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THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP.

FROM NEANDER.

IN the persecution which befel the church of Smyrna, A.D. 167, the aged and venerable Bishop Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John, gave up his life. Of this persecution we have a detailed account, in a circular letter addressed by the church of Smyrna to other Christian churches. The proconsul of Asia Minor, at that time, does not appear to have been personally hostile to the Christians; but the heathen populace, with whom the lower class of the Jews had united themselves, were fiercely hot against them. The proconsul yielded to the popular violence and to the demands of the law. He endeavored to move the Christians by threats, by displaying before them the instruments of torture, and the savage animals to which they were to be thrown, to deny their faith; if they remained firm, he condemned them to death. In one respect, he certainly evinced too ready a compliance with the ferocious will of the people. He chose deaths

that were painful and ignominious ; such as being thrown to wild beasts or perishing at the stake — punishments he was not compelled to resort to by the laws. Yet it must be allowed, that if the laws denounced death in general terms, as the penalty for perseverance in Christianity, it was considered right to assume, that such as were not Roman citizens ought to suffer a more painful death than those who were.

Under the most agonizing torments, calculated to excite pity even in pagan bystanders, the Christians displayed great tranquility and composure. “ They made it evident to us all,” says the church, “ that in the midst of those sufferings, they were absent from the body ; or rather, that the Lord stood by them and walked in the midst of them ; and, staying themselves on the grace of Christ, they bid defiance to the torments of the world.” But even here the difference was shown betwixt the momentary intoxication of enthusiasm, which, with a rash confidence in itself, courted and defied danger, and that calm, deliberate submission to God’s will, which first awaited his call, and then looked to him for the needed strength. A certain Phrygian, Quintus by name, of a nation peculiarly inclined by nature to fanatical extravagance, presented himself, in company with many others, whom he had wrought up by his discourses to the same pitch of enthusiastic zeal, uncalled for, before the proconsul’s tribunal, and declared himself a Christian. But when the magistrate pressed him, and wrought upon his fears, by showing him the wild beasts, he yielded, swore by the genius of the emperor, and sacrificed. After stating this fact, the church adds, “ We therefore praise not those who voluntarily surrender themselves ; for so are we not taught in

the gospel." Quite different from this was the behavior of the venerable Bishop Polycarp, now ninety years of age. When he heard the shouts of the people, demanding his death, it was his intention, at first, to remain quietly in the city, and await the issue which God might ordain for him. But, by the entreaties of the church, he suffered himself to be persuaded to take refuge in a neighboring villa. Here he spent the time, with a few friends, occupied, day and night, in praying for all the churches throughout the world. When search was made for him, he retreated to another villa ; and directly after appeared the servants of the police, to whom his place of refuge had been betrayed by unworthy men, who enjoyed his confidence. The bishop himself, indeed, was gone ; but they found two slaves, one of whom was put to the torture, and betrayed the place whither Polycarp had fled for refuge. As they were approaching, Polycarp, who was in the highest story of the dwelling, might have escaped to another house, by the flat roof peculiar to the oriental style of building ; but he said, " The will of the Lord be done." Descending to the officers of justice, he ordered whatever they chose to eat and drink to be placed before them, requesting them only to indulge him with one hour for quiet prayer. But the fullness of his heart hurried him through two hours, so that the pagans themselves were touched by his devotion.

The time being now come, they conveyed him to the city on an ass, where they were met by the chief officer of the police, (*eirenarchos*) coming, with his father, from the town. He took up Polycarp into his chariot, and addressing him kindly, asked " what harm there could be in saying ' *the emperor, our Lord,*' and in sacrificing." At

first, Polycarp was silent ; but as they went on to urge him, he said mildly, " I shall not do as you advise me." When they perceived they could not persuade him, they grew angry. With opprobrious language, he was thrust out of the carriage, so violently as to injure a bone of one of his legs. Without looking round, he proceeded on his way, cheerful and composed, as though nothing had happened. Having arrived before the proconsul, he was urged by the latter to have respect at least to his own old age, to swear by the genius of the emperor, and give proof of his penitence, by joining in the shout of the people, " Away with the godless !" Polycarp looked with a firm eye at the assembled crowd, pointing to them with his finger ; then with a sigh, and his eyes uplifted to heaven, he said, " Away with the godless !" But when the proconsul urged him farther, " Swear, curse Christ, and I release thee." " Six and eighty years," the old man replied, " have I served him, and he has done me nothing but good ; and how could I curse him, my Lord and Saviour !" The proconsul still persisting to urge him, " Well," said Polycarp, " if you would know what I am, I tell you frankly, I am a Christian. Would you know what the doctrine of Christianity is, appoint me an hour and hear me." The proconsul, who showed here how far he was from sharing in the fanatic spirit of the people, how gladly he would have saved the old man, if he could have appeased the multitude, said, " Do but persuade the people." Polycarp replied, " To you I was bound to give account of myself, for our religion teaches us to pay due honor to the powers ordained of God, so far as it can be done without prejudice to our salvation. But those I regard as not worthy of hearing me defend myself before

