

# The Earnest Christian

—AND—

## GOLDEN RULE.

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### BLINDNESS.

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The Scriptures have much to say about spiritual blindness. We hear but little, we read but little about it in these times. The subject is not popular in the days of self-conceit. All claim to see clearly. But few are willing to ascertain whether they are sitting in darkness or walking in the light. But some welcome the truth, thank God! Let us hope that others may.

All such are invited to consider carefully what the Scriptures teach on this important subject.

1. Spiritual blindness is a state in which those who are afflicted by it fail to perceive the truth relating to the things of God when it is plainly set before them. Thus our Lord repeatedly calls the Pharisees blind; because the truth made no more impression upon their minds than light does upon the eyes of one literally blind. Matt. 23: 16.

2. There are degrees of blindness. Some have a dim perception of the truth, while others have none whatever. "Blindness in part has happened to Israel."—Rom. 11: 25. The truth relating to the Messiah, so

clearly expressed in their Scriptures, they did not apprehend. Others are in dense darkness. "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people."—Isaiah 60: 2.

3. Heathen nations are almost totally blind. Their light is comparatively dim, but they fail to walk in the light which they have. They sin against nature. The most revolting crimes are not only committed, but encouraged. In India, until it was prohibited by the English, widows were burned alive, upon the death of their husbands. In some of the tribes in Africa, upon the death of a chief, his wives, sometimes twenty or thirty in number, are buried alive with his dead body. The idols of the heathen are senseless and often hideous. The means of knowing how to do better are within their reach. "These, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."—Rom. 2: 14, 15.

4. Unconverted people are blind. Many of them have been brought up in the midst of light. They see many things that the heathen do not,

but as to many important matters they appear to be completely blind. They are in imminent danger of the damnation of hell, but they do not perceive it. Many of them fall into gross delusions. Some neglect the Bible, though the evidences of its inspiration are so clear as to carry conviction to every mind that is willing to be convinced. Multitudes fall into vices which they can but know will render them miserable in this life, and which God assures them will be punished in the life to come. Says President Edwards: "The blindness of the mind, or an inclination to delusion in things of religion, is so strong that it will overcome the greatest learning, and the strongest natural reason." Hence, many people of good education are carried away with the delusions of Spiritualism. Unbelievers are credulous. Those who are not truly religious are generally superstitious. Men who will not believe in God will believe in mediums and fortune-tellers. "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"—Isa. 44: 20. The reasons that sinners generally give, why they do not become Christians, are such as would not influence them at all in other important matters. If they saw a chance to make money in an honorable way, they would readily do it, whether others did it or not. They would not neglect opportunities to get gold because others did. If they knew they were in a burning building they would strive to make their escape good, though others made no

effort. But many who know they are in danger of death and hell, every day they live, make no effort to secure salvation, though it is freely offered. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them."—2 Cor. 4: 4.

5. Many among professing Christians are blind. Of course, they do not know it. If told of it in the most tender possible manner, they will resent it as a false accusation and an insult. But because a man thinks that he has good spiritual eye-sight, it is no evidence that he has. The Scribes and Pharisees in our Saviour's day were confident that their spiritual vision was clear. So was the Jew in Paul's day. "And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness."—Rom. 2: 19. But the apostle assured him that he did not even know what a Jew was. It is so in our time. Many call themselves Christians who do not have any correct conception of what it is to be a Christian. When they see one they do not know him, but look upon him as an enthusiast, or a fanatic. Instead of having fellowship with him, they entertain for him a feeling of pity, or contempt. It is all they can do to endure him; but after he is dead they may speak in his praise. Of this kind of professors there are three classes:

(1.) Those whose eyes were never opened. At best they only got where

they "saw men, as trees, walking." They do not wait on Jesus to have him touch them the second time. In the process of conversion, one of the first things God does for a soul is to enlighten him. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened."—Eph. 1: 18. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened."—Heb. 6: 4. But many in the church never were enlightened. They were received into the church because of their doctrinal views, their social qualities, or for their influence. They do not know what it is to repent. As for faith in Christ, they never trusted in one of his promises unless it was endorsed by the church. They probably never heard repentance clearly explained and stoutly insisted upon in their lives. The army of blind followers of blind leaders is great in numbers, and of the highest respectability and influence among men. But the reflection as to what their end must be is sad indeed!

(2.) Those who have quenched the Spirit are blind. At the head of this grand division of the nominal church of Christ stand many of the preachers. Some have lost their first love. They have settled down in a lukewarm state, and really think they are in a better spiritual condition than they ever were before. The bitter persecutions which they had to endure when they were alive to God have all ceased. They are now in loving communion with the dead churches around them. They are respected by the world. They prosper in business and lead a life of pleasant self-indulgence. It was to one of these that our Lord wrote:

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."—Rev. 3: 15-17. This is a complete description of many preachers who once had the life and power of godliness. They join hands with the world, and have a keen zest for its pleasures. They have gone back to the bondage of corruption, and yet they boast of their freedom. They ridicule the work of the Spirit, and yet make the highest profession of religion. They feed on flattery, but reject reproof and hate the faithful friend who gives it. They will have nothing to do with one who comes with any words but those of commendation. "But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."—1 John 2: 11. This accounts for what seems unaccountable, how one can profess perfect love and yet use most abusive language towards those who differ from him

(3.) Those who fail to go on in their experience become spiritually blind. The tree that is so confined that it cannot grow, dies; the senses that are not exercised become torpid; the strength that is not renewed is supplanted by weakness; and the grace that is not improved is followed by corruption. The apostle, after

enjoining converted and sanctified souls to "give all diligence" to add to the power to overcome "the corruption that is in the world" which was given them at conversion, and to the "divine nature" of which they were made partakers when sanctified wholly, the various Christian graces, makes this important statement: "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."—2 Peter 1:9. Here is found an explanation of the strange course of many who once were clear in their experience. They failed to go on, and insensibly lost what they had. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"—Matt. 6:23. It becomes supernatural. From these blinded professors come the most unrelenting persecutors of those who strive to follow the Lord fully.

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

(1.) Blindness does not alter facts. Dangers before a blind man are not removed because he can not see them. If you are unsaved and yet insensible, you are as much exposed to hell as if you were alive to your peril. A feeling of security does not give security. Danger is often lurking near those who fear no danger. A few years ago a band in a theatre in Brooklyn was playing, in mockery, to a delighted audience, "What Shall the Harvest Be?" when the curtains suddenly took fire, and the flames spread so rapidly that, it is supposed, at least three hundred perished in the devouring element. One moment in the midst of revelry, the next in eternity! So sinners in

the world and in the church may rest one hour in fancied security, to wake up the next "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

(2.) If you are spiritually blind it is your own fault. The "true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" has shone into your heart sufficiently to let you see your danger and the means of deliverance. If you will walk in the light it will lead you to Christ, who will open your eyes fully. He counsels thee to "anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." If you accept this advice, you will begin to realize how far you have gone astray. But if you keep on, living a life of self indulgence, and boasting of your riches and worldly prosperity, the scales will grow completely over your eyes, and you will become supernaturally blind. Pride will keep you from acknowledging your true condition, and you will go on, "deceiving and being deceived," until your destiny is sealed amid the blackness of darkness forever.

(3.) You can never fully recover your sight until restored completely to spiritual life, and made all alive by Christ. But to secure this end, you have something to do. When Christ bids you awake, you must make an effort to open your eyes. Lazarus was dead when Christ said to him, "Come forth." Bound as he was with grave-clothes, he came forth. Had he begun to obey, and then sunk back before the difficulties, he had doubtless remained in his grave.

*"Wherefore He saith, Awake, thou*

*that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*"—  
Eph. 6: 14.

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AN EXPERIENCE.

BY VIGIL.

CHAPTER I.

*"To Gladdest Day from Saddest Night."*

My conversion to God was of the most divine character. It began with a revelation of my lost condition, accompanied by holy conviction of sin, and total self-despair. The lake of fire and the adversary of God and man were as distinctly visible to the eye of my soul as any object in the material universe is to that of the body. The heavens were brass; yet, notwithstanding this, I felt utterly and alone responsible for my damnation. My spirit completely vindicated and justified God. It was not any particular sin or sins, so much as my state of hopeless alienation from the life of God, which worked in me the despair that seemed unavailing. I might justly have been called a religious, rather than an ungodly, sinner; but my case, I conceive, was worse on that account; for I believe that it is more difficult for the Holy Ghost to awaken and quicken a religious moralist (if any thing be really difficult to the Spirit,) than a consciously active transgressor. At the right moment, when the Great Awakener, with the ploughshare of the law, had effectually accomplished his work in the soil of my conscience, a friend came upon the scene, and told me the glad news of God's redeeming love through his unspeakable gift, the Saviour of sinners. My awakened soul drank in the message with avidity. I hastened to my room, fell on my knees, and, after speaking to God in prayer, a vision of surpassing splendor passed before me. The risen Redeemer, with

countenance lit up with celestial radiance, and a smile of ineffable love, which baffles all description, stood welcoming me to his arms and heart. He was robed in spotless white, and turning toward me with extended hand. I saw the pierced side and the crimson, "precious blood" oozing from it. From a distant part of the heavens there shone a light, which rested on the wounded side of the now risen and victorious Sufferer, revealing in large letters, the word YOU. The Holy one stood a moment longer in that silent yet most eloquent posture, giving me an opportunity to contemplate attentively and adoringly the matchless splendor of his person and the divine significance of his sacrificial work. In an instant the vision of glory vanished. I arose from my knees, and with strong faith, which seemed now to have been strongly planted in my heart, I testified to the walls (for I was the only occupant of the room,) in the following words: "Glory to God! I'm saved! I see it all. Sin, begone! Satan, begone! Unbelief, begone! I will doubt no more."

I slept soundly that night, and in the morning, about ten o'clock, the blessed Spirit came into my heart with rushing, burning, melting, witnessing power. The glory and the love, which no language formed by human thought can describe, swept through my being in heavenly waves. I had the distinct consciousness in my heart that all my sins were forgiven, and the Holy Ghost witnessed not only to this, but also to the exact reason why sinners, believing, receive everlasting life.

Faith, therefore, is insisted upon throughout the New Testament by our Lord and his apostles. It is the one important, yea, indispensable link between our deep soul-need, as children of Adam, "dead in trespasses and sins," and the infinite fullness which is awaiting us in Christ, the second Adam.

