

THE
LIBERAL CHRISTIAN.

VOL. I.

OCTOBER, 1854.

No. 10.

THE PROGRESSIVE STAGES OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

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THE first step towards God originates in a deepened sense of the moral worth and high responsibilities of Man's life. The religion of children, as of some uncultivated and simple tribes, consists in a vague wonder and awe, intermingled with a diffusive feeling of gratitude and trust. They are taught perhaps to blend the idea of God with that of duty; but the association is not in general very vivid, till sorrow or death, or the consequences of heedless transgression, have awakened the mind to profounder reflection on the destination of humanity. While life flows on — in the main innocent and happy — the moral consciousness is tranquil, but it is not quick and operative. Such, however, can rarely be for any length of time, the condition of a dweller on earth. Sorrows and trials are too thickly spread — misfortune and disappointment reach us through too many avenues — to leave any one many

years undisturbed by the importunate question — “Why am I here? and what have I to do?” An ideal gradually shapes itself before every reflective mind, of Man’s function and duty, which his actual performances and even his habitual aims fall immeasurably below, and the comparison of which with the reality, fills him with grief and shame. Perhaps some unwonted sin deepens the feeling of disparity between what he is, and what he ought to be — rouses him to a sense of danger — and puts him on efforts that he never made before. Perhaps he is awakened without passing through this ordeal of personal humiliation. He is conscious of powers that have never yet been adequately exerted, or finds himself possessed of opportunities which he has hitherto failed to improve. He looks around on a world languishing in darkness, sin and woe — yet teeming on every hand with seeds of undeveloped good, which only ask for patient and zealous culture, to ripen into widespread blessings for mankind. Can he linger in sloth and apathy, with no earnest aim or chosen work, while such solemn calls are made upon him? His self-reproach may be less for what he has — than for what he has not — done. But in this upbraiding sense of deficiency lies the hidden source of future strength. By whatever consciousness produced, whether of positive wrong or of defective goodness — and however designated in the copious nomenclature of Religion — conversion, seriousness, new birth, conviction of sin, or self-dedication to the truth — in this strong and clear persuasion, of a moral purpose in existence, and in the resolute sacrifice of all worldly, selfish and carnal impulses that are at war with it — the true life of God in the human soul has its origin: and no one probably ever attained to

eminence in virtue and religious wisdom, ever rose above the standard morality of his age, or wrought any lasting good for mankind as a philanthropist and a reformer—whose character had not passed through some such crisis as this. For with all states of mind which involve the birth of a new and higher life—the idea of a Divine Inspector and Judge is deeply interfused. It is then that we hear His voice in our inmost souls, calling on us to come and serve Him. It is then that we own His presence in every deepened conviction and strengthened purpose, and in the solemn awe of religion overshadowing our daily steps. It is then that we are penetrated by the irresistible belief, glancing like heaven's lightning through the soul, that all things must work together for certain good, so long as we continue in free and unconditional self surrender to His service. And all these influences blending into one, and acting with a single impulse on the mind, create the force which bursts the bondage of former habit and sets the bias of the character in a new direction. The sentiments which possess the soul, on the first experience of this change—are a grave and earnest sorrowfulness—humiliation before God—tenderness of heart—fervent prayer—moral watchfulness. The soul for the time is broken and cast down, and waits for encouragement to look up and proceed. Such is the natural expression of this first stage of religious life. We must not rest in it. It is but preliminary. It marks transition. It is an effervescence of strong emotion, which must be fixed in principle and condensed into habit, or it will evaporate and pass away. Some forms of Religion, not perceiving this, have taken these transient symptoms for the permanent functions of the life of God, and striv-

ing to arrest it at this point, have converted piety into one long agony of groans and tears.

The resolution to serve God having been made, we come now to the ordering of the outward life and the discipline of the affections in accordance with it. The life of God must be deep set in firm and steadfast principle, and must be built up and fortified on every side by virtuous habit. Habit and principle are not indeed the same thing with the spirit of Religion ; but they are indispensable conditions of its secure and continuous existence. They define and protect the sphere within which it lives and breathes, and give it free scope to act — exempt from constraint and invasion. In this second stage of the religious life, the mind is less fettered by anxiety and fear. It has more reliance on itself. It feels safer against temptation and sin. It has more confidence towards God, and greater freedom in devotion. It has less of excitement and rapture — fewer of the deep convulsive struggles of faith and conscience, which marked its opening course — but a more serene and habitual consciousness of the divine presence and of moral responsibility. This passage from the first to the second stage of the religious life, is the most critical period in the spiritual history of the Soul. It furnishes the test, whether the strong emotions which once agitated it, were merely a sudden gust that swept over it and passed away, or the harbingers of deep and radical change. The emotions, when they came, might be genuine. But did they last ? Thousands have meant well, and striven for a time after the life of God. Alas ! they were open to impressions of every kind ; and the latest effaced the first. They wanted fixed resolve, distinct purpose, and the power of self-denial. The world

was too strong for them. They abandoned prayer, and quitted their hold on God. The false lights of ambition and vanity led them astray. Snares and temptations beset them, and they fell:—and the day that dawned so fair, went down in grief and guilt.

