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PREACHING.

WE take the following from an article in the March number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, entitled "Is the religious want of the age met?" It is a corroboration from an unexpected source of the views which we have set forth in this magazine, of the inefficacy of the ministry of the present age.—Ed.

The prevailing impression among the ministry appears to be, that the man who cannot write "an able doctrinal discourse" is but an inferior man, fit only to preach in an inferior place; and that it would be a great gain to the Church, if scholarship were only so general that the standard of the universities could be applied, and only Phi-Beta-Kappa men allowed to enter the ministry. No doubt, those who incline to this view are quite honest, and not unkindly in it. But those who think this, grievously misunderstand the necessities of the age in which we live. Reading men know where to find better reading than can possibly be furnished by any man who is bound to write two sermons weekly, or even one sermon a week; and to train any corps of young men in the expectation that any considerable fraction of them will be able to win and to maintain a commanding influence in their parishes mainly by the weekly production of learned discourses, is to do them the greatest injury, by cherishing expectations which never can be realized. *

* * It is not worth while for any man to go into the ministry who can-

not relish the Apostle's invitation, running thus: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a *living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." If that seem not reasonable, ay, and exceedingly inviting too, better let it alone. All men cannot do all things. Better raise extraordinary potatoes than hammer out insignificant ideas. You do not see the connection? you were a Phi-Beta-Kappa man in college, and know that you can write better than many a man in a metropolitan pulpit? Very likely; but we of the few go to church to be made better men, and not by fine writing but by significant ideas, which may come in a homely garb, so they be only pervaded with affectionate piety, but which can come to us only from one who has laid all ambitious self-seeking on the altar of God. There is a power of persuasion in every minister who follows God as a dear child, and who walks in love, as Christ loved us, which the hardest heart cannot long resist,—which will win the congregation, however an individual here and there may be able to harden himself against it. You think that the great power of the pulpit is in high doctrine, presented with a metaphysical precision and acuteness. We have no disparagement to offer of your doctrinal knowledge, nor of your ability to state it with metaphysical precision and hairsplitting acuteness. But we know, from much experience, that there is a divine truth, and a fervor and power in imparting it, with which God inspires the man who is wholly devoted to Him, in comparison with which the

higher achievements of the man who lacks these are trumpery and rubbish. Many, *many* men have failed in the ministry, are failing in the ministry every day, because their principal reliance has been upon what they deem their thorough mastery of the soundest theories of doctrine and of duty. They were confident they could administer to minds and hearts diseased the certain specific laid down in the book, ad-measured to the twentieth part of a scruple. Confident in their theoretical acquisitions, they could not comprehend the indispensable necessity of a large experience in actual cases of mental malady. And for want of such experience, it was absolutely impossible that they should be *en rapport* with the souls they honestly desired to benefit. Can you heal a heart-ache with a syllogism? There is no dispensing with the precept and prescription,—“Weep with those that weep!” “Be of the same mind one toward another!”

Theories of doctrine and of practice are not without their value; but the minister who is merely or chiefly a theorist, whether in doctrines or in measures, is an adventurer; and the chances against him are as many as the chances against the precise similarity of any two cases presented to his attention,—as many as the chances against the education of any two men of fifty years being precisely alike, in every particular and in all their results. The soul's problems are not to be solved by theories. Such was not the practice of the Great Physician; “*surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.*” Theories shirk that. “*In all their affliction, He was afflicted; in His love and in His pity, He redeemed them.*” And precisely in this way his ministers are now to follow up his practice. Our age is growing less and less tolerant of formality,—less and less willing to accept metaphysical disquisition in place of a warm-hearted, loving, fervent expansion of the Word of God, recommended to the understanding and to the sensibility by lively illustrations of spiritual truth, de-

rived from all the experience of life, from all observation, from all analogies in the natural world,—in short, from every manner of illumination, from the heavens above, from the earth beneath, and from the waters which are under the earth. God is surely everywhere, and hath made all things, and all to testify of Him; and the innumerable voices all agree together.

And when this is both understood and felt, what rules shall be given to guide and control the construction and the delivery of discourses? Shall we say, The people must be brought back to the old-time endurance—ay, *endurance*, that is the word—of long-drawn, laborious ratiocinations, wherein the truth is diligently pursued for its own sake, with an ultimate reference, indeed, to the needs and uses of the hearer, but so remote as rarely to be noticed, except by that very small fraction of any customary congregation who may chance to have an interest in such doings,—some of whom watch the clergyman as they would the entomologist, running down a truth that he may impale it, and add one more specimen to his well-ordered collection of common and of uncommon bugs? Our neighbors in the South do better than this; for they hunt with the lasso, and never throw the noose except to capture something which can be harnessed to the wheels of common life.

No, the people are not going back to the endurance of any such misery. They have found out that still-born rhetoric is by no means the one thing needful, and care far less for the *art* of speech than for the *nature* of a holy heart. They want a man to speak less of what he believes and more of what he feels. The expectation of bringing the people again to endure prolonged metaphysical discriminations, spun out of commonplace minds, cobwebs to cloak their own nakedness and universal inaptitude, if indulged, is absurdly indulged. The whole Church is sick of such trifling. She knows well that it has made her most unsavory to those who might have found their way into

the temples of God, or kept their places there, but for the memory of an immense amount of wearisome readings from the pulpit,—too often a vocabulary of words seldom or never found out of sermons,—a manner of speech which, when tried by the sure test of natural, animated conversation, must be pronounced absurd and abominable. It is a wonder of wonders, that, in spite of such drawbacks, an individual here and there has been reclaimed from worldliness to the love and service of God.

The student-habits of the clergy most naturally lead them to prefer the formal statement, the studied elaboration of ideas, which their own training cannot but render facile and dear to them. And there is here and there a man who, in virtue of extraordinary genius, can infuse new life into worn-out phrases,—a man or two who can for a moment or for an hour, by the very weight and excellence of their thoughts, and because they truly and deeply feel them, arrest the age, and challenge and secure attention, in spite of all the infelicities of an antiquated style and an unearthly delivery. But in this age, more than ever before, we are summoned to surrender our scholastic preferences and esoteric honors to the exigencies of the million. And the men of this generation have, without much conference, come with great unanimity to the determination that they will not long endure, either in or out of the pulpit, speakers who are dull and unaffecting, either from want of words, ideas, or method and wisdom in the arrangement of them, or lack of sympathies,—and especially that they will not endure dull declamation from the pulpit.

If any man really wish to know how he is preaching, let him imagine himself conversing earnestly with an intelligent and highly gifted, but uneducated man or woman, in his own parlor, or with his younger children. Would any but an idiot keep on talking, when, with half an eye, he might discern tedious, wrought by himself upon the

uncalloused sensibilities of his hearers?

How long ought a sermon to be? As long as you can read in the eye of seven-eighths of your audience, *Pray, go on*. If you cannot read that, you have mistaken your vocation; you were never called to the ministry. The secret of the persuasive power of our favorite orators is in their constant recognition of the ebb and flow of the sensibilities they are acting upon. Their speech is, in effect, an actual conversation, in which they are speaking for as well as to the audience; and the interlocutors are made almost as palpably such as at the "Breakfast Table" of our dramatic "Autocrat." In contrast with this, the dull preacher, falling below the dignity and the privilege of his office, addresses himself, not to living men, but to an imaginary sensibility to abstract truth. The effect of this is obvious and inevitable; it converts hearers into doubters as to whether in fact there be any such thing as a religion worth recommending or possessing, and preachers into complainers of the people as indifferent and insensible to the truth,—a libel which ought to render them liable to fine and punishment. God's truth, *fairly presented*, is never a matter of indifference or of insensibility to an intelligent, nor even to an unintelligent audience. However an individual here and there may contrive to withdraw himself from the sphere of its influence, truth can no more lose her power than the sun can lose his heat.

The people, under the quickening influences characteristic of our age, are awaking to the consciousness, that, on the day which should be the best of all the week, they have been defrauded of their right, in having solemn dullness palmed upon them, in place of living, earnest, animated truth. Let not ministers, unwisely overlooking this undeniable fact, defame the people, by alleging a growing facility in dissolving the pastoral relation,—a disregard of solemn contracts,—a willingness to dismiss excellent, godly, and devoted

men, without other reason than the indisposition to retain them. Be it known to all such, that capable men in every department of life were never in such request as at this very hour; and never, since the world began, was there an audience so large and so attentive to truth, well wrought and fitted to its purpose, as now.

PLEASE YOUR HUSBAND?

Do you wear jewelry to please your husband; do you, sister, wear that breastpin to please your husband? Well, will this pleasing your husband please Jesus? Which do you prefer to please: your husband or your Saviour? who "For you bore the shameful cross and carried all your grief?"

"What's the harm, pray, in wearing a modest gold breastpin?"