them." The governor having once more threatened him in vain with the wild beasts and the stake, caused it to be proclaimed by the herald, in the circus, "Polycarp has declared himself to be a Christian!" With these words, was pronounced the sentence of death. The heathen populace, with an infuriate shout, replied, "This is the teacher of atheism, the father of the Christians, the enemy of our gods, by whom so many have been turned from the worship of the gods and from sacrifice." The proconsul having yielded to the demands of the people, that Polycarp should die at the stake, Jews and pagans hastened together, to bring wood from the shops and the baths. As they were about to fasten him with nails to the stake of the pile, he said, "Leave me thus; he who has strengthened me to encounter the flames, will also enable me to stand firm at the stake." Before the fire was lighted, he prayed, "Lord, Almighty God, Father of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have received from thee the knowledge of thyself; God of angels, and of the whole creation; of the human race, and of the just that live in thy presence; I praise thee that thou hast judged me worthy of this day and of this hour, to take part in the number of thy Witnesses, in the cup of thy Christ."

What appeared the greatest thing, to this church, was not the martyr's death of Polycarp in itself, but the Christian manner in which it was suffered. They expressed it as their conviction, that all had been so ordered, that he might exhibit what was the essential character of evangelical martyrdom; "for," so they write, "he waited to be delivered up, (did not press forward uncalled to the martyr's death,) imitating, in this respect, our Lord, and

leaving an example for us to follow; so that we should not look to that alone which may conduce to our own salvation, but also to that which may be serviceable to our neighbor. For this is the nature of true and genuine charity; to seek not merely our own salvation, but the salvation of all the brethren."

The death of the pious shepherd contributed also to the temporal advantage of his flock. The rage of fanaticism, after having obtained this victim, became somewhat cooled; and the proconsul, who was no personal enemy of the Christians, suspended all farther search, and refused to know that another Christian existed.

THE THOUGHTFUL AND THE THOUGHTLESS.

BY MARY G. CHANDLER.

THE distinction made between thoughtful and thoughtless persons is commonly one of intellect alone; it should be quite as much one of morality. Considered intellectually, a thoughtless person cannot be successful in any but the very lowest walks of life. He brings nothing but his hands to what he does. If these be strong, he may dig, perhaps, as well as another man, but he can never make a good farmer; he may use the axe or the hammer to good purpose, but he can never become a master-workman. If he attempt anything more or higher than what his hands can do under the guidance of another's brain, his effort is sure to be followed by confusion and failure. Viewing a thoughtless person in a moral light, he cannot be religious, he cannot be virtuous, and, unless by acci-

dent, he cannot even be externally moral. He may, perhaps, perceive that the grosser forms of wickedness are to be avoided, but he can have no comprehension of the danger involved in the little vices of every-day life; and cannot understand how every one of these vices, small as it may seem, contain within itself the germ of some one of those great and shocking sins forbidden in the commandments. He will, therefore, without compunction, go on committing these small sins until the habit of evil becomes so fixed, that, if he does not end by committing great ones, it is more frequently from lack of temptation than from any worthier reason.

The thoughtless person can never be depended upon for anything. We never know where to find him, or what he will do in any particular position or relation of life. All we can anticipate of him is, that he will probably do something bad, or silly, or improper: accordingly as the act may bear upon morality, sense, or manners.

Before going further, let it be understood that a thoughtless person is not one without Thought. A human being without thought is an impossibility. Most, if not all, idiots think. It is the lack of coherency, purpose, and effort in Thought that induces the habit of mind commonly known as thoughtlessness. Without Thought, Imagination, and Affection, one could not be a human being. Mankind differ from each other, not in kind, but in degree. It is the low degree of activity in either of these great divisions of the human mind that causes one to seem thoughtless, unimaginative, or without affection. The end of all training should be to develop each one of these faculties so that it shall co-operate with the others, and all as fully as possible. A just balance of power is

the first requisite, and constant increase of it the second ; just as in the physical frame we ask, first, for just proportion, and, as the product of this, for strength.

It is often said that no kind of sense is so rare as common sense ; and this is true, simply because common sense is attainable by all far more, and is a natural gift far less, than most other traits of character. Common sense is the application of Thought to common things, and it is rare because most persons will not exercise Thought about common things. If some important affair occurs, people try then to think,—but to very little purpose ;—because, not having exercised their powers on small things, their powers lack the development necessary for great ones. Hence, thoughtless people, when forced to act in an affair of importance, blunder through it with no more chance of doing as they should than one would have of hitting a small or distant mark at a shooting-match, if previous practice had not given the power of hitting objects that are large and near.

The thoughtless person perpetually acts and speaks as if it were of no consequence what is said or done. If any one venture to suggest a different mode of speech or action, the reply is pretty sure to be, “ O, it is of no consequence ! ” As if an immortal being, to whom a few short years of probation had been given, the use or abuse of which must give character to an eternity to come, could do or say what would have no consequence ! Let any one bring distinctly before himself the great truth that we stand ever in the presence of the Almighty, stewards of his bounty, children of his love, and could it be possible for him to believe that it is of no consequence how that love is returned, and how that bounty is used ?