Nor is this the only danger that awaits men in the second stage of the religious life. They may tarry in this, as others have tarried in the first. They may never go on to perfect freedom and peace. They may remain entangled in the mere instrumentalities of Religion; and without lapsing into vice and absolute worldliness, become scrupulous and formal. They may tie themselves down to duty, and punctiliously fulfil every letter of the outward law, without the faith and the love which sanctify and gladden the heart. It is of immense importance to the religious sentiment in this phasis of spiritual growth, that it should be associated with a rational and benevolent theology, which will divest it of all narrowness and gloom, and harmonise it with the great interests of humanity. For such a theology by unfolding a wide and cheerful view of the desigs of Providence, and of man's business and destination in this terrestrial scene, quickens his onward progress, and facilitates the transition to a yet higher stage of religious development.

Arrived at this, the mind surveys the whole world in a religious light, and impregnates every part of life with a religious spirit. In going to God, we do not separate ourselves from the world; for it is only through the world—in the very midst of its cares, temptations and trials—its active duties, its absorbing interests, and its exciting joys—that we can rightly draw nigh to God, and hold communion with Him—blessing every scene with the con-

sciousness of his presence, and sanctifying it by cheerful obedience to his law. It is the traditional cant of a false theology, that Religion and the world are mutually repugnant. We should rather say, there can be no true Religion without the constant use and hearty enjoyment of the world. To the virtuous, Heaven is the complement of their life on earth : and our own experience must teach us, we should be wholly unfit for the exalted occupations and delights which we believe awaits us there, without the preparatory seasoning and discipline of the stern or joyous realities that are thrown around us here. Every one at his entrance into life, should look on the world, as a field to be cultivated and a garden to be enjoyed. All that he needs, is the religious consecration of mind and heart, to secure as ample a return from the one as is necessary for the moral purposes of existence, and to gather a rich abundance of the sweetest satisfactions from the other. He should ask himself, as the wide and varied prospect opens round him — “What am I fit for ? and why have I been placed where I am ?” — And when the answer comes to him from his own sincere and earnest heart, he should recognise his mission as from God, and religiously give up all his powers to fulfil it well.

We need a wider interpretation of man's religious vocation in this life. It lies, I take it, in the zealous culture of his specific gift and entrusted talent, whatever they may be — according to his discernment of the Divine law. As the world is now constituted, men's minds are often forced down by circumstances into spheres of action, for which inclination and aptitude equally unfit them. And while this is so, patient submission and an effort to make the best of what is unalterable — are plain

dictates of prudence and duty. A faithful and energetic mind will master circumstances. But as education is diffused and society develops itself, more choice of object will be offered to various talents: and even now, as far as we can, we should endeavor to put men and women to the task for which nature evidently intended them. More strongly marked character will be thus produced in individuals; and the infinite riches and beauty, with the true use and enjoyment of this world, will become more apparent to every mind. We may promote this salutary change, by dissipating the mistaken feeling which is now associated with the word respectability. Every social function is respectable, which fills its proper place, is exercised in the right spirit, and wields its appropriate talent. All things are parts of one great whole, and express together the benignant harmony of the Spirit of God. Whatever stimulates and gratifies a rational curiosity, though it yield no direct practical result — whatever awakens taste and sentiment, or throws a grace over the coarser realities of life, if cultivated in a holy and loving spirit — is as solid a good to mankind, as the heavy drudgery which heaps up riches year after year — and may be as truly religious — may as directly take the mind to God — as the mechanical routine of a traditional piety, and the cold and listless observances which dishonor many a sanctuary. We come, through this religious consecration of life, to view the entire universe as the dwelling-place of God — conversing through nature, history and the human mind with Him — and sympathising with the filial spirits that He has placed in the midst of it, to behold his glory and rejoice in his beneficence. In nature we witness the serene reflection of his unchanging majesty and

almightiness. In history we trace the grand results of his moral government, combining and accumulating from age to age, and interpreting, as they proceed, the great idea of his eternal Providence. In the workings of the human mind, we observe that He has left men, within certain fixed limits, to be their own teachers, and to profit by the fruits of their own experience. He has thus sanctioned in his own vast plan for the education of the human race, the great principles of self-reliance and self-government: yet has guarded the order of his creation, by setting bounds to the folly and wickedness of man, and through that wonderful alchemy which is everywhere at work in the moral world, transmuting their effects into means of higher good and more effectual instruction.

Prepared by the progressive change which feeling, habit and action have undergone in this process of spiritual development, the mind passes on to the last and highest stage of the religious life. It arrives at the blessed consciousness of co-operating with God in the great design of his creation, and of being one in purpose and endeavor with Him.

THE RIGHT SPIRIT. — Keep your mind open to receive Truth, and never set limits to your improvement. Be always ready to hear what may be objected even against your favorite opinions, and those which have had longest possession of your assent. And if there should be any new and uncontrolable evidence brought against these old and beloved sentiments, do not wink your eyes fast against the light, but part with any thing for the sake of Truth. Remember when you overcome an Error you gain Truth, the victory is on your side, and the advantage is all your own. — *Dr. Watts.*

THE TEACHING OF OUR SAVIOUR.

BY REV. DR. TURNBULL.

MEN often acknowledge the supremacy of God in the world of external or material forms, but deny it in that of interior and spiritual forces. They discern the action of his creative and renovating spirit in the seasons. Joyfully they sing, —

“ O God, thou art the life and light
Of all this wondrous world we see ;
Its glow by day, its smile by night,
Are but reflections caught from thee ;”

but they frequently close against him, both theoretically and practically, the domain of the soul, and deny the very possibility of a new creation, or renovation there. Hence their alienation and irreligion, even amid the forms and symbols of worship. Hence, also, their rejection of a profound spiritual religion, of real union with God, and that interior life fitly called divine.

