

THE
LIBERAL CHRISTIAN.

VOL. II.

JUNE, 1855.

No. 6.

UNIVERSALITY OF THE DIVINE
BENEVOLENCE.

BY DR. T. SOUTHWOOD SMITH.

FOR the same reason that the Deity designed to make one human being happy, he must have purposed to bestow felicity ultimately upon all. For, if there be a single individual whom he created without this design, since he must still have had some design, it must be different from which we have already shown to be the only one which he could have had in view.

In reality, his purpose with respect to every individual must have been either to make him happy or miserable. If it were not to make him happy, it must have been to make him miserable; but to suppose that he purposed to make any one miserable ultimately and upon the whole, is to suppose that he purposed the production of misery for its own sake, which has already been shown to be impossible.

And if every principle of the human understanding revolt at the conclusion, that he is partial and capricious in

his kindness, and has designed to make some individuals happy and others miserable, it is equally opposed by all the appearances in nature. It is refuted by every object to which we can direct our attention. The sun, in the brightness of his glory, diffuses light and joy through all the nations of the earth. He has no favorite to bless. He regards not in his course the little distinctions which prevail among mankind. He shines not on the lands of the great, forgetting to pour his beams on the lowly spot of the peasant. He lights up the Indies with a burning glow — he smiles upon the nations of Europe with a milder beam, and he shines upon the hoary path of the Laplander, amidst his mountains of eternal snow. “The Lord is good to all. He causes his sun to shine upon the evil and the good.”

The cloud, bearing in its bosom riches and fertility, pours its blessings upon every field, without regarding the name or rank of its owner. “The Lord visiteth the earth with his goodness; he watereth it with the dew of heaven: he maketh it soft with showers; he blesseth the springing thereof.”

No where in nature are there traces of a partial God. Some inequalities indeed appear in the distribution of his bounty, but this must necessarily be the case, if creatures are formed with different capacities, and endowed with different degrees of excellence. There can be no degrees in excellence — there can be no variety of orders and ranks among intelligent beings, unless some are made higher and some lower, some better and some worse than others. But how low in capacity, how dark and groveling in apprehension, how little capable of estimating the benignity of the Author of its mercies, must be that mind

which dreams that the Deity is partial, because by diffusing every where a countless variety of capacity, excellence, and happiness, he has adopted the means of producing the greatest sum of enjoyment ?

The great things which make us what we are, which minister to the primary wants, and which lie at the foundation of the happiness of all animal and intelligent natures, are always and every where the same. Life itself is the same, wherever that wonderful power, which imparts to a mass of clay the amazing properties of sensation and intelligence has operated. Wherever a vital fluid circulates, from the lowest animal up to the highest human being, it flows to diffuse enjoyment. To all, indeed, it does not impart an equal sum of happiness, because it could not do so, unless every object in nature were exactly alike ; but to all it is the source of pleasure. Simple existence is a blessing ; simply to be, is happiness. And this is the case with every race of animals, and with every individual of every race. The Deity has made no distinction in the *nature* of the existence which he has given to his creatures. He has not made the act of existing pleasurable in one and painful in another ; he has made it the same in all, and in all he has made it happy. No reason can be assigned for this, but that he is good to all.

Every appearance of partiality vanishes from all his great and substantial gifts. It is only in what is justly termed the adventitious circumstances which attend his bounties, that the least indication of it can be supposed to exist ; yet narrow minds confine their attention to these adventitious circumstances, and hence conclude that he is partial in the distribution of his goodness ; while all his great and fundamental blessings are so universally and

equally diffused, that they demonstrate him to be a Being of perfect benevolence. Now we ought to reason from the great to the little, not from the little to the great. We ought to say, Because, in every thing of primary importance there is no appearance of partiality, therefore there can be really none, although in lesser things there is some inequality in the distribution of the absolute sum of enjoyment; not because there is some inequality in lesser things, therefore, there must be partiality, although there is no indication of it in any thing of real moment.

If to this consideration be added what has already been established, that even the most wretched of the human race enjoy a great preponderance of happiness, it will furnish another decisive proof, that the Deity designed to make all his creatures happy.

If we look inward on ourselves, and consider all the parts which minister to the perfection and happiness of our nature, whether animal or intellectual, we shall find a farther confirmation of this great truth. Did not one God fashion us? Has he given to any one of us more members than to another? Has he superadded to one, in the use of an organ, an exquisite degree of enjoyment, which he has denied to another? Are not all our organs the same, adapted to the same uses, and productive of the same gratifications? Has he not given to all the same number of senses, and made them the source of similar intelligence and pleasure?

Indeed, no one can imagine, that in the formation and government of the world the Deity has been influenced by partiality, without entertaining the most low and puerile conceptions of his nature and conduct. When of one piece of clay he made an animal without reason, and of

another a man, he felt no more partiality towards the clay which formed the man, than towards that of which he constructed the animal without reason. But he determined to impart enjoyment to an infinite variety of organized and sensitive creatures. It was necessary to the perfection of his plan, that there should be an animal without reason; it was necessary that there should be a man. He therefore gave to each the properties it possesses.

