople, and, we trust through it, of the East.*

It does not lie within our province at present to pass judgment on the manner and the means by which Turkey has passed as really under the protectorate of England, as some of the Provinces of India. We all know that the history of our power in India is stained with

* We give here an extract from an Editorial in the CHRISTIAN MONTHLY in Nov., 1876, on the "*Decay and Fall of the Turkish Empire.*" In answer to the question then anxiously asked by many "*What is in the future?*" the Editorial thus referred to the answer of Scripture:—"The answer to this question is with God alone. The statesmen of Europe seem like men at their wits' end. They know not what to do, nor what is to be. The answer to the question is in Revelations, 16th chapter and 12th verse. '*And the sixth angel poured out his vial on the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*'" This verse, taken in connection with the preceding verse, ("And the fifth angel poured out his vial on the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain,") shows, 1st. That as Popery and Mahometanism rose into existence almost contemporaneously, and under the fifth and sixth trumpets, (about the beginning of the seventh century,) so also shall they perish contemporaneously, and under the fifth and sixth vials. 2nd That the extinction of Mahometan power will be after the fashion of a great river retiring into its channel after a time of inundation. It will retire gradually. It will retire leaving behind it the races and churches which lay buried under its waves for so many centuries, but which it did not destroy. 3rd. The destruction of Mahometanism will open the way for extension of the Gospel into India and Persia, which must be meant by the way of the Kings of the east being prepared.

many a wrong. The treaties that have at length settled the Eastern question are also, we fear, stained as regards England, if not with blood, yet with duplicity; for, although the promise given by the Prime Minister of England to Turkey has been kept to the ear, it has been broken to the heart. It is not, however, at the morale of the matter that we propose here to look, but at the far-reaching consequences that lie in this rude germ.

As the *founding* of Constantinople conjoined with the open acknowledgment of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire, signified the *overthrow of the old Pagan world*; and as the *fall* of it, conjoined with the invention of printing, powder and other beneficent and maleficent powers, heralded the *rise of modern civilization*; so the *regeneration* under the eye and hand of Britain, of the great historical city of the Bosphorous, which now, we trust, begins, signifies, men begin to hope, the settlement of peace for Europe, the downfall of Mahometanism, the destruction of heathenism, and the triumph of Christianity in the Eastern Hemisphere.

1. There is now a fair prospect that Europe may gradually begin the great work of disbanding its enormous armies and settling down to a peace basis. For centuries back Turkey has been (as a carcase) a centre of attraction to the war eagles of Europe and Asia, and has thus fostered standing armies. It is true that local quarrels and jealousies in western Europe, and the Jesuitism that has its home in Rome, still exist as disturbing elements, and as a partial excuse for the vast standing armies that are depopulating France and goading the German people into madness and communism.* But now

* Germany, like an overburdened beast of toil, staggers and trembles under the load of her army, and men ask, "Must we always pay this price for a united Germany? Must we ever be under a system which makes every man a soldier—drains the country of her sons in the precious seedtime years of their life, which oppresses the treasury, which makes mothers tremble when they look into the eyes of their first-born sons and think of these weary, weary, ever recurring wars?" It was blood and iron with Schleswig-Holstein, blood and iron with Austria, blood and iron with France—now it is blood and iron with Germany. This fair Germania, beautiful among the nations, which was to be the harbinger of peace and industry and brotherhood, whom all men were to love and hail her coming—this comely Germania of which poets dreamed. She has come. The hope of Barbarossa is realized. But she comes in blood and iron after all. Suspicion reigns. Detectives float around you. Soldiers stand guard at every corner. You hear the beating of the drums. You are told of "stronger" and "stronger measures."—*Correspondent in Berlin of New York Herald.*

that Turkish progress and destiny are linked to England, now that the new Pope has abandoned the hope of seeing the temporal power restored to the Papal see, now that France is settling into moderate Republicanism, we are not, we trust, far from a Congress of the European powers whose object it will be to proclaim the true Christian Commune and change Europe from an armed camp, bristling with swords and bayonets, to a hive of peaceful industry. "He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." That time seems in Europe very far away; but it is undoubtedly drawing near, and we have now entered on an epoch, to which, among other changes, belongs this great reformation for which the hearts of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, wives and children, in town and country, in every language in Europe, are crying aloud in the ear of God.

2. Under the fostering hand of England and aided by its wealth and skill, there are good prospects that the vast material resources of Western Asia will be developed.* The finest countries to-day in the world, for soil, climate, position, lie right around Cyprus, from the mouth of the Nile to the Golden Horn. There lie the cradle of the human race, the seat of the ancient empires of the world, the country of our Redeemer; and the scene of the first triumphs of the Christian faith. In these Bible lands we meet with fertile valleys, with living streams, with lofty mountains, with bays the finest in the world for harbors and trade. But the plains are desolate, the streams sweep idly to the sea, the ports are without trade, without shipping, and many without even a fishing boat, and the mountains are the homes of robbers and raiders. Law, money, religion and education could with the blessing of God change this great wilderness into a garden once again. Let these four forces issue hand in

*As we write the report reaches us that Asia Minor is to receive Lord Dufferin as British Commissioner. There could not be a better appointment for such delicate and important work. We hope it is true.

hand from Cyprus, to march over the waiting and weary land, and Turkey will become the finest country in the world. But we must not forget that this issue hangs on the heart and hand of England being held true to God and his adorable Son, and the Christians of England standing true to the faith of the Reformers.

The necessity of defence and of connection with India will secure the construction of railroads and the ultimate reclamation of the Euphrates valley. The time is not far distant, as was hinted in a former article, when the iron horse will from Vienna cross the Bosphorus and neigh on its way through the wild passes of Asia Minor, the steppes of Persia, and the plains of India till it enters its stable, for its return journey, at Calcutta or Peking. In the meantime a railroad through the valley of the Euphrates to some point on the Persian Gulf is a military necessity of England's position in Cyprus. This is an undertaking the first probably that will be accomplished, the effects of which it is difficult to over-estimate.

"In former days," says William K. Loftus, "the vast plains of Babylonia were nourished by a complicated system of canals and water-courses which spread over the surface of the country like net-work. The wants of a teeming population were supplied by a rich soil not less bountiful than on the banks of the Egyptian Nile. Like islands rising from a golden sea of waving corn stood fragrant groves of palms and pleasant gardens affording to the idler or the traveller their grateful and highly-valued shade. Crowds of passengers hurried along the dusty roads to and from the cities. The land was rich in corn and wine. How changed is the aspect of that region at the present day. Long lines of mounds, it is true, mark the course of those main arteries which formerly diffused life and vegetation along their banks; but their channels are now bereft of moisture and choked with drift sand; the smaller offshoots are wholly effaced. 'A drought is upon her waters,' says the prophet, 'and they shall be dried up.' All that remains of that ancient civilization, 'that glory of kingdoms,' 'the praise of the whole earth,' is recognizable in the numerous mouldering heaps of brick and rubbish which overspread the surface of the plain. Instead of the hum of many voices, silence reigns profound, except when a few passing travellers or roving Arabs flit across the scene. Instead of luxuriant fields, the groves and gardens, nothing now meets the eye but an arid waste—the dense population of former times is vanished, and no man dwells there."

Thus has it been literally fulfilled "that the sea (river) has come upon Babylon and she is covered with the waves thereof;" and, also, "That a drought are upon her waters and they are dried up;" "That she is wholly desolate;" "The hindermost of nations, a wilderness, a dry-land, and a desert." As for the city, it will never be rebuilt;

but, is the curse about to be removed from the land, and is the Euphrates about to be dried up *physically* as well as *morally*? Is the wonderful fertility of this extraordinary flat (400 miles long and 100 wide) unbroken, save by ruins—is this fertility celebrated in history again to return? To restore to health and fertility a country the half of which is lying waste from lack of water, while the other half is a marsh from too much water, requires first, a railroad, and then, the opening of the ancient canals. With its waters carefully and properly applied and husbanded the Euphrates would convert the whole valley into one great garden with two harvests of wheat in a year, and returns as high, according to ancient historians, as two hundred, or even three hundred-fold.

3. A matter, however, of deeper interest to the Christian is the question of converting Asiatic Turkey to the faith of Christ. "It is one of the marvels of Christian history," says Dr. Jessup of Syria, "that after the lapse of nearly two thousand years the birth-place of Christianity is missionary ground. The lands of the Bible ask for the Word of God. The birth-place of religion needs a religion. The moral and religious conflicts of the past are to be repeated by the armies of the truth in the very seat of their ancient victories. The encampments of the Prince of Darkness, like the black tents of the Bedouins, cover the lands where prophets and apostles preached."

It has now come round, in the course of God's Providence, that Western Asia, the cradle of the human race, and also of Christianity, is to be once again the battle-ground of religious opinion. On this occasion, as in former times, the battle will no doubt be severe and protracted, but we have good hopes that it will issue in victory, this time, full and final, for Christ and his Church.

The chief religious systems of Western Asia, with which this battle is to be fought to-day, are *Mohammedanism*, *Paganism*, and corrupt *Christianity*.

1. The MAHOMETAN religion prevails largely through Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Persia, and Northern India, to Peking; and presents

the widest and noblest missionary field, according to the missionary quoted above, in the whole world. We find among the followers of Mahomet some of the finest races, intellectually and physically, to be found anywhere. In a measure they are prepared for pure Christianity by their theism, temperance, reverence for portions of the Scriptures: but they despise the immorality and idolatry of the Oriental Christian Church, and refuse to exchange a system of monotheistic worship for what they regard as polytheistic idolatry. The purest and barest and most puritanic of the Christian Protestant Churches is the church that will succeed best among these oriental Unitarians.

"I have been in France," said an Arab officer once to me, "and I have seen Christianity, and I know that the Protestant Church is nearer to us than the Latin or Greek Churches." That man, an intelligent, noble looking soldier, who acted as guide to some of the Napoleon family through the territory of Moab, and who was invited to Paris by them, and introduced to the gorgeous ritual of the Romish Church, was evidently more attracted by the unadorned simplicity (similar to that in his own mosque) of Protestant places of worship and forms of service, than by the florid worship of popery. The conversion of the Mahometans to the Christian religion will, therefore, be a conversion, when it takes place, to the purest and simplest forms of Christianity, and hence from the ranks of this Shemitic race will the Puritans of the west receive such important accessions and strength in their conflict with the ritualism and priestism of the Romish and Greek Churches, as will yet, it may be, turn the scale in the favor of primitive Christianity.

2. The PAGAN sects of Syria, Druze, Nusairy and Yezidee, number about half a million. They are supposed to be the descendants of the ancient people, and the disciples of the ancient religion of Western Asia; and constitute a difficult but interesting part of the mission field.

