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GLAD TIDINGS.

A Monthly Religious Periodical.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth glad tidings of good, that publisheth salvation.—ISAIAH LII. 7.

1st MAY, 1864.

Edited by Rev. R. KENNEDY.

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GLAD TIDINGS.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth glad tidings of good, that publisheth salvation.—ISAIAH LII. 7.

THE GREAT GIVER TEACHING TO GIVE.

BY REV. A. A. DONAR, AUTHOR OF
"MEMOIR OF M'CHEYNE."

Believing men are to be not merely cisterns, but springs. "He that believeth on me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water." (John vii. 38.) One of these rivers which the Master declared should not fail to flow from his believing ones is delight in giving, or the gladsome habit of using all we possess as being stewards for the Lord, and not as proprietors of the same. When an Israelite had offered the sacrifice of atonement at the altar, he must forthwith bring MINCHA, or meat-offering, an offering in which he symbolically gave up to the Lord the possession of all his property. But we should not have said, "he must bring;" for it was all privilege—he was PERMITTED to bring his property, to give vent to his gratitude, to exhibit practically, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits?" So did Zaccheus at Jericho; so did the Pentecostal Church at Jerusalem.

Many do not seem to notice how often the Lord Jesus inculcated truth regarding this matter. His sayings on the point are very many; nor do we wonder that it should be so, considering that selfishness is in us a root of bitterness ever springing up to trouble us.

I. HE STATED THE DUTY.

And when He did so, it was done in startling terms. We read in Luke vi. 30: "GIVE TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH OF THEE." Have we read the words aright? Yes, the words are plain. Is there no other translation possible? No, they are too plain and downright to admit of any doubt. Is there no various reading, then? No, none; the words stare you in the face, "GIVE TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH OF THEE!"

Disciple of Christ, you are to be a light, ever dispensing its rays; you are to be a well, affording something to all who come. As you are to "Pray WITHOUT CEASING," and to "Give thanks IN EVERY THING," (1 Thess. v. 17, 18), so you are to have an always-giving heart and hand—a reali-

zation of that well over which was written:—

"Christian reader view in me,
An emblem of true charity,
Who freely what I have bestow,
Though neither heard nor seen to flow,
And I have full returns from heaven,
For every cup of water given."

While another, who is not a disciple, may be grumbling, "So many calls!" you are to reply, "Yes, very many; but they are all calls in providence to teach and cultivate in me a giving disposition." The Master had "many calls" upon Him for healing all disease, and helping all want, and "GAVE TO EVERY ONE."

Let us understand the context of this passage, Luke vi. 30. In the preceding verses, Christ inculcates, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that de-pitefully use you," (Luke vi. 27-28). This is the very mind that was in Him; this was what the Cross exhibited to the full; this is the heart of the Gospel, telling us the manifestation of God's love to enemies in the Beloved Son, who was made a curse for them that He might bless them. And surely this is the holy mind that disciples are expected to copy from their Master. Then in ver. 29, we see the meekness and calmness of Christ; "Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also." We, his disciples, are expected to possess a meekness of spirit and a self-control that would carry us this length, whenever circumstances required. And so ver. 30 comes in; "GIVE TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKETH OF THEE;" followed by the clause: "And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again." Surely, these are words that call for a GIVING MIND, and a readiness to let go the things that are lawfully ours! Can less than this be the meaning?

If then, we turn to Matthew v. 39-42, we have the same subject treated of in very similar terms. It bids us not revenge, but be prepared "if one smite us on one cheek, to offer also the other"—not revenge, but rather, "if compelled to go a mile, to go two," should that be the alternative,—not revenge, but if unjustly dealt

with so that "one sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also"—far better this alternative than exhibit the spirit of the world. Even so, "GIVE TO HIM THAT ASKETH OF THEE, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away," calls upon us to be ever ready to give, instead of being annoyed, as some are, by "so many calls." When asked, or when providence puts a case in our way, there must be no harsh denial, but an entire willingness to give, if the case of need be apparent.

In all this, who can fail to discern the spirit and tone of the Lord Jesus, whose charity sought not its own, but laid out even glory itself on us the undeserving?—Such a tone of character, therefore, must be essential to real holiness and the want of it a deformity, in as much as such a want is unlikeness to the Lord.

"Give strength, give thought, give deeds, give
Give love, give tears, and give thyself; [self,
Give, give—be always giving,
Who gives not, is not living,
The more we give,
The more we live."

II. HE STATED THE MANNER.

We are to give with a happy, cheerful feeling, as being privileged to do a blessed thing. "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE" (Acts xx. 35), are words of the Lord Jesus—words preserved and embalmed in the Church, words so well known that Paul could refer to them as in a manner proverbial, words that bear the peculiar and unmistakable characteristics of the soul and heart of Him from whose lips they fell. They are words that tell us not simply that "GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER" (2 Cor. ix. 7), but that God has implanted blessedness in right giving, so that the giver's face cannot fail to shine, if he knows what he is doing.—Yes, "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE," as Mary did at Bethany, "THAN TO RECEIVE," as Solomon did when his ships returned laden with gold of Ophir, and every rare and precious thing.

Giving, it appears, is not to be reckoned self-denial at all. It would have been no wonder though the Lord had made this call on us for giving, even if every act of giving had been sore self-denial, a wrench-

ing off a right hand. But it turns out that there is no self-denial in it to a soul fully imbued with the mind of God. To such a soul, "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE." We do no one a favour by giving; we bless ourselves, that is, we, in the very act, break open the alabaster box which pours on us its own fragrance and refreshing.

The grand illustration of this blessedness is to be found in the Godhead. Man likes to get, God lives to give; and it is God that is "blessed for ever." In the plan of Redemption, we find THE FATHER counting it "more blessed to give than to receive." He develops (so to speak) His own bliss by giving that immense, that infinite gift, His own Son. This is the rate at which He who is blessed in giving, delights to give. Here is a gratification of His giving heart; He bestows on man the unspeakable gift, the Beloved Son, and to Him He grants the gift of a multitude that no man can number, a countless flock of ransomed souls for their Shepherd's glory, while to each of the flock He gives not only the Beloved Son, but also the Holy Spirit with all His train of graces and joys. Then, also we find the Son's rate of giving to be in no respect less liberal. He gives Himself, "God manifest in flesh" for us, Himself with all His obedience, all His suffering and death, all His merit, and all that all these purchase and make sure. The price of the purchased blessings must not be forgotten; for He gave not only service, but anguish, woe, death, in short whatever justice sought—all in order to present us with grace and glory, without money or price on our part. O what giving is this! O my soul what giving is here! And the Holy Ghost also (who in Psa. li. 12, is called "THE FREE," i.e. the princely, or generous, or liberal Spirit), He comes in the name of Jesus, and makes a gift of HIMSELF and thus in one sum we are made to receive, "Love, joy, peace, goodness," in short, all holiness, all excellency, and all that is contained in Eternal Life. What giving! we again exclaim. The full sea of Godhead-bliss flowing in upon man! And this giving is one of the forms of Godhead-felicity. "IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE." Men and Brethren, who would not taste something of this peculiar joy? "It is not your money I want" (says a man of God), "but your happiness."

III. HE STATED THE MEASURE, AND RULE.

"FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE;" (Matthew x. 8.) Ye have got from your Master without His looking for requital in any shape; give ye to your fellow men without regard to the probability of requital from them. This is so far the force of "FREELY;" but then we must also remember the amount of what we received freely from Him. Who can forget how full, how frank, how generous He was! The pattern of our giving as to measure is to be THE LORD'S OWN measure; and in regard to that we know that He gives as prompted by His own loving,

kindly, generous nature, not stinted by regard to the likelihood of getting thanks, or meeting with a return of benefit. Let none, therefore, excuse in himself an un-readiness to give by saying, "Possibly, it may be turned to little advantage by the person who gets"—that word "FREELY," enjoins you to copy the Saviour's example; to open wide your heart and hand even though your kindness be ill-requited, or never owned at all. Neither say; "I have stopt giving in the meantime, because others, equally able, are not giving up to their measure." What hast thou to do with what OTHER MEN GIVE? We ask again, what hast thou to do with what "OTHER MEN GIVE?" Thy part is to remember and to look upon WHAT THOU HAST RECEIVED; yes, what THOU THYSELF (leaving others out of view) HAST RECEIVED AT THE HAND OF GOD. Look at the largeness of that amount, and how it was given unstinted and ungrudged, in spite of His knowledge of selfishness in thee, which (like the sand drinking in the rain) would so quickly appropriate all and exhale upward almost nought. McCheyne quotes the saying of an old Divine: "What would have become of us if Christ had been as saving of His blood as some men are of their money?"

And farther. When Jesus says, "ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU," (Matt. vii. 7. Luke xi. 9.) does he not suggest much as to the measure; especially when he adds; "What man of you is there whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" The measure here is simply the VERY THING REQUIRED. Christ gives not merely something but up to the supplying of the want; if we copy Him here, then as far as lies in our power we shall aim at giving as much as will meet the exigency, as much as will come up to the demand. You know we are only STEWARDS of all we possess; our money is not our own.—"Occupy till I come," is the superscription on every coin.

But reverting again to Matt. x. 8, "FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE," let us notice that the first application of that counsel was in reference to the preaching of the Gospel, the imparting to other men what they themselves had received. Go and tell your fellow-men these good news, however ungratefully the hearers may act toward you; for you yourselves were undeserving of such a blessing when the Lord sent it. Shew your estimate of what you have received by your efforts to impart it to others far and wide. Do this by personally telling it as opportunity occurs, faithfully, frequently, prayerfully.

But since you can do it very effectually, and far more extensively than your personal influence can reach, by HELPING OTHERS TO PROCLAIM the tidings of great joy, you must not, you cannot, fail to avail yourselves of this means of "FREELY GIVING." What, then, is the rate of your giving for the support of the Gospel ordinances at Home? Is it such that you can say: "You may fairly estimate my sense

of the value of the Gospel by the measure of my giving?" We do not ask, Do you give ten shillings annually towards the support of the Ministry, or do you give ten pounds? but we ask, Is your giving such in its measure that God could point to it and say, "See! here is one who gives freely, because he feels that he has received freely." As to our spreading the Gospel among the Jews and the heathen—what a melancholy calculation that is which was recently made in regard to the Communicants of two of the most numerous Presbyterian bodies in this land, viz.—that the yearly average for every Communicant amounted to somewhat like one shilling and no more! As if each communicant said, "I value my share in the Gospel at this rate. I give at the rate at which I received!" Shall the Lord judge any of us by this measure? Has He deserved no more than this at our hands?

IV. HE STATED SOME OF THE BENEFITS RESULTING.

These are His words: "Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Luko vi. 38.) Here is a promise of recompense, ay, of recompense for doing what is in itself most blessed! For such is the Lord's manner. How like Him who said: "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matt. x. 42.) "Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble." (Psa. xli. 1.) It was the same Lord who by the mouth of David said; "I have not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread; he is ever merciful and lenient, and his seed is blessed"—where (you see) the giving characteristic of the man thus blessed is unmistakably held up to view—it is the generous, the "lending" righteous man. And how truly in keeping with His own manner was that saying of the Master to the Young Ruler, "Sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." (Mark x. 21.)

In point of fact, men and brethren, "giving well," is as needful to our soul's prosperity as "doing well;" and on the other hand, as surely as "the doer of the work is blessed in his deed," (Jas. i. 25,) so surely is the willing giver of his substance blessed in his giving. Hearken, beloved brethren! "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up as a memorial before God." (Acts x. 4.) Hearken yet again; "Not that I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account," (Philipp. iv. 17,) is the language used respecting the giving of the jailor at Philippi, the givings of Epaphroditus, Lydia, Euodia, Syntyche, and the rest who had ministered of their substance to Paul.

It was the experience of a godly Glasgow merchant in other days, that the

liberal man is the man whose riches are likely to continue with Him. He quaintly remarked, in allusion to Proverbs xxiii. 5, that "clipping the wings," was the only way to prevent riches flying away as the eagle. There was deep meaning in his words; for the Master's words go thus far, and much beyond it, too. Notice the special terms of Christ's declaration; not only shall you get some requital, but you shall find "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over!" This is the recompense! What words are these! What a promise is here! The complete fulfillment shall reach us in the Kingdom, but even here we shall often get instalments.* And do you not think, brother, that you and I have good security for the loan which we may lend to the Lord?

A man says: "I do wish to get blessing for the ministrations of my pastor and for Gospel ordinances." And the man prays for blessing as well as diligently attends on ordinances. But the man must add to his plan; he must also "give," and not leave it to others to give all. He must have a hand in the sums gathered for upholding the ordinances, just as Cornelius had his "alms" ready, as well as his "prayers." They who do not give according to their ability to the sustentation of the ministry, need not expect to get the benefits they would otherwise obtain. "Give, and it shall be given unto you."

Another says: "I wish the congregation I am connected with to flourish; its schools, its schemes of benevolence, and all such objects, I pray for them often and heartily." Well, but Cornelius would have added "alms" to "prayers." We do not shrink from saying, You must put into the plate of what God has given you, as well as put your prayer into the censer of the High Priest. "Give, and it shall be given unto you."