Unbelief, or distrust, is opposed to faith; and it is the dark and awful sin (how few fully receive it) respecting which the Holy Spirit came into the world to convict men. "He will reprove the world of sin, *because* they believe not on Me."—John 16: 8, 9. Let a man *distrust* God, and any other sin is possible after this.

#### CHAPTER II.

##### *Backsliding; or, From Gladdest Day to Saddest Night.*

Years, long years, have passed since the incidents referred to in the last chapter. It may be helpful to the readers of the EARNEST CHRISTIAN to dwell a little on the cause or causes that led to the complete reversal of my experience as indicated in the heading of the first chapter.

I had not long enjoyed conscious salvation, with its attendant glories, before the Tempter crossed my path, suggesting a course of conduct in direct opposition to the gentle, gracious and distinct impressions made upon my heart by the Holy Spirit.

The Lord desired me to confess his name, and tell his gospel in the crowded street. I looked for a moment at two or three imaginary obstacles which the enemy pointed out, and, being then "ignorant of his devices," I yielded to the snare, shrank from the command, refused the divine commission, and straightway lost all, save the bitter memory of my departed Saviour and his soul-gladdening love. I fell into a state of inconsolable grief.

The reader will observe that my first sin, like that of our mother Eve, was in listening to the direct suggestions of the devil; my second, in failing to add to my faith, courage or fortitude to testify publicly, as well as privately, to what the Lord had done for my soul; my third, in losing heart, and sinking into a state of inexcusable despondency, thus surrendering to Satan, and giving

him complete control of the situation. Alas! the old, old story of the fall—how often are its solemn scenes being re-enacted! How often are the unwatchful sons of God found withdrawing themselves from divine fellowship by hearkening to the voice of the destroyer!

A distinguished writer calls attention to the very frequent occurrence in the New Testament, and the obvious import of the words, *faith, believe, believeth, believed and believing*. He says: "Just as *distrust* was man's turning-point from God, so *faith* is the turning-point of man to God." By listening to the lie of Satan, the life of heaven was quenched and the poisoned life of hell was kindled in the heart of Eve. Death began there and then; and it "passed upon all men, for all have sinned." This inherited or transmitted depravity is what the Scripture terms the "carnal mind," the "flesh," etc., and this is that which has to be slain or destroyed. The instruments of its destruction are the Word and Spirit of God. We need the Word of God as "law" to slay this hellish life; and we need the Word of God as "gospel" to quicken the heavenly life. The mission of the Saviour, who is "the way, the truth, and the life," was to call lost man back to his allegiance to God; to counteract the lie of Satan; and to demonstrate by His holy life and sacrificial death the unspeakable love of God to sinners. This was, and yet is, the gospel, or glad tidings to men, who are alienated in thought, word and deed from the life of God; and the belief of this message was, and is, the turning-point to God and to the fact that I was now united, as a member of the body, to Christ, the living Head in heaven. The divine and solemn ecstasy in my soul produced such a remarkable sensation in my body that to prevent physical levitation, of which I was delightfully apprehensive, I laid hold of the desk at which I had been

writing, with firm grasp, and thus helped to postpone to a future day my ascension through the star-spaces to glory.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *Further Experiences and Impressions.*

I have said that I listened to the suggestions of Satan, distrusted and disobeyed God, lost the consciousness of his presence and the joy and witness of his Spirit in my heart. There yet remain to be stated other causes of continued darkness in my soul.

A friend, connected with the Moravians, whose mind was oscillating between continuing in fellowship with that denomination and joining the Plymouth Brethren, had been interested in my spiritual welfare. He was the first to whom I communicated the story of my conviction, repentance and faith, the heavenly vision and the spiritual manifestation of the Saviour to my heart. This young man ridiculed the account I gave him of the stages through which I had been led. He told me that it was all excitement and natural enthusiasm, and to put no confidence in such fleshly manifestations. Thro' him I was often thrown among the Plymouth Brethren, with whose fellowship he eventually connected himself. Their extraordinary acquaintance with the letter of Scripture at once surprised and pleased me. I listened with admiring wonder to their ablest teachers. They could present such striking general outlines or sketches of whole books of the Bible, during a single service, that they perfectly amazed me. I was in this way imperceptibly drawn from occupation with experimental truth, to that of prophetic and speculative truth. My organ of wonder rapidly expanded, but instead of wondering at and worshiping God for the unspeakable possibilities of divine light, life and love in a saved heart, I wondered at and praised the system and

the men who could tell so much about almost everything connected with or relating to Scripture, save the witness and operations of the Holy Ghost in producing such fruits as "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance," (Wesley's translation,) in the heart and life of the believer. I became so spell-bound and bewitched that to all my other sins I added the gigantic sin of being far more solicitous in proselyting individuals to Plymouthism than inquiring if they had ever been convicted of sin, or converted to God. I marvel at this moment that I could have remained so long in such stupid and obstinate blindness, in view of my most distinct and glorious conversion. But the truth is that I can not recall one of them who did not so belittle or ridicule my experience, as "of the flesh," that I dropped speaking of it altogether, and there came into my mind, instead of a longing after God and what I had lost, a desire after intellectual classification of Scripture, on prophecy and such subjects as fascinated the understanding, but took no hold whatever on the heart. I became filled with self-conceit, and a belief that I knew so much more than many others. I could expatiate for hours together on dispensational, prophetic, doctrinal and historical truth. I acquired a flippant glibness of speech and manner which must have been very offensive indeed to thoughtful and wise people with whom I conversed.

I pitied the religious ignorance of those who talked about the possibility of "falling from grace," and, with the air of a field-marshal, put them right (!) by patronizingly informing them that a person might fall from grace, but that he could not fall from salvation. I had profound pity for any one who talked about having a "new heart," or a "clean heart,"—more especially if Ezekiel 36: 25-29

were quoted as confirmatory of said experience. To all such simple ones I had the ready Plymouth reply: "That is all Jewish and Millennial; you have nothing whatever to do with such experience." Should a warm-hearted, soul-loving person express a burning desire for the conversion of the world, I was so cold-hearted and bound up in speculative theories that I was more eager to discuss the "second coming" and the "rapture of the saints" than the plucking of brands from the burning, whether they were the brands of Christendom or those of heathendom. I was incessantly harping upon "church truth" and "church discipline," and utterly neglecting heart-truth, and secret and prolonged prayer. I heard so much of doctrinal hair-splitting that I became a most accomplished graduate in that line.

The Plymouth Brethren are among the most merciless and relentless critics. They are censorious, in the full sense of the word. In both these sciences, neither of which is divine, I have taken high honors. The Lord in his great mercy forgive me! It has taken rare watchfulness for years to break from the atrocious habit, and even now the dark scars are often visible in my moral make-up.

The doctrinal heresy which lies at the foundation of their whole system is one which, it seems to the writer, has never been fully exposed. I refer to the heresy comprehended in the statement made by all their teachers, but more distinctly expressed by one who once was among their most gifted oracles, but is now a Presbyterian minister in England: "The believer's state can never correspond with his standing." The simple meaning of which is, as interpreted by themselves, that the experiences of the 7th and 8th of Romans must always co-exist in the same heart. They assert that the "old man," the "carnal mind," the "flesh," the "old nature," can never be slain,

can never be put to death in this life, either by human or divine power. And disbelieving this, they of course never expect a clean or a pure heart. According to this theory, death is a mightier conqueror than the blood of Christ and the Holy Ghost. The most that can be done for the believer in this particular is the *suppression* of the hellish life of the first Adam in the heart. I am bold to say that this false foundation in their theology is the fruitful source of all their tyranny and "strife for masteries" among themselves, as well as their very inadequate ideas on the vital questions of holy conviction of sin, and repentance, as prerequisites, divine prerequisites, to salvation.

What has struck my mind most frequently while conversing with the most thoughtful among them has been the very defective views they entertain concerning the "witness of the Spirit." Being so highly and richly blessed in my own soul by His witnessing presence, it was quite natural that I should dwell much and often on this rich grace and experience. In all my intercourse with them, I never met but three of their number who gave me any satisfaction on the subject. But these brethren had the unspeakable good fortune to receive it, not among the Plymouth people, but during a great and mighty outpouring of the Spirit in one of the most marvelous revivals on record. Not one of the three, any more than myself, retained the experience after association with that body.

It is quite evident that there must be something wrong in their apprehensions of Scripture, otherwise there would be more love among them; but their teachers (and most of them think they are teachers) are Pharisaic in a high degree, though having the semblance of meekness. They affirm that they are on the "ground of the church of God," and that "no one else is." A man is "living in sin"



who does not observe the Lord's supper every Lord's day morning. The Word of God, they say, is the evidence, when believed, and *that is all*, that we are saved. One of their exponents out West acknowledged that he had sought the "witness of the Spirit" for seven years, and failing to obtain it, became convinced thereupon that there was no such thing apart from the written word. That man is looked upon to-day as a wonderful teacher of teachers, and people sit under his Antinomian voice with ears and eyes and mouth wide open, as though he were an angel from heaven. To have the mind filled with knowledge of Scripture, the walk outwardly circumspect, and the conversation directed exclusively to objective rather than to subjective truth—these seem to be the qualifications which characterize the best part of the Plymouth Brethren.

But are not these the qualifications which were common to both Nicodemus and the foolish virgins? neither of whom had the faintest heart-experience of the operations of the Spirit. The former, with a knowledge of the letter of the Word, which embraced the whole of the Old Testament, could neither see nor enter the kingdom. The latter, though they had almost all the marks of their wiser sisters,—viz.: the same name, they were virgins; the same dress, they were robed in white; they were on the same errand, they went out to meet the Bridegroom; they all had lamps, they all had vessels, they all "slumbered and slept"—were waived into the retributions of eternity, simply and exclusively because they had no oil. In other words, as another has said, "Their religion was a religion without the Holy Ghost." Oil everywhere in Scripture symbolizes the Spirit.