Now, while we suppose that he was not influenced by partiality, in the distinction which he has made between the different genera of creatures, shall we imagine, that when he proceeded to form the species, and still more the individuals, he on a sudden changed the principles of his conduct, and acted solely with a view to gratify a capricious fondness for one individual, and aversion to another — that classes and orders, those great lines of demarcation between different creatures, do not proceed from partiality, but that the slight shades of difference which distinguish individuals from individuals do? Can any conception be more peurile? Every blessing diffused over the creation, which is of great or permanent importance, is given, not to individuals, but to the species. This is the invariable law of nature.

But, while the universality of the divine benevolence will be readily admitted, with respect to the blessings which have been mentioned, many persons believe that the Deity acts upon a totally different principle, with regard to the distribution of moral and spiritual favor, and that he invariably confines the communication of this description of good to a few chosen individuals. The most popular systems of religion which prevail in the present age are founded upon this opinion. But if it be a fact,

that there is no partiality in the primary and essential gift of existence, in life, considered as a whole, in the minor properties and felicities of our nature, in our senses, in our intellectual and moral faculties, and in the gratification of which they are respectively the source — if all these great blessings agree in this important circumstance, that they are instruments of enjoyment to all, and that the happiness they actually do impart is universal — it must follow, that there is no partiality in the distribution of moral and spiritual good. For why is this spiritual good imparted to any? Why is it superadded to the merely animal and intellectual nature of a single individual? It must be to perfect its possessor, and to make him susceptible of a greater sum of enjoyment.

We perceive, that in addition to mere animal existence, man is endowed with organs which constitute him the most perfect of the creatures which inhabit the earth. Why were these organs given him? Without doubt that he might enjoy a higher degree of happiness than the creatures beneath him. To the organs which constitute him a mere (though a very perfect) animal, there are then superadded others which impart to him a rational and moral nature, with a view that he may enjoy a more perfect happiness; but besides all these, other properties are added, which exalt him still higher in the scale of creation — properties, for the reception of which, the former only qualify him — properties which make him capable of loving his Maker, and of enjoying him forever. Why is he endowed with these? Certainly that he may enjoy a more perfect happiness than he could attain without them. Must not this reason then induce the Author of these invaluable blessings to bestow them upon the race as well as upon a few individuals?

Let the mind dwell for a moment upon what it is it really supposes, when it imagines that these properties are given to some and denied to others. The difference between the man who is capable of perceiving the excellence of the great and perfect Being who made him, of loving him, and of conforming to his character, and the man who not only is not endowed with this capacity, but is impelled by the principles of his nature to hate the Deity, is infinitely greater than the difference between a worm and the most exalted of the human race. For, if before the religious faculty begins to be developed, there appear no remarkable distinction between them, let them be observed after this principle has been called into action and has operated for some time. It will then be seen, that in their conceptions, their occupations, and their enjoyments, they totally differ from each other — that they have hardly any thing in common — that there is as great a distinction between them, as between the insect which grovels in the dust, and the man who first measured the distance of the stars, and taught us the laws by which the universe is governed. Let the mind look forward to eternity, and suppose, (as always is supposed,) that both will progressively advance, each in his career, through the ages of an endless duration ; how immeasurable does the distance between them become !

Now the difference which is here supposed between two beings of the same species is never found to exist. There is nothing similar to it in the whole range of that part of the creation with which we are acquainted. Differences between individuals of the same species are observable, but there is nothing approaching the immensity of this inconceivable distinction. Whatever differences

prevail are those of *degree*, not of *kind*. Every individual of the same species has every essential property the same as his fellows ; but here a property infinitely more important in its consequences than the addition of a new sense would be, is given to one and denied to another. This looks not like the work of Deity. It is a vast and sudden chasm in the plan of wondrous order, for which no preparation is made, to which we are led by no preparatory steps, for which nothing can account, and which nothing can reconcile. It bears upon it traces of the imperfect and short-sighted contrivance of man ; it is contradicted by all which we feel and know of the works of God, and it ought to be driven from the mind of every rational being, that the fair creation of the Deity may no longer be falsified by the deceptive medium through which it is viewed, and that our Maker may not be charged with injustice because our eye is evil.

MAMMON WORSHIP.

BY THE REV. J. MARTINEAU.

WITHOUT indulging in any sentimental declamation against the pursuit and influence of wealth, we may be permitted to feel, that *this* is the quarter from which specially, our moral and religious sentiments are most in danger of being vitiated. The habits which produce the danger may be inevitable, forced upon us by a hard social necessity ; still in bare self-knowledge there is self-protection. For, the danger of a vice is not like the danger of a pestilence, in which the most unconscious are the

most safe ; and the fear of contagion, which in the one case, absorbs the poison into the veins of the body, repulses in the other the temptation from the mind.