But our Saviour aims, both by precept and example, to bring men to the practical acknowledgment of God's supremacy, not only in nature, but in the soul; so that, spiritually, they may live in God, as God lives in them.

This is the true coming of the kingdom of heaven, not with outward movement, or mechanical force, but by inward life and spiritual control. “ The kingdom of God cometh not with observation ; neither do men say, Lo, here ! or Lo, there ! but the kingdom of God is within you.”

Christ does not despise the outward, except when it is forced into competition with the inward. On earth, he

seems imbosomed peacefully in nature, which ever does him homage. Nay, more, he imbosoms himself in society. It seems his natural home. Rejected and despised by his apostate countrymen, he yet comes to them as a brother and a friend. His death itself does not remove him from the race. He abides there by his spirit. Through this means he organizes a church, or spiritual family, in which he may dwell, bound together by love, and observant of all holy precepts. Being himself the emodiment of the divine, he would ever give a beautiful body to a beautiful soul; so that the church is analogous to his body and is even called by his name. Thus he has enshrined the kingdom, in its essential powers, in fair forms and usages, to be observed by his followers to the end of time. In this way, the reality within expresses itself by the image, or utterance without. But the interior power is first, as the soul is first, or as God, who is a spirit, is first. The spirit must generate the form, as God creates the universe, or renews the face of the earth, in the form of plants and flowers.

Clearly, then, the kingdom of heaven is inward, spiritual, immortal; and in that kingdom God, "the Father of us all," must be "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."

This is only another mode of expressing the fact, that a religion, to be good for any thing, must be a religion of spiritual or vital force — a religion of inward life and love, all-comprehending and imperishable.

Such a religion, however, must be taught both by word and deed — that is, by the word within, and the word without — for all action is a kind of word. It must embody and exemplify itself in a divine and human life.

God and man must be seen in company ; the union, secret and indestructible, must be exhibited at once in speech and in action.

For this reason, Christ lives as the incarnation or embodiment of God. The Son reveals the Father. The one is the measure and manifestation of the other. Through the Son, the Father communicates his life to the world. Thus God comes, as Christ comes. His reign is acted into the historic life of man — into the life of each Christian soul. So that now “the tabernacle of God is with men.” We dwell in him, he dwells in us. All are one, as God and Christ are one.

A religion, then, which stops short of God, and a true reign of heaven in the soul, has neither truth nor power. That only is real and divine which first brings God to man, and then brings man to God. Harmony, deep and eternal, is found only in the God-man, and the ineffable union thence secured between the soul of a believer and the Spirit of God — a result accomplished by a reconciling and regenerating power on the part of *Christ*, by a penitent and confiding faith on the part of the *Christian*. “God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.”

How plain, then, the proposition, already hinted, that Christ presents himself to us as an infinite central power, from which flows a spiritual influence to redeem the lost and thus constitute a sacred organization, which may be the light and glory of the world !

All this is expressed by Christ in a few pregnant sentences, which he uttered in the form of supplication, just before his death. “That they all may be *one*, as *thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*, that they also may be *one in us* ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent

me. And the *glory* which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be *one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me*, that they may be made *perfect in one.*"

The same great truth has been uttered in all ages by the church universal, in that prayer which Christ taught his disciples, the model and form of all true supplication: "Our Father who art in heaven — hallowed be thy name. *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.*" This, then, is the key note of our Saviour's teaching.

True to this grand conception, which, as a conception, is original and perfect, like the sun shining by its own light, Jesus Christ went forth "to teach and to preach" amid the hills and the valleys, and in the cities and the villages of Judea. He addressed himself chiefly to the common people, in language of marvellous simplicity and force. He spoke to them respecting God and the soul, sin and holiness, life and death, duty and immortality, as man had never before spoken. And not only so, but he looked all he said, acted all he said; so that he himself was a living Word, an embodied, eternal Discourse.

So striking and authoritative was his teaching, and yet so simple and clear, that all were compelled to acknowledge its force. Attracting to himself a few childlike souls, mostly fishermen, who longed for the coming of the kingdom, of which they cherished only dim conceptions, he made known to them gradually the design of his mission, and the principles of his kingdom. The terms used are so familiar and translucent, and yet so perfect and full, that while, from our familiarity with them, they seem the merest commonplaces, they yet contain the grandest and

deepest verities. But they would never have become commonplaces, even to us, had they not possessed, at first, the most complete originality, as well as the most touching simplicity. Like the unchanging stars, familiar to us from childhood, they are more than they seem. Their beauty is of the infinite. Back of these luminous points lie undiscovered worlds.

Indeed, the language of Christ is not that of the schools, far less of the rhetoricians. It is scarcely language at all. So transparent is it, you see the things rather than the words. In fact, it is only when you see the things rather than the words, that you understand him. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they see God." "There is joy in heaven, among the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth." "Our Father." "Take no thought [care] for the morrow. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "God is a spirit." "Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to eternal life." "Two men went up unto the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee stood by himself and said, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, unjust, extortioners, or even as this publican.' But the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, and cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" How simple all this, but how full, how significant!

The teaching of Christ is that of inspiration, or, as we term it, of revelation, a revelation as rich and varied as nature itself; new and strange, like the well-known face of earth and sky, in which all forms are blended with a familiar, yet mystic beauty. In a word, it is the utterance of that eternal Wisdom (Logos) from which are all things, natural and divine. "Never man spake like this man." Sometimes in the synagogues, but oftener in the open air, by the wayside or by the well, on the mountain or by the margin of the lake, in the shadow of the temple or in the depth of the wilderness, he uttered his words of life. Nothing could be more natural, nothing more thrilling and impressive. The originality, completeness, and imaginative beauty of his parables, in which the highest, most abstract, spiritual truths are embodied in familiar forms, which have all the vividness of life, must have greatly struck the minds of the people. Containing unknown depths of spiritual truth, they are yet simple and beautiful as the falling dew, or the blowing clover. God and the soul, in their mysterious relations, duty and happiness, sin and misery, the infinite and immortal state, regeneration and resurrection, the renovation of society, the restitution of all things, the everlasting life, the everlasting death, all are incarnated in these marvellous inspirations. The invisible world is made as patent as the visible: mysterious, indeed, as all things are mysterious, stretching away into the everlasting immensities, yet real, palpable, glowing. Every thing external and internal is set in motion; all around us, within us, and above us, trembles with life. The most delicate and affecting relations, the deepest feelings, the most amazing facts and changes in the realm of spirit, are bodied forth in shapes of grace and power.

THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA.*

ANONYMOUS.

THE Roman power had for some time been consolidated under the vigorous rule of Augustus Cæsar: the kingdom of Judæa, as yet independent, though among the subservient allies of Rome, was still governed by Herod the Great, when a woman in humble station gave birth to a child which she herself regarded as a supernatural being, but which others, naturally enough, concluded to be the son of the honest carpenter to whom she had been lately married. Some singular events marked the epoch; but the affairs of the poor are rarely much inquired into by the rich and the great: and even when the slaughter of the young children at Bethlehem was enough noised abroad to be reported, though erroneously, to Augustus, and drew forth a witticism from the emperor,|| the character of Herod and his deeds of insane cruelty were so generally known, that few would concern themselves much to look for a cause. The king died, and the massacre of a few children was probably almost [forgotten among the many bloody and tyrannical acts, which for some slight cause, or none at all, he had at various times been guilty of.‡

* See "Small Books on Great Subjects," No. XIX. Published by Pickering, London, 1851.

|| "When he (Augustus) heard that among the children of two years old whom Herod the king of the Jews had commanded to be put to death in Syria, he had likewise killed his own son, he observed that 'it was better to be Herod's hog than his son.'"—*Macrob. Saturnal.* lii. c. 4.

‡ When this king found himself to be dying, he ordered a number of persons of the first families to be confined in the circus at Jericho, where he then lay, and gave orders to his sister and her husband to execute them the moment that he expired, thus hoping to prevent the rejoicings which he was well assured would be made when the news of his death became public. It is hardly needful to say that the command was not obeyed; but it may serve to show the character of the man.

Thus the young Jesus grew up without exciting any attention: for even when at twelve years old he showed himself in the temple, and conversed with the doctors there, they seem only to have considered him as a fine intelligent boy, anxious for improvement: and perhaps imagined that, like another Samuel, he was to be devoted thus early to the service of the Lord. But though "astonished at his understanding," it does not appear that their surprise went farther than that which we often feel at the sight of a boy in humble life who has contrived to attain an education beyond his apparent opportunities.

In this obscurity the youth grew up unnoticed; and it was not till he was entering on his thirtieth year, soon after the commencement of John's preaching, that he took any step towards making known his mission on earth. His first public act however was highly significant: he chose twelve apostles (*apostoloi*, or messengers sent) a number always remarkable to the Jews, for it referred to the twelve tribes, and coincided with the twelve princes of Israel, who led the march under Moses. In addition to these he chose seventy inferior disciples, who in like manner appeared to represent the seventy elders nominated by Moses for his assistance in hearing causes, a court which survived even to that time, under the title of the Great Sanhedrim.

These acts, in the eyes of the people then existing, must have been acts of dominion; he was evidently claiming to be the "prophet like unto Moses," whose advent that legislator had foretold, and for whom he had bespoken the obedience of the nation: and accordingly we find that from this time the jealousy of the ruling powers was excited. The Pharisees, bigoted adherents

to the law as handed down in the traditions of the elders, and well acquainted with their ancient prophecies, were now fully expecting that the long foretold son of David would soon show himself. They abhorred the rule of the Idumæan, Herod ; and had Jesus been in a situation to seize at once on the government, probably they would have supported him with their whole power ; hoping to rule by his means, as they had already done under some of the Asmonæan princes. But the poor Carpenter was too contemptible a leader ; and they feared nevertheless, that the people might make some mad outbreak which would draw on them the Roman arms. Hence the endeavor to hush the matter up, when any supernatural work of the new preacher created enthusiasm among the people : hence the unwillingness to believe in his prophetic mission even : hence the stern resolution to cut him off, lest he should be the remote cause of their losing that independence which he could not assist them in preserving. The general belief in prodigies ; in the influence of evil spirits ; in magic ; and other superstitions, prevented the miraculous acts of Christ from being thoroughly convincing. Those who *wished* to disregard his Divine Mission could easily satisfy their own minds by concluding him to be a skilful magician ; and it was only among the common people, whose straight forward reasoning went no farther than “whereas I was blind, now I see ;” and “if this man were not of God he could do nothing ;”* that he found a hearing. “Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed on him ?” † was the triumphant question of the Jewish authorities, when their

* John ix. 25-33.

† John vii. 48.

officers, who had been commissioned to arrest him, returned without performing their bidding. "We are Moses' disciples," says the examiners of the man who had been born blind, "We know that God spake unto Moses : but we know not whence this man is."

To us, this appears obstinacy : but it must be remembered that the preaching of Christ went to do away with the Mosaic law ; the venerated, and justly venerated legacy of their forefathers : a law whose infringement had always brought severe punishment in its train : — could that man be sent by God, who sought to abrogate it? — Even a conscientious Jew might doubt, — and, like Nicodemus, would only suspend his judgment and wait for further information. "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" — was his quiet observation to his more violent colleagues. When therefore to the reasonable cause for doubt, was added the powerful motive of self-interest, we can hardly wonder that the young Carpenter was looked at with suspicion and alarm. The greater his popularity, the greater the danger. The Romans willingly caught at any pretext for incorporating fresh provinces into their empire, and an insurrection, such as this singularly gifted preacher might at any time give rise to, would afford one. "The Romans would come and take away their place and nation."

Let us place ourselves for a moment in the situation of the Jews : — let us imagine a preacher, a man from among the people, calling together numbers, and addressing them in the open air from any eminence he could find : condemning our rulers, as covetous, immoral hypocrites ; — pronouncing our constitution and laws to be obsolete, or

rendered of none effect by the glosses of lawyers: and finally announcing that it is his mission to abrogate them altogether, and substitute for them his own dicta. Let us suppose further that there was some cause for such animadversions; that our rulers were not immaculate: that our laws would not bear on all occasions a close comparison with the eternal principles of justice and truth — and finally that the dicta which were to be substituted for them were strictly in conformity with these great principles, — so strictly so, that the working out of the new system would change the whole face of society, give privileges to those who never had had any before; take away power from those who had possessed it, and establish a general equality of the human race before God, such as no lawgiver had ever before thought of. Should we listen with much satisfaction, or be very willing converts to such doctrines? Should we not dread the impracticability of such a system: the general disorganization it must produce? Would not our prejudices in favor of “our glorious constitution” operate on many minds: — the jealousy of power, the lust of wealth, on many more; the timidity which shrinks from change, lest it should go too far, — on a yet greater number? — If this would be the case among us; and who would be so bold as to say that it would not? let us not too hastily condemn the Jewish Rulers and Priesthood for their opposition to ONE whom as yet they knew not; — whom many, probably, regarded as an enthusiast, — some, as an impostor; some, as a person who derived his supernatural power from unlawful practices, and whose doctrines, all must perceive, could only lead to a total change in the existing order of things.

So bold and uncompromising an innovator could not be *tolerated*; — he must either be received as the Lord of all, “come to his own,” or he must be sacrificed, even though innocent of moral wrong, — to avoid the political evil which his preaching was likely to produce. The Jewish Rulers chose the latter course; and like all who imagine that public acts are exempted from the rules of right and wrong which regulate private life, they suffered a bitter penalty for their condemnation of One whom at any rate they knew to be an innocent man; and in whom, if they could for a moment have forgotten their prejudices, they might have seen something more than a mere man. Had they listened to the peaceful doctrines of the gospel, the fatal insurrections which drew upon them the Roman arms would never have occurred; the nation would not have been dispersed; and Mount Zion might still have been “the glory of all lands:” the centre from which the light of the gospel, would have radiated into the whole world.

The dreaded teacher was at length put to death: his few disciples concealed themselves in grief and terror, and the sect was apparently crushed: — but suddenly they re-appear, boldly proclaiming the message which they had been charged with by their Lord; — endued by him with the like supernatural powers. And now their converts are reckoned by thousands, and again the Rulers of the Jews tremble for their authority, and take Peter and John into custody. The same notions which led to the sacrifice of Jesus evidently actuate them on this occasion: they do not doubt the miracle, but they suspect magic: — “By what power or what name have ye done this?” is the question: and when these “unlearned and ignorant

men,"* — so their own historian styles them, — boldly avow their mission, and the Rulers at last recognise them as the former followers of Jesus; the alarmed functionaries endeavor to procure their silence by threats; thinking probably that with such men this would be sufficient. It is remarkable that though Jesus was of no higher apparent rank than his followers, the members of the Council never seem to have attempted, as in the case of his disciples, to gain their end by menace. They shrunk, awed, from the dignified demeanor and native elegance of the poor Carpenter's Son! "Never man spake like this man!" — was the exclamation of the men employed to take him into custody. No such *prestige* surrounded the poor Galilæan fisherman; nevertheless the Word of God "grew mightily and prevailed;" and very soon that word which had at first been whispered only in a closed chamber, was proclaimed aloud in the Areopagus of Athens, and before the tribunals of Rome, while the sinner in his pride of power and place trembled before the intrepid preacher of "temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come." ||

This preacher was a Cilician Jew, of good family, who had received a learned education, and profited by it. He was young and ardent; had begun by being a persecutor of the Christians, but was suddenly converted to their faith; and to his preaching more especially, was confided the spreading of the gospel among the Greeks, for he had studied their literature, and was a proficient in the arts of rhetoric and disputation.