Every word, every act of our lives, is either a use or an abuse of his bounty, a showing forth either of our love for or our indifference to him. Therefore, every word and act has a consequence, ending not with the hour or day, but stretching forward into eternity. Let this truth be admitted to the mind, and who could dare to be thoughtless. Who would not wish to return the infinite love poured out upon us, by consecrating all that we have and all that we are to the service of the Infinite Father? When this consecration takes place, all pure aspirations fill the heart; while the mind is ever thinking what is the best way in which the will of the Lord may be done. Thoughtlessness has no longer an abiding-place, for the mind now perceives that it must be about its Father's business, and Thought becomes a delightful and invigorating exercise, instead of the wearisome effort it seemed before.

If the mind hold to its integrity, without relapsing into its former state of blind indifference to its high vocation, the cultivation of the power of Thought will go on steadily and surely, and the mind will become constantly more and more clarified from all folly and silliness.

When a person brings everything habitually to the standard of right and wrong, he gradually learns to judge wisely of whatever subject he may hold under consideration, provided he does not seek for that standard in his own mind, but in the mind of the Lord, as he has given it to us in the Word of eternal life. When this standard is sought only in the human mind, nothing is fixed or permanent, and discord abounds in society much as it would if the length and breadth of the fingers of each individual were to be substituted for the standard inch

and foot of the nation ; but if the Bible be honestly and humbly received as the standard by which to judge of right and wrong, mankind would ever abide in brotherly love and harmonious union. The element of discord is not in God's work, but in the mind of man ; and man becomes truly wise and capable of concord only so far as, forgetting the devices of his own understanding, he becomes a recipient of the truth that descends to him from on high.

It may be objected that the Bible has been the fruitful source of contention and war ; and some may suppose it cannot therefore be a standard of union to the world ; but it should be remembered that, when it has become a cause of dissension, it has been by the perversion of man, who has separated doctrine from life,— has put asunder that which God joined. No contention has ever risen in the world regarding religious life, but many and terrible ones regarding religious doctrine separated from life ; and it is perfectly apparent, that, had those who were engaged in them, looked to religious life with the same earnestness they did toward doctrine, all these dissensions must have ceased. Christian life is, as it were, a building, of which faith is the foundation. The foundation is subservient to the superstructure, and should be strong and well laid ; but has no value excepting as it is the support of a worthy building. The Lord is very explicit in all his teachings on the subject of life, and it is hardly possible that any one could faithfully study his words, and then exalt abstract doctrine into the place that belongs of right to Christian life.

Whoever studies the direct teachings of the Lord, recorded by the Evangelists, and makes them the rules of

his Thoughts, must necessarily be wise. Everything connected with daily life, if his mind be really permeated with these teachings, takes its proper place before him. He sees what has a transient, and what a permanent value, — what is merely temporal, and what eternal ; and so learns to appreciate the relative value of all things. Everything that occurs becomes a subject for his thoughts to work upon, and while working in heavenly light his mind grows in wisdom day by day. This action of Thought will not be confined to events as they occur around him, but whatever is read, all the events of the past, all art and science, are brought under the same analysis. The thoughtless person reads merely for the amusement of the moment, remembers little of what he reads, and that little to no purpose. A fact is, to such a man, a mere fact standing by itself, and having no relation to anything else. However much he may read, the thoughtless man can never be instructed. He is of those who, seeing, perceive not, and who, hearing, do not understand. The thoughtful person, on the contrary, reads everything with a purpose. His mind works upon what he reads, and he is instructed and made intelligent, even though he may see only with the light of this world. His intelligence will, however, be very different and very inferior in degree to that of the man who looks at objects in the light of heaven. He will measure things by an uncertain, varying standard, and will appreciate things only according to their temporal value. He will, therefore, never become truly wise. With those whose minds are nurtured by the words of the Lord, everything is judged by the standard of eternal truth. Whatever is learned is digested by the thoughts, and so the powers of the

mind are strengthened and enlarged. Thus the mind becomes constantly more and more wise. The merely intellectual man has the desire to become wise, but his eye is not single, and therefore his mind is obscured by many clouds,—the dark exhalations of worldliness. When a man fixes his eye upon the Lord he is filled with light, and sees with a clearness of vision such as can be gained from no other source.

The cultivation of Thought lies at the root of all intellectuality, while it elevates and enlarges the sphere of the Affections. Affection is above Thought, but it is sustained and invigorated by its influence. Thought being the foundation upon which Affection is built, the strength, permanence and reliability of Affection must depend on the solidity and justice of the underlying Thought.

The mind may be stored with the most varied and extensive knowledge, and yet be neither improved nor adorned thereby. Robert Hall once remarked of an acquaintance, that he had piled such an amount of learning upon his brain, it could not move under the weight. It is little matter whether the amount of learning be large or small; the brain is only encumbered by it, unless it has taken it into its own texture, and made it by Thought a part of itself. Some persons love facts as a miser loves gold, merely because they are possessions; but without any desire to make use of them. A fact or thought is just as valuable in itself as a piece of money. Gold and silver are neither food, nor raiment, nor shelter; but we value them because through their means we can obtain all these. So facts and thoughts are neither rationality, nor wisdom, nor virtue, and their value lies in their being mediums whereby we may obtain them all.