3. The ORIENTAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, according to Dr. Jessup,

who is the very best authority on the subject, may be divided into six great classes:—

(1) The *Monophysite* sects, who teach that the human nature in Christ was swallowed up and lost in the Divine nature so that Christ ceased at his birth to be a man. They are four in number, the sects who adopt this view:—*The Armenians, Jacobites, Copts, Abyssinians.* They have a married parish clergy and reject the primacy of the Pope.

(2) The *Nestorian* or Chaldean sect, which goes to the other extreme, and asserts that there were *two persons* in Christ. They reside chiefly in Persia; They have a married clergy, their ritual is free of picture worship; and they have a great reverence for the Scriptures.

(3) The orthodox *Greek Church*, which accepts the seven General Councils. "It is," according to Dr. Jessup, "the Church of Rome decapitated—a priestly system without a pontifex." The parish clergy are married and are very illiterate.

(4) The *Maronites*, who are a branch of the Church of Rome. Its patriarch refused to attend the late Vatican Council lest the Pope might interfere with his personal rights.

(5) The *Oriental Papal Churches*, which consist of converts to Popery from the Greek, Armenian, Nestorian and other native churches, and which the Pope allowed to attain their own calendar, saint-days, and various ancient prerogatives.

(6) The *Latins*, a small community, chiefly connected with the monasteries, who conform in *all* things to the church of Rome.

These six Christian Churches all hold the doctrine of transubstantiation, of baptismal regeneration, of priestly absolution. They all worship the Virgin Mary, and regard relics, pictures, and images with superstitious veneration. They all use the confessional and prayers for the dead. They are, therefore, *one* in their errors, *one* in their need of reformation, *one* in their being a *stumbling-block* in the way of Mahometans seeking Christ. Christianity in the East is, therefore, a skeleton clad in the armour of ancient days. Christ

has departed and the Church named after Him is a valley of dry bones. The first thing to be aimed at, therefore, is the conversion of the ten million of Eastern Christians to their first faith, and first zeal, and first love, and through them to reach and influence hundreds of millions of Pagans and Mahometans, from Jerusalem to Peking. Aiming at this great work (begun forty years ago) there are now in the Turkish Empire about eighty American and European missionaries and 350 native preachers. The Bible has been translated into Arabic, Turkish, Bulgarian, Armenian, Syriac, Modern Greek, Persian, Kurdish, etc., eleven versions in all. Some ninety-five churches have been organized, nearly fifty of which have native pastors. Six theological seminaries are in operation and six colleges for ladies. Hundreds of books have been translated and many of the "standard English Classics are household treasures in Eastern homes."

It cannot be (whatever other reforms and improvements may or may not come) but a new impulse will be given to Protestant missions in Turkey, were it only from the increased sense of security which the protectorate of England will henceforth give to the missionaries and their converts. A new era has risen for Protestantism in the East. The Euphrates is now dried or is fast drying up, to be followed by the advent of the Kings of the East—the conversion of India. "The boisterous threats and haughty looks of the Mahometans are no longer heard and seen," say two American missionaries writing from the coast of Syria. "The consciousness that the arm of their civil power is broken has moderated the display of their fanaticism." And in the same hopeful strain do we find the Foreign Mission Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (which has a Mission in Turkey) conclude their report to the recent meeting of their Synod.

"The Ottoman Empire is in a transition state. The encampment of the Turkish hordes on European soil has been broken up by the victorious arms of Russia. Reconstruction and readjustment are sure to follow; and while it is not in the mind nor heart of the great powers, which have the work in hand to benefit the gospel by

the new arrangement, there is a Divine Providence shaping events to an issue which promises such deliverance and enlargement to Christian missions in the East as have not hitherto been known in countries where the Koran is supreme."

Living Preachers.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION: WHAT IT IS AND HOW CHRISTIANS ATTAIN THERETO.

[A sermon preached in the Presbyterian Church, Rocky Saugeen, Grey County, Ont., on the 6th of June, 1878, being the Saturday preceding the dispensation of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.]

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Son of God.—1 JOHN v. 13.

HIS text brings before us a very important practical religious question, a question which it becomes us to consider well before taking our places at the table of the Lord on the morrow. It is the question of ASSURANCE OF SALVATION. How important this matter is you can judge from the place the Apostle John gives it in this letter. One of his principle objects in writing this letter was to settle the Christians of his day in this thing. "These things I have written," he says, "unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." In other words, John avows that one object of his writing was that Christians who already had *faith* might be enabled to go a step farther and obtain *assurance* of faith.

I. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITH AND ASSURANCE.

In speaking to you to-day on this subject allow me first of all to call your attention to the difference that exists between faith and assurance. To be *safe* and to *know* that you are safe are surely two things that are separable in thought and reality. A child may be safe in the arms of its mother and yet it may be in great fright. A prisoner may be a pardoned man, and yet for days after his pardon has been signed he may be ignorant of it. Jacob and his family were perfectly *safe* under the care of God when they met Esau with his 400 rough warriors, and yet Jacob did not feel *assured* of his safety till after his night of strenuous wrestling with the angel. Peter was safe, though he did not know it, when Christ said,

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" The little band of timid disciples was safe though they had no assurance of it, when Christ said, "Fear not little flock: it is the Father's good will to give you the Kingdom." To be safe therefore, and to know it are two different things; distinct in thought, distinct in every day life, distinct in the experience of God's saints.* Faith and assurance stand, therefore related as cause and consequence. Faith is the root: assurance is the fruit. Faith is the foundation, assurance is the superstructure. Many have faith who have no assurance: and some, alas! have assurance who have no faith, according to the observation of the wise man in his day:—"There is a generation who are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness:" Proverbs xxx. 12.

II. DEGREES OF HOPE SHORT OF FULL ASSURANCE.

It would indeed seem from what we gather from the experience of the saints in the Bible, that there are three stages of hope in which good Christians may be short of full assurance.

1. They may be in total darkness. Such cases are rare, we believe, and such a position is a sad one to occupy. It comes sometimes from bodily and mental weakness; at other times from assaults of Satan and unbelief: and at other times from the sovereign ways of God. That believers, however, may be in such a position is clear from the encouraging words of Isaiah addressed to such a case. "*Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord.*"†

2. Christians may be found who have only a little star of hope shining in a sky otherwise full of clouds. This position is much better than total darkness, but it is far short of full day. Many cases of this kind do we find in Scripture. It was the position of our first parents after their sad fall; the position of Israel in Egypt; the position of him who wrote, "My spirit is overwhelmed within me, my heart is desolate, hear me speedily, my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like them that go down unto the pit;" the position of the man who cried in the ears of his Saviour, "Lord I believe, help mine unbelief."

* I would have it taken notice of that though GRACE and ASSURANCE be two lovers, there is no such bond of union between them that the one cannot exist without the other.—REV. ANDREW GRAY, Glasgow.

† Many cases are on record, such as the case of the poet Cowper, who had undoubtedly faith but who were at times without assurance.

3. Christians may be found, who are beyond the night, who have the dawning of the day in their souls, but who still are short of perfect day. You all know how long Abraham and Sarah walked in the border territory between hope and full assurance. They believed in the promise that a son was to be born to them; but that they did not believe it with full assurance is clear from several things recorded of them. If they believed all that was told them of this son of promise, and if they believed it with full and unclouded faith, why did God confirm the *simple promise* with a *solemn oath*? If you receive with full unclouded faith the word of man, what need he make solemn oath to confirm your faith in him? If Abraham had a faith entirely unmixed with any fears and doubts, why did God confirm the promise to him with an oath? This is the reason given by Paul: "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath." "More abundantly"—in that expression we see that Abraham had not yet reached the full height of assurance even at that point in his history when on the top of Moriah he showed that the night had passed, and that the morning had come, but that God's oath added to his promise—two immutable things—were necessary to give his servant "the strong consolation," which is the mid-day brightness of full assurance."

III. THE DUTY OF BELIEVERS TO SEEK FULL ASSURANCE.

While, in the interests of truth, and to save from sadness hearts that God has not made sad, I am anxious to show that there may be good people who have not yet reached full assurance, still we should not lose sight of the important fact that it is the duty of believers to seek full assurance. Full assurance is full growth in Christ. We are not content always to remain children, but aim after things and strength that belong to men, so ought Christians to leave behind a state of childish fears and to rise to the full height of their exalted position. It is not a mark of humility, but of pride, a mark of imperfection and weakness for the believer to be always doubting his own safety and sonship. The walk of Enoch with God was in full assurance. It was in full assurance of faith Jacob gave commandment concerning his burial, and Joseph concerning his bones. When the people talked of stoning David it was as fully assured "that he comforted himself in God." In the confidence of full assurance Paul exclaims, "*Who can separate us from the love of God?*" In the same blessed confidence, John again says, "*We know that we have passed from death unto life.*" It is very plain, therefore, that assurance

can be obtained, and that the common healthy condition of the Church of God is a condition of full assurance.

"The Westminster Confession of Faith" acknowledges this truth in its wise and safe article "Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation." I quote a few sentences from the 18th chapter, which from beginning to end is worthy of your careful study. "Such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed. This certainly is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith," etc. To the same effect, the *Larger Catechism*, "*Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in a state of grace?* Answer:—Such as truly believe in Christ and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him may be infallibly assured that they are in a state of grace."

It is much to be regretted that among our people there is not earnest seeking after this full rest in God. Full assurance has been obtained, can be obtained, and ought to be diligently sought after in God's way for three reasons:—because

1. The more fully we are assured of our own safety resting upon God's promises the more we *honor them*. There is a universal and unconditional promise of God that those who come to him in Christ will in no wise be cast out. Is it not to the honor and glory of God, whose promises never fail, that the believer should rest in the truth of that promise and go on his way rejoicing? The more fully you rest on a promise made by a friend the more you honor your friend. Let us honor God by resting in implicit confidence on his truth.

2. The more fully we are assured of our own security, the greater our *happiness*. It is new life to the passengers who have given the ship up for lost, to be assured that the danger is past and that the harbor is in view. We who are walking in doubts of our salvation have no idea of the gladness it would spread all around if only on good solid Scriptural grounds we could arrive at assurance of salvation and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

3. The more fully we are assured of salvation the *more good* we can do to the world. It is only as the church of God attains to its perfect stature in Christ that its full influence for good will be silently felt by an

unbelieving world. No amount of *talking* will to any large degree influence the unconverted while the *lives* of God's people are pitched on a low key. It is not the praise of the music before it begins and after it is over that entrances the soul, but the music itself.

For these and other reasons we ought to give diligent heed to the great business of "making our calling and election sure."

IV. HOW CAN CHRISTIANS ATTAIN TO FULL ASSURANCE.

There is such a thing in religion as false faith, and false experience, and false hope, and false assurance. Many mournful instances of this kind are recorded in the Bible. After the passage of the Red Sea we read of the children of Israel, "that the people feared the Lord and believed the Lord and his servant Moses." But of that same people Paul says in his letter to the Hebrews, "To whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?" They believed with the head but not with the heart: they had assurance as they sang the great song of Moses and Miriam, but it was false assurance. Against this false faith, false peace, and false assurance, many of the parables of Christ are directed. It was false assurance that ruined the foolish virgins, and the house built on the sand, and the man without the wedding garment. Paul urges constantly that Christians should examine themselves as to the grounds of their assurance. James says, "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead." In the face of these sad facts and solemn warnings, it is of great importance to find some test of true faith and some marks of that assurance that maketh not ashamed.