What the state of society was, which this able and bold preacher of the truth had to encounter and to amend,

* Acts iv. 13.

|| Acts xxiv. 25.

history sufficiently attests; his own epistles addressed to the Greek churches bear ample testimony to the utter dissolution of manners in these countries, nor have we any reason to suppose that it was less in any part of the Roman dominions. The causes of this were various; but none of them probably were so efficient as the universal prevalence of slavery. This has often been objected to in modern times, but seldom on true grounds; for the subject of declamation has usually been, the wrong done to the slave by depriving him of his liberty: — the wrong done to society by surrounding every family with a number of persons ready to minister to every evil passion, unable, even though reluctant, to resist the will of the master, and too often not even reluctant; could hardly fail to have the most fatal consequences as regarded morals: for these degraded persons were the nurses and companions of the children, the confidants and tools of the youths of the family.* Thus society had a canker in its very vitals, which soon showed itself in every relation of life. The traffic in female slaves led to the most disgraceful consequences; hardened the heart, and desecrated the sanctity of those domestic ties which elevate man above the brute. The ease with which slave labor could be attained prevented all attempts to improve machinery, or to apply the resources of science to industrial purposes: the unwilling slave executed his work in the coarsest manner, brought with him into the palaces of the more courtly Romans the rude habits of the barbarian, † his coarse and illiterate

* The result of this will be amply seen in the comedies both of Plautus and of Terentius. One of the standing jests in these is the beating given to the crafty slave by the father of the young man whose vices and extravagancies he had fostered.

† In the Greek Comedies we find that the attendance of slaves at the banquets had the same evil attending it which is complained of in the

tastes, and tinged even his lord with some of the grossness with which he was thus in daily juxta position. Husbandry made no advance, for the captives taken in war were usually sent to the farms, and these, arrived at man's estate in a state of savage ignorance, were unable to do more than execute the manual labor assigned them by the overseer, in the usual method of their own barbarous home; and thus whether in the city or in the country, the slave population was the curse of the land, and paid back, by the very evils incident to their condition, a righteous retribution for the wrongs done them.*

(To be continued.)

TRAINING OF THE YOUNG.

BY REV. A. B. MUZZEY.

It is unkind to a child to bring him up in dainty habits. Encourage in your children simple tastes, a love of plain food, and of a merely neat dress. Do this on principle, whatever may be your circumstances in life; for then, if they are hereafter needy, they will be content with a lot for which you have so well prepared them. If, on the other hand, they are rich, they will the more enjoy their wealth, and the luxuries it procures for them, from the contrast of their abundance with the frugal habits of their early days.

case of the negro, and the abundant use of perfume became a matter rather of necessity than luxury.

* The harsh laws made to protect the life and property of the master from the attempts of his slaves, which I shall have occasion to mention as I proceed, are a sufficient proof that these wrongs were considerable, and frequently resented. Some lines from Ovidius show that it was not unusual to *chain* the slave who acted as porter, to the door-post in order to secure his fulfilling his office. v. Bekker Gallius, vol. i. p. 24.

For the same reasons, I would encourage refined manners, not only in society, but in the bosom of the family. "Why do this among those who know each other so well?" you may ask. I reply, if they are gentle and respectful at home, they will surely be so abroad. To thank others for favors, when we are accustomed to thank husband or wife, father and mother, brothers and sisters, every day, becomes easy, almost unavoidable. Let there be politeness at your own table, and your children will show it everywhere else. If it be assumed only on certain occasions, their manner will be stiff and embarrassed; but let it be common every hour, and at every meeting in the family circle, and you will see in them at all times the true gentleman and the true lady.

By politeness I do not mean artificial, still less affected, manners. It is not Chesterfield, but Paul, I would set up as a model in this respect. "Whatsoever things are lovely" are closely connected with "whatsoever things are of good report." Teach your children gentle manners, and you do much to give them kind feelings. "St. Paul," it was once said, "was a finished gentleman." This is true; he had a benevolent heart, and a great knowledge of human nature, and these two things are the basis of genuine politeness. A child, by being courteous to his parents, gains an insight of other persons' feelings, and he also acquires the habit of consulting other persons' happiness. Let your daughter be civil to brother and sister, or let your son be gentle to every inmate of your family, and they will become so to all out of the family. Christian politeness will then be with them "a second nature."

I know of no better illustration of the power of right training than its effect on a child's control of his appre-

hensions and fears. Some mothers tremble and betray terror at the approach of a thunder-storm ; so, uniformly, do their daughters: The mother screams at the sight of a snake or a toad ; the little child at her side echoes that scream. Is the horse in the carriage restive ? The mother cries out for fright, and each girl and boy learns soon to cry still louder. And who has not seen the almost miraculous influence, on the other hand, of composure in danger, and the expression of reliance upon our Father in heaven, as it is caught from a mother's lips and eye ? In this age of weak nerves, it is of the last importance that our children be guarded, both by precept and example, against the fears of imagination. We should form the habit, even in the infant, of self-possession. It is hardly too much to recommend the course which Montaigne tells us his father pursued with him, from his earliest years. "Some," says he, "being of opinion it troubles and disturbs the brains of children suddenly to wake them in the morning, and to snatch them violently and over-hastily from sleep (wherein they are much more profoundly involved than we,) he caused me to be waked by the sound of some musical instrument, and was never unprovided of a musician for that purpose." Let us spare no reasonable efforts to fortify the nerves of our children. Nothing is better for this purpose than inducing them — and I would even do it by authority, if it could not be done otherwise — to take physical exercise in the open air, when neither their amusements nor their occupation lead to it. The effect of this practice on their mind and character, as well as on their bodily health, will be seen through their whole lives.