God requires from his children not only right and Scriptural views of truth, and circumspection of walk before the world, but also the faith

which works by love, divinely implanted love, the love of God himself in the regenerated heart. In such a heart the Holy Spirit abides, instructing, comforting, witnessing, and always lifting Christ before the vision of the soul, in order that, while looking or attentively contemplating his glories we may be transformed into his likeness. It is all spiritual, as opposed to natural. It is not ordinary but extraordinary experience. It is not human but divine. The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither doth he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. It used to be said to me, "Oh! don't talk about your experience. It discourages weak ones, who think they are not converted because they have not had any experience"! And I listened again and again to the devil in professing saints of this class, not understanding that the more dissatisfied with itself a soul could be at the rehearsal of an experience which brought agony, and longing, and soul-hunger, the more God was glorified and the more thoroughly would the work of conviction go on in the heart and conscience of the distressed one until conversion would succeed the repentance not to be repented of.

There are respectable religionists all over Christendom who deny the Godhead of our Lord, and yet their morality and benevolence would put to the blush the best efforts of a vast number of so-called orthodox churchgoers. But in looking at the characteristics of another class, as described by the Spirit of God in 1 Cor. 13: 1-3—men and women who were quite orthodox as to the person and work of Christ—I find that they also are self-deceived. If there were to be found in the State of New York to-day five millions of persons answering to that august description, they would as certainly be rejected by the Son of God as were the fool-

ish virgins. I know that our Plymouth friends have a way of replying to this kind of argument, by taking advantage of what I shall call a dispensational quibble. For the parable of the foolish virgins, say they, as before they pronounced upon the experience of Ezekiel 36: 25-29, "relates to the Jew in the future, and not to us in these days. For we do not get new hearts, nor clean hearts. Our hearts, on the contrary, are like a cage of unclean birds, and they must continue such, except as controlled or suppressed by the indwelling Spirit"—of whose presence, by the way, they are as little cognizant, consciously cognizant, I mean, as the writer is of what is now transpiring on the planet of Jupiter.

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#### WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?—

Is it of importance that Zion should prosper; that souls should be saved; and that the Church should enjoy the favor and blessing of God? Every good person will exclaim: "Yes! by all means." Yet two facts are undeniable.

1. That we shall never see real, spiritual prosperity, without obedience to the divine will, in spirit and in truth, to the best of our knowledge and ability.

2. We shall never see prosperity until we are willing to labor and sacrifice to bring it about.

The entire responsibility of the condition of the Church is with the people. The Lord will do his part, and show signs, and wonders, and impart the gift of the Holy Ghost as he has promised, provided we will do our part, without compromising his truth and holiness.

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TRIALS do not hurt, if they teach us submission. A burden ceases to be such when we are quite willing to bear it, and especially when we feel that God wills it, and that his grace sustains us.

M. H. S.

#### WHAT WILL YOU GIVE?

DEAR friends, we are not going to pass the contribution box around now; but thinking this to be an all-important question, one upon which the interest of every one of us depends as much, perhaps, as upon any question we could propound, let us each for himself carefully consider—How much will you give for the gospel of Christ? But, do you say, is it not a *free* gospel? Does not the prophet say, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money—come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk *without money and without price*"? Yes, that is a correct quotation, but there is nothing in the passage quoted to indicate that a man who *has* money can have the gospel and still *keep* his money: those who are to have it without money are those who have no money to pay.

But sincerely, my brother, my sister, my friend, how much will you give for the gospel? It is exceedingly valuable, and you should not expect to get it for nothing. You should not be willing to take it for nothing if you could. Neither can you expect to give an equivalent for it; for "it is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."—Prov. 8: 11. Now, if you have some faint idea of its value, perhaps you will be willing to make some offer for it. Offerings for it are in order now: this is "the acceptable [receivable] year of the Lord," and we are close to "the day of vengeance of our God;" and if you want a chance in the high calling, you need to be quick and prompt about it. We expect the quota under this call will soon be filled, and hope you will not be among the number who will "stand without, knocking and saying 'Open unto us,' when it will be forever too late. Again we ask, How much will you give? Suppose we consider the

word *give* first in the sense of *yielding*, "giving ear." Are you willing to give your attention and thought to this gospel? Are you willing to bend your mind to it? Are you willing carefully, prayerfully, and persistently to consider it? Are you willing to give it all the thought that you have hitherto given to matters of little or no importance? Consider it well: think of the hours you have spent in reading works of fiction, wit and humor, perhaps in playing some game for diversion, or even in reading history or secular news, mainly for the purpose of being considered well informed, or possibly for the purpose of being qualified for some position of worldly honor or fame. Are you willing to give way, to give that attention to the gospel that you have given to these? Do you answer in the affirmative? That is well, so far, but that is not enough.

Are you willing (notice, these questions are for you to answer to yourself in the present tense, not tomorrow,) to give in the sense of *quitting*? Are you willing, if this gospel requires it, to give place to principles which will antagonize those that you have hitherto entertained? Are you willing to have a radical change made in your mind, and in your manner of reasoning, *i. e.*, so that instead of reasoning from an earthly or natural standpoint, it shall be from a spiritual or gospel standpoint? Earthly wisdom would reason, "If thine enemy hunger, let him starve," and everything else on the same line; but heavenly wisdom waits to have our Heavenly Father, who understands all the weaknesses of our natures, and all the influences that have been brought to bear upon us, adjust matters for us, instead of our taking them into our own hands and managing from an earthly plane and with earthly wisdom. That is to say, looked at from an earthly standpoint, we resign our earthly

wisdom and become fools for Christ's sake.

You think this is giving considerable, do you? Well, it is; but you can not become a vessel fit for the Master's use without. Are you willing? Yes. Very well; that is good. But that is *not enough*; for this gospel will likely reveal to you that very many things which you have hitherto considered harmless in their nature are really very injurious to you; and you will be called upon to give, in the sense of abandoning, *i. e.*, to let go of in the sense of never taking hold again—a long good-bye to the things you once loved. Among them may be earthly hopes and expectations. This heavenly wisdom will teach you that all these are transitory and vain, and that the *more you depend upon them the more you will be deceived by them*, and the greater will be your disappointment; for your expectations will fail to be realized, and your hopes will be blasted. You will find everything turned around under the influence of the gospel, and that the things which are highly esteemed among men are abominations in the sight of God.—Luke 16: 15. Notice the words, "*highly esteemed among men.*" Earthly things needful for our physical well-being are not to be despised, nor will heavenly wisdom prompt us to despise them. They are not the things referred to as highly esteemed among men, for men will sacrifice these for worldly honor and wealth. If you will *give way* to the influences of the gospel upon you, you will be led to abominate that which is *highly* esteemed among men. Let us see what things are highly esteemed among men. What do they make the greatest sacrifice for? Probably the greatest effort that men make is to be worshiped; honor, fame, a name among men; not so much to *be* superior as to be *regarded* superior. To have men cast out your name as evil—that is a terrible thing

for a man who knows nothing of the gospel of Christ. To lose his reputation is one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest calamity that can befall a man. He will not mind so much the loss of his character, but the loss of his reputation is most terrible to the man of the world; for if you lose this, you will lose your friends, mostly. Some of them will stand by you if you have plenty of money, but it will take a great deal even of money to hold many friends after your reputation is all gone. So, if you relinquish your reputation for the sake of the gospel, (nothing else should induce a man to part with it,) you will be doing pretty well—you will be *giving* considerable. Do you think you can do it? Y-e-s? Well, can you not say it with emphasis? "By the grace of God, I will!" That is good! You are giving yourself poor, after the wisdom of this world; but never mind. Look not at the things that are seen—they are temporal.

But you have not given enough yet. Have you any money? (No, we are not going to pass the contribution box now.) Yes, some. Well, much or little, you will need to give it, not to pay for the gospel, but out of gratitude, and that it may be sent to others. And there are some of the Lord's brethren living near your house that are hungry or sick, so your (?) money will be needed, and with it will go those few friends who staid by you for your money's sake after your reputation was gone. You found by bitter (but blessed) experience that a great part of your friends left you when your reputation did; and now the rest of your worldly friends will go, and you will be left alone. Will you do it? "Yes, by the grace of God, I will!" The sting of death (to the world) is past, isn't it? How much easier it is to say *yes*, now. Praise the Lord!

But you have *not given enough yet*. Now, my dear friend, you are not far from the kingdom. Will you sacri-

fice your ease, your comfort, yea, your life itself, if called upon? Will you let it be worn out, or burned out, or in any way used up for the sake of the gospel of Christ? You will? Thank God! I am *so* glad. You will be *so rich*.

Now, let us look over this covenant. You have given your attention, your time, your mind, your reputation, your friends, your money, your *life*—seven items. You have given yourself poor indeed, haven't you? I acknowledge the fact: it is so poor, *very* poor; and you have done this willingly. It makes me think of something I have heard, and while I am looking at you your countenance seems changed. You remind me of some one I have known. Ah! it comes to me now. Jesus of Nazareth was his name. Why, how much you resemble Him—you must be His brother! "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he *was* rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich."—2 Cor. 8: 9. Why, you have done just as He did, and just what He intended when He said: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."—John 13: 15. Well, that is the best kind of will that you could make, and I am glad to greet you as my brother, I also having done the same things—"for which cause he is not ashamed to call *us* brethren."—Heb. 2: 11.

You can afford to be poor, and to go about in disguise for awhile, now, inasmuch as you are an heir of the kingdom. "Hearken, my beloved brethren: hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"—James 2: 5. And now you will *learn* faster, and be able to prepare yourself for regal employment in the royal family; for "If any man will (wills or *wishes* to) do His will, he shall *know* of the doctrine."—Jno. 7: 17.

SAVED AND HEALED.

BY EDITH M. DEAN.

I was deeply convicted of sin in the spring of 1882. I fought against my convictions for some time, but finally yielded and gave my heart to God. I received the clear witness of sins forgiven, and my acceptance with God on the 11th day of April, 1882. Leaving home soon after, and not having an opportunity to be with Christian people very often, I did not get along very fast. But Praise God! His Spirit did not leave me. I still desired and tried in my weak way serve Him; but how plainly I can now see that I was following him afar off.

On coming home in the fall, and being in the society of Christians, and having the word of God preached in all its plainness, I soon began to feel the need of a deeper work of grace in my heart.

I had heard sanctification preached about before, but never really understood it; but as I continued to feel more and more my need of God, He soon enabled me, by his Holy Spirit, to see where I stood. After hearing the doctrine of sanctification more fully explained, I saw that it was what I needed. I commenced seeking for it, and after about two weeks I was enabled to lay hold by faith on God's promises, and Dec. 1st, 1882, received the witness of the Spirit that God fully saved and sanctified. Praise God forever! Oh! what rest I found in Jesus; what peace and joy in the Holy Ghost! Since then I have been trying to follow my Saviour closely; but there have been times when I have not felt just clear before God, and I would have to cry unto him and plead earnestly, until I felt free again.

In August 1884 I went to Moreland, Schuyler county, to make a visit, and was taken sick the next day, Tuesday. I had not been at all well

all summer, and was then taking medicine. Was quite sick that night with a burning fever. The next day I was some better, and continued to gain until Friday, when I grew rapidly worse; and so much worse that I thought then, and still think that I was very near death. I was a firm believer in the power of Jesus to heal our diseases, but had not felt led to pray very earnestly for my healing.

While I was lying there with my eyes closed, but not asleep, I suddenly saw, as plainly as I ever saw anything, several hymns. The only one I noticed particularly was the one called, "The hem of His garment." It was so plain I could read the whole of it easily, and just then I felt assured that God would restore me to health. I did not feel in any hurry, but just felt contented to wait His own good time.

Saturday and Sunday I felt a little better until Sunday afternoon, when the fever came back and I felt worse than I had at all before. Brother George Van Arsdale and his wife, the dear friends with whom I was staying, did not know but I was dying. I knew all that was passing around me, but as soon as I would close my eyes so many and such strange scenes would pass before me. One in particular was so plain. I seemed to see Jesus and his disciples in a boat fishing, and it seemed that I helped them draw the net into the boat, and it was filled so full of fishes; then it seemed that Jesus fed us all there on the bank with the fishes and manna. It was not a dream, for I was not asleep, neither was I out of my head.

Suddenly these words were put into my mouth: "Stand still and see the salvation of God," and I said them aloud. I had not thought of being healed then, but as I said the words I felt that something was going to be done; the fever all left me, and I could breathe, oh! so easy.

Pretty soon Sister Van Arsdale started to give me some medicine. I told her I did not want any medicine. It seemed as though God put the words into my mouth, for until I had refused the medicine I had not thought that I was healed. I then asked for my clothes and got up. Praise God! I was healed, made whole by the Great Physician! Glory to His name! I went out into the sitting room, and we had a season of prayer and praise to God; and oh! how he did bless me. We rose from our knees and I went out on the stoop and looked around. Oh! how bright and beautiful the world looked to me. It seemed to me that it never looked so lovely before.

Since then the Lord has been leading me in new ways. I have never enjoyed so much of his love, never had so much light, nor saw the narrow way so clearly as since I was healed. Glory to God! I am all on the altar to-day; I feel the love of Jesus burning in my heart as I write and by the grace of God I will be true to him, and give him all the glory for what he has done for me.

#### BAD BARGAINS.

A teacher in a Sabbath School once asked his scholars if the Bible tells of anybody who made a bad bargain. "Yes," replied a boy. "Esau made a bad bargain when he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage." "Yes," exclaimed a second boy. "Judas made a bad bargain when he sold his Lord." "Yes" said little Annie, "And Jesus says a man makes a bad bargain when he gains the whole world and loses his own soul." Ah! what a bad bargain that would be, and yet how many lose their souls for a very little.

BEFORE the world is converted the sermons will have to be converted.

#### ANALYSIS OF EXODUS. [Compiled from Various Authors.]

BY REV. A. SIMS.

1. *Authorship and Date.*—Written by Moses, at Sinai, for the Hebrews, B. C. 1491.

2. *Character of Contents, and Chronology of Events Recorded.*

I. ISRAEL IN EGYPT, 1571—1491 B. C.—1. History of Moses, Chapters 1—7: 13.

2. Israel in Egypt—The Egyptian Plagues, Chapters 7: 14—12.

3. Departure of the Israelites, and Journey to Sinai, Chapters 13—17.

II. ISRAEL AT SINAI, 1490 B. C.—1. Promulgation of Commandments and Laws, Chapters 18—23.

2. The Tabernacle, its furniture and services, Chapters 24—40.

"More briefly, this book is divided into two parts: chapters 1—19, historical; and 20—40, legislative." "It embraces the history of about 145 years from the death of Joseph to the erection of the Tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai."—Horne. "The title of this book is peculiarly appropriate. Exodus means departure, and this book contains the account of the departure of the Israelites out from Egypt—an event which is the foundation of their whole history as a nation, and which is more frequently referred to than any other, in their subsequent history."—Nicholls.

3. *Central Truths.*—Bondage. Redemption by blood. Types.

4. *Promises or Prophecies Fulfilled.*—Here we have a fulfillment of the prophecy made to Abraham, that his seed should multiply and be afflicted 400 years, and in the fourth generation be delivered; also of a similar statement made by Joseph to his brethren.

5. *Biographies.*—Moses—brought up in all the learning of the Egyptians; renounced all his privileges and prospects, to become the deliverer of his people; he had a clear call to his

work, and forty years training in Jethro's service; in temper very meek. Aaron—yielded to temptation and made a calf; his excuse for this exceedingly shallow.

6. *Connection with other parts of Scripture.*—"The connection between the books of Genesis and Exodus is supplied in Exodus 1. Thus at the close of Genesis we have Jacob's family before us; and as Exodus takes up the history of Moses, great-grandson of Levi, Joseph's brother, we are at once informed as to our place chronologically at the opening of Exodus—about three generations, sixty to seventy years each, (Matt. 1: 17,) or 200 years."—Linton. This book gives deep spiritual light on many other parts of Scripture. "There are forty-four references to this book by Christ and his apostles."—Cornell. "The description of the plagues may be read in connection with Rev. 15—16; Israel's triumphant song, with Rev. 15."—Anderson.

7. *Practical lessons and doctrines taught.*—The cruel bondage of sin. The mighty delivering power of God, as manifested in the ten plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea. The tendency to speedy apostasy in human nature, shown (1.) in the murmuring of the Israelites for water; (2.) then for bread; (3.) then for water again; (4.) and then making a golden calf, which led to the death of three thousand men. The success of importunate prayer, seen in the intercession of Moses for the Israelites. God must be obeyed. The superintending providence of God, shown in His care over Moses at his birth, his removal to Midian, and forty days fasting on the mount.

The many types of this book are fraught with lessons of the deepest significance. Turn to chapter 17: 6: "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." Now turn to

1 Cor., 10: 4, and get the New Testament interpretation of the above passage: "They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ."

"Manna is a type of the 'Bread which came down from heaven' (John 6: 51), for nourishing the immortal soul. Moses was a type of Christ in giving laws to the children of Israel."—Cornell.

Nicholls, in referring to the pass-over as a type of Christ, says: "It is a remarkable circumstance that Christ, *our passover*, was sacrificed for us, and our deliverance from the bondage of sin completed, in the same month, and on the same day of the month, that the Israelites were delivered from the bondage of Egypt. Man did not intend this." Compare Matt. 26: 5 with Acts 13: 27.

"There are more types of Christ in this book than in any other book of the Old Testament."—Henry.

ONLY A DWARF.—How strange it is that evidence which carried conviction to the gigantic intellect of men like Newton and Locke, and which satisfied men of science like Pascal and Cuvier, Dalton and Herschel, Brewster and Faraday, should not suffice for the small race of agnostics! They do not deny the greatness of such men, but they say that we know more now, and tell us that "the dwarf on the giant's shoulder sees more than the giant." Very true; but he is a dwarf still. Put the agnostic on the ground, and we see with what small and deformed mind we have to deal, blind to everything but natural science, and unable to look at what Butler calls "the whole system of things," at the world of mind as well as matter.—*Dr. James Macanley.*

ONE of the first steps in coming to a saving knowledge of Christ is an acknowledgement of need.

## THE DELIVERER.

BY MRS. N. H. MOORE.

How many heart-sufferings we pass through that are without utterance! They are many and varied. If we should tell them to others, they would look at us kindly and think—How foolish! Should we speak of more, they might be horrified that evil thoughts could be so abundant in the mind. But here we are, with the seeds of envy, jealousy, malice, ungovernable temper—passions that would arise and rule in every form unless they were held, subdued, and conquered by a mightier Ruler who has, by the experience of my own soul, come in to abide forevermore.

At times they seem without number, a mighty host advancing like an army to overthrow the purity and peace of the abiding presence within. Then is the time to cry to the Conqueror within the soul. Then He comes forth from the temple, His resting-place, and by His presence scatters the host of enemies that war against the soul. He bids them be gone, and they obey.

Then we know His presence has subdued them. We rejoice, and in triumph we sing and feel—Praise God, we are free. The soul feels the sunshine. The rainbow of promise is over us, and all is well. The abiding presence of Jesus seems to return to the temple of our soul and once more take the seat of the refiner and purifier of silver, watching its purification.

Then we look forth and behold, they are not gone forever, but have hiding places, and seem, with bows and arrows, ready to assail the temple of peace in another direction. Then again we cry in spirit, O Father, the foes are hiding, but ready to pierce us with arrows of dismay. Then he turns and says, Fear not: more are for you than all they that be against you. I am here to protect

and save you from weapons of war.

So with the victory in which I was rejoicing. The crafty enemy would have taken it all away by the ghosts of doubts and fears. O my soul, cling every moment to the abiding Jesus within, who is here to save thy life from destruction, and thy soul from the power of the grave.

## A BEAUTIFUL THOUGHT.

“Our present joy and future glory are improved according as we rise to perfection here. The life of a saint may be compared to the labour of the bees, who all the day either fly from their hives to the flowers, or from the flowers to their hives; and all their art and exercise is where there is fragrance or sweetness. In Divine worship the soul ascends to God by holy thoughts and ardent desires, and God descends into the soul by the communication of grace and comfort.”—*Bates' Spiritual Perfection.*

If the above thought be true, what must we think of those who find little or no real blessedness in religion? Have they experienced the saving efficacy of the Gospel upon their hearts?

From the same work we cite another thought, equally beautiful:

“The holy soul is a heaven enlightened with the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; a paradise planted with immortal fruits, the graces of the sanctifying Spirit; and God walks in it, communicating the sense of His love.”—*Divine Life.*

CHRIST is styled the *finisher* of our faith, as well as the *author* of our faith. There is as much necessity for the Spirit to keep up our graces as there is to bring forth our graces. Indifference in religion is the first step to apostasy from religion.

THE world is waiting for the coming sermon, the Christ-like sermon.



## THOROUGH SPIRITUAL REFORMATION NECESSARY.

BY REV. E. P. MARVIN.

Sixty thousand pulpits in the land all guarded by law,—60,000 men of learning and ability, bringing a life and death message from the throne of God—addressing the people upon the most tremendous concerns in the universe—concerns of supreme importance to God, angels and men—concerns that alter the tragic scenes of Sinai and Calvary now gather increasing solemnity and grandeur from the approaching nearness of the great Judgment Day and eternity.

"There stands the legate of the skies;  
His office sacred, his credentials clear;  
Through him the violated law speaks out  
With all its thunders; and through him, as soft  
As angel's breath, the gospel whispers peace."

Why not a spiritual power that shall proclaim "a present deity"? Why not a moral earthquake that shall break asunder the bands that bind the Church in the embraces of the world?

Multiply the twelve apostles by 5000 and how soon they would turn this land of ours upside down. Has not "the tongue of fire" as well as the gift of tongues almost ceased? Must there not be serious defects in the Church and its ministers? What aileth thee, O thou Church of the living God, that thou hast not fulfilled thy great commission, and that thou art so impotent and despised? What aileth thee, O thou impenitent World that thou dost not bow to thy rejected Redeemer and rightful Sovereign? Art thou waiting for a more faithful Church, or art thou hopelessly hardened by sin and fatally bewitched by Satan?

Behold the Church, bought with precious blood, the object of God's ceaseless care and love, ordained to show His wisdom, love and power, sent on the glorious mission of

evangelizing the world, the expectant Bride of the Son of God—behold her as she is to-day! Pulseless be the heart that rejoices in her humiliation! Palsied be the tongue that tells her faults in Gath or publishes them in the streets of Askelon, for the triumph of her enemies!

But repentance and restoration can never come until her sins are discovered and reprov'd. "As many as I love I rebuke," saith the Lord. Behold, then, the professing Church in her petty, unscriptural, sectarian divisions,—her lukewarmness and lawlessness toward Christ and her fond fellowship with the world that murdered her Lord and has never repented of it,—her peaceful surrender to its allurements and the mixed multitude that swells her communion rolls to 10,000,000, so many of whom disbelieve her creeds, disregard her covenants, and defy her discipline, practically repudiate her distinctive principles of separation, consecration, holiness and usefulness, and bear almost every characteristic that defines worldliness. Weighed instead of numbered, they are found wanting. Behold their thoughtless profession and go-as-you-please living, in conformity to the customs, fashions and amusements of the world: no cross, no conflict, no self-sacrifice, so that the world sees nothing in them to be converted to. They began by making religion easy, and now do without it altogether.

Behold their extravagance in sumptuous living and their parsimony in promoting godliness; their indifference to the vital concerns of Christianity and their demand for entertainment and pleasure at any price, and even in the administration of the gospel, evincing that they are "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having the form of godliness but denying the power thereof." They seem desirous of being saved by Christ and made happy

by the devil. Behold the Church as a visible and corporate body, compromising and catering like a church of the world, giving no clear testimony and putting no visible restraint on worldliness, but studying to please with excellency of speech in the pulpit and hired operatic mockeries in the gallery, too often inspired by vanity; her proud floral displays after the similitude of naturalistic Cain-worship, the re-introduction of Papal holidays and ritualism; the silly invention of juvenile exhibitions to relieve the tedium of plain spiritual worship, and all the flash and folly of a kind of chromo Christianity. Behold her neglect the poor in her temples of ease and pride, her vassalage to wealth, fashion and social influences, and her lust for boy preachers who are expected to be more attractive to the young and more tolerant toward worldliness.

Behold the Church as a repository of social influences and pleasures, not essentially unlike those of the surrounding world—her alliance with the club-room and play-house, which has now passed into her very architecture, and as a recommendation even into the polity of the "Godly old Methodist Church."

Alas! behold her feasting and rioting with the world—her literary, musical and dramatic entertainments which engross so much of her life and almost characterize her as a "Bureau of Amusements" for the world, in connection with which she plays at missions and various Church work, corrupts the spirit of gospel benevolence, and cultivates the spirit that leads the young people in throngs to the theatre, the ball-room, and other sinful pleasures, thus helping on the world's mad frolic to judgment and perdition.

In the midst of this manifest apostasy we hear vain boastings of improvement and progress, and expressions of contempt for those who

see these evils and weep over them in secret places. We witness a general aversion to the blessed hope of the Lord's coming, the loss of the confidence, conscience and respect of the world, and finally the decline of powerful and permanent revivals, evincing that the Holy Ghost can do no mighty works through the backslidden Church.

Sad picture indeed! Sad because so true! Deluded or dishonest pulpiteers may easily hold up this picture to popular ridicule and scorn. They may interpret those ecclesiastical changes and sectarian rivalries, as exponents of an advanced and more attractive Christianity; they may sing the syren song of "peace and safety" to delighted audiences, but any intelligent infidel can show them that these changes are a departure from the Christianity of the Bible, while their lovely song is a fulfillment of a prophecy of the New Testament.

These warning cries of God's scattered witnesses may continue to be regarded by many as the Jeremiades of weak brains and disappointed ambitions, but this will in no way affect their usefulness and importance.

The moral condition of the surrounding world—its lawlessness, vice and crime—its indifference, irreligion and infidelity—its drift away from God and his Church into atheism, communism and confusion, should be clearly manifest to all. Let us not, like the Jews, bring upon ourselves condemnation for not discerning the signs of the times. And now with this condition of the Church and the world open before us, calling in trumpet tones for a radical, spiritual reformation, what shall we do about it?

Is it not our immediate and commanding duty to make a united and supreme effort for this end? And how shall this be accomplished? Another article may tell.

## JESUS LEADS.

BY MRS. E. CARROL.

During this summer in harvest time, I had an experience that I never had before. For six whole weeks I felt the presence of God all the time. For three years previous I had walked as in the immediate presence of God, but this was a different feeling from any that I ever had before. I will try to explain it, but am afraid that I shall not be able to pen it, as I understand it. But God helping me, I will try it. At first there was such an expressive joy in my soul; I could not tell whether I was in the body or not at times, then I felt Jesus standing back of, or behind me, with His hands on my shoulders and His breath sweeping down over my face continually, sometimes more than others. Sometimes He would bear so heavy on my shoulders and His breath come so heavy with its sweet odors that it almost took my breath. Oh! such a weight of glory on me. It seemed all glory in my soul, all around me wherever I went. My house was full it. When I went to church it was there, wherever I went that weight of glory was on me, and Jesus' breath sweeping down over my face. I could feel His hands as plainly as any earthly friend's. Oh, what blessed communion I had with God those weeks. Praise God for it! It came on me so heavy sometimes that I could hardly breathe. It was Jesus! It was glory! That is all I can say. All I could say or do was to praise God and drink in the sweet breath of Jesus. I felt to melt in His hands and exclaim, Oh! sweet will of God! How it does pay to obey God in everything. It does! It does! We do not have to wait until we cross the river to get our reward, but we get our pay right along every day. Praise the Lord. I know this to be true. I realize

what I am saying. I know it. I am so glad that I ever sunk out of self into the will of God. I feel the same peace in my soul and know that I am in the will of God, doing his will now just as I was in those six weeks, but do not feel his breath and hands as then; but realize every moment that thou God seest me. Oh, brothers and sisters, let us be true to God in everything. God forbid that any of us should ever bring a reproach on His cause, by doing little things we ought not to do. Some seem to think, or at least act, as though they thought these little things do not amount to much, but they do. There is just where you are mistaken. "It is the *little* foxes that destroy the vines." It is the *little* things you do that makes you *lean* in your soul. It is the *little things* you do that get you down in your soul, and you do not know what is the matter with you, how you got there, and hardly how to get out of that place. You do not know much of anything only that you have lost your experience. When you come to the class room you have not a word to say, you feel as barren and empty as a last year's birds-nest. It is the little things we do, that God hates, which get us into such places as this. Just look around and see if this is not the case; look in your homes, look at your children's clothes. Are you putting on your children what you cannot wear yourself and remain clear before God? Do you dress plainly and dress your child like the world? This is wrong. I believe if we are saved we will not put on our children anything like the world. We will say, as for me and my house, we will obey God—we will walk in the light. May God help us to practice what we preach.

Bro. Roberts, may the Lord bless you and keep you true to himself while you live. Keep your EARNEST CHRISTIAN as you now have it, full of food for hungry souls. I love your

magazine, and I can hardly wait till it comes. I love it because it contains pure, wholesome reading. Keep it pure. Keep the Church pure, do not compromise with the world in the least.

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### FAITHFULNESS.

BY MRS. E. GREENE.

God is a faithful Creator. He is a High Priest. He is faithful that promised—the faithful God that keepeth covenant. Faithful is He that calleth you. The Lord is firm in adherence to his provisions, oaths, treaties and engagements. The harmony and order of the universe depend on the constancy of his faithfulness. Now God loves to see in his children, and will he not, his own characteristics? He admonishes bishops to be faithful, ministers to be faithful, stewards to be faithful, husbands and wives to be faithful, servants to be faithful. There is very much in being faithful, perhaps more than we often consider. It is quite easy to be faithful under circumstances where nothing hard seems to be required; where all about us is helping us on; but to be constant, untiring, unwavering, undeviating in our onward march, not swerved by flatteries or frowns, requires a firm reliance on the Infinite. When we are cast down and seemingly forgotten, God's eye is upon us, for he saith, "Mine eye shall be on the faithful of the land." Preachers are sometimes faithful or appear to be in their pulpit services, when perhaps they are not really faithful to their families. A minister attending a general quarterly meeting, said, Saturday afternoon: "I must go home, for wife has not provisions enough to last over Sunday." Some urged him to remain, but I gladly excused him; but had he been faithful, or at least thoughtful, would the

provision not have been made before and not left until the late hour of Saturday evening, thus closing up the avenue of temptation to the tired wife?

I heard Brother Roberts preach a sermon once at Conference, and I presume it was an excellent discourse, but the most I remember of it is the text: "For he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," and some of his remarks on this were: He said some men seem to be full of the Holy Ghost but they are not emphatically good. "If a minister under my supervision was holding meetings and sinners were being converted, if his family was suffering or in need of comfort, I would send him home at once." Oh, let us be faithful in every department of life, for it is written, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."

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### THE TRUE INSPIRATION.

Behold now what must be the inspiration of all the moral work which lies around us to be done. The motive can not lie in the material profits that shall accrue. The noblest employments will not add to your wealth. You can not ask gold to inflame your zeal; you can not appeal to the charm of fame; you can not assume that happiness will never disappoint nor forsake you; you can not wait for your soul to be stirred by the rivalry of sects. The moral toiler of to-day must look back to Palestine, and see that one who, in three summer times, overthrew an old civilization and set going an era that will be called after his name forever; and while they mark that divine outline against the eastern sky, they will hear the words, simple and true and everlasting. "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh in which no man can work."

## BENEVOLENCE.

BY REV. J. W. FULKERSON.

Benevolence is the gospel of this day, addressed to all people, and especially to all Christians. It is one of the blessings of society, and makes it the duty of any good citizen. It is enjoined upon the rich to help the poor, and the strong to bear burdens with the weak.

The miser saps the foundation of society, and with his avaricious, spongy disposition consumes the bread that should be given to the poor, and forgets that death in a short time will take from him all he possesses. The one thing lacking on the part of the young man was, "to sell his goods and give to the poor."

The blessed Saviour taught and suffered the sentiment of benevolence. The system of the gospel and the promises of the Bible all center in benevolence as the lines of Christian faith and practice. When we dedicate our wealth to the good of the church and the glory of God we extract the poison from our riches and wisely register in the book of heaven that which will weigh in our favor in the final reckoning.

I shall be happy in this effort if harmony can be established between the Creator and the creature. "The heavens will hear the earth, and the earth will hear the heavens." Benevolence is the image of God and the expression of his essence—the chief action of man's felicity on earth, the brightest ray of man's hope for glory.

Charity is the center where all virtues meet. "O God, my goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth." We are justified by faith, and will be rewarded for our works. All public worship, prayer, fasting, humiliation, sacraments, and benevolence will soon come to an end with us;

for they imply that we are gross and carnal, and they will have no place in heaven. There the three divine Persons will be the object of our adoration, and the thoughts of blessing others will brighten our joys forever. Let us "give alms of such things as we have."

## BE AND DO.

There is a great difference between *being* good and *doing* good. Some people suppose that if a man will only *do* good he is certain to *be* good. But a man may do a great many good things and still lack the element of goodness within. He may do them to be seen of men, or to deceive people; to obtain a reputation, and secure larger opportunities for the commission of crime; and so his well-doing may prove only a cloak for all iniquity.

The divine order is not, first *do* and then *be*, but first *be* and then *do*. The fountain is to be made sweet, and then the waters may be expected to be pure. The tree must be made good and then the fruit will not be corrupt. The beginning of all legitimate reformation and righteousness must be in the grace and power of God, through whom we are *born again, or created anew in Christ Jesus*, and thus prepared for service in Christ's cause.

We are not to wait until after we have done many good things, and then expect we shall become good as a result of our actions; but we are to go just as we are to Jesus, the Saviour of the lost; to God, who loves and pities perishing men; and, having done this, and having been renewed in the spirit of our minds, we are then prepared for service in the Master's cause, and for all well-doing which he may require at our hands.—*Safeguard.*

"I will be glad in the Lord."

## THE FOOLISH VIRGINS.

BY MRS. D. A. CATTON.

A parable is a representation of something real in life or nature, from which a moral is to be drawn for instruction. Parables are frequently used in Scripture.

From the parable of the wise and foolish virgins we may learn a valuable lesson. They all took lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Five of the ten were wise, and took oil in the vessels with their lamps; but the foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them. In their starting out, there was evidently no apparent difference between them.

In this parable there is an allusion to the customs that prevailed at marriages in eastern countries. It was usual for the bridegroom to bring home his bride in the evening, and that she might be received properly at his house, some of his female friends, when he was near at hand, went forth with burning lamps to welcome her, and conduct him and his bride into the house, and for this they were guests at the marriage feast.

They all started with the same end in view, namely, to meet the bridegroom. While he tarried they all slumbered and slept. When the cry was made—"Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."—all arose and trimmed their lamps; but alas! the foolish had their lamps; the same as their companions had, but there was no oil in them.

They had a religious profession and to all outward appearance were followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and expected to be permitted to go into the feast. They slept quietly, for they saw nothing to fear. They were in the company of others who had the form of religion, and while those who had made the required

preparation went in and the doors were shut, with great confidence came the foolish, who had had only a name to live, who had never fully complied with the terms upon which salvation is received, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." The answer to them was, "I say unto you, I know you not."

Is it not to be feared that many, very many of the young in the present day, who make a profession of faith in Christ, and are members of a Christian Church, are destitute of oil—the grace and holy love in the heart, which makes them new creatures, makes them Christlike? Without this oil all is vain. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." The heart must be emptied of sin, washed in the atoning blood, and that robe of righteousness put on, which is the righteousness of the saints, and which is freely promised to every one who seeks for it with all the powers of his being, and will not consent to take up with anything else.

How comforting to rest our souls in prayer, to carry every burden and lay it upon the altar, committing ourselves, body and soul, into the keeping of Him who is faithful, that promised. This attitude of the soul will give serenity to our looks, and dignity to every action. The darkest day may bring sharp suffering, but can not move us to irritation or a revengeful spirit. Thus to cast ourselves on Him, looking for light in what looks dark, is the only way of safety for any of us. M. H. S.

"If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." He that draws back from his profession on earth shall be kept back from any profession in heaven. He that departs *in* the faith shall be saved; but he that departs *from* the faith shall be damned.

## WHAT SORT?

What sort of morality is that which satisfies a man in the non-payment of a debt as long as his creditor refrains from "dunning"?

What sort of morality is that which satisfies itself in the non-payment of a debt because it is a small amount—a trifle?

What sort of morality is that which calls the attention of the creditor to an overcharge but is silent about an undercharge?

What sort of morality is that which seeks to evade meeting his creditor lest he should be more plainly reminded of his indebtedness?

What sort of morality is that which satisfies itself in the non-payment of a debt because the creditor is presumed by the debtor not to need what the debt calls for?

What sort of morality is that which satisfies itself in the non-payment of a debt because of a failure in farming or other enterprise or undertaking?

What sort of morality is that which gets offended when asked to pay a debt which the debtor promised to pay long before the time of dunning?

What sort of morality is that which provides for his own wife and children by defrauding the wife and children of another man, dead or alive, to whom he is justly indebted for things which have been used by the debtor's family for their own enjoyment or profit?

What sort of morality is that which ignores moral obligation as to a debt, and pays only when the civil law compels?

What sort of morality is that which lightens the obligation to pay a just debt in proportion to the length of time since it was contracted?

In short, what sort of morality is that which disregards the command, "Thou shalt not steal"?—*Christian Neighbor.*

## "THINKING ABOUT IT."

BY MRS. D. A. CATTON.

During a recent camp-meeting in which there was much of the presence of the Holy Spirit, many yielded to conviction, sought the Lord and found the pardon of their sins.

An elderly gentleman rode quite a distance to attend the meeting. The Spirit was poured out on that day, and very many were led to serious reflection. Seeing the old gentleman deeply moved under a sermon in which God set His seal to the truth, a brother approached him and kindly asked if he did not feel that it was high time for him to give serious attention to the concerns of his never dying soul. "I am thinking about it," he replied, but could not be prevailed upon to make any start towards seeking the Lord. At the close of the meeting he returned to his home; and the following morning found him again an attentive listener at the meeting. Seeing that the Spirit was at work upon his heart, the same brother again kindly urged him to seek the Lord, and received the reply—"I'm thinking about it." The next day he was taken dangerously ill and in a short time died, died as he had lived, without God and without hope in the world. He had opportunities at those meetings to seek and secure salvation, but he only said "I'm thinking about it." How true the Scripture: "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."—Gal. 6 : 7.

THOSE who would let anything take the place of Christianity must abolish sorrow from the earth.

GOD directs in the carrying of the gospel to individuals and communities.

## INFIDELITY.

What has infidelity done?

Has it ever gone out in the heathen lands and found a people ignorant and barbarous delighting in rapine and murder, and by the power of its teachings lifted them out of their degradation, until they adopted the customs of civil nations? Has it ever written down languages and translated literature, prepared text-books, planted schools, established academies, seminaries, colleges and universities? Has it ever founded hospitals, builded asylums, established orphanages, and brought blessings to the poor, the maimed and the blind? What discoveries has it made? What improvements has it introduced? Is there in all the history of infidelity a story of its moral triumph that will match the regeneration of the Fiji Islands under the labor of the missionaries? Has it added anything to the sum of human happiness? Does it bring one ray of comfort into the chamber of death? The religion of Jesus, Christ has done all these things. "The tree is known by its fruits." "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Does infidelity bear figs or thistles?—*Sel.*

CHRISTIANS, like crocodiles, grow till they die; or they are like the moon, which increases in her beauty till she is at the full. They have no desire for putting off the robes of purity while they are on this side of eternity. They wish to hold the sword of religion in their hands until God sets the crown of glory on their heads.

Do not let us take the Spirit of God as an instrument; it is we who are His instruments.

RECONCILIATION to God causes rejoicing in the soul.

## HOW TO PRAY.

An article found among the unpublished papers of the late Dr. J. A. Alexander, on "Circumlocution in Prayer," closes with the following practical suggestions to young men who are forming their habits in respect to prayer. They are equally applicable to all who pray in public.

1. Let your prayer be composed of thanksgiving, praise, confession and petition, without any argument or exhortation addressed to those who are supposed to be praying with you.

2. Adopt no fixed form of expression except such as you obtain from the Scriptures.

3. Express your desires in the briefest, simplest form, without circumlocution.

4. Avoid the use of compound terms in place of the imperfect tense.

5. Hallow God's name by avoiding its unnecessary repetition.

6. Adopt the single devotional phrases of Scripture; but avoid the free use of its figures, and all quaint and doubtful application of its terms to foreign subjects.

7. Pray to God and not to man.

THERE is the same power to strengthen a saint as to quicken a sinner. He who sets us up and makes us holy must keep us up and make us steady. How many professors have seemed to be just ready to cast eternal anchor, when a contrary wind has driven them to sea, and they have been lost forever! "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto you?" and Judah, what shall I do unto you? Why, what is the matter? "Your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away."

"How can ye believe, who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"



## DRESS.

The wearing of costly array is directly opposite to the being adorned with good works. Nothing can be more evident than this; for the more you lay out on your own apparel, the less you have left to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to lodge the strangers, to relieve those that are sick and in prison, and to lessen the numberless afflictions to which we are exposed in this vale of tears. And here is no room for the evasion, "I may be as humble in cloth of gold as in sackcloth."

If you could be as humble when you choose costly as when you choose plain apparel, (which I flatly deny,) yet you could not be as beneficent, as plenteous in good works. Every shilling which you save from your own apparel, you may expend in clothing the naked, and relieving the various necessities of the poor, whom "ye have always with you." Therefore, every shilling which you needlessly spend on your own apparel is, in effect, stolen from God and the poor!

And how many precious opportunities of doing good have you defrauded yourself of! How often have you disabled yourself from doing good, by purchasing what you did not want! For what end did you buy these ornaments? To please God? No; but to please your own fancy, or to gain the admiration and applause of those that were no wiser than yourself. How much good might you have done with that money? And what an irreparable loss have you sustained by not doing it, if it be true that the day is at hand, when "every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor"!—*John Wesley.*

GOD is not one thing within the veil and another thing without. He is always and everywhere the same.

## RELIGION IN BUSINESS.

A DEVOUT and liberal layman recently took from his pocket a little book from which he read the following record, made some years previously: "From this time forward I solemnly purpose to serve God as a calling, and to do business to pay expenses." This was given as the secret of his liberality and usefulness. Though not rich, he made exceptionally large contributions to the cause of Christ. This resolution reveals the true philosophy of life. The man who does business that he may become wealthy does business for himself. Such a one will have little inclination to give largely of his possessions to advance the interests of religion, even though he be worth millions. On the other hand, the one whose life business, family, and everything is fully consecrated to the service of the Master will feel that the proceeds of that consecration belong to God. How easy, then, to devote a large share of his income to the extension of the kingdom of our Lord.

LOOKING backward, we see clearly where and when we made mistakes. While such retrospection is painful, we should rejoice that light is shining upon us, enabling us to see our mistakes. It is evidence that the Spirit of God is adding to our spiritual vision.

M. H. S.

If you feel an impulse to tell others of the joy God has put into your heart and life since you gave yourself to him, do not fail to tell it. "Quench not the Spirit."

THE first care of a people should be for religious institutions and the worship of God; no godless nation was ever blest.

"My God is the Rock of my refuge."

## EDITORIAL.

## REVIVAL PREACHING.

To produce a revival, the preaching must be awakening in its character.

A man who does not believe in God, and in the revelation which God has made in the Bible and in nature, has no right to claim to be a preacher of the gospel. If he does, he is an impostor. He obtains a living under false pretenses. One who believes in the Bible, and in nature, must believe in future punishment.

Men naturally like to believe in heaven. The heathen generally do. Men of all beliefs and of no belief generally expect a *life of happiness hereafter*. The Bible speaks out plainly: "In my Father's house are many mansions."

But the Bible teaches, with at least equal plainness, that there is a hell. There are recorded in the gospels more warnings that we should endeavor to escape hell, than persuasions that we should gain heaven. "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."—Matt. 5:30. The Saviour utters many similar warnings.

Instances of *future* punishment may be found in any community. The papers have just told us how the greatest general of our country, a man who has twice filled the office of President, was informed by his physicians that he must stop smoking or die. His tongue was swollen and he could scarcely speak. He was faithfully warned years ago to quit smoking. The anti-tobacco apostle, Dr. Trask, earnestly entreated him, for the sake of his influence over young men, to stop smoking. He thought that his splendid constitution enabled him to use tobacco with impunity. But the penalty, though marching along with slow pace, has at last overtaken him. This infliction, upon

old age, of the penalty for the excessive indulgence of youth is the warning which nature gives to man "to flee from the wrath to come."

Then, if you believe in future punishment, preach it, earnestly, affectionately, and with a heart full of compassion for those who recklessly live in constant danger of it. Do not be silent on this subject because it is unpopular. If you see that souls are in danger, and do not give them timely warning, God will hold you accountable for it. "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."—Ezek. 3:18. Then do not dare to be silent or indefinite on this subject.

One reason why revivals are so superficial and short-lived in their influence is because this part of the teaching of the Word of God is passed over in silence. Men are not "moved by fear," because they are not taught that there is any ground for fear. The divine attribute of love is dwelt upon until the people come to believe that God has no other attribute. The sympathies are touched, but the conscience is not awakened. The strength of some popular revivalists appears to consist almost entirely in their ability to play upon the domestic sympathies. Their converts are weak and worldly conformed, and bold to say that they "never had any fear of hell." They keep up their profession while it is popular or profitable, but they give no evidence of having passed from death unto life.

Even the Church of England teaches a deeper conviction than is tolerated, much less taught, by many of the popular revivalists of the day. One of their writers says: "When men feel in themselves the heavy burden of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, and behold with the eye of their mind the horror of hell, they trem

ble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, and can not but accuse themselves, and open their grief unto Almighty God, and call unto him for mercy. This being done seriously, their mind is so occupied, partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, that all desire of meat and drink is laid apart, and loathing of all worldly things and pleasures cometh in place. So that nothing then liketh them more than to weep, to lament, to mourn, and with both words and behavior of body to show themselves weary of life."

Preach so as to produce such conviction. Those converted under such preaching will not oppose holiness; nor will they readily turn back to the beggarly elements of the world.

"But," you say, "we want to bring the people to Christ. To do this we must dwell chiefly upon his love and compassion."

The Apostle Paul did not think so. He says: "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."—Gal. 3: 24.

If the people do not feel the claims of the law upon them, they will not feel their need of Christ. One in full physical vigor does not need a doctor. One who has no sense of guilt is not likely to sue for pardon. When men realize their danger, then are they ready to flee for refuge to Christ.

The soft, sentimental, flattering style of preaching has no warrant whatever in the Scriptures.

John was called the loving disciple; but his love was not of the self-seeking kind. It led him to warn souls faithfully of their danger. "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil."—1 John 3: 7, 8. How different from that kind of preaching which insists that all Christians *must* commit sin! The burden

of Paul's preaching was Christ. Even to the idolatrous Athenians he preached "Jesus and the resurrection."—Acts 17: 18. But he tells us the manner in which he did it. "*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*"—Col. 1: 28. He not only told sinners plainly of their peril, but he warned believers of their danger in stopping short of holiness, (Heb. 12 14, 15,) and of their falling out by the way and missing heaven at last. Heb. 10: 26-31. This he did, not in an indifferent, professional way, but with the deepest compassion. In the city of Ephesus, where he remained so long, and where, among those recently converted from idolatry, there must have been much that needed to be corrected, we do not read that he turned a single member out of the church; but he bore with them and did all that one could for their salvation. In taking his final leave of them he said: "*Therefore watch and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears.*"—Acts 20: 31.

This is the kind of preaching and ministerial effort that is needed in these days. The preacher who labors in this way and with this spirit, however lacking he may be in ability, can but make his ministry a success.

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#### WORK.

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More preachers die through preaching too little than through preaching too much. Want of work kills more preachers than overwork. It is no wonder that a man who is called of God to devote all his time to work for the salvation of the lost, but who restricts his labors to preaching only two or three sermons a week, should be feeble in body and lean in soul. The wonder is that one who does so little can do any thing. He would be illy prepared to run a race who lay in bed

six days out of seven, and got up only to exhibit his speed for an hour, two or three times on the seventh day. Many an invalid has regained his strength by working with regularity. A preacher who runs down in health from preaching two or three times on the Sabbath will come up, and grow strong, by preaching as he should, six or seven times a week.

If your congregation does not want so much preaching, go to other congregations. If there are country appointments keep them up. If there are none, make some. If there is no interest, awaken an interest. Everywhere there are souls to be saved. Form a circuit, a good large circuit. Put others to work who have gifts and graces for it. Act as if you are preaching, not to get a respectable living with little labor, but out of love for souls, and to gain life everlasting.

You will last much longer by working as you should, than you will by taking it so easily. Do not be so afraid of wearing out. An engine kept well oiled will last longer by being properly run than it will standing still. John Wesley kept on preaching an average of more than a sermon a day till he was over eighty years old.

By preaching more, you will preach better. If honest, you will preach yourself under conviction. You will get more of the Spirit. Your sermons will not be so dead. As you get life you will impart life. The people will be profited by your preaching. Good will visibly result from your labors.

As far as you are concerned, you will be much more likely to gain everlasting life if you "*work out your own salvation.*" You will not be in so great danger as you are now in, of spiritual death.

Seeing so little accomplished through preaching plain truths in a dead manner, you are in danger of adapting your discourse to suit "*itching ears.*" So that, for the sake of your own soul, as well as for the sake of the cause of God, stir

yourself up and go to work in earnest. Do not let a single appointment run down on your hands. Be instant in season and out of season, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

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#### TEMPTATION.

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Our Lord teaches us to pray: "Lead us not into temptation." No matter how deep our experience may be, we never get beyond the necessity of using this petition. Our circumstances may be as favorable to our growth in grace as they can be on earth, and yet this prayer will lose none of its adaptedness to our condition. The heart may be pure, but still Satan can whisper to it plausible suggestions in favor of a course which, under his showing, appears to be right, but which ends in death.

Many who once stood as strong as we now stand have ingloriously fallen, and we have need to take warning. The pressure against the godly is so great that unless upheld by divine power the mightiest will be overthrown. Our only safety is to keep filled with the Spirit. A steam boiler can stand heavy blows from without, but it can not stand a vacuum within. It is a blessed thing to resist temptation, but it is still more blessed to avoid it. He who recovers from sickness should be thankful to the Lord, "who healeth all our diseases;" but he who is kept in proper health should be still more thankful.

We must watch as well as pray, that we "enter not into temptation." Be careful to avoid every thing that would expose you to your easily besetting sin. Walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand "in the way of sinners." Keep out of the reach of their influence. If you stand in their way they will certainly corrupt you. Take as much pains against exposing your soul to sin as you would against exposing your body to the cholera. Avoid the beginning of evil, and you will never tread its dangerous road to the

fatal termination. True courage never prompts to a reckless exposure to danger.

Where others have perished, we should be especially on our guard. Wherever duty calls, we may look for divine protection; but to go, out of curiosity, in the company of the ungodly, is a dangerous exposure. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away."—Prov. 4: 14, 15.