Another says: "I am deeply interested in the cause of missions; I long for the day when Jew and Gentile shall all know the Lord." But do you, besides good wishes and prayers, give the help of your money? And not the mere mite which you never feel the want of, but the sum that testifies that your interest is really deep and practical?

But one of our poorer brethren puts in a question here. "Am I, then, necessarily a loser under ordinances, because I have not got the means of giving, and so cannot bring an offering?" No, not at all; your case is of the same class with that of the sick and feeble, stretched on beds of languishing, who cannot work and labour for God, but have "the will to do it."—The Lord knoweth the "willing" heart; and the willing one may rest assured that to him Jehovah is saying as to David when he would fain have built the Temple and was not permitted (1 Kings viii. 18), "Thou didst well that it was in thine

heart." (2 Cor. viii. 12.) Only be honest and true with God in the matter. The man can work and labour in God's cause who can find time and strength for visiting friends and evening parties; so also the man is able to give to God's cause who can "spend" so largely on his family and domestic comforts, who can indulge himself in buying what is only a luxury, and who can lay up money in the bank less or more. Poor believer, "giving" is really "sowing;" you are a gainer by giving your few shillings. "A handful of seed sown may yield great increase."

Man of God, let us ask the Great Giver to teach us to give!

Anxious, unsatisfied soul, there are some whose secret unhappiness goes hand in hand with their want of a generous tone of mind. These persons are not able to discern the large-hearted grace of God; they judge God by themselves; their narrow hearts represent God as one who gives indeed, but gives sparingly, or conditionally, or in consideration of previous desert.—Were your soul more generous in its tone, you might be better able to discern the generous freeness and fitness of God's giving; but a withholding, miserly soul is too likely to picture to itself a withholding God, who must be repaid for His gifts, and from whom blessings must be wrung by making out a claim. May the Holy Ghost give you a true discovery of our God who "giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." (James i. 5.)

Unsaved man; perhaps you are liberal and benevolent. You give well, because your natural disposition is amiable and kind; but you do not, in your givings even to religious objects, recognize Christ. If so, you will yet hear him say; "You did it not to me" (Matthew xxv. 45); you gave either to enjoy the luxury of complacent self-applause, or because you felt it pleasant to see others pleased.—Brother, in such giving the Lord Jesus takes no pleasure. Benevolence, charity, liberality, generosity, wash no sins away and form no righteousness. Will you listen to us when we invite your attention to the delight which the Lord Jesus has in your "receiving" from Him? Jesus would fain give Eternal Life—pardon, peace, purity, glory—to such undeserving ones as you, who make a righteousness out of your givings to men, and are withholding your conscience from the cleansing blood and your heart from His holy fellowship.

But, unsaved man, you may belong to another class—those who refuse to give a mite to religious objects, and who cry out about neglecting the poor at home. You say it is all waste to spend money on Gospel ordinances, on missions, and the like, though Jesus commanded and rewarded the woman who spent ten pounds, in order to anoint His head. (Matthew xxvi. 10-13.) Well, here is the truth; you give nothing to Christ because you know Him not. You set no value on perishing souls, because your own soul is unsaved. You have never seen your state of sin and death, and how near the brink of perdition you stand at this hour. You

have never understood the free love of God, nor seen His glory. But stay, unsaved man; what voice is that which reaches our ears? "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matthew xvi. 26.) Do you not know that the love of money is the love of sin? ay, that thy money shall perish with thee? and that thou shalt be so poor in eternity as not to be able to get one drop of water? One thing, however, let us tell you: a man enthralled to earth, to self, to sin, to Satan, may be delivered from them all, if he make haste. For the Holy Spirit sets free a soul by revealing Christ that died and rose again. This is the sight, this is the sun, that melts an earth-worm's and a miser's heart. The cross is still as powerful as when Paul said, that it was by it "The world was crucified to him and he unto the world."—(Galat. vi. 14.) It is still as truly "the power of God" as when Cowper sung of it;

"It was the sight of Thy dear Cross,
First weaned my soul from earthly things,
And taught me to esteem as dross
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings."

PIOUS RESOLUTIONS.

WRITTEN SHORTLY AFTER CONVERSION.

I will no more a wanderer be,
With heart estranged and far from thee,
Nor serve the world, when I am free
From its dread chains and drudgery.

Henceforth, will I thy glory seek,
Henceforth, will I thy praises speak,
Henceforth, will I, though I am weak,
Thee strive to praise and glorify.

Henceforth at life's pure cleansing stream,
My soul shall wash and e'er be clean,
And thy white robe, void spot or seam,
My soul shall clothe and beautify.

Henceforth to Thee for daily bread,
My soul shall look and e'er be fed;
Henceforth thy love shall be my bed;
O that will be true luxury.

No more the world's alluring joys,
Shall snare my heart and feast my eyes,
But henceforth Christ shall be the prize,
For which my soul strives vigorously.

No more a bond-slave but a prince,
My steps through grace shall still advance,
Till waking from life's fleeting trance,
I bathe in endless ecstasy.

Rockwood.

A. N.

NEGLECTING SALVATION.

Most of the calamities of life are caused by simple neglect. By neglect of education, children grow up in ignorance. By neglect, a farm grows up to weeds and briars; by neglect, a house goes to decay; by neglect of sowing, a man will have no harvest; by neglect of reaping, the harvest will rot in the field. No worldly interests can prosper where there is neglect, and may it not be so in religion? There is nothing in earthly affairs that is valuable, that will not be ruined if it is not attended to: and why may it not be so with the concerns of the soul? Let no one infer, therefore, that because he is not a drunkard, or an adulterer, or a murderer that he will be saved. Such an inference would be as irrational as it would be for a man to infer that because he is not a murderer his farm will produce a harvest, or that because he is not an adulterer therefore his merchandise will take care of itself. Salvation would be worth nothing if it cost no effort—and there will be no salvation where no effort is put forth.

* Our version seems to convey the idea that the recompense is to be conveyed by the hands of men; "SHALL MEN GIVE UNTO YOU?" But the Greek signifies simply, "It shall be given to you." They whose business it is to do it shall be employed by God to do it.

ABSENCE OF GOD IN PRAYER.

"O that I knew where I might find him!"—Job. xliii. 3.

"If God had not said, 'Blessed are those that hunger,' I know not what could keep weak Christians from sinking in despair. Many times, all I can do is to complain that I want him, and wish to recover him."

Bishop Hall, in uttering this lament two centuries and a half ago, only echoed the wail which had come down, through living hearts, from the patriarch, whose story is the oldest known literature in any language. A consciousness of the *absence of God* is one of the standard incidents of religious life. Even when the forms of devotion are observed conscientiously, the sense of the presence of God, as an invisible friend, whose society is a joy, is by no means unintermittent.

The truth of this will not be questioned by one who is familiar with those phases of religious experience which are so often the burden of Christian confession. In no single feature of "inner life," probably, is the experience of many minds less satisfactory to them than in this. They seem to themselves, in prayer, to have little, if any, effluent emotion. They can speak of little in their devotional life that seems to them *like life*; of little that appears like the communion of a living soul with a living God. Are there not many "closet hours," in which the chief feeling of the worshipper is an oppressed consciousness of the absence of reality from his own exercises? He has no words which are, as George Herbert says, "heart deep."—He not only experiences no ecstasy, but no joy, no peace, no repose. He has no sense of being at home with God. The stillness of the hour is the stillness of a dead calm at sea. The heart rocks monotonously on the surface of the great thoughts of God, of Christ, of eternity, of heaven,—

"As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean."

Such experiences in prayer are often startling in the contrast with those of certain Christians, whose communion with God, as the hints of it are recorded in their biographies, seems to realize, in actual being, the spiritual conception of a life which is hid with Christ in God.

We read of Payson, that his mind, at times almost lost its sense of the external world, in the mellow thoughts of God's glory which rolled like a sea of light around him, at the throne of grace.

We read of Cowper, that in one of the few lucid hours of his religious life, such was the experience of God's presence which he enjoyed in prayer, that, as he tells us, he thought he should have died with joy, if special strength had not been imparted to him to bear the disclosure.

We read of one of the Tennants, that on one occasion, when he was engaged in secret devotion, so overpowering was the revelation of God which opened upon his soul, and with augmenting intensity of fulfillment as he prayed, that at length he

recoiled from the intolerable joy as from a pain, and besought God to withhold from him further manifestations of his glory. He said, "Shall thy servant see thee and live?"

We read of the "sweet hours" which Edwards enjoyed "on the banks of Hudson's River, in sweet converse with God;" and hear his own description of the inward sense of Christ which at times came into his heart, and which he "knows not how to express otherwise than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision . . . of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and rapt and swallowed up in God."

We read of such instances of the fruits of prayer, in the blessedness of the suppliant, and are not reminded by them of the transfiguration of our Lord, of whom we read, "As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and glistening?" Who of us is not oppressed by the contrast between such an experience and his own? Does not the cry of the patriarch come unbidden to our lips, "O that I knew where I might find him?"

Much of even the ordinary language of Christians, respecting the joy of communion with God,—language which is stereotyped in our dialect of prayer—many cannot honestly apply to the history of their own minds. A calm, fearless self-examination finds no counterpart to it in anything they have ever known. In the view of an honest conscience, it is not the vernacular speech of their experience. As compared with the joy which such language indicates, prayer is, in all that they know of it, a dull duty. Perhaps the characteristic of the feelings of many about it is expressed in the single fact, that it is to them a duty as distinct from a privilege. It is a duty which they cannot deny, is often uninviting, even irksome.

If some of us should attempt to define the advantage we derive from a performance of the duty, we might be surprised, perhaps shocked, as one after another of the folds of a deceived heart should be taken off, at the discovery of the littleness of the residuum, in an honest judgment of ourselves. Why did we pray this morning? Do we often derive *any* other profit from prayer, than that of satisfying convictions of conscience, of which we could not rid ourselves if we wished to do so, and which will not permit us to be at ease with ourselves, if all forms of prayer are abandoned? Perhaps even so slight a thing as the pain of resistance to the momentum of a habit will be found to be the most distinct reason we can honestly give for having prayed yesterday or today.

There may be periods, also, when the experiences of the closet enable some of us to understand that manical cry of Cowper, when his friends requested him to prepare some hymns for the Olney Collection:—

"How can you ask of me such a service! I seem to myself to be banished to a remoteness from God's presence, in comparison with which the distance from east to west is vicinity, is cohesion."

If such language is too strong to be truthful to the common experience of the class of professing Christians to which those whom it represents belong, many will still discern in it, as an expression of joylessness in prayer, a sufficient approximation to their own experience, to awaken interest in some thoughts upon the CAUSES OF A WANT OF ENJOYMENT IN PRAYER.

The evil of such an experience in prayer is too obvious to need illustration. If any light can be thrown upon the causes of it, there is no man living, whatever may be his religious state, who has not an interest in making it the theme of inquiry.—"Never any more wonder," says an old writer, "that men pray so seldom. For there are very few that feel the *relish*, and are enriched with the *deliciousness*, and refreshed with the *comforts*, acquainted with the *secrets*, of a holy prayer." Yet, who is it that has said, "I will make them joyful in my house of prayer?"—*Still Hour*.

PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

French Christ crucified! Turn not aside from this, under the temptation of meeting some question of the day, or some bearing of the public mind. There is much mystic verbiage, which some esteem to be of transcendental depth. There is much pantheism which some regard as *original and sublime*. Your versatility will often be urged to follow after these conceits. You will be told of their amazing influence. They really are nothing. They are the bubbles of the hour. They cannot boast even a novelty. I conjure you, care little for them. Yours is not a discretionary theme. It is unchanging. Keep to it. Abide by it. It is one, but it is an infinite one! It is the word of Christ, divinely true! Its rigidity can never hamper your thought. Its reiteration can never weary your inquiry. At no point can it restrict you. It is a large place. It is a boundless range. It is a mine of wealth. It is a firmament of power. Whither would ye go from it? It is the unwinding of all the great principles. It is the expansion of all glorious thoughts. It is the capacity of all blessed emotions.

O Calvary, we turn to thee! Our nature, a wreck, a chaos, only canst thou adjust! We have an aching void which thou canst only fill! We have pantings and longings which only thou canst satisfy! Be thou the strength and the charm of our inward life! Be thou the earnestness of our deepest interest! Be thou inspiration, impulsion, divinity, and all! Our tears never relieved us until thou taughtest us to weep! Our smiles only mocked us until thou badeest us rejoice! We knew no way of peace until we found our way to thee! Hope was banished from us until its dove flew downwards from thee upon our heart! All was dormant until thou didst stir; all was dull until thou didst excite us! Our eyes are still lifted to thee as to the hill from which cometh our help! Our feet shall stand upon thee, O high mountain! and thou shalt make them beautiful while we publish the glad tidings of "Christ crucified."—*Rev. W. R. Hamilton, D.D.*

A GOSPEL WITHIN THE GOSPEL.