What's the harm, sister, in wearing any ornaments of gold? Why did the Holy Spirit say: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning * * * of wearing of gold," &c.,—see also 1 Tim. ii, 9. If it is right for you to wear a gold breastpin, why not also gold ear-rings, gold wristbands, tip off from top to toe in gold, even to nose-jewels like the heathen? The Bible makes no distinction between much gold or little gold: "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." It's the little foxes that destroy the vines; it's the little leak that sinks the ship; it's the little spark that kindles the flames. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth." Sister, you profess to be a Christian, enjoy the inner life,—what is the effect of your example on the lambs of the flock? What says Christ of those who offend or cause to stumble "one of these little ones." Read Matth. xviii, 6—8.

But you wear the gold breastpin to please your husband! Sister, beware of this trap of Satan, *beware*, lest like Sampson you are shorn of your locks. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than

me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

"At his command, we must take up
Our cross without delay;
Our lives—and thousand lives of ours—
Can ne'er his love repay.

"Each faithful sufferer Jesus views
With infinite delight:
Their lives to him are dear; their deaths
Are precious in his sight.

"To bear his name—his cross to bear—
Our highest honor this!
Who nobly suffers now for him,
Shall reign with him in bliss.

"But should we, in the evil day,
From our profession fly,—
Jesus, the Judge, before the world,
The traitor will deny."—GOLDEN RULE.

STRONG BELIEVERS.—Luther was a tower of strength, because his whole trust was in the Lord. Baxter was a burning flame, because he lived hard by the mercy-seat, whereon the glory dwelt between the cherubim. Whitefield was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," because like John, his crying was, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Chalmers foamed like a cataract because the deep rapids came rushing down upon him from the everlasting mountains. Hall's words were all molten in the furnace where his faith was tried with fire. These were great preachers, because they were, *strong* believers; and they were strong believers because they loved the truth, kept their hearts with all diligence, and walked in the light of heaven. There is no age in which *such* preachers would not have power. — ECLECTIC REVIEW.

RELIGION in the hands of self, or corrupt nature, serves only to discover vices of a worse kind, than in nature left to itself. Thence are all the disordered passions of religious men, which burn in a worse flame, than passions only employed about worldly matters; pride, self-exultation, hatred and persecution, under a cloak of religious zeal, will sanctify action, which nature, left to itself would be ashamed to own. — LAW.

OPINIONS OF EMINENT MEN
RESPECTING THE BIBLE.

A Book which Sir Isaac Newton esteemed the most authentic of all histories; which by its celestial light illumines the darkest ages of antiquity; which is the touchstone whereby we are enabled to distinguish between true and fabulous theology—between the God of Israel, holy, just, and good, and the impure rabble of heathen Baalim; which has been thought by competent judges, to have afforded matter for the laws of Solon, and a foundation for the philosophy of Plato; which has been illustrated by the labor of learning in all ages and countries, and been admired and venerated for its piety, its sublimity, its veracity, by all who were able to read and understand it.—*Bishop Watson.*

There never was found in any age of the world, either philosopher, or sect, or law, or discipline, which did so highly exalt the public good as the Christian faith.—*Lord Bacon.*

There is no book upon which we can rest in a dying moment, but the Bible.—*John Selden.*

There are no songs comparable to the Songs of Zion; no orations equal to those of the Prophets, and no politics like those which the Scriptures teach.—*Milton.*

There is no book like the Bible for excellent wisdom, learning and use.—*Sir Matthew Hale.*

It is a matchless volume; it is impossible we can study it too much, or esteem it too highly.—*Hon. Robert Boyle.*

To a person who asked that profound thinker, John Locke, which was the shortest and surest way for a young gentleman to attain to the true knowledge of the Christian religion, in the full and just extent of it, he replied,—‘Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life.

It hath God for its Author; Salvation for its End: and Truth, without any mixture of Error, for its matter.’

I have carefully and regularly perused the Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the volume contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history and finer strains of eloquence than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written.—*Sir William Jones.*

In every generation, and wherever the light of revelation has shone, men of all ranks, conditions, and states of mind, have found in this volume a correspondent of every movement towards the better felt in their own hearts. The needy soul has found a supply, the feeble a help, the sorrowful a comfort! yea, be the reciprocity the least that can consist with mortal life, there is an answering grace ready to enter. The Bible has been found a spiritual world,—spiritual, and yet at the same time outward, and common to all. You in one place, I in another, all men somewhere or at some time, meet with an assurance that the hopes and fears, the thoughts and yearnings that proceed from, or tend to, a right spirit in us, are not dreams of floating irregularities, no voices heard in sleep, or spectres, which the eye suffers, but not perceives. As if on some dark night a pilgrim, suddenly beholding a bright star moving before him, should stop in fear and perplexity. But lo! a traveler passes by him, and each, being questioned whither he is going, makes answer. “I am following yon guiding star!” The pilgrim quickens his own steps, and presses onward in confidence. More confident still will he be, if by the way-side, he should find here and there ancient monuments, each with its votive lamp, and on each the name of some former pilgrim, and a record, that there had he seen or begun to follow the benignant star!—*Coleridge.*

The Bible is by far the most inexhaustible book in the world, even laying aside its Divine origin altogether.

For its great antiquity, simplicity of narrative, splendor of poetry, and wise and holy injunctions, there is no work once to be compared with it.—*James Hogg.*

In this world we are children standing on the bank of a mighty river. Casting our eyes upward and downward along the channel, we discern various windings of its current; and perceive that it is now visible, now obscure, and now entirely hidden from our view. But being far removed from the fountain whence it springs, and from the ocean into which it is emptied, we are unable to form any conceptions of the beauty, usefulness, or grandeur of its purpose. Lost in perplexity and ignorance, we gaze, wonder, and despond. In this situation, a messenger from Heaven comes to our relief, with authentic information of its nature, its course, and its end; conducts us backward to the fountain, and leads us forward to the ocean. This river is the earthly system of Providence; the Bible is the celestial messenger; and Heaven is the ocean in which all preceding dispensations find their end.—*Dwight.*

A single Book has saved me; but that book is not of human origin. Long had I despised it; long had I deemed it a class-book for the credulous and ignorant; until, having investigated the Gospel of Christ with an ardent desire to ascertain its truth or falsity, its pages proffered to my inquiries the sublimest knowledge of man and nature, and the simplest, and at the same time the most exalted system of moral ethics. Faith, hope, and charity, were enkindled in my bosom; and every advancing step strengthened me in the conviction, that the morals of this book are as superior to human morals, as its oracles are superior to human opinions.—*M. L. Baintain.*

A person who tells you of the faults of others, intends to tell others of your faults.

AMAZING GRACE.

Dr. TYNG is writing a series of articles for one of the New York papers, in which we find the following incident that occurred in his pastoral experience. It illustrates the power of Divine grace to subdue the strongest will, and also shows the power of gentleness, of a wife's gentleness, to bring a husband near the Saviour's feet. As the account is true, it will be read with the more interest:

"Many years since, a gay and fashionable pair lived near me and attended my ministry. The wife was beautiful, social and admired. The husband was rich and worldly, and delighted in the admiration which, in society, his wife received. They lived a reckless, gay, and worldly life. Except in the worship of an occasional Sunday morning, they knew nothing of religion, and cared nothing for what they heard even then. But in the wonders of grace this gay and fashionable woman was converted there, and in the most open and decided manner renounced her life of folly, and cast her lot among the followers of the Lord. Her sudden change of life and purpose intensely enraged her unconverted husband, who had no sympathy with her, and could not understand her. He tried in every possible manner to overthrow her plans, and drive her from her choice. He forbid her union with the church, in any personal act. He watched at the gates of the church-yard to prevent her entrance by force. So far was this hostility carried, that at last she found access to the church for her appointed baptism only through the window in the rear. Thus matters went on for weeks, every day bringing me some new tidings of his violence and her sufferings. How much their domestic affairs were known to others, I never knew. The people and the generation have since passed away. Their young children are now mature, and several of them parents themselves.

Some weeks of this new history had

passed, when late one evening, after I had retired to my chamber for the night, my door-bell was violently pulled, and a messenger said Mrs. — desired to see me immediately. I dressed myself and went, anticipating some scene of violence, and simply saying to my wife where I was going, in case I might be prevented from returning. The streets were solitary and still. As I ascended the steps, the door was quietly opened to me, and I was directed to the parlor, where, to my surprise, I found the two sitting together on the sofa, with no other person present. The man looked up to me in an agony of tears, as in astonishment I sat by his side and asked an explanation. "Oh, sir," he cried, "can I be saved, can I be saved?" "Yes, surely," I answered; "but you amaze me—what has led you to this?" "This angel," he replied, with eagerness,—“you know how I hated her religion. But you do not know how I hated you. I thought you the blackest of human beings. You had broken up my happiness, you had destroyed my peace, you had separated my family, you had alienated my wife from me. I laid it all to you. I was intensely enraged with you. I have several times watched for you at night with the intention of killing you. But it is all over now. I am thankful to see you. But this angel wife—I have cursed her, I have persecuted her in every way. I have beaten her, I have pulled her down by her hair; and she has received it all in silence and meekness. She has never said one unkind word in reply; but she has prayed for me and loved me. And I can stand it no longer. I am miserable, because I am so guilty. I have rebelled so horribly. I have been loved and treated so affectionately. Can I be saved?" The wife sat silently and heard the whole,—and then gently said, "My dear husband seemed so distressed to-night, that I took the liberty to send for you." How fresh and vivid is that whole scene before me as I write, with all its incidents and details, which I will not describe. With what delight did

I preach the Saviour's love to this lost one thus at last aroused by that love to see his own voluntary and aggravated guilt!

