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RIGHTEOUSNESS.

BY THE EDITOR.

EVERY material substance has its essential properties. These distinguish it from every other body, and without them it could not exist. Gold possesses the quality of being drawn into thin sheets when sufficiently beaten, while iron pyrites, of nearly the same external appearance, fly into fragments under the hammer.

Christianity is something positive. It is not a mere negative. It has an actual existence, and possesses its positive elements. First and foremost among them is RIGHTEOUSNESS. The religion of Christ appears before the world with so many appendages, that we almost look upon these as the thing itself. Like the birds in the cornfield, we mistake the coat and the hat, carefully adjusted upon a bundle of straw, for the man himself. Forms and ceremonies do not make the performer a disciple of Christ. Tall-steeped temples, decorated in the highest style of art, do not constitute Christian churches; and the singing of devout hymns by undevout vocalists, hired for the purpose, and the reading, in solemn tone to a polite congregation by a grave-looking gentleman, of a moral, historical or philosophical essay, do not constitute Christian worship. There may be Christianity with or without churches, bishops, ministers or choirs, but there can be none without righteousness. "Ye are," says Paul, of Christians, "the temple of God." Righteousness is the frame-work, without which the entire

structure will fall to ruins before the fierce blast of the tempest. Righteousness is the breast-plate of the soldier of the cross, and if he goes into battle without it, the first arrow from his skillful adversary will lay him prostrate upon the field, mortally wounded. It is the warp of the white robe, in which the redeemed saint shall be presented to the court of Heaven.

In its most comprehensive sense, righteousness denotes that state of the heart, which enables one faithfully to discharge all the duties he owes to God and man. This is the signification in which it is used by our Saviour when He says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"—they shall have such a fullness of grace, that, like Enoch of old, they will "walk with God." In this sense it corresponds most nearly to the Latin *justitia*, *ex qua una virtute* says Cicero, *boni viri appellantur*—"From which virtue alone, men are called good." In the more limited signification in which it is generally used in the Bible, it denotes that gracious disposition of the soul, which leads to the fulfilling of all moral obligations—which prompts one to perform all the acts affecting our fellow men that God requires, and to exercise suitable dispositions towards them.

In particular it implies, *strict honesty in all business transactions*. Men are in haste to get rich. With many, wealth is the grand object of pursuit.

The disciples of Christ, thrown into competition with those who prosper by dishonesty, are tempted to pursue a course which they see generally practised, though it involve a deviation

from the strict principles of integrity. But the righteous resist the temptation. They are honest not merely when "honesty is the best policy," but when it involves a sacrifice of pecuniary interests. They serve Christ: and the requirement "to do justly" they consider binding upon them at all times.

Open opposition to all wrong and injustice is another element of Scriptural righteousness. Many who would not do wrong themselves will countenance it, at least indirectly, in others. This is usually the first step towards a loss of virtue. He who, for the sake of party interests, personal friendship, or any other cause, is silent when he should reprove, will soon apologize for, then justify, then approve, and, if occasion serves, perpetrate the wrong from which, at first, his moral sensibilities revolted. Well has it been said:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

The teaching of the Bible, little as it is heeded, is very emphatic upon this point. Prov. xvii. 19—"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD." Isa. v. 23—"Wo unto them which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against His people." It would be well for those who look in silence, construed into approbation, upon gigantic oppression and enormous wrong, to ponder these and similar passages: Lot would never have come out of Sodom alive had not that "righteous man," dwelling among the wicked, "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds."

Connected with the condemnation of

wickedness, and necessarily implied in it, is the vindication of the innocent. The penitent thief upon the Cross manifested the genuineness of his repentance, not only by a confession of his own guilt, but by declaring the innocence of Jesus. "We receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss." It is not conclusive evidence that an individual is wicked, because some man, or body of men, however respectable their position, have pronounced him guilty of crime. It is possible that the guilt attaches to the tribunal rendering the verdict. Christ was crucified, the apostles were put to death, the martyrs burned, Luther was excommunicated and the Wesleys indicted by the proper authorities! Righteousness recognizes virtue upon the gallows or in the dungeon, just as readily as when she walks forth among her votaries the admired of all beholders.

Rigid impartiality is another element of righteousness.

There is no respect of persons with God. With Him the distinctions that men make among themselves, pass for nothing. To His eyes of purity, sin perpetrated in a palace, in the most refined manner possible, presents as revolting an appearance as when it is committed in a hovel by the coarse and ignorant. "He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness," that is, with impartiality. A degree of this attribute He gives to all His children as soon as He adopts them into His family. Their new nature disposes them to look at things as they are, irrespective of the circumstances by which they are surrounded. They remember the command, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor."

Were this principle generally prevalent, what a change would be produced in the administration of justice! Neither the man of passion, though seated in Congress, nor the wealthy planter,

could murder, in open day, with impunity. Juries, civil and ecclesiastical, would decide cases according to their merits, and not as partisan inclination or personal bias should dictate.

This Scriptural righteousness prompting to do right under all circumstances is not inherent in man. By nature there is none righteous, no, not one. But by grace, righteousness is possible to humanity. Here and there one may be found who is righteous before God. The Bible speaks of such a class.

Ceremonial righteousness has its foundation in fallen human nature. It is an artificial growth from a degenerate stock. The unconverted man, influenced by education or a partially awakened conscience, commences the performance of some religious rites, and when his lesson is learned so that he can go through the prescribed routine, with comparative ease, he persuades himself that he is a child of God! He makes a conscience of discharging what he is pleased to call religious duties, but still lives, as before, the life of nature.

Evangelical righteousness is the result of the operation of the Spirit of God upon the human heart. None possess it save those who have been born again. To obtain it we must "put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." There must be, not a polishing up of the old nature, but a new CREATION, bringing into being that which had no existence before. God puts into the human heart a principle which was lost by the fall. Man is transformed by the renewing of his mind, before righteousness can dwell in his heart.

Allow me to ask you, respected reader, do you possess this righteousness? You may be orthodox in your creed—we trust you are—but it matters not how correct your conceptions of the doctrines of the Bible are, or with what clearness you may state them, or with what ability you may defend them, if you are defective in personal righteous-

ness at that dread hour when God shall bring the secrets of man into judgment, your eternal ruin will be inevitable. No substitute for this will be allowed. No scrupulous observance of rites—not even of those ordained of God—neither fervent numerous prayers, nor study of the Bible, nor fastings, nor bestowment of money to build churches, or support ministers or missionaries, nor attendance upon the preaching of the word, nor going to sacraments—neither one nor all of these, can compensate, in the slightest degree, for the lack of righteousness.

In particular, are you honest? especially in small matters? Do you never practice deception? Do you claim as your own, property that rightfully belongs to others? It makes no difference whether you obtained it before or since you made a profession of religion. God never pardons a soul until that person has done all he can to make right the wrongs which he has committed.

Are you as careful to give to others their due as you are to exact your claims of them? Do you never take advantage of the ignorance or necessities of men? The heathen standard of honesty was higher than that of some professed Christians! Cicero proposes a case. He says, Antisthenes brings a ship load of grain to Rhodes at a time of great scarcity. The Rhodians flock about him to buy. He knows that five other ships, laden with grain, will be there to-morrow. Ought he to tell the Rhodians this before he sells his own grain? "Undoubtedly he ought," says this honest heathen, "otherwise he makes a gain of their ignorance, and so is no better than a thief or a robber!" Let now memory and conscience do their offices, and if you can discover any dishonest act that you have committed in the past, give yourself no rest till, by repentance, confession, and restitution, you have done all in your power to have the guilt of the wrong blotted out. Perhaps you may satisfy *yourself* in an easier way, but you cannot obtain the favor of God on any

other terms. Praying is good, but it can never answer as a substitute for honesty.

Again, do you in your decisions upon the conduct of your fellow-men discountenance vice and encourage virtue? Or do you "justify the wicked for reward?" To incur the "two" pronounced against such, it is not necessary that you should be openly bribed. Satan is too skillful a fisher for the souls of men to throw out a bait so gross. The reward you anticipate may be the approval of those in position and power, or the promoting of the success of a party, or of the "unity of the Church!" A professed Christian was asked what he knew against one whom he had loved as a devoted and eminent servant of Christ, that he would not hear him preach. "All I wish to," was the prompt reply. "What is it?" was urged. "Why, that a majority voted against him!" This was all he wished to know! No matter how the majority was obtained. How unlike is this to righteous Job, who said, "The cause which I knew not I searched out." Had such men lived in the days of the Apostles, they would not have professed Christianity, for this was proscribed by the unanimous verdict of the authorities of "the Church!"

Were slaveholding abolished in our country how few would be found among us who would apologize for its existence in Turkey or Algiers! But on the side of the oppressor there is power, and when grave doctors of divinity and venerable bishops give oppression their sanctions, too many, who would be Christians, are led away by such examples.

See to it, then, that you are righteous. If you have it not, make haste to get that unbending integrity, which will not let you do wrong under any temptation. What an enemy said of an old Roman ought to be true of every Christian. "It would be easier to turn the sun from his course than Fabricius from the path of honesty." Remember the words of our Lord: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the

righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

HAVE you the love of God in your soul, the Spirit of God in you? How dare you cross the threshold of a theatre or tavern any more? What! the Spirit of God amid the wanton songs of a theatre, or the boisterous merriment of a tavern! Shame on such practical blasphemy! No: leave them, dear friends, to be cages for devils, and every unclean and hateful bird. You must never cross their threshold any more. What shall I say of games, cards, dice and dancing? I will only say this, that if you love them, you've never tasted the joys of the new creature. If you feel the love of God and the Spirit, you will not lightly sin these joys away amid the vain anxieties of cards, or the rattling of senseless dice. What shall I say of simpering tea-parties, the pleasures of religious gossiping, and useless calls, without meaning, sincerity or end? I will only say, they are the happiest of God's children who have neither time nor heart for these things. I believe there cannot be much of the Spirit where there is much of these.

What shall I say of dress? A young believer, full of faith and joy, was offered a present of flowers for her hair. She would not take them. She was pressed to accept them; still she refused. Why will you not? Ah, she said, how can I wear roses on my brow, when Christ wore thorns on his? The joy of being in Christ is so sweet that it makes all other joys insipid, dull, lifeless. In his right hand are riches and honors; in his left are length of days. His ways are ways of pleasantness. What, then, have I to do any more with idols?—MCCHEYNE.

To what purpose dost thou reason profoundly concerning the Trinity, if thou art without humility, and thereby displeasest that Trinity?—KEMPIS.

THE CHARACTER OF A METHODIST.

1. THE distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions, his espousing the judgment of one man or of another, are all quite wide of the point. Who-soever, therefore, imagines that a Methodist is a man of such or such an opinion, is grossly ignorant of the whole affair; he mistakes the truth totally. We believe, indeed, that "all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God;" and herein we are distinguished from Jews, Turks, and infidels. We believe the written word of God to be the only and sufficient rule both of Christian faith and practice; and herein we are fundamentally distinguished from those of the Romish Church. We believe Christ to be the eternal, supreme God; and herein we are distinguished from the Socinians and Arians. But as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think. So that, whatsoever they are, whether right or wrong, they are no distinguishing marks of a Methodist.

2. Neither are words or phrases of any sort. We do not place our religion, or any part of it, in being attached to any peculiar mode of speaking, any quaint or uncommon set of expressions. The most obvious, easy, common words, wherein our meaning can be conveyed, we prefer before others, both on ordinary occasions, and when we speak of the things of God. We never, therefore, willingly or designedly, deviate from the most usual way of speaking; unless when we express Scripture truths in Scripture words, which, we presume, no Christian will condemn. Neither do we affect to use any particular expressions of Scripture more frequently than others, unless they are such as are more frequently used by the inspired writers themselves. So that it is as gross an error to place the marks of a Method-

dist in his words, as in opinions of any sort.