AN EXPOSITION OF LUKE XV. 11-32.

By Rev. William McKenzie, Ramsay, O.W.

PART I.—SIN AND MISERY.

In this parable of our Lord, so simple, so touching, so artless, when regarded as a chapter of human life, and yet so profound, and full of meaning, when regarded as a revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, all of us should be able to find a place. It is a history of the sinner in his sin, in his repentance, and in his reception back again into the favour of God. We are, *all of us*, reproduced here; either as we have ever been, or, as we are hoping and endeavouring to be, or, as we have become by God's grace.

"And He said, A certain man had two sons." In this significant beginning of the parable we have the indication of a blessed truth. In one sense, God is the Father of all His intelligent creatures; but, in a very special sense, God is the Father of men. They are His sons. In the beginning they were begotten in His likeness, for "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them." Moreover, God is, and remains the Father of men, even in their apostasy from Him. They are His sons, His children, still; though they have become "rebellious children." He deals with them even then as a Father; His paternal love and grace extending to the very vilest sinner. This blessed truth pervades the whole parable.

In this first portion of the parable we have a history of the sinner in his sin and misery. "A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me."

By this figure of a grown-up son, who will be a young man before his time, and cannot endure to wait until his father dies for his inheritance, our Lord exhibits to us the root and origin of all sin. This request sounding so like a demand, denotes the entire alienation of the heart from all the love and duty of a son. This son breaks loose from his father. The bond of filial love is utterly broken. He feels the father's presence a restraint upon his freedom. His will is to be entirely independent, to have his own way. Estranged in heart, he can no longer tolerate the fellowship of his righteous father, whose authority had hitherto constrained him to an unwilling obedience, and so he confronts

him with his selfish demand—"Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." Here we have

SIN IN ITS ORIGIN.

In this extinction of the filial sentiment in the heart, in this severance of the bond of love, the foundation of all true duty and obedience, we have the secret root and origin of all sin, far more exceeding sinful in this its first beginning, and hidden principle, than in any after manifestation.

But it might be asked here, had the son not a right to prefer such a request? Had he not at least a legal right? He only sought the portion of goods that fell to him. No; not then. He could stand on no right.—These goods were not his. The father, as long as he lived, might have retained them, for they belonged to him. And, involuntarily, the son paid a tribute to this truth when he prefaced his demand with the words of petition, "Father, give me my portion." The blessings we enjoy, even of an earthly sort, are the *gifts* of our heavenly Father. They are His by right—ours only by favour. And though we may ignore this truth, and by an unholy appropriation call them our own, and use them only according to our own will, only for ourselves, and for our own pleasure and glory; yet we are to remember that they are ours only by grace, the gifts of our Father above; to be enjoyed with Him and used for His glory.

This demand, for such it is essentially rather than a prayer—selfish, unfilial, and unfounded though it was, is not denied.—It plainly indicated apostasy of heart on the part of the son, that he had fallen from filial love and duty: but yet the father remains a father still, he will not now become a hard and despotic master. He is not willing to have only a servant in the place of a son, and when he finds that he cannot keep him as his child, he will yield the point, and allow him the freedom of his own chosen way. Thus does the blessed God deal with men who have forsaken Him, with His rebellious children. He leaves them to the freedom of their own way. He does not lay any outward restraint upon them. He does not constrain them by mere authority to an unwilling obedience. Neither does he withhold their portion of earthly good. His mercy is not taken away, it follows them in all their wanderings here. God is still a Father, whatever they may have become.

The extinction of the true filial sentiment in the heart, indicated by this demand of

the younger son in the parable, is the hidden root of sin, but we now begin to see the process, or development of sin.—The secret root in the heart soon begins to bear its appropriate fruit, for "Not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country." What! Had he become so dead to every feeling which a son should cherish, that he could not remain under the same roof with his father? Had such a neighbourhood become so irksome, and unpleasant, that he was in haste to leave it? Was it possible that though he had got his portion by paternal grace, yet he could not enjoy it according to his own heart until he had placed a long distance between himself and home? It was even so. The hidden apostasy of the heart now begins to discover itself, and to be developed in outward action, which is

SIN IN ITS PROCESS.

A son may leave his father's house, taking with him a father's blessing. In a distant land his heart often fondly turns to that still beloved home, it is a green and fragrant spot; the remembrance of it is his solace in a land of strangers; and the presence of those there, wherewith a living, because a loving, memory surrounds him, with all their well-remembered words of hope and counsel, are a shield and buckler against evil. Filial love and duty still live in his heart. But a son may seek to leave his father's house because, to all filial love and duty his heart has become apostate. He receives his portion thanklessly, and, with a heavy heart, the parent sees him go his way. He is glad to be rid of the restraints of his father's house, in haste to drown the memory of its words and ways; no sooner does he set his foot in the far country to which he has gone, than he gives the rein to all his pent-up desires, and pursues their chosen path with eager step. Among strangers he feels at liberty; at liberty for words and deeds which would load every heart at home with shame and grief. And what is it that so darkens this picture, that makes it one of such exceeding baseness? What is the essential aggravation of his sin? Is it not just this, that, though he is a son, yet in his corrupted heart all filial love and reverence are dead and gone?

Reader, is this your portrait? Would it be impossible, think you, to make good against you a charge of heart-apostasy from the blessed God? Does your way of life, your habitual course of outward action, not indicate that root of bitterness in

your heart? Is it not true that you can fully enjoy your portion in this life *only away from God*? That you can delight yourself in your chosen pursuits and pleasures *best when God is farthest from your thoughts*? Nay, that you find it needful to *banish* the thoughts of your Father in heaven, if *you are to enjoy them at all*? Just like him in the parable, who gathered all together, and went into a far country, and there "wasted his substance with riotous living." This suggests to us that *Life without God*, which is

SIN IN ITS CONSUMMATION.

Far now from his father's house, far from underneath his eye; beyond the reach of his authority and influence, among strangers, in a land of strangers, this apostate son feels at liberty. Now, he can live the life he has pined for, a life, the very zest of which consists in the liberty from all home influence, in the wretched freedom gained by that far separation from the father's house. And what is the difference between this, and that round of pleasure which men call *Life*? What gives the relish to all those expedients for spending time pleasantly, such as the ball-room, the theatre, the jovial meeting with kindred spirits, which have received the stamp of the world's approbation? Is it not the unrestrained freedom of such a far separation from every holy influence? Is it not because, for the time, they come between the soul and God? Is it not the broad brand of *ungodliness* upon them which gives them their zest and relish?—There is an utter incongruity between such scenes and fellowship with God.—Let a child of God for once stray among them, one whose heart still beats with filial love, and whose joy consists in the presence and fellowship of his heavenly Father.—Let him by word or deed recal the thought of Him who is his chief joy, and, straightway, the flow of mirth is checked, the jest remains half uttered, a shadow darkens every countenance, until some one gathers courage to make, in a tone of rebuke, the bold confession, that all such things are *out of place there*. Indeed! Then it is the far country, far from the father's house, away from his presence and influence, where all things help to banish the very thought of Him from the heart: those dwelling there love to have it so, for on this depends the very zest of all their pleasure.

Life without God is sin in its consummation. The intense word, here translated "riotous living," might be rendered "a

self-destroying life." The idea conveyed is that of *wasting* life, not *using* it. We need not confine the meaning to a life of open riot, abandoned profligacy. These are of course included in the idea of a wasted life, and heart-apostacy from God is often consummated by such a life. A life without God, a *Godless life*, is emphatically a *wasted and lost life*. Such a life may be accompanied with honour among men; it may leave you all your energies to heap up riches, and you may succeed; it may be spent in company with troops of friends who cheer you on, but, without God, you have never risen to the conception of what *life* really is. You are "wasting your substance" In a little while all shall be gone. In forsaking God, you give up your place in the Father's house, you sell your birthright: and whatever may be that other portion you have chosen as the price, sooner or later it shall be spent, the *whole* of it, and a great eternity shall remain behind utterly unprovided for.

We see here then the beginning of sin in the heart-apostacy of the sinner, its process in the gradual forsaking of God; and its consummation in a life without God, an ungodly life may not be characterised by glaring sin. It may be a life adorned with all outward proprieties, what men call a successful life, leading to worldly fortune and honour, for "men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself." But reader if your life is spent *not for God*, then emphatically it is a *wasted life, you are destroying yourself*.

And now, in successive steps, the misery to which sin leads is exhibited to us.—First,

THE BEGINNING OF WANT.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want." In a short time all he had gathered together was scattered and wasted. Just at that point, giving force to the similitude, it is said, "there arose a mighty famine in *that land*," the far country, far from the father's house.—There is and must always be a famine there, a lack of the true bread, the proper nourishment for an immortal soul. Perhaps for a while and with large means to command earthly pleasures, there is little sense of want in the soul far from God.—Pleasure has not yet palled upon the taste, its full round has not yet been run. When the banquet is set, and the chosen guests assembled, it is not the time for carking care. The hall resounds with mirth, with the song, and the jest, and the light laugh;

the shadows flee away in that hour of light and thoughtless gaiety. But the morning light looks in upon another scene. The guests are fled; the footstep sounds hollow in the empty hall; the remnants of the feast, the extinguished tapers, the empty vessels, are the relics of departed joys. The silent void around drives back the soul to commune with itself, and then the sense of inward want makes itself felt. In those intervals of pleasure, when the soul, left to its own companionship, engages in the unwonted exercise of reflection, it *begins to feel want*. Those intervals, to the soul without God, are dull, dark seasons, fruitful of sad thoughts and low spirits: for, when the soul thus turns within, it is like one passing through an empty banquetting hall; a dull and dreary void is all it finds. That soul has "*begun to be in want*."

RECOURSE TO FALSE HELP.

This is the next step in the progress of the sinner's misery. When he began to be in want, this apostate son "went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." He does not think of returning to his father's house; he seeks help in his own way, persisting still in his apostacy. He draws closer the bonds of fellowship with those who dwell in that land of famine. And now that impatience of restraint, that lust for independence, which had driven him from home, results in the vilest servitude. Thus is it with the soul far from God. To drive away the dull, aching sense of want, which he begins to feel, the sinner seeks a larger measure of those earthly pleasures which have thus declared their insufficiency; he draws closer his connection with those who are like-minded with himself; he ever requires to seek *new* pleasures and new companionships; these become absolute necessities for him, he must *have them*, to save him from himself, from being left alone with his empty soul; he *must* have them to keep the sense of want at arms length away.—And thus, the *freedom* of sin, that *liberty* for which men forsake God, resolves itself at the last into a *bitter, a profitless, and degraded servitude*. For his utmost efforts cannot preserve him from the last stage of misery.

UTTER DESTITUTION.

Sent into the fields to feed swine, "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him." He is left by those among whom he dwells, whose help he has

sought, to perish. They cannot help him even if they would. And so with that soul living without God. The very help such an one seeks, when want begins to be felt, only deepens his misery. The pleasures of sin, like the husks that the swine did eat, are no proper nourishment for his soul. Every hour of his life on earth may be filled up with them, but his soul, his immortal soul, only sinks into a lower deep of want and degradation.—The parable depicts the extreme of outward poverty and misery, such as, oftentimes, does result in fact from a life of sin; but no such outward circumstances of want and wretchedness, can add to the *real* misery and degradation of one who has come to the end of a long life spent far from God. God may have given an one a full portion here; he still possesses all the comforts and luxuries of earth; he has lived a life of refined pleasure in his own circle of society; and even now, with hoary head, and failing strength, he fulfils like an hireling the same round of paltry pleasures, which, to him, have long since lost all their zest. Such an one might be like a shock of corn, filling and ripening for the joyful home-gathering; but there he is, fading away in his ways, poor, degraded, lost. How many might be sons and daughters in the Father's house, who prefer to remain, in contented degradation, amid the want and misery of the land of famine.

In this picture of the misery consequent upon sin the colours are strong, they are employed unsparingly, and yet with perfect truth. How accurately, even in the minutest touches, the pathology of such a sin as *intemperance* is here depicted.—Here, for example, is a young man beginning life with the fairest prospects. At the first, the wine cup is only one of many pleasures, used to fulfil the offices of good fellowship. But, after the soul has begun to feel want, it is sought after as a *help*, either to give a new charm to those pleasures which have begun to pall on the taste, or as a convenient defence against the depressing inroads of care and serious thought. Thus gradually, step by step, the desire grows, the habit strengthens, until the chains of a bitter slavery are fast riveted upon him. And then, at the bidding of the now imperious habit, the suggestions of worldly interest, the claims of affection, even the very sense of shame, are cast aside, until, with wrecked means, and broken character, he sinks to the fellowship of the vilest offscourings of society, to reach ere long a premature and dishonoured grave. To the man who has for-

saken God there is no security against the dominion of the most degrading sin; but the man whose heart still beats with filial love to his Father in heaven, and whose strength and defence God is, cannot be so enslaved.