There are three witnesses whose testimony ought to decide all doubtful cases. In order to ascertain whether we are really God's people or not, let us hear,

1st. *The testimony of our hearts.*—"Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." What do our hearts say? Have we been convinced of our sin and misery; are our minds enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, are our wills renewed, have we been persuaded and enabled to embrace Christ, are we now resting upon him for salvation? What is the testimony of our own hearts on these points? Can we say "One thing we know that whereas we were once blind we now see?" Can we say honestly that we have the faith of dependance, for "God never gives a faith of assurance," says Stoddart in his *Guide to Christ*, "before he gives a faith of dependance." But you ask how can I know that I have the faith of dependance. "The rule is very sweet,"

says Mr. Shepard in his *Sound Believer*, "but certain; when the believer takes *all* the Scripture and embraces it as spoken to him, he may then take *any particular promise* boldly. This no hypocrite can do. This the saints shall do."

You may not be able to explain the mystery of the change that has passed over you, nor tell it to others, but for all that you have the witness in yourselves, and the voice of this witness is of considerable importance in the verdict for which you look. But it would be dangerous to imperil the great concerns of the soul on this single witness. He that trusteth in this testimony alone is not wise. For the heart is deceitful; and many are, no doubt lulled asleep by its soothing flatteries. Any other witness that can be called into court? Yes:—

2. Let us hear *the testimony of the Spirit*. "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." Let us not imagine that this witnessing means some strange, startling or miraculous voice speaking in the ear of the soul. This witnessing is not a new revelation, but a business of the ordinary means of grace, and of every-day experience on the part of the Christian. There is, let us suppose, a will made by a rich man consigning a valuable estate to certain heirs who are described in the will. When the marks given of the heirs in the will are found clearly and distinctly in certain individuals, that fact proves their title to the property. So the Holy Ghost *witnessing and speaking in his word* gives in various places the marks of God's children, the disposition, habits and ways of God's people. And let us mark that the promises are not given to men by *name* but to men by their *dispositions*. Then, the Holy Ghost witnessing and working in the believer's *heart* creates there the graces and dispositions he describes in the *word*; and when the two agree then, it is proved, to the comfort and assurance of the believer that he is really, truly, a child of God; then is it proved to his own soul that he is an heir to the estate (peace and assurance, not justification) because he has the marks laid down in his elder brother's will. But it is quite possible for the spirit of error to speak with the voice of the spirit of truth. Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, can wrest Scripture, and can imitate even the graces of the spirit so that to be safe a third witness is necessary.

3. Let us listen to the *testimony of the trials*. No one has read history, his own heart and Scripture aright, who does not know that steadiness and steadfastness under trials, endurance to the end, is the best and ultimate test of all sincerity. How did it appear that the faith and assur-

ance of the Israelites that came out of Egypt was a rotten business? It did not endure. When subjected to trials their faith faded, fainted and failed. It lacked the element of continuance, of vitality. How did God prove the sincerity of Abraham's faith and of Job's patience? By trials. What showed the difference between the good ground and the bad in the parable of the sower? The ground that carried the seed to victory over the birds, the drought and the weeds, was the good ground. Short of this, no matter how good, it was bad ground. Seven times we are told in Christ's last message to the churches that it is *he that overcometh* that shall be rewarded. Yes, it is not he that puts on his armour who is allowed to boast in the Bible, but he who honorably puts it off. In the affairs of every day we proceed on the maxim that there is "no proof like a trial." He is a fool who boasts of his new axe till he has tried its temper on some knotty limb. "We glory in tribulation," says Paul. Why? "Tribulation worketh patience." Well, what of that? "Patience worketh experience." *Trial*. There it is. The experience that cometh from tribulation is to the believer what the hemlock knot on a frosty morning is to the new axe, what the battles are to a new recruit out of his chimney corner, what the ocean with its storms are to the new ship. You don't know your axe till it has been tried, nor your coat, nor your friend. You don't know yourself, your own heart, till you have been tried. It is "by patient continuance in well doing" men are to seek for eternal life: Rom. ii. 7. "If ye continue in the faith," "If they continue in faith and charity and holiness and sobriety," (Col. i. 23, 1 Tim. ii. 15,) these and such like expressions are continually ringing in the ears of those who read their Bibles.

We find, to draw toward a conclusion, that when the great apostle of the Gentiles lay in his prison cell in Rome waiting for execution, he was visited in that cell by the first witness named above—the testimony of his own heart, "I serve God with a pure conscience." He had also the testimony of the spirit:—"God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." But the witness that closed up and clinched the great argument of his full assurance was the third witness. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." He had been weighed and numbered; he had gone through fire and water; and there he was safe and sound through the varied ordeal; and right logically, right Scripturally, right joyfully, right solidly, he concludes the grand demonstration,

HENCEFORTH THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME A CROWN.

God grant us such a triumphal demonstration as that when we come to die. It may be well, in conclusion, to address a few pointed, parting words to certain distinct classes to be found in every mixed gathering of professing christians.

1. Are there any here who *have assurance and yet who have no true right to this assurance?* Many such we meet in Bible history. Cain seemed to have a lot of assurance in his way of it; so had Korah and his companions; so had Simon Magus, Demas and the foolish Galatians of whom Paul stood in doubt; so had the foolish virgins. Bunyan describes such a man in his *Pilgrim's Progress*. He was a "brisk lad" from the country called "Conceit," and his name was "Ignorance." When he came to the dark river, even there he had no fears, for it happened that one "Vain-Hope," a ferryman with his boat helped him over. He knocked boldly at the gate of heaven, and when asked whence he came, answered confidently, "I have eat and drunk in the presence of the King and he has taught in our streets;" but when asked for his certificate he "fumbled in his bosom for one and found none." Two shining ones bound him hand and foot and carried him to the prison of Despair. "Then," says John Bunyan, as the last words of his searching and suggestive dream, "then I saw that there was a way to Hell even from the gates of Heaven as well as from the city of Destruction." If that be so do not cry "peace" too soon; nor be too easily satisfied of the security of your faith. Remember that there is not a single true grace but there is a counterfeit of it: remember that in religion, as an experienced divine has said, "the common natural affections when touched by some excitement are often stronger than the saving:" remember that a continued mistake here is forever fatal, for there is no recrossing the river to undo our blunders. Let your prayer therefore be "Search me O Lord and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."

2. Are there any here who *have no assurance and yet who ought to have it?* Now, let us understand that assurance is not the chief end of our life, but "to glorify God and to enjoy him." Assurance, however, is good, pleasant, profitable; and you who ought to have it should not content yourselves without it. *Look much to Christ*. "For every look you give yourself give ten looks to Jesus Christ," is one of the advices of the saintly McCheyne to a doubting Christian. Then again, *be very careful*

in the daily honest practice of Christ's commandments. Obedience to Christ is the surest road to assurance. The more men's *grace* and obedience is multiplied the more their *peace* is multiplied. "Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord," 2nd Peter i. 2. "Look on John, Christ's beloved disciple and bosom companion," says that searching writer, Shephard. "He had received the anointing to know him that is true, and knew that he knew him. But how did he know that? what was his last proof? 'Because we keep his commandments.'" Go on then working the work given you by God; go on in the path of active service and your assurance will go on growing with your growth and strengthening with your strength. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. The path of the just is like the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

2. *Are there any here who have a full assurance and who have a right to have it?* Keep it as the apple of your eye. "Remember care and diligence," says Flavel, "follow the sealing of the spirit (assurance). Now is the soul at the feet of Christ as Mary was at the sepulchre—with fear and great joy. He that travels the road with a rich trossseau about him is afraid of a thief in every bush." Beware of slumbering, beware of slipping, beware of sinning, lest it happen to you as in the arbour to the Pilgrim. "He fell into a slumber, thence into a fast sleep, which detained him in that place till it was almost night, and in his sleep *his roll* (assurance) *fell out of his hand*." Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation." "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of these things."

Poetry.

LORD, I BELIEVE.

"Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."—Mark ix. 24.

Yea, I do feel, my God, that I am thine;
 Thou art my joy—myself, mine only grief;
 Hear my complaint, low bending at thy shrine,—
 "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Unworthy even to approach so near,
 My soul lies trembling like a summer's leaf;
 Yet, O, forgive! I doubt not, though I fear,—
 "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

True, I am weak, ah! very weak, but then
 I know the source whence I can draw relief;
 And, though repulsed, I still can plead again,—
 "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief,"
 O, draw me nearer; for, too far away,
 The beamings of thy brightness are too brief;
 While faith, though fainting, still has strength to pray,
 "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."—*Monsell.*

WHY ARE YE IDLE?

OFTEN we hear, amid the throng around us,
 Such words as these, in accents sad and low—
 "Others are useful, and are working bravely,
 Yet I do nothing: why should it be so?"

Ah, why indeed! It may be thou art seeking
 For something great to do beyond thy sphere:
 To preach, perhaps, in some remoter region,
 And yet thou carest not for sinners near!

Are they too near? Then very much I fear me
 The love of Christ is not thy motive spring;
 Glory is bright, and earthly praise entrancing,
 Oh! try thyself, my friend; about this thing.

Another says, "If I could speak to thousands,
 And chain a multitude by thrilling tones,
 How earnest would I be, how self-denying?"
 But what about Christ's very little ones?

Each has a soul, the worth of which is priceless:
 Hast thou begun by preaching Christ to these?
 Are they too low? Must other lips address them,
 Whilst thou art dreaming on thy couch of ease?

Then rest assured with thee there's something wanting—
 Thy love is dead, thy service therefore cold.
 Oh, pray that Jesus' beams may shine within thee,
 Restoring life as in the days of old.

Still one may say, "Not even to the children
 Could I make known the tidings that I would;
 Others are able to confess Christ boldly,
 But I am silent, and can do no good."

"No good!" Oh yes, indeed thou canst be useful,
 By doing little things for Jesus' sake,
 We all have gifts, but differently divided;
 And some are called to give, and some to take.

We learn in many ways the self-same lesson;
 Christ may not mean that thou shouldst teach in words;
 Yet let thy life confess, and men will read it
 And know full surely that thou art the Lord's.—*Charlotte Murray.*

CONSTRAINING LOVE.

Jesus, thy boundless love to me
 No thought can reach, no tongue declare;
 Oh, knit my thankful heart to thee,
 And reign without a rival there:
 Thine wholly, thine alone I am,
 Lord, with thy love my heart inflame.