The excess, to which this master-passion is carried, perverts our just and natural estimate of happiness. It cannot be otherwise when that which is but a means is elevated into the greatest of ends ; when that which gives command over some physical comforts becomes the object of intense desire than all blessings intellectual and moral, and we live to get rich, instead of getting rich that we may live. The mere lapse of years is not life ; to eat and drink and sleep : to be exposed to the darkness and the light : to pace round in the mill of habit, and turn the wheel of wealth : to make reason a book-keeper, and turn thought into an implement of trade,—this is not life. In all this, but a poor fraction of the consciousness of humanity is awakened : and the sanctities still slumber which make it most worth while to be. Knowledge, truth, love, beauty, goodness, faith, alone give vitality to the mechanism of existence ; the laugh of mirth that vibrates through the heart, the tears that freshen the dry wastes within, the music that brings childhood back, the prayer that calls the future near, the doubt that makes us meditate, the death which startles us with mystery, the hardship which forces us to struggle, the anxiety that ends in trust—are the true nourishment of our natural being. But these things, which penetrate to the very core and marrow of existence, the votaries of riches are apt to fly ; they like not any thing that touches the central and immortal consciousness ; they hurry away from occasions of sympathy into the snug retreat of self ; escape from life into the pretended cares for a livelihood ; and

die at length busy as ever in preparing the means of living.

The despotic temper, which is apt to be engendered by wealth in one direction, is naturally connected with servility in the opposite. For the very same reason that we regard those who are beneath us almost as if they were our property, we must regard ourselves almost as if we were the property of those above us. There is little, I fear, that is intellectual or moral in that sort of independence which is the proverbial characteristic of our countrymen; it consists either in mere churlishness of manner, or in overbearing tyranny to those of equal or lower grade. It would be inconsistent not to yield that respect to the purse in others, which men are fond of claiming for it in themselves; and accordingly it is to be feared that in few civilized countries is there so much sycophancy as in this; so many creatures ready to crawl round a heap of gold; so many insignificant shoals gleaming around every great ship that rides over the surface of society. It is a grievous evil arising hence, that the judgments and moral feelings of society lose their clear-sightedness and power; that the same rules are not applied to the estimate of rich and poor; that there is a rank which almost enjoys immunity from the verdict of a just public sentiment, where the most ordinary qualities receive a mischievous adulation, and even grave sins are judged lightly or not at all. But it is a more grievous ill that the witchery thus strikes with a foul blight the true manhood of the children of God:—the manhood, not of limbs or life, but of a spirit free and pure;—of an understanding open to all truth, and veneration for it too deeply to love it except for itself, or batten it for honor or for gold; of a heart en-

thrilled by no conventionalisms, bound by no frosts of custom, but the perennial fountain of all pure humanities ; of a will at the mercy of no tyrant without and no passion within ; of a conscience erect under all pressure of circumstances, and ruled by no power inferior to the everlasting rule of Duty ; of affections gentle enough for the humblest sorrows of earth, lofty enough for the aspirings of the skies. In such manhood, full of devout strength and open love, let every one that owns a soul see that he stands fast ; in its spirit, at once humane and heavenly, do the work, accept the good, and bear the burdens, of his life. Its healthful power will reveal the sickness of our selfishness ; and recall us from the poisonous level of our luxuries and vanities to the reviving breath and mountain heights of God. There could be no deliverer more true than he who should thus emancipate himself and us. O ! blessed are they who, for the peace and ornament of life, dare to rely, not on the glories which Solomon affected, but on those which Jesus loved ; glories which even God may behold with complacency — nay, in which he shines himself ; glories of nature, richer than of man's device ; genuine graces, resembling the inimitable beauties of the lilies of the field, painted with the hues of heaven, while bending over the soil of earth.

POVERTY is a sad thing, but there is no man so poor as he is who is poor in his affections and virtues. Many a house is full, where the mind is unfurnished and the heart is empty ; and no hovel of mere penury ever ought to be so sad as that house.—*Dewey.*

CHRIST THE IMAGE OF GOD.

BY REV. J. H. THOM.

THE fullest and truest conception of Christianity would be obtained by developing the significance of that description of Christ, which represents him as the *Image of God*. An Image gives all the *proportions* of the original, though upon a smaller scale—as when some boundless expanse of earth and sky is pictured, in every feature, on the smallest tissue of tender nerves within the eye. Thus when Christ is called the Image of God, it is meant that what God is on the scale of Infinity,—that Christ is, on the scale of Humanity. God possesses every moral attribute that characterized Jesus, and in the same relations to each other,—but in an infinitely greater and fuller degree. The moral features are the same;—only, in the one case, on the scale of created being,—in the other, on the scale of the eternal and immeasurable Mind. Thus, Christ's spirit of Mercy is the Image of God's Love; Christ's Holiness, of God's Holiness; Christ's active Goodness, of that Beneficence which worketh ever, and interrupts its loving constancy by no Sabbath pause; Christ's union of Sinlessness with compassion for Sin, the image of that Holy yet forgiving Father, whose arms are ever open to the wanderer, though he says to that holier child, who strays and wanders not, "Son, *thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.*" The divine light diffused through the Universe; and in all the workings of Providence, was concentrated within the soul, and in the person, of Christ, that he might convey directly a representation of God to the soul of Man. "God, who com-

manded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." If, then, we would know the moral character of God, we have only to look on the face of Jesus Christ, and then lift our thoughts and hearts to the Infinite Original. If Christ was merciful to man, — then God is infinitely merciful. If Christ was forgiving to the penitent, and had no difficulty in reconciling his personal Holiness with the throb of Mercy, — then God is infinitely compassionate, and his tenderness to the penitent is one form of his moral Perfection. If there was no unforgivingness in Christ, there can be no unforgivingness in God, — for the Image must be faithful to the Divine Original. Whatever moral feature, then, you find in Christ, ascribe it to God with an infinite fullness; — and whatever moral feature you do not find in Christ, ascribe it not to God at all.