Now, reader far from God; remember that far country is a land of famine, where you cannot sustain the life of your soul.—In our nature there are capacities too large, and wants too deep, to be supplied by any earthly good. Though separated far from God by sin, still He is our Father, our God, our chief joy: still our true end in life is to glorify Him; and still we have our original capacity to enjoy him. *It cannot be*, thou, that any mere created good, or even all created good, should be able to fill up in our soul that place which at the first was set apart for God. There *must* be, sooner or later, a sense of want and misery until He occupies the true place in *your heart*, reader, until you enjoy His favour which is *life*. Moreover, the most honourable place which the world can give you as the reward for its service, is in reality a position of deep degradation to one who might fill the place of a son of God. Why then remain in that far country? You may try the whole round of earthly pleasure, you may seek to fill your soul with earthly good, but the end of life shall surely find you weary and empty. O reader, that you would, even now, and without tasting that bitter experience, hear the voice of God calling on you in fatherly expostulation and entreaty—Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.—*Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.*

MARY MAGDALENE;

OR, THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR.

In Joseph's garden, and at Joseph's sepulchre, a woman is crouching in grief. She came to weep, but she did not expect to find an empty tomb. Her heart is heaving, big with sorrow, as her tear-bedimmed eyes are attempting to gaze into the vacant vault. But as she stoops to look through the grey morning light, the sight startles her, for there in the rock-hewn tomb she sees two angels sitting in solemn contemplation. Her sobs arrest their attention, for a woman's tears melt even the hearts of angels. "Woman, why weepest thou?" is their sympathizing en-

quiry. "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him," is her heart's reply. How few Marys are there in the world! How few there are who weep for a lost Saviour! Would that there were more, for he ever draws nigh to such sorrowing ones with sweet words of comfort. And here he comes to Mary, for the sound of the approaching footstep which turns her attention round, is that of Jesus, who has come to surprise her, and to give her beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" are his soothing words. She, taking him to be the gardener, pleads with beseeching tenderness. "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus listens in silence, and stands for a moment beholding, for he loves to look upon such tears as those which trickled down her cheeks. It was to him a better sight than that of hosts of angels, with golden harps ranked up to do him honour. He gazes with delight, because in her he sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied. Then in his gentle, well known and heavenly accents, he says "Mary." It is enough. There was more than magic in his voice. That one word brightens up her eyes with joy. She neither asks for a sight of the nail-pierced hands, nor of the spear-thrust side. "Rabboni!" "Master!" she exclaims, while she casts herself a worshipper at his feet. That familiar voice had, before now, sent sunbeams of gladness into her dark, despairing soul. Jesus, however, tells her to reserve her adoration until he had entered on his celestial glory. Her duty now is, not to lie a worshipper at his feet, but to go and tell his brethren that he was soon to ascend to His Father and their Father, and to His God and their God. Mary, elated with gladness, quickly bears the tidings to his disconsolate followers—the tidings that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, and that she had seen and talked with Him. She had gone to the grave weeping; now she returns rejoicing, for that Saviour who had dethroned the idols of her heart is alive again, and is still the same loving one he had ever been! "O! what am I," she would reason with herself, "that my Lord hath appeared thus unto me?" But it was so like Jesus to do as he did then, and he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Any who will come weeping to contemplate a crucified Saviour in the tomb, even though viler than Mary Magdalene ever was, shall soon

know of a truth that Christ is risen indeed, that they are risen with Him, and that soon, where he now is there shall they also be." X. Y. Z.

THE WANT OF THE AGE.

Not a little is heard, now a days, about "the wants of the age!"—Good men and bad, wise men and unwise, real and false philanthropists, the pulpit and the press, all have much to say as to the demands of the age, and the best way of supplying them.

The Fourierite tells us we must *herd human beings*, as we do cattle; the Agrarian, that we must divide up property and land; the agitator, that we must fill in with his favourite scheme of excitement; the Swedenborgian that we must have faith in his dreams; and the Mormon, that we must bow down and worship in his temple. Every one cries out, that the age must adopt *his* views, or it is undone! One tells us the demand of the age is for universal education; another, that it requires liberty of speech, person, and conscience; and still another, that it must and will have an upheaving of the social state, and perfect uniformity of social privilege and enjoyment!

But as opposed to *some*, and far above and beyond *all* these things, there is a want, and it is *the* want of the age. Do you ask what it is? It is *the* gospel! This is what the age wants—prominently and supremely wants—and must have for its improvement and salvation.

The Bible is the book of the age—of this, as of every age!—It is not antiquated, old fashioned, out of date!—It needs no remodelling for the nineteenth century; and he is but a madman or a fool who protests it! The idle, who would be unused; the visionary, who prefers dreaming to reality; the vicious, who would wallow in indulgence, may turn away from it to novelties, excitement, or the wild schemes of scepticism, delusion, selfishness, and lust. But if souls are to be renewed, communities benefited, the age regenerated, our country and the world redeemed, it must be *by the Bible—by Christianity!*

The lawless spirits of the age must yield themselves to the law of God; the free spirits of the age submit themselves to the righteousness which is by faith; the proud spirits of the age be humbled to acknowledge their dependence on the cross; the depraved spirits of the age, be renewed by the gospel of Christ as applied by the Holy Spirit. The great doctrines of the Bible must be made known, and the great duties of the Bible pressed home on every conscience, and heart, and life, in all their power, and by all the sanctions of eternity!

The want of the age is the gospel; the plain, unadulterated and unmodified gospel—the gospel preached from the pulpit, taught in the family and Sabbath school, sent forth in the Bible, and tract, and printed volume, borne by the press, the missionary, the colporteur, the private Christian, to the city and wilderness.—*A. E. Puritan.*

FORWARD! FORWARD! FORWARD!

A WORD TO THE ANXIOUS.

You have been awakened, conscience has been alarmed; you have begun to feel the terrors of the law: you have heard the crack of the whip, and felt it on your back. You are trying to escape from your sins; you are not, as you used to be, a contented bondsman, but you pant to be delivered altogether from sin in its power and its guilt.

You have been flying as best you could from sin; but the whole of your sins are after you, and your conscience, with its quick ear can hear the sound of threatening judgment. "Alas!" your heart is saying, "unless God help me, I shall be in hell!"—"Alas!" says your judgment, "unless God be merciful, I shall soon perish." Every power of your manhood is now upon the alarm: the different parts of your heart are talking to one another, and they are all foreboding desperate mischief.

Now, what shall I do for you? Shall I pray for you? Ay, that I will. Shall I bid you pray? Ay, that I may: and we may blend our prayers together—"God be merciful to us sinners! Lord save us, or we perish!" But, methinks, while I am praying for you, I hear my Master saying, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Tell them to go forward, preach Christ to them, instead of praying any longer, or bidding them pray.

Deliver to them the message of the gospel—"Forward, sinner, forward to the cross! Forward to the five wounds! Forward to the bloody sweat and to the crown of thorns! Go forward to the agonies of Gethsemane, and to the death struggles of Golgotha. Forward! Forward to the place,

'Where the full atonement's made,
Where the utmost ransom's paid.'

I know what you say. "Right before me rolls the great sea of God's wrath. I am surrounded with a dark, dark night, and I see no light but the sheen of these terrible waves of fire. If I go forward, God's eternal wrath is in the way." Forward, sinner, whatever may obstruct the way; let not hell itself block up the road, for, do you not know that when Jesus is your leader, he will at once divide the Red Sea of Jehovah's wrath. He *did* divide it; he went through it himself when he suffered the wrath of God instead of us. As you go forward, you shall find Almighty justice standing up as a protecting wall on either hand, and no longer rolling as a devouring flood. Forward in the way of faith, in the Saviour's name; and when you have passed through the dry bed of a sea, once deep and stormy, you shall look back and see the deep sea swallowing up your sins, and shall sing, "The depths have covered them, there is not one of them left." Forward sinner, forward!

"Well," saith one, "I will pray about it." Beware of substituting prayer for faith, faith is your present duty, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "I will think about it a little longer." Do no such thing, thinking is a

very poor substitute for believing. Forward! forward at once and on the spot; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "But I am not fit to believe." Forward, in God's name—forward! What have you to do with fitness? God commandeth you to believe in his Son Jesus Christ.

Forward, is my message—I come not to tamper with you, to deal with your "ifs" and "buts," and excuses, and peridventures. Hell is behind you; you are shut up on the right hand and on the left by God's providence, your own fears, and divine justice; there is but one way of safety, and that is the way of faith. Forward, sinner! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Why, some of you have been frittering away your time, weeks, and months, and years, thinking about it, praying about it, reading about it, hoping about it, fearing about it, but never coming to Jesus just as you are. It is all wrong—it is all wrong. God's command is neither work, nor fear, nor fear, but it is simple and plain. Believe! Forward! Trust a Saviour's wounds; and trusting there, there is life in a look at him, and you are saved.

O, I wish I could get behind some of you and whisper a word in your ear, for I know what Satan says. He says, "Tarry, tarry, tarry." Ah! he loves to have you in the place of breaking forth of children, that he may vex and torment you. Go back," says he, "go back!" Ah, I know he would like to have you at your old sins, but you cannot go back if God has once brought you out of Egypt. I know what he whispers. He says, "It is of no use going forward. If you believe in Jesus," says he, "you will perish after all." Back, thou old liar, back! God never did permit a man yet to walk in a path in which he commanded him to go and not to walk safely.

Forward, sinner, forward! Christ is before thee, and heaven in him is before thee. If thou stayest where thou art, thou shalt die. If thou goest forward, thou canst but die; and, therefore, take the captain's word, for it is the word of the captain's King—"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."—*Spurgeon.*

PRAYER AND PRAISE.

In a recent address the Rev. William Arthur remarked: "There was one line of James Montgomery's glorious hymn on 'Prayer' which he always disputed—

'Prayer, the sublimest strains which reach
The majesty on high.'

"No, no. 'He that offereth praise glorifieth God.' Praise was sublimest strain which went up to heaven, and when it was educed from human hearts by the love of God and the grace of the Holy Spirit, of all things rich and happy, that praise was the highest and the most acceptable to the Redeemer."

The most dangerous infidelity of the day is the infidelity of rich and orthodox churches.—*Becher.*

MOTHER.

When she changed worlds, and before that time, what was she to others? A small, old, delicate woman. *What was she to us?* A radiant, smiling angel, upon whose brow the sunshine of the eternal world had fallen. We looked into her large, tender eyes, and saw not as others did, that her mortal garment had waxed old and feeble; or if we saw this, it was no symbol of decay, for beyond and within, we recognized her in all her beauty. Old! how heavy and bitter would have been her long and slow decline, if we had seen her grow old instead of young. The days that hastened to give her birth into eternity, grow brighter and brighter, until when memory wandered back, it had no experience so sweet as those through which she was passing. The long life, with its youthful romance, its prosaic cares, its quiet sunshine, and deep tragedies, was culminating to its earthly close; and like some blessed story that appeals to the heart in its great pathos, the end was drawing near, all clouds were rolling away, and she was stepping forth into the brilliancy of prosperity. Selfishness ceased to weep under the light of her cheerful glance, and grew to be congratulation. Beside her couch we sat, and traced with loving fancy the new life soon to open before her; with tears and smiles we traced it. Doubts never mingled, for from earliest childhood we had no memories of her inconsistent with the expectations of a Christian. Deep in our souls there lay gratitude that her morning drew near; beautiful and amazing it seemed that she would never more bow to the stroke of the chastener; fresh courage descended from on high, as we realized that there was an end to suffering; it was difficult to credit that her discipline was nearly over: how brief it had been compared with the glorious existence it had won her. How passing sweet were her assurances that she should leave us a while longer on earth with childlike trust, knowing that our own souls needed to stay, and that the destiny of others needed it. But the future seemed very near to her, and she saw us gathered around her in her everlasting home. She grew weaker, and said her last words to us. Throughout the last day she said but little, but often her tender eyes were riveted upon us; they said, "Farewell! farewell!" In the hush of the chamber, a faint Eolian-like strain came from her dying lips; it sounded as if it came from afar; then the angels were taking her to their companionship. She softly fell asleep, resigning her worn-out body to us, and she entered Heaven.

Ah! do we apprehend what a glorious event it is for the "pure in heart" to die? We look upon the bride's beauty, and see in the vista before her anguish and tears, and but transient sunshine. The beauty fades, the splendour of life declines to the worldly eyes that gaze upon her. Deaf and blind are such gazers, for the bride may daily be winning imperishable beauty, yet it is not for this world. A most sad, a melancholy thing it seems when children

of a larger growth judge their parents by their frail and decaying bodies, rather than by their spirits. And more deeply and still is it, when the aged learn through the young to feel that the freshness of existence has gone by with them. Gone by? when they are waiting to be born into a new and vast existence that shall roll on in increasing majesty, and never reach an end! Gone by? when they have just entered life, as it were! The glory and sweetness of living is going by only with those who are turning away their faces from the Prince of Peace. Sweet mother! she is breathing vernal airs now, and with every breath a spring-like life and joy are wafted through her being. Mother, beautiful and beloved! some sweet, embryo joy fills the chambers of my heart as I contemplate the scenes with which she is becoming familiar. Dead and dreary Winter robes the earth, and autumn leaves lie under the snow like past hopes; but what of them? I see only the smile of God's sunshine. I see in the advancing future, love and peace—only infinite peace!