Oh, grant that nothing in my soul
 May dwell, but thy pure love alone:
 Oh, may thy love possess me whole,
 My joy, my treasure, and my crown;
 All coldness from my heart remove,
 May every act, word, thought, be love.

O Love, how cheering is thy ray!
 All pain before thy presence flies;
 Care, anguish, sorrow, melt away
 Where'er thy healing beams arise:
 O Jesus, nothing may I seek,
 Nothing desire, or seek, but thee!

In suffering, be thy love my peace;
 In weakness, be thy love my power;
 And when the storms of life shall cease,
 Jesus, in that important hour,
 In death, in life, be thou my guide,
 And save me, who for me hast died.—Paul Gerhardt.

Christian Thought.

THE GENESIS, NATURE AND RESULTS OF SIN.



AS all the highways of the ancient world centred in Rome, so all speculations in morals and theology lead to the *questia vexata*, the *Genesis of Sin*. And again as a man's idea of the world depends on the medium through which he views it, so the character of a man's theology and ethics depends largely on his view of the *Nature and Results of Sin*.

We present our readers with a bare outline of Professor Burwash's recent lecture on this lofty theme, at the close of Victoria College, Cobourg.

The questions to which he invited discussion were three in number:
 (1) How came sin? (2) What is sin? (3) What shall be its results?

The subject can be studied by two distinct methods: (1) That of Biblical exegesis, and (2) That of Philosophical speculation. The first founds a dogma, a religious belief; the second attempts a scientific theory, a reason for the belief. In so far as they cover common ground they will harmonize. If they appear to conflict he would accept the results of his exegesis in preference to those of speculation. Reason follows faith where she leads to the truth. The unity of faith and reason is the highest gratification of the spirit of man. The field of truth embraced by religious faith may be divided into two parts; into one of these reason easily follows faith, and is called the field of natural or rational theology; from the other reason is not excluded, but the work of reason is rather that of apprehension than demonstration. Discussing the question by the scientific method there are two distinct points of view. On the one hand the nature and moral attributes of God and His relations to the universe. If our view of the latter is in any way materialistic, then sin is but a fated result of mechanism; if pantheistic, then sin is but a phase of evolution; if theistic, then sin is either a purpose of God or an act of the creature. From a second point of view we may take as our basis the moral constitution of man. A third point of view might seem possible, viz., the standpoint of the principles of absolute right and moral law as binding both upon God and man. He preferred to discuss the question from the second view, because:—(1) This basis is most fully within the scope of our reason; (2) this basis is to our reason the most fundamental; and (3) this is the proper basis of a rational as distinguished from a revealed theology. Man must be considered as a moral or responsible creature. The elements of responsibility are conscience, intention, and free-will. By tracing backward a completed moral act the above order would be found; but if we look at the putting forth of moral activity the order is reversed. Freedom is that which makes an act essentially my own. It implies personal isolation, excludes materialism and pantheism, but does not necessarily require self-existence, though its most perfect manifestation is in the self-existent One. It implies in the second place, power and superiority to all external influence. Freedom also implies the intelligent apprehension of its acts. Intention is not motive, but arises from within and expresses the particular conscious exercise of our freedom in view of and under the influence of motives. The intention is free, it is our own. By conscience he understood (1) a moral judgment, (2) a sense of obligation, and (3) a sense of satisfaction or remorse. Suppose the existence of a being morally pure, possessed of

conscience, but still in probation, how can sin take place, come to be, and what is the nature of such an act? The being is an independent self, so that his act is his own, is free. He is linked to the outer world by a circle of senses, etc. These enter into his conscience self-bound, but they are in reality only the spirit's habitation. Every conscious act of the spirit must be one of the following cases:—(1) A purely spontaneous activity from within; (2) a purely passive suffering of influence from without; (3) a combination on equal terms of both; (4) an opposition of the internal and external, as, (a) spontaneous activity in opposition to external influence, and (b) external influence prevailing over inward motive. Probably of those five motives the first occurs; the second, when it does occur, does not constitute a moral act; the third could not result in sin; the fourth probably would result in sin. After showing how the fourth proposition could lead to sin, he affirmed that the possible origin of sin arises first when external motive and the directive power of conscience are opposed to each other; and when the influence of external motive is so strong that reflex effort is required to enable the conscience to assert the superiority of the spirit to all influence from without. The failure to put forth that effort results in the prevalence of external influence, and that prevalence is sin. And what is this sin? First of all, sin in its commission is a reversal of the moral law within; as a completed act it is the taking up by me of a wrong relation towards God, or my fellow-beings, or both. Sin is not a mere negative or a nonentity. It is a reality. All realities may be distributed under three categories, substitutes, attributes, and relations. Sin is a reality in the last category. It does not originate in the flesh or the environment by which the spirit is united to the external world; but it is our act, originating from the inmost self, our perversion of God's good. The immediate results of sin are: (1) a subjective pain, the reproach or remorse of conscience; (2) the objective disorder of our relations to the universe, which we designate as evil; and (3) the subjective disorder within, which we call evil character. Guilt, remorse, and fear, the results of sin, are the expressions of the soul's convictions as to the real nature of sin. Guilt is the centre—remorse is the soul's wail over the past—fear is its terrible prophecy of the future. The very constitution of our natures, which was given us for the attainment, development and perfection of holiness, becomes by its perversion the means of the origination, perpetuation, and permanence of sin with all its terrible evil. The hereditary transmission of sin in the race undoubtedly includes: (1) the supremacy of the outer over the inner man, of the


lower desires and passions over conscience; (2) the extinction of confidence and love towards the good, and their replacement by the spirit of fear and of aversion from good; and (3) the subjective sense of guilt. Is there eternal sin? The question divides itself into two parts; one looking at the sinful act and the other at the sinful state. The act once done cannot be undone; justice towards all sinful acts is final and eternal; and by the atonement God's immutable position is maintained. The sinful state may be rectified. We have full deliverance from sin by (1) eternal justice toward the sinful act; (2) severance of the sinner from his sinful act; and (3) change of the sinful state. This is the second conceivable end of sin—salvation from it. He concluded by saying, "To this definite conclusion we seem clearly led:—(1) That the end of all sin is to be placed under final justice; (2) that the Gospel must finally determine all probation; and (3) that when this is preached to every creature the end must come, when God's unerring judgment and justice shall fix for ever the right moral relations of the universe.

Christian Life.

REV. THOMAS BOSTON OR THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR.*

BY REV. J. WILSON, M.A., ABERNYTE.

SECOND PAPER.

 HE upland parish of Ettrick in which Thomas Boston was settled as minister in the year 1707 embraces the higher part of the valley along the course of the Ettrick river and the mountainous tracts that border on St. Mary's lake. It was of old the haunt of notable freebooters, almost every spot having curious legends attached to it. On many a height the visitor still sees their dismantled fortalices—like forsaken hornets' nests—grim remembrances of old feudal days when these border regions were planted by strong families, as rough buttresses of the land from southern invasion. The fierce manners of feudal times lingered longer here than elsewhere, and there was not wanting in the legends and ballads of the district much to protract and foster this spirit. Thus, in the neighbourhood of Boston's dwelling, at the ruined tower of Tushielaw, still stands a famous ash, on whose

* "The Tenfold State," and the "Marrow of Modern Divinity," can be ordered from the Rev. Andrew Kennedy, London, Ont.

lower branches are seen the notches and hollows worn by the ropes with which the owner of the keep hanged his victims, and on which he himself was hanged by James V.

A brother marauder was hanged during the same royal expedition, and the stone which marks his tomb is still near the site of the old tower of Henderland, inscribed in black letter, "Here lyes Perys of Cokburne and his wife Marjory," the said wife Marjory being the heroine of a popular ballad, "The lament of the Border Widow," in which she says—

"And think na ye my heart was sair
When I laid the moul' on his yellow hair?
And think na ye my heart was wae
When I turned about away to gae?"

But it would be a task as endless as out of place to give all the legends of the district regarding the perilous days of the

"Homes that dwelt on Leader side
And Scotts that dwelt on Yarrow."

In John Welch's time, who as minister of Selkirk evangelized this region and had the charge, it is said, of the four parishes of "St. Marie Kirk, New Kirk of Ettrick, Rankelburn, and Ashkirk," the fierce border spirit was by no means extinct, as he learned by experience, having at length to quit the neighbourhood through the animosity and barbarity of Scott of Headschaw. Even in Boston's time, though a profession of religion to a large extent obtained among the people, the state of civilization was not high.

During the preceding generation, when the persecuted nonconformists to prelacy took refuge among the mountains and caves of Ettrick as a last retreat, conventicles were frequently held by Peden, Renwick and others, as at Riskinhope, Dobb's Linn, Talla Linn, and by this means a leaven of true godliness was introduced. In this way there were a number of families such as the Biggars, Brydens, Andersons, etc., who formed as Boston says, "a ballast to his enemies," and from whom a band of faithful elders were obtained who formed a sort of body guard to the minister, strengthening his hands in cases of discipline and in times of difficulty. The change produced among the people by the dark time of persecution was more sudden than satisfactory. Previous to that time, as an old man informed Boston, there were but three Bibles in the parish; now there was one almost in every house, family worship was maintained, and many of the people hotly protested against the evils and defections of the times. But their new pastor soon found that most of them overlooked

evils nearer their own doors. Profane swearing was pretty general among them, and a loose separatist spirit, which gave Boston much trouble for many years. He began to preach boldly against the sin of swearing and other evils, and for many years he earned nothing but hatred and opposition from many, until—such is the perversity of human nature—having received a call to go elsewhere, they at length united in fervent desire to retain him, and were friendly ever after.

The manse of Ettrick which sits at the foot of the lofty green range of hills, was, when Boston went, "a sorry habitation" from its rickety condition, and for some time the family had to bivouac in the barn, where one of his children was born. A mountain stream, swelling in time of flood to alarming size, passes the manse in rather close proximity. At one time when the proposal was made to him by friends to prepare for publication the discourses that form the foundation of the "Fourfold State," and being in difficulty about it on account of his excessive humility, we find him in his memoir retiring to a solitary place up the brook where he prayed, and sung Psalm cvii. That which fairly decided his undertaking the task was a letter from a friend, Mr. Colden, in which he said, "Let respect to duty and the salvation of perishing souls sway you."

That word "perishing souls," says Boston, nailed my heart, and it burst out and answered, "Then let me be a fool for perishing souls." It shows the deep and well high morbid conscientiousness of the man to find that nothing of any moment could be undertaken by him without a long process of prayer for Divine light, and self-examination as to the motives prompting it. Thus, when pressed to publish some sermons he spends most of a day in prayer, and reads Durham on "the call to write books," waiting on the Lord while he spread out his papers and letters before him. Such works, begun, continued, and ended with prayer, could not fail to prove successful, and accordingly we find that ere long he received testimonies unsought as to their worth and benefit. Such testimonies were to the much afflicted and painfully conscientious pastor, as he says, like cordials to a fainting spirit or a ray of light shining in a dungeon.