THE DISOBEDIENT INEXCUSABLE.

ANONYMOUS.

CAN those who intentionally neglect religion, who habitually disobey the Christian commands, offer any satisfactory excuse for their neglect and disobedience, any excuse satisfactory to their conscience and their God?

Are not the Christian commands *reasonable* in their requirements? They require us to love Jesus Christ in sincerity, to love our fellow men as ourselves, to love God with our whole heart. God is the perfect Creator of the universe, the Father of all creatures, the Ruler of all

worlds. His nature is essentially Love. He is *our* Father in heaven. He has brought us into existence, preserved us in being, and crowned our lives with his goodness. We always have been, now are, and ever shall be, dependent on him for all we are, all we possess, all we enjoy, and all we hope for. And is it not reasonable that we should love supremely such an almighty, infinitely merciful, ever present Father? And if we love him with our whole heart, shall we not repent of all our deviations from his holy laws; and thoroughly reform our erroneous religious opinions, our sinful dispositions, and our wicked practices? Shall we not habitually worship him in sincerity, in spirit and in truth; constantly cultivate feelings of gratitude for his manifold favors, and cheerfully submit to the various dispensations of his unerring providence? Shall we not repose unlimited confidence in his wisdom and love; and earnestly strive to know more of his character, perfections, and government? Shall we not continually aim to render unreserved obedience to his holy will, and sincerely endeavor to become perfect even as he is perfect? Is it not reasonable that we should cultivate and possess this supreme love for God, and that our affection should yield these fruits of Christian piety? Nothing can be more reasonable.

Our fellow men are our brethren; children of the same parent, possessed of the same nature, entitled to the same rights, and indulging the same hopes, with ourselves. They are also partakers in our infirmities, our trials, and our afflictions. They are necessary to our present support and comfort, and equally probationers for a future state of blessedness. Christ has died for their salvation, as well as for ours; and they are equally dear to our com-

mon Father? Is it not reasonable, then, that we should love those whom God and Christ love? And if we love them as ourselves, shall we not invariably seek the promotion of their happiness, as opportunity, condition, and circumstances permit? Shall we not assist, with our property, our counsel, and our sympathy, the poor, the ignorant, and the afflicted? Shall we not deal justly love mercy, and walk humbly? Shall we not bless those who curse us, pray for those who persecute us, and forgive those who injure us? Shall we not wish well to all, even our enemies; and ever do unto others as we would have others do unto us? Is it not reasonable that we should thus love our fellow men, and that our love should produce these fruits of Christian benevolence? Nothing can be more reasonable.

Jésus Christ is the well-beloved Son of God, the commissioned revealer of his will, the prince of peace, the Saviour of the world. He came upon earth in poverty; and labored, suffered, and died, that he might save us from ignorance, error, sin, and death. He left, for our instruction, the words of eternal life; and for our imitation, a perfect example. He arose from the grave, to demonstrate our immortality; and ascended to his God and Father, to prepare mansions for all his obedient followers. And is it not reasonable that we should love such a disinterested, such a compassionate, such an all-sufficient Saviour? And if we love him in sincerity, shall we not acknowledge him as the true Messiah, the Son of the living God, the head of the Christian church? Shall we not prize his gospel as a most invaluable legacy, as the words of eternal life; and make them the only standard of our faith and practice? Shall we not often contem-

pate his perfect character; and endeavor to imitate his spotless example? Shall we not seek to imbibe much of his meek, and humble, and benevolent, and forgiving, and devout spirit? Is it not reasonable, then, that we should thus love our Saviour; and that our affection should produce these Christian fruits? Nothing can be more reasonable. Yes. We must conclude that the Christian commands are perfectly reasonable in their requirements.

Are the Christian commands *impracticable*? Can you not love your fellow men, your Saviour, and your God, as required? You love other objects; your friends; the world; and the fruits of your affection appear in your conduct. Consequently, you possess all the natural affections of the human heart, and are not prevented from exercising religious love by any natural inability.

Perhaps, however, you plead a moral inability. Perhaps you say that your nature is totally depraved, and consequently you cannot obey your heavenly Father. Do you understand the meaning of this plea? You admit that the Christian commands were given by God, and promulgated by Christ Jesus. You acknowledge that they are reasonable in their requirements, and that disobedience is threatened with tremendous punishment. Now if you say that you have no power to render the required obedience, you in reality declare that God, who made man, and Jesus, who knew what was in man, are either ignorant of man's ability, or are cruel in requiring of him impossibilities, and will be unjust, should they punish him for not performing duties, which he never had power to perform. So much your plea of moral inability must prove. Far be it from our minds to accuse God either of ignorance, or cruelty, or injustice. We have ability to obey the Christian commands.