FAMILY DISCIPLINE.

What motives are laid upon all Christian parents to make the first article of family discipline a constant and careful discipline of themselves. I would not undervalue a strong and decided government in families. No family can be rightly trained without it. But there is a kind of virtue, my brethren, which is not in the rod—the virtue, I mean, of a truly good and sanctified life. And a reign of brute force is much more easily maintained than a reign whose power is righteousness and love. There are too, I must warn you, many who talk much of the rod as the orthodox symbol of parental duty, but who might really as well be heathens as Christians; who only storm about their house with heathenish ferocity, who lecture, and threaten, and castigate, and bruise, and call this family government. They even dare to speak of this as the nurture of the Lord. So much easier is it to be violent than to be holy, that they substitute force for goodness and grace, and are wholly unconscious of the imposture. It is frightful to think how they batter and bruise the delicate, tender souls of their children, extinguishing in them what they ought to cultivate, crushing that sensibility which is the hope of their being, and all in the sacred name of Christ Jesus. By no such summary process can you dispatch your duties to your children. You are not to be a savage to them, but a father and a Christian. Your real aim and study must be to infuse into them a new life, and, to this end, the Life of God must perpetually reign in you. Gathered round you as a family, they are all to be so many motives, strong as the love you bear them to make you Christ-like in your spirit. It must be seen and felt with them that religion is a first thing with you. And it must be first, not in words and talk, but visibly first in your love—that which fixes

your aims, feeds your enjoyments, sanctifies your pleasures, supports your trials, sanctifies your wants, contents your ambition, beautifies and blesses your character. No mock piety, no sanctimony of phrase, or longitude of face on Sunday will suffice. You must live in the light of God, and hold such a spirit in exercise as you wish translated into your children.—You must take them into your feeling, as a loving and joyous element, and beget, if by the grace of God you may, the spirit of your own heart in theirs.

This is Christian education, the nurture of the Lord. Ah, how dismal is the contrast of a half-worldly, carnal piety; proposing money as the good thing of life; stimulating ambition for place and show; provoking ill-nature by petulance and falsehood; praying, to save the rule of family worship; having now and then a religious fit, and, when it is on, weeping and exhorting the family to undo all that the life has taught them to do; and then, when the passions have burnt out their fire, dropping down again to sleep in the embers, only hoping still that the family will some time be converted! When shall we discover that families ought to be ruined by such training as this?—*Dr. Bushnell.*

SLAVERY TO HABIT.

The following horrible illustration of the force with which the habit of intemperance clings to its victims, was given by Mr. Gough at a late temperance meeting, and vouched for by Mr. Gough as having come within his own observation:—A young man had broken the heart of his wife by his intemperate habits, and she was lying on her bed of death. He was kneeling by her, watching the breath which was fast fleeing away, as she besought him with impassioned agony to indulge no longer in that intoxicating draught which had killed her, and was fast hurrying him to the drunkard's grave. His heart was melted by her entreaties, and he promised that he would drink no more till he received the cup from her hand. She died, but scarcely had the breath departed, when the maddening desire for liquor returned. He poured out the draught, but the thought of the oath so solemnly pledged flitted across his mind, and he desisted. But the habit was too strong to be overcome. He returned to the chamber of death, filled a cup with the liquid fire, raised the inanimate arm of his wife, clasped her cold fingers around the cup and drained its contents to the very dregs.

If this man was not a slave where shall we find one? No thralldom of man to man can be compared with this. For such a victim there is but one cure—Regeneration! "Ye must be born again."

Six.—The only disturber of men, of families, cities, kingdoms, worlds, is sin. There is no such trouble, no such traitor to any state, as the wilfully wicked man; no such enemy to the public as the enemy of God.—*Wogan.*

THE USE OF MAN.

The world was made to be inhabited by beasts, but studied and contemplated by man; 'tis the debt of our reason we owe unto God, and the homage we pay for not being beasts. Without this, the world is still as though it had not been, or as it was before the sixth day, when as yet there was not a creature that could conceive, or say there was a world. The wisdom of God receives small honor from those vulgar heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire his works. Those highly magnify Him whose judicious inquiry into his acts, and deliberate research into his creatures, return the duty of a devout and learned admiration.

Every essence, created or uncreated, hath its final cause, and some positive end, both of its essence and operation. This is the cause I grope after in the works of nature. On this hangs the providence of God. To raise so beautiful a structure as the world and the creatures thereof was but his act; but their sundry and divided operations, with their predestinated ends, are from the treasury of His wisdom . . .

There are no grotesques in nature; not anything framed to fill up empty cantons and unnecessary spaces . . . What reason may not go to school to the wisdom of bees, ants, and spiders? What wise hand teacheth them to do what reason cannot teach us? Ruder heads stand amazed at those prodigious pieces of nature, whales, elephants, dromedaries, and camels. These, I confess, are the colossuses and majestic pieces of His hand. But in these narrow engines there is more curious mathematics; and the civility of these little citizens more neatly sets forth the wisdom of their Maker. I could never content my contemplation with those general pieces of wonder, the flux and reflux of the sea, the increase of the Nile, the conversion of the needle to the north; and have studied to match and parallel those in the more obvious and neglected pieces of nature, which, without further travel, I can do, in the cosmography of myself.—We carry with us the wonders we seek without us. There is all Africa and her prodigios in us. We are that bold and adventurous piece of nature, which he that studies wisely learns in a compendium what others labor at in a divided piece and endless volume.—*Sir Thomas Browne.*

PILGRIM STANDFAST.

A staunch old pilgrim he was, as ever set out for the celestial city. No persecutions, nor any allurements of pleasure, could turn him aside from the right way. Such a pilgrim was sturly John Knox, who, when the lords of Queen Mary's court bade him stop his preaching, giving him but one alternative—"silence, or the gallows"—would make answer:—"My lords, you are mistaken if you think you can intimidate me by threats to do what

conscience and God tell me I never shall do. Be it known to you that it is a matter of no importance to me, when I have finished my work, whether my bones shall bleach in the winds of heaven, or rot in the bosom of the earth."

The same Standfast stood strong in the heart of the martyr Hooper, when he went with a firm step to the fatal stake. "I am come hither to end this life," he said, "because I will not give away the truth I have formerly taught you." And when a pardon from the Queen was set before him, he cried out with a determined voice, "If you love my soul, take it away; take it away." The price of that pardon, he well knew, must be a denial of the faith. So Bishop Latimer, when summoned before "the bloody Mary," said, "I go as willingly to London, to give an account of my faith, as ever I went to any place in my life." As he rode through Smithfield—that spot which had such a baptism of martyr's blood—he said, "Smithfield has groined for me a long time."

Perhaps it is quite as hard for Standfast to pursue his integrity amidst the temptations and pleasures of the world, as in the fires of persecution. Where persecution has slain its thousands, worldliness has slain its tens of thousands.

A poor woman in India, who had embraced Christianity, was offered back the jewels and money which had been taken from her, on condition that she would return to her old religion; but she replied: "Oh no, I would rather be a poor Christian than a rich heathen."

And still another Mr. Judson tells us of, who was very fond of her jewelry, yet desired to follow Christ. When he asked her if she was willing to sacrifice them for His sake, she was for a time much disturbed; but at length, taking off the gay necklace, which was her especial pride, she said with sweet and touching simplicity: "I love Christ more than this."

Can we all, when the world holds out its glittering baits to us, lay them aside with the same steadfast spirit, and say with her, "I love Christ more than these!"—*Christian Chronicle.*

THE INFIDEL'S RETORT.

A preacher perceiving, on one occasion, among his hearers, an individual who was known in the neighbourhood as a ringleader of infidelity, was induced to hope that some alteration had taken place in his views.

To ascertain whether such was the fact, he called upon him the next day, and told him how happy he had been to see him at the preaching the previous evening, the more so, as he had been given to understand that he did not believe the gospel.

"Nor you either," said the unceremonious sceptic.

"What!" he exclaimed, "do you mean sir, to call me a hypocrite?"

"I call you no ill names, sir," he coolly replied, "but what I mean to say is this, you have known of my infidelity for years,

and though I have lived all the while within a short distance of your dwelling, you have never before attempted to enlighten me as to those matters, a thing which, to do you justice, I must believe you would have done, had you thought them as important as your creed would make them; indeed, I can hardly fancy that you would see me going to hell, and never try to save my soul."

IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD THERE IS FULNESS OF JOY.

Even in this world, where there is much of God, how sweet to the Christian is the sense of His presence, and friendship, and love! What will it be in that world, where it is all of God? The foretaste is blessed—what must be the fruition! The rays of the Divine glory are gladdening—what must be the full blaze of that sun itself!

My soul! dost thou often delight to pause in thy journey?—does faith love to ascend its Pisgah-Mount and get a prospect of this Land of Promise? What is the grand feature and element which swallows up all the circumstances in thy future bliss? Let Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles answer—It is "Thy Presence." "In my flesh, I shall see God!" says one. "I shall be satisfied, says another, "when I awake, with Thy likeness." "They shall see His face," says a third. Amid all the glowing visions of a coming Heaven vouchsafed to John in Patmos, there is One all-glorious object that has ever a peerless and distinctive pre-eminence—God himself. There is no candle—Why? "For the Lord God giveth them light!" There is no temple—Why? "For the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple thereof!" The Saints dwell in holy brotherhood; but what is the mighty bond of their union—their "chiefest joy?"—"He that sitteth on the Throne dwells among them!" They have no longer the intercession of ordinances and means—Why? Because "the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water!" They no longer draw on the storehouse of the Promise—And why? Because "God himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!" "No napkin," says a holy man, "but His own immediate hand, shall wipe my sinful face!"

My soul! here is the true "Paradise"—where you will "see God face to face!" Here is the true "Mahanaim"—where "the Angels of God meet you!" Here is the true Communion of Saints—"The glorious fellowship of the Prophets—the godly fellowship of the Apostles—the noble army of Martyrs!" Yet all these latter will be subservient and subordinate to the first—the vision and fruition of God! Even the recognition of the death-divided (that sweet element in the Believer's prospect of bliss) will pale in comparison into a taper-light before this "Glory that excelleth!"

Reader! art thou among these "pure in heart," who are to "see God?" Remember the Bible's solemn interdict—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord!" Remember its solemn admonition—"And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure!" To "see God!" Oh! what preparation needed for so august a contemplation! Infinite unworthiness and nothingness to stand in the presence of Infinite Majesty, Purity, and Glory!

Can I wonder at the much discipline required ere I can be thus "presented faultless before the presence of His glory?" How will these needed furnace fires be dimmed into nothing when viewed from the Sapphire throne!

—*Macduff.*

ROMANCE IN PRAYER.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."—1's. lxxvi. 18.

We often affront God by offering prayers which we are not *willing* to have answered. Theoretical piety is never more deceptive than in acts of devotion. We pray for blessings which we know to be accordant with God's will, and we persuade ourselves that we desire those blessings.—In the abstract, we do desire them. A *sane* mind must be far gone in sympathy with devils, if it can help desiring all virtue in the abstract.

The *dialect* of prayer established in Christian usage, wins our trust; we sympathize with its theoretical significance; we find no fault with its intensity of spiritual life. It commends itself to our conscience and good sense, as being what the phraseology of devout affection should be. Ancient forms of prayer are beautiful exceedingly. Their hallowed associations fascinate us like old songs. In certain imaginative moods we fall into delicious reverie over them. Yet down deep in our heart of hearts we may detect more of poetry than of piety in this fashion of joy. We are troubled, therefore, and our countenance is changed.

Many of the prime objects of prayer enchant us only in the distance. Brought near to us, and in concrete forms, and made to grow life-like in our conceptions, they very sensibly abate the pulse of our longing to possess them, because we cannot but discover that, to realize them in our lives, certain other darling objects must be sacrificed, which we are not yet willing to part with. The paradox is true to the life, that a man may even *fear* an answer to his prayers.

A very good devotee may be a very dishonest suppliant. When he leaves the height of meditative abstraction, and as we very significantly say in our Saxon phrase, *comes to himself*, he may find that his true character, his *real* self, is that of no petitioner at all. His devotions have been dramatic. The sublimities of the closet have been but illusions. He has been acting a pantomime. He has not really desired that God would give heed to him, for any other purpose than to give him an hour of pleasurable devotional excitement. That his objects of prayer should actually be inwrought into his character, and should live in his own consciousness, is by no means the thing he has been thinking of, and is the last thing he is ready just now to wish for. If he has a Christian heart buried up anywhere beneath this heap of pietism, it is very probable that the discovery of the burlesque of prayer of which he has been guilty, will transform his fit of romance into some sort of hypochondriacal suffering. Dependancy is the natural offspring of theatrical devotion.

Let us observe this paradox of Christian life in two or three illustrations.