Closely connected with this topic is that of educating

our children in habits of industry. It is not enough to talk earnestly against idleness; we must see that they are actually not idle. For the sake of health, let them never contract habits of indolence. A child should be taught the necessity of employing every part of his nature diligently and in earnest. "Nine tenths of the miseries and vices of manhood proceed," says Carlyle, "from idleness." This is a strong statement, but I believe it to be true. What more wretched than the feeling that one has absolutely nothing to do? "When I rise in the morning," observes some old writer, "if I can think of anything to do, if it is but the plucking of a rose, I am happy." Labor should be represented to the young as a blessing, and constant, useful occupation should be shown, both by precept and example, to be the truest happiness.

Idleness is a prolific parent of the vices. Nothing is more dangerous to the character of children than to allow them to remain unemployed. If they are not doing good, they will certainly do evil; if their thoughts are not directed to profitable topics, they will roam upon all that is ensnaring and corrupt. Leave them to themselves, and you are sowing those seeds which spring up in vanity and folly, if haply they do not yield a fearful harvest at the haunts of dissipation, intemperance, gambling, shame, and ruin. Teach, as far as possible, useful occupations; but, rather than permit your son to be idle, set him to removing a pile of stones from one end to the other of your garden. Keep your daughter employed, — always excepting a liberal allowance of time for recreation, — keep her busy. Better knit what you know must be all unravelled, better any thing that is harmless, than that she form the habit of sitting, hour after hour, perfectly idle. I would

have a child's conscience so educated that he should regard the waste of time as a sin, like dishonesty or untruth. To how many sins, indeed, does it inevitably lead !

Whatever, in short, we may teach or tell our children about their various duties, let us not stop there. Instruction may succeed in forming a good character, but how often does it fall short of it ! We see the well-informed prove inefficient, and the good scholar make an indolent, a wayward, or a passionate and self-willed man. The great evil in the moral world is, that, while we know what is right, we fail to perform it. Knowledge is good, but principle, firmness of purpose, benevolence, and well-doing are immeasurably better. Intelligence is to be desired ; so also, and far beyond it in value, is virtue ; and the only sure link between the understanding and the heart and the life is that which is forged in the fires of early culture. Knowledge is being poured into the mind from a thousand fountains ; — books, conversation, teachers, experience, all life, in one word, are daily adding to its stores. But character is formed by a single process alone. On the quiet grounds of the individual soul, silently and slowly, must this temple of God be erected. Gold, silver, and precious stones are all that may enter into the structure. Blessed is that parent whose child bears the marks of this divine workmanship !

“Train up a child in the way he should go.” How wide is the scope of this precept ! It goes beyond all formal instructions, all set speeches and lectures to the young, and embraces the entire experience of that God-appointed institution, the family. We train our children, let it also be remembered, by the general tone of our own conversation, by the spirit we indulge and the feelings

we cherish, and by our air and manners; these constitute the basis of parental education. What we do casually, and without any immediate intention of influencing our children, is the great moulding power of our household. We may teach what we please; but that alone will not decide the character of these little ones. It is what we do and say, nay, what we think and feel, in our inmost soul, that accomplishes the larger part of this mighty work. The state of our heart, our affection for God and man, or our habitual indifference to eternal things, and our inbred selfishness, — these are what train our children. We cannot seal up this inner fountain; its waters, if they do not gush forth openly, will yet ooze out, and will fall on the minds and hearts of our offspring, either to blight them, like the pestilential miasma, or, like the dews and showers of heaven, to freshen them and quicken them to an unfading verdure.

The necessity of training children, as well as teaching them, is inculcated constantly in the Scriptures. The command is to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” This involves far more than merely telling them how they ought to be brought up. It involves a reciprocal duty on the part of the child. “Children, obey your parents in all things,” — so runs the Divine command. Obedience, then, is indispensable to a Christian education. Accordingly, the parent must not only frame rules for the government of his family, but those rules must be enforced. The authority vested in him by God is not to lie dormant, but with calmness and in love it must be steadily exercised.

AUTUMNAL UNITARIAN CONVENTION.

It will be seen by the notices inserted under the head of Intelligence, that the Autumnal Convention of Unitarians is to meet in this city during the present month. The presence of such a body will be a new thing in this community, and we cannot but hope that it will be of good service to the cause of Liberal Christianity. Other Churches have their periodical meetings of Synod, Presbytery, Conference, Society or Association, but the Unitarians, from their recent organization here, and from their smaller numbers, have hitherto been without any such help or sympathy. They have existed as a Congregation isolated and apart, and all that they have known of others holding a like faith with their own has come through reading about them. From what we know of the Unitarian Congregation of this city, we will venture to say, that all the members thereof who have had the privilege of being present at the meetings and discussions of any larger organized bodies of their brethren, might be almost reckoned upon our fingers. But it is very needful that we have some such experience of the interior working of a religious body if we would thoroughly understand its spirit and tendencies.