But perhaps you plead a disinclination to the performance of religious duties. Whence arises this disinclination? Is it natural or acquired? Perhaps you say natural, resulting from the fallen nature we have inherited from our first parents. Not so. Reason, conscience, revelation, experience, assign a different cause for our disrelish for religious exercises. God gives to every one all the necessary faculties for the performance of commanded duties. He places sufficient motives before those who have the gospel, when properly considered, to excite them to their habitual performance. The disinclination is therefore acquired; acquired by immersing ourselves in the cares and pleasures of the world; by neglecting the study of our own hearts, and the holy scriptures; by disregarding the motives and sanctions of the gospel; by not cultivating pious affections, and religious habits. And I would ask, if any one, who pleads this disinclination as an excuse for disobedience, can conscientiously say, that he has given the subject of religion his serious and persevering attention? — that he has spent hours and days in close self-examination, and a prayerful study of the sacred gospel? — that he has uniformly made a determined resistance to the wicked suggestions of earth-born passions and propensities, to the allurements of a deceitful world, to all temptation and sin? — that he has used strenuous exertions to keep himself pure and unspotted from the world, to do unto others as he would have others do unto him, to love his Saviour sincerely, and his God supremely? If he has not done all this, and I fear his conscience must testify against him, his excuse of disinclination remains unsatisfactory, and must so remain, until he has made an unsuccessful experiment. But this can never

be; for no one, who sincerely endeavored to love God, and Christ, and man, ever failed of success; while thousands and tens of thousands have succeeded in securing the one thing needful. This plea of inability and disinclination are both groundless; consequently, the commands are practicable; and whoever sincerely attempts their performance, is certain of success.

Are the commands *unnecessary*? Is not obedience to them necessary to secure our present and future happiness? God gave us existence. He made us for felicity. He fully understands the wants of our nature. He is also the author of these laws. He has given them solely for our benefit. Consequently, they must be adapted to our condition. Obedience to them must be essential to our happiness. What is true in theory, is established by facts. Look at those who live in habitual disobedience. Are they not punished by their sin? Are they not tormented either by bodily disorders, or mental anguish, or public censure, or legal enactments, or worldly wretchedness? Most assuredly; the way of transgressors is hard. On the other hand, look to the real Christian. Is he not happy?—and do not his purest joys arise from his religious obedience, his conscious integrity, his tranquil passions, his self-government, benevolence and piety; his blessed hopes of a happy immortality? Most assuredly. No one will deny that the virtuous character is rewarded in some considerable degree by his virtues, and the wicked character punished for his wickedness. And if our obedience is absolutely essential to our happiness in this world, it is equally necessary for our felicity in the world to come. Because God is unchangeable; his laws are unchangeable; the distinction between sin and holi-

ness is eternal ; and nothing but goodness can make the human soul happy in any state of existence. Consequently our present and future happiness depend on our obedience to the Christian commands.

The case then stands thus. These commands were given to make me good, that I might be happy. If I obey them, I shall pass through this sinful world comparatively pure. My temporal enjoyments will be greatly increased by my goodness. My present comfort will not be disturbed by a guilty conscience. The pains of my dying hour will not be aggravated by a recollection of past iniquity ; or by fears of future misery. And I shall enter the eternal world prepared for its never ending felicity. On the other hand, if I disobey these commands, my soul will be defiled with sin. My present peace will be destroyed by the baneful effects of my wickedness ; and by the ever painful compunctions of an accusing conscience. My character will be degraded ; and my company will be avoided by the wise and good. My example and influence may injure my friends, and ruin my offspring, and bring infamy on my name. The hour of nature's dissolution will be embittered by a painful remembrance of the past ; and be rendered agonizing by fearful forebodings of the future. And the just rewards of my mispent life will await my entrance into eternity. Thus two alternatives are before me ; a few years of earthly-mindedness and sensual gratification, attended with present uneasiness and self-reproach, and future condemnation and misery ; or a few years of self-denial and self-cultivation, attended with present satisfaction and inward joy, and future eternal felicity. Which does my reason prompt me to choose ? Unless it is very much

perverted, nay, unless it be wholly^m perverted, it will prompt me to prefer happiness to misery. Looking, therefore, at the character of God, the commands of Jesus, my own nature, and the experiences of the righteous and wicked, I must acknowledge that obedience to the Christian instructions is absolutely necessary to secure my present and future welfare.

If then the Christian requirements are reasonable, practicable, and necessary, am I not justified in saying, that the intentionally negligent, the habitually disobedient, have no satisfactory excuse for their own neglect and disobedience, no excuse satisfactory to their own conscience or their God. And if I am living in this disobedience, I am daily acting contrary to my highest interest ; contrary to the best feelings of my own nature ; contrary to the soundest dictates of my reason ; contrary to the clearest convictions of my conscience ; contrary to my temporal and future happiness ; contrary to the revealed wishes of my Saviour and my God.

It is a false idea that religion requires the extermination of any principle, desire, appetite, or passion, which our Creator has implanted. Our nature is a whole, a beautiful whole, and no part can be spared. You might as properly and innocently lop off a limb from the body, as eradicate any natural desire from the mind. All our appetites are in themselves innocent and useful, ministering to the general weal of the soul. They are like the elements of the natural world, parts of a wise and beneficent system, but, like those elements, are beneficent only when restrained.—*Channing*.

"LACK OF OIL."

WANT OF RESERVED MORAL STRENGTH.

BY REV. DR. PUTNAM.