In its purely religious action, Thought is the fountain of that Faith which forms the base of St. Paul's trinity of the primal elements of Character,—the foundation upon which hope and charity are to be elevated. How important, then, is it that this foundation should be wisely laid! Many persons think much in relation to religious subjects from the love of metaphysical reasoning; while their lives are not influenced by the doctrines they profess. This is an abuse of Thought, one of its fruits is bigotry. The more strongly a man confirms himself in any doctrine that he does not apply to life, the more elevated he becomes in his own estimation,—the more puffed up with spiritual pride,—the more full of contempt and hatred towards those who disagree with him. With such persons, purity of life is as nothing compared with faith in a certain sect of dogmas. There are some who think much of the vices of life, but always in relation to their neighbors, and thereby engender that form of bigotry called misanthropy. Both these classes misuse the faculty of Thought, making it subserve the purposes of contempt and hatred and debasing narrow-mindedness, instead of ministering to Christian love, that hopeth all things of its brother, and judges as it would be judged.

The more we study human nature out of ourselves, and in the light of the Understanding, the less we love it; but the reverse takes place, when we study our own hearts at the same time that we study the characters of our fellow-beings, and both in the light of Christian truth. We cannot hate our fellow-beings while we perceive that we are all of one family,—while we feel our own weakness and sinfulness; and we cannot despair of human nature while we believe that Infinite Wisdom has become its Redeemer and Saviour.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF DAILY LIFE.

BY REV. E. Q. SEWALL.

CHRISTIANITY is like its author. It inculcates all the domestic and social virtues with as much earnestness as the care of the spiritual nature and devotion towards God. That apostle whose spirituality was as eminent as any other quality of his mind, enjoins that we please not ourselves, but every one his neighbor for his good, adding as a motive, — “For even Christ pleased not himself.” He commands that we be not slothful in business ; and when, in allusion to his own case to be burdensome to no man, he says, “Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my necessities and to them that were with me ;” he continues, “I have showed you how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak,” remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” More especially remarkable would, on this supposition, have been the inculcation of diligent exertion in common labors, by the very motives which are so efficacious upon the mass of mankind, as in these passages. “That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without ;—that ye may have lack of nothing ;—that ye may have to give him that needeth.” Nor could it have been less noticeable that, as if by anticipation of a common apology for excessive devotion to the pursuit of gain, the same apostle should have written, “If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith.”

Language such as this cannot have been learned in the school of a mere ascetic, whose doctrine enforced a con-

strained neglect of earthly pursuits, and who sought to promote among men a piety which should make them indifferent to the proper avocations of life. And it merits our admiration, that Christianity, which confessedly is above all religions, unearthly and spiritual in its tone of sentiment, in the character of its instructions, and in the purposes it holds of most importance, — does, while calling us to a close walk with God, to high and solemn communion with him by solitary prayer and meditation ;— while commanding us to *set our affections on things above ; — to lay up treasures in Heaven, and to look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal,* — does yet descend to even the smaller particulars which belong to a prudent care for present comfort and well-being ;— teaching, not only to be industrious, but to be frugal ; not only to be faithful, but discreet ; not only to be veracious, but to be no tattlers or busy-bodies ; not only to do good on occasions when the suffering poor claim sympathy, but to be given to hospitality. It were easy to multiply such quotations from the New Testament, as are familiar to every reader, and show upon their very face, how unfounded must be any views of our religion, which represent it as seeking to further men's spiritual interests, without heed to the needs and cares of the present life.

“ Some may suppose,” says Owen in his Treatise on Spiritual Mindedness, “ that to have men spiritually minded, we would make them mopes ; but let not any be mistaken ; I am not to take men out of their lawful earthly occasions, but to bring spiritual thoughts and affections into the management of them all ; a man may do as much work whilst he is spiritual, as whilst he

is carnal ; spiritual thoughts will no more hinder you in your callings, than those which are vain and earthly, which all sorts of men find leisure for, in the midst of their employments." It is worth while for one who pleads the care of his temporal affairs in apology for slighting the spiritual nature, to ask himself what it is, which really occasions an injurious neglect of common avocations, and robs life of its interest and charm ? Not to mention the more palpable vices, which seldom fail to lead on to ruin and a broken heart, — whence most often arises that morbid sensibility, — and that self-torturing melancholy, — and that weary disgust with the world, — and that cynical temper, which scorns both man and his pursuits ? Let physical causes be set aside, and then ask, to what such scourges as these, confessedly destructive as they are of their unhappy subject's temporal interests, are to be ordinarily traced ? Is it because the soul was too deeply sensible of its own wants, — or felt too much the value of a divine friendship amidst the perplexities of life, or because it was too intent on its heavenly home, or had indulged too far the joys of the spirit, or too earnestly meditated a Saviour's love, — that its energies sunk, its affections withered, its hopes became extinct, its whole nature changed to bitterness ? Is it that this world has been undervalued and immortality over-rated, earthly good too little esteemed, and celestial bliss inordinately prized, that men grow despondent in misfortune ; — are moody when success is followed by satiety ; — complain that there is nothing worth living for, when disappointed of some fond aim ; — turn disconsolate from the grave of others and look with horror to their own ? Was it that religious faith was too rife in him,

that the still lamented and long admired Byron, became even

“ In his youth’s summer.

The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind.”

We know full well how such questions as these must be answered. It is when men forget the claims of their spiritual nature, make the world their idol, garner up in it all their treasures of hope and affection, that they lay bare their hearts to destroying angels, and gather upon their heads the black clouds of despair. It is by “minding earthly things” with an exclusive and absorbing passion, that they become not only “enemies to the cross of Christ,” but enemies to their own present happiness. Avarice, and pride, and ambition, and exorbitant thirst for pleasure are the ruthless murderers, to whose cruel power sacrifices more terrible than those of blood, are offered in numbers that no man can count.

Whenever a soul passes from a state of spiritual deadness and the thralldom of habitual impiety, from a worldly or an unbelieving manner of living, into the condition of one alive unto God, awake to righteousness, intent on Heaven, a state devotedly and thoroughly Christian, — this newness of spirit and of life within causes all things outward to appear alike new ; — imparts of its own purity and freshness to the worn and defaced objects which had lost their power to charm ; — spreads bright hues over nature ; gives new interest to every social tie ; makes the commonest comforts delightful, and the most familiar pursuits engaging.

You have left behind the days of your youth, — to whom the delights of that season, when all abroad wore the aspect of novelty because the soul was new, are now but

matter of dim recollection, — you know what a need there is in our nature, of something to take the place of those youthful instinctive emotions, in order to keep up the tone of the spirits, and save from that heaviness and dreariness, the sinking of the heart and loss of interest, which come too surely with advancing years. There are some, possibly, among my readers, who have experienced too, what it is to be left spiritless amidst iron labor, to feel bound to persist in a round of unmitigated efforts, when there was no response in the bosom to the call for exertion, no elastic springing of the powers to grasp their objects, none of that eager and panting emotion with which a young unbroken heart welcomes every toil, and loves the very hardships of adventurous life. You will understand then what I mean, when I claim for our holy faith the power of so renovating all things within and without as to preserve and restore much of that feeling of interest, so exuberant in earlier days, which is wont to flag and almost to become extinct, without the aid of some such support as religion alone can supply. It is by the sense of our relation to the Infinite and Eternal, by the inwrought conviction of the imperishable nature of the soul, by a uniform reference of all things to God and to a heavenly world, that we repair the wasting energy of resolution, and lift up again the drooping powers. Exclude from view the endless life, and what is there in this which can have efficacy to meet the case of a spirit wounded in its manifold conflicts and sinking beneath its heavy burdens? What is there in the precarious prospect of living on in a world, whose expedients have become to us as broken tools, and whose resources we have already drained, a few years more, and then sinking into a hopeless annihilating grave ;

— what is there in *this*, to wing for a higher flight the wearied soul? to put new strength into failing faculties and give new warmth to freezing affections? We know that an irreversible decree appoints to us all, as years multiply into old age, the experience of a saddening change in the aspect of things about us, and a melancholy decay of the outward man. As well might we try to detain spring's freshness for the parched summer, or the golden glories of morn for the shadowy evening, as nourish the hope of an equal glow of interest and the same capacity to enjoy in our own bosoms, or the full measure of power to please in outward objects. We cannot save up the strength of manhood for the benefit of old age, as we can by economy retain something from its earnings for the uses of that infirm period. And when the bloom, and grace, and sweetness are clean gone from everything earthly, when we are despoiled of whatever renders the outward man most respectable to a worldly eye;— when fears shall be in the way and nature faints;— when all the interest that has been given to life by what was of the world shall be exhausted, — what then can we bring out of the stores of this life that shall be adequate for our necessities? Happy, indeed, in that stage of our pilgrimage will be he that can still say, “ *The outward man perisheth, but the inward man is renewed day by day.*” No wonder if they shudder to anticipate that cold, sad destiny, who think only and care only for the miserable vanities which are destroyed in the using.

HE is not so good as he should be, who does not strive to be better than he is.

REASON AND SCRIPTURE.

BY REV. G. W. BURNAP, D.D.

It is objected to Unitarians, that they rely too much on *human reason*; that they set up reason in opposition to Scripture, and in opposition to faith. Let us examine this matter, and see if this charge be just. What is the relation of reason to Scripture and to faith?

We say, then, that the use of reason is necessary to determine whether the Scriptures are to be received as a divine revelation; and when they are received, the use of reason is necessary to find out what they teach; and in the third place, faith, instead of being opposed to reason, is built upon it.

In the first place, reason is the only means which God has given us of distinguishing what is true from what is false, what is probable from what is improbable, what is to be believed from what is not to be believed. The New Testament is given us, and we read it. There is no way for us to determine whether it is true or false, but by the use of our reason. If we must receive the New Testament merely because it is placed before us, than the Mahometan is just as much compelled to receive the Koran because it is placed before him.

A man says that he receives the New Testament as a divine revelation. Another asks him, Why? He then goes on to give his reasons. He says that the narrative is natural, and bears the marks of truth. That is, it resembles other narratives which he knows to be true. The comparison of that narrative with other narratives is the work of reason, and the inference he draws from it is the

work of reason. He says, that Paul and Peter and John, and the other Apostles, would not have consumed their lives and finally sacrificed them in testifying to a falsehood. This inference is an act of reason. Faith in the New Testament, then, is built on reason. And if it were not, it would be mere credulity.

In the second place, we must use reason in finding out what the Bible teaches. All sects do this, even those who disclaim reason most vehemently. All sects use it till it begins to press upon their peculiar doctrines, and then they discard it. The Catholic uses it. He reads in the New Testament where Christ calls himself a "vine." Is he to receive this literally or figuratively? If he is not allowed to use reason, he must believe that Christ was literally a *vine*, that he was planted in the earth and had roots and branches; and the only reason he can give why he does not so receive it is, that it is not reasonable to believe that this was Christ's meaning. Upon the strength of reason he rejects the literal meaning. But when he comes to the passage, "This is my body," he refuses to use his reason, and says that this assertion must be interpreted literally, and he must believe that it was the real flesh of Christ. The Trinitarian Protestant insists on using his reason in the same way, in this case, that the Catholic did in regard to the assertion of Christ that he was a vine. He judges that it is more reasonable to believe that Christ meant to say, that the bread represented his body, as his body was present unbroken and unchanged.

But there is a limit to *his* application of reason to the interpretation of Scripture, as well as to the Catholic's. Christ said, on a certain occasion, — "I and the Father are one." He insists that this passage must be interpreted

literally, that God and Christ are one being. You ask him how two beings can be one being, and he answers that he does not pretend to explain it. It is a mystery, and must be received notwithstanding its repugnance to reason. But he would not allow the Catholic to make the same plea in favor of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

The Unitarian goes on to apply reason to the interpretation of *this* passage also. He inquires if the same writer do not employ the same word in cases where no identity of being is intended. He reads on a few chapters, and he finds the Saviour praying for his disciples in these words,—“that they all may be one.” And in the next verse he specifies the sense in which they were to be one to be the same with that in which he had applied the same expression to himself and God,—“That they may be one, even as we are.” If the expression be allowed to prove that God and Christ were numerically one, then the same expression must be allowed to prove that God and Christ and the disciples were all one being.

The only difference, then, that there is between the Unitarian and other Christians is, that he applies reason to the interpretation of *all* the Scriptures, whereas they do only to a part. Without the use of reason, revelation would be useless; for we could never know what was revealed and what was not revealed, what was figurative and what literal. If it be meant by placing reason *above* Scripture, that, when reason and Scripture come in conflict, we believe reason in preference to Scripture, we deny that any such case ever happened or ever can happen, for we affirm that the Scriptures teach nothing that is not perfectly reasonable, when they are properly interpreted.

Revelation teaches more, and on higher evidence, than reason. If it did not, it would be wholly useless and superfluous. If it added nothing to what we knew before, it could do us no good. Reason teaches the *probability* of a future life; but the assurance of Christ, and his own resurrection, make it certain. But it is only by the use of reason that we can ever arrive at the well-grounded conviction, that Christ ever uttered such an assurance, or ever rose from the dead. It is only by the use of reason that the accounts of the supernatural events recorded in the New Testament can be separated and distinguished from the thousand other accounts of supernatural events which have been handed down to us from the past. Accordingly, every book that has ever been written on the evidences of Christianity is a recital of the *reasons* we have for believing the supernatural accounts of the Old and New Testament, and rejecting all others. These books are addressed to the reasoning faculty of man. If the reasoning is not satisfactory, the revelation has no authority. We go farther, and say, that it is reason only which can give us confidence in a revelation, even when we are convinced that one has been made. The truth of revelation, even when it is made, depends upon the veracity of God, — upon the question whether it is probable that he would or would not deceive us. The probability that he would not deceive us depends entirely upon the fact, whether he be a good being. And the only evidence we have that he is a good being is the predominance of good over evil in his works, or of happiness over misery in the creatures he has made. The representation is not *true*, then, that Unitarians set up reason in opposition to Scripture, and in opposition to faith. They make use of

reason for the establishment of Scripture, and for the establishment of faith. They make use of reason for the interpretation of Scripture, that they may ascertain what it teaches and what it does not teach.

WITHOUT CHRIST.

BY REV. W. MOUNTFORD.

WITHOUT Christ, we are without light ; without Christ's life, we are without the key to this world's meaning ; and without Christ in the flesh, our flesh is but a body of death.

Take from me a revealed, and leave me only a speculative God ; the seal on Christ's sepulchre, — suppose it had been eternal, and that Jesus had never risen ; and shut up the New Testament, with its doctrines concerning prayer to God and acceptance with him, this present life's purpose and immortality's certainty, and let all be as though the Gospel had never been ; and then what am I, and what has the world around me become ? Myself, I am the body of this death ; for I die daily then, and the powers of my nature are only those of hopeless corruption, every beating pulse hastening the hour when the heart shall stop and putrescence begin. And the arch of heaven above, — it then shuts in upon this earth like the vault of a living grave.

But this is not the worst of being without Christ ; — quite otherwise ; for if I have no Jesus to believe in, as a first-born brother, O, then, along with Job, I would gladly say “ to corruption, Thou art my father ; to the worm,

Thou art my mother and my sister !” O, then, welcome the grave ! be it eternal, still it is welcome ; for “ there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest.”

Let Christian faith fail, and then this world’s wickedness and weariness are intolerable ; and the more thoughtful a man is, the more miserable he becomes. You may read the book of Ecclesiastes and learn there what life was before Christ, and what it would still be without him, — vanity of vanities ! And for us in this age of the world, it would be worse than for Solomon ; and him, royalty and wealth and genius could not save from feeling that “ better is the day of death, than the day of one’s birth.”