An *ambitious* Christian—we must tolerate the contradiction; to be true to the facts of life we must join strange opposites—an

enthusiastic Christian prays, with becoming devoutness, that God will impart to him a generous, loving spirit, and a conscience void of offence to all men. His mind is in a solemn state, his heart is not insensible to the beauty of the virtues which he seeks. His posture is lowly, his tones sincere, and self-delusion is one of those processes of weakness which are facilitated by the deception of bodily habitude. His prayer goes on glibly, till conscience grows impatient, and reminds him of certain of his equals, whose prosperity stirs up within him that "envy which is the rottenness of the bones."

What then? Very probably he quits that *subject* of prayer, and passes to another, on which his conscience is not so eagle-eyed. But after that glimpse of a hidden sin, how do the clouds of estrangement from God seem to shut him in, dark and damp and chill, and his prayer become like a dismal pattering of rain!

An *ambitious* Christian prays that God will bestow upon him a humble spirit.—He volunteers to take a low place because of his unworthiness. He asks that he may be delivered from pride and self-seeking. He repeats the prayer of the publican, and the benediction upon the poor in spirit.—The whole group of the virtues kindred to humility seems to him as radiant as the Graces with loveliness. He is sensible of no check in the fluency of his emotions, till, his conscience, too, becomes angry, and dashes the little eddy of goodness which is just now covering up the undertow of selfishness that imperils his soul. If then he is not melted into tears at the disclosure of his heartlessness, that prayer probably ends in a clouded brow, and a feverish, querulous self-conflict.

A *revengeful* Christian prays that he may have a meek spirit; that he may be harmless as doves; that the synonymous graces of forbearance, long-suffering, patience, may adorn his life; that he may put away bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice; that that mind may be found in him which was also in Christ. At the moment of this devotional episode in his experience, he feels, as Rousseau did, the abstract grandeur of a magnanimity like that of Jesus. There is no doubt about the fervour of his theoretic love of such an ideal of character; and he is about to take courage from his rapture, when his conscience becomes impertinent, and mocks him, by thrusting upon his lips the words which are death to his conceit—"Forgive me as I forgive." If then he is not shocked into self-aborrence at the ghastliness of his guilt, he probably exhausts that hour of prayer in palliations and compromises, or in reckless impositions upon the forbearance of God.

A *luxurious* Christian prays, in the good set phrases of devotion, for a spirit of self-denial; that he may endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ; that he may take up the cross and follow Christ; that he may be ready to forsake all that he hath, and be Christ's disciple; that he may not live unto himself; that he may imitate

Him who went about doing good,—who became poor that we might be rich, and who wept over lost souls. In such a prayer there may be, consciously, no insincerity, but a pleasurable sympathy; rather, with the grand thoughts and the grander feeling which the language portrays. The heart is buoyant with its gaseous distension to the bounds of its great swelling words.

This lover of the pride of life does not discover his self-inflation, till conscience pricks him with such goads as these: "Are you living for the things you are praying for?"—"What one thing are you doing for Christ which costs you self-denial?"—"Are you seeking for opportunities to deny yourself, to save souls?"—"Are you willing to be like Him who had not where to lay his head?"—"Can you be baptized with the baptism that He was baptized with?" If, then, this effeminate one is not roused to a more Christ-like life by the uncovering of his hypocrisy, what a sickly murmuring of self-reproach fills his heart at the collapse of that prayer?

Such is human nature; such, but by the grace of God, are we all. We must be dull inspectors of our own hearts, if we have never discerned there, lurking beneath the level at which sin breaks out into overt crime, some single offence—an offence of feeling, an offence of habit in thought, which for a time has spread its infection over the whole character of our devotions. We have been self-convicted of falsehood in prayer; for, though praying in the full dress of sound words, we did not desire that our supplications should be heard at the expense of that one idol.

Perhaps that single sin has woven itself like a web over large spaces of our life. It may have run like a shuttle to and fro in the texture of some plan of life, on which our conscience has not glared fiercely as upon a crime, because the usage of the world has blindfolded consciences by the respectability of such sin. Yet it has been all the while tightening its folds around us, repressing our liberty in prayer, stopping the life-blood and stiffening the fibre of our moral being, till we are like kneeling corpses in our worship.

That is a deceptive notion which attributes the want of unction in prayer to an arbitrary, or even inexplicable, withdrawal of God from the soul. Aside from the operation of physical causes, where is the warrant, in reason or revelation, for ascribing joylessness in prayer to any other cause than some wrong in the soul itself? What says an old prophet? "Behold, the Lord's ear is not heavy that it cannot hear; but your *iniquities* have separated between you and your God. Your sins have hid his face from you. Therefore, we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as

dead men." Could words describe more truthfully, or explain more philosophically, that phenomenon of religious experience which we call the "hiding of God's countenance?"

It does not require what the world pronounces a great sin, to break up the serenity of the soul in its devotional hours. The experience of prayer has delicate complications. A little thing, secreted there, may dislocate its mechanism and arrest its movement. The spirit of prayer is to the soul what the eye is to the body,—the eye, so limpid in its nature, of such fine finish and such intricate convolution in its structure, and of so sensitive nerve, that the point of a needle may excruciate it, and make it weep itself away.

Even a doubtful principle of life, harboured in the heart, is perilous to the peacefulness of devotion. May not many of us find the cause of our joylessness in prayer, in the fact that we are living upon some unsettled principles of conduct? We are assuming the rectitude of courses of life with which we are not ourselves honestly satisfied. I apprehend that there is very much of suspense of conscience among Christians upon subjects of practical life, on which there is no suspense of action. Is there not a pretty large cloud-land covered by the usages of Christian society? And may not some of us find there the sin which infects our devotions with nauseous incense?

Possibly our hearts are shockingly deceitful in such iniquity. Are we strangers to an experience like this—that when we mourn over cold prayers as a misfortune, we evade a search of that disputed territory for the cause of them, through fear that we shall find it there, and we struggle to satisfy ourselves with an increase of spiritual duties which shall cost us no sacrifice? Are we never sensible of resisting the hints which the Holy Spirit gives us in parables, by refusing to look that way for the secret of our deadness—saying, "Not that! Oh no, not that! But let us pray more?"

Many a doubtful principle in a Christian mind, if once set in the focus of a conscience illumined by the Holy Spirit, would resolve itself into a sin, for which that Christian would turn and look up guiltily to the Master, and then go out and weep bitterly.—*Still Hour.*

AN EARNEST MINISTRY.

One element in John the Baptist's character was his earnestness. The phrase is familiar to us all;—it has passed into a proverbial saying,—"an earnest ministry." Here was a living exemplification of it; and its earnestness was the secret of its power. John (so far as we know) was neither polished, nor learned, nor eloquent. Judging from the brief recorded specimen of his preaching, he had nothing of the logical acumen and intellectual grasp of the great scholar of Gamaliel. His sentences, as we have already said, are strong—pointed—vigorous—epigrammatical;—the arrowy words of a bold, outspoken man,—no more.

But,—mightier than all eloquence, and than all the logic and learning of the schools,—his winged appeals went forth from his inmost heart. The words were those of one who deeply felt all he said,—whose every utterance came welling forth from the depths of an earnest soul.

After all, *this* is what the world, what the Church, wants,—a living earnestness. It is the earnest man who alone can stand the test, and shall alone be honoured in his work. Have we not manifold instances in proof of this in our own times? Look at those places where there has been manifested a deep and growing interest in divine things,—and where hundreds, before in a state of utter indifference and death, have been brought to a knowledge of the truth. What is the instrumentality that has been employed? Often the very weakest. Ministers of little intellectual energy;—devoid of all the arts of oratory,—who can clothe their utterance only in the simplest and rudest garb;—but they are men in earnest;—men who have their work at heart,—who go to it in the spirit of believing prayer—animated by one predominating motive,—love for souls and the glory of God. And where there is this earnestness and heart-work, it is pleasing to see those of cultivated minds, and who may even be called fastidious hearers and worshippers,—many among them far superior to their instructors in natural and acquired gifts and knowledge of life,—sitting and listening with docility to the "simplicity of the truth." It is the old scene witnessed in the Jordan wilderness,—those of strong and vigorous intellect—hard-headed men of the world—polished Pharisees—subtle Sadducees—soldiers with Roman blood in their veins—officers trained in all court etiquette—wily, far-seeing tax-gatherers;—in one word, hundreds skilled in the world's logic,—shrewd, knowing men of business,—coming and sitting at the feet of this half-savage-looking hermit—a man all unschooled in worldly art and courtly manners and the business of life—and asking him, "What shall we do?"

And the same characteristic which gave him access to the hearts of the people, opened his way to the heart of the Tetrarch. When no other power could have reached the polluted soul of Herod Antipas, the earnest truth of the wilderness messenger enabled him to confront, face to face, the royal debauchee. He honoured his earnestness, though he hated his piety. "Herod heard him gladly." Why? because he knew that he was a just man and a holy.

God grant us ever an earnest ministry! It will be the mighty lever for a revival in its noblest sense. Here is the grand theme for the prayers of our people, that among ministers and students there may be the infusion of "the earnest life." It is this alone which will confound the reasoning and surmises of a semi-infidel world. The world is keen in scanning motives;—the world is discerning (sovereignly so sometimes,) in estimating character; and many draw the conclusion, (alas! too often with good reason!) "These men, preach as they may, are not in earnest;—they are only skillful players on an instrument. These pulpit orations are shams, ideal pictures, not counter-signed by the life." Hundreds go away from the house of God with the smile on their face, and Ezekiel's words on their lips, "Ah, Lord God, doth he not speak parables?" Ezek. xx. 49.—*Macduff.*

SELF.—Do you want to know the man against whom you have most reason to guard yourself? Your looking-glass will give you a fair likeness of his face.—*Whately.*

THE FULLNESS OF JESUS.

I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursed load.
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White in his blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains.

I lay my wants on Jesus;—
All fulness dwells in him.
He heals all my diseases,
He doth my soul redeem.
I lay my griefs on Jesus,
My burdens and my cares—
He from them all releases—
He all my sorrows shares.

I rest my soul on Jesus—
This weary soul of mine;
His right hand me embraces,
I on his breast recline.
I love the name of Jesus,
Immanuel, Christ, the Lord;
Like fragrance on the breeze,
His name abroad is poured.

I long to be like Jesus,
Meek, lovely, lowly, mild;
I long to be like Jesus,
The Father's holy child.
I long to be with Jesus
Amid the heavenly throng,
To sing with saints his praises,
To learn the angel's song.

Rev. Dr. Bonney.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

Thou deep abyss of blessed Love,
In Jesus Christ to us unscald,
Fire, which no finite heart could probe,
Depths, to no human thought revealed;
Thou lovest sinners—lovest me,
Thou blestest those who cursed Thee:
O great, O kind, O loving One,
What worthless creatures shalt Thou not

Thou King of Light! our deepest longing
Is shallow to Thy depths of grace;
Deep are the woes to us belonging,
But deeper far Thy joy to bless.
Teach us to trust the Father's love,
Still looking to the Son above;
Blest Spirit! through our spirits pour
True prayers and praises evermore.

Jesus! Thine own with rich grace filling,
Thy mighty blessing on us shed,
New life through every member thrilling,
Diffused from Thee, the living Head;
Shew us how light Thy mild yoke is,
And how from self's hard yoke it frees.
If Thou wilt teach Thy household so,
The works the Master's hand shall show.

—Count Zinzendorf.

TONGUE.—Give not thy tongue too great liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken, is like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desire to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue.—*Quarles.*

STEADFAST CONFIDENCE.

I am not unacquainted with your perplexities, and I shall tell how my mind used to work in producing them. I thought, with myself, "Since I have professed the gospel; I have acted inconsistently with it—more so, I fear, than a Christian could. If I am a Christian now, I was one then for no change has happened in my views of the Gospel; therefore I fear I am not one at all." Thus was I ready to be led either to despair on the one hand, or to a confidence founded on my Christian character on the other.

But this kind of reasoning goes opposite to the whole tenor of the Scriptures. Consider; as the sum of those texts to which I refer; the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. iii., verse 14:—"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end."

What the beginning of the confidence of these Hebrews was, and which they are here exhorted to hold steadfast, we see in Acts ii. They had lately murdered the Son of God. Convinced that they had done so, they were pricked in their hearts, while at the same time they received the word gladly. These effects of the down-pouring of the Holy Ghost as a comforter, and as the Spirit of adoption, in opposition to the Spirit of bondage under the law, are conformable to the account which Christ gave of the effects of the Comforter, or Spirit of adoption, when he should come, John xvi. 7-9. We see these Jews, in Acts ii., convinced of sin because of their unbelief, and pricked to the heart; while at the same time, convinced of righteousness by the resurrection of Christ, they received the word gladly, and rejoiced; and doubtless this was the first period of the Spirit of adoption. These persons, looking back to their former lives, saw there the blackest scene of iniquity which ever disgraced the annals of mankind—the rejecting, betraying, and murdering the everlasting Jehovah manifest in the flesh. In themselves, therefore, they were altogether in despair, and perceived no ground of confidence in God for the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, but what the righteousness manifested in the resurrection of Christ, and the love displayed in it, afforded them. On the other hand, notwithstanding all the aggravations of their sins, they saw nothing more to prevent their hope than that of the apparently most virtuous. Assured that the blood which they had shed cleansed from all sin; certain that Christ had entered into rest, had overcome every obstacle which could oppose the vilest, or prevent the weakest, and had promised salvation to every one that believed; they could not but trust in God for the remission of sins, deliverance from their power, and entering along with Christ into his rest. To these Hebrews, then, after (in consequence of receiving the word gladly) they had for many years continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, this apostle writes, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the

beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." We have seen *what this beginning was*. Now this it is which they are exhorted to hold fast.