### A NEW CREATURE.

Are you a new creature in Christ Jesus? You must be if you would be saved. For this, there is no substitute. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Gifts however large, sermons however eloquent, prayers and praises born of the flesh, end in the flesh. They will not take any one to heaven. They do not change the fleshy nature. The quality of the fruit of a tree is not improved by increasing its quantity. No amount of polishing can change iron ore into steel. To acquire the new qualities needed, it must pass through the fire. No acquisition of theological learning, no proficiency in the outward performance of the rites of Christian worship, can convert a sinner into a saint. To become spiritual, every one must be born of the Spirit.

You have been in the church for years. You give your money for its support and your prayers for its prosperity. You are moral in your outward life. But your natural temper remains unchanged. What you were, in nature and disposition, before you joined the church, you are still. There has been no change in your spirit or temper perceptible to yourself or to others. If there was at first, its duration was brief. With the exception of performing a few religious duties, your life is the same that it was before you united with the church. You are at times conscious of your sad defects, and have made many

an effort to obtain a "deeper work of grace." But in this you have failed. "What is the matter?" The trouble is, you are not *born of the Spirit*. You are working on a wrong theory altogether. You are proceeding upon the false assumption that the "old man" can be so disciplined and refined as to fit him for heaven. This is a fatal mistake. Your seeming success in improving his appearance is deceptive. The heart beneath that polished exterior is as full of pride, and ambition, and passion, and love of the world, as ever. You must begin at the very bottom. It may be that you have maintained a creditable profession for years. So had Nicodemus. Like him, you must be born again, or you cannot see the kingdom of God. Anything short of this will end in everlasting disappointment and despair.

Let me give you some marks by which you may know whether you are a new creature in Christ Jesus, or not.

1. If you are a new creature, there is a radical change in your disposition and nature. If you were proud you have become humble; if covetous, liberal; if quick-tempered, patient; if fretful, cheerful. You are thoroughly honest in all business matters, and sincere in a desire to know God's will.

2. If you are a new creature your manner of living is changed. You do not live in self-indulgence. You give up tobacco, if you ever used it. You are plain in your dress, and humble in your appearance. You no longer walk in the counsels of the ungodly; but if you belonged to secret societies, you have "come out from among them and are separate."

3. You do not feel any opposition to the doctrine of holiness. If there is for you more grace, you are glad to hear it. Your aim is to press on to as great a fullness of experience and perfection in conduct as is possible for you.

4. You abound in good works. You make it a study to benefit your fellow men.

You lay your money, and your talents, and your influence under contribution to do good. You are not looking so much to be helped as you are to help others. You do not require to be petted and flattered and put forward, but you are willing to serve the cause of God in the humblest capacity. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them."—Eph. 2: 10.

If you find that you are not a new creature, do not rest until you are one. No longer adopt half-way measures and take up with a defective experience. Be thorough. Separate yourself from all ungodliness. Make any confession and restitution that God shows you is necessary. Give up your pride and your reputation. Let the Spirit search you, and make you all over new.

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."—2 Cor. 5: 17.

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### STUMBLING BLOCKS.

It is astonishing for what trifling causes men will pursue a course which brings wretchedness with it here, and which results in eternal ruin hereafter. Some go to hell to spite their friends. Some one, a parent, or brother, or sister, or wife, has prayed and labored for his salvation. He has taken it into his head to feel insulted by the deep interest they have manifested in his welfare. It will please them too much for him to become a Christian. And so he plunges more deeply into sin, travels the hard road of the transgressor, only to prove at last that the wages of sin is death.

Many give up their religion because they are not properly treated by some of their brethren or sisters. They meet, or imagine they meet, with coldness where

they expected to find the warmth of affection. How foolish! Perhaps they were so busy, or so burdened, that, without intending it, they failed to treat you with proper courtesy. Does that change God's truth, or render it any less incumbent on you to do your duty? Are you serving men, or the Lord Jesus Christ? If the latter, then never think of being any the less faithful because of the misconduct of your fellow-servants.

Some stumble over the inconsistencies of professors. There can be no doubt that there are many who do not enjoy religion in their hearts, or exemplify its precepts in their lives. They are either self-deceived, or are wilful hypocrites. But what of that? Will you find any shelter in the judgment day, under their bad example? "To his own master he standeth or falleth." The counterfeit establishes the value of the genuine. Where do you ever meet any counterfeit Confederate money? But the greatest skill is displayed in producing imitations of United States bonds.

"Did you ever enjoy religion?" we asked recently of a thoughtful, honest-looking man traveling with us on the cars.

"I never did."

"Do you not believe in the reality and necessity of a genuine religious experience?"

"I do not know that I doubt it; but somehow my association with professing Christians has been unfortunate. When I was a boy I was thrown out into the world to care for myself as best I could. I worked hard and earned a little money. I bought an interest in a chair-factory at Clyde, N. Y. I did well at the business, and after some years sold out, taking in payment two houses and lots. One of these I traded with a deacon of the church for some land. He said the land was sixteen miles south of Buffalo, of good quality, and worth twenty dollars an acre. There was no railroad then, and I traded, relying upon his representations. There

was a mortgage on the house and lot, and one of the same amount upon the land. Each of us agreed to assume the mortgage on the property for which we had traded, and to run our own risk of paying it. When we exchanged papers, the deacon called in two friends and said: 'We have traded—he giving me this house and lot, and I giving him that tract of land south of Buffalo. There is a mortgage of equal amount on each piece of property, which we each assume, and we each agree to run our own risk.'

"After awhile I went to see my land. I found it twenty-four miles from Buffalo, instead of sixteen, and the land was not worth one-half of what he said it was—not worth more than the incumbrance. When I went back and charged the deacon with misrepresentation, and sought redress, I was coolly told that I agreed to run my own risk, and the two witnesses testified to this fact. The only risk I was to run was that of paying the mortgage; but the deacon had so artfully worded it as to make me run the risk of the truth of his representations. Thus I was coolly cheated out of about one thousand dollars. Several times since, I have been defrauded by those occupying a prominent position in the church, and it has, to some extent at least, set me against Christianity. My children go to Sabbath-school, but I seldom go to church."

This may be the case with others. Such professors will have a fearful account to render at the day of judgment. Many will be surprised then, to learn the influence they have exerted.

Be careful, then, how you lay a stumbling-block in another's way. Remember that Jesus says: "Whosoever shall offend [that is, cause to stumble] one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."—Mark 9:42. This should put us on our guard. We should see to it that our words and our actions are such as to

give none any real occasion to doubt the reality of the Christian religion.

Let all take heed how they stumble over the failings or wrong doings of any person, no matter what his standing may be in the visible church. "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers." You may receive treatment from ministers of the gospel, such as avowed infidels would blush to be guilty of. Bigotry is far more cruel and unfeeling than common human nature. But we know that, under such circumstances, the grace of God can keep you from falling. Persecutions, even from those who profess godliness, should bring us nearer the cross.

When you know that you are right, do not be turned aside by anything. To allow ourselves to be turned aside from the narrow way by the ill conduct of any one, shows a want of grace and a want of sense. He who walks in the light, sees obstructions that may lie in his path, and avoids them and passes on his way. But he who goes over the dangerous way in darkness, falls over every obstruction, becomes discouraged, and turns back. This stumbling so much is a sure sign of a bad heart. "The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble."

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#### MISSION TO AFRICA.

The call for mission work in Africa is of the most urgent character. Commercial enterprise is putting steamers on the rivers and establishing trading posts along the banks. It will be much easier to Christianize the people now than after they have added to their own, the vices of civilization.

Bro. W. W. Kelley, one of our most efficient preachers, is now expecting to start the latter part of February, to select a site and establish a mission. All the funds needed have not yet been received, but they are coming. A beloved friend,

though not a member of our church—J. H. Chambers, the well known publisher of St. Louis—writes us: "I am so much interested in the promulgation of the doctrines taught by your church that I want to invest fifty dollars toward starting the blessed work in heathen Africa."

Who will follow this excellent example? What thou doest, do quickly."

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### CORRESPONDENCE.

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#### FROM CALIFORNIA.

Plymouth is a mining town of some twelve hundred inhabitants. There are two of the richest gold quartz mines in the State located here. However, the "gold tried in the fire" is scarce.

We have a society of ten probationers here. God is with us. The outlook is encouraging. One of the class was lately sanctified wholly. Several unsaved persons are under deep conviction. We are expecting a revival of God's work. Pray for us. Yours in Christ,

W. K. LA DUE.

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### OBITUARY.

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MRS. MARY E. QUACKENBUSH—of Tecumseh, Mich., was born at Chittenang, Madison county, N. Y., August 30, 1825. She was the wife of Lansing Quackenbush, and the mother of eleven children, of whom ten are now living, grown to manhood and womanhood. All of them have become good citizens. Although she never made a public profession of religion, she was always favorable to it, and many times she would say, "Go on, be good and do right." For about the last three years she was a constant reader of the *EARNEST CHRISTIAN*, and many times would manifest in words her love for the pure sentiments it contains. She was also very studious in the Word of God. After a

continued illness for about two years, of consumption, she passed away on Sunday, January 18, 1885. She left a heart-stricken husband, with the shades of many winters upon his head, and ten children, who keenly feel the loss of one who was dearly loved as wife and mother.

Yours in sympathy,

W. H. BRAINARD.

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### LOVE FEAST.

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GUSTA TULLIS.—My soul doth magnify the Lord for all his benefits. He has kept my soul sweetly saved almost eleven years, and I am fully persuaded that he is able to keep me to the end. Each year of my life since I entered the service of Jesus has been blessed, but I can truly say the past one has been the most glorious of all my life. The Lord has made himself so lovely to my soul. Such revelations of his love and power I never realized before. I am sure my soul is growing in grace.

Another important experience that he gave me was new health of body, and I am stronger and more able to endure labor than for three previous years. Hallelujah! what a Saviour! I have not been permitted to see as much visible fruit of my labor as in some other years, but through grace I have been faithful to the light, and can trust results in the hands of the Lord. He is fitting me up for his glory, and my soul whispers a glad Amen to all his process of refining. Brethren and sisters, help me praise him.

MARTHA J. JONES.—My testimony today is that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth me from all sin. Praise his holy name! I find this is a wonderful salvation. It helps us in all our trials. I know this is so, for I am proving it day by day. Glory be to God and the Lamb forever.