I HAVE seen the young man who had stored himself with the intellectual qualifications necessary for a reputable life, with good intentions, generous impulses, honorable sentiments, with intelligence, and agreeable manners and an active spirit, he thought himself prepared for all that lay before him, equipped for a creditable, successful, self-governing career, and for as much virtue as would be requisite for safety and good repute in the world. So he stepped forth with confidence and alacrity upon the theatre of life. By and bye, of course, there came a stress upon his principles, a draft upon his moral resources, that he had not anticipated. Dangerous associates drew their wily and invisible nets about him. Pleasure plied him first gently and then stormily with its enchantments. New influences drew him by degrees from his industry, his fidelity, his probity. Confidence slipped mysteriously away from him. Evil predictions were whispered of him by the sagacious. The aims of life became gradually lowered in him, and the flame of good aspirations burned lower and lower. A reckless aspect stealthily came over him, that indescribable but unmistakable look. He fell away from his good endeavors, and his lamp went out, in a prodigal and worthless life, in the slough of indolence, and sensuality and moral enervation. There was a fatal deficiency at the outset, — and it was sure to go out.

I have seen the maiden, who resembled her foolish prototypes in the parable. She entered upon life gaily. Her confidence was in her beauty, her taste, her accomplishments, her intellectual quickness, her social attractiveness, her social position and connexions, and in such store of romantic sentiments and fine-toned sensibilities as might easily pass, for a time, for religious affinities and a semi-moral enthusiasm. By and by the real cares and duties of life came. The illusions of youth passed away as they must. Accomplishments lost their charm, and beauty its lustre. The realities of life grew commonplace, as they always do. Life is not what it seemed in her young dream. Romance flies from the domestic hearth. Suffering and sorrow come, and the stern trial of her strength and patience. Emotion, sweet before, grows acrid now. Sentiment turns into fretfulness, and enthusiasm to discontent and disappointment. Duty is burdensome, and home is insipid, and its ties a bondage, and society a mockery. All this bitter falling off is cloaked to the common eye under the show of good appearances, but the feeling of it is the more intense for that. Her life is a failure — her lamp is gone out; and well it might go out — well it might — every page of Scripture and every lesson of human experience predicted that it would.

I have seen a man, who at the outset designed to be only prudent, industrious and enterprising, turn at length into a sordid miser, his soul smothered under his gains, his heart eaten up by the cankerous touch of his own gold, and the whole man, body and soul, bound hand and foot, a helpless slave to the goods of this world; no, not its goods, but the mocking shadow of its goods. His lamp

has gone out; and how could it but go out, with such shallow outfit as he started with?

I have seen the man who had too much conscience to set out with the purpose to deceive and swindle, — he meant only to be shrewder, more vigilant than others. But in the drive of business, and amid growing excitements and larger baits, honesty faltered, and conscience grew accomodating, and opportunity more inviting. Integrity slipped away little by little, he knows not when or how, and now his whole heart is false, his whole character unstrung and demoralized. His lamp has gone out, and no wonder; as well might a pasteboard ship breast the surging waves of the sea.

So all around us, in every sphere of life, lamp after lamp goes out in moral stench and darkness. And why? of necessity and of course, for lack of oil, upon the same principal that any human purposes fail, that depend on forethought and accumulated resources and reserved power, as character does, more essentially, more universally than any thing else.

And now one inquiry more and I have done. Whence shall we derive those needful resources and that reserved strength, which are sure to be wanted? I answer, from among the moral elements of the soul and the spiritual influences of religion, — in early and vigorous self-culture and that uplifting, sanctifying spirit that comes from God through Christ.

THE mind of man is capable of strange things, and many an honest soul has travelled to heaven by a most circuitous route.—*Gannett*.

JESUS THE MEDIATOR.

BY REV. H. WARE, JR.

MEN have imagined, in their ignorance, that they could not sufficiently multiply the objects of religious adoration. But in the simplicity of that mighty universe, which man's imagination cannot grasp, there is but one such object. Men have fancied that they could not interpose too many friends and advocates between their insignificance and the high majesty of heaven ; they have crowded the access with numberless mediators to solicit benediction for them, and have filled churches and altars and cloisters with the images of saints who might pray for them, until the face of the great Supreme has been hidden, and their dependence on him forgotten. But the simplicity of God's government rejects this crowd of suitors, whom man would thrust forward to shelter his weakness, and appoints ONE mediator between himself and his offspring — one to be the medium of his communications to them, and of their approaches to him. There is One on the throne, and One before the throne. When the suppliant draws nigh, his devotion is neither doubtful nor distracted. He knows that there is but One to be addressed ; he feels that there is but one by whom he may obtain access ; and his soul is absorbed in a single undivided act of trust and praise.

The title of Mediator is in four several passages ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament. In order to understand clearly its import, we must consider that a *Mediator* is one who acts *between* two persons or parties. He is the MEDIUM between them, the medium of intercourse or communi-

cation. And as such an one among men is needed, not in the ordinary current of affairs, but on occasions of difference or dissention; it has happened that the name is most usually given in the sense of a *peace-maker*, or one who effects reconciliation. In this sense it is doubtless applicable to our Lord; for one important object of his mission and religion is to reconcile men to God; that is, to render them his friends by doing away their dislike to his holy law, and uniting them to him in love and obedience. Hence God is said "to be in Christ reconciling the world to himself." And to this end, it is written, "it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, and, having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself."