Among the Unitarians the Autumnal Convention is an institution of comparatively recent origin. It dates back only some twelve or thirteen years. It is entirely distinct from the usual Anniversary Meetings held in the spring. These are invariably held in the City of Boston, at the season of the general religious gatherings of Massachusetts. We need scarcely say that the proposed Convention has no authoritative character. And here it differs from the Synodical meeting of the Presbyterians, the Conference of the Methodists, the Convocation of the Episcopalians, and the Association of the Orthodox Congregationalists. Whether for good or ill, no such assembly among Liberal Christians can be authoritative. Liberal

Christianity from its nature renounces all such human control. If one man is not infallible, neither can a thousand be, nor ten thousand. Each individual among Liberal Christians will gratefully accept all the good he can receive from such a meeting in the way of instruction, counsel, and friendly guidance ; but he cannot concede to it any authority. He cannot permit any man, or any assembly of men, any creed, decree, or humanly constructed symbol to interpose between his soul and God. God speaking in and through Christ is his only authority in Christianity. The use of such meetings as the proposed Convention, is to elicit thought on such topics as may from time to time be suggested by the circumstances of the denomination in itself, or as it stands related to the general body of Christians, or to society at large. Each member, by hearing expressed the collective thought of his brethren, by having the various sides of a subject presented to his notice, is better enabled, from a larger understanding thereof, to form his own conclusion. And whether minister or layman, he will receive added strength and satisfaction from the larger and clearer view he obtains.

In the Unitarian Convention a wider freedom of expression may be expected [than that which prevails in other bodies of religionists, who are bound by humanly constructed creeds and symbols. A meeting pledged to such symbols cannot permit them to be openly and freely contravened or discussed. Whatever doubts or difficulties may exist in individual minds, they must be hushed and kept quiet. Among Unitarians it is directly otherwise. The differences are sure to come to the surface. And what is more, these differences commonly appear in greatly magnified proportions. We have no hesitation in affirming, that in a collective body of Unitarian ministers and laymen there will be found as general an agreement on all essential points of religion, as is to be found in any other such body, even though bound together by written

articles and creeds. But the differences of opinion in detail, which in the one case would be privately discussed, and cautiously spoken of, are in the other case, presented and discussed in the formal and public meeting. "There is an awful honesty among you," was the exclamation of a worthy Methodist minister once, as he sat among Unitarians, assembled for deliberative purposes. We claim, indeed, honesty of speech as one of our virtues, and we are fully convinced that in this, as in all things else, honesty is the best policy. We disclaim and scorn all artifices to stifle and hide away conscientious differences of opinion. Let these fairly appear, we say, — let them be freely discussed and charitably considered — and we shall all be helped rather than hindered thereby. It is through this "awful honesty" of the Unitarians, that their "worst heresies" become so patent to the world. For narrow and partizan persons connected with the pulpit and the press are prone to seize on extreme expressions of opinion and taking them out of their just place, exaggerate them into a form which is not true. By ignoring all the related circumstances, which a candid mind would feel itself compelled to include in the whole case on which it was to pass judgment, such persons magnify them into actual, and sometimes gross, misrepresentations.

The topics to be considered by the approaching Convention in Montreal, have not yet been publicly made known. There are, generally, two or three distinct topics presented for consideration by discussion, and the method of introducing each has sometimes been by a brief written essay, prepared and read by a person named for that purpose by the Convention's Committee of arrangements. Then follow remarks, *viva voce*. Besides these, there are several religious services, including sermons, in the usual exercises of the Convention — the whole being commonly concluded with the administration of the Lord's Supper. The proceedings commence on Tuesday evening, and close on Thursday evening.

The Unitarian Congregation of Montreal is, probably, the smallest community of their faith that the Convention has ever visited. We know that every effort will be made for their proper reception and accommodation here, and hope that they will not be called on to make any large allowances for our inability to do for them as generously and completely as the larger communities of our faith, though possibly they may be called on to make some. The Unitarians here feel that they are indebted to their brethren in the United States for much, every way. And in coming across the line which separates republican from regal territory, we hope they will find, as we have done, that Christianity recognises no geographical limits in the exercise of its sympathies. The Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes are blended in one when they meet serenely under the higher symbol of the Cross.

INTELLIGENCE.

NOTICE.

THE THIRTEENTH ANNUAL UNITARIAN AUTUMNAL CONVENTION will be held at the City of Montreal, Canada, beginning on Tuesday evening, October 10, 1854. The Clergy and Laity of the denomination are respectfully invited; and it is hoped that the churches may be generally represented by their Pastors and Delegates.

By order of the Committee,

FREDERICK A. FARLEY, Chairman.

Brooklyn, N.Y., Sept. 16, 1854.

AUTUMNAL UNITARIAN CONVENTION.

THE Committee of Arrangements for the Autumnal Convention of Unitarians, having selected the City of Montreal as the place of its next meeting, we have to express our sincere satisfaction with the choice. We accept it as a favor. The presence of such a body will be a novelty to us here, and we anticipate pleasure and profit from its coming. We hope to see as many of our friends as can make it convenient to attend, and we shall esteem it a privilege to welcome them to our city and our homes.

On behalf of the Montreal Unitarian Congregation.

BENJ. WORKMAN.
GEO. H. FROTHINGHAM.
R. H. STEPHENS.

Montreal, Sept. 18, 1854.