A year or two ago the writer of this having visited Ettrick was kindly shown by the present minister various relics of Boston. Among these are a few small metal tokens used in Boston's time to reckon the number of souls over whom the faithful pastor watched and prayed, and who having made a credible profession of conversion were admitted to the Lord's table. They and he have gone to give in their account and to

stand in their respective lot, and it was therefore with reverent interest we examined these old counters.

Another and more interesting relic is the session records written by Boston's own hand in a beautiful, business-like way; for having been some time in a lawyer's office in youth, and being synod clerk, he had acquired such business capacity, that Lord Minto, who had been clerk to the national council of Scotland, having been present at a synod meeting, publicly expressed his admiration at the manner in which Boston conducted its business. These session records simply attest the low state of morality in the parish and the difficulties of his position on account of the stern method of discipline which was followed. Such a method of dealing with backsliding communicants, as when a peculiarly obstinate offender who would not confess particulars of her crime, was made to stand weekly before the congregation for a year, may in our more enlightened and refined age appear out of place. Yet it had advantages. That sense of justice which sits so lightly on our age, and is indeed wholly evaporated from the soft-sawder theology of Broad Churchism, was heightened by it to a great degree. As an old negro is said to have remarked in contrasting the preaching of two successive ministers, "God appeared to be a greater Being at that time than he now does." The portion of these records which would most interest many has connection with a name not unknown in literature, viz., that of the hero of James Hogg's "Brownie of Bodsbeck," being the penitent death-bed confession of Walter Laidlaw of Chapelhope.

After leaving Ettrick manse we proceeded round by the classic vale of Yarrow and drove over to the manse of Kirkhope to visit Mr. Gibson, who is a descendant of Boston. The road thither passes over the hill tops between the valleys of Yarrow and Ettrick, and reminded one forcibly of Thomas the Rhymer's road to Elfland.

"Yon bonnie road that winds about yon fernie brae," especially as it passes Oakwood Tower of the weird memory, which is said to have been the residence of the verifiable wizard, Michael Scott, who spake the words that "split Eildon's hill in three." Near the top of the sloping surface of the mountains was a patchwork of green furze and purple heather. A heavy thundercloud hanging over the vale of Yarrow, down at "Newark's stately tower," was discharging its contents in that quarter, and higher up we were wholly enveloped in a dense mist. Having arrived in safety, however, at the beautiful Kirkhope Manse, perched on a high cliff, with a fine "linn" or rapid of the Ettrick brawling

beneath, we were shown certain other relics of Boston. Among these was a small pocket Bible with silver clasp, which had belonged to Boston's wife, inscribed "Katharin Brown, 1699," and from the handwriting and date probably a present from her betrothed.

We were also favoured with a copy of a letter never hitherto published, which had been sent by Boston to his wife from Edinburgh on the occasion of a visit to the General Assembly. It was written after a time of great personal and family affliction; for Boston through a great part of his course was one who, above most, "did business on the great waters" of trouble. It was about the close of a trying spring season, when days of drifting snow, long known as "the drift days," desolated the uplands, and famine and death in many cases followed. His wife had fever, and he himself was in so weak a condition that he had felt compelled to look out for an assistant in his pastoral work; but having got some relief, even while his work increased, he says he was taught to work on without asking questions till his Master should say, Stop. There were also deeper troubles connected with his ministry which touched the heart of the faithful pastor more keenly. His temporal substance, too, was diminished, and his wife's fever lasting two months, her faith remained firm, and she was resolved never to part with Christ though at times she felt "like a bird on the side of a wall where it cannot alight, gripping with its claws." About the same time the end of the house was blown down by a gale of wind. It is necessary to dwell upon these things to understand the steady valour with which the afflicted and severely indisposed pastor girt himself for diligent work from week to week, and the amount of public spiritedness he showed in regard to evils impending over the church. His greatest grief was his wife's illness, through which, he says, she had been for several years free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, remembered no more, overwhelmed with bodily maladies and her spirits drunk up with terror. There is a certain quaint and almost tragic interest in Boston's descriptions of his wife's spiritual exercises at this time. At length, having attained much of her former peace and light, she made, according to the fashion of those days, a personal covenant, which was written down by her husband.

Now, says Boston, we were with our broken ship within sight of the shore, and I was as one stretching forth his hands, crying, Help forward, help forward! But, behold, in a little time after, the storm rose anew, and the ship was beat back into the main ocean again, out of sight of land. No wonder this man became to many a son of consolation in trial,

and wrote *The Crook in the Lot*, a book once extensively read and prized by afflicted persons in Scotland.

In such circumstances he might have been excused going to the General Assembly. But duty loudly called him thither. A dark cloud of moderatism was beginning to gather over Scotland, threatening to remove the pure light of gospel truth, and along with that all spiritual vitality. It was about that time or shortly after that the father of Carlyle of Inveresk, according to the admiring account of his son, would go along with a brother clergyman, both having a "very great turn for fun and buffoonery," on expeditions in which they would go out of their way for the special purpose of making sport of brother ministers. Still, as the narrator informs us, both were very respectably orthodox clergymen. One leading qualification sought in ministers of this stamp was a capacity of holding their own in the hard drinking bouts common at the period.

All this was a grief to Boston, and as at that time the Assembly had to deal with the case of a professor of divinity, Mr. Simson, who was accused of teaching loose views, and as the moderate party were likely to allow the errorist to hold his important office, the Ettrick pastor leaves his afflicted wife and family and sets out on horseback for Edinburgh. The following is the letter already mentioned, which was written to his wife after his arrival:—

"Ed. May 6, 1729.

"My dearest,—I came yesternight to Cowgate mouth in good time but wearied; however we were very well accommodated then beyond expectation, wherein I saw the goodness of a kind providence. This morning I came in here safe, and just this forenoon the assembly began Mr. Simson's affair. Mr. Wilson* is here, to whom I have represented your case, and he has a hearty sympathy with you, and gives his love to you. I have been in Mr. Trotter's shop, spoke for the carvy, orange-peel and tea, but he being busy in the commissioner's house on this occasion I could not get the tea ensured to come out with the servant, but if it come not then you may expect it on my return. I desire the horse may be in again on Tuesday's night next week. I am in health but crazy and have not yet got time to rest. I desire to believe that the Lord who called us to part for these days will pity us both, and make us meet again to bless him for his kind conduct about us. You cannot be off Hy heart, and I believe our joint case, and the case of ours, is on the heart of our merciful High Priest. 'Tis now past twelve o'clock at night, and I'm obliged to conclude, being with most endeared love and regard,

"T. Boston,

"My love to all the children; and I doubt not but my daughters will show the same, if not more, concern for your comfort in my absence as in my presence."

* Gabriel Wilson, of Maxton, his close friend and a faithful minister.

This brief note, written with no view to the public eye, and in spite of its domestic business details, is not without deep interest. It shows that Boston, as a man and husband, was less ascetic than many who knew him merely as a writer suppose; and it is a genuine piece of everyday life at a time which is not unimportant in Scottish history.

The Assembly, as usual, treated Simson's case in a shuffling manner by referring it to a committee, without taking any definite measures, though the charges against him were of many years' standing. From this finding Boston alone dissented, judging the charges against the professor to be too grave to permit him any longer to teach in the church, and in a clear, audible voice read his dissent.

The leading evangelical ministers present—though not members of that Assembly—strengthened Boston by their sympathy and presence; and one of them, Ralph Erskine, three years after, in writing an epitaph to the memory of Boston, commented on this scene:—

"The great, the grave judicious Boston's gone,
Who once like Athanasius stood alone,
Whose golden pen to future times will bear
His fame, till in the clouds his Lord appear."

After this time his health gradually declined, but to the very last he persevered in his loved work; and when no longer able to go to the church he preached from a window in the manse, the congregation standing without. He entered into rest on May 20, 1792.

Boston is described by his contemporaries as a man of amiable, venerable aspect, over the middle size, and with a strong, melodious voice. He had naturally a lively imagination and, as a few of his more intimate friends knew, a ready wit, reined in, however by a Puritanic reverence and a sense of God's presence. He was exceedingly modest and humble, and there was, undoubtedly, too dark a tinge in his piety, partly owing to the generally low state of his health. He was no despicable scholar in Hebrew and theology, and laboured much upon a Latin work on Hebrew stigmatology or accentuation, which was published in Amsterdam after his death. David Mill, the famous English Biblical scholar, wrote the preface, in which he says—"Reverendus Boston, in Scotia quondam Pastor Attricensis doctissimus, utilissimam accentibus Hebraeis operam navavit presentis libello, quo hanc doctrinam perspicue et accurate persecutus est." The celebrated Bengel in his later years (see *Life*, p. 425) says, "If writing were not become too laborious for me I would endeavour to trace out the doctrine of the Hebrew accents.

Mr. Boston (of Ettrick) has hit upon the right way of understanding them."

Boston's great work, however, was, as a preacher and writer, in both of which capacities he was a bright light in the dark evening of moderatism that was settling down on Scotland. The communion seasons at Ettrick were greatly prized by the godly in Scotland. A slight indication of this is in the incidental notice by Boston in describing one communion, that the horse of a visitor from Fifa had run off. It is also told of a farmer in Lanarkshire that he rode to Ettrick every week to hear the sermons that formed the foundation of the "Fourfold State."

Those who think of Boston as one whose Puritanic sternness had at length repressed all human tenderness should read the glowing tribute he pays to his wife after thirty years' married life, which commences, "A woman of great worth, whom I therefore passionately loved and inwardly honoured: a stately, beautiful, and comely personage, truly pious, and fearing the Lord; of an evenly temper and patient in our common tribulations, and under her personal distresses; a woman of bright natural parts. . . . and finally a crown to me in my public station and appearances."

The autobiography and other writings of Boston abound in memorable and pithy expressions of which a brief sample may be given in conclusion.

"Had I but one wish, it should be that he would wrap me up in his love, light and life, while I am here; and take me away to eternity when he pleased, though I fain would do something for Christ here; but my unbelief and worldly-mindedness put me on the rack."

"I have observed that, wanting written commentaries, a heavenly frame of spirit and soul-exercise, whether about temporal or spiritual things, were two excellent commentaries."

"Upon occasion of enlargement in secret prayer I saw the unreasonableness of the conceit of merit, as if a beggar should think he should therefore have an alms, because he can cry for it, or puts out his hand to receive it."

"On the Lord's day morning worldly thoughts were as bird-lime to my feet."

"I besought the Lord to go with me, for without him the pulpit was a terror to me."

"This month we had a family thanksgiving, wherein the Lord was

*This note furnished by Dr. A. A. Bonar.

very gracious to us, and our hearts were enlarged with the remembrance of the Lord's hearing our prayers at the last family fast, and with his present goodness."

"As for the Sabbath sermons (after going to Ettrick), they were but coldly enough received; but remarkable was the pricking up of ears when anything relative to the public fell in, which was a wounding observation to me."

"I have sometimes a confusion in my head in preaching, but seldom does my body fail when my frame is right."

"I was surprised with discoveries of the Lord's mind in his word. As from time to time in that happy study I met with new discoveries of that nature, I often thought with myself, what a trifle my digging up of gold in some mine of Peru or elsewhere would have been in comparison with what I found in my accentuated Hebrew Bible."

"My kind and gracious Master managed me at that time as ever a mother would have done a weak child, so that I got a lesson, just to be doing with the strength I have for the time, without asking questions."

"The heart of the believer uses the lawful enjoyments of life warily, as the dogs of Egypt run while they lap the water out of the river Nile."

"If a man have an ill neighbor, he may remove; if he have an ill servant, he may put him away at the term; if a bad yoke-fellow he may sometimes leave the house, and be free of molestation that way. But should the saint go into the wilderness or set up his tent in some remote corner of the sea, where never foot of man, beast, nor fowl had touched, there his natural corruption will be with him. Should he be with Paul caught up to the third heavens it shall come back with him, 2 Cor. xii. 7."

"Many a groan is heard from a sick bed, but never one from a grave."

"Thousands hope to be saved who do not at all concern themselves with the question, whether they are born again or not; a question that is like to wear out among us."

"Be humble, carry low sails, walk softly all your years. The peacock walks slowly, hanging down his starry feathers while he looks to his black feet."

"Common operations of the Spirit, like a land flood, make a strange turning of things upside down. But when they are over, all runs again in the ordinary channel."

"Many have a rational discovery of the world's vanity, but can that wean their heart from the world? Nay, no more than painted fire can burn off the prisoner's fetters."

"If sin is somewhat bitter to us, but never so bitter as suffering, never so bitter as the pains of being weaned from it, truly we are strangers to the saving change."

"Surely it is from the devil that weak Christians make a rack for themselves of the attainments of the strong. And to yield to this temptation is as unreasonable as for a child to dispute away his relation to his father because he is not of the same stature with his elder brother."

"As a wife is unwilling to be put away, pleads and hangs to the marriage tie, so do men by the covenant of works. They hold by it like the man who held the ship by his hands, and when one hand was cut off held it with the other, and when both were cut off, held it with his teeth."

These extracts will serve to show better than our sketches what manner of spirit Boston was of. We add one more which may be regarded as a sort of *extract essence* of the experience of one who closely studied God's methods of dealing towards his people in providence: it will doubtless find an echo in the hearts of many Christian readers. Speaking of a matter which he had greatly longed and prayed for in youth, he says:—

"He brought it about through many difficulties, tried me with various disappointments, at length carried it to the utmost pitch of hopelessness, and seemed to be laying the gravestone upon it at the time of my mother's death; and yet after all he brought it to pass: AND THAT HAS BEEN THE USUAL METHOD OF PROVIDENCE WITH ME ALL ALONG IN MATTERS OF THE GREATEST WEIGHT."

Christian Work.



UNDER this head of *Christian Work* we go in company with our readers through all the churches and to every corner of the world month by month. This month we propose to stay at home by our own firesides, and to notice a style of Christian work that lies to the hand of every one that can command a few cents. A work that lies to-day at the door of every parent and patriot is to fill our Canadian homes with healthy religious literature. There is a loud cry to engage in this work when we consider how busy are the agents of unchristian and impure literature. Let us listen to what Mr. Hastings, of the *Boston Christian*, says on this subject in one of his recent papers:—

"It has been asserted that the entire issues of the Bible societies and

religious societies in London, are less numerous than those base issues of the corrupt press which are sent out in defiance of law, and which are out of sight of decent and respectable people. There is a literature abroad in the world of which these self-satisfied dreamers have not the slightest conception. It is true there is enough within the sight that is bad enough in all conscience. There are theatres which reek with nudity and nastiness, and which recall an Eden which is almost void both of fig-leaves and innocence. Then there are records innumerable of scandals, and sensational abominations which fill and defile the omnipresent press of the present day. But beside these, throughout the length and breadth of the land there are publications, placed *under* if not on, the news-stands, the very touch of which is defilement, and which might have been appropriately edited, published, and sold in Sodom and Gomorrah, the day before Lot departed. Those familiar with these matters know that during the last few years there has been uncovered an abyss of such literature that is perfectly horrifying, and the circulation of which is beyond all calculation. Novels and romances adapted for perusal in haunts of vice and crime, literature that would be popular in prisons, brothels, and in dens of thieves and cut-throats, and which ministers to the basest passions of men, has been circulated by tons throughout the length and breadth of the land. Men with devilish ingenuity have sought out every channel for its distribution. The catalogues of academies and seminaries have been scanned; the name of every man, woman, or child that could be found in print has been obtained; large lists of addresses have been gathered from the books of various business establishments, or secured by advertisements under false pretences; innocent-looking notices have been inserted in religious newspapers, which have resulted in bringing large numbers of names of honest and unsuspecting people into the hands of wily and unscrupulous rogues, and then, throughout the length and breadth of the land has been rolled a tide of obscenity and abomination which is unparalleled in the history of the nation. And while Christian parents have *grudged a few shillings to be invested in interesting and profitable religious reading for their children*, those children have sent their pennies and shillings to these infernal vampires and have received in return books and pictures, to say nothing of other appliances, of the most *infamous, disgusting, immoral and devilish* character. Multitudes are in their graves to-day, no doubt in consequence of these abominations, others are wrecked and ruined in body and soul, and the extent of this curse is beyond conception or computation.

"Out of the vaults of a single printer, whose professions were in the direction of religion and morality, we were informed, were taken at one time five tons of stereotyped plates of books and pictures of a character unfit for circulation. At one time in the basement of a single building, we were informed that there were some *ten-tons* of this kind of literature stored which had been confiscated and was awaiting destruction. In all more than twenty tons of such literature have been seized and destroyed within a few years past in America.

"The evil of which we speak is so wide-spread that in families where an impure word or look would not be knowingly tolerated, there are secret places that reek with this corruption, which, like the frogs of Egypt has made its way to almost every corner.

"Among the special boastings of the age, we frequently meet with the assertion that literature has been greatly improved and purified, and that in this respect the world of late exhibits substantial progress. We yield to no one in our interest in sound Christian literature; to the diffusion of which our chiefest labors have been devoted, and we believe we appreciate its importance and its progress. It is true that there has been a vast increase of religious literature of late, and that in some of the secular literature of the present time there is far less coarseness than in some of the literature of past generations. There are expressions, no doubt, in old plays and novels which would be regarded as objectionable in many circles at the present time; and so if we define literature as meaning simply those books and publications which respectable people keep in their libraries and on their centre-tables, and which reviewers quote, and first-class publishers disseminate, we may no doubt reach the conclusion that literature is greatly purified. But there is another side to this question. Literature has not only risen during the past generation, but it has sunk. It has extended itself upward and downward. It has heights hitherto unknown, and depths which are scarcely fathomed."

These sorrowful statements, all founded on fact, should not be allowed to pass with a sigh. Efforts should be made to watch the reading of our young: efforts should be made to supply them with better mental food. This aspect also of the question is well stated by Mr. Hastings in another of his papers:—

"An important phase of missionary work is the dissemination of religious reading among the people. The value of this instrumentality is generally acknowledged. Many persons do not attend public worship or listen to the stated preaching of the word of God. Through indifference,

infirmity, advancing years, and domestic cares, numbers are hindered from assembling for religious instruction. To meet the necessities of such, the Gospel must be carried to their homes; but living messengers are not always obtainable, and there is often perhaps no way more practicable, convenient and effective, than to convey the tidings of salvation by the printed page. Thus the printed message in the dwelling may be read by those who would not hear the sermon, or if they heard it would fail to remember it. Of the various forms of Christian literature, tracts are short-lived; books are ponderous and expensive for general circulation; and religious periodicals and papers, if true to their name, seem to furnish the most convenient and valuable means for reaching many of these people with the Gospel.

“If we can secure the subscription of any person to a religious paper, and if we can be assured that the paper will maintain its religious character, we may then expect that at stated intervals, for the term of a year at least, the messages of grace will find their way to that dwelling. The sermon will preach itself, the tract will distribute itself, and for a certain period of time, without further labor, the good seed will be, to some extent, sown in hearts and homes where it is needed. If then we send a paper to the address of any friend or stranger, for a year, we may expect that, quietly and unperceived, the seed will be sown in that family.

“If, however, we can persuade persons to subscribe for a paper themselves, we may have good reason to hope that in some cases they will pay more attention to that for which they have expended their money, than they would to that which was bestowed upon them as a gift: hence the importance of making every effort to induce persons to subscribe themselves for such publications as will profit them or their families.

“Sometimes we meet with men who have no interest in religious reading; but frequently those very men have wives or families who are starving for the bread of life. Sometimes too, there are aged persons, debarred the privileges of public worship; and such persons hail with delight the coming of a religious periodical which breaks the monotony of their weary days, and turns the current of their thoughts into more cheerful and more profitable channels. There are few Christians who would not willingly give two or three meals of victuals in the course of a year to some person whom they desired to benefit and lead to the knowledge of the truth. But a very few meals of victuals would cost more than the trifle required to send a cheap religious periodical for a year to any friend or stranger to whom they wish to give it.

“It being specially desirable that persons be induced to subscribe themselves for religious papers, Christians may well inquire whether in this way they may not be able to serve their generation and benefit their fellow men. A little persuasion, or an offer to bear a portion of the expense, or an intimation of reduced rates at which such papers may be obtained by those who are unable to pay the full price, might induce some one to receive and read them who otherwise would not enjoy that privilege; and with the blessing of the Lord on the seed thus sown, we might hope to see some fruit in the great day of ingathering. Will not Christians carefully consider whether it is not their privilege to extend the knowledge of the Gospel and of the Saviour by earnestly persuading others to receive and read such publications as give reasonable promise of being profitable to those who come beneath their influence? We are exceedingly glad to co-operate with Christian friends in thus spreading the good news of the grace of God which bringeth salvation. When we have succeeded in inducing an unconverted person or a Christian to receive a good paper for a year, we feel that then, unless something unforeseen shall interpose, there will be the opportunity for a year at least of teaching, inviting, and entreating some soul to turn to God and live. To us this is a great privilege, and it is a privilege in which others may participate, if they desire so to do. When persons are once persuaded to receive an interesting religious paper, it frequently occurs that they become so interested in it and so habituated to its perusal, that they feel that they cannot well do without it, and in this way a permanent influence for good is planted in the midst of a home. Certainly all Christians would gladly labour to effect so desirable an end. Let us prayerfully consider what the Lord has for us to do in this direction, and having learned, let us do it with our might. Our working time is brief; let it be well improved.”

Practical Papers.