And we shall evidently see how much occasion there is for an exhortation of this kind, if we attend a little to the danger Christians are in, of turning aside from the testimony they are commanded to hear: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

When persons at first believe the gospel of God, looking back to their former lives they see nothing but one scene of unbelief, or making God a liar, by rejecting the testimony he has given of his Son, and consequently of loving the world in preference to God. Despairing then in themselves, they think not at this season of building the smallest hope upon anything they ever did or could do; while on the other hand (and which is inseparably connected with the former) none of their sins, however great, can appear in the least degree to affect the most lively hope of salvation—which comes unasked, which supposes sin, and which is conferred by the love of God through a divine righteousness, without the smallest respect to human worth. So that *that very thing* which shuts them up from all hope in self, occasioning the most thorough self-despair (that is, all men being in one common situation before God, God not respecting human worth, or any thing whereby one man stands distinguished from his fellow, but according to his sovereign grace, choosing some to eternal life in distinction from others); I say that very thing which shuts up from hope in self, effectually takes away all that despair of salvation which greatness of sin, or any other thing could produce.

Thus it is with Christians hearing the word of God, and free from the doctrines and commandments of men, when they first believe the gospel. But alas! how often may it be said, "How is the gold become dim, how is the most fine gold changed!" When men believe the gospel, they receive the truth in the love of it; for the natural consequence of seeing nothing between them and eternal misery, but the work of Jesus Christ, is above all things to love and prize Him, who, that he might become a refuge from every storm, "though he was in the form of God, took upon Him the form of a servant, because obedient to the death of the cross, and hid not his face from shame and spitting." Again, the necessary effect of love is, *the feelings of love*, and the natural consequence of both, *the pleasing the beloved object*, which, with regard to Jesus Christ, consists in keeping his commandments. The necessary consequence, also, of believing the glad tidings that Christ has become a sacrifice for sin, and that in this Jehovah is well pleased, is *the hope of a participation of all things which Christ was manifested to bestow*. The natural consequence of seeing God manifesting his justice, as well as his mercy, in the remission of sins, is hope in God's mercy, as nothing but the justice of God can appear to oppose this. The consequence of knowing the purpose of the

manifestation of the Son of God to deliver from sin, and the eternal design of God to save a people from all iniquity, to have fellowship with him in the contemplation and possession of his perfections, is *the earnest desire of sanctification and conformity to Christ*; while the effect of knowing, that Jesus, in overcoming every obstacle which could oppose his entering into rest, overcame at the same time every obstacle which could prevent the chief of sinners, is *the hope of entering into the same rest*. Further, the necessary consequence of this hope is *joy and peace*. And once more, the natural effect of the belief of his humiliation, who, on account of sinners,—not his own, but his people's—endured at once the hiding of the Father's countenance, the temptations of the devil, and the persecutions of men, must be *repentance and Godly sorrow* for those sins which thus brought the Son of God to the cross. Thus then are love, obedience, hope, repentance, produced by the faith of the gospel; and so far all is well, and in its proper place. But alas! how often and how sadly is the whole reversed. It is true, that all these things are the inseparable evidences and effects of the truth being believed; but the heart of man is desperately wicked, and deceitful above all things, ever prone to set the truths of God at variance. Under the pretence of examining by these things, whether or not the truth is believed (which is not improper, but often enjoined in Scripture), these things are put instead of that truth which produces them. The intention and nature of self-examination seems to be this: when a man has firm belief in God's mercy, and thinks that his hope is altogether founded upon the work of Jesus Christ, he is called to examine whether or not it produces those effects which hope upon the true foundation ever must produce. But it often happens that men, instead of examining themselves in consequence of the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and while enjoying the sense of the remission of sins through his sacrifice, examine their evidences of Christianity, that is their love, obedience, hope, joy, peace and repentance, *when their consciences are burdened with a sense of guilt*, and so plainly put these evidences in place of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Here let us pause. Is the beginning of the confidence thus kept steadfast? or rather, do not all such give up the confidence and rejoicing of the hope, being moved away from the hope of the gospel? When the gospel was first believed, when they were oppressed by a sense of guilt, and destitute of every evidence of Christianity, they had then no other resource but the blood of Jesus. He was then as rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. But now—they have other waters and other rocks besides him; now, when oppressed by a sense of guilt, they can fly away to their evidences, slighting the evidence of the good pleasure of God in the work of his beloved Son, manifested in his resurrection from the dead! Thus there is a distinction made between

themselves as sinners before they believed the gospel, and themselves as Christians since they believed, in a respect wherein the Scripture warrants not the smallest: namely, in the way of relief from a sense of guilt, and in the ground of their encouragement in approaching God. When sinners, they sought *nothing more* to relieve their guilty consciences, *nothing more* wherewith to approach God, than what assured them that God had accepted of, and was altogether well pleased in the work of Christ. Now, let this be as it will, they cannot be comforted, they cannot approach, before they see that they believe thus, and that it produces proper effects upon them; things, the one of which can only be known, and the other only produced in the way of having their whole confidence founded on the blood of Jesus, and by this being altogether and fully encouraged to draw near unto God. In fine, they are no more helpless sinners pricked in their hearts, receiving the word gladly, and so approaching God; but good Christians, proud of their evidences as distinguishing them from other men, and coming to God in consequence of presenting their Christian character instead of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Here, then, we see one way in which the beginning of the confidence is not kept steadfast to the end. For surely all must allow, that there is a material difference between the *beginning* and the *end* of this confidence; a beginning and end as different as trust in God and trust in self; as different as glorying in the person and work of Christ, and glorying in our own persons and our own works.

But there is yet another way intimately connected with the former, in which the beginning of the confidence is not kept steadfast to the end. To put love, obedience, hope, joy, peace, repentance, in place of the work of Christ, is evidently to destroy them all. For instance, when we think we see, or wish to see, other things than the work of Christ between us and misery, love to him as the only refuge must be impaired in proportion; hope also must be lost; joy and peace too cannot be kept alive, or deceit alone preserves them; nor shall we mourn much on account of those sins, of which anything else but the work of Christ gives us the confidence or prospect of forgiveness. Here, then, are the effects of the gospel gone; and thus forsaking God, the fountain of living waters, we must hew out to ourselves broken cisterns which can hold none. The mind of man is formed for activity, and the desire of happiness is there a first and necessary principle, and when we do not find happiness in the Creator, we must be seeking it in the creature. Forsaking the love of Christ, we must be placing our affections on opposite objects, that is, upon somewhat in the world, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life." Forsaking the hope of the gospel, we must be seeking a hope in this world, producing a correspondent joy and peace, and our former godly sorrow will give place to "the sorrow of this world which worketh death." Thus are self-righteousness and the love of the world

inseparably connected. But will the conscience of such a man be easy? Alas! no. The remembrance of his departed hope, love, and joy, will haunt him, but in hand, with the consciousness of his present alienation; and while he has lost hope from the gospel, and cannot take comfort from what he is, he will strive to obtain some glimpse of hope from what he was. Tell him "the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin," he will grant it in words, when in fact he denies it. Granting that the greatest sinner, at first hearing the truth, may, and ought to set his hope in God; he will doubt, if one long professing the gospel, and long in works denying it, has the same ground to do so. Here, then, is a denial that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. Formerly (that is, when the truth was first believed), comfort and hope sprung from the truth, in the very worst views entertained of sin; now, unless he be free, as he thinks, from sins inconsistent with Christianity, no hope can be entertained. Here then, again, the *beginning of the confidence is not kept steadfast unto the end*. Formerly, whatever godly sorrow sin might produce, no sin, however great, occasioned distrust for salvation, the gospel removing every cause of it. Formerly, no unworthiness could make us judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life, knowing that God viewed us still more unworthy than we could possibly view ourselves. Now, sin produces not so much godly sorrow, as despair.

What is there, then, which can recover from such a situation? What can again restore to hope? The Lord will indeed restore the souls of his sheep: but it will not be by their getting a better opinion of themselves; nay, we may safely say, on the contrary, that it will be while they entertain a worse. *That same truth* (which level-human pride and abases human worth, while it sets forth God as our boast, and God as our righteousness; that same truth, which first quickened to lively hope in God when dead to all other, and destroyed every degree of hope in self once entertained; *that very truth alone*) can now revive the same. Let us then, when falling into unbelief, and consequently into the love of the world, and so either having hope in our own righteousness, or repining for want of it; let us, while thus asking that question, "Where-with shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?" or that in Romans x. 5, "Who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend into the deep?" let us, I say, remember, that "the word is nigh us, even in our mouths and in our hearts," that which we profess to believe; and neither having, nor wishing to have, hope founded upon our own righteousness, but confessing ourselves the chief of sinners, let us take comfort from that word, which to us, as such, brings salvation. The effect is sure: we shall again, through the resurrection of Jesus, have lively hope; we shall again be filled with joy and peace in believing; we shall, above all things, love Him who is free from all variableness and shadow of turning—the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. This love also will constrain us powerfully, not to live unto

ourselves but unto him; pouring contempt upon all that the world holds excellent and worthy of love. This unchangeable love and kindness, contrasted with our own ingratitude and backsliding, will then too produce that godly sorrow, which leads to repentance never to be repented of. Thus then do men live by faith; thus do they fall by unbelief; and thus are they again restored to live by faith; that is, by that very truth, by the faith of which they formerly stood, and by the unbelief of which they fall.

The whole design of what has been said, is to inculcate the great necessity of glorying, first and last, entirely and exclusively, in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is freely admitted, that it is highly proper for professors of the faith to examine themselves by their fruits, but then of what are these fruits the evidence? Of their faith in Christ, and hope in him alone for salvation; and therefore no works can afford any evidences of those that perform them, being the people of God, unless they are conscious that these works flow from the faith and love of the gospel, as the sole ground of their confidence. It is of the last importance for professors of the faith to be fully convinced, that when they backslide from God and his ways, they can only be recovered by that truth which first quickened them, and that the free and sovereign grace of God can alone renew their hope and joy.

To this purpose we have many examples in the word of God: and particularly the case of the Churches in Asia is exactly in point, recorded in Rev. chapters ii. and iii. The Ephesians, having left their first love, are called on "to remember from whence they had fallen, and to repent." The Church in Sardis, having departed from their liveliness in God's ways, is exhorted "to remember how they had received and heard, and to hold fast, and repent." And the Laodiceans, having fallen into a self-righteous and lukewarm state, highly offensive to Christ, are counselled by him "to buy of him gold tried in the fire that they might be rich, and white raiment that they might be clothed, and that the shame of their nakedness might not appear, and to anoint their eyes with eye-salve, that they might see."

It is then a comfortable and safe doctrine, that Christians, in all their defections and sins, must have immediate recourse to the blood of Jesus for pardon and peace of conscience. They may perhaps have, at times, reason to doubt if they ever knew the truth, and this may be a state of mind salutary to their souls in certain circumstances, but they ought at all times to be convinced, that the gospel is true, and suited to their case, although they themselves should have been self-deceivers, and thus to be encouraged, while it is called to-day, to draw near to God, and call on his Almighty name, who has assured us that none shall ever do so in vain. Rom. x. 13.

He who is active and agile, who works as well as wishes, who adds endeavours to his desires, will quickly be a cedar in grace. —Brooks.

THE WONDROUS LOVE OF CHRIST.

THE HOUR COME.