3. Nor do we desire to be distinguished by actions, customs, or usages, of an indifferent nature. Our religion does not lie in doing what God has not enjoined, or abstaining from what he hath not forbidden. It does not lie in the form of our apparel, in the posture of our body, or the covering of our heads; nor yet in abstaining from marriage, or from meats and drinks, which are all good if received with thanksgiving. Therefore, neither will any man, who knows whereof he affirms, fix the mark of a Methodist here,—in any actions or customs purely indifferent, undetermined by the word of God.

4. Nor, lastly, is he distinguished by laying the whole stress of religion on any single part of it. If you say, "Yes, he is; for he thinks 'we are saved by faith alone;'" I answer, You do not understand the terms. By salvation he means holiness of heart and life. And this he affirms to spring from true faith alone. Can even a nominal Christian deny it? Is this placing a part of religion for the whole? "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law." We do not place the whole of religion, (as too many do, God knoweth,) either in doing no harm, or in doing good, or in using the ordinances of God. No, not in all of them together; wherein we know by experience a man may labor many years, and at the end have no religion at all, no more than he had at the beginning. Much less in any one of these; or, it may be, in a scrap of one of them: like her who fancies herself a virtuous woman, only because she is not a prostitute; or him who dreams he is an honest man, merely because he does not rob or steal. May the Lord God of my fathers preserve me from such a poor, starved religion as this! Were this the mark of a Methodist, I would sooner choose to be a sincere Jew, Turk, or Pagan.

5. "What then is the mark? Who

is a Methodist, according to your own account?" I answer: A Methodist is one who has "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him;" one who "loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength." God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul; which is constantly crying out: "Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! My God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!"

6. He is therefore happy in God, yea, always happy, as having in him "a well of water springing up into everlasting life," and overflowing his soul with peace and joy. "Perfect love" having now "cast out fear," he "rejoices evermore." He "rejoices in the Lord always," even "in God his Saviour;" and in the Father, "through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he hath now received the atonement." "Having" found "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of his sins," he cannot but rejoice, whenever he looks back on the horrible pit out of which he is delivered; when he sees "all his transgressions blotted out as a cloud, and his iniquities as a thick cloud." He cannot but rejoice, whenever he looks on the state wherein he now is; "being justified freely, and having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." For "he that believeth, hath the witness" of this "in himself;" being now the son of God by faith. "Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father!" And "the Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God." He rejoiceth also, whenever he looks forward, "in hope of the glory that shall be revealed;" yea, this his joy is full, and all his bones cry out, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again to a living hope—of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that

fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for me!"

7. And he who hath this hope, thus "full of immortality, in everything giveth thanks;" as knowing that this (whatsoever it is) "is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning him." From him, therefore, he cheerfully receives all, saying, "Good is the will of the Lord;" and whether the Lord giveth or taketh away, equally "blessing the name of the Lord." For he hath "learned, in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content." He knoweth "both how to be abased, and how to abound. Everywhere and in all things he is instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need." Whether in ease or pain, whether in sickness or health, whether in life or death, he giveth thanks from the ground of his heart to Him who orders it for good; knowing that as "every good gift cometh from above," so none but good can come from the Father of lights, into whose hand he has wholly committed his body and soul, as into the hands of a faithful Creator. He is therefore "careful" (anxiously or uneasily) "for nothing;" as having "cast all his care on Him that careth for him," and "in all things" resting on him, after "making his request known to him with thanksgiving."

8. For indeed, he "prays without ceasing." It is given him "always to pray, and not to faint." Not that he is always in the house of prayer; though he neglects no opportunity of being there. Neither is he always on his knees, although he often is, or on his face, before the Lord his God. Nor yet is he always crying aloud to God, or calling upon him in words: for many times "the Spirit maketh intercession for him with groans that cannot be uttered." But at all times the language of his heart is this: "Thou brightness of the eternal glory, unto thee is my heart, though without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee." And this is true prayer, and this alone. But his heart is ever lifted

up to God, at all times and in all places. In this he is never hindered, much less interrupted, by any person or thing. In retirement or company, in leisure, business, or conversation, his heart is ever with the Lord. Whether he lie down or rise up, God is in all his thoughts; he walks with God continually, having the loving eye of his mind still fixed upon him, and everywhere "seeing him that is invisible."

9. And while he thus always exercises his love to God, by praying without ceasing, rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks, this commandment is written in his heart, "That he who loveth God, love his brother also." And he accordingly loves his neighbor as himself; he loves every man as his own soul. His heart is full of love to all mankind, to every child of "the Father of the spirits of all flesh." That a man is not personally known to him, is no bar to his love; no, nor that he is known to be such as he approves not, that he repays hatred for his good will. For he "loves his enemies;" yea, and the enemies of God, "the evil and the unthankful." And if it be not in his power to "do good to them that hate him," yet he ceases not to pray for them, though they continue to spurn his love, and still "despitefully use him and persecute him."

10. For he is "pure in heart." The love of God has purified his heart from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper or malign affection. It hath cleansed him from pride and haughtiness of spirit, whereof alone cometh contention. And he hath now "put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering:" so that he "forbears and forgives, if he had a quarrel against any; even as God in Christ hath forgiven him." And indeed all possible ground for contention, on his part, is utterly cut off. For none can take from him what he desires; seeing he "loves not the world, nor" any of "the things of the world;" being now "crucified to

the world, and the world crucified to him;" being dead to all that is in the world, both to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." For "all his desire is unto God, and to the remembrance of his name."

11. Agreeable to this his one desire, is the one design of his life, namely, "not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him." His one intention at all times and in all things is, not to please himself, but Him whom his soul loveth. He has a single eye. And because "his eye is single, his whole body is full of light." Indeed, where the loving eye of the soul is continually fixed upon God, there can be no darkness at all, "but the whole is light; as when the bright shining of a candle doth enlighten the house." God then reigns alone. All that is in the soul is holiness to the Lord. There is not a motion in his heart, but is according to his will. Every thought that arises points to him, and is in obedience to the law of Christ.

12. And the tree is known by its fruits. For as he loves God, so he keeps his commandments; not only some, or most of them, but all, from the least to the greatest. He is not content to "keep the whole law, and offend in one point;" but has in all points, "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." Whatever God has forbidden, he avoids; whatever God hath enjoined, he doeth; and that whether it be little or great, hard or easy, joyous or grievous to the flesh. He "runs the way of God's commandments," now he hath set his heart at liberty. It is his glory so to do; it is his daily crown of rejoicing, "to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in Heaven;" knowing it is the highest privilege of "the angels of God, of those that excel in strength, to fulfil his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his word."

13. All the commandments of God he accordingly keeps, and that with all his might. For his obedience is in proportion to his love, the source from

whence it flows. And therefore, loving God with all his heart, he serves him with all his strength. He continually presents his soul and body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; entirely and without reserve devoting himself, all he has, and all he is, to his glory. All the talents he has received, he constantly employs according to his Master's will; every power and faculty of his soul, every member of his body. Once he "yielded" them "unto sin" and the devil, "as instruments of unrighteousness;" but now, "being alive from the dead, he yields" them all "as instruments of righteousness unto God."

14. By consequence, whatsoever he doeth, it is all to the glory of God. In all his employments of every kind, he not only aims at this, (which is implied in having a single eye,) but actually attains it. His business and refreshments, as well as his prayers, all serve this great end. Whether he sit in his house or walk by the way, whether he lie down or rise up, he is promoting, in all he speaks or does, the one business of his life; whether he put on his apparel, or labor, or eat and drink, or divert himself from too wasting labor, it all tends to advance the glory of God, by peace and good will among men. His one invariable rule is this: "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

15. Nor do the customs of the world at all hinder his "running the race that is set before him." He knows that vice does not lose its nature, though it becomes ever so fashionable; and remembers, that "every man is to give an account of himself to God." He cannot, therefore, "follow" even "a multitude to do evil." He cannot "fare sumptuously every day," or "make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." He cannot "lay up treasures upon earth," any more than he can take fire into his bosom. He cannot "adorn himself," on any pretence, "with gold or costly apparel."

He cannot join in or countenance any diversion which has the least tendency to vice of any kind. He cannot "speak evil" of his neighbor, any more than he can lie either for God or man. He cannot utter an unkind word of any one; for love keeps the door of his lips. He cannot speak "idle words;" "no corrupt communication" ever "comes out of his mouth," as is all that "which is" not "good to the use of edifying," not "fit to minister grace to the hearers." But "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are" justly "of good report," he thinks and speaks, and acts, "adorning the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in all things."

16. Lastly. As he has time, he "does good unto all men;" unto neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies; and that in every possible kind; not only to their bodies, by "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that are sick or in prison;" but much more does he labor to do good to their souls, as of the ability which God giveth; to awaken those that sleep in death; to bring those who are awakened to the atoning blood, that, "being justified by faith, they may have peace with God;" and to provoke those who have peace with God to abound more in love and in good works. And he is willing to "spend and be spent herein," even "to be offered up on the sacrifice and service of their faith," so they may "all come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

17. These are the principles and practices of our sect; these are the marks of a true Methodist.* By these alone do those who are in derision so called, desire to be distinguished from other men. If any man say, "Why, these are only the common, fundamental principles of Christianity!" Thou hast said; so I mean; this is the very truth; I know they are no other; and I would to God both thou and all men knew, that I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men, by any but the common principles of Chris-

tianity,—the plain, old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction. And whosoever is what I preach, (let him be called what he will, for names change not the nature of things,) he is a Christian, not in name only, but in heart and in life. He is inwardly and outwardly conformed to the will of God, as revealed in the written word. He thinks, speaks, and lives, according to the method laid down in the revelation of Jesus Christ. His soul is renewed after the image of God in righteousness and in all true holiness. And having the mind that was in Christ, he so walks as Christ also walked.

18. By these marks, by these fruits of a living faith, do we labor to distinguish ourselves from the unbelieving world, from all those whose minds or lives are not according to the Gospel of Christ. But from real Christians, of whatsoever denomination they be, we earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all; not from any who sincerely follow after what they know they have not yet attained. No: "Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." And I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that we be in no wise divided among ourselves. Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? I ask no farther question. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not destroy the work of God. Dost thou love and serve God? It is enough. I give thee the right hand of fellowship. If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; let us strive together for the faith of the Gospel; walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called; with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; remembering, there is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called with one hope of our calling; "one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."—JOHN WESLEY.

HE that resolves to live well when a danger is upon him, or a violent fear, or when the appetites of lust are newly satisfied, or newly served, and yet when the temptation comes again, sins again, and then is sorrowful, and resolves once more against it, and yet falls when the temptation returns, is a vain man, but no true penitent, nor in the state of grace; and if he chance to die in one of these good moods, is very far from salvation; for if it be necessary that we resolve to live well, it is necessary we should do so. For resolution is an imperfect act, a term of relation, and signifies nothing but in order to the actions; it is as a faculty is to the act, as spring is to the harvest, as eggs are to birds, as a relative to its correspondent, nothing without it. No man, therefore, can be in a state of grace and actual favor, by resolutions and holy purposes; these are but the gate and portal toward pardon; a holy life is the only perfection of repentance, and the firm ground upon which we can cast the anchor of hope in the mercies of God, through Jesus Christ.—JEREMY TAYLOR.