TESTING ANCHORS.*



LONG the line of rail by which I often travel, my eye has frequently been arrested by a few words written in large letters on the outside of a long shed, "House for testing anchors." It is one of several similar buildings which have been established by the Government, to which anchors cast in the neighbourhood, and the chains forged to hold them, are taken, to be tested by hydraulic pressure, and other means, before they are allowed to be used for vessels. After a very careful trial, a certificate is given with them, declaring them to be in all respects fit for use. In this way much danger is avoided. Anchors and chains which have a flaw, are discovered before the time when the safety of the crew might depend upon their holding fast. Many valuable ships are consequently saved from being wrecked; and the lives of sailors and passengers are preserved.

A lesson is brought to us from this needful practice by applying its principle to the Christian's hope—the hope of soul-safety on earth, and of eternal life, with all that these words include, in heaven. This hope is spoken of in the Bible as an anchor of the soul because, in the hour of peril, it holds fast and keeps the soul in peace and security. And as it is a wise thing to test anchors, so, too, is it wise for men to try their hope of what sort it is. Is it firm and strong? Is it one we can rely upon? Is it one that can bear any strain that may be put upon it, and that will be quite safe when most it is needed?

Reader, be honest with yourself. Be willing to know your true condition; examine and prove this by the light of God's Word. A few plain questions may assist you in discovering where you stand, and whether your hope will abide the test of the Great Day. Think over these questions with the Scriptures which follow them, and be not content without being able to give a distinct and satisfactory answer to the question whether hope in Christ is the anchor of your soul.

1. *Do I feel my own exceeding sinfulness, and daily confess it before God?*
 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth

* Tract No. 581 issued by London Religious Tract Society.

is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—*1 John* i. 8, 9.

2. *Do I renounce all trust in my own works, and lean only on Jesus—on His faithful promise—on His all-sufficient sacrifice—on His all-prevailing intercession?*

"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."—*Eph.* ii. 8, 9.

"When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."—*Luke* xvii. 10.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life."—*John* vi. 47.

3. *Do I love the Saviour, and regard Him as better than any earthly friend, or anything which this world offers?*

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."—*Psalms* lxxiii. 25.

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."—*Phil.* iii. 8.

4. *Do I daily search the Scriptures, and find them a help and refreshment to my soul?*

"The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."—*Psalms* cxix. 72.

"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth."—*Psalms* cxix. 103.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."—*Psalms* cxix. 105.

5. *Do I pray truly and heartily in the spirit, and not merely utter a form of prayer?*

"This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honour-eth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me."—*Matt.* xv. 8.

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."—*John* iv. 23, 24.

6. *Do I strive faithfully through the Spirit to bring into captivity every*

thought to the obedience of Christ, to conquer every sinful habit, and every evil temper, and to walk before God in all good conscience?

“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”—Rom. viii. 13.

“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”—Gal. v. 24.

7. Do I strive to glorify God by doing His will in all things?

Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”—1 Cor. x. 31.

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”—1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

The answers to these questions may tell you whether your anchor, if you profess to have one, is of any value. The blessedness of having a good hope through grace, will be to you a spring of consolation in life or in death. Let me give you an example of this.

A young lady was told she could not live many months. She received the tidings very calmly, and thanked her father for telling her. After a little while she said to her mother, “I feel just like a sailor when he is called to go aloft; he tries all the ropes to see if they are firm. I have been trying them all, and, mother, they are all right.”

But what was this hope, which could thus endure the test of approaching death?

All her trust was in Jesus, and in His finished work. She had no fear as to the future. “Once,” she said, “my sins seemed to me as a mountain pile; but I have laid them all on Jesus, and His blood is my peace. It is all done for me. I have nothing to do but to keep clinging to Jesus, till I see Him.”

May this be the unfailling hope of every reader of this tract. Those who make Christ their hope shall never be ashamed.

“If my immortal Saviour lives,
Then my immortal life is sure;
His word a firm foundation gives:
Here let me build and rest secure.
Here let my faith unshaken dwell;
Immovable the promise stands;
Not all the powers of earth or hell,
Can e’re dissolve the sacred bands.
Here, O my soul, thy trust repose!
If Jesus is for ever mine,
Not death itself, that last of foes,
Shall br

Christian Miscellany.



FROM the "Metropolitan Pulpit" we cull the few items that follow:—

WHEN God sends his people on a pilgrimage, He gives them a staff to support them by the way.—*Taylor.*

OH, tossed and driven soul, knowing not where to land, ignorant of a place of safety, all the palm branches of heaven this morning are waving before your soul. They mean peace, pardon, life, salvation.—*Talmage.*

KNOW what you pray. Prayer is not putting your hand into a bag and pulling out what comes first. Oh! no; there must be definite desires and specific requests. Think carefully about it, and ask for what you want and for nothing else but what you need.—*Spurgeon.*

It is possible for a Christian to believe in miracles because he believes in an immanent or present and superintending Deity. The universe to him is not like a clock which is wound up in the morning and left to tick the hours away until, at last, the weights run down and the machinery falls to pieces.—*Hepworth.*

"GENEVA," said Talleyrand, in intended scorn, but yet in unconscious eulogy of that book which had formed the character and institutions of its people, "Geneva is a grain of musk which perfumes Europe," and to-day the nations which are leading the van of progress are those in which God's Word is most extensively read and pondered and obeyed by the people.—*Taylor.*

JESUS, the sanest, surest, purest, best of souls, the consummate flower of humanity, affirmed our personal immortality with undoubting, unqualified certainty. I believe Him, not chiefly because He rose from the dead, but because He was all alive, immortal, living on principles and for ends that were eternal—from the sermon on the mount to the words from the cross. I have the witness in myself that He was the Son of God. His words find my inmost heart. His affirmations evoke and clarify my own.—*Bellows.*

It was said by a distinguished naval officer of England that the most murderous contest in which he ever was engaged chanced one even-

ing at sea, when the darkness had fallen so that they were not able clearly to distinguish the ship with which they were brought in conflict. It was at a time when England and France were at war, and each of the two English vessels supposed the other to be a French man-of-war. They fired full broadsides into one another. When the morning broke the carnage was found to be terrible, and those who were under the same flag wept bitterly at the error into which, through the confusion of the night, they had been betrayed. Dear friends, all the conflicts between bodies of Christians are only the parallel of this.—*Tynq.*

THAT evidence concerns apparently little things which mentions that "they spake one to another." Of course people will gossip when they get together: what is there in talk? Oh, but what sort of gossip was it? that is the question. For a holy theme turns gossip into heavenly fellowship. It is written, "they thought upon His name." Surely it is not much to think. Ah, brethren, thinking and speaking are two very powerful forces in the world, and out of them the greatest actions are hatched. Thoughts and words are the seeds of far-reaching deeds, and God takes care of these embryos and germs: men do not ever know of them, and if they did know would not esteem them, but they are put down in the book of remembrance which lies always open before the Most High.—*Spurgeon.*

A NEW way of reading the Bible has been invented in these highly enlightened days. I used to get on exceedingly well with the Book years ago, for it seemed clear and plain enough, but modern interpreters would puzzle us out of our wits and out of our souls, if they could, by their vile habit of giving new meanings to plain words. Thank God, I keep to the old simple way; but I am informed that the inventors of the new minimizing glasses manage to read the big words small, and they have even read down the word "everlasting" into a little space of time. Everlasting may be six weeks or six months according to them. I use no such glasses; my eyes remain the same, and "everlasting" is "everlasting" to me, whether I read of everlasting life or everlasting punishment.—*Spurgeon.*

THE grand question of our time, despite the confidence placed in the authority of revealed religion, therefore, is this: What evidence does nature, reason, candid philosophy, sober thought, experience, the testimony of our own and other souls give us, that *personality* is a sacred and precious and mastering principle in the spiritual world; that self-con-

sciousness, the knowledge of our identity; the thought and the significance of the I, which is the one distinctive spiritual thing, separating men from the more intelligent brutes; the source of society; the basis of personal dignity; the ground of law; the primary spring of religion; the "Be all and end all of man's present worth and glory," as it is the anchor holding him to Christ and to God—what, I say, is the ground, independent of revelation, on which we rest our hope that this personality will survive the change called death?—*Bellows.*

The impatient horse which will not quietly endure his halter only strangles himself in his stall. The high-mettled animal that is restive in the yoke only galls his shoulders; and everyone will understand the difference between the restless starling of which Sterne has written, breaking its wings against the bars of its cage and crying, "I can't get out," "I can't get out," and the docile canary that sits upon its perch and sings as if he would out rival the lark soaring to heaven's gate, and so moves his mistress to open the door of his prison-house and give him the full range of the room. He who is constantly looking back and bewailing that which he has lost does not only thereby unfit himself for improving in any way the discipline to which God has subjected him; whereas, the man who brings his mind down to his lower lot, and deliberately examines how he can serve God best in that is already on the way to happiness and to restoration.—*Taylor.*

Oh, that early home! You may have been out in the world twenty, thirty, forty years; but you never forget it. God was in that home. Your parents loved Him. They took you early and consecrated you to Him. You were on their lips in the dying moment. It was the great anxiety of their life to have you useful and Christian, and when they bowed their gray heads into the grave it was in the hope of lifting them up again in the glorious resurrection and uniting with you in the great home circle of heaven. I wonder if they will? Do you pray at all now when you go to bed at night? Do your feet walk in the path they so lovingly laid out for you? Do you not sometimes think of those old times and compare your life now with what it was then? And sometimes when you cannot sleep at nights do you not think of their prayers and of their Christian example? Oh! Lord, God of our Christian parents, have mercy on us!—*Talmage.*

THESE are men who have ruled with a right royal sceptre; men upon whom we have hung, as nations, for our future; men who have decided

the destiny of ages. Saint Paul was one of these. The words he uttered have echoed through the centuries and are heard to-day. This church, next to Christ, is founded in the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians. Herein is proclaimed the glorious doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Luther was one of these men. He held the destiny of Europe in his hands. His voice started a reformation, thundered all over the continent of Europe, until despots trembled on their thrones, and potentates recognized the presence of a real and consecrated man in their midst. Calvin was such a man. In his name churches have been built; organizations have been compacted. He held fast the spiritual destiny of his own age, and he has held fast the destiny of all generations since. What magnificence of power, what splendor of influence some men have exercised! How much fruit some trees have borne in the great orchard of human life!—*Hepworth.*

WAS IT AN ACCIDENT?

Many a seeming accident illustrates Cowper's line :

" God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

Dr. Hamlin, so long the head of Roberts' College, Constantinople, tells of one of these "accidents." One hot day in July, 1839, while passing the Galata Custom House, a crowd attracted his attention. Forcing his way through it, he saw a poor sailor lying by the side of the wall, apparently dying of cholera.

"Do you speak English?" asked Dr. Hamlin.

"Yes," said the man, following the word with an oath.

"Are you an Englishman or an American?"

"American"—another oath.