Our great and glorious Redeemer having, as the man of sorrows, the servant of the Father, and the representative of his people, finished his work of teaching, and his active labours for his people; and being about to endure the curse, sustain the punishment of their sins, and make an infinite atonement for them, presented himself before them as the great Intercessor. In his address to his Father in their hearing, he opened his loving heart, disclosed the depth of his sympathy, and gave utterance to his unbounded desires for their welfare. How sublime his language! how exquisitely tender his pathos! how profound his thoughts! May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, lead us to meditate on his wondrous prayer to our own profit, and his glory: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." (John xvii. 1). Observe—

What Jesus did. "He lifted up his eyes to heaven." This was expressive of desire, confidence, expectation, and reverence. Of *desire*,—for as when we speak to any one, and desire a reply, we naturally turn to that one, and look him in the face; so Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, the place of his Father's throne, the home of his Father's glory, where he had lain in his Father's bosom: from everlasting. The deep and intense desire of his soul directed his eye upwards. Of *expectation*,—for he expected a reply; and we, when we expect a reply, look toward the party we address. Hence David says, "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." When we desire anything of God, which he has promised in his word, and which we believe will be for our good and his glory, we should look up, and expect to receive it. Of *confidence*,—he had the strongest confidence in his Father, and therefore he lifted up his eyes, and looked for sympathy and a reply. So we should have confidence in God. He loves to be trusted. He has given us many exceeding great and precious promises, to which he has added innumerable proofs of his faithfulness, to induce us to exercise confidence in him. Let us, therefore, ask in faith, and believe that our God will give us the desires of our hearts. Of *reverence*,—Jesus in the model worshipper. In him we see strong desire, earnest expectation, unquestioning confidence, and profound reverence. He was all solemnity; yet there was no dread, no terror, no slavish fear. How different to the unhalloved freedom of some professors! How different to our own approaches to God at times! He lifts up his eyes to heaven, and with a soul burning with zeal for his Father's glory he said,—or poured out his whole soul, for himself, for his disciples then present with him, and for his people down to the very end of time. Let us notice,—

What Jesus said. He said, "Father, or My Father. He came to God as a son

—as a son conscious of his father's love— as a son who had been doing, and was now about to suffer, his father's will. He realized his relation to God, which was peculiar; for he was the Son of God as none other ever was, or ever will be.— Angels are the sons of God by creation, and we are the sons of God by adoption and regeneration; but he was the only-begotten of the Father, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. How the Son was begotten of the Father I know not, do not ask to know. What precise idea is to be attached to the word begotten, when applied to the co-equal and co-eternal Son of God, I know not, do not expect to know. That it implies sameness of nature, is clear. That it does not interfere with the independence of the Son, I believe. Each of the divine persons possesses the whole Godhead,—each is equally, eternally and essentially God; therefore equally the object of trust, reverence, and religious worship. The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father; and yet the Son is as really, truly, and eternally God, as the Father. Thus he stands before his Father clothed in flesh, one with his people, acting for his people; but though clothed in flesh, he is the Son of God, one with God, and acting for God. But I would rather stand and adore, than try to understand or set forth so great a mystery; for the mystery of godliness is confessedly great,—"God was manifest in the flesh." His relation, while it is peculiar, is perpetual. He will always be the Son, the Son of God. To him the Father said, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." The Son of God is both divine and human; and as such, "he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come."—the hour fixed upon in the councils of eternity, and decreed before time began—the hour predicted by the inspired prophets—the hour anticipated and expected by patriarchs, and men full of the Holy Ghost—the hour on which so much depended, as to heaven and earth. It was the hour when Jesus was to drink the cup of woe, conquer the foes of his Church, meet the claims of divine justice, and glorify God in the highest possible degree. "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son." This included, sustaining him under all he had to suffer, delivering him out of the hands of all his foes, raising him from the dead by his glorious power, and enthroning him at his own right hand. All this the Father did. "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Upon this his heart was set. For this he came into the world, and for this he was prepared to suffer and to die. He wished to glorify his Father in his government, reconciling all the claims of that government in the salvation of his people. He would glorify his Father's character, harmonizing all his perfections; that so he might appear the just God while he was the Saviour. He would also glorify his Father in his purposes, by removing every obstacle out of the way of their accomplishment, and securing their complete and glorious fulfil-

ment. Precious Saviour! the glory of thy Father lay near thy heart: may thy glory over his near to mine! Oh, for grace, that I may glorify Jesus, in body, soul, and spirit!

Here we see the Mediator standing between the two parties, his Father and his people pleading with the one, and preaching to the other. Blessed be his name, he stands between them still; for we have one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus! He acts in character as a Son. Of old the Lord proposed the question to Israel, "If I be a Father, where is mine honour?" But there is no room to ask the question here; for the perfect Son seeks above all things to honour his beloved Father, even when he was about to hide his face from him. He looks up, his eyes beaming with love, and his heart filled with reverence, just when he heard his Father saying, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, smite the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd."—just when "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief." Oh, what filial submission! more, what resignation! more, what acquiescence in the Father's will more still, what preferring the Father's will to his own, though it cost him an agony and bloody sweat,—a cruel, shameful, and lingering death! He looks beyond the cloud to glory, and for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame. He observes order: first he preaches to his disciples, then he pleads with his Father for them, and then he suffers in their stead. He teaches us to meet the hour of affliction, or suffering, or death, with patience, and with hope. His hour, that tremendous hour, is past; our hour is yet to come. Oh, may we meet it with fortitude and courage! Oh, may we be enabled, by the gracious teaching and enabling of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus did, to lift up our eyes to heaven, full of ardent desire, well founded expectation, scriptural confidence, and holy reverence, and say, "Father, the hour is come; honour thy child by sustaining and delivering him, that he may honour thee, by testifying for thee, and preferring thy will in all things to his own." Jesus was sustained, by keeping one object only in view, and that was his Father's glory; which glory, he knew, was bound up with the salvation of his people. On that one object may our minds be set; and to promote that, may all our desires, prayers, efforts, and sufferings tend. Oh, to glorify God all through life's weary pilgrimage!—*Rev. J. Smith, Cheltenham.*

There is no religion in the Bible—I hope if there are any reporters here, that they will wait until I finish my sentence before they run to the — paper—any more than there is a road upon the guide-board. The Bible is the rule, the direction, by which man is to work out his own salvation, as the guide-board is the direction by which he is to walk out his journey. Religion is in the man, or it is not anywhere.—*Beecher.*

DOES THE WORLD HATE PIETY ?

Sidney Smith says, "It is not true that the world hates piety. That modest and unobtrusive piety which fills the heart with all human charities, and makes a man gentle to others and severe to himself, is an object of universal love and veneration. But mankind hate the lust of power when it is veiled under the garb of piety; they do not choose to be insulted; they love to tear folly and impudence from the altars which should only be a sanctuary for the righteous and the good."

This sounds well and plausible (says an unknown but sensible writer,) and has but a single flaw, it is not true. Athens had once a citizen of unblemished virtue, whose stern integrity, and winning and blameless life excited universal comment, but so far from being "an object of universal love and veneration," Aristides was banished in disgrace to foreign land. At a later day she had a second citizen, whose lofty example infused fresh life into social morals, and whose eloquent teachings allured young men from the haunts of vice, and the snares of evil companionship, yet Socrates did not become "an object of universal love and veneration," but died in prison, a martyr to his personal goodness.

Several centuries later there appeared in Judea, a man, whose "modest and unobtrusive piety," even Sidney Smith would not venture to call in question. His "charities" were universal, his tenderness more winning than woman's. His character was harmoniously rounded, wholly free from the rough edges and inequalities which inhere in excellent men, when governed by a single idea; equally free from the bitterness of spirit and rude personality which excite aversion in many reformers. "He went about doing good," healing the sick, comforting the troubled, sympathizing with the outcast, raising the dead. "He spake as never man spake." He lived as man never lived. But did Jesus Christ become "an object of universal love and veneration?" Let the secret snares of his untrusting enemies answer. Let the treachery of Judas, and the malice of the Pharisees, and the mockery of Herod with his men of war, and the shouts of the populace in the streets of Jerusalem, answer. Let Golgotha, with its bloody cries and its bitter jeers, "He saved others, himself he cannot save," answer. Let his own words answer, "They hated me without a cause." "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father." "If the world does not hate piety, the life of our blessed Saviour in whom it appeared in the most winning form of innate love, would be quite inexplicable.

Sidney Smith was not a competent witness. He was a man of genial temper and ready wit. But of the nature of true piety, as rooted in a heart renewed by the Holy Spirit, he seems never to have conceived. The very idea of such a piety excited his derision, and he sought to riddle it through and through with the keenest shafts from the quiver of his wit. A higher authority has said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." One must have overlooked the teachings of the New Testament, and have misread strangely apostolic history, and the dark annals of the martyrs of the churches, and have looked with a dull vision into the inner chambers of the human heart, if he denies that the world hates piety. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"—*Gospel Trumpet.*

YOU NEED A GUIDE.

When men are travelling in the far East, over the burning sands of the desert, (where there are no railroads or stage-coaches such as we have), they go in *caravans*, that is, a great many of them together. Sometimes there will be hundreds of persons, and thousands of camels, that stretch out in a long line as far as the eye can see. But whether there are many or few, they are always sure to have one man going before them, whom they call the *hyber*, or guide. If any company of travellers should think of going over the desert without him, they would be as foolish as if we were to try travel in the railroad cars without a conductor or engineer; and they would be almost sure to get lost by the way. This guide must be one who knows all about the country through which they are to pass. He must be able to tell when the dreadful simoom, or hot wind, is rising, so that they may be able to prepare for it. He must know where the sands are most firm, and where they are shifting, so that the men and beasts may not sink in them. He must know all about the wells and springs by the way, where they may drink and not die of thirst; and where the little oases, that is, the grassy resting-spots, are found. And he must be a man who knows the tribes of Arabs, and can keep them from robbing the caravan. Every one follows and obeys this guide, until he has led them safe to the journey's end.

Now, I see before me a *little caravan*—a company of travellers, and where are you going? To *eternity*. Some of these little feet have only begun the journey, others have been longer on the way. Now and then one has dropped down by your side, and you have seen them no more; they have reached the journey's end before you. But just as fast as the minutes fly, you are all going on—on to another world.

And, like the travellers over the desert, do you not need a *guide*? Oh, yes, for there are many dangers before you. There are many wrong paths that do not lead to heaven, but lead far away from it; paths pleasant to look upon, but oh, their end is misery and death.

Yes, my little pilgrims, you need, and we all need, a strong, and loving, and wise *guide*; one stronger than any man, and who loves us so well that he will take us by the hand, and never let us go away from him; one who knows where the springs of living water are; one who can lift you over the bad places, and lead your tired feet to pleasant resting spots, and who can guide you to the heavenly home, and not let you get lost by the way.—*Little Crowns and how to Win them*

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MORAL SENSE OF LIFE.

We are prone to imagine that our temptations are peculiar;—that other hearts are free from secret burdens that oppress our energies, and cast a cloud upon our joy; that life has for others a freer movement, and a less embarrassed way. But in no one has God made the human heart to carol its thoughtless song of joy; and the shadow of our moral being rests darkly on us all. We cannot take the world as it comes, enjoying what it offers, and passing by its sufferings and its burdens with our lightest touch;—we get involved in the deep questions of Conscience and Duty, and the sense of Responsibility stills the carol of the spirit, and suffers no man to repose without a trouble on the bosom of life.

Infinite are the ways in which the devices

and aims of the Moral Nature break the instinctive happiness that lives for the day, and forgets the morrow; but effectually this awakening of deeper and sadder life takes place in all; and struggle, fear, disappointment, the partial feeling of an unfilled Destiny, the restless wavings of uncertain Hopes, are in the heart of every man who has risen but a step above the animal life. The more we know of what passes in the minds of others, the more our friends disclose to us their secret consciousness, the more do we learn that no man is peculiar in his moral experience—that beneath the smoothest surface of outward life lie deep cares of the heart—and that if we fall under our burdens, we fall beneath the temptations that are common to man, the existence of which others as little suspect in us as we do in them. We have but the trials that are incident of humanity;—there is nothing peculiar in our case—and we must take up our burdens in faith of heart that, if we are earnest, and trifle not with temptations, God will support us, as, in the past fidelity of his Providence, he has supported others as heavily laden as ourselves.—*J. H. Thom.*

SONG OF THE INCARNATION.

This is the day the Lord hath made;
Let all the world thereof be glad!
Praise Him, ye heavens, and thou, O earth,
Proclaim the wonders of His birth.

The nations waited long for Thee,
Until the time fulfill'd should be
When God sent down from His high throne
The world's Redeemer, Thee His Son.

When this event my soul surveys,
'Tis lost in wonder and amaze,
And seeks in vain to grasp a love
All human thought so far above.

Thou dost, O Lord, Thyself abase,
That sinners may receive Thy grace,
And our weak flesh and form assume,
To save us from impending doom.

Thy King, O Zion, comes to Thee.
"Tis written in the book of Me,
I come, O God, to do Thy will,
And perfectly Thy law fulfil."

Lord, who didst come on earth to dwell,
The Prince of Peace, Emmanuel,
Whom long the fathers hoped to see,
Messiah, God, I worship Thee!

Our Saviour and our highest good,
Thou join'st Thyself to flesh and blood,
Our Friend and very Brother here,
That we may be God's children dear.

Oh, thought sublime and truly great,
'Tis thine the soul to elevate!
Oh, blessed thought, 'tis also thine
To fill the heart with joy divine!

By one man's sin the world first fell,
By One it is redeem'd from hell!
Then wherefore fear?—at God's right hand
Our Saviour and our God doth stand.

Rejoice, ye heavens, from which to earth
Were brought the tidings of His birth;
And earth, who seest now this day,
Oh sing to Him thy sweetest lay.

This is the day the Lord hath made;
Let all the world thereof be glad!
Praise Him, ye heavens, and thou, O earth,
Proclaim the wonders of His birth.

C. F. GILBERT.

—*British Herald.*

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