We passed more than an hour thus together, and closed our conversation with earnest prayer. Blessed indeed was the result. The strong man armed had found a stronger than he, who had taken from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and spoiled his goods. He was subdued by love, converted by Divine power. He too came into the Saviour's flock, and on the side of Jesus. How changed the mad one became,—“sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind.” He witnessed among us for years a good confession;—he was honored and beloved in the church;—a pattern of gentleness and fidelity at home and abroad. After some years of earnest Christian life on earth, his course was finished and his rest attained. I have since hardly passed the house in which they lived without recalling to my mind this whole remarkable scene—that peculiar display of grace—that voluntary wanderer, and the wonderful love and mercy which in so much rebellion he received. He assumed all the responsibility of the guilty wandering upon himself. He learned to give all the glory of his recovery to that amazing grace, which had plucked him as a brand from the burning, and loved him when he was dead in sins.”

ANY movement by the oppressed to recover their rights, will be resisted by those who have oppressed them; but *suffering, and persecution, in a cause which the love of God and man requires, should be fearlessly met and resolutely borne.*—BASCOM.

DEFECTIVE RELIGION.—A religion that never suffices to govern a man, will never suffice to save him; that which does not sufficiently distinguish one from a wicked world, will never distinguish him from a perishing world.—HOWE.

SECRET PRAYER.

MEN never take so firm a hold on God as in secret. Remember Jacob.

Thou shouldst pray alone, for thou hast sinned alone, and thou art to die alone, and to be judged alone. Alone wilt thou have to appear before the judgment seat. Why not go alone to the mercy seat? In the great transaction between thee and God, thou canst have no human helper. You can be free before God. You are not going to tell him any secret. You may be sure he will not betray your confidence. Whatever reasons there may be for any species of devotion, there are more and stronger reasons for secret devotion.

Nothing is more embarrassing and disturbing in secret prayer than unpropitious circumstances. Great attention ought always to be paid to this point. "Enter into thy closet," says Christ. He says not *a* closet, nor *the* closet, but *thy* closet. The habit of secret communion is supposed to be formed. The man is supposed to have a closet—some place to which he is accustomed to retire for prayer—some spot consecrated by many a meeting there with God—some place that has often been to him a Bethel. The Saviour uses the word to mean any place, where, with no embarrassment either from fear or pride of observation, we can freely pour out our heart in prayer to God. No matter what are the dimensions of the place, what its flooring or canopy. Christ's closet was a mountain, Isaac's a field, Peter's a house top.

Go not to thy closet to say prayers. Oh! I wish obsolete could be written against that phrase, "saying prayers." It were as proper to speak of saying phrases. If, when in thy closet, thou feel nothing, say, "Oh, God, I feel nothing—no gratitude, no contrition." God likes truth.

It is in the closet, and not in the crowd, that men become acquainted with God! Oh, how it lightens the pressure of a calamity, relieves the

loneliness of death, and breaks the shock of the entrance to eternity.

To become remiss in secret devotion is to become tired of God.

What an argument we have for secret prayer, in the example of Christ, who seems to have been in the habit of retiring to very solitary places, for the purpose of personal communion with God, and especially for prayer. Yes! He who knew no sin, needed no forgiveness, and whose mind was not liable to be diverted and distracted, as ours is, maintained secret prayer. Though the habit of his soul was devotion, and every breath bore upon it, and wherever he was, he held perfect and uninterrupted communion with the Father, yet he was wont to seclude himself to pray. With these advantages over us, he felt the necessity of it; and, with the business of the world's redemption to attend to, he found time for it. This example speaks volumes to us all. Was it necessary for him and not for thee, poor, guilty, exposed sinner, who hast a God to propitiate, a soul to save, a heaven to obtain? Was it practicable for him, and canst thou, durst thou, say it is not for thee? Canst thou not find a secrecy, or make a solitude? And if the day is not thy own, is not the night? That was the Saviour's time for prayer, and the cold mountain-top was his oratory.

The Scriptures do clearly teach that secret prayer ought not only to be daily—"give us us this day our daily bread"—but often through the day. Daniel and David prayed three times a day at least. "To pray frequently, is to pray fervently."—NEVINS.

A WITNESS FOR JESUS.—Mary Dyar who was hung in Boston, in 1660, for being a Quaker, on her way to the gallows said, "This is to me an hour of the greatest joy I could enjoy in this world. No eye can see, no ear can hear, no tongue can utter, and no heart can understand, the sweet incomes, or influence, and the refreshings of the Spirit of the Lord, which now I feel."

PRAYER.

BY REV. JOHN B. GRAHAM.

PRAYER is the key of the Kingdom of Heaven. It opens the celestial gates. It unlocks the store-house of divine grace.

Prayer is the keeper of the human heart. It admits the truth into the chambers of our imagery—into the secret things of the spirit of a man.

Prayer like rest or music, brings an evenness and serenity over the mind. It calms the soul till it becomes like the countenance of the benign Saviour. It imparts a peace which the world cannot give nor take away. The spiritual part of man ascends in prayer, as upon the wings of a dove, to the sky, enters into the presence of God, and returns to earth with the radiance and tranquillity of heaven about it.

Prayer for ourselves is the entrance to every good gift, and it elevates and purifies the suppliant.

But when the saint prays for others, the bond of perfectness, the generous emotions of unbounded love, makes him resemble the divine Advocate with the Father, the interceding Spirit of God. The good man thus goes abroad in his desires towards the family of his great Parent, like an angel on his ministrations here below.

What has prayer not done? What mountain, what natural impossibility has it not removed and cast into the sea? Has not God often spared a city or a people at the prayer of one holy person? Are not the children of God the salt of the earth which preserves it from corruption? Do not the prayers of the saints prevent the Holy One from leaving it to dissolve by the force of its own enmities and discord? Shall not the cries of the martyrs proceeding from beneath the altar arouse the Judge of the quick and the dead? The prayers of holy men have hindered God's judgments, and again they have hastened them. Prayer has quenched his wrath, and inflamed it. It has repelled the mightiest temptations, and chased

away the evil one from his prey. It has procured the ministry of angels to supplant the attendance of devils. For sickness it has brought health; for barrenness, fruitfulness; for death, life.

Prayer has given nerve and constancy to the timid and weak virgin to resist the fire, and the rack, and the cord of demoniac inquisitors.

It has made torments, however sharp, appear easy; afflictions however protracted, brief; dangers, however formidable, unseen and unheeded. What cannot prayer do?

And then how suitable this work is to our nature, and how accommodated to our diversified circumstances. It is not the cumbrous and and imprisoned body that need act in this work. We need no eloquence but that of the unfortunate and needy beggar. A sigh may contain a prayer; a groan, a tear, a cast of the eye, may each wrap up many petitions. The current of thoughts is like the incessant flowing of a mighty river, and each thought may be a prayer. Oh! how niggardly the soul that cannot spare a few drops. Faith is like the sun upon the river of the human soul. It turns a certain portion of the stream of mind into celestial desires, which ascend to heaven and come down again in fertilizing showers of blessed influences upon this parched world, causing the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

But some prayers are like the sluggish and creeping mists that hang over the stagnant marsh. They are not sufficiently rarified by holy fire. They proceed from formal, unthinking, unbelieving souls. They are as unpleasant breath in the nostrils of God. He smells no sweet savour of faith and love. They turn back upon the false, unfeeling suppliant, without ever reaching the skies.

What can an indifferent prayer do? Can it save a soul from death? Can it even vanquish a sinful passion, or obtain a piece of bread? If men must be in earnest to bespeak effectually benefits from men, how much more from God? If the paltry concerns of sense and time

be worth fervency and importunity, how much more the one thing needful.

God hates a cold prayer worse than none at all. For it is pouring contempt on those things on which he himself has put more value by the death of his Son, and the intercession of his Spirit, and his own eternal concern about them, than he hath put upon the globes, and crowns, and sceptres of imperial kings—upon the hidden treasures of golden mountains, or the pomp and fame of conquests. Oh! then, dear reader, pray in faith, for

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gate of death,—
He enters Heaven by prayer."

FAULT FINDING.—To find fault with others requires neither commanding talents, nor a high state of piety. It is much easier to idly look upon the tireless endeavors of active Christianity to do good, and to show wherein they might have done better, than it is to improve upon their example. He who is most ready to examine others, will generally be found most backward to examine himself. If we are faithful to our own convictions we shall have too much to do at home, to become "busybodies in other men's matters." He who scrutinizes the conduct of his fellow Christians with the greatest severity is not unfrequently least able to bear such scrutiny himself. Many have been excommunicated for the faithful discharge of duty, by those who deserved to be themselves excluded from the pale of the Christian Church for real crimes. Before we can attain to the stature of perfect Christians we must have less tongue, and more heart work. *Speak not evil one of another, brethren.*

THE WORLD.—As you love your souls, beware of the world; it has slain its thousands and tens of thousands. What ruined Lot's wife? The world. What ruined Judas? The world. What ruined Simon Magus? The world. And "what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—MASON'S REMAINS.

READING.

The principles of holy living extend, in their application, not only to the affections and the ordinary outward actions, but to every thing.

For instance, in the matter of *reading*, he who has given himself wholly to God, can read only what God permits him to read.

He cannot read books, however they may be characterized by wit or power, merely to indulge an idle curiosity, or in any other way to please himself alone.

If we look to God for direction in the spirit of humility, we may reasonably hope to be guided aright in this thing as in others. As a subordinate means of such guidance, it is proper for us, not only to exercise our own judgments with care, but to consult the opinions of religious friends and teachers.

In the reading of religious books, I think this may be a suitable direction, namely, to read but little at a time, and to interrupt the reading by intervals of religious recollection, in order that we may let the Holy Spirit more deeply imprint in us the Christian truths to which we are attending.

When the state of recollection turns our minds from the truths of the book to the object of those truths, so much so that our desires are no longer upon the book, we may let it fall from our hands without scruple.

God, in the person of the Holy Ghost, becomes to the fully renovated mind, the great inward teacher. This is a great truth.

At the same time we are not to suppose that the presence of the inward teacher exempts us from the necessity of the outward lesson. The Holy Ghost, operating through the medium of a purified judgment, teaches us by the means of books, especially by the word of God, which is never to be laid aside.—FENELON.

MEN are generally deserted in adversity. When the sun sets, our very shadows refuse to follow us.

LEAN ON JESUS.

When thy spirit is oppress,
Sad and weary, longs for rest,
Burden'd with the weight of sin,
Foes without and fears within.

Anxious cares press heavily,
Dreaded ills thou may'st not flee,
Lean on Jesus, He can cheer,
He can dry each falling tear.

None can such relief afford,
None sustain thee like thy Lord,
He can soothe thy fainting heart,
He can peace and joy impart.

Chase thy anxious fears away,
Turn thy darkness into day;
He removes sin's heavy load,
With His own most precious blood.

Clothe thee in the beauteous dress
Of His spotless righteousness,
Guide thee with His gentle hand
Safely to the promised land.

Fit thee now the cross to bear,
Then a glorious crown to wear;
Lean on Jesus, trust His word,
Lean, O! lean upon thy Lord.

DRUNKEN WOMEN.

THERE is a great and growing evil in this city, but one of such a delicate nature as to almost forbid being dragged into public print. I refer to the increasing and lamentable habit, now so common, of the indulgence by ladies in intoxicating drinks. I do not refer to those who do wrong from necessity, but that other class who have rich husbands and homes, that might be made happy. A larger number of this class are steadily diving deeper and deeper into dissipation every year than many persons greatly interested in their welfare even imagine. I have heard recently of several distressing cases of this kind, and to-day I learn that the wife of a well known citizen, reported to be very wealthy, has been sent to

the Lunatic Asylum, in the hope that she may, with returning reason, be enabled to overcome the terrible temptation which intoxicating liquors have of late had for her. Her husband's name is almost as familiar in some parts of the South as it is here.

It is unwise to attribute this growing evil to one cause, for there are a variety in operation. A few may be named, and the reader must make such use of them as an intelligent conscience may urge.

Reputable physicians seem to be falling into the habit, more and more, of advising alcoholic remedies, either frankly and above board, or under the disguise of Tonics, Tinctures, and bitters. Scarcely a religious newspaper of any name or sect can be taken up which does not contain advertisements of these same mischievous agencies, with "Reverend" certifiers, *ad nauseam*. The editors of respectable medical journals, and the publishers of the same, lend their aid towards the introduction of wines, and beers, and brandies into the families by whose patronage they live; thus prostituting their influence to vile purposes for the sake of a few dollars they receive from the advertisement of the same. To show the extent to which these things are practised we take up a medical periodical, for July, of this city, issuing from the establishment of a name which for half a century has commanded the respect of the whole community; the editor an old man of learning and culture, and high position in his profession and his church; such men we say, are found introducing to the knowledge of their readers "Pure liquors for the use of the sick," and telling where such a brand of gin and such a quality of whiskey can be had; showing, however, some little deference to public decency, by saying: "So long as people will take domestic medicines, they ought at least to discriminate the good from the bad."

How is it possible to "discriminate" between good and bad London Dock Gin and Philadelphia Whiskey and French Cordials, when all are bad;

when the use of any of them for a short time tends to set up a desire for more, which no man of intelligence and who has any respect for himself or truth will deny? How many men and women under the habitual use of Tonics and Bitters and Beers and Cordials, have waked up at last to the fearful truth that "they cannot do without them—must have them," let our asylums and prisons and poor-houses testify; and let ruined families and blasted reputations and broken hearts the land over confirm the terrible record. He, and he only, is safe from a drunkard's death who never tastes a drop of anything that can intoxicate.—THE JOURNAL OF HEALTH.

THE QUARTER-DOLLAR SIN.

REV. DANIEL LINDLEY, after an absence of forty years—more than half of the time passed as a missionary in Africa—returned to this country and returned to Athens, Ohio—the home of his childhood—the theatre of his youthful days. He trod again the old Campus, walked through the old college halls, stood upon the *cliff*—the rocky rostrum of college boys. He examined the old paths, and inquired for the companions of his youth. Changes had passed upon every scene. He was asked to preach at night, and to give some account of his life in Africa. At the close of the services, a very respectable and aged gentleman approached, and desired him to take a walk.

They passed on, and, when they had reached a somewhat retired place, the gentleman turned, and said:

"Brother Lindley, if a man has ever done wrong—has committed a sin—don't you think he should confess it?"

"Why, yes," said Mr. Lindley, "if thereby he may glorify God; if it will make amends to the party wronged, or do good to the party who sinned."

"Well, that is just what I think. I am in that predicament. I have long desired and prayed for an opportunity to make a confession and amendment

to you. When we were boys together, fifty years ago, we were playing together. You dropped a quarter of a dollar, and I snatched it up, and put it in my pocket. I claimed it as my own, and kept it. It was, perhaps, a little, mean, dirty trick: and it has worried and troubled me ever since."

"Oh, it was a small matter, and I have no recollection of it," said Mr. Lindley.

"Ah, you may call it a small matter, but it has been a mighty burden for me to bear. I have carried it now for fifty years; I would not carry it fifty more for all the gold in California. And suppose I had to carry it for fifty thousand years, or for all eternity! No, sir, it is no small matter; it has been growing bigger and heavier, and I want to get rid of it. I have no doubt you have forgotten it, but I could never forget it. I have not, for the last fifty years, heard your name mentioned, or the name of your father, or any of the family, but that *quarter* has come in connection. Why, the very buttons on your coat—every thing that is *round*, represents a quarter. The moon and stars are magnified and illuminated quarters. You need not call it a little sin; if it was, it has grown mighty to plague me; and deservedly too."

With this the gentleman took from his pocket-book a five-franc piece, worn bright and smooth, and said:

"I wish you to take this; it belongs to you, it is rightfully yours, and will be no burden to you. And if this is not enough, I will give you more."

Mr. Lindley accepted it, and the gentleman raised himself erect, and drew a long breath, as a man would who has thrown off a heavy load. He was at last relieved.

The sense of guilt is enduring and tormenting, and can only die or be relieved by repentance, confession, amendment, or atonement. It needs not that it be the theft, fraud, or wrong, amounting to a thousand, ten, twenty, fifty, or a hundred thousand dollars, in order that the soul be oppressed by its burden; a twenty-five cents—a *quarter* of

a dollar sin—may become larger than the globe, weightier than many worlds, with a punishment like the sin of Cain—*unendurable*.—N. Y. OBSERVER.

EXPERIENCE OF MRS. EUNICE COBB.

At a grove meeting which we held last spring near Marengo, Illinois, our attention was attracted to an aged female, whose plain dress, devout appearance, and clear, explicit testimony to the power of Christ to save to the uttermost, bespoke the pilgrim to Mount Zion. We learned that it was Mother Cobb, of whose earnest uncompromising piety we had heard much in that region. The following account of her experience, which was published in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, in 1847, has been forwarded to us, and will we trust be made a blessing to our readers.—Ed.

Soon after I was converted I felt conviction for a deeper work of Grace, and a fervent desire for full redemption in the blood of the Lamb. Sometimes I felt as though I had almost obtained that great blessing, then I would lose my grief and for sometime live without my accustomed deep feeling. Still I continued to pray for the blessing.

After a time that man of God, G. Fillmore, came to our circuit. He preached the doctrine of holiness so plainly and powerfully that my heart became all alive for that perfect love of God that casteth out fear.

Now I was powerfully tempted. It was suggested to me that I was so ignorant and unworthy, that God could not bestow such an inestimable blessing upon me. I thought all my friends would shun me, and that all would despise me; and the powers of darkness gathered so thick about me, that I was already in despair. The struggle I now felt was a fearful one. I felt that I could no longer live without this

blessing; I therefore resolved in the strength of the Lord, that I would not rest till I had obtained the prize; now I was willing to become anything or nothing for Christ sake. In that moment, my prayer, my struggle, my unutterable longing was gratified; praise took the place of prayer, my full soul, dissolved in love and praise, seemed as wax before the fire; then was that "new name" written upon my heart, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. In a moment I saw that this was sanctification, but quick as thought it was suggested, "Do not speak of it, for no one will believe you; it is only a blessing, and you have been blessed a great many times;" but blessed be God, who enable me to resist the devil and claim the blessing! My peace was "like a river." In the morning with streaming eyes I was enabled to tell the dear friends in love-feast that I had received a great blessing from the Lord. I had not strength fully to profess the blessing. O, it seemed such a great thing to profess sanctification! I had never heard any say they enjoyed sanctification, and it appeared to me that no one could believe me, if I professed it. For a number of weeks in every prayer and class-meeting, I told it as well as I could, and not say sanctified. After another conflict with the powers of darkness, I was strengthened fully to profess what God had done for me. Thanks be to God for ever for victorious love!

A beloved sister said to me, "I am sorry you have made such a profession, I am afraid you will wound the cause." I replied, my blessed Master, who has enabled me to testify of his goodness, is able to keep me; for it is not I that live, but Christ that liveth in me. When I reached home, my Bible, my Hymn Book, were full of holiness, and upon the walls and door-posts I could read holiness; all praise be to God and the Lamb for ever, that when we fully believe with the heart, we may then make confession with the mouth unto salvation. By faith, faith only, I received this precious treas-

ure, and by simple faith I held it fast. Now my fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and I am anxious that all the world should taste the riches of his grace. O,

The arms of Love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace.

About this time several in our village experienced religion, and I commenced praying in earnest for my unconverted companion. God convicted; but still he refused to yield, and he pointedly opposed me; yet I told my friends he would be converted—that I could claim that promise. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife." To this promise my soul clung for a long time, rejoicing and praying without ceasing, until the time of our Camp Meeting, when his long captivated soul was set at liberty. He, however, made no profession till a few weeks after the meeting, at which time our neighbors came in to rejoice with us, that "the dead was alive, and the lost was found." When Rev. J. Dempster, came in, he said "you have no need of a physician," and he added "you remind me of a merchant in Rochester, who, on being converted rushed into the street, swinging his arms, inviting every one as he went to come to Jesus, just now come to Jesus; just now come to Jesus."

Now I went from house to house, and tried to persuade the people to embrace religion. Every one rejoiced with me for the wonderful work which God had wrought. Instead of being neglected, as I had been tempted to believe I should be, every one seemed to have confidence in me. Some sent for me to their homes, others would call me in when I was passing, to inquire concerning what God had done.

Occasionally I had some difficulty in ascertaining duty, and I have found it vastly important carefully to guard my heart, lest Satan should find an entrance. On one occasion, having been in great distress for about an hour, and all access at a throne of Grace appearing to be cut off, I retired, opened my Bible,

knelt and read, "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptation; ye that sit down with me in my kingdom." The cloud broke, and O, what a bright light shone all around me! Then I felt as though I could convince a world of the divine realities of religion. Glory to our great deliverer, who set me in a large place! I now felt it my duty to be decidedly plain in dress. Going one day to church I met a lady dressed in the height of fashion; I was tempted, and it was suggested to my mind, "Why should I be so plain and singular when I can have those fashionable articles just as well as others? nay, and my friends feel mortified to observe my old dress? All as in a moment I seemed to see a robe displayed before me, which outshone the sun in brightness. I cried out, farewell all earthly grandeur, while a voice seemed to say, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Dear Saviour, let thy beauties be,
My soul's eternal food;
And grace command my heart away,
From all created good.

My heart is grieved when I witness lightness and trifling among those professing godliness. Surely we must have the spirit of Christ, or we are none of his. We read that "Jesus wept," but where do we read that Jesus laughed and trifled?

On one occasion it was suggested to me, "you have given way to temptation; you have been impatient; you may now give up this great blessing," and while I was crying mightily to God, these words came to my mind, "cast not away, therefore, your confidence which hath great recompence of reward," and again my enemy was vanquished. Glory be to God that we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous!

Our physician called upon me about this time, saying he wished me to take a number with me, and visit and pray with a young man who was lying sick in our village, and so low that medicine had ceased to effect him, adding that if prayer would not raise him he must

die. We went, he took no notice of us; but there was a mighty spirit of prayer given to us; faith lent her realizing light, and I felt constrained to say that the young man would recover, and be thrust out to preach. In a few days he was able to be removed a hundred miles to his father's house, and some time after I learned that he was standing upon the walls of Zion, a faithful ambassador for Christ. At a Camp Meeting in Indiana, I heard Brother J. Armstrong, and Brother Griffith, preach their last sermons. The effect was glorious. Many were so cut down that they could not move. Such weeping, such shouting, such displays of the power of God I never witnesseth before.

When Dr. Ruter came out to preach Brother Armstrong's funeral sermon, I inquired if there were many in the Conference who enjoyed the blessing of sanctification. He replied that now Brethren Griffith and Armstrong were gone he feared there were few who enjoyed sanctification. How lamentable that a preacher of the Gospel should lack a blessing so essential! How can such a one with satisfaction to himself feed the flock of God? O, let the constant cry of the church be, "give us a holy ministry!" I thank God that the witnesses of this great grace are becoming more numerous. Many can now say from happy experience that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. O, may this blessing become common, yea, general! Lord, hasten the glorious time!

From the moment in which I received the blessing of perfect love, I have ardently desired to do all in my power, and am constantly inquiring, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? I have found by blessed experience that "labor is rest, and pain is sweet," when we see God in everything. O, if every professor would arise and assert his liberty, what a great turning to God there would be among sinners! My Bible teaches me to visit the widows and fatherless in their afflictions, and to keep myself unspotted from the world. All this by the grace of God I am striving to

do; and the Gospel, the blessed Gospel! I am doing all I can to sustain it, and send it abroad to every destitute corner of the earth.

It is now twenty-three years since I experienced this blessing, and my way is brighter, and brightening still. I find that all things work together for my good. O, how delightful to cast every care upon Jesus, knowing he careth for me! O what green pastures, what still waters! How I love to dwell in the house of the Lord.

I have felt frequently a wish to send forth my experience in the Christian Advocate and Journal, but knowing my unfitness to write, I have deferred it from time to time; but impelled by a sense of duty, I have at length written as above, praying that the grace thus shown me, may encourage others to embrace this fullness of the blessing of the Gospel.

LOSS OF THE SOUL.

If you get not the soul's attachments to the world loosened before death, there will ensue such a rending and agony upon your departure, as no loss of country, of wife or children, can be compared with, and, if you take not a cool forethought of the future, nor prepare to meet it, there will come such a brood of fears, such a wreck of hopes, as no improvident spendthrift ever encountered. O! ye sons of men, if these things are so, and ye tread every moment upon the brink of time, and live upon the eve of judgment, what avail your many cares, and your un-resting occupations? Will your snug dwellings, your gay clothing, and your downy beds, give freshness to the stiffened joints, or remove the disease which hath got a lodgment in your marrow and in your bones? Will a crowded board, and the full flow of jovial mirth, and beauty's wreathed smile, and beauty's dulcet voice, charm back to a crazy dwelling the ardours and graces of youth? Will yellow gold bribe the tongue of memory, and wipe away from

the tablets of the mind the remembrance of former doings? Will wordly goods reach upward to heaven, and bribe the pen of the recording angel, that he should cancel from God's book all vestige of our crimes? or abrogate the eternal love by which sin and sorrow, righteousness and peace are bound together? Once more, ye sons of men, hear me for your honor and your interests' sake; and give ear as you value the love of Christ and the majesty of God. It is as sure as death and destiny, that if you awaken not from this infatuation of custom and pleasure, at the calls of God your Saviour, the habitations of dismal cruelty, endless days and nights of sorrow, shall be your doom. O! could I lift the curtain which shrouds eternity from the eye of time, and disclose the lazar-house of eternal death, what sleeper of you would not start at the chaos of commingled grief?—EDWARD IRVING.

GROWING IN GRACE.—I was considering how it was, that so many who were once filled with love, are now weak and faint. And the case is plain: the invariable rule of God's proceeding is "From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath." Hence, it is impossible that any should retain what they receive, without improving it. Add to this, that the more we have received, the more of care and labor is required, the more watchfulness and prayer, the more circumspection and earnestness in all manner of conversation. Is it any wonder, then, that they who forget this, should soon lose what they had received?—WESLEY.

PRIDE is as loud a beggar as want, and a great deal more saucy. When you have bought one fine thing, you must buy ten more that your appearance may be all of a piece; but it is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy that which will follow it.—BENJ. FRANKLIN.

FATE OF THE APOSTLES.

Do you complain of hardships? See how the apostles fared. Do you think you ought to have an easy time in old age, and die surrounded by weeping friends? Read the fate of the apostles. Job says of the wicked, "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave." David says "There are no bonds in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they flayed like other men."

But the apostles, those holy men of God, not only endured bitter persecutions though life, but the most of them met with a violent death.

St. Matthew is supposed to have suffered martyrdom, or been put to death by the sword at a city in Ethiopia.

St. Mark was dragged through the streets of Alexandria, in Egypt, till he expired.

St. Luke was hanged upon an olive tree in Greece.

St. John was put into a cauldron of boiling oil at Rome, and escaped death. He afterwards died a natural death at Ephesus, in Asia.

St. James the Great was beheaded at Jerusalem.

St. James was thrown from a pinnacle or wing of the temple, and then beaten to death with a fuller's club.

St. Philip was hanged up against a pillar at Heirapolis, a city of Phrygia.

St. Bartholomew was flayed alive by the command of a barbarous king.

St. Andrew was bound to a cross, whence he preached to the people till he expired.

St. Thomas was run through the body by a lance, at Coromandel, in the East Indies.

St. Jude was shot to death with arrows.

St. Simeon Zelotes was crucified in Persia.

St. Mathias was first stoned and then beheaded.

Be temperate in all things.

WESLEYAN METHODISM.

WE are confident that we shall do our readers a favor in presenting to them the following article, which we take from the *North British Review*, an able journal of Presbyterian proclivities. It breathes a commendable spirit of liberality. We hope that some, at least, who read it may be stirred up to imitate the ceaseless activity of the founder of Methodism in doing good. Who, like him will consecrate themselves fully to the Lord? There never was a greater demand for LABORERS in the Lord's vineyard than at the present time. Reader, will you go to work for God?—Ed.

In the year 1785, well nigh half a century after the rise of Methodism, a sapient society in London discussed, for three nights in succession, this question: "Have the Methodists done most good or evil?" The disputants do not appear to have been either a company of free-thinkers, or a set of frolicsome and reckless young men. It seems to have been a grave and earnest affair. Thomas Olivers, of whom Southey, in the *Life of Wesley*, gives such an interesting sketch, joined the society to be present at the debate, and his speech on the occasion was published long afterwards in the form of a pamphlet. How the question was decided we do not know; nor is it of any consequence. It is the discussion, not the decision, of the question that is at all curious. That serious men should at that date have made this a subject of prolonged debate, is not a little remarkable. We cannot but think that, in our own day, Methodism is better understood and better appreciated. Looking at its extensive labours at home and abroad, and estimating—if it can be estimated—the value of its services to the human race, we might smile at, but should never think of discussing, the question which the London sages so laboriously

debated. Doubtless, there are still whole classes of men who would promptly give their vote against Methodism. Infidels would do so; so would Papists; so would the enemies and revilers of evangelical religion; and so, we fear, would many who consider themselves zealous Christians in that church which the Wesleys loved so well and treated so tenderly. We are told by John Wesley, that up till the time when he commenced field-preaching, he thought it "almost a sin to save souls out of a church;" so there are some who seem to think that it is almost a sin—if, indeed, it be not an impossibility—to save souls out of the Church of England; and that it is both almost and altogether a sin to detach them from her communion. But among intelligent and earnest Protestants, who will, of course, treat such pretensions with derision, there can, we imagine, be only one opinion as to the debt which the world owes to Methodism. That debt we cordially acknowledge, without qualification or reserve. We do not say, of course, that we are prepared to subscribe all its dogmas, or to approve of all its ecclesiastical regulations. It might be easy enough to find things in the Wesleyan creed and organization to which we should be disposed to take exception; but this does not hinder us from expressing our hearty admiration of the zeal and devotedness with which Methodism has prosecuted the great work of promoting the best interests of mankind.

Our readers will have no difficulty in discerning, that the special ground of our esteem for this branch of the Church of Christ is the amount of good which it has done to the souls of men. Indeed, it is only when we look at man as an immortal being, and take eternity into our reckoning, that we can duly appreciate the services of Wesleyan Methodism. We cheerfully admit that it claims our respect and gratitude upon other grounds. It has done much to elevate and civilize the lower orders of society in England and elsewhere, and thus to diffuse elements of order

and stability through our social system. By its efforts multitudes in heathen lands, who, a few years ago, were debased and brutal savages, are now "sitting clothed, and in their right mind." It has produced many men of distinguished talent, and the literature emanating from its book-room, has neither been scanty in amount nor contemptible in quality. But we strongly feel that Wesleyan Methodism would be unfairly treated if it were tried by such standards of judgments as these. For however great may have been the material, or social, or intellectual benefits flowing from its labours, these were rather the incidental accompaniments of the Christianity which it sought to diffuse than the direct object of its efforts and aims. If it were the main business of a church to polish and refine human society, to add extensively to the stock of general literature, to maintain a body of dignified, well-bred, and scholarly ecclesiastics, or even to frame an orthodox creed, and construct symmetrical systems of divinity, and exhibit a stately and harmonious development of correct ecclesiastical order, we might probably be of opinion that Methodism must retire from competition with some other denominations. But it was not any of these things which it set before it as "its leading object. "Your business is to save souls," was Wesley's pointed and oft-repeated admonition to his preachers. And if this be, in truth, the primary and principal mission of the Church of Christ, then we cannot but regard Methodism as having, from the first, done the great work of the Church vigorously and well. And the more adequately we realize the incalculable value of immortal souls, the higher will be our estimate of all that Wesleyanism has done, and is still doing for their welfare.

It is not necessary that we should affirm that the erection of the Wesleyan Institute was the very best thing that could have occurred in England at the time when it arose,—that it was better, for example, than would have been an

extensive revival of true religion in the Establishment, or better than if some one or more of the Non-conformist bodies had taken the place and performed the part which fell to Wesley and his coadjutors. But, if the religious condition of the Church was such as to call for supplementary efforts for the Christianization of the people, and if none of the other ecclesiastical systems afforded them, then we are surely not only at liberty, but bound to rejoice in the rise of Methodism, and to look with complacency upon its progress.

The annals of Methodism form a curious chapter in the ecclesiastical history of England. The reign of the second George is a singularly dreary and uninviting period to contemplate, both as respects the political, and social, and religious, character of the nation. Corruption rioted in all the public departments of the state; a withering Socinianism infested the Church, and, as a consequence, gross immorality and avowed irreligion widely prevailed. Nor did evangelical religion fare much better among the Dissenters in England than in the Established Church. The fervent piety of the early Non-conformists had grievously declined; and many of the ministers had lapsed, or were fast lapsing, into a virtual and practical, if not an open and professed Socinianism, and many of the people into utter ungodliness. It was at the time when the gloom seemed to be deepening all around, and every source of illumination becoming hopelessly obscured, that a light dawned at Oxford, which, faint and struggling at first, soon shed its rays into the surrounding darkness, and ultimately did not a little to dispel it.

The Wesleys sprang from a good stock. The parents had been educated as Puritans, though they subsequently "conformed." The Father—the rector of Epworth—was a diligent and conscientious minister. The mother—like so many mothers of eminent men—was remarkable for strong sense, high principle, deep piety, uncommon natural talent, energy, and force of character.

It is easy to prophecy after the event ; but one feels disposed to say, that the sons of such a woman could hardly turn out mere ordinary men.

Under deep religious convictions John and Charles Wesley, with three or four kindred spirits, formed at Oxford about one hundred and thirty years ago, what was called, in derision, the "Holy Club," and they were nicknamed "Methodists." Braving the storm of ridicule,—that most formidable of all modes of assault against educated young men,—they resolutely held on their course. Prominent even then, as ever after, was the distinctive aim of Wesley, to which we have before adverted. And, as their work went on, the broad and placid surface of ecclesiastical routine was stirred ; the waters were put in motion, and though there might be here and there, a turbid eddy visible, yet even the wildest rush of the torrent was infinitely preferable to the sluggishness and stagnation which reigned before. The Wesleys and Whitfield were soon surrounded by listening thousands, many of them men for whose souls no one had hitherto cared, and on whose ears now fell, for the first time, the warnings and offers of the Gospel. Church dignitaries fretted and fumed at these disorderly proceedings ; though they might have remembered that, as Wesley says, "one pretty remarkable precedent of field-preaching" is to be found in the Sermon on the Mount. But with all their reverence for the Church, these fervid evangelists were not to be driven from their labour of love, even by a bishop's frown. "You have no business here," said the Bishop of Bristol to Wesley, "you are not commissioned to preach in this diocese." "My Lord," said Wesley, "my business on earth is to do what good I can. Wherever, therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay so long as I think so. At present I think I can do most good here, therefore here I stay." The pulpits were generally shut against them ; but this, instead of silencing, only drove them the more to preach in the open air, where tens of

thousands listened to their message, who never would have entered within the walls of a church to hear it.

But the frown of the regular clergy, was far from being the only or the most formidable opposition, which the early Methodists had to encounter. They were violently persecuted,—and the narrative of these persecutions is one of the strangest chapters in their history. It is sad to think that, in a Christian land, those who were preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, and who could have no other aim or object than the good of their hearers, should be assailed and put in peril of their lives by fierce and brutal mobs, composed of men and women who had themselves been baptised into the Christian Church, and who called themselves Christians. We read, till we are absolutely sickened with the details, of Methodist preachers being hustled, pelted with stones and filth, dragged by the hair of the head through the streets, and trampled bleeding in the mire ; of men and women plundered and maltreated ; of soldiers sentenced, one to receive two hundred, and another five hundred lashes, for attending a Methodist meeting, *when off duty*, etc., etc. We might fill pages with the hideous recitals, and yet the worst would remain to be told. No honourable mind can learn, without indignation and disgust, that these abominable atrocities were, in many cases, openly encouraged by the gentry and the clergy ; not unfrequently by some of both these orders who were in the Commission of the Peace, and occasionally by some of *both* these orders, who were at the moment in a state of intoxication. "We find and present," said an English jury, when receiving—or rather when throwing out—the depositions of some of the sufferers, "We find and present Charles Wesley to be a person of ill-fame, a vagabond and a common disturber of his Majesty's peace, and we pray he may be transported !"

When scenes like these occurred in England, one cannot be surprised to

read of men and women present at a Methodist meeting in Ireland, being "beaten without mercy;" the preacher being knocked down, "one thrusting a stick into his mouth, another tramping upon his face, swearing that he would 'tread the Holy Ghost out of him,' etc., etc. It is pleasing to us, as North Britons, to think that though Wesley might occasionally have to complain of a Scottish congregation, "which seemed to know everything and to feel nothing," no similar proceedings disgraced our Presbyterian country. Meanwhile, fed continually by the untiring labours of its founder and the preachers appointed by him, and organized by the sagacity and administrative talent which so pre-eminently characterised him, the system of Methodism began to take shape and consistency. Wesley was not content, like Whitefield, simply to Christianize great multitudes of men. He would not leave the "babes in Christ" to walk alone, or find support to their tottering steps wherever they could; whether from the clergy, or in the chance fellowship of private Christians. He surrounded each of them with suitable counsel, and provided needful superintendence,—thus linking the several parts of the mechanism together by a strong yet flexible chain. With a zeal which burned like a fire, and consumed every personal feeling of reluctance or self-indulgence; with a courage which braved the most appalling dangers; with a determination which bore him right onward over obstacles which would have staggered the timid and repulsed the feeble; with a capacity for work which hardly knew weariness or claimed repose, and a capacity for administration, which moulded with plastic skill the rough materials with which he had to deal, into form and symmetry; with a heaven-inspired devotedness which breathed the spirit of his Divine Master,—“My meat is to do the will of my Father, and to finish His work;” and with a band of ardent coadjutors, whom he raised up, or rather whom God raised up, to second his efforts and to share his toils;

and above all, with the blessings of the Most High upon his and their labours, Wesley soon had thousands belonging to his societies, and calling themselves without scruple by the once despised name of Methodists,

But we are to keep it full in view, that in all this, John Wesley never intended to establish a separate ecclesiastical community, or to detach his converts from the Church of England. This pregnant and remarkable fact should at least exempt him from the imputation of ambitiously aiming at making himself a name as the founder of a sect. But it deserves careful consideration on many other grounds. His resolute and tenacious clinging to the Established Church, and his desire to frame his own institute—or rather to regulate his *societies*—so as to give scope to this strong attachment, and harmonize, if possible, with this fond adherence, materially affected the constitution of the Wesleyan system, and modified its course. Indeed, the relation of Wesley and Wesleyanism to the Church of England, is one of the departments of this subject which deserve special attention. As to Wesley himself, it is certain that, amid obloquy and insults heaped upon him for half a century, and fierce opposition to his efforts for the salvation of souls, he cherished an undying love for the Church, and was most unwilling to become, or to be called, a separatist. No man was more tender of her reputation or more anxious for her welfare. No man with a spirit so high as Wesley's, and, as has been sometimes alleged, so imperious and impatient of contradiction, could, unless animated with profound reverence and affection, have borne the treatment which he had to endure from his mother church and her clergy, without being driven into hostility and hatred. Towards her, at least, he largely manifested that charity which “suffereth long and is kind,” which “envieth not, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things,

endureth all things;" and, in this respect as in so many others, his mantle has, to a wonderful extent, fallen upon his successors. Even in the state of separation, into which the Church did so much to *force* them to enter, they have cherished towards her, feelings not merely of forbearance, but of kindness and good-will, which have been but coldly acknowledged and but scantily reciprocated.

We remarked that Wesley's stanch adherence to the Church had an important bearing upon the constitution of his societies. It followed from it that Methodism, as it came from the hands of its founder, was not properly a *Church*, but a *society within a Church*; not a distinct and complete ecclesiastical institute, but an auxiliary, or supplement, or appendage, to the national institute already existing. Thus, he admonishes his preachers to attend the Church at least two Sundays every month, and denies that the service of the Methodists is "public worship," in such a sense as to supersede the Church service. "It presupposes public prayer, like the sermons at the University." "If the people put ours in place of the Church service, we *hurt* them that stay with us, and *ruin* them that leave us." In harmony with these views, so frequently and forcibly expressed, was the constant declaration of Wesley, that his preachers were mere laymen, having no right to administer the sacraments, or to assume the designation of ministers, or clergy, or the title of *reverend*.

From all this it follows that the Wesleyan system was not framed after what was in reality—or even after what appeared to its founder to be—the New Testament model of a Church, just because it was not designed to be a Church at all. It was constructed piece-meal, as experience required, and as new emergencies called for new provisions. The Conference, the District, and Quarterly, and Leaders' Meetings, the Circuit and Superintendent, the Class and its Leader, Itinerancy and Lay Preaching,—these and other parts of the vast

machinery of Methodism, were instituted, not primarily or professedly, because Scripture expressly prescribed them as necessary component parts of, and as together constituting, the external economy of a Church of Christ, but because they were deemed important auxiliaries, and useful arrangements in carrying on, *in the bosom of the Church of England*, the great work of converting sinners, and building up believers in their most holy faith. Hence it occurs, that intelligent and candid Wesleyans, like the biographer of Dr. Bunting, freely admit that "Methodists do not profess to rest their ecclesiastical policy upon any *jus divinum*."—P. 84, *note*. It is interesting to observe how, in spite of Wesley's fond predilections, and strong prejudices, and resolute struggles, and firm will, and sovereign authority, his societies were gradually falling, even in his own day, into a distinctive ecclesiastical mould, and admitted an organization which paved the way for a separate denominational existence. Some lament that he did not bind his societies indissolubly to the Church: we can only marvel at the tenacity with which he clung to her. What was anticipated by others, and dreaded by himself, occurred soon after his death. Yet so reluctant were many, even then, formally to withdraw from the Establishment, that we find, in the life of Dr. Bunting, that when he was on probation in the Macclesfield Circuit, 1803, "service during church hours not having been yet introduced into the Methodist Chapel, he was able frequently to attend the vigorous ministry of Mr. Horne"—an Episcopal minister—"and he communicated occasionally at his church."

Ere we pass from the Methodism of Wesley's day, and the career of that extraordinary man, we have a few additional remarks to offer. We have seen that Wesley did not owe his success, in any measure, to the exhibition of a new church, claiming to be more scriptural and complete in its constitution than the existing Establishment.

Nor did it flow from the promulgation of new doctrines; although so obsolete had the old doctrines become in many parishes, that we read of the people, in one place, engaging in high debate as to what religion the preacher (Wesley) was of, some averring that he was a Quaker, others insisting that he was an Anabaptist, till a village oracle solved the problem and settled the controversy, by pronouncing him to be a Presbyterian Papist.

Nor did Wesley attract men to him by speaking smooth things, and crying, "Peace, peace," while there was no peace. He and his fellow-laborers proclaimed the total depravity of the natural man, and the absolute necessity of the great and thorough spiritual change called conversion, and offered to their hearers a free and present salvation through an all-sufficient Saviour. Under God, we ascribe Wesley's success, *instrumentally*, to that noble characteristic which pre-eminently distinguished him, and which has distinguished all great men, and been productive of all great achievements, the characteristic of *hard work*. It was not by the magic of genius that he won his triumphs. Universally, indeed—at least the exceptions are marvellously few—it has been by strenuous, persevering toil—by *sheer hard work*—that even great men have achieved great results.

So it was with Wesley. When we read his journal and letters, we discover the secret of the spread of Methodism, in so far as it depended upon human instrumentality. For example, under the date of Friday—not *Sunday*, be it observed—the 11th July 1765, when he was in his sixty-third year, we have this record, "Preached at five; again at nine, in the new house at Stokesley; came to Gainsborough a little before twelve, and preached immediately; then rode on to Whitby, and preached at seven." Writing from Dumfries, on June 1st 1790, he says, "I doubt I shall not recover my strength till I use the noble medicine, preaching in the morning." Well may Mr. Bunting exclaim, "To think of an early morning preach-

ing"—i. e., at five A. M.—"curing the ailments of a man in the eighty-eighth year of his age!" All the pages at our disposal might be filled with similar illustrations of this splendid capacity for work.

And these labours of Wesley and his confreres were carried on amid many outward discomforts. We have referred to the persecutions which they endured, but they had other hardships to encounter. "Brother Nelson," said Wesley, one morning about three o'clock, to his companion, as they lay on the floor, where they had lain every night for near three weeks, one of them having a great coat for a pillow, and the other "Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament;" "Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer, I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but one side." Then look at Mr. Thomas Taylor, paying 3s. a week for room, fire, and attendance in Glasgow, often telling the landlady not to provide anything for dinner, dressing himself a little before noon, and walking out, then coming in to his "hungry room with a hungry belly," thus making her think that he had dined out, and so saving his credit. We read of an entry in the society book of a certain city to this effect, "7s. 6d. for turning the assistant preacher's coat to make it fit the second preacher." In the Bradford Circuit book 1770, the whole annual income of the preacher for food, clothes, books, and all other necessities, *for himself and his family*, is stated to be less than L. 33. Assuredly it could not be for filthy lucre that *any* man, educated or not, could engage in a work of which the wages amounted to such a pittance as this. These circumstances made the hard work of the early Methodist preachers harder still. Yet we find Wesley labouring after the fashion now indicated, from day to day, and from year to year, through more than half a century. It is truly a noble spectacle to contemplate, such a long lifetime of toil, expended in such a cause. We must not, of course, say that it absolutely *deserved* success, but

we do say that it was the most likely of all things to obtain it.

And when treating of this subject, we may observe that the example of Wesley has been extensively followed by his successors. No one, indeed, will affirm that they have universally or generally manifested a zeal and assiduity equal to his. Had they done so, there would scarcely, we believe, have been at this moment, a man, woman, or child, in England, ignorant of the way of salvation. This, however, was not to be expected. Men like Wesley are not so rife. But there is ample evidence of the possession by others of an admirable aptitude for work. "My circuit," wrote John Bennet in 1750, "is one hundred and fifty miles in two weeks, during which time I preach thirty-four times, besides meeting the societies and visiting the sick." Half a century later, "Brother Solomon Ashton" describes his *walks* and labours in the Lancaster circuit. "Eighty-two miles and eleven sermons the first week; forty-three miles and nine sermons the second," and so on. "This," he adds, "was my first month's work on foot. The fatigue of walking and talking, rain by day, damp beds by night, etc., have caused me to suffer very much in health." During the two years which young Bunting spent in the Oldham circuit, "he preached six hundred and twenty-eight times in his own circuit, and twenty-two times out of it." In his four years of probation, "he preached thirteen hundred and forty-eight times." We are told of an old gentleman, still surviving, who "walked with Adam Clarke, during the three years of his residence in London, six thousand miles, heard him preach nine hundred sermons (eight hundred and ninety-eight of which were from different texts)." Work like this carried on for a long course of years, and over the whole empire, could not fail, by the blessing of God, to be extensively successful.

In sketching, however rapidly, the history of Methodism, one loves to linger upon the character and career of

Wesley. He lived so long and bulked so large, that it is not easy to lose sight of him. Fettered as he was by his devoted allegiance to the Church of England, hampered and hindered as was his rare talent for organising, by the fear of invading existing ecclesiastical authority, yet impelled irresistibly onwards by his ardent zeal for the conversion of sinners, and his anxious concern for the growth in grace of his converts, this great evangelist went resolutely on, doing most energetically the work to which he felt himself called, preaching the Gospel, tending and training his spiritual children, and providing for the oversight and government of his rapidly multiplying societies. We follow his footsteps with unflagging interest for upwards of sixty years, from the days of the "godly club" at Oxford, onwards to the time when, in 1790, he presided over his last Conference, and when the circuits in the British dominions numbered 119, served by 313 preachers, and comprising 77,000 members; and, in addition to these, there were 97 circuits, 198 preachers, and 43,000 members in the United States. With what feelings must the venerable Wesley have contemplated the prodigious results of his apostolic labours! Before another Conference, he had entered into his rest and reward; and when *at length* he rested from his labours, of few men that ever lived could it be said with so much truth and emphasis, that "his works do follow him." "There may come a time," said Southey, some forty years ago, "when the name of Wesley will be more generally known, and in remoter regions of the globe, than that of Frederic or of Catherine." Assuredly that time has already come.

Wesley passed away; but the vast mechanism which he had constructed did not fall in pieces or come to a stand. The hopes of enemies, and the fears of friends, were alike disappointed. Another Wesley, indeed, could not be found, nor could any one stand in the same relation to the societies which he had formed. It was impossible, there

fore, to perpetuate such an autocracy as he had exercised, and if it had been possible, it would not have been desirable. But the Conference which had met annually for almost half a century, through which, and in whose name, Wesley had governed the societies, and which he had formally designated, by the legal Deed of Declaration, his successors in power, now firmly grasped—if we must not say the *sceptre*—at least the *helm*, and the good ship moved steadily forward in her course. She did not, indeed, escape some stiff gales, which now and then rent a sail, and snapped a spar, and on more than one occasion severely tested the sea-worthiness of the vessel, but she bore bravely on; and though she sometimes reeled and staggered in the storm, she never foundered, nor, though once or twice very near the breakers, did she ever run aground.

In looking at Methodism after the death of Wesley, we miss, of course, the grand central figure—the master-spirit which had so long directed all its movements; and the men whom he left behind must have missed him much more. They would feel every hour the want of his sagacity and authority in counsel, his skill and promptitude in administration, his energy and unquenchable ardour in action. But it was not merely that his seat of supremacy was empty, and that the blank was sorely felt. There were grave questions, which a respectful deference to his feelings and authority had kept in abeyance while he lived, and, we were about to say, *reigned*, which now urgently clamoured for a settlement. Were the tens of thousands who had grown up in the bosom of Methodist families, or had been converted by Methodist preachers, both of which classes had scarcely known, and had never valued any other religious services than those held in Methodist chapels—were they still to profess a nominal adherence to the Church of England, and were they to deny themselves, or suffer themselves to be deprived of sealing ordinances within

what they could not but esteem their *own* communion? They had in the Wesleyan preachers the only ministers of the Gospel from whom they had ever derived spiritual benefit; were they to go to others, of whom they knew nothing, and who might possibly refuse and repel them, for the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper? They had hitherto yielded to Mr. Wesley's wishes; but was the glaring anomaly to continue? In short, was Wesleyan Methodism to be a *church*, or was it to be a mere appendage or supplement to the English Establishment? The moment was critical, the question vital. Warm and wide-spread discussion took place as to whether the sacraments should be administered in Wesleyan chapels, and by Wesleyan preachers; and it required all the cautious wisdom of the Conference to prevent an explosion. The danger was averted by the adoption of a prudent "Plan of Pacification," which permitted, under certain regulations, the sacraments to be administered; and thus was Wesleyan Methodism launched as a distinct and independent branch of the Church of Christ.

THE cruelest magistrates seldom are very bloody or persecuting, but when a worldly or proud clergy stirs them up to it. And all the heresies that ever sprang up in the church, do seem to have done less harm on one side, than by pretences of unity, order and government, they have done on the other. O how unspeakably great have been, and still are the church's, sufferings, by a proud and worldly clergy, and by mens abuse of pretended learning and authority.—BAXTER.

It is certainly a paradox that we are naturally desirous of long life, and yet unwilling to be old.

It is one of the worst of errors to suppose that there is another path of safety beside that of duty.

REVIVALS.

BY THE EDITOR.

A REVIVAL of pure religion is the work of God. Whatever human instrumