

Practical Papers.

THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY REV. W. E. BOARDMAN.

PART II.—HOW ATTAINED.

CHAPTER IV.—BY WAYS (*Continued.*)



HERE are those who have tried nearly every by-way of them all—run each out in turn to the bitter end of disappointment, before finally going to Jesus as *the way*. One such would give us a complete chart of them all in the single sketch of his own blunderings. Such an one is at hand.

THE PASTOR.

He is no blunderer either, in other matters. Few more careful, or wise, or discreet, than he. Abundant success in his pastoral work shews that. And yet he calls himself,—as we shall have occasion to see in the end, in view of the long succession of blunders he made in his efforts to learn the way of sanctification experimentally,—a fool. How and when and where he was convinced, is not at all essential to our chart. Possibly it may have been in connexion with a very delightful work amongst the students of another of our theological seminaries. Such a work there was, and many of the young gentlemen came to see and understand the way of sanctification by faith, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and the pastor knew much of this work and commended it publicly. It would be a glorious thing if, from year to year, each and all of our schools of the prophets could be baptised in this way.

Possibly it was the conscientious leanness of his own soul which made him hunger and thirst for the precious things of God. Not that he was not a devoted Christian and minister. There was no apparent lack of this kind. Indeed he was far more than most others a faithful, earnest, tender, thorough pastor and preacher, and for this very reason he would be the more likely to feel deeply his own want of this very experience of the way of sanctification.

Those who are most earnest in pressing forward, come soonest into the light which reveals their own pollutions. The laggards among the prophets are not apt to have visions of God in his exalted purity and glory, making them exclaim, "Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips." Such a vision—with the live coal from the altar to take away our sins, would be a blessing of unspeakable value to every ambassador of Christ, and there are many who would welcome it gladly. Perhaps it was the increasing desire to do good, and to learn the way to gain the power from God to do it. Such aspirations are indeed angel visitants—not few or far between—in the pastor's heart.

But, however it was, at the time our sketch commences, the pastor had become deeply convinced and was earnestly longing for the experience in question. He was a student, and, student-like, his *first resort was to books*. Whatever his own library contained, or the book-stores could supply, or other libraries could lend, he got and devoured, upon the subject of the higher forms of Christian experience. He pored over the memoirs and writings of the most noted in each of the three classes we have named, "Lutheran," "Wesleyan," and "Oberlinian." He ranged about and fed with the greediness of Pharaoh's lean kine, and gained as much, but no more by it. He read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested, the experiences of all he could hear about, who had found the way to the tree of life and fattened upon its twelve manner of fruits, but he was as lean as ever.

His church had reason to know something of this. If he devoured books as the silkworm does mulberry leaves, for his own food, it gave material for the pulpit and the prayer meeting, which, like the cocoons of the silk-worm, the people had occasion to spin and weave into close-fitting garments for themselves. Like others who write bitter things against themselves, he of course told his people over and over, that they were no better than they ought to be, and were in great need of a deeper work of grace as well as himself. Like Legh Richmond under conviction, unconverted but preaching, he preached his people into convictions like his own, but had no power to point them the way out; for as yet, and for a long while, he did not know it himself.

Meanwhile, he wrote to the living, or visited them, from whom he hoped to receive light. But neither the illustrious dead by their memoirs, nor the living by their words, could give him the light of the way of life. They could tell him what to do—could tell him to consecrate himself, and to believe; but they could not make him understand. The Lord alone could do *that*, and he had not yet learned to go as a child and ask the way.

Strange, we are so slow to learn that the Lord alone can open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and set the prisoner free!

All books, like the book in the Apocalypse, are sealed, until they are opened by Him who sits upon the throne. And the living teacher, though he were an Isaiah, is no better than the dumb, until our ears are opened by the Lord to hear, and our hearts to understand his words. The Word of God itself is only a dead letter to us, until we look to the living Saviour for light, and he then makes it a quickening spirit.

The pastor failed to look to Jesus directly for the light, and so every book from the Bible downwards failed to give it to him.

Baffled in this quarter he turned to another. His next movement was that of humbling himself by taking a bold stand for unpopular truths and reforms. Pulpit and platform and press, groaned under his appeals. He challenged the world to say what it pleased about him, and let them know that he was not to be turned from his course, or kept back by fear of the brand. Relentlessly and heroically he pushed his crusades. Not so much, however, in hope to secure the reforms, as to humble and sanctify himself. And what was the result? Was he humbled and sanctified? No. But lifted up in the pride of his heart, so that he began to despise his brethren who did not come out and stand with him, and stand by him; and although not at all inclined to censoriousness, it was hard for him to withhold denunciations of their course. At last,—seeing as he did the rising pride of his heart, when he looked to see it thoroughly humbled in the dust,—hope from this quarter died out and he turned to another.

It would have been strange, indeed, if he had not tried making the outside of the cup and the platter clean, to sanctify the inside. He did not indeed pull up his carpets, and sell them, with every other elegance or curiosity or luxury of his house, as some have done. His tasteful and excellent wife might have put in some serious objections if he had proposed it. Possibly he thought so, and therefore said nothing to her about it. Another minister, who had gathered a splendid library, sold all and gave to the poor, under a similar pressure, reserving only a few devotional books, and a few absolutely indispensable.

Our pastor was wiser than that. He left his library complete. It seems not to have once occurred to him that putting the light out of his library might bring it into his mind; at any rate he did not try it. The mint-and-anise process, of course, reached his wardrobe and person, though not to any very ridiculous extreme. He did not go so far as the lady who sold her wedding ring, and then disposed of the old watch, the heirloom of her paternal ancestry, because conscience would not down at her bidding, and because she hoped by stripping her person of the last jewels and ornaments, to bedeck her spirit with the higher graces coveted.

But whatever he did or did not do, he failed in all, and gave up hope in this quarter in turn.

He had now tried, first, inquiring of books and men for the way, *and failed*. Next, he had sought humility of heart by braving reproach, *and failed*. Next, he had tried punctilious observances, regulating dress, and time, and occupations, and expenses, and intercourse with the world, and everything by rule, as a means of regulating the heart, *and failed*.

What next?

Now he turned to seek the Holy Spirit by prayer, to do the work which he took it for granted would be done—that is, cleanse his soul and give him to feel that he was really holy. This he pushed more earnestly than all before. Every book upon prayer was searched, the Bible above all. Every example.

of the prevalence of man with his God, and every promise was weighed with the care of one who is gathering and sifting gold dust for his bags. Not simply to be treasured either, but to be used rather, as bank-notes are by the holder who presents them at the counter for payment.

Through all his struggles and troubles, his church, of course, shared largely, whether they knew it or not, what was passing in his heart. And more than ever he had now come upon a course which was suitable to urge upon them. They were stirred up to pray as they never had been before. Pray to test the power of prayer. Pray to sanctify themselves. Pray that the Lord would come down and work in pentecostal power in their own hearts and in all around them. And they did pray—but their pastor prayed more; and more than they all. Hour after hour, alone with his God, he wrestled with the pertinacity of a Jacob, but not like Jacob to prevail.

Time passed on; day after day, week after week flew by, and yet the blessing delayed. The Spirit did not come upon either pastor or people. He was confounded, and began to inquire what it could mean. He was at last completely at his wit's end, and falling before the Lord confessed it. His plans, one after one, had all been tried out and failed. He could devise nothing more; now what *should* he do? There was nothing more that he could do but to *inquire of the Lord* what to do. For the first time therefore in all this history of successive struggles he was prepared to come to the Lord himself, not to have any plan of his own confirmed and carried out, but to ask after the Lord's plan, and be led into it. And this he did most heartily. He threw himself upon the Saviour to be shewn the way, and there he rested the matter.

Rising from before the Lord, he opened his Bible at the oft read seventh of Romans, and read over again the history in miniature of his own vain struggles in the weary months and years gone by. Coming to the closing question, "*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" he read it and re-read it with a sigh, and then passed on to the answer, "*I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.*" The light flashed through his soul, that Jesus was the deliverer from sin, just as he had been his deliverer from condemnation. And springing to his feet he could scarce restrain himself from leaping for joy. "What a fool I have been! What a fool I have been! Strange, I have never seen this before. There never has been an hour through all this time, when if I had seen any one doing to obtain forgiveness of sin what I have been doing to obtain purification from sin, that I should not have said, 'O foolish man, you are rejecting Christ *the way* in vain efforts to be saved in your own way.' What a fool I have been! What a fool I have been!"

Light came in like a flood. His joy was tumultuous.

By-and-bye, when it calmed down to something like the even flow of peace, he opened his Bible and ran it through and through, everywhere seeing the confirmation of the fact, that sanctification like justification, is by faith in the Lord Jesus, that the just shall *live* as well as be *made alive* by faith.

And now commenced a new era in his preaching and teaching. The days of scolding were over and gone. He had found green pastures for his flock, and he delighted to lead them there, and they were delighted to be led.

Now also came the beginning of a revival in that church, the end whereof has not yet been seen at this writing. Through all the days of scolding and driving, neither pastor nor people could do for the cause of the Redeemer what now it is easy for them to do. For now they have a mind to the work; and they work with a will and a wisdom new in their history. Many a dark place never ventured upon before, has now been undertaken and done. And so the wilderness all around is made glad for them, and the desert begins to blossom as the rose.

Passing now to the illustration of the progress and power gained by abiding in Jesus, the same course will be followed. The Bible, and memoirs, and hitherto unrecorded facts, known to be facts, will be the staple of our material. God grant grace and wisdom in the work! To him be glory, all the glory, and always the glory. Amen.

(To be continued.)

ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

BY THE EDITOR.



E cannot too carefully guard the truth that salvation is alone by the power of God: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Nevertheless we know that it pleases God to exercise that power in answer to prayer. I desire to present here a few illustrations of this truth which may encourage God's children to "wait upon the Lord."

Everybody has heard of the great revival of 1857-8, but probably there are many who never heard of its beginnings, and who do not know that it resulted from believing prayer. It may be profitable to recall some of the circumstances:—

In the year 1857, four young men, whose hearts the Lord had touched, met in a small school-house near Connor, in the County of Antrim, Ireland, to pray for God's blessing on the preached Word, and on the Sunday-schools and prayer-meetings of that place. Soon a few kindred spirits joined them, and for months the meetings were continued without any visible results. In December one young man was awakened, and, after a painful struggle, found peace in believing. In January, 1858, a lad in one of the Sunday-school classes was converted. Slowly but steadily the tide rose. Prayer-meetings began to multiply, and faith in the power of prayer was greatly increased. For eighteen months it flowed on in a calm, but ever-widening stream, and thousands were awakened and brought to God.

In the beginning of 1859, a young convert from Connor visited his

friends in another parish. Through his conversation and earnest prayers the whole family were awakened and brought to Christ. These became missionaries in the neighborhood; within a month large numbers were powerfully awakened, and in the months succeeding, in barns and school-houses and dwelling-places, hundreds sought and found peace.

In Ballymena the work began in April. The first convert was a lad of sixteen. The work here spread rapidly, and with wonderful power. Persons were struck with sudden conviction in the markets and streets. Business was almost suspended, and in scores of houses could be heard, day and night, the cry for mercy, the wrestling prayer, the song of praise, mingled with the glad shout of new-born souls. Groups in the fields and highways, in the streets and around open windows, listening to some word of exhortation, or joining in earnest prayer, gave evidence of deep and wide-spread interest in the matter of personal salvation.

In Coleraine the work began in one of the public schools. A boy was observed by the master to be under deep conviction, and he advised him to go home and call upon the Lord in private, sending with him another boy who had found peace the day before. The two turned into an empty house and knelt in prayer, and soon the troubled heart found rest in Christ. Immediately he turned back to the school-room, and going up to the teacher, said "Oh! Mr. —, I am so happy; I have the Lord Jesus in my heart." The simple testimony went straight to the hearts of the other pupils. Boy after boy slipped quietly out; and shortly after, when the master looked over the wall of the play-ground, he saw a number of his boys upon their knees silently praying. He turned back and said to the pupil who had first found peace, "Do you think you can go and pray with these boys?" The lad went at once, but no sooner did he begin to pray than the silent grief of the mourning ones broke into an exceeding bitter cry which reached the ears of the boys yet in the room, and seemed to pierce their hearts. As with one consent they fell upon their knees, and began to pray for mercy. The cry reached the ears of the girls in the room above, and soon they were all upon their knees, weeping and calling upon God. The sound reached the adjoining streets, and the passers by, recognizing it as the cry of those who "look upon Him whom they have pierced, and mourn," hurried in and joined their prayers with those of the children; and so the day passed, and not until eleven o'clock at night could the meeting be brought to a close. From this time the work spread like fire among stubble, and thousands were brought to God.

In the town of Belfast the work was, if possible, still more remarkable. Two young men from Connor visited Belfast for the purpose of telling what God had been doing in their native place. The work began at once; the whole city was moved. A prayer-meeting was held in the Botanical Gardens, at which not less than *thirty-five thousand* people were present. It is computed that *ten thousand souls* were converted in Belfast alone.

This blessed work grew in power from day to day. It spread all through the North of Ireland, through England, Scotland and Wales, and then gathering up its strength rolled, like a tidal wave, across the Atlantic, and

broke in floods of salvation on the shores of the New World. In the United States, the focus of the movement was the world-famed "Fulton Street prayer-meeting." Here, in the very centre of one of the greatest commercial cities in the world, began those "noon prayer-meetings," which have exerted such a blessed influence on the religious life of this continent. Eternity alone will reveal the good accomplished; but enough is known already to fill every pious heart with adoring gratitude, and to strengthen the faith of God's people in the power of prayer.

As soon as the existence of the Fulton street prayer-meeting became known, requests for prayer began to pour in from all parts of the country, and even from foreign lands, and these were soon followed by joyful testimonies of prayer abundantly answered. These requests took a wider range. Some were for individuals, some for churches, some for revivals. An extract or two in illustration, from Dr. Prime's "Five years of Prayer," may be interesting to many:—

An aged pastor, residing in an interior county in the State of New York, made the following statement:—"About six months ago I was in this meeting, and asked prayer for a very hopeless, wayward young man, the only son of his mother, and she a widow. When the poor woman found I was coming to the city, she came to me, and, with many tears, besought me that I would come to the Fulton street prayer-meeting, and ask you to help her pray for the conversion of her son. I also asked you to pray that God would pour out His Spirit upon my people, and grant us a general revival of religion. . . . I went home and went to work. Soon it was very evident that the Holy Spirit was among us. Christians were quickened to prayer, and sinners were awakened, and were enquiring what they should do to be saved. Some were converted, and among the very first was that ungodly young man. . . . He was away from home at the time when he experienced the great change. . . . The first thing he was impelled to do was to go and see his poor, praying, agonizing mother. So he saddled a horse and rode to his home. He rode into the yard, and sprang from his horse, and ran toward her. She exclaimed, 'Tell me, what is the matter?' 'Mother,' said the boy, 'I have found the Saviour!' 'How long ago is it, my son, since you began to be anxious about religion?' 'Only about two weeks ago.' 'There! there!' said the mother, 'that was just the time when we began to pray for you, and when I sent to the Fulton street prayer-meeting, asking them to help me pray for you!' This young man is now a professor of religion, and is an active and useful Christian."

Let the following encourage those who are toiling in the blessed work of Sunday-school teaching. In the prayer-meeting a young German said:—"About five months ago you were asked to pray for a Sabbath-school class of six little boys. I am here to say that all those little boys have been converted. Two years ago you were asked to pray for their teacher, who was supposed to be in consumption. The Lord spared him, and raised him up to health. He is now a member of a theological seminary, and is preparing for the work of the ministry."

Reader! have you a friend who is unsaved! Try the method indicated in the following paragrah:—

"Early in the revival, two Christian friends were conversing on the subject of being burdened for souls, when one said, 'I have such a friend, (naming him,) for

whose conversion I ask you to unite with me in praying.' The other replied that he also had a similar case on his mind, and it was mutually agreed that they would make them special subjects of prayer for ten days. On the tenth day one of the friends met the subject of his prayer in the street, and spoke to him about the interests of his soul, when the tears started, and with much emotion he told him that for ten days he had been under deep conviction, and was earnestly seeking the Saviour. On mentioning this to his friend, he was surprised to learn that the same thing had taken place with the one for whom he was so deeply concerned, *his* first impressions dating also from the same time as the other. They are now both rejoicing in hope."

Space will not allow of other instances; but these may suffice to show that God still hears and answers prayer. Let all who are waiting for "the promise of the Father," be encouraged to pray on. The answer will come,—all the more abundant because of seeming delay. "Though it tarry, wait for it." Let it no more be said,—"No one stirreth up himself to lay hold upon God," but let every believing heart stir up the gift that is in them, and soon the clouds will break in "shower of blessing." Lo, even now there is a "sound of abundance of rain."

THE CLASS MEETING.

BY H. C.



THE caption I have written may lead the readers to expect a homily on some text that has done duty in Scriptural defence of the class meeting. But I purpose nothing of the sort. It is equally superfluous to quote Scripture or look for apostolic precedent for the endorsement of the acknowledged worth and expediency of the class meeting, as to require written testimony that Mr. Wesley held prayer meetings in order to establish the propriety of believers meeting together for prayer.

Christian communion has proved itself productive of such results as are assured in the Scriptures; and as to the manner in which it is conducted, Methodism has not doubted the expediency of that form in which its fathers framed it. To set forth the value of this time-honored institution is not my intention. Abler pens have written its worth, and experience has gone deeper than the keenest pen can go, to become enriched beyond description. But it is because there is a painful decline in the popularity of the class meeting I am moved to write of it, and, if it be possible, to arrive at some of the causes of that decline. They may not be so chronic as to defy removal. To do this I purpose setting out on a tour of inspection, imagining as I do, that the difficulty may in part be traced to the institution itself. I must be pardoned, therefore, if with as pure a motive as ever put disguise on a detective for the apprehension of the faulty, I assume for the nonce the otherwise questionable tactics of an eaves-dropper or spy.

Setting out on this mission with as profound a loyalty for the class meeting as if I had been born of Methodist parentage, I cannot avoid a sense of pain that a means of such value to some should become a burden to any, and an occasion of prejudice to others. But it is still harder to reflect upon the possible fact that the failure of popularity is traceable to weakness in the observance or conduct of the institution itself. Determining to find out whether this fact be true, my mind is made up to visit first the class-room itself, and then call upon a few of the delinquent members; and selecting a class that nominally numbers thirty, I find myself peeping in at the door of the little room where it meets,—and as it is too early I take notes of the room itself. It is nine feet by twelve; floor uncarpeted and unscrubbed; a large box stove, that threatens to roast the fraction of the class that can squeeze into the room; one small window, letting in light through a stained buff blind, making the place as sombre as if it were a sepulchre; some very uncomfortable benches, with not even the relief of a table, make up the furniture. Was it not natural to draw the contrast between that room and the stained-windowed church to which it was appended, and ask whether surrounding circumstances were calculated to chase the gloom that may be borne into it by some child of affliction? But as it is my business to get information where I can, I employ a leisure moment in questioning the sexton, and I ask him of the prosperity of the class and the proportion of attendance. In this conversation I learn that some of the members are delicate; and I was left to judge whether they or the trustees were the most to blame if they refused to risk a frail body and a consequently depressed mind in such a cheerless seven by nine corner as that class-room.

Peeping in at the door as the members gather, I am disposed to expect a better attendance than if the meeting was held after a long public service, when the members are fatigued. But the dropping in of one after another in such slow succession confirmed the sexton's statements. The leader was late, and I overheard that it was his habit; and in the animadversions I listened to, I could not avoid the impression that such neglect might neutralize the purest devotion, and thereby spoil measureably the effect of the meeting.

It would not be proper to note down the heart breathings of the faithful, or the memorized expressions of the formalist, and the guarded sentences of some whose countenances indicated that they felt themselves passing through an ordeal rather than performing a pleasing duty. But the lean and hasty expressions of the leader struck me as in no way fitting to instruct or encourage, and assured me that he had not considered the needs of his class long before he appeared in their midst. Had he come from his closet, starting early enough to catch the bracing morning air, and see God in nature during a leisurely walk among singing birds that tried to put a smile on his face, his body would have been fresh, his heart happy, his mind fruitful, and he would have injected a cheerfulness and freshness into the service which was impossible in his hurried appearance, with scarcely breath enough to lead the devotions of his class. And had he in the intervals of meeting consulted such pages as would give light on the philosophy of religious life and the intricacies

of religious experience, he would far more effectually have met the claims which a class has on its leader. For instance, he would not have attributed to Providence the leanness of that brother's soul when he knew that the heaviness of which he spoke was more traceable to his neglect of the prayer-meeting, his sleeping under the sermon, and his hunger for wealth. Nor would he have spoken so assuredly of the crowning of that young member whom he knew to be a better expert at the dance than at the explanation of a Sabbath-school lesson.

From this hasty peep from behind the screen I gathered the following conclusions, viz:—First, that the class-meeting should, as other institutions of the church, be provided for in agreement with the demands of a growing age. In days when the log-house was the rule for the dwelling, a comfortless classroom could be more easily tolerated. Now that Christians come from carpeted floors, it does not seem absolutely necessary for them to incur the self-denial of doing penance for an hour in a cheerless class-room. And even if the piety of some prevents their feeling the change, the task it is to the feelings and patience of the majority is measurably a cruelty. It is not the policy of Protestantism to punish the body for the good of the soul. Nor is the intelligence of the age so blind as to expect members of any church to become very enthusiastic in their loyalty for spiritual helps through the channels that offend the sensibilities.

Further,—The age in which we live is emphatically an educational one; and no branch more than Methodism respects the universal clamor for knowledge. In agreement with the vast improvements in mental culture, the pulpit has been improved, the curriculum in the education of ministers has been advanced. This is a growth from necessity, and it is deemed absolutely necessary that the voice of the pulpit should not be coarser than that of the pew. Twaddle, if ever admissible, is out of date; and though the same old gospel must be preached, the same doctrines enunciated, it must all be done in a manner not to shock the ear of him whose heart it is intended to reach.

Thus much may alike be said of the important work of class leading. Informed minds have reasonable expectations of those to whose care they are confided; and although the piety of uneducated leaders will, among all true Christians, compensate for the effect of early disadvantages, the great bulk of the membership expect, and have reason to expect, as efficient provision for them in this particular department as the church can command. Piety is not the only requisite for a preacher; nor would education be a sole requisite for a leader; but, if in the pulpit the combination of these two qualifications are essential, is it not equally necessary in the class? Admitting that many faithful leaders are the victims of an early superficial education, there are none, methinks, worthy of the title *faithful* who are not furnishing themselves to the best of their ability in the use of every available channel, for the responsibility of the office they hold. The care of souls is upon them; and when it is considered that in some instances the mind of many under their care has been favored with a careful training they will agree in the wisdom of making the class meeting as palatable as possible to all such. And it is because I

know that a Christian student may, without a diploma, gather largely and distribute freshly week by week to his class, I speak thus. No mention of this growing want would be made if all who educationally are placed at a disadvantage were *fatally* unqualified as leaders. I am conversant with too many cases to the contrary; but I am confident that too many wait for the inspiration of the class-room to furnish intelligent matter to break to the hungry that wait patiently for food; and in the failure some are induced to come rarely, if at all.

Visiting some who are in the habit of omitting the class meeting from their list of duties, I may jot down some of the excuses given, and which do no more credit to the head than heart. Brother C. says he does not enjoy the meeting, and therefore thinks it better to stay away. He admits he used to enjoy it, but is not certain whether or not he is to blame for the change in his feelings. Brother D. does not go because brother E., who meets in that class, does not live up to his profession; so he concludes he won't either. Brother F. conscientiously believes, though he only lately believed it, that class meeting is not a wise institution in a Protestant church, and yet he allows himself to remain a member of such a church. Sister M. who can go to market, and always does her own shopping, is not in sufficient health to go to class meeting. Sister N. would go if her husband would. For the same reason she seems disposed to go to heaven—not unless. Young Frank and a host of others can't see the use of going to class if the class does no more for members than it does for their parents. And so on, *ad infinitum*, the omission is not without excuse—but what excuses! O for so much of Quakerism as will blend the life to the profession; a little more of the loyalty that will send members into the field if a battalion stays behind; more of that primitive pluck that lets no storm keep the church goer at home, nor miles intervening any excuse for absence.

Would that a commission were appointed to enquire into the weaknesses of the class meeting wing of this great Methodistic building, and that the church may yet witness the recurrence of that class meeting loyalty that obtained in the early times of its history! A Delilah has been manipulating our secret of strength; may Methodism's God mercifully turn aside her hand.

SOME employments may be better than others; but there is no employment so bad as the having none at all. The mind will contract a rust and an unfitness for every thing, and a man must either fill up this time with good, or at least innocent business, or it will run to the worst sort of waste—to sin and vice.

THE full assurance of faith, always attended with the full assurance of hope, never fails to be productive of perfect love, even the love that casteth out fear.

LIFE WORK.



N the western extremity of the plain of Thebes, is a mass of high limestone cliffs, cleft by two deep ravines that lead up into the very heart of the hills. The one is the valley of the tombs of the Kings—the other of the tombs of the Priests: the Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral of ancient Thebes.

Ascending one of these ravines, you enter a sculptured portal in the face of the cliff, and stand in a long and lofty gallery opening into successive halls and chambers. The walls are covered with white stucco, and this in turn is covered with paintings, in brilliant coloring, fresh as when laid on thousands of years ago. No modern palaces could be more completely ornamented; but the interest we feel in these rock-hewn chambers is enhanced by the fact that they are not palaces but tombs—the tombs of the ancient Theban kings. In the paintings upon the walls the traveller beholds not only a vivid representation of ancient Egyptian life and religion, but in some sort a history of the king himself. Each of these Theban kings began his reign by preparing his sepulchre, and in some instances the visitor passes at once from the most brilliant decorations to rough, unhewn rock. The king had died in the midst of his labor, and the grave closed over his unfinished work.

There is something analagous to this in human life. Every man is engaged, whether consciously or not, in a work that shall live after him as the monument of his virtues, his follies, or his crimes. He is building the structure in which his name and his memory shall be enshrined through the coming ages, and on which coming generations shall gaze with admiration or with scorn. Or, perhaps, instead of rearing some imperishable structure, he may, like a thoughtless child, be building houses on the sand, which the next returning wave shall sweep away. There is a wide difference in the results of different human lives. Some are splendid failures and some are splendid crimes; while others are vague and meaningless, and, so far as any healthful influence on the world is concerned, had better never have been.

There are many men who, in regard to life's great purposes, build without any definite plan. They go on, in a desultory way, adding room to room and wing to wing, and in the end there is a mere aggregation of materials without beauty or symmetry, and, it may be, unfit for any useful purpose. Most failures in life have been owing to one of two causes: either there was no definite plan by which to work, or else there was not sufficient energy to execute the design. The one class waste good materials in building unsightly and useless structures; the other class erect magnificent castles—in the air. "A man's purpose in life," says a modern writer, "should be like a river which was born of a thousand rills in the mountains; and when at last it had reached its manhood in the plain, though if you watch you shall see little eddies that seem as if they had changed their minds and were going back again to the mountains, yet all its mighty current flows changeless to the sea."

So goes the mighty St. Lawrence, never losing its way or changing its direction, for the thousand streams that fall into it on the right hand and on the left, but only using them to increase its current, and bearing them onward in its resistless course.

In the fashioning of character, as well as in the erection of buildings, an all-important point is the *foundation*. With multitudes the failure is just here. The foundation is bad, and, as a necessary consequence, the whole structure is insecure. There are some who build on *sensuality*. So did the prodigal, of whom we read in the gospel; but it brought him at last to herd with swine, and starve in the "far country." Some build on *covetousness*, and sacrifice conscience and self-respect to the greed of gold. So did the young man who came to Christ saying, "What shall I do that I may have eternal life?" and then, when Christ said, "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." So did the rich fool, who said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years," but that very night he died a spiritual bankrupt. So did Judas, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, and the sad and hopeless end of a suicide proved the madness of his choice. Some, again, build on *ambition*. So did Alexander. He swept on his path of victory till the earth was subdued before him, and then wept because he had no more worlds to conquer. At last he set fire to a city, and died in a scene of debauchery. So did Cæsar; and yet having conquered 800 cities, and dyed his garments in the blood of one million of his foes, he was assassinated by his most intimate friends in the very place that had been the scene of his triumphs. So did Napoleon; but after being the scourge of Europe, and the desolator of his country, he died in captivity, unfriended and almost alone.

A few there are who build upon a firmer basis. Believing that existence is not bounded by the horizon of the present life, they choose *truth* for their foundation, and build for an eternal future. Setting before them an object worthy the dignity of redeemed manhood, they work at it with unfaltering hand. Out of the toil and the strife comes a character that is at once symmetrical and strong, and a life is developed the influence of which shall never die out of the world. Let us take heed, then, what we build and how we build it, for the structure when finished is to be the dwelling-place of the soul forever. Character is eternal, and he whose life has been a failure or a mistake, cannot return when life is ended to try again, or to rectify the mistakes he has made; for it has been settled by authority which none may dispute, that "whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap."

A. SUTHERLAND.

THOUGH good works may be our Jacob's staff to walk with on earth, yet they cannot be our Jacob's ladder to climb to heaven with. To lay the salve of our services upon the wound of our sins is as if a man who is stung by a wasp should wipe his face with a nettle; or as if a person should busy himself in supporting a tottering fabric with a burning fire-brand.—*Secker*.

THOMAS COOPER

BY REV. E. BARRASS.



N interesting 12mo volume, being the autobiography of Thomas Cooper, is now before us. It is a charming book, one that no reader will willingly lay down until he has finished its perusal. Few men have had a more eventful career than the person now mentioned. For years he was a Chartist lecturer in England, and was confined in a dungeon because it was deemed unsafe to allow him to inflame the public mind. Alas! too, he became a sceptic, and for a long time he was in a worse state than Egyptian bondage. Happily he was restored to the faith, and became a "lecturer on Christianity," and for several years he has spent his time in delivering lectures throughout Great Britain and Ireland. In early life Mr. Cooper was a Methodist, and labored hard as a local preacher: he became convinced that it was his duty to be holy, and therefore sought and obtained this blessing. Hear his own words:—

"Very soon some one put into my hand 'Sigston's Life of William Bramwell.' It proved to be a spark that for a time lit my whole soul into a flame. I had heard members of the Society talk of holiness of heart, and of the 'blessing of sanctification,' and of 'a clean heart,' and of 'perfect love,' or the 'second blessing,' as some called it. I read again such of Wesley's sermons as touched on the nature of holiness; I found that Wesley taught 'sanctification,' but could never learn that Wesley himself professed to be sanctified. Fletcher's experience was fully described, and professed, and taught, as what all might experience. The experience of Hester Ann Rogers—her's is a well-known book to Wesleyans—also seemed very full and clear. I had already been reasoning with myself—'what I want is to be holy. I want to cease from sinning. The pardon of sin is really of imperfect value if I continue to sin. I shall need pardoning again. It is entire devotedness to God that I need; I ought to be devoted to him. It must be right to be so devoted, and it must be wrong to live without perfect obedience. Does he not ask me for it in His word? Does he not say, 'Be ye holy?' If he commands it, it must be possible to obey. God never mocks man; he would not command if it were not possible. But I am mocking God if I profess to be His, and yet have not given Him my whole heart.'

"I reasoned further, that as I had come out from the world, and joined myself to God's people, I should be acting insincerely if I did not live fully to God. My plans of learning and study? Alas! they had all been suspended. And I reasoned that I must not resume them to kill my spirituality of mind. I must have this holiness of heart; all other things are despicable, compared to it. I had been taken out by a local preacher to begin to preach, and put on the plan as a prayer leader; and the earnestness of my prayers for holi-

ness soon raised a flame around me. Others began to pray for holiness, and then in company with a few earnest young men, I began to meet once a week in the house of a female class leader, who for many years had been noted for fervid devotion. I read Bramwell by three in the morning. I was swallowed up by the one thought of reaching perfect love,—of living without sin,—of feeling I was always and fully in God's favor. I prayed for it, we all prayed for it, at the weekly meeting we held in the house of the devoted woman I spoke of. One night we had sung 'Wrestling Jacob,' the hymn which has so often been styled the masterpiece of the Wesleyan hymn book, commencing,

'Come, O thou traveller unknown,'

We had all sung the hymn with wrapt fervour, but I had sung one verse with an earnestness of feeling and an agony of resolve, that I think I never sang another verse with in all my life.

'In vain thou strugglest to get free,
I never will unloose my hold !
Art Thou the Man that died for me ?
The secret of Thy love unfold !
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know.'

We sang over and over again, on our knees, 'Wrestling I will not let Thee go!' till at last I sprang upon my feet, crying, 'I *will* believe, I *do* believe;' and the very saying of the words, with all the strength of resolve, seemed to lift me above the earth,—and I kept on believing, according to the lesson I had learned in the Life of Bramwell. No thought of consequences that might happen, no fear of the possibility of failure, could prevent me from confessing and professing, with impressive fervor, that God had sanctified my soul. The example was wondrously infectious; hundreds in the town and circuit began to pray for holiness of heart, and many professed also to obtain it. How long I maintained the profession of it, I cannot say with exactness. It was for but part of a year, perhaps not more than half a year. But I well remember that I was in a religious state that I have never reached since. For some months I never struck a boy in my school, and told the children I should strike no more. And the children used to look at me so wistfully, when I spoke to them tenderly and lovingly, if any had done wrong. I instituted prayer four times a day, with singing, in my school; and I have had many testimonies in after life, to the good impressions made on the minds of some of the children.

"If throughout eternity in heaven, I be as happy as I often was, for whole days, during that short period of my religious life, it will be heaven indeed. Often for several days together I felt close to the Almighty—felt I was His own, and His entirely. I felt in the wandering of the will, no inclination to yield to sin; and when temptation came, my whole soul wrestled for victory till the temptation fled."

IS IT IN VAIN ?



PERHAPS there are few words so full of sadness as these two, "IN VAIN." They speak of loss, of disappointment, of great longings, and desires, and efforts, which have failed of their end. Do not some of us know what it is to watch long the slow decline of one dear to us—the eager, quiet haste with which new measures are tried—the hope that clings and clings, and will not let go its hold till the hopeless words come, "All in vain," and we strive no longer? Or who amongst us does not know what it is to wrestle and pray for one, not sick in body, but in soul? And again and again we are fain to cry out, "In vain, in vain;" and though, by God's grace, hope return, surely there is no such dull despair as throbs in these words.

We know something of it; but does it never make us wonder if we are not causing our God to look down upon us, and to say, as He views his dealings toward us, and our strange acceptance of them, "In vain?" St. Paul could say of himself that the grace of God was not bestowed upon him in vain. But do not we, for the most part, live and act as if it were in vain for *us*?

Sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, how is it that you so often "go mourning all your days," as if there were no promises, no hope, no Christ, no Holy Spirit? What complainings there are of darkness and doubtings, coldness and want of heart and feeling, failings in temper and manner, and a general recognition as of a great *inconsistency* in life!

"Born again"—into God's kingdom of light, and joy, and peace; living in it in darkness, trouble, and unrest. "Born again"—the sons of God; living as strangers, and afar off. "Born again"—to be conquerors over sin; daily and often hourly succumbing to its power. "Born again"—to work for God, and often finding his work an arduous and weary task. "Born again"—that Christ may reign in us for ever, and hardly conscious of his presence. "Born again"—by the power of the Holy Spirit, with Him to be our Guide and Teacher, and knowing Him little more than in name.

What is the meaning, what the cause of such fatal contradictions? Why, abounding in such privileges, do we live entirely below them? It cannot be that God has not meant what He has said, or that He means it for a chosen few, or that He has forgotten to be gracious, so we must look for the trouble elsewhere; and where but in ourselves? Our heavenly Father has made ample provision for the upright, holy, consistent, working life of his children, but I think it is that we are not in a *position* to receive them. This may be a startling thought, but is it not a true one?

When God has made such perfect and ample provision for us, and is willing and longing to bestow, can there be any other reason why we do not receive excepting that we are holding ourselves in such a position that we *cannot* receive it?

It seems like this: If a man's hands are already full, they cannot receive anything fresh in them. But do you say, Ah! I am not full; I am wretched, miserable, knowing nothing of the life of victory over sin, joy in the Holy Ghost, the abiding presence of Christ, that seems the lot of some Christians? Well, is not that it? You are so full of yourself, your feelings, your doubts, your darkness, your thoughts of yourself and others, that you have no room for your Saviour? You have received Him by faith as your Redeemer from the penalty of sin; but have you not been looking to *yourself*, your resolutions, prayers, readings, experience, to find in them your redeemer from the

power of sin in your life? Not that you do not need all these, nor that they are not both right and necessary; but have you not been, as it were, hugging your infirmities to you, and letting them, together with your religious exercises, hide Christ, instead of using these latter as means of fellowship with Himself? Thus, instead of being free and open in the sunshine of God's presence, your life has become a bondage, and far greater than any outward bondage, inasmuch as it is one which you have imposed on yourself, that springs up out of your own heart.

God never meant it to be thus. His way is one in which "wayfaring men, though *fools*, shall not err therein;" and how can we in any way get astray, save that we cease to hold his hand, and to look for the guidance of his loving eye? But must you not, somehow or other, have got wrong, and slipped away from Him, since your life is so unsatisfactory and unprofitable, because so Christless?

I think there are two reasons for this. The first, that you are not wholly given up to God; the second, that you are looking and trusting to yourself instead of to Him; and therefore all his love and sympathy, his guiding and teaching, his tender drawings and loving corrections, have been for the most part in vain. He was willing and faithful; you, unwilling and untrusting, and thus *you* have marred his work. Do not you *want* to be entirely his? to give yourself thoroughly to Him, keeping nothing from Him? So long as you keep *anything* back from Him it will hang a dead weight upon you. You need not think you will *lose* by giving all into his hands; they are so tender, so gentle. You will find He wants to take nothing from you; but to enjoy it all with you; and for those things that in your heart you know you cannot have, if you will have Christ, they will fall away of themselves as you touch Him; for his touch is holy. Oh, why hold anything apart from Him who will bless all? Whatever you dread or fear, shared with Him, will turn to hope and promise.

And for the doubts and darkness that oppress you? We read of a man in the "Pilgrim's Progress" who, as he went through the valley, was tormented by whispers from evil ones, "and he had not the wit to put his fingers in his ears." Have you been wiser than he hitherto? But now will you not be willing to give yourself so wholly to the Lord, that you will turn your back upon them, and your face to Christ? And you know it is only when you take your face away from his that all looks so bad—when you look at what you cannot do, instead of at what He can do.

And for your will that is so strong and imperious, and will not die? I know of but one remedy. Once and for all give it definitely up to God, and so often as you feel it is coming back, go to Him and remind Him that it is his; *believe* that He has taken it, *act* as if it were (and it is) no longer your own.

How act? No longer by sight, looking at everything and everyone excepting at your God, but by fully trusting Him to whom you have fully consecrated yourself. Act by faith, the simple outstretching of your heart to the Lord Jesus—and what a welcome He gives to such outstretching! You will wonder that you never did it before. And then, having trusted Him for one thing, do not, as has been so often the way before, snatch yourself back as if you had no right to it, as if you became afraid of yourself when you are hopeful and glad; but, instead, go right forward. However trembling your hold is, Jesus will not mistake it. Very likely you may do so yourself, and want to take it away, for fear it is not right, and the devil will be very busy to induce you to loosen your grasp; but hang on to God. Let your only dread be to turn away from Him, and let anything else intervene; and even that need not be a dread, for, given into his hands, it will turn to hope and confidence in Him. In *Him*, and only in Him. Danger comes when anything is

severed from his presence; but so soon as we apprehend this danger, let us quickly turn to Him, and He will make it right.

In such a life as this, spent with Jesus—and daily, through the guiding and teaching of the blessed Holy Spirit, learning more—much will arise and meet us. Infinite needs, of which we never dreamt, perhaps. And, besides that, the more we see his holiness, the more we shall realize of our own corruption and sinfulness. Yet, abiding with Him, the one will not oppress us, for the God who supplies “all our need” is with us; the other will not overwhelm, for it is our Saviour who holds us. And besides all this, being *wholly* given up to Him, *wholly* trusting Him, real living life will begin for us.

We have been looking on failure and sin as something to be expected, something simply inevitable, and to be borne much in the same way as we bear a physical ailment. Now we fix our eyes on something different. We see, not our weakness, not our foolishness, not our natural propensities (these we have always known, and for the future must only look at *with*, and not apart from God), but “we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honor . . . able to succor them that are tempted” (Heb. ii. 9, 18). And you know his succor is not any half-help. When we put a matter into his hands, He does not leave any of it undone. And so surely as we commit ourselves in sin and temptations, be they great or small, unto Him, He *will* succor us; and so surely as we strive to fight single-handed, and forget to use the succor He has provided, we shall fail. Is it not so? Which way shall you choose? Surely you will not waver. Take God for your strength, take Him as your confidence. Be full of confidence in Him.

We are not told that those who follow the Lamb thus fully shall have no trials, and sorrows, and temptations; indeed, we find a verse that says, “*many* are the afflictions of the righteous.” But that is not the whole of it; the end gives us this confidence, which is hope, and power, and life—“the Lord delivereth him out of them *all*.”

Let us live, then, in his great might. Belonging to Him, trusting to Him, we need not fear. “Troops flushed with the confidence of victory are irresistible;” and shall a soldier of the cross dare to hold back and turn coward, led by the Lord Jesus Christ?

And, for the rest, you have given yourself to God—your will, your circumstances, your all—you have taken Him for your strength, your confidence, your trust, and now *live* on Him. Forget yourself, the self which will try so hardly and warily to come forward; let it go, treat it as a cumbrous, troublesome thing; it is too clever and strong for you, therefore bring it to God, and leave it with Him. In Him you will find more and more boundless love and wisdom, fathomless, tenderest sympathy.

“For all my sins His pardoning grace,
For all my woes and wants his loving-kindness;
For darkest shades the smiling of God’s face,
And Christ’s own hand to lead me in my blindness.”

God Himself—what more can the most longing heart desire?

N. B.—The above will be published in tract form.

HEAVENWARD.—My horse invariably comes home in less time than he makes the journey out. He pulls the carriage with a hearty good will when his face is towards home. Should not I also both suffer and labor the more joyously because my way lies towards heaven, and I am on pilgrimage to my Father’s house, my soul’s dear home and resting place?

FANATICISM—SANCTIFICATION.

BY REV. DANIEL STEELE, D.D.



HERE are two enemies to the fulness of the Spirit—baptized worldliness, and fanaticism run mad on the subject of holiness. Let us consider the latter.

Fanaticism is not limited to religion. Wild and extravagant views may be indulged on any subject. In our late war we had peace-fanatics, who clamored for peace at any price; and war-fanatics, aching to see every rebel hung, and his estate confiscated. In peace, we always have had fanatical agitators on various questions of social interest, such as labor, the sphere of women, and hostility to immigration. In philosophy we have fanatics, intolerant of opposition, who ridicule as block-heads all who differ from them. Any person whose mind becomes so disproportionately filled with any one idea as to become unsymmetrical and unbalanced, is in danger of those extravagant views and intense feelings which make the fanatic. As religion is an exciting and absorbing theme, so there is especial danger of running into unwarrantable enthusiasm. Religious fanaticism has deluged the world with bloodshed, instituted inquisitions, and invented thumb-screws. Sanctification-fanaticism is a milder species of this genus, yet it is none the less mischievous. It brings into reproach the most glorious doctrine of the gospel, the office of the Sanctifier; it brings into ridicule the crowning blessing, the most precious experience of our holy Christianity. Here is the portrait of a holiness-fanatic, or perfectionist, or Nazarite:

1. He adjures and pours contempt upon that scintillation of the eternal Logos, human reason. This lighted torch, placed in a man's hand for his guidance in certain matters, he extinguishes in order ostensibly to exalt the candle of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, but really to lift up the lamp of his own flickering fancy. Reason is a gift of God, worthy of our respect. We are to except it as our surest guide in its appropriate sphere. Beyond this we should seek the light of revelation and the guidance of the Spirit. The fanatic depreciates one perfect gift from the Father of lights, that he may magnify another. Both of these lights, reason and the Holy Ghost, are necessary to our perfect guidance. To reject one, is to assume a greater wisdom than God's. Such presumptuous folly He will glaringly expose. He who spurns the Spirit will be left to darkness outside the narrow sphere of reason; and he who scorns reason will be left to follow the hallucinations of his heated imagination, instead of the dictates of common sense.

"'Tis reason our great Master holds so dear;
'Tis reason's injured rights His wrath resents;
'Tis reason's voice, obeyed, his glorious crown.
To give lost reason life He poured His own;
Believe, and show the reason of a man;
Believe, and taste the pleasures of a God.
Through reason's wounds alone thy faith can die."

Mr. Wesley was pestered by persons "who imagine that they receive *particular directions* from God, not only in points of importance, but in things of no moment, in the most trifling circumstances of life; whereas, God has given to us our own reason for a guide, though never excluding the secret assistance of His Spirit."

2. He degrades the Word of God by claiming for himself an inspiration equal to its theopneustic utterances, just as the free-religionist adroitly be

littles the Holy Scriptures by classifying their inspiration with that of Homer and Shakespeare. He proclaims new revelations of Christian truth beyond the utterances of the sacred oracles, forgetting the maxim of orthodoxy, that any thing essentially new in Christianity is essentially false. He takes to his bosom the baneful error that Christianity, as a system of objective truth, was not handed down from above, a complete whole, but was left by its Author to be finished by endless supplements, communicated to individual believers in all ages. John Wesley was called to preach against this folly of "enthusiasts who imagine that God dictates every word they speak, and that it is impossible they should speak any thing amiss, either as to the matter or manner of it." He also styles those enthusiasts "who *designedly* speak in public without any premeditation."

3. He imagines that he has a manifestation of God so immediate that he no longer needs the ordained means of grace. He is beyond the sacraments. Prayer is a superfluity. He receives without asking; or, if he asks for any thing, he asks but once. To repeat his request would imply imperfect faith. He omits one petition of the Lord's Prayer, because he has no trespasses to be forgiven; although the recording angel is daily noting a thousand sins of ignorance and infirmity which need the blood of sprinkling. If he is a logical fanatic—a very rare bird—he finds all his time so holy that he has no occasion to make the commanded distinction between secular and sacred days.

4. Another feature of this character is superiority to instruction and reproof. Are they not taught of the Lord? Shall they, who are receiving the blaze of the Spirit's light, like the full-orbed sun, turn away and follow the pale radiance of some brother's feebler light, glimmering like a faint star in the skies? Not they. In vain does the wise and deeply experienced Wesley expostulate with Bell and Maxfield, and their band of overheated zealots, who, by their dangerous delusions, were sadly damaging the fair fame of Methodism, and making her a laughing stock to her many foes. They would not deign to listen to "poor blind John." After a long forbearance, sixty of these deluded members of the Foundry Society were cut off at once, and left to follow their disordered imaginations, in order to save the whole body from the fatal infection. Many of them "perished in the gainsaying of Korah."

5. We should deserve the reputation of an unskillful limner should we fail to portray the most prominent and most ugly feature of this character—his uncharitableness. Professing perfect love to God, he grievously lacks tender affection toward his fellow men. All degrees of spirituality and faith below his own, are worthy not of his sympathy, but of his censure. If the young convert falls into the hands of such a nursing father or nursing mother, he will have a sorry time indeed, and be more than once tempted to say that there is a mistake in the declaration that "the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness." He is scolded for every unsteady step; at every fall he is berated, and not encouraged to try again; he is judged by an absolute standard, and condemned without mercy if he fails in any particular. It is not our purpose to show the philosophy of so strange a combination of contradictions as this feature of the perfectionist-fanatic presents—to be destitute of love while professing love made so dominant as to exclude all its antagonisms. Similar phenomena occur in the commercial world. Stock-gamblers, while calling millions their own, are penniless bankrupts. Both characters draw upon their imaginations, and account themselves rich. They do not put gold in their coffers. They are satisfied with the glitter of appearances. Simon Magus fixed his eye upon the worldly glory which the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost would confer, and was baptized, and found that he was the

same poor pagan sorcerer—like the baptized infidel, a little the worse for mending. Christians who seek for ecstatic joys, or showy gifts of the Spirit, or any thing else rather than the pure love of God, make the same mistake. Hence the importance of giving earnest heed to Wesley's admonition: "let no one be satisfied with the direct witness of the Spirit without the *fruits* of the Spirit."

Application: In the words of Wesley, watch and pray, lest you fall into so great an evil. It easily besets those who fear or love God. O, beware you do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think! Do not imagine you have attained that grace of God which you have not attained. You may have much joy; you may have a measure of love; and yet not have living faith. Cry unto the Lord that he would not suffer you, blind as you are, to go out of the way—that you may never fancy yourself a believer in Christ till Christ be revealed in you, and till his Spirit witnesses with your spirit that you are a child of God."

In conclusion, this question arises: In view of the possibility of such an unlovely character coming into existence under the preaching of entire sanctification, would it not be wise to abstain from inculcating this high doctrine, lying as it does on the borders of an infatuation so dangerous? Just as wise as it would be to suppress Christianity, because its abuse has bred fanatics, bigots, and persecutors. Just as wise as it would be to burn up all our banknotes because they have been counterfeited, and to withdraw all gold and silver coin from our currency because of the worthless imitations. Yet this is the way many are treating entire sanctification. A superior practical wisdom did the great founder of Methodism evince, when, notwithstanding the outburst of religious madness and folly which had beslimed his London societies, he insisted on preaching this truth, and enjoined on all his preachers to set forth "perfection to believers, constantly, strongly and explicitly," and exhorted them "to mind this one thing, and continually to agonize for it." His brother Charles, constitutionally much more conservative, thus expressed his sympathy with this doctrine in this fiery ordeal:—

"Set the false witnesses aside,
But hold the truth forever fast."

Many years after the great work of sanctification, which was wrought so powerfully in the Wesleyan Societies, beginning in Otley about 1760, and spreading rapidly through the connexion, and in some places running into extravagances requiring excision, Wesley calmly reviews that great outpouring of the sanctifying Spirit, and adopts the prayer of a devout Scotchman in a similar case: "O Lord! if it please thee, work the same work again, without the blemishes. But if this cannot be, though it be with all the blemishes, *work the same work.*"—*Abridged from Advocate of Holiness.*

FALSE PEACE.—Your peace, sinner, is that terrible prophetic calm which the traveller occasionally perceives upon the higher Alps. Everything is still. The birds suspend their notes, fly low, and cower down with fear. The hum of bees among the flowers is hushed. A horrible stillness rules the hour, as if death had silenced all things by stretching over them his awful sceptre. Perceive ye not what is surely at hand? The tempest is preparing; the lightning will soon cast abroad its flames of fire. Earth will rock with thunder-blasts; granite peaks will be dissolved; all nature will tremble beneath the fury of the storm. Yours is that solemn calm to-day, sinner. Rejoice not in it, for the hurricane of wrath is coming, the whirlwind and the tribulation which shall sweep you away and utterly destroy you.

THE DAY OF THE LORD.

BY HORATIUS BONAR.



HE day of the Lord, it cometh !
 It comes like a thief in the night,
 It comes when the world is dreaming
 Of safety, and peace, and light.
 It cometh, the day of sackcloth,
 With darkness, and storm, and fire,
 The day of the great avenging,
 The day of the burning ire.

Not slowly, slowly, like twilight,
 Nor like the cold creeping tide ;
 Nor barque from the distant offing,
 Moving on o'er the waters' tide.
 But instant—like sudden lightning,
 In the depths of a tranquil sky ;
 From the west to the east in a moment,
 The havoc descends from on high !

The day of the Lord it cometh,
 When the virgins are all asleep ;
 And the drunken world is lying
 In a slumber yet more deep.
 Like the sudden lurch of the vessel,
 By night on the sunken rock,
 All earth in a moment reeleth,
 And goeth down with the shock.

The voice of the awful trumpet
 Arresteth the march of time ;
 With terror, and woe, and judgment,
 It soundeth through every clime.
 It speaketh aloud to the living,
 It speaketh to the slumbering dead ;
 Earth heareth the final summons,
 And boweth the trembling head.

The flash of the sword of havoc
 Foretelleth the day of blood,
 Revealing the Judge's progress,
 The downward march of God.
 The fire which no mortal kindles
 Quick seizes the quaking earth,
 And labors the groaning creation
 In the pangs of its second birth.

Then the day of the evil endeth,
 And the righteous reign comes in ;
 Like a cloud of sorrow, vanish
 The ages of human sin.

The light of the morning gleameth,
 A dawn without cloud or gloom ;
 In chains lies the ruler of darkness,
 And the Prince of light has come!—*Christian at Work.*

Miscellany.

SELECTIONS.

HOW BROTHER R— GOT OUT OF HIS TROUBLE.

I know a little country society not far from the town of G—, and composed for the most part of men who have to sweat for their bread, and who, for more reasons than one, like Sunday better than any other day in the week. Well, in that little church the class-meeting is one of the most popular and interesting means of grace. It is true there is a certain sameness associated with it, but that is one of its chief charms. The same brethren meet together from week to week, on the same night, in the same place, led by the same brother, and in the same way, and, what is more, the same Holy Spirit descends upon them, filling their hearts with the same old joys.

From twelve to fifteen of them usually meet together in the old chapel, and good times they have. All the neighbours around about know when it is class-night, not only from the light shining through the chapel windows, but from their joyous voices as they mingle in song, in prayer, and praise.

Not many weeks ago they held the meeting as usual, and it proved a time of refreshing not soon to be forgotten. After the leader had stated his experience in his own stirring way, he said—

“Now, Brother R—, how is it with you?” We give the words in his own homely style. He said, “Praise the Lord, I’m very happy in Jesus, and I feel I can niver praise him enough for what he has done for me. I wor in a queer fix this week, you may depend, and I’ll just tell you how the Lord helped me out.

“Well, you see, I get my living with a pony and cart, and I had to gan to Mr. — with a biggish load of things —biggish for my bit of a pony, you know; it’s about fourteen miles journey. However, we started, pony and me, and went on first-rate till we got near the far end, where we had to face a terrible hill. Thinks I, ‘We’ll niver git up this bank.’ However, pony pulled and I pushed with all my might, so we got on bit by bit, crossing and tacking from side to side; but though the canny thing were straining herself, and I were pushing and praying behind, it proved too much for us. About halfway up the hill we stuck fast, and the pony were panting as if her heart would burst. Night was coming on, no houses in sight, no help near,— what could I do? So I backed the cart wheels into the dyke, that the pony could’n get away, and off I went up the hill o seek for help. At the top I saw a house, so I went to it, and met a man looking like a farmer. I told him how I was fixed, and asked him if he would lend a horse and help the pony up the hill. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘we don’t reckon to do that sort of thing, you know, because we otten get imposed upon; but you look a decent sort of a man. I think, yes, I think I will give you a bit of a pull up. Hold on a minute while I fetch the horse out.’ ‘Thank ye,’ says I. Thinks I to myself, ‘We are all right now.’ And so we were, for in a few minutes out came the farmer with a horse and four chains, and started down the hill with me till we came to the pony. There she was, fast in the dyke where I left her. So we hooked in the new horse at once. ‘Now, my lass,’ says I, ‘come on!’ Both horses sprang to the caller, and we were out of the dyke in a minute, and rattling up the hill at half a trot. We were soon up at that rate, and then, of course, we stopt to

unloose the farmer's horse, and so says I, 'I'm very much obliged to you for your kindness, and I'll be glad to pay for it. What do you charge?' 'Oh, I don't know hardly—say a shilling.' 'A shilling!' says I; 'praise the Lord, a shilling! Why, it's worth five.' The farmer looks at me, and says he, 'Oh, does thou love Jesus?' 'Bless the Lord, I do,' says I. 'Here, then, tak' shilling back again. I'm none going to tak' a shilling from anyone as loves Jesus.' So he fastens forechains across the horse's shoulders, and then turning to me he said, 'Thoo can pray a bit, I reckon?' 'Ay, bless the Lord, I can.' 'Come, then, we mun have a word of prayer afore we part,' says he. So down we gans upon our knees, and I prayed beside the pony in the road, and farmer prayed too, and glory be to God, the Holy Ghost came down upon us, and so filled our hearts with joy, that we shouted and clapped our hands, and wept again. I think I were never so happy in all my life afore. 'Well,' says I, 'this caps ivereverything. Just now I were in a dead lock, fast in the dyke, and didn't know what to do, and now here I am, out of all my trouble. I've had a lift up the hill, had a blessing on my knees, and all for nought. Hallelujah! hallelujah!'"

Yes, and hallelujah went all around the class, and broke from every lip, male and female, there that night; and I reckon you would have said hallelujah too, my friend, if you had been there to hear the words from that brother's own lips, sustained as they were by the gushing feelings of his grateful heart. You wouldn't have thought there was no variety in the experiences, when we have such horacly heart-stirring scenes drawn before us by men who, though they paint with rough and unpolished words, take care, nevertheless, to fill in the details of the pictures with the richest hues and of their own joys. Was there no variety in that hill-top landscape? Look again. Standing out from the surrounding fields and forests, in the soft evening light see a loaded cart, two panting horses, behind them the hill surmounted, beside them two strong men, strangers, yet brothers, kneeling, praying, rejoicing in an unseen presence—tell me, was picture ever fuller of soul-inspiring variety?

Oh, what a pity it would be if there

had been no social means of grace where that story could be told, and hearts could grow warm under its rehearsal! But there was such a means of grace in that Methodist class-meeting.

Soon after this the meeting was concluded, and every heart there was charged with fresh resolves to cling to Christ, and hold fast to the end. And as the members shook hands, and parted outside the chapel doors, and the lights inside were turned out, their mingled "good nights," and "God bless you," told the good feelings they were carrying home with them to exert upon others. I went up the long dark lane towards home, praising God for what I had heard and felt at a class-meeting.—F. J.—*Methodist New Connexion Magazine*.

HOW TO BE PROFITED BY PREACHING.

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH, speaking of a conversation with a friend, says, "About that time he made a remark that impressed me deeply, and, I hope, abidingly. We attended the ministry of Mr. H——, and on one occasion, adverting to some criticism on his sermon, I asked him, 'How is it, that while they call this sermon fine, and that one dry, and another one heavy, etc., I find them all so profitable, and always come away instructed and fed from the word?' With animated promptness, he replied, 'I'll tell you how it is; you pray for him.' 'Indeed I do, and that he may be taught from on high to teach me.'

"Ay, there it is, and your prayer, you find, is answered. The preacher and the hearers either feed or starve each other. What they withhold from him in prayer, they lose in instruction and benefit. Those who listen only to cavil or admire, come away empty of spiritual food; while those who give liberally to their minister in secret prayer for him, have their souls richly fed by the very same preaching that falls unblest on others. Bear your minister,' he added, 'more and more on your heart to the throne of grace, and you will feast more largely on the banquet that he spreads.'

"I have to be thankful," she continues, "that my friend's counsel was not lost upon me. From that minister, indeed, I was soon removed, for in a short time

he was called away to his rest. But I carried the lesson to another pasture, where richly as we are fed, mine always seems to be a Benjamin's portion, for I have learned the secret of the profitable barter, which I would commend to every Christian heaver, namely, instant, affectionate, personal intercession for the minister, in the spirit of faith. When we are faithful to this, we sit profitably under the hearing of divine truth, humbly confident of receiving the assured answer to our prayers in the portion which is divided, and will always be blessed to us."—*Messenger*.

WHY CARRIE DID NOT ENJOY WATCH-MEETING.

BY MRS. C. F. WILDER.

"WELL, Carrie, how did you enjoy the watch-meeting last night?" asked Mrs. Dearborn of her daughter, while at her embroidery on New Year's afternoon.

"I do not want to pain you, mamma; but, to tell the plain truth, I did not enjoy it very well," was the girl's reply.

"I am surprised," said her mother. "I felt quite certain, after the sacrifice you made to go, that you would be greatly blessed. Do you know why you did not enjoy it? Do tell me all about it."

Carrie thoughtfully gazed from the window a long time before replying. The snow was falling fast, "like the seasons upon the life;" the wind chanted a mournful requiem, and the moving branches creaked an accompaniment according with the music; the sun was behind the clouds, and the church spires looked cold and dark. What a dreary day thought the girl—so much like life, cold and cheerless.

"How gloomy it is to-day," she said at last, and seeming to forget the previous conversation.

"It does not seem gloomy to me," was the reply. "I like these days; home seems so comfortable, and we see how much we have to make us happy; and then, when the sunny days come again, how every one appreciates them, and with cheery voices say, 'this is beautiful.' Yes, I really like the gloomy days. But, Carrie, you have not told me about the meeting. Why didn't you enjoy it?"

"Well, in the first place, there was nobody there."

"Do you really mean that Brother Lloyd preached to empty pews?"

"Why no; not exactly that; but only a few of my particular friends were there. Nellie, Hattie, Sarah, Ella Green, and Joe, and lots of the others, had gone to the party, and as soon as I found that they had gone, I felt 'sort of sorry that I had tried to be good,'" and Carrie gave a sob and a laugh, so curiously mixed that it was hard to tell which was strongest, the laugh or the cry. "After the sermon an experience meeting and a prayer meeting followed till a few minutes of twelve, when all united in silent prayer until the town clock struck the midnight hour—that was solemn and beautiful."

"Yes, I know how sweet that hour is," said her mother, thoughtfully. "I should have been glad to go, but I had my watch-meeting here with your father, and we enjoyed it very much. But were you unable to enjoy the meeting because your particular friends 'were not there?'"

"That was not all the reason," said Carrie, hesitatingly. "I don't like to hear people speak in meeting whose everyday life is no better than that of those who make no profession of religion, especially if they always tell how much religion they enjoy. I think they must feel about as Mrs. Campden does when she 'enjoys very poor health.' I know that if I lived as they do I should not 'enjoy' much of anything, and it always makes me have a 'bad time,' as aunt Hetty says, when such people talk in meeting."

Mrs. Dearborn made no reply, and the girl felt the silent rebuke; but it only goaded her on.

"Mr. Stephens said he was very happy—hallelujah!" (speaking the last word through her nose, like the brother mentioned; and she looked at her mother in a defiant way, that said, you wanted to hear, and now you shall!) "and he was 'on the mount—hallelujah,' and, you know, mother dear, what a stingy soul he has; he never gives a cent for anything. I've seen that old contribution box put under his eyes for ten years, and I never saw him put a cent into it; he never gives to the Sabbath School, nor missionary, nor worn-out preachers, nor nothin'," said Carrie, forgetting her grammar in her earnestness. "And he hires the cheapest pew; and he is worth more

than any other member of the Church. I wanted to go and ask him to give ten dollars for a ton of coal for widow Smith; how he would have groaned, instead of saying 'hallelujah.' When he joined the church, he promised to give as the Lord should bless him. Look at his houses, his lands, and his cattle! I just think he is breaking that promise to the Lord every day; and he lives—well, I won't say any more; but it is enough to stir up a saint to hear such men talk.

"Then, who should speak but Mr. Greyton, who said that he, too, 'had been on the mount all the year,' and the Saviour had been constantly with him; and O, mother, he is just as cross in his family as he can be. If you should hear him, you wouldn't wonder that Tom ran away; and I've heard him talk to Ella in such a manner that if it had been my father talking so to me, I'd have walked out of the house and never walked in again.

"Mrs. Kaine spoke after Mr. Greyton, and she felt that Christ was her soul's most dear, familiar friend; and I don't believe she understood what she was saying. Do you think that she can be a Christian? Don't you know that when Lizzie Gray's good name died, how Mrs. Kaine seemed to delight to talk about it? She said that she was 'so sorry for poor Lizzie, but had always expected it!' when, you know, mother, that she was very intimate with her for years! And it was Mrs. Kaine who started the stories about Mrs. Elwood, who lived in the other part of their house on Summer Street. It is said that she bored a hole through the wall, and used to watch Mrs. Elwood when she had callers, and listen to the conversation; and as she only heard snatches of it, she would make up the rest. And she nearly ruined Emma Allyn, by misconstruing her motives and acts when Emma boarded with her. And you know how she will always have her own way in church affairs. How she put you on oneside when we were furnishing the parsonage, and you chairman of the committee—you just allowed her to run over you rather than have a quarrel. You'll never catch me being so good! I think she is just horrid; and I don't believe that she knows what it is to be a Christian. Mrs. Kaine being meek, humble, loving her neighbor as herself! The very idea is absurd.

"Then May Lincoln spoke. She said she wanted to lead a new life, and I presume she does; but then she won't after warm weather comes, and she begins to think about going to Newport or Long Branch. There were half a dozen others that spoke, but they did not do much good, and I think it would have been better for them to have kept silent. There, mother! I've told you why I did not enjoy the meeting—and do you wonder?"

"No; I do not wonder that you received no benefit from the meeting," said Mrs. Dearborn, sadly; "but I cannot express how deeply I am pained at hearing you criticise the members of our church as you have, and at the state of heart which your words have revealed to me."

"But, mother, what I said was all true."

"It may be, in a measure, true; but their motives you know nothing about, and our judgments are often incorrect, though we think, like the servant Ritchie, 'we can judge better for ilk ither than in our ain cases.' Then, we do not know how bad their lives might have been if they never had tried to live as they think a Christian ought. They may overcome more besetting sins in one day than another would in a year. If we only knew how many wrong things they were tempted to do, but resisted the temptation, we might look upon them with admiration. It is a great comfort to me when I am misjudged, and it must be to others, that God knows the motive; He knows all about it. They may have done the best they could; but my daughter has been educated in such a manner that she knew she was grieving the Spirit by allowing herself to 'talk evil' about others."

"Why, mother!" exclaimed Carrie.

"What milder term can I use?" said Mrs. Dearborn. "You have not cherished that charity which hopeth the very best of them, but have believed the evil which you have heard, and now you have 'spoken evil.' You have so soon forgotten the lesson of last Sabbath, 'let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers; and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God; let all evil speaking be put away from you; be followers of God; walk in love; walk as

children of light.' I have noticed this besetting sin growing upon you, and have wished to call your attention to it. I do not think it right to speak words which tend to injure those against whom they are spoken."

"But, mother, you can't expect a girl of eighteen is going to be a saint. If you expect it of me you will be disappointed. Sometimes I think it is of little use for me to try and be good, for after I've been fighting some besetting sin, and think I have conquered it, and stop to take breath and rest a minute, the first thing I know, I've up and done that very thing. You can't think how I've prayed and striven to get rid of envy toward Ella James; and I thought at last communion that my heart was all free from that sin; but I am ashamed to tell you that I snubbed her awfully last night, just because I thought that she spoke to me in a patronizing sort of way because she had on a new seal-skin cloak and I had only my old squirrel cape. I do believe, mother dear, it will be of no use for you to tell me of my faults, for I cannot be good. And then, what's the use in being better than other people? It only sets one up as a mark for Satan and the world to shoot at! I've almost come to the conclusion that if I can 'mog' along towards heaven, and at last barely creep in, even if I have to go in at so small a gate that my soul is squeezed in the attempt, I will be satisfied. This 'running the race'—why, mother, I can't do it; I'm halt and blind, and I can only limp along at the very best; and half of the time out of the path at that. So, just let me go on in my own style."

"O, Carrie, I can understand how your conscience is troubling you when you talk in that manner. You *do* want an 'abundant entrance'; you do want to overcome your besetting sins; and I know, my dear girl, that you do try; but you think that you have so many that you grow discouraged sometimes, when you think the warfare must never cease. He who knows all about the battle-ground, furnishes armor and weapons; and you should be thankful that you see the enemy to fight, and pray for more wisdom that you may better understand yourself, and also that you may have a clearer view of the Great Captain that leads you on. Your foes are mostly within your heart, and you are doing bravely. Be constantly

vigilant, and live so that you will be all ready whenever the Saviour calls you to the mansions that he has prepared."

"Don't praise me, mother; don't tell me that I am doing well, for I know that I am not. There's another besetting sin. I hate housekeeping; yet I know it is my duty to have the care of the servants while you are unable to leave your room. But I do hope that if I ever have a mansion in heaven the good Saviour will not make me take care of it."

"Why, Carrie, you are desperate to-day! I never heard you talk in such a wreckless manner as you have this afternoon. What has come over you?"

"I am discouraged, mother. There is no use in hiding my feelings or my faults. I thought yesterday that I was as good as the average of Christians, and perhaps better; and when I gave up the party for the watch-meeting, I thought if the Church ever knew what a sacrifice I made, if they did not canonize me after my death, they would send to the Church papers such a eulogy as we sometimes see about some rare soul who has gone to her reward; and I went to the meeting in some such frame of mind. The minister from Troy made a few remarks which made me feel a little uncomfortable; and then, when Mr. Lloyd read his text, 'Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?' I felt that may be that was said of me by the Great Husbandman. But I tried to think how much good I am doing in mission and Sunday School work, and caring for your poor, and I began to feel all right—when he said that, 'perhaps the leaves of a fair profession so covered the barrenness of the boughs, that they hide even from itself its real state, and it is only the gardener who understands, acknowledges, and bewails its condition, and tenderly entreats for it a patience and help that it does not know it needs.' And, mother, if at the Judgment Day my life looks as empty of good, and as full of evil, as it did when he said that, I should think it but justice to banish me from the Saviour that I've professed to love. My want of charity, my love of ease, the disagreeableness of self-denial, coveting so many things that I cannot have, and all my other besetting sins came trooping by like an army of hideous skeletons, and I hated myself and everybody else; and that was what made me talk so awfully."

"You should not have gone to sleep feeling so uncomfortable and wicked."

"I know that," said Carrie, sadly. "I did pray the Lord to forgive me, but I was not very earnest about it last night; but the prayer acted as a soothing-syrup, and it was so late, and I was so sleepy, that I did not stop to examine my heart very closely; and this morning it was like that plaster of Paris I used yesterday; it had 'set,' and it won't melt, and it has not broken yet. I am not commencing the new year as I want to commence it. To look forward now, this year looks like an Iliad of woes, and a great sea reaches from now to next January; and I must ride on it in a frail bark, in constant danger of shipwreck, and growing weaker and weaker, day by day, I have such a contempt for myself, and I am so depressed."

"Your feelings are very natural," said her mother. "You have been comparing yourself with yourself—what you are now, with what you were, and what you wish to be; and that is always narrowing. Instead of this, you must look to Jesus, who is the great example, and who is the guide and teacher. You can do nothing without His help. This is a good day to commence a new life, because the leaves of this year's record-book are yet clean. Pray that your heart may now be purified—may be whiter than snow. (And Mrs. Dearborn looked from her window at the snow-covered earth; and as she saw how spotless was the covering, her heart was filled with gratitude to Him who made it possible for every soul to plunge into that fountain that is opened for sin and un-leanness, and rise purified, spotless, into the life of God—life within life—Christ living in us, and we in Him.) If you realize that Jesus is in the boat with you," continued Mrs. Dearborn, after a short pause, "and that in every sin-storm, and in every wave of trouble, His love can be found, and His help received, you will not live so that only sometimes despondency may hope, and darkness sometimes smile into light, but you will dwell in the light, and the ladder of faith will rest on the walls of heaven. Hope for this; pray and strive most earnestly for such a life. Jesus is very anxious for us to come nearer; He knows just how weak we are, and that without Him to guide we only just drift on the sea, at the mercy of every

wind that blows. Remember how He loves us—O, how He loves us: and how wise and strong, and yet how tender He is; and though you meet a thousand perils, you will not be shipwrecked. Do not bend beneath the burden of to-morrow, nor let your eyes fill with the tears of yesterday; but show forth to-day the Saviour's praise, and every danger you pass will make you wiser; every trial will make you stronger; and if you reach that haven that shelters from sorrow and sin before the year passes, His hand will lead you safely through the dark waters, and His voice will bid you welcome to your eternal home. If, instead, you are spared to reach the shore of next January, you can commence the voyage of that year with a braver heart and a surer trust in Him who crowns every year with His goodness."

THEIR OWN COMPANY.

BY REV. THEO. L. CUYLER.

A MAN is known by the company he keeps. He will seek out what is most congenial to him. This elective affinity extends even to the brute creation. A lost sheep will fill the air with its bleatings until it discovers the rest of its flock, and then it bounds away to join its "own company." If I catch a sparrow on my piazza-roof it is an unhappy prisoner until the window is opened and it is again with its feathered comrades.

How natural it is then to read that when Peter and John were released from prison in Jerusalem, they went straightway in the direction that their hearts drew them. "Being let go, they went to *their own company*." They might have torn off their badge of discipleship and slipped back to their fisheries on the shores of Galilee. The hard treatment they had just received from the bigoted Sanhedrim, made the discipleship of Christ a dangerous distinction. It was a good time to compromise and beat a retreat. Weak-kneed men would have "shown the white feather" after one night in a dungeon.

Loose a stone from a hillside, and it bounds by a law of its own to the valley below. Liberate a carrier-pigeon from a ship in mid-ocean, and it cuts its keen

straight passage through the air back to the cote of its companions. So the two liberated disciples, being "let go," follow their warm and holy hearts right off to a prayer-meeting of their brethren. Christ was there, and there they longed to be likewise. Duty was there, and they obeyed its call. As soon as they could act out their secret drawings of heart, they were in the dear old company again, telling their experience, and stirring up their brethren and sisters to a fresh campaign of prayers and work.

Now from the stem of this beautiful incident let us pick off two or three practical lessons.

1. The first one is, that men usually act from the strongest motive and obey the strongest attraction. There were many selfish reasons for Peter and John to desert their colors when the first gale of persecution smote them in the face. But the purpose of their hearts was to stand by their beloved Master. They gave conscience the casting vote. So being let go, they went to their own company.

What was true of those two loyal disciples is true of every healthy, sound-hearted Christian in these days. He will gravitate towards Christ. Never do you find a genuine and effective Christian, but you find one who has enthroned the Lord Jesus in his soul. He has given to Jesus the key of his heart. Having the *will* to serve his Saviour, he is never at a loss to find the *way*. Not a Sabbath comes, but it sees him on his way to the house of God, however hot the rays of the sun, or however furious the rain-beat on the pavement. His heart so aches for the poor children of his mission-school, that a headache is no excuse to keep him at home on the sofa. When the prayer-meeting night comes, it finds him perhaps thoroughly tired out. But the brotherhood are waiting for him, and looking for him too. Christ expects him at that prayer-meeting. So he rouses up his tired limbs, excuses himself to the neighbor who came in to talk about politics or the money-market, and hastens away to the spot where

"Jesus sheds,

The oil of gladness on our heads."

Does an ardent lover ever find the night too dark, too cold, or too stormy, to hinder him from seeking the company of her in whom his soul delighteth?

A heart-service of Jesus is pure luxury. Even the wholesome severities of duty become pleasant. Following Christ is none the less enjoyable because it involves some self-denial and some headwinds of opposition, or because it requires him to hold on to the old coat or the old carpets, in order to have a few spare dollars for his Lord's treasury. Not of constraint, but willingly does he bear a cross to honor the Saviour he loves. "Let go," he goes towards Jesus.

Thrust your penknife into a compass and you deflect the needle. But as soon as you let it go, it trembles back towards the North pole. You can trust that needle. And you can trust the man or woman who supremely loves the Lord Jesus. And if when free to act, you do not yourself so act as to please Christ, you ought to doubt whether you are truly converted. Being let go, you *will* go to your company—where Christ is, if you are a true Christian; but where the world is, if you are a false professor or a backslider.

2. Here is a test of backsliding. It lies in the heart. And when I detect a young man seeking the company of the card-players, the ball-goers, or the wine-bibbers, instead of the prayer-meeting, I get a key to his heart. He has lost his first love. He really prefers the dance, or the dice-box, or the decenter, to the Lord that bought him. The French soldiers who were set down to resist Napoleon on his landing from Elba, deserted to him just as soon as they saw their old commander. And the Christian professor whose heart is with the world, never can be trusted. Being let go, he deserts to the world *openly*. A sound heart can be trusted anywhere. Then what perpetual need of that fervent prayer, "O God, create in me the *clean heart*; renew the right spirit within me!"

3. This principle of affinity reaches our into the eternal world. Judas, being let go by death, goeth to "his own place." So will you, dear reader, if you are out of Christ. You would be wretched in a heaven of holiness. If you love Jesus, then too is it true, that when death releases you from the clay prison-house, your glorified spirit being "let go," will wing its way to its "own company" in paradise. The living soul will find its living Saviour!

Editor's Portfolio.

WORK AND WAIT.

A HUSBANDMAN who many years
Had ploughed his field and sown in tears,
Grew weary with his doubts and fears.

"I toil in vain! These rocks and sands
Will yield no harvest to my hands;
The best seeds rot in barren lands.

"My drooping vine is withering;
No promised grapes its blossoms bring;
No birds among its branches sing.

"My flock is dying on the plain,
The heavens are brass—they yield no rain;
The earth is iron—I toil in vain!"

While yet he spake a breath had stirred
His drooping vine, like wing of bird,
And from its leaves a voice he heard;

"The germs and fruits of life must be
For ever hid in mystery,
Yet none can toil in vain for Me.

"A mightier hand, more skilled than thine,
Must hang the clusters on the vine,
And make the fields with harvest shine.

"Man can but work; God can create;
But they who work, and watch, and wait,
Have their reward, though it come late.

"Look up to heaven! behold and hear
The clouds and thunderings in thy ear—
An answer to thy doubts and fear."

He looked, and lo! a cloud-draped car,
With trailing smoke and flames afar,
Was rushing from a distant star.

And every thirsty flock and plain
Was rising up to meet the rain
That came to clothe the fields with grain.

And on the clouds he saw again
The covenant of God with men,
Rewritten with His rainbow pen.

"Seed-time and harvest shall not fail,
And though the gates of hell assail,
My truth and promise shall prevail."

—*North Western Christian Advocate.*

THOMAS COLLINS.

SHORTLY after beginning his ministry at Wark,
Mr. Collins received several valuable letters
from the Revs. Francis Collier, James Heaton,
and others. Three of these letters his bio-
grapher has condensed into the following

MODEL "CHARGE."

"Set to work with all your heart. Be an
early riser. Lose no time. Say 'No' to a
friend rather than waste an hour. Follow no
mere impulses. 'Square your useful life
below by reason and by grace.' Be a *Methodist*.
Do nothing haphazard. Forecast. Lay plans,
but, before committing yourself to any, pray
for light, seek counsel, and exercise wary
judgment.

"Let all your reading bear upon your work.
. . . . Be sure that you study thor-
oughly John Wesley's writings. For purity
and force, plainness and elegance, they have
seldom been equalled. His distinct thought,
appropriate language, and lucid arrangement,
are exemplary.

"Kind approval, wisely expressed by the
sensible and devout, is a favor from the Lord
cheering and helpful. But beware of the
flatterer's net. If a man can but hold up and
hold on, loud and fast, ignoramuses, with
wonder smitten, rate him a nonpareil at once;
and being, as fools generally are, afflicted with
a flux of speech, straightway assure their
victim that he is a *very great preacher indeed*.
Should any of these loose-tongued agents of
the devil for the ruining of young ministers
thus deal with you, let their manifest im-
prudence moderate your estimate of their
judgment. Trust them not. Exaggerating
adulators are almost invariably fickle. They

go round like a weather vane, and are among the first to wish their former idol gone.

"Set your mind upon excellence. Determine to be a workman, not a bungler. Carefully treasure up with your pen for future use every weighty thought and apt expression that occurs to you. Seek to have good sermons rather than many. Take pains with them. Opportunities for repetition should not make us idle, but excellent. We have chances for paring, pruning, and perfecting, such as no other ministers possess.

"Pay special attention to the framework of your discourses. Orderly arrangement helps memory, holds thought together, and accumulates thought for the final appeal.

"Avoid subjects that take you out of your depth. Never let rhetoric outrun logic. Have aim. Know what you are at,—what you want to do.

"Subdivisions, if numerous, should not be announced. They are pegs for your own thoughts, but will only perplex those of others. Skeletons, though useful, are not beautiful, and should not be thrust nakedly before the eye.

"Be a preacher, not a reciter. . . . Admit no anxiety about mere words. Sound doctrine, godly unction, manly reasoning and free speech, answer all evangelical ends.

"Whatever else you be, be holy. Adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things. Be a man of one business. In every place, to every person, in every way, do all the good you can."

PRAYING FOR FAITH.

In reply to some who objected to praying for faith, on the plea—"Why pray for that which the Bible calls upon you to do?" Mr. Collins says:—

"Man possesses, and often employs, the terrible power of resisting God. In preaching I deal with man: my chief business then, of course, is to get them to cease the exercise of that awful power. In prayer, on the contrary, I deal with God, and ask the gift, the plenitude, and the continuance of the Spirit. Addressing the penitent, I bid him believe; addressing the Lord, I say, 'Lord, help this poor creature!' This is the old Methodist way; this is my way. I find it succeed, and do not intend to alter it."

"INSTANT IN SEASON."

"Returning from Cranbrook, Mr. Collins was overtaken by a person of sober, steady

look. Brief intercourse discovered the man to be of thoughtful, serious mind,—wishful for good, but uninstructed in the simplicities of the Gospel offer. Telling him, as they journeyed, the story of Philip and the Eunuch, he assured him that there and then, like the Eunuch, he might believe on the Son of God and be saved. Opening up to him at length the saving plan, he plied him with the duty of present submission to the evangelical conditions, and earnestly appealed to him at once to put his trust in the Saviour. Nor was this exhortation vain. Before they reached the village towards which they went, the man was rejoicing in the bliss of accepted salvation."

GOSPEL *versus* LAW.

"Two families at Brede had been in feud about a well. Their houses belonged to different landlords, between whom an understanding existed that the well on the one property should be common for the use of both. The tenant within whose holding the water was, refused admittance to it. Proceedings in the court to test the right were about to be initiated; when, lo, the heads of both families were someway drawn to chapel, and both converted. Gospel precluded law. The quarrel terminated; and the reconciled families learned to love, esteem, and help each other."

READING AND THINKING.

BACON asserts that reading makes a full man; but without digestion fullness is dyspepsia, and creates sleepiness and inert fat, incapable of action. Hazlitt says you might as well ask the paralytic to leap from his chair and throw away his crutch, or, without a miracle, to take up his bed and walk, as to expect the learned reader to throw down his book and think for himself. He is a borrower of sense. He has no ideas of his own, and must live on those of others. The habit of supplying our ideas from foreign sources enfeebles all internal strength of thought, as a course of dram-drinking destroys the tone of the stomach. The Word of God is pre-eminently a book for direct reading, and is never known in its glory if received through another man's comment. Pure and cool are its streams if we drink immediately from the well-head, but when the precious crystal has long stood in earthen vessels its freshness is gone; the truth is there, perhaps, but not the life. We should let texts lie on our hearts till they melt into them, like snow-flakes dissolving into the soil.—*Pittsburg Christian Advocate.*

THE PRODIGAL CHILD.

"I will arise, and go to my Father."—LUKE xv. 18.

1. Come home! come home! You are wea-ry at heart, For the way has been
2. Come home! come home! For we watch and we wait, And we stand at the

dark, And so lone-ly and wild. O pro-di-gal child! Come
gate, While the shadows are piled. O pro-di-gal child! Come

home! oh come home! Come home! Come, oh come home!
home! oh come home! Come home! Come, oh come home, come home.

Come home, come home!

3.

Come home! come home!
From the sorrow and blame,
From the sin and the shame,
And the tempter that smiled,
O prodigal child!
Come home, oh come home!

4.

Come home! come home!
There is bread and to spare,
And a warm welcome there,
Then, to friends reconciled,
O prodigal child!
Come home, oh come home!