What miseries there are now, which to endure rightly require all one’s Christianity, and which, without that, would convert and concentrate all the feelings of our hearts into a fierce despair, — pain often making the short span of a life a prolonged spasm of agony, — poverty in aggravation of the body’s sufferings debarring one of the needful remedies, or the necessary food, or those many comforts which are requisite to make man’s unfurnished life endurable ; and this, too, in a world where the lilies of the field are arrayed in glory, and where the fowls of the air, — your Heavenly Father feedeth them.

Let a man be without Christ, let him know of himself no more than he learns from nature, and he must feel himself a mockery in the world. Let it have happened how it may ; it has happened, and it is so, that most men endure life and not enjoy it ; and this evil is largely augmented by the knowledge of it, by man’s having been created capable of discerning the evil of his lot, and bemoaning it, and of contrasting it with the happier world

of his own thoughts, ay, and even with the happier world which the brutes actually have. The plentiful provision made for beast and bird and insect, and the evident ease of their subsistence, make the scantiness and difficulty of human living still stranger.

O, go outside any town on a summer's evening! the insects are sporting for very joy in the last rays of light, whilst the melody of gladness rises from bush and tree, blending as it ascends with the song of the lark; and the fragrance of the air, which is really superabundant life, is a sweet savor, like what primitive man imagined that God might be pleased with, — it is insensate nature's silent thanksgiving. Thus ends the day with irrational creatures; with them all, excepting those which are under man's control. But man's own day ends far otherwise; — how often in the weariness of over-work, or the worse misfortune of having found no work to do; in the bitterness of industry disappointed of its just reward; in sickness of the heart, as little by little and one by one life's reasonable expectations perish; in the loathsomeness of sensuality, which so many resort to as an escape from their thoughts, or as a pitiful mode of filling up that void of happiness in their hearts, for which they find otherwise no provision made; and in that distractedness so horrible to many persons, and which, in some season or other of external quiet, makes itself felt in every heart which is unchristian. And then there are the pains, the exhaustion, and the agony which always so many are enduring; — the result of the delicate organization of the human frame. With the larger portion of men, the day ends in fatigue or suffering, and, if they think of themselves and their prospects, with dissatisfaction. Very few they are

indeed, with whom, as mere mortals, the day ends with a peace like that which prevades animal creation, in complete contentment with their worldly lot. No doubt there are multitudes, who every night lie down more than contented; but it is not with their human circumstances as such, but it is with a peace, "not as the world giveth." Divest these believers of their heavenly comfort; imagine that there were no Christian prayer to close the day with, and that this town were like any one of the many heathen towns which St. Paul visited; conceive yourselves also without Christian knowledge; and then man's lot would seem to you a wanton exception to the happiness of all nature besides; and even if you had no woes of your own, still, if you were like the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes, — at least, I think it would be so with myself, — the sight of suffering inflicted apparently for no purpose, and sympathy with my fellow-creatures in their hard and forever, hopeless lot, would thrill me, as it were, with a dying agony in every nerve of my moral being, and make St. Paul's words mine in all their bitterness, — "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

But it is spiritual death these words refer to chiefly. The Christian view of life, — step aside from that, and it is into a position "having no hope and without God in the world." No hope, and no God! It is so, and the more horribly so, the farther you recede from discipleship with Christ. In earlier ages Deity might be believed in under various characters; but as men grow wiser, they have need of a purer religion; so that now it may be said, that, with an intelligent man, faith in religion is proportionate to the purity of it, — that he believes and can be-

lieve in God only as far as his belief is like Christ's doctrine, — Christ's own doctrine, I mean, not creeds of any kind, whether Roman, Anglican, or Calvinistic.

Now, were we without Christianity this day, existence would be without worth, and our souls without the means of life. "Now nearly six thousand years," we should say, "has the world — a heathen world then — has the world gone on, and no God ever been heard of, except such idols as human fear has made. Right is violated, and justice outraged with impunity; crime prospers; and amid the world's chicaneries, the unscrupulous is the only safe path. The very names of rectitude and purity are derided; and, indeed, are they anything more than words? I may think so, but others think differently; and why are my ideas to be trusted, rather than those of other men? and are not mine superstitions merely? or, how can I tell that what is right with me is right with God also? nay, may not my actions under the mistaken name of righteousness be the very worst of offences against him? or, after all, is God to be offended? A handful of animated dust sin against the Majesty of Heaven! An infinite God heed the thoughts formed within the narrow circumference of a human brain!" And thus unbelief would reason on, as indeed it does now; for God, when excluded from any concern in human life, is thought of simply as a mighty force, driving the currents of existence through the veins of nature; and when no longer conceived of as a God of justice, love, and truth, his intelligence is very soon doubted, and the Deity is degraded into mere mechanism, framed of itself many ages ago, by chance. But men cannot disbelieve God permanently; no nation, no one age, ever did; for, in their utter-

most skepticism, there is a something in men's hearts that cannot be stifled, and which at last gets utterance in something like Lord Bacon's words:—"I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this Universal frame is without a mind."