THERE is no man in this world without temptation. In the time of prosperity, we are tempted to wantonness, pleasures, and all lightness; in the time of adversity to despair of God's goodness. Temptation never ceases. There is a difference between being tempted, and entering into temptation. He bids them therefore, not to pray that they be not tempted, but that they "enter not into temptation." To be tempted is no evil thing. For what is it? It is no more than when the flesh, the devil and the world solicit and move us against God. To give place to their suggestions, and to yield ourselves, and suffer ourselves to be overcome by them, this is to enter into temptation.—BISHOP LATIMER.

THE REFINER OF SILVER.

SOME months ago, a few ladies, who met together in Dublin, to read the Scriptures and make them the subject of conversation, were reading the 3d chapter of Malachi. One of the ladies gave it as her opinion, that the Fuller's soap, and the Refiner of silver, were the image, both intended to convey the same view of the sanctifying influence of the grace of Christ; while another observed:—there is something remarkable in the expression in the third verse:—"He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."

They agreed that possibly it might be so; and one of the ladies promised to call on a silversmith, and report to them what he said on the subject. She went accordingly, and without telling the object of her errand, begged to know from him the process of refining silver, which he fully described to her,—"But, sir," said she, "do you sit while the work of refining is going on?" "O yes, madam," replied the silversmith, "I must sit with my eye steadily fixed on the furnace, for if the time necessary for refining, be exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver will be injured." She saw at once the beauty, and the comfort too of the expression. "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." Christ sees it needful to put his children into the furnace, but he is seated by the side of it, his eye is steadily intent on the work of purifying, and his wisdom and love are both engaged in the best manner for for them. Their trials do not come at random; the very hairs of their head are all numbered. As the lady was leaving the shop, the silversmith called her back, and said he had still further to mention that he only knew when the process of purifying was complete, by seeing his own image reflected in the silver. Beautiful figure! When Christ shall see his own image in his people, his work of purifying will be accomplished.

ETERNAL LIFE.—The following sentiment from one of the Christians of the third century, we commend to the careful consideration of all, especially of those who think to gain Heaven without difficulty or self-denial:

Whosoever prefers the life of the soul, must of necessity despise that of the body; nor can he aspire to the highest good, unless he despise advantages of an inferior kind. For the All-wise God did not choose that we should attain to immortality in a soft, indolent way, but that we should gain that inexpressible reward of eternal life, with the highest difficulty and severest labor.—LACTANTIUS.

OUR offences sometimes are of such nature, as required that particular men be satisfied, or else repentance to be utterly void and of none effect. For if either through open rapine or cloaked fraud, if through injurious or unconsciable dealings, a man have wittingly wronged others to enrich himself; the first thing evermore in this case required (ability serving) is restitution. For let no man deceive himself: from such offences we are not discharged, neither can we be, till recompense and restitution to man accompany the penitent confession we have made to Almighty God.—HOOKER.

THOSE WHOM CHRIST KNOW HE CONFORMS TO HIS IMAGE.—An unrenewed person, whatever be his education, talents, or natural temper, can never fall in with Christianity as it is taught in the New Testament. If, therefore, he occupies a station in the church, he will be almost certain to transform religion so as to suit himself. This was the grand source of the Romish apostacy.—ANDREW FULLER.

THAT is not saving faith which can be separated, even in theory, from good works and evangelical obedience.—DR. HOPKINS.

ENTIRE CONSECRATION TO GOD.

KNOW, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God," (Deut. vii., 9.) "that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments;" (Nehemiah i., 5.) "And if thou wilt love the Lord, and serve him," (Deuteronomy x., 12; x., 20; xi., 13; xiii., 4.) "And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies." (1st Kings, ii., 3.) "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily: And thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward." (Isaiah lviii., 8.) "And he shall guide thee continually, and thou shalt be as a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not." (Isaiah lviii., 11.)

FORM OF CONSECRATION.

Eternal and ever-blessed Lord, deeply impressed with the solemnity and importance of the step I am taking, I humbly crave and implore divine assistance.

In obedience to the word of inspiration and the dictates of conscience, and desiring to occupy a position where I may receive and enjoy the precious blessings and privileges so graciously provided and freely offered to those who enter into and keep covenant with thee, *I present myself to thee a living sacrifice, with full confidence in thy truth and faithfulness, and firm reliance in the virtue of the atonement, for acceptance.*

Feelingly alive to my utter unworthiness of any favor at thy hand, and desiring nothing so much as to be thine, and *thine altogether*, I solemnly and willingly, *fully* surrender and consecrate to thee all that I am, and all that I have, *soul, body and spirit*, my time, talents and influence, together with my worldly possessions, all to be resolutely em-

ployed in obedience to thy commands, *as long as I live*—holding all in readiness to know, to do, or to suffer thy holy and righteous will.

Helpless of myself, I look to thee for aid, and trust in the assurance "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*" Yielding thus my *all* to thee, I nothing claim or have as my own, but, being brought into covenant union with the Sovereign of the world, I have thy promise that my wants shall be supplied. Condescend, O my father! to use me as an instrument of thy service, and number me with thy "peculiar people." Sprinkle me ever with the purifying blood of thy dear Son; transform me more and more into his image; impart to me, through him, all needful influences of thy spirit, and let my life be passed under the approving smile of thy gracious countenance, as my Father and my God. And when the solemn hour of death shall come, and heart and flesh shall fail, be thou my confidence and my strength. Sustained in thy everlasting arms, may I triumph over the "King of terrors," and receive an abundant entrance into the kingdom of thy glory, to go out no more forever. And to thee, O Father! to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to thy Holy Spirit, be eternal glory. Amen.

RULES FOR HOLY LIVING.

"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."—ROM. viii. 13.

1. I will endeavor to render perfect obedience to the revealed will of God.

2. Religion shall be my chief concern, and the business of my life.

3. I will begin each day with God, by consecrating myself anew to his service.

4. In resuming my daily cares, I will endeavor to aim at the glory of God.

5. I will improve my time to the best of my ability.

6. I will observe *three stated seasons each day* for private devotion.

7. When I have the privilege, I will pursue the word of God *on my knees*.

8. I will watch over myself with godly jealousy, carefully inspecting my thoughts, motives and desires.

9. I will practice self-denial in various ways, and fast each week, as health and circumstances permit.

10. I will pay strict regard to truth.

11. I will resolutely oppose all inclination to fictitious and unprofitable reading.

12. I will, when possible, punctually attend the stated means of grace, ready and willing to bear the cross.

13. Inclination shall in no case prevent compliance with known duty.

14. As far as circumstances shall permit, I will do to others as I would they should do unto me.

15. I will observe plainness and simplicity in dress, avoiding useless expenditure and ornament.

16. I will shun idle and unprofitable conversation and foolish jesting.

17. I will join no association likely to injure my religious influence.

18. I will take no recreation that I may not in the name of the Lord.

19. I will neither make nor attend large "tea parties."

20. I will be scrupulous in observance of the Sabbath day, and enter the sanctuary prayerfully and seriously.

21. I will endeavor, by divine grace, in all things to be exemplary, that my influence may be a savor of life unto life.

22. I will close each day with self-examination and prayer, and will not suffer myself to close my eyes in sleep in a state of condemnation before God.

23. *Love to God* and filial fear shall be my motive in the discharge of every Christian duty.

A HELP TO SELF-EXAMINATION.

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established."—PROV. IV. 26.

QUESTION.—1. Did I rise this morning with a grateful sense of the goodness of God?

2. Did I offer myself anew to him in consecration?

3. Did I do it thoughtfully, as in the presence of duty?

4. Has the reading of the Scripture profited me?

5. Have I been firm and resolute in doing my duty?

6. Has no part of my time run to waste?

7. Have I governed my thoughts well?

8. Have I indulged no wrong tempers or dispositions?

9. Have I improved opportunities for doing or getting good?

10. Have I been strong in faith toward God?

11. Have I seen the goodness of God in little things which have a tendency to disquiet me?

12. Have I been resigned to the will of God, as indicated in His providences.

13. Have I been much in prayer?

14. Has my life corresponded with my profession?

15. Have I held sweet communion with my Saviour?

16. Have I met and overcome temptation?

17. Have I knowingly done anything to grieve another?

18. Have I broken any of my "Rules?"

19. Do I close this day with gratitude to God, and a consciousness of His favor and approbation.

20. Do I feel a firm unwavering confidence in God as my Father and my God.

A professed Christian, whether a private member or an officer in the church, or a minister of the gospel, who enjoys the fullness of the love of God in his heart, by his daily walk and conversation, may bind the golden chain of divine love around scores by the bright light emanating from his own character; or by a manifest disregard of vital piety, either in sentiment or example, by making *his own elevation* tower above the promotion of *God's glory*,

may lose the respect and confidence of all, and thus become the *gilded vessel* sailing under false colors, bearing a cargo of immortal souls to the dark ocean of eternal ruin.

As the sense, so the motion, of him that liveth the life of God hath a peculiar kind of excellency. His hands are not stretched out towards his enemies, except it be to give them alms: his feet are slow *save* only when he travel-eth for the benefit of his brethren. When he is railed upon by the wicked, his voice is not otherwise heard than the voice of Stephen—"Lord lay not this thing to their charge."—HOOKER.

THE circumstances of the Christian profession vary; but the Christian spirit is the same in every age. There must be the same essential feature of character in all the servants of God, amid all their diversified experience in passing through this world to heaven, and that feature is spirituality.—ROBERT HALL.

Cursed are all preachers that in the the church aim at high, hard, and neat things, and (neglecting the saving health of the poor unlearned people,) seek their own honor and praise, therewith to please one or two ambitious persons.—LUTHER.

Let prayer be not only the key that opens the day, and the lock that shuts out the night; but let it be also, from morning to night, our staff and stay in all our labors, and enable us to go cheerfully up into the mount of God.—LEIGHTON.

The most unprofitable piece of the world, is either a profane, a carnal, or a formal, dead minister; he is good for nothing—unsavory salt, of all things the most unsavory.—LEIGHTON.

Why are ye fond of those earthly things, which are neither true riches, nor are they yours? If they are yours, take them with you.—LT. BERNARD.

REV. JAMES B. FINLEY.

BY THE EDITOR.

WE have seldom been more entertained with any book than with the autobiography of this pioneer of the west. He was born in the year 1781, while the war of the revolution was raging, and died some year or two since, honored and beloved. He contributed as much perhaps as any other man to the establishment and spread of Methodism at the west. His father was a graduate of Princeton College and Presbyterian preacher. In 1788, he removed with his family to the wilds of Kentucky. The Indians were still hostile, and the voyage of the emigrants down the Ohio in an open boat was full of danger. They however reached their destination in safety, and went to work and made them a home in the wilderness. After some years of toil, having cleared up the land, and rendered themselves comfortable, defects in the title of their farm, occasioned them to remove into the wilds of Ohio.

Amid the excitements, hardships and perils of pioneer life, augmented by the hostilities of the savages, young Finley was brought up. His father, however, gave him a good classical education. He studied for the medical profession, and was duly admitted to practice, but the attractions of a backwoods hunter's life were too powerful for the young physician: he threw aside his books and medicines, and plunged into all the excitements of border life. "Occasionally," he says, "I would take a spree; would swear when angry; and fight when insulted, at the drop of a hat."

In the midst of his wild career the young backwoodsman was arrested by the Spirit of God. Reports reached his ears of a great revival of religion that had commenced in the State of Kentucky. It was attended with such physical manifestations as spread terror and alarm all over the country.