It is not, however, in this sense only, but in a more extended sense, that we are to understand this title; as indicating not only one who makes peace, but one who, in a general sense, is *the medium of communication between God and man*. This is the meaning which the word bears in the New Testament. Thus Paul says, speaking of the law (Gal. iii. 19), "it was ordained by angels, in the hand of a mediator." What is meant by Moses being thus called the mediator of the law, may be learned from his own language in speaking of the same transaction (Deut. v. 5): "I stood *between* the Lord and you at that time, to *show you the word* of the Lord." In this instance the name is manifestly given him, not in the restricted sense of a peace-maker, but in that of his being the medium of communication. In no other sense is it applied to Moses.

It is obviously in the same sense applied to Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews (viii. 6), where he is styled

“ the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises,” than that of Moses. Now as Moses was mediator of the ancient covenant, inasmuch as through him it was communicated to the people ; it must be in the same sense that Jesus is called the “ Mediator of a better covenant.”

This example serves to define and settle the term in its application to our Lord, and teaches us how to understand it in the other passages in which it occurs. Thus when the apostle contrasts the mildness of the new dispensation with the terrors which accompanied the introduction of the old (Heb. xii. 24), he mentions “ Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant ;” evidently as the chosen messenger of love by whom it was brought.

In the same sense we are to understand him (Heb. ix. 15) where he speaks of the Mediator as having died that he might certify the new covenant and render it “ of force” ; as all testaments, he adds, are required to be ratified with blood. So also are we to interpret the title in 1 Tim. ii. 5, “ For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” It has pleased God to have intercourse with his creatures, to establish with them a covenant, and pledge to them his promises. He through whose instrumentality this is done, is for that reason called “ the Mediator between God and men.” “ The law came by Moses,” who was thus the mediator of the old covenant ; “ but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” who was thus mediator of the new. By the same channel of mediation, God has also appointed that his offspring shall have access to him, through him “ come to the Father,” and “ in his name” address their praises and supplications. “ I am the way, and the truth,

and the life ; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”

There are thus two divisions under which the office of mediator presents itself: the one, as bringing down to men the messages of God ; the other, as bearing up to God the offerings of men.

RELIGION IN DOMESTIC LIFE.

ANONYMOUS.

RELIGION is necessary to render domestic life a scene of uninterrupted enjoyment. Marriage was designed by our heavenly Father to be a source of the most perfect temporal happiness. And when the religion of Jesus exerts its governing and sanctifying influence on the heart and life ; and causes the wedded pair to cultivate mutual friendship and affection ; to be uniformly kind and obliging ; accommodating and forbearing ; charitable and forgiving ; patient, and contented, and cheerful ; and truly devoted to the promotion of each other's welfare — this benevolent design is answered, and this present of earthly felicity is secured. But when this is not the case, as sometimes happens ; when those are united who have no correct knowledge of each other's characters ; whose tastes, and dispositions, and habits are unlike ; and over whose feelings, and passions, and conduct, Christian principles exercise no controlling power, the wise plan of providence is frustrated. Thence arise those complaints and criminations ; those angry disputes and unhappy difficulties ; that unkind treatment and alienation of

affection, which render this connection a state of contention, discord and misery.

But this is not all. The example of parents is ever carefully watched and imitated by their children. If the injunctions of the Gospel are habitually disregarded by the parents; if the words of profanity, and falsehood, and passion often fall from their lips; if the trifles of earth, the failing of acquaintances, the tales of passing scandal, the means and measures of acquiring popularity and wealth; and the follies, and fashions, and amusements of gay life constitute the chief subjects of conversation; if the supply of animal wants, and the gratification of vain desires, and the promotion of temporal aggrandizement are made the principal objects of attention and pursuit; if no decided respect is shown for undeviating rectitude and moral goodness; if the word and ordinances of God are slighted; and they attend the sanctuary only in compliance with fashion, or habit, or a love of excitement and display; — if the Christian instruction of their children is neglected; if the good seeds of virtue are never implanted on their tender minds; if the pernicious weeds of vice and ungoverned passion are suffered to spring up and flourish unchecked; if they are permitted to resort to places of idleness and dissipation for amusement and companions; after such an education, if they become useful and religious members of society, it will *not* be in consequence of the example and instruction of their parents. They may indeed, as some few have done, break the shackles of ignorance and irreligion, and become ornaments in our Christian community. But this is scarcely probable. For they will be peculiarly exposed to so many temptations; to temptations from their

own undisciplined passions and ungoverned desires ; from thoughtless and profligate companions ; from vice and infidelity, which will beset them in every form ; that there is danger, *great* danger, of their becoming pests to the community, scourges to their friends, and curses to themselves. And all this would be but the natural consequences of the examples they have imitated, the instructions they have received, the principles they have imbibed, and the habits they have formed, while under the paternal roof.

On the other hand, if the parents endeavor to regulate their conduct and their household by the precepts of religion ; if they are kindly attentive to each other's wishes and wants, mild and equable in their tempers, circumspect and amiable in their manners, true and candid and improving in their conversation ; if they manifest the sympathies of an expansive benevolence, and exhibit the fruits of genuine goodness and unaffected piety ; — if parental discipline and instruction be added to this worthy example ; and their offspring are early taught to obey the dictates of their parents, their reason and their Maker ; if their risings of rebellious passion are checked and controlled ; and they are aided in forming habits of truth, honesty, industry, self-government and virtue ; if they are assisted in cultivating cheerful, contented, happy dispositions ; if they are instructed to look upon the honors, emoluments, and pleasures of this world as uncertain, temporary and unsatisfying ; and upon Christian goodness as the one thing truly essential to their happiness in every period of their existence ; if they are induced to believe that the religion of Jesus is a certain guide to peace, usefulness, respectability and salvation ; and that God is their

ever present, unfailing Friend and Father — thus educated by precept and example, they will be prepared for the evils that are in the world. And though they may leave the happy scenes of infancy and childhood with regret, they will soon secure the esteem of all who know them; they will be blessings to their friends and ornaments of society. And should they be greatly exposed to the influence of corrupting example, in the moment of strong temptation, if their early impressions, their virtuous habits, their Christian principles will not save them from ruin, there is good hope they will be saved by the remembrance of a virtuous *home*; by the recollection of a brother's affectionate warnings, a father's agitated countenance, a sister's earnest entreaties, a fond mother's tears. If then we would have uninterrupted happiness in our family circle, we must cherish religion on the domestic altar. Her heavenly influence must purify our motives, refine our feelings, mould our dispositions, elevate our affections, dignify our conversation, and direct our conduct. Then we shall have felicity in our own bosoms, and the same blessing will rest upon our dependants and children.

OBERLIN TRACTS.

THE following brief tracts were originally issued from the "Oberlin Press," a private printing establishment belonging to the Rev. P. P. Carpenter, of Warrington, Lancashire, England:—

OBERLIN TRACTS, NO. 43.

What advantage then hath the Christian?

That he is brought into a state of reconciliation and peace with God:

That the Almighty, the All-wise, and the All-merciful is his *Friend* :

That he is in union and communion with his Heavenly Father :

That from henceforth he is one with God and with Christ :

That his members, his hands, his heart, his feet, are the very members of Christ :

That he is not his own, but Christ's :

That even his life is hid with Christ in God :

That God unceasingly works in him, to will and to do of his good pleasure :

That, as a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without divine permission, so nothing can happen to the Christian without God's ordination :

That even the very hairs of his head are all numbered :

That nothing can have any power against him, except it be *given* from above :

That therefore everything which happens to him is a message from God unto him, sent specially by his Heavenly Father, and calling for holy obedience, submission and resignation to the divine will so manifested :

That therefore no evil can happen unto him :

That everything without him is ordained, in infinite wisdom, and almighty and unbounded love towards him ; — so perfectly that if he had the control of all the wide universe of being, and of all the course of events around him, he could alter nothing for his own greater good or advantage :

And all these blessings are secured to him for evermore, on one single realised condition ;— that sin, which is the working of his own self-will, the only evil, is to be avoided, shunned and overcome in the power of God ; for which divine work, divine grace and divine aid is promised to all who ask it and continue to ask it of God in sincerity and truth, in the name and spirit of the Lord Jesus.

My friend, do you feel in your own heart that these blessings are yours ? If not, I beseech you seriously to ask yourself, "*Why am I not a Christian ?*"

What hinders you from being a Christian ?

Is it that Christians are squabbling among themselves about doctrines, and so you leave them alone till they have settled the first points ? It is not for *them* to settle

the first points, but for *you*, by the words of Jesus Christ himself, "The first of all the commandments is, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Is it that most Christians teach such strange doctrines that they go against your reason? You are not bound to believe them unless they are clearly taught in the Scriptures; and even then, if you cannot understand them, take what is plain and live by that; and wait till God by his spirit teaches you more. Be assured that he will teach you, if you give yourself up to be led by him. Religion does not consist in believing a creed, but in submitting the heart to God, and leading a holy life through faith in Jesus Christ. He himself declares, "The words that I spake unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

Is it that you have no wish to be a Christian? that you do not care for all these glories that God has offered; nor fear the woes that he has denounced against disobedience? If so, yours is a sad case, for God accepts no unwilling service. Before the Lord Jesus will do anything for you he will ask, "Dost thou desire to be made whole?" Surely you are not so happy and satisfied with your state that you have no wish to improve?

Is it not that *you have no faith in Christ*? You believe fast enough all that relates to your own gain and pleasure, but you do not believe his words. But remember his awful language of authority, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: *the Word that I have spoken, that same SHALL JUDGE HIM in the last day.*"

And why have you no faith in him? *Is it not that you love and practise SIN*? You seek your own pleasure, in eating and drinking, in amusement, perhaps in horrible fornication or uncleanness, perhaps in cheating and covetousness, perhaps in lying and slander, perhaps in hatred and envy, perhaps in hypocrisy and double-dealing;—perhaps in none of these, but in some other evil thing that you do not dare to bring to the light, and yet will not give up.

It is this that really keeps you from being a Christian. Whatever it be, flee from it as you would from a raging fire or a flood of many waters. Pray to be delivered from it, as you would if you were drowning in a shipwreck. "*The wages of sin is DEATH.*"