Worse expressions showed that profanity had become his mother tongue. Dr. Hamlin, after many appeals to the crowd, whose brutal natures were stirred by the prospect of seeing him die, secured assistance and removed the sailor to a house.

For several weeks he was nursed and visited by the missionaries. He recovered and sailed for Boston. On the morning he left, he called on his missionary friend to say good-by. Lingering for a moment by the door, he said—"I have been a very wicked man, Mr. Hamlin, and have

done all the evil I could in the world, and now I am going to do all the good I can.

Three years after, Dr. Hamlin received a letter from him, which thus began:—

“Dear Mr. Hamlin—Thank God, I still survive the ded! I am here workin’ and blowin’ the gospel trumpet on the Eri Kanal.”

When Dr. Goodall, an old missionary, saw the letter, he asked that he might begin the answer, and taking a sheet of paper, wrote:

“Dear Mr. Brown—Blow away, brother blow! Yours, in blowing the same gospel trumpet.”

WILLIAM GOODELL.

Twenty-five years after, Dr. Hamlin, while dining at a hotel in Paris, was accosted by an American gentleman.

“I am just from Honolulu, Sandwich Islands,” said the gentleman. “I have known a man there by the name of Brown who has done a great deal of good among the sailors. He can go everywhere and anywhere with the Bible. He has told me how he was once dying, a blasphemous dog, (his own words,) in the streets of Constantinople, and you picked him up and saved him soul and body. Is it all true, or is it in part a sailor’s long yarn?”

What seemed the accidental passing of Mr. Hamlin down a street in Constantinople was the means by which God saved a “blasphemous dog,” and sent him “blowin’ the gospel trumpet” along the “Eri Kanal,” and among the islands of the Pacific. Is there such a thing as an accident in God’s moral government.—*Youth’s Companion*.

SINGING ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

A brave and godly captain in one of the Western American regiments told the following story, as he was removed to the hospital—He was shot through both thighs with a rifle bullet, a wound from which he could not recover. While lying on the field, he suffered intense agony from thirst. He supported his head upon his hand, while the rain from heaven was falling around him. In a little time, quite a pool of water collected in the hole made by his elbow. If he could only get to that puddle he could quench his thirst. He tried to get into a position to suck up a mouthful of muddy water, but was unable to quite reach it. He said, “I never felt such disappointment before—so needy, so near, and yet so

helpless. By-and-by night fell, and the stars shone out clear and beautiful above the dark field; and I began to think of the great God who had given his Son to die a death of agony for me, and that he was up there—up above the scene of suffering, and above those glorious stars; and I felt that I was going home to meet him, and praise him there; and that I ought to praise Him, here in my wounds and in the rain; and I began to sing with my parched lips:

‘When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.’

There was a Christian brother in the bush near me. I could not see him, but I could hear him. He took up the strain; and beyond him another caught it up, all over the battle-field of Shiloh, and long into the night the echo was resounding, as we made the field of battle ring with hymns of praise to God.”

Children's Treasury.

A FAITHFUL SHEPHERD BOY.



GERHARDT was a German shepherd boy, and a noble fellow he was, although he was very poor.

One day he was watching his flock, which was feeding in a valley on the borders of a forest, when a hunter came out of the woods, and asked:—

“How far is it to the nearest village?”

“Six miles, sir,” replied the boy; “but the road is only a sheep track, and very easily missed.”

The hunter looked at the crooked track, and said:—

“My lad, I am very hungry and thirsty; I have lost my companions and missed my way; leave your sheep and show me the road. I will pay you well.”

“I cannot leave my sheep, sir,” returned Gerhardt. “They will stray into the forest and may be eaten by wolves or stolen by robbers.”

“Well, what of that?” queried the hunter. “They are not your

sheep. The loss of one or more wouldn't be much to your master, and I'll give you more than you have earned in a whole year."

"I cannot go, sir," rejoined Gerhardt, very firmly. "My master pays me for my time, and he trusts me with his sheep; if I were to sell my time, which does not belong to me, and the sheep should get lost, it would be the same as if I stole them."

"Well," said the hunter, "will you trust your sheep with me while you go to the village and get some food, drink, and a guide? I will take care of them for you."

The boy shook his head. "The sheep," said he, "do not know your voice, and—," he stopped speaking.

"And what? Can't you trust me? Do I look like a dishonest man?" asked the hunter, angrily.

"Sir," said the boy, "you tried to make me false to my trust, and wanted me to break my word to my master; how do I know that you would keep your word to me?"

The hunter laughed, for he felt that the lad had fairly cornered him. He said:—

"I see, my lad, that you are a good, faithful boy. I will not forget you. Show me the road, and I will try to make it out myself."

Gerhardt then offered the contents of his scrip to the hungry man, who, coarse as it was, ate it gladly. Presently his attendants came up, and then Gerhardt, to his surprise, found that the hunter was the Grand Duke, who owned all the country around. The duke was so pleased with the boy's honesty that he sent for him shortly after that, and had him educated. In after years, Gerhardt became a very great and powerful man, but he remained honest and true to his dying day,—*Our Fireside Friend.*

PLAYING TRICKS.

An elderly lady was quite sick, not long since, in consequence of a thoughtless trick played by two young neighbors. A few young people had called in to see the kind old lady, when these two neighbors thought it would be a fine trick to put on two hideous masks, and throw some old wrappings about them, and go into the house and see if they could frighten her. The old lady was so terrified, even when she knew who they were, that she retreated as far as she could to the opposite side of the room, trembling in every limb. The next day she was very ill from

the effects of the fright. The parties who did the mischief were certainly deserving of very severe censure.

A young lady was once thrown into convulsions by the sight of a "broom-stick ghost" some thoughtless companions had set up in the corner of her room. They hid themselves close by, that they might enjoy her fright; but their sport was of short duration. She was subject to such attacks at times ever afterward.

Another young lady, returning to her home one evening, was met by a party of rude lads, who had a frightful-looking jack-o'-lantern among them. She was so terrified that she fell fainting as soon as she reached her own door. They laid her upon her bed, and she never rose from it again.

Such cruel, wicked play should never be indulged in by any one. If you are urged to join in any sport of this kind, decline at once and decidedly. Try also to dissuade others from it, and if you cannot, then put their victim on his guard. The law of love demands that you should spoil such sport just as much as it would require you to put out a fire that would burn down a neighbor's house. Health, reason, and even life itself, have often been sacrificed to such foolish joking. Is it worth running such a risk for a moment's idle laughter?—*Child's World*.

KINDNESS REWARDED.

In the year 18—, as the mail train, on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, bound west to Cumberland, in charge of the late Capt. George A. Rawlings, conductor, was approaching Doe Gully tunnel, the engine struck and killed a cow belonging to the widow of a watchman at that point, who lost his life in the service.

The accident soon brought to the scene quite a number of the people living in the immediate neighborhood, and among them the widow of the watchman and her five small children, who were crying most piteously at their loss, and using the most heart-rending expressions.

Rawlings, who was proverbial for his kindness of heart, took up a collection, the passengers and train men contributing, and he soon collected over seventy dollars and handed it to the widow.

With tears in her eyes, she turned to him and said: "You will never regret this kindness to the poor widow and her children, and it will come home to you some day or other."


Time rolled on and the incident was nearly forgotten, when one

night Rawlings left Cumberland on his east bound trip in a terrible rain storm, and after passing through Doe Gully tunnel, his engineer blew for brakes in sharp and quick blasts, indicating sudden and unexpected danger.

The train came to a stand-still within fifty feet of an immense landslide covering the track for a distance of fifty yards, close to which a large bonfire had been built, and standing within a few feet of it was the widow, with a blazing pine knot in hand, waving it and shouting:—"Where is the conductor? Where is the conductor?"

Rawlings soon appeared, and going up to him she said: "I told you you would never regret your kindness to the poor lone widow and her children. I heard the fall of rock and earth in the cut, and I knew you were coming down, and I built a fire to warn you of the danger. God bless the man who thought of the poor widow and her children when they were in trouble."—*Baltimore News*.

Our Study Table.

 HERE is not perhaps at this present moment a subject of more importance than the *Home*. The home, or the family, is an institution as old as Eden, and as sacred and venerable as the Sabbath and marriage. What the *Church* is, what the *State* is, depends on what the *Home* is. "France," said Napoleon, "needs mothers and horses." We welcome, therefore, this little treatise on *The Christian Home*, by the Rev. Edward Garbett, Canon of Winchester, (published by the Religious Tract Society, of London,) in 14 chapters. One sentence will suffice to show the spirit of the book:—"When family religion is absent all true happiness is absent. It is the highest end of all which alone can keep all the rest in order. It is the central force which, like the life of nature itself, silent and unconscious, creates beauty and fragrance through the whole. From this office of a family priesthood, where the head of the house ministers before God, the parental authority itself derives its sacredness."

"BEFORE THE CROSS;" a Book of Devout Meditation : by Dr. Titcomb, Bishop of Rangoon.

Its character and spirit we gather from the motto on its title page:—

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing
Which before thy cross I spend."

In the preface a very wise sentence meets us which is needed to widen the idea of the Cross from being as it is to too many, an instrument or means of *simple pardon*. "The grave conquered, the kingdom of heaven opened, the eternal inheritance secured, the mediatorial intercession, the mission of the comforter, the regeneration and sanctification of the human heart,—all these blessed fruits of the atonement gather as much round the Cross of Calvary as the forgiveness of sins and the finished work of reconciliation." This book also has come from that perennial fountain of pure literature, Paternoster Row, London.

"THE OPEN FOUNTAIN." By the Rev. Robert Lang.

This is a plain, earnest, practical book, on such points as:—"How to come to Christ," "Faith," "Assurance," "Doubts and Fears." We do not feel very sure that the writer, a Presbyterian Minister, is altogether safe from the leaven of what might be called "Hyper-evangelism." He pushes for instance his exaltation of *faith* so far that one is tempted to exclaim, "was faith crucified for you? Were ye baptised in the name of faith?" "We are saved," he says, "by faith alone; not by faith and works together." It is true we are *justified* by faith alone: but justification is not *salvation*. Salvation includes sanctification and glorification, hence Christians are told to work out their salvation. We are not really and fully saved till "*we are openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment.*" Do not works enter into the final judgment that is passed on the saints at the last day? Yes! truly. See 2 Cor. v. This is not the time to cast discredit on works, when the standard of morality is so low among those who are quite sound on the doctrine of "justification by faith alone." This book also is by the Tract Society.

THE NEW LIFE NOT THE HIGHER LIFE: By Dr. Pitzer.

In this little book we meet a sentence which harmonizes with what has been written on the "Open Fountain." "Salvation," Dr. Pitzer says, "in all its parts is one. It is the application of the one grace of the one God to man. The links may be many, but the chain is one. Believers are said to be justified, adopted, regenerated, sanctified, glorified: but the work is *one*, and Jesus Christ the Son of God is both author and finisher." This book is by the Philadelphia Board of Publication.