"It was reported," he says, "that hundreds who attended the meeting

were suddenly struck down, and would lie for hours, and sometimes for days, in a state of insensibility; and that when they came out of that state, they would commence praising God for his pardoning mercy and redeeming love.

Hearing that a great meeting was to be held in his father's old congregation in Kentucky, he concluded to go, and see and hear for himself. On the way he said to his companions, "now if I fall it must be by physical power, and not by singing and praying;" and, he proceeds to say, "as I prided myself upon my manhood and courage, I had no fear of being overcome by any nervous excitability, or of being frightened into religion." But no one can tell what he will do when he comes under the influence of the Spirit of God. Physical strength can be turned into corruption in a moment, as in the case of Daniel, and prejudices as deeply rooted as the oaks upon the mountains may be overturned in the twinkling of an eye, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus.

Finley describes this camp-meeting, held in 1801, in the following language: "We arrived upon the ground, and here a scene presented itself to my mind not only novel and unaccountable, but awful beyond description. A vast crowd, supposed by some to have amounted to twenty-five thousand, was collected together. The noise was like the roar of Niagara. The vast sea of human beings seemed to be agitated as if by a storm. I counted seven ministers, all preaching at the same time, some on stumps, others in wagons, and one was standing on a tree, which had in falling, lodged against another. Some of the people were singing, others praying, some crying for mercy in the most piteous accents, while others were shouting most vociferously. While witnessing these scenes, a peculiarly strange sensation, such as I had never felt before, came over me. My heart beat tumultuously, my knees trembled, my lip quivered, and I felt as though I must fall to the ground. A strange supernatural power seemed to pervade the entire mass of mind there

collected. I became so weak and powerless that I found it necessary to sit down. Soon after I left and went into the woods, and there I strove to rally, and man up my courage. My pride was wounded, for I had supposed that my mental and physical strength and vigor could most successfully resist these influences."

"After some time I returned to the scene of excitement the waves of which, if possible, had risen still higher. The same awfulness of feeling came over me. I stepped up on to a log, where I could have a better view of the surging sea of humanity. The scene that then presented itself to my mind was indescribable. At one time I saw at least five hundred swept down in a moment, as if a battery of a thousand guns had been opened upon them, and then immediately followed shrieks and shouts that rent the very heavens. My hair rose upon my head, my whole frame trembled, the blood run cold in my veins, and I fled for the woods a second time and wished I had staid at home. While I remained here my feelings became intense and insupportable. A sense of suffocation and blindness seemed to come over me, and I thought I was going to die. I cautiously avoided my companions fearing lest they should discover something the matter with me. In this state I wandered about from place to place in and around the encampment. At times, it seemed as if all the sins I had ever committed in my life were vividly brought in array before my terrified imagination, and under this awful pressure I felt that I must die if I did not get relief. Then it was that I saw clearly through the thin veil of Universalism, and this refuge of lies was swept away by the Spirit of God. Then fell the scales from my sin-blinded eyes, and I realized in all its force and power, the awful truth that if I died in my sins I was a lost man forever. O how I dreaded the death of the soul, for

"There is a death whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath,
O what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death!"

Notwithstanding all this, my heart was so proud and hard that I would not have fallen to the ground for the whole State of Kentucky."

The next day he started for home, feeling that he was a "ruined man." The spirit of the Lord followed him, and his trouble on account of his sins continued to increase. Putting up at the close of the day, he passed the night in weeping and promising God that if he would spare him till morning, he would pray and "mend his life" and abandon his wicked practices. As soon as the day broke he went to the woods to pray, and no sooner had his knees touched the ground than he cried aloud for mercy and fell prostrate. His cries attracted the neighbors and they gathered around him. Among them was a German who enjoyed religion. He had him carried to the house and then prayed for his salvation in Dutch and broken English. He continued singing and praying till nine o'clock, when "suddenly," says Finley, "my load was gone, my guilt removed, and presently the direct witness from heaven shone full upon my soul. Then there flowed such copious streams of love into the hitherto waste and desolate places of my soul, that I thought I should die with excess of joy. I cried, I laughed, I shouted, and so strangely did I appear to all but my Dutch brother, that they thought me deranged."

He continued happy in the Lord until his mind became exercised upon the subject of preaching; he resisted the call as a temptation; had no rest day nor night, till from a state of robust health he was reduced almost to "a walking skeleton." His comfort was gone—he gave up his religious exercises and gradually relapsed to his former practices.

In this backsliden state he remained for about three years, when he again yielded to the strivings of the spirit and resolved to return to the Lord. While on his way to the barn to pray, he says, "suddenly God poured upon me the Holy Spirit in such a manner, and in such measure, that I fell my

whole length in the snow, and shouted and praised God so loud that I was heard over the neighborhood. As soon as I was able to rise I returned to the house, and caught my wife in my arms and ran round the house, shouting Salvation! Salvation! God has again blessed me with his pardoning love. No doubt many would have said, had they seen me, "This man is drunk or crazy." But I was not "drunk with wine, wherein is excess," but I was filled with the spirit." For an hour I could do nothing but praise the Lord. While thus exercised, I felt as though some one had spoken to me, "Go preach my Gospel." I instantly replied, "Yes, Lord, if thou wilt go with me." He started at once; went to his nearest neighbor, called all the family together and told them what God had done for his soul. From this time, without waiting for a license, he commenced holding meetings in his own house. In less than a month nineteen of his relatives and neighbors experienced religion. From this time to the close of his life, he made the salvation of men his one business.

He filled prominent positions in the church, always with credit and acceptability. He was Presiding Elder for a number of terms, Chaplain to the State Penitentiary of Ohio, and a delegate to many of the General Conferences. We conclude this sketch by giving the account which he has published of

A REMARKABLE VISION.

"During my labors on the Dayton District, an incident occurred which I must relate.

It was in the summer of 1842, worn down with fatigue, I was completing my last round of quarterly meetings, and winding up the labors of a very toilsome year. I had scarcely finished my work till I was most violently attacked with bilious fever, and it was with great difficulty I reached home. The disease had taken so violent a hold on my system that I sank rapidly under its power. Everthing

that kind attention and medical skill could impart was resorted to, to arrest its ravages; but all was in vain and my life was despaired of. On the seventh night, in a state of entire insensibility to all around me, when the last ray of hope had departed, and my weeping family and friends were standing around my couch waiting to see me breathe my last, it seemed to me that a heavenly visitant entered my room. It came to my side, and, in the softest and most silvery tones, which fell like rich music on my ear, it said, "I have come to conduct you to another state and place of existence." In an instant I seemed to rise, and, gently borne by my angel guide, I floated out on the ambient air. Soon earth was lost in the distance, and around us, on every side, were worlds of light and glory. On, on, away, away from world to luminous worlds afar, we sped with the velocity of thought. At length we reached the gates of Paradise; and O, the transporting scene that fell upon my vision as the emerald portals, wide and high, rolled back upon their golden hinges! Then in its fullest extent, did I realize the invocation of the poet:

Burst, ye emerald gates, and bring
To my raptured vision
All the ecstatic joys that spring
Round the bright Elysian.

Language, however, is inadequate to describe what then, with unveiled eyes, I saw. The picture is indelibly pictured on my heart. Before me, spread out in beauty, was a broad sheet of water, clear as crystal, not a single ripple on its surface, and its purity and clearness indescribable. On each side of this lake, or river, rose up the most tall and beautiful trees, covered with all manner of fruits and flowers, the brilliant hues of which were reflected in the bosom of the placid river.

While I stood gazing with joy and rapture at the scene, a convoy of angels was seen floating in the pure ether of that world. They all had long wings, and, although they went with the greatest rapidity, yet their wings were folded close by their sides. While I ga-

zed I asked my guide who they were, and what their mission. To this he responded, "They are angels, dispatched to the world from whence you came, on an errand of mercy." I could hear strains of the most entrancing melody all around me, but no one was discoverable but my guide. At length I said "Will it be possible for me to have a sight of some of the just made perfect in glory?" Just then there came before us three persons; one had the appearance of a male, the other a female, and the third an infant. The appearance of the first two was somewhat similar to the angels I saw, with the exception that they had crowns of the purest yellow, and harps in their hands. Their robes, which were full and flowing, were of the purest white. Their countenances were lighted up with a heavenly radiance, and they smiled upon me with ineffable sweetness.

There was nothing with which the blessed babe or child could be compared. It seemed to be about three feet high. Its wings, which were long and most beautiful, were tinged with all the colors of the rainbow. Its dress seemed to be of the whitest silk, covered with the softest white down. The driven snow could not exceed it for whiteness or purity. Its face was all radiant with glory; its very smile now plays around my heart. I gazed and gazed with wonder upon this heavenly child. At length I said, "If I have to return to earth, from whence I came, I should love to take this child with me, and show it to the weeping mothers of earth. Methinks, when they see it, they will never shed another tear over their children when they die." So anxious was I to carry out the desire of my heart, that I made a grasp at the bright and beautiful one, desiring to clasp it in my arms, but it eluded my grasp, and plunged into the river of life. Soon it rose up from the waters, and as the drops fell from its expanding wings, they seemed like diamonds, so brightly did they sparkle. Directing its course to the other shore, it flew up to one of the topmost branches of

one of life's fair trees. With a look of most seraphic sweetness it gazed upon me, and then commenced singing in heaven's own strains, "To Him that hath loved me, and washed me from my sins in His own blood, to Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."

At that moment, the power of the eternal God came upon me, and I began to shout, and, clapping my hands, I sprang from my bed, and was healed as instantly as the lame man in the beautiful porch of the temple, who "went walking, and leaping, praising God." Overwhelmed with the glory I saw and felt, I could not cease praising God. The next Sabbath I went to camp-meeting, filled with the love and power of God. There I told the listening thousands what I saw and felt, and what God had done for me, and loud were the shouts of glory that reverberated through the forests.

Though years have rolled away since that bright, happy hour, yet the same holy flame in burning in my heart, and I retain the same glorious victory. "Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

THE POWER OF CHRIST.—When Napoleon, on St. Helena, contemplated the wreck of his own empire, he was filled with awe of this mysterious power of Christ. "With all my power," said he, "I have only made men fear me; but this carpenter, without an army, has made men love him for eighteen hundred years.

"I have so often inspired multitudes that they would die for me. God forbid that I should form any comparison between the enthusiasm of the soldier and Christian charity, which are as unlike as their cause. But after all, my presence was necessary; the lightning of my eye, my voice, a word from me, then the sacred fire was kindled in their hearts. I do, indeed, possess the secret of this magical power, which lifts the soul, but I could never impart it to any one. None of my generals ever learned it from me; nor have I

the means of perpetuating my name, and love for me, in the hearts of men, and to effect these things without physical means. Now that I am alone, chained upon this rock, who fights and wins empires for me? who are the courtiers of my misfortunes? who thinks of me? who makes efforts for me in Europe? Where are my friends?

"CHRIST speaks, and at once generations become his by stricter, closer ties than those of blood—by the most sacred, the most indissoluble of all unions. He lights up the flame of a love which consumes self-love, which prevails over every other love. The founders of other religions never conceived of this mystical love, which is the essence of Christianity, and is beautifully called Charity. In every attempt to effect this thing, namely, to *make himself beloved*, man deeply feels his own impotence. So that Christ's greatest miracle undoubtedly is the reign of Charity."