FIFTEEN YOUNG MEN.

At a respectable boarding-house in New-York, a number of years ago, were fifteen young men. Six of them uniformly appeared at the breakfast table, on Sabbath morning, shaved, dressed, and prepared, as to their apparel, for attendance on public worship. They also actually attended both forenoon and afternoon. All became highly respected and useful citizens. The other nine were ordinarily absent from the breakfast table on Sabbath morning. At noon they appeared at the dinner table shaved and dressed in a decent manner. In the afternoon they went out, but not ordinarily to church; nor were they usually seen in the place of worship. One of them is now living, and in a reputable employment; the other eight became openly vicious. All failed in business, and are now dead. Several of them came to an untimely and awfully tragic end.

Many a man may say, as did a worthy and opulent citizen, "The keeping of the sabbath saved me." It will, if duly observed, save all. In the language of its author, "They shall ride upon the high places of the earth." — *Christian Inquirer, Selected.*

BOOK NOTICES.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF PRAYER. An Essay by James Freeman Clarke. Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co. For sale in Montreal by C. Bryson.

THIS is a concise and able treatise on one of the most important of themes. The author, by his frank and candid manner of treating the great subject has put us all under obligations to him. And the American Unitarian Association, (for whom it is published,) by placing it before the public in its present form has rendered good service to the cause of sound religion. In the common run of tracts on prayer, rational difficulties and objections are too generally evaded. Here they are met — met directly, and in the proper spirit — and met, we think, very satisfactorily. The tendencies of multitudes of the very best minds in our age are man-ward rather than God-ward, and the tendency of multitudes more is self-ward, rather than toward anything else. There is no lack of formal faith and formal prayer in every Christian community; but who does not see how much the traditional faith and habits of all churches require to be quickened into vitality by life from on high. If this were accomplished, a change would be wrought which would give a new cast and character to the whole of Christendom. The idea of a God personal and paternal, always loving and always near — this idea, transfused into the consciousness of humanity, and thoroughly incorporated with it, would inspire it with new motive and awaken it to new life. Beside this idea selfishness and sensualism could not long exist — certainly they could not long rule; and with this idea the best philanthropy of our best men within our churches and outside of them would become better still — certainly much more permanent. A sincere recognition of God, as distinguished from that which is merely formal, is a standing want in the world. And any book like this, calculated to help man to a genuine intercourse and vital com-

munion with the heavenly Father is a boon which should be gratefully accepted and highly prized.

THE ELEMENTS OF CHARACTER. By Mary G. Chandler.
Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co. For sale in Montreal by C. Bryson.

A "SMALL book on a great subject." It is evidently written, from a Swedenborgian point of view, but this matters little, where we find the spirit and the philosophy consonant with the Gospel. The author thoroughly understands the structure of character, and her idea thereof is substantially the same as our own. The book contains nine Essays entitled, Character, The human Trinity, Thought, Imagination, Affection, Life, Conversation, Manners, Companionship. We wish we could secure its thoughtful perusal by every young man and woman of our acquaintance.

THE UNITARIAN FAITH.

AIDS IN READING THE BIBLE.

FRESH THOUGHT ON OLD THEMES.

THE TRINITY.

CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES.

THE SAVIOUR.

THE ATONEMENT.

A GOOD LIFE.

Published by the American Unitarian Association, and for sale in Montreal by C. Bryson.

In the Tracts published by the Association just named, the Unitarian community possess a body of religious literature which, for variety of topic and method, clearness of thought, excellence of style, devoutness of tone, and general elevation of aim, may safely challenge comparison. In their competent Christian learning, sound sense, manly reasoning, generous spirit, and high practical and spiritual scope, they form a strong contrast to the feeble,

and worse than feeble, pages so often circulated as tracts from other quarters. The nine volumes whose titles we have specified above, are compilations of these tracts arranged according to their character, under several heads. The volumes would have been much improved by the insertion of an index in each, before the covers were put on. This want, however, may be readily supplied by an index in writing. Bound in cloth and lettered as they are, they make very good looking books, and they will be thankfully welcomed by many persons who desire to preserve their contents in a permanent and convenient form.

INTELLIGENCE.

AUTUMNAL UNITARIAN CONVENTION.—The meeting of the Autumnal Convention of Unitarians is fixed this year for Tuesday, 10th October, at Montreal.

MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL.—During the Anniversary Meetings of this Institution, the new Divinity Hall was dedicated. The Services took place on Wednesday afternoon, June 28th, and in the following order:—

Anthem, "Lift up your heads, ye everlasting doors," &c.; Reading of Scriptures by Elder J. E. Church, of Spring, Pa.; Hymn; Dedicatory Prayer, by Rev. G. W. Hosmer, of Buffalo; Sermon by Rev. E. B. Hall, D.D., of Providence, R.I.; Hymn; Concluding Words and Benediction by President Stebbins.

The new Hall, which is a fine, durable structure, contains a chapel, a commodious library, recitation rooms, kitchen, dinning-room, rooms for steward's family, and rooms for forty students.

In connection with the Anniversary Exercises, sermons were also preached by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, of Brooklyn, N.Y., and Rev. R. R. Shippen of the Unitarian Church, Chicago, Illinois.