LIVING TO GOD.—I am laboring to live as near to God as any one I have ever known; yea, as near as Saint Paul himself. I read more frequently his character, and study more closely his deadness to the world, his zeal, his love to souls, his labor, his being always ready for his change, and his desiring *rather to be with Christ*. But I am more than ever convinced, that to accomplish this, I must redeem time to the uttermost; I must sleep no more, eat and drink no more than nature requires; and this calls for daily self-denial, such as I believe our Lord meant in his Divine Instructions. The Testament, the Book of God is more precious than ever. I read it, and am lost in wonder, love and praise. I find that to be cleansed from sin is one thing; but to be filled with God is much more. Dr. Clarke's note on that expression, "*the fullness of God*," never leaves me.—BRAMWELL.

THE eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

THE EARLY CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

BY REV. D. W. THURSTON.

THE relation between parents and children is deeply interesting and important. It was designed by Infinite Wisdom to form a source of the richest earthly enjoyment; yet it often becomes the occasion of unmingled sorrow; a result originating almost invariably from a violation of the obligations growing out of this relation. The extent of these obligations we apprehend is not properly appreciated.

Parents, generally, deem it an imperative duty to instruct their children in good morals; to present before their minds the beauty and rewards of virtue, and the tendency and fruits of vice. Many sustaining the parental relation go further. They would feel condemned did they not impress upon the minds of their offspring the precepts of the Christian religion. These they inculcate diligently during the hours of family devotion. To aid them in this work, they secure for their children the instructions of the Sabbath School, and the stated ministration of the sanctuary. Over the associations of their tender charge they exercise untiring vigilance, promptly checking their evil propensities, encouraging and rewarding every virtuous manifestation.

There is reason to fear, however, that even of Christian parents, there is a small minority only, who employ direct and efficient means to secure the early conversion of their children to God. That this is the imperative duty of all having the charge of childhood, we shall endeavor to establish. It is argued—

1. From the obscurity attending the period when children become accountable to God.

That there is a period in the existence of every human being, when he is irresponsible for his conduct, is a point generally conceded. To controvert it is to impeach the justice and mercy of

God, and to pervert the plain precepts of his word. We allude to the period of infancy. The Scriptures fix its termination in early life, yet the exact period when man enters upon his trial for eternity is one of those secret things which belong to the Lord our God. We infer, however, that in its determination he is influenced by the native strength of the mind's powers, and by the circumstances favoring their development. Now, whenever this boundary is passed by the youthful candidate for eternity, he becomes exposed to the torments of a dreadful hell, unless he immediately yields his heart to God. For he resists the Holy Ghost—refuses to love God—and thereby transgresses the divine laws; which is sin, of which the wages are death.

Since, then, the child becomes accountable to God at a period unknown to parents, and therefore becomes, at that time, subject to the awful penalties of a violated law, is it not their manifest duty to labor earnestly to bring his mind under the renewing power of the Holy Spirit as early as possible? Suppose the captain of a vessel, finding it necessary to send some one to the top of the mast, calls upon his son for the performance of the required service; he has reason to believe that, after ascending to a certain height, the boy will become dizzy, and can keep from falling only by looking aloft. If he loves his son, will he neglect earnestly and repeatedly to instruct and caution him in these things, so essential to his safety? Will not the anxious father vociferate, even before his child reaches the point of supposed danger, look up, my son! look up! look up!

This duty is argued—

2. From the corruption of human nature.

The Scriptures lucidly teach that a depraved nature is inherited by every child of apostate Adam. "Who," says Job, "can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Says the inspired David: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." In proof of this point,

which is confirmed by universal experience, other passages might be adduced, but those already quoted are sufficient.

This inherent depravity of children, predisposes their minds to the embraces of error, and to the pursuits of vice. It invests with fearful potency the influence of vicious example, with which their minds are in frequent contact, and affords for the success of Satanic agency peculiar advantages.

Besides, the evil propensities of children grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength. Their enmity to God—their love of the world, and their corrupt inclinations strike their roots deeper and deeper into the heart, while the increasing power of habit—of vicious associations, and the consequent fierce assaults of fallen spirits, urge the youthful probationer with uniformly accelerated velocity towards the gulf of perdition.

It is alarming to observe with what fearful rapidity the tender sensibilities of the child are merged into the cold indifference and daring recklessness of the hardened sinner! The transition is often complete long before the unsuspecting parent detects the first premonitions of the awful change!

Is it not the duty of parents to employ every instrumentality for the rescue of their children from the impending danger to which we have referred? Within the whole range of parental obligations, we can discover none more weighty than this. But against this danger religious instructions afford an insufficient safeguard. It may prevent the commission of overt acts of wickedness, yet nothing but the regenerating energy of the Divine Spirit can stay the rapid tide of inbred corruption.

That it is the duty of parents to attempt the early conversion of their children, is argued—

3. From the constitution of the human mind.

God has endowed man with a capacity for the exercise of various passions and emotions. Whenever the

excitement of these is followed by corresponding actions, their original susceptibility gains strength. On the other hand, their power is always enfeebled by exercise when we fail to act in accordance with their direction.

In the perusal of fictitious narratives, which usually abound in scenes of sorrow, the sympathies of the soul become powerfully excited; but their excitement can be followed by no corresponding effort to relieve the sufferings contemplated, for they have no real existence. As a consequence, these sympathies are weakened, and a cold barren sentimentalism, which is unmoved by real misery, inevitably ensues.

It is a notorious fact, that a few years' residence in slaveholding communities, destroys in many minds their former deep-rooted aversion to human oppression. Why are their tender sensibilities so soon struck down? Were the sufferings which first awakened them imaginary? No, they beggar all description. They surpass in horror the images of the liveliest imagination. The reason is obvious. The legal enactments of pro-slavery communities prohibits the performance of those duties which the wretchedness of the slave demands, and to which the feelings of the heart urgently prompt. Thus, the lover of his species first endures, then pities, then embraces a system which crushes the noblest powers of man, sunders the most sacred ties, and forces from the bleeding hearts of oppressed millions the lamentations of despair.

Religious instruction awakens in the minds of children a sense of their obligations to love and serve God. When corresponding duties are performed, the more exquisite does this moral sense become by successive excitements. But when these are neglected, as in the case of those who refuse to dedicate their hearts to God, their impressions of duty diminish in power. Frequent neglect secures to them the appellation of "Gospel-hardened sinners." In this condition, appeals that

bring to their knees unenlightened and vicious men, fall as idle tales upon their ears, and affect their hearts no more than the pale moon-beams the mountain ice-berg. This feature in the human constitution accounts for the fact so frequently observed, that the children of religious parents often excel others for indifference to religious things. The world attributes this fact to undue strictness in parental oversight, than which nothing is more false. The truth is, the harmony of the moral powers is destroyed by neglecting the emotions, and the duties corresponding with the impressions of duty. Parents should deal with their children as the Gospel does with sinners of adult age. Immediate repentance and faith should be urged by all the solemn motives which the Gospel affords. A neglect to do this will render their instructions the savor of death unto death. Those instructions had better be withheld.

The duty in question is urged—

4. From the uncertain tenure of the parental relation.

That the tie uniting parents and children is subject to premature dissolution, no argument is needed to prove. Mysterious, indeed, is that Providence which tears from the embrace of children those who alone appear qualified to nurture and guide their youthful minds. But it is one of frequent occurrence. Parents reading this article, will, long before their youthful charge reach the period of manhood, mingle with departed spirits. What Christian parent can bid adieu to sinful children without the most gloomy forebodings? As he gazes upon them for the last time, he reflects that they are making their way towards the chambers of unending night. He knows that no human being can exert the power over their minds that the God of nature has rendered him capable of wielding. He is conscious that none will succeed to his charge who can feel for it a parent's concern. But he must yield it, perhaps, to wicked minds. In view of these solemn considerations, is it not

the manifest duty of the parent to lead his child to Christ in infancy? Should he not labor to place his child in a position in which he may be reached by mercy's arm the very moment he passes the line of accountability?

That it is the duty of parents to seek the early conversion of their children is inferred—

5. From the instructions of Scripture.

The Bible teaches that the precepts of the Divine law are within the comprehension of children. The inculcation of those precepts to children was enjoined upon parents under the Mosaic dispensation. When about taking leave of his countrymen, Moses, at the instigation of the Almighty, delivers to them this solemn charge: These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way; and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 6-7. Says Saint Paul to Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." II Tim. iii. 15.

From the fact thus established, that children may know God's law, we infer that they are capable of transgression, and consequently subject to the judgment of the Almighty. This inference is justified by Scripture authority. In proof of this, an incident in the life of Elisha is in point. God sanctioned the curse pronounced by this holy man upon the children of Bethel, who had reproached him, by commissioning wild beasts to destroy them. Would this awful judgment have fallen upon these children if they had not been viewed by God as transgressors of his law? Will it be urged that they had passed the period of children? The records of this transaction state explicitly that these offenders were "little children." It being proved, then, that little children may

render themselves obnoxious to the wrath of God, is it not the duty of those having charge of them to induce them to seek his pardoning mercy? Again, the Scriptures recognize children as acceptable worshippers. David calls upon "young men and maidens, old men and *children*, to praise the name of the Lord. Christ publicly sanctioned and encouraged the acts of worship presented to him by children in the Temple. He silenced those who rebuked these juvenile worshippers by a reference to the inspired record. "Have ye not read," says he, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings there hast perfected praise?" Children, then, being called upon to engage in divine worship, ought not parents to urge them to comply with God's call, and to seek the renewing favor of the Spirit essential to spiritual homage?

Once more. We are taught in the book of God that children are susceptible of renewing grace. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord," is an expression referring most manifestly to the inward operation of the Spirit; and the "great peace" to the fruits of this internal work. The following exhortation of the Apostle establishes the same doctrine: "Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." These terms evidently embrace the whole of the Christian religion. The history of the church confirms the instruction of Scripture on this point. Children, even before they have passed the fifth year of their existence, have manifested deep contrition for sin—given clear evidence of regeneration, and have left the world in ecstasy and triumph. If, then, they are susceptible of converting grace, who dare say that they are not accountable for its fruits? If they may partake of the rich enjoyments of the Christian religion, where is the heart so unfeeling as to neglect the instruction that might lead them into the possession of those enjoyments? Seeing, then, that the inspired writings teach that children may be informed of the Divine will—that they are treated as

sinner upon the violating of God's law—that they are capable of glorifying their Maker by acts of devotion, and that they are susceptible of gracious influences and of the sweet enjoyment thereof, are not parents solemnly bound to labor to bring their little ones to the Cross at the earliest period possible? They need not fear that their offspring will be induced to make too early a consecration of their powers to God. The disciples of Christ thought that the blunder of those parents who brought their infants to Jesus was so gross as to merit rebuke. But the action and remarks of the Great Teacher, on this occasion, should be matters of grateful recollection to every parent. He took these infants in his arms and blessed them, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

Upon this subject, there is much infidelity. The church itself, we fear, is not free from it. In seasons of revival, who has not witnessed clear manifestations of dejection on the part of God's people, because "none but children expressed a desire for salvation?" Yes, although a score of weeping children are around the altar, crying for mercy—although Heaven is filled with joyful acclaim for the penitence of these young prodigals, Christians are disheartened, and report a "poor meeting" to their absent brethren, for "Nobody but children were forward for prayers." We have never heard anything which sounds so much like blasphemy against the Holy Ghost as this: "Nobody but children!" Did not the Eternal Spirit awaken them? Must they not be converted or sink to an eternal hell? Are they not possessed of immortal spirits, panting for the enjoyments and hopes of the Christian religion? O! why interdict them from the inheritance of the saints? Why not bear them on the arms of wrestling faith to the Eternal Throne, until their little hearts are gladdened by the love of Jesus?

The unbelief from which this uncon-

cern for the souls of children originates, has framed numerous objections against their early nurture in the things of religion. It is urged that "in matters of religion they should be left uninfluenced, to think and choose for themselves." They must think and choose for themselves, most certainly, before they are converted; but that they should be left to do so uninfluenced by the counsel of experience, is unreasonable and inhuman. The suggestions of their corrupt natures, of fallen spirits, and of a wicked world, powerfully influence them to act in a manner that would ruin them eternally. May not, *should* not the parent counteract the tendency of such influence, by giving a right direction to their inexperienced minds? What parent or guardian is willing to carry out the principle of this objection? To do so, he must learn his child to select his books of instruction, his teacher, and his associations. He must not dissuade his child from lying, drunkenness, theft or murder. He must not influence him to the practice of virtue. All interference with him in these things is as inconsistent as in the affairs of his soul; for certainly he cannot be educated, moral, or virtuous, without thinking and choosing for himself. The child left to think and act for himself in matters of religion, is almost sure to act wrong. God holds parents responsible for the proper guidance of the youthful mind, and woe to that parent who proves recreant to his solemn charge.

It is objected, again, that "important efforts to convert children, will render religious things objects of disgust to their minds." Were this objection founded in truth, it would not justify a neglect to press unceasingly and urgently the claims of religion upon the youthful mind. His exposure to ruin demands vigorous effort to effect his conversion at every hazard. But experience and the philosophy of mind are opposed to this objection. God has a witness in the minds of children, which secures respect for the ministrations of truth. Diligence

on the part of the spiritual laborer has no tendency to destroy that respect, but will almost invariably result in early conversion.

We will mention but one objection more. It is urged that "Children are more liable to backslide than converts of mature years." If this is a fact, it must owe its existence to neglect on the part of those whose duty it is to watch over the spiritual interests of babes in Christ, or to some weakness or besetments peculiar to children. If the assumed fact originates in neglect, its existence may and should be avoided. But to say that circumstances incidental to childhood, render youthful piety precarious, is to impeach the mercy and veracity of God—to say that the Great Shepherd leaves the tender lambs of his flock without those provisions which their helplessness requires, and that the promise, "My grace is sufficient for you," is not fulfilled—which is blasphemy. But it remains to be proved, that a greater number of those converted in childhood apostatize from God, than of those reconciled to him in manhood. We believe the assertion to be utterly false.

O! what a vast addition of moral power might be secured—what an immense outlay of means might be saved; and O, how much more rapidly would the cause of Christ be extended, if parents would attend faithfully to the duty in question! A new era would dawn upon the world. Millennial glory would be ushered in, and the knowledge of God would cover the earth!

We entreat parents to ponder seriously and prayerfully this solemn subject. - You do well to procure for your children the instructions of the Sabbath school, and the ministrations of the Gospel. You do well to expound to them the Scriptures of inspiration in the domestic circle; but O, do not stop here. They may endlessly wail with the lost, notwithstanding these instructions, and they certainly will, unless converted, if they have passed the line of accountability! Rest not until their little hearts receive the impress of

God's own image. Take them daily into the closet; agonize before the throne; teach them to agonize; urge them to repentance and faith, and God will give you the desire of your hearts. Look into the future. A few days more and you are on the dying bed, bidding farewell to those loved ones. O, what will they do without religion, in a wicked world, surrounded by wicked men, pursued by wicked spirits?

Praise God, parents, that your children are yet within the reach of your influence. Haste to apply yourselves more diligently and earnestly in leading them into the kingdom; and may God grant that you, with them, may form an unbroken circle in Heaven. Amen.

GOD'S WILL.—As living to God's will is in all things to be our end, so in all the way to that end it is to be the rule of every step. For we cannot attain this end but in his way; nor can we attain it without a resignation of the way to his prescription, taking all our directions from him, how we shall honor him in all. This is to live to him, to find it our life. That such a lust be crucified, is it thy will, Lord? Then, no more advising, no more delay. How dear soever that was when I lived to it, it is now as hateful, seeing I live to thee who hatest it. Wilt thou have me forget an injury, though a great one, and love the person that has wronged me? While I lived to myself and my passions, this had been hard. But now, how sweet is it! seeing I live to thee, and am glad to be put upon things most opposite to my corrupt heart; glad to trample upon my own will to follow thine. And this I daily aspire to and aim at, to have no will of my own, but that thine be in me, that I may live to thee as one with thee, and thou my rule and delight; yea, not to use the very natural comforts of my life, but for thee; to eat and drink and sleep for thee; and not to please myself, but to be enabled to revere and please thee; to make one offering of myself and all my actions to thee, my Lord!

Oh! it is the only sweet life to be living thus, and daily learning to live more fully thus! It is heaven this, a little scantling of it here, and a pledge of whole heaven. This is, indeed, the life of Christ, not only like his, but one with his; it is his spirit, his life, derived into the soul.—LEIGHTON.

WATCHMAN.

Watchman, tell me, does the morning
Of fair Zion's glory dawn?
Have the signs that mark his coming,
Yet upon my pathway shone?
Pilgrim, yes—arise, look 'round thee—
Light is breaking in the skies;
Gird thy bridal robes around thee,
Morning dawns—arise, arise!

Watchman, see, the light is beaming
Brighter still upon the way;
Signs through all the earth are gleaming
Omens of the coming day.
When the Jubal trumpet sounding
Shall awake from earth and sea
All the saints of God, now sleeping,
Clad in immortality!

Watchman, hail the light ascending,
Of the grand Sabbatic year;
All with voices loud proclaiming
That the Kingdom's very near.
Pilgrim, yes, I see just yonder
Canaan's glorious height arise;
Salem, too, appears in grandeur,
Towering 'neath its sunlit skies!

Watchman, in the glorious city,
Seated on his azure throne,
Zion's King, enthroned in beauty,
Reigns in peace from zone to zone.
There, on sunlit hills and mountains,
Golden beams serenely glow;
Purling streams and crystal fountains,
On whose banks sweet flowerets grow!

Watchman, see, the land is nearing,
With its vernal fruits and flowers;
On just yonder—O, how cheering,
Bloom forever Eden bowers.
Hark! the choral strains there ringing,
Wafted on the balmy air;
See the millions, hear them singing—
Soon the pilgrims will be there!

GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

[We commend to the careful perusal of our readers, the following article from the pen of the late Justice Hale, of England, who was no less eminent as a man of deep piety than as a learned and impartial judge. That the doctrine of the inward direction of God's Spirit is susceptible of abuse we readily admit; and what doctrine of the Bible is not? But the greater danger in this day of self-sufficiency lies in our laying too little rather than too much stress upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit.—ED.]

They who truly fear God, have a secret guidance from a higher wisdom than that which is barely human,—namely, the Spirit of truth and goodness, which does really, though secretly, prevent and direct them. Any man that sincerely and truly fears Almighty God, and calls and relies upon him for his guidance and direction, has it as really as a son has the counsel of his father: and though the voice be not audible, nor discernable by sense, yet it is equally as real as if a man heard a voice saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it."

Though this secret direction of Almighty God is principally seen in matters relating to the good of the soul; yet, even in the concerns of this life, a good man fearing God, and begging his direction, will very often, if not at all times, find it. I can call my own experience to witness, that even in the temporal affairs of my whole life, I have never been disappointed of the best direction, when I have, in humility and sincerity, implored it.

The observance of the secret admonition of this Spirit of God in the heart, is an effectual means to cleanse and sanctify us; and the more it is attended to, the more it will be conversant with our souls, for our instruction. In

the midst of difficulties it will be our counsellor, in the midst of temptations it will be our strength and grace sufficient for us, in the midst of trouble it will be our light and our comfort.

It is impossible for us to enjoy the influence of this Good Spirit, till we are deeply sensible of our own emptiness and nothingness, and our own minds are thereby brought down and laid in the dust. The Spirit of Christ is indeed a humbling Spirit, and the more we have of it, the more we shall be humbled; and it is a sign that either we have it not, or that it is yet overpowered by our corruptions, if our heart be still haughty.

Attend, therefore, to the secret persuasions of the Spirit of God, and be aware of quenching or grieving it. This wind that blows where it lists, if shut out or resisted, may never breathe upon us again, but leave us to be hardened in our sins. If observed and obeyed, it will on all occasions, be our monitor and director. When we go out, it will lead us; when we sleep, it will keep us; and when we awake, it will talk with us.—HALE.

THE BIBLE.

BY A. F. BROWN.

How comes it that this little volume, written by humble men, in a rude age, when art and science were in their childhood, has exerted more influence on the human mind and on the social system than all other books put together? Whence comes it that this book has achieved such marvelous changes in the opinions of mankind—has banished idol worship—has abolished infanticide—raised the standard of public morality—created for families that blessed thing, a Christian home? What sort of a book is this, that even the winds and waves of human passion obey it? What other engine of social improvement has operated so long, and yet lost none of its virtues? Since it appeared, many boasted plans of amelioration have been tried and failed—

many codes of jurisprudence have arisen; and run their course. Empire after empire has been launched upon the tide of time, and gone down, leaving no trace upon the waters. But this book, this blessed book is still going about doing good, learning society with its holy principles—cheering the sorrowful with its consolations—strengthening the tempted—encouraging the penitent, calming the troubled spirit—and smoothing the pillow of death. Should the Bible be taken from us, it would be to mantle the world with more than Egyptian darkness; it would be taking the moral chart by which alone the inhabitants of Earth are guided. Ignorant of the nature of God, and only guessing at their own immortality, the tens of thousands would be as mariners tossed on a wide ocean, without a pole-star and without compass. The loss of the Bible would dry up the fountain of human happiness; it would take the tide from our waters, and leave them stagnant; and the stars from our heavens, and leave them in sackcloth; and the verdure from our valleys, and leave them in barrenness; it would make the present all recklessness, and the future all hopelessness. It tells us of God; unveils immortality, instructs in duty, woos on to glory. Such is the Bible. Prize it more and more. Prize it, as ye are immortal beings, for it guideth to the New Jerusalem. Prize it, as ye are intellectual beings, for it giveth light to the simple.

CONVERSION.

WE readily take any little slight change for true conversion, but we may see here that we mistake it. It doth not barely knock off some obvious apparent enormities, but casts all in a new mould, alters the whole frame of the heart and life, kills a man and makes him alive again. And this new life is contrary to the old; for the change is made with that intent, that he live no longer to the lusts of men,

but to the will of God. He is now, indeed, a *new creature*, having a new judgment and new thoughts of things, and so, accordingly, new desires and affections, and answerably to these, new actions. Old things are passed away and dead, and all things are become new.

Political men have observed, that in states, if alterations must be, it is better to alter many things than a few. Things do so relate, one to another, that except they be adapted and suited together in the change it avails not; yea, it sometimes proves the worse on the whole, though a few things in particular seem to be bettered. Thus, half-reformations in a Christian turn to his prejudice; it is only best to be reformed throughout; and to give up with all idols; not to live one half to himself and the world, and as it were, another half to God, for that is but falsely so, and, in reality, cannot be. The only way is, to make a heap of all, to have all sacrificed together, and to live to no lust, but altogether and only to God. Thus it must be, there is no monster in the new Creation, no half-new creature—either all, or not at all.

We have to deal with the Maker and the Searcher of the heart, and he will have nothing unless he have the heart, and none of that neither, unless he have it all. If thou pass over into his kingdom, and become his subject, thou must have him for thy only sovereign. *Omnis que potestas impatiens consortis.*

“ROYALTY can admit of no rivalry.” and least of all the highest and best of all. If Christ be thy king, then his laws and sceptre must rule all in thee; thou must now acknowledge no foreign power; that will be treason.

And if he be thy husband, thou must renounce all others. Wilt thou provoke him to jealousy? Yea, beware how thou givest a thought or a look of thy affection any other way, for he will spy it, and will not endure it. The title of a husband is strict and tender.

Now, thou hast but One to serve, and that is a great ease; and it is no slavery, but true honor, to serve so ex-

cellent a Lord, and in so high services; for he puts thee upon nothing but what is neat and what is honorable. Thou art as a *vessel of honor* in his house, for his best employment. Now thou art not in pain how to please this person and the other, nor needest thou vex thyself to gain men, to study their approbation and honor, nor to keep to thine own lusts and observe their will. Thou hast none but thy God to please in all; and if he be pleased thou mayest disregard who is displeased. His will is not fickle and changing as men's are, and as thine own is. He hath told thee what he likes and desires, and he alters not; so that now thou knowest whom to please, and what will please him. This cannot but much settle thy mind and put thee at ease.—ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

CONFESSION.

BY S. K. J. CHESBROUGH.

At the present day, the duty of confession is not held up before the Church as it should be. Too many make it a superficial work. *What is it to confess our sins?* One defines it thus: "To own, and lay open our sins and offences, either unto God in private, or in public confession." The work must be thorough, it must needs go to the very depths of the heart. We must not judge of our sins by our own judgment as to their sinfulness, but must acknowledge even the so called "little sins," as heinous and damning in the sight of the great God, "who seeth not as man seeth."

Why should we confess our sins? Because God commands it, and it must necessarily precede our salvation, "for he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy." When we see ourselves as sinners, we must confess, repent of and forsake them. The reason why many bow at our altars of prayer, night after night, and yet go away unblest, is because they do not make thorough work of confessing their

sins. When this work is commenced in earnest, and we let the light shine, we shall find such a work before us as we little thought of, and to our sorrow we shall find the "leprosy of sin lies deep within." Satan whispers to the ear, Omit this and that; but we must go through. "Strait is the gate." We had better die here to self, than to die eternally. Reader, make thorough work in this matter; a mistake here may prove fatal to thy soul.

To whom should we confess our sins? Undoubtedly, most of our sins should be confessed to God in our closets. But our public faults or sins must be publicly confessed. The sins committed against our families, our friends, our neighbors, must be confessed to them as well as to God. Here is a point at which many stumble. The word of God, which is Spirit and Life, becomes like a two-edged sword. We see ourselves in the Gospel mirror. We feel that "our hearts have been secretly enticed"—our walk, our conversation, or dealings one with the other, our conduct before our families, have not been consistent with our profession. We begin in good earnest to confess to God our wanderings—we feel some relief, but no clear evidence of our acceptance. Why not? "We must confess our faults one to another, that we may be healed." And here is where the great hue and cry is made the present day against an earnest Christianity. "What! must I confess to the Church, to my wife, to my husband, to my children, to my *hired servants*, to my neighbors? Yes, reader, if you have given way to impatience, anger, pride, to light and trifling conversation, you need to confess to God, and to those before whom you committed these sins; they remember them, you remember them, God remembers them. "But," says one, "if I do this I shall bring a reproach upon the Church." God help you, my friend, He says that you are already a reproach. You may meet the frowns of those who are in the same condition. Never mind: obey God, and shame the devil. But instead

of its bringing a reproach upon the Church, it is just the reverse. Israel was put to flight, they turned their backs to their enemies; there was sin in their ranks—secret sin. God knew it. Hear what Joshua says: Joshua, vii. 19, 20—

“And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, *and make confession unto Him*: and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done.” Mark the expression—“Give glory to the Lord God”—how this puts to blush the teachings of some ministers and class leaders of the present day, who cry, “Hold thy peace.” Oh, may God’s Spirit search out the Achans of the camp, and raise up Joshuas who, amid the threatenings of “hireling shepherds” and dead formalists, will hold the people to this cross until they confess their secret backslidings from God. How many have hid in their hearts the “Babylonish garment and wedge of gold.” God sees it. They have lost their power. The world knows it, and they know it. In vain will they strive to get around the Cross—this duty stands before them: “Confess your sins.” How many are shutting out the light! How many have emerged into the clear light, by simply rising and confessing before the Church the true state of their backslidden heart! Others have had to go from house to house. But to-day they are free. Oh! glorious freedom! Reader, search your heart; have you confessions to make? Tarry not! confer not with flesh and blood, but go and make thy confession, and thou shalt find mercy.

He will gain wisdom who knocks by prayer; not he who by quarreling makes a noise at the gate of truth.—
AUGUSTINE.

All the virtues are the daughters of faith.—CLEMENS ALEXANDRIUS.

SUBSTITUTES FOR THE HOLY GHOST.

BY REV. A. A. PHELPS.

In the remarks which we are about to make, it is no part of our design to “slander the Church.” Our inmost feeling is that of lamentation rather than of reproach. If our pen should run into a strain of seeming severity, the undying interest we feel for the prosperity of Zion must be our only apology. That there is *danger* of departing from the simplicity of the gospel, and of losing the real elements of our power and success, is admitted by all. That this loss has been actually *sustained* by all branches of the Christian Church, to an alarming extent, is equally obvious to every careful observer who has no favorite theory to establish on the opposite assumption. In the same proportion as the Church loses the *real* DIVINITY from her midst, she is sure to accept some other god. There is a *Divine philosophy* which God designed should regulate the Church; and that philosophy is both understood and adopted when her politics and purity are in harmony with the order of Heaven; but when and in so far as she loses her spiritual vision, the philosophy of this world becomes the platform of her action. Mark some of the things upon which the Church depends for success, and which are often substituted for the omnipotent energies of the Holy Ghost:

1. *Numbers*. How natural it is to measure our power by the multitudes that throng our altars, and to become elated over the reflection that we are the “biggest Church in the land!” A feeling of self-security arises within us on seeing ourselves surrounded by so many of the “same faith and order,” and we are ready to believe that the ark of God will move on irrespective of our individual character and position. We forget that the thousands of members in any single denomination, or of all the denominations combined, are utterly incapable of converting a single

soul, without the accompanying agency of the Holy Spirit. If all who are admitted to Church fellowship were required to conform in all things to the Bible standard of piety, our numbers might be a more reliable measurement of our power. As it is, the saying of a former Bishop is doubtless true, "that we could part with ship-loads of members, and be better off." And even if the entire membership were deeply devoted, it would be dangerous to rely on our numbers as an element of success. God does not want *multitudes* to fight His battles, but He wants "valiant hearted men who are not afraid to die!" Sometimes numbers are in the way—a thinning out is the first step to efficiency, as in the case of Gideon's army, which was reduced from thirty-two thousand to three hundred. These, with God Almighty assisting, were enough to gain the most signal victory.

2. *Wealth.* The highest ambition of some professed Christians, seems to be to influence the *rich* to profess religion, and identify themselves with the Church. The gospel to them is a sort of machinery which is to be run with money. Their attention is all absorbed in the outward—the mechanical of Christianity, while the underlying spirit seems hid from view. How low must be their ideas of God to suppose that He cares a whit more for a millionaire than for the veriest pauper that walks the streets! Money is good in its place, but money is not God, and it will never answer as a substitute for God. If any doubt our position, let them find a practical demonstration in the fact that our poorest Churches, taking the work as a whole, actually do more in getting sinners saved than those that roll in opulence and ease, for the two are generally united.

3. *Social position.* It is true that Christianity has numbered among her votaries some of the wisest and mightiest men that have ever lived; and this fact is not without weight and importance in recounting the evidences of the Christian system; but when these giant intellects are in any manner depen-

ded on to carry forward the practical operations of the gospel, defeat and dismay must be the result of our ill-directed confidence. Men of honor and position may give to the Church the influence of their greatness, but they cannot give her the power that breaks the sinner's heart, and prevails with God. It is insulting to the Most High to suppose that with social position the Church can succeed without the Holy Ghost, or that with the Holy Ghost she cannot succeed without social position! "The great and wise" are far from being the principal want of the Church. God rather wants, to slay the Goliaths of sin, the "little ones" of real devotion and awful power. Let a Church be clothed with the might of the Spirit, and it matters but little whether "any of the rulers have believed on" Christ or not. With such a baptism of pure fire, she has a weapon more effectual than a combination of the largest numbers, the greatest wealth and the highest position among men.

4. *Forms.* These are eminently appropriate when appropriately employed. They must, however, be regarded as helps to a real good, and not the good itself. They are the leading-strings of the gospel to assist us in our approaches to the Parent of all. If we recline upon these, and refuse to go beyond them, we shall never outlive the weakness of a spiritual infancy. Forms and ceremonies amount to nothing and worse than nothing, only so far as they point us to something above and beyond themselves. They never saved anybody, and never will. "It is the *Spirit* that giveth life." But alas! how many have no eyes to look beyond the types and shadows! They bury themselves tip in a mass of frigid and stereotyped formularies, and consent to drag out a miserable existence, without any touches of heavenly power, or baptisms of Divine consolation. They make speeches, and say prayers, and go through the routine of ordinary Christian duties, but they see and feel but very little of God in them all!

It is true they "hold fast the form of sound words," but they do no more; they never seek the energizing influence of the Holy Ghost. And yet, nothing else will answer. We must have, *we must have it*, or this revolted world will never be redeemed to God! Let us have what we may of outward prosperity and favorable circumstances, but never may we mourn the absence of the Infinite Spirit! Take away our numbers, our wealth, our reputation, our ceremonies, but leave us, O leave us the anointing that abideth—the baptism of refining fire—the spirituality of a living gospel—the presence of an indwelling Divinity—the unction of the Holy Ghost!

THE more I see and know of the world the less I esteem it, and the more I desire to be delivered from it: to live indifferent to its smiles and frowns. O, what vanity and vexation is the portion of those, at least many of them, that enjoy much of what are called its good things. My soul keep thou free from it! In God alone is true happiness to be found. It is a great thing to be altogether a Christian. —LADY MAXWELL.

I am not afraid that the people called Methodists, should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead Sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the Doctrine, Spirit and Discipline, with which they first set out. —WESLEY.

It would be wrong to suppose that the way of holiness is a *miraculous* way. It is wonderful, but it is not miraculous. Those who are in it walk by simple faith alone. And perhaps there is nothing more remarkable or wonderful in it, than that a result so great as that of the purification of heart, should be produced by a principle so simple. —FENTON.

REVIVALS.

BY THE EDITOR.

NEVER, since our remembrance, have the fields been so white for a spiritual harvest as at the present. There is an element in man that cannot be satisfied with material objects. The summit of ambition may be reached—political power may be secured, competency and wealth may be gained, but still, man's nature is not satisfied—he craves something more. This is illustrated forcibly in the experience of Madame de Maintenon, who had been married to Louis the 14th, though, for political reasons she was not publicly acknowledged as his wife. She had his confidence as well as his affections. For many years the most important affairs of France depended upon her concurrence. Her power was felt to be hardly less than that of the King. The greatest men of the Kingdom paid her homage. Everything which wealth or art could furnish was put in requisition to make her happy.

In the height of her prosperity and power, writing to a friend, she says: "Why can I not make you sensible of that uneasiness which preys upon the great, and the difficulty they labor under to employ their time. Do you not see that I am dying with melancholy, in a height of fortune which once my imagination could scarce have conceived? I have been young and beautiful, have had a high relish of pleasure, and have been the universal object of love. In a more advanced age I have spent years in intellectual pleasures, I have at last risen to favor; but I protest to you, my dear Madame, that every one of these conditions leaves in the mind a DISMAL VACUITY."

So is it with mankind generally in all conditions of fortune. There is in the mind,

"An aching void
The world can never fill."

This hunger of the soul for fruit that does not grow on trees of nature's planting, Christianity was designed to satisfy. It has in it a supernatural element calculated to meet the highest wants of man's spiritual being. It proffers to him the highest and most substantial joys; flowing from a source unseen by mortal eye; and completely delivered from the influence of all external circumstances. But where the Churches, the guardians and repre-

representatives of the religion of Christ, settle down into a dead formalism this want is not met. The earnest soul turns away in disgust from dry speculations, barren forms and idle fancies. It asks for the bread of life, and is offered instead the painted flowers of rhetoric, and spiritual mummies (from which the vital spark has long since fled,) carefully embalmed, and superstitiously preserved.

Hence the rapidity with which modern Spiritualism—the latest emanation from the bottomless pit—swept, like a moral simoon, over the country, leaving the wrecks of ruined virtue and domestic happiness in its path. Had a proper tone of Spirituality prevailed in the Churches, the devil could not have thus deceived, with his enchantments. But the effects of this diabolical attempt to imitate the work of the finger of God are too terrible for the delusion to be lasting. Already the attention of the public is directed to the Christian religion as that which alone can satisfy the conditions of our being.

All that is wanting for a revival of earnest Christianity to sweep through the country is for men and women, *full of faith and the Holy Ghost*, to labor everywhere, as in apostolic times, for the salvation of souls, preaching to sinners and formalists “repentance from dead works,” and urging believers to “go on to perfection.” Wherever this has been done faithfully, no matter what obstacles have been in the way, good results, exceeding the anticipations of the most sanguine, have been realized. In the hope of stirring up others to a holy activity, we give a brief account of what the Lord is doing in reviving earnest Christianity in different parts.

A brother, writing us from Illinois, says:

“God has a little pilgrim band in St. Charles, Rock River, Con., numbering something over a hundred. Some twenty-five of their number were expelled from the M. E. Church, (if the preacher in charge can become complainant, counsel, committee, chairman and quarterly conference, and all at one and the same time, Others have risen up from the blood of these martyrs and enlisted for life or during the war for holiness.

But the best of all is “the Lord of Host is with us! The God of Jacob is our refuge”—and in our “own hired house” sinners are con-

verted to God—backsliders restored to their “first love” and led out into the highway of holiness.

The sister Churches in the place are deeply feeling the lightings-down of the Spirit of grace, a goodly number receiving among us the “baptism of fire,” to return, as we trust, and kindle the flame in their own homes. The entire place is moved, but whether the walls shall utterly tumble at the blowing of the crooked horns, remains to be seen.

Thus far, in the battle, “He that is for us has been more than all” that have been against us. We have greatly wanted for room, and the work has been evidently hindered from this cause. We expect soon to remedy this by erecting a house in which God can be “Spiritually” worshipped. I bless God for a stamp of salvation, that does not congeal in winter nor evaporate in summer, for a salvation that *lives, breathes, walks, talks, and thinks, and acts*, that has in it “mustard-seed faith,” “leavening-power, Holy Ghost,” energies, with fire shut up in the bones, with “immortality and eternal life.”

Often have I looked upon these expansive prairies and seen the night receding before a pursuing lake of fire; but a far sublimer scene is here preparing to open to the admiration of Angels and the astonishment of men. Even now, all along Fox River, and on either side of it, and out upon the stretching prairies, the holy fires are kindling, and we only wait another sweeping breath of heaven and we stand upon “a sea of glass, mingled with fire,” with many harpers harping with their harps. “Hallelujah to God and the Lamb!” The deep-toned thunders of early Methodism are beginning again to salute our ears, and her long hushed echoes to utter their voices. Again, the voice of the expring Jesus is rending the rocks and quaking the earth—the graves are opening and many of the saints which slept are rising to appear unto many.

Continue the voice, my Lord, until the Churches “shall give up their dead,” and the world shall be blessed and redeemed by a living ministry and a holy people.

PARMA, N. Y.—A member of the Genesee Conference, who has not bowed the knee to Baal, writes:

“The Lord is working with us on this

charge, both in the Church and out. Believers have been sanctified, and upwards of thirty sinners converted since the Conference, and still the work goes on. The *Earnest Christian* is loved much by the earnest Methodists in these parts, and you know their number is legion."—C. D.

PORTER, N. Y.—Rev. Wm. Cooley, one of the preachers "expelled" from the Genesee Conference last fall, writes:

"The revival on the Randall Road goes on gloriously. Over fifty have been converted here and a number have been clearly sanctified. So about seventy-five have been converted since we came to Porter, and about twenty have been sanctified. It looks to me as though the Lord is about to sweep through all this region in great power. I am in for this war to the end."—W. C.

"P. S.—I understand a good work is going on in Pendleton, under brother J. Stacy. Bless the Lord."—W. C.

WALES, N. Y.—A good brother laboring for souls in Wales, Erie County, writes:

The Lord has not forgotten us. Notwithstanding, on the part of the oppressor, there is power, the God of Daniel still lives, and all we have to do, after having done our duty, is to stand still, and see the salvation of our God. I can say of a truth that earnest Christianity is on the increase. And we are nobly "contending for the faith once delivered to the Saints."

We've nailed our colors to the mast,
And firmly we declare
We never will strike while time shall last,
Or Jesus answers prayer.

Our congregations are increasing in numbers and sinners are enquiring what they shall do to be saved. At Spring Book, the Lord is evidently reviving his work. Blacksliders have been reclaimed, and still the work goes on, to God be all the glory.

Yours, for an Earnest Christianity,

C. HUDSON.

BUFFALO.—A good revival has been in progress for some time in the Thirteenth Street Free Methodist Church, in this city. The Lord has been carrying on a work of grace there almost ever since we commenced holding meetings in Mr. Ketchum's Church.

The interest has been steadily upon the increase, and souls have been saved almost from the commencement of our labors. For some weeks past brother Daniel Sinclair has been carrying on a protracted meeting there with the best results. Some forty or over give good evidence of having passed from death unto

life. Last Sabbath from fifty to sixty staid in class, each one of whom gave in a clear testimony, of the enjoyment of a present salvation. This is about double the number that composed the entire congregation when we began to preach there, about one year since. Now the house is often crowded to the utmost, many going away unable to find standing room. A general interest is excited, and we hope soon to hold meetings also in a more central portion of the city.

IN ROCHESTER, we held some meetings for the promotion of earnest Christianity the latter part of February and fore part of March. Much of the divine presence was realized in all the meetings and great good was done. Persons in the habit for years of neglecting religious services were constant in attendance—a number were clearly saved and conviction appeared to be general. Such was the interest that we were obliged the last Sabbath of the meeting to go to Corinthian Hall for room. This, too, was crowded. It was said by those knowing the capacity of the Hall that there were at least 1,400 persons in attendance. A good work is commenced there, which will, we trust, result in the conversion of thousands of souls.

AT SYRACUSE there is a small but choice band of pilgrims, who are "strong in the faith, giving glory to God." Our four days meeting with them, commencing the 8th of March, was thinly attended, but the Lord was with us, and we had a pleasant and profitable time.

AT CANANDAIGUA we held a four days meeting, commencing the 15th of March. We have seldom left a place with so many regrets at our being unable to continue our labors longer. The congregations were large, there being, it was estimated, eight hundred or one thousand people present at the last service—there were all that could be crowded into the large hall, and into the entrance leading to it. The word was listened to with marked attention. Several came out into the clear light of a present salvation, and others received impressions which will, we trust, lead them to a speedy and total surrender to the claims of Christ. We would gladly have staid there longer, but other and pressing engagements compelled us to leave.

AT ALBION we learn that an interesting state of things prevails in the "Free Methodist church, of which the Rev. L. Stiles is the pastor. They now worship in the basement of their new church. This is a large and commodious room, capable of seating some six or seven hundred persons. This, we are informed, is crowded from Sabbath to Sabbath. A good religious influence prevails, and additions are made to their membership from week to week, of such, we trust, as 'shall be saved.'"

PERRY, N. Y.—An esteemed brother writing us from this place, gives the names of seventeen of the old and reliable members of the Methodist Episcopal church who were "withdrawn" without their knowledge or consent. At the time the preacher thus unceremoniously "read out" these Christians from the church which they had helped by their labors and money to build up, he also read a resolution of the official board, (his own creation) the substance of which was, "that if, through insufficient evidence or wrong information, any had been unjustly 'withdrawn,' they might appear before the next official meeting and they would reverse their action and re-instate them to their former position." "Now," writes the brother, "if we had any knowledge what we were turned out for, we might appear before that august body. There is not one of us that has been reproved by pastor or class-leader. The pastor said the case of Brother J. was a very clear one; for about one year before, a Protestant minister had held a protracted meeting in the school-house in Brother J.'s neighborhood, and was instrumental in the conversion of some of his children. Brother J. paid something for his support, thinking it to be his duty to do so, and notwithstanding he has attended preaching and class-meeting as regularly as he ever did, he is now read out of the M. E. Church for that single act; and the pastor said this was a very clear case. There is Popery for you with a vengeance!

The official board voted sister R. out, but before the quarterly meeting, they found out that she had paid her quarterage—some fifty cents. So they held a special meeting and voted her in again!

But blessed be God, though we are cast out we are not forsaken, for God is with us of a truth. After the action of the official board we organized ourselves into a band. Our

meetings continue to increase in numbers and in interest. Two young men have been converted and have joined, and others are seeking.
T. S. C.

THE EARNEST CHRISTIAN.

WE are truly thankful to our Heavenly Father for the favor which he gives our magazine in the eyes of His children. We commenced it from a conviction of duty, at quite a pecuniary risk. Subscribers have come in from all sections of the country, beyond our most sanguine expectations. It is no longer an experiment. Its success is established.

We are gratified with the many expressions of approbation it receives from those whose approbation we prize.

A preacher in Vermont, a stranger to us in the flesh, but partaker of the precious faith, writes:

"I am beginning to think much, very much, of the *Earnest Christian*. The January number did not impress me very favorably, but the February number was much better, and the last is better still—it is full of power. I have just finished reading its strongest articles, and they so perfectly harmonize with my views, feelings, and preaching, that I must sit down and speak a word of encouragement to you. And the great feeling of my heart is this: God bless Brother Roberts in his uncompromising fidelity to pure Bible truth. Your last article on PEW RENTING is just the thing for these times. I give it my unqualified and unshrinking approval. It will stand the fires of the last day. Sister Smith's article is characterized by directness and searching truth, and consequently power. It should be read by all professing Christians. All the articles of this number which I have read are excellent, and I shall make an effort right away to get some to subscribe for you."
J. F. C.

A local preacher of the Genesee Conference writes: "I am more and more pleased with the *Earnest Christian*. I have only one source of anxiety on its account, viz: How can it be sustained and continued as good as it is now? But God will inspire writers as well as speakers, and I pray God that all who write for its pages will have the inspiration in their souls of an *Earnest Christianity*."
W. H.

BACK NUMBERS.—We can supply back numbers for a few hundred new subscribers. Will our friends take a little pains, show the E. C. to their neighbors, induce them to subscribe for it and send on their names, with the money, without delay? We shall try to make each number of the Magazine as good or a little better than its predecessor.

DIRECTIONS.—Write proper names very plainly, giving Post Office, County and State. If you wish the direction of your Magazine changed, be sure to give the Post Office where you have received it as well as that to which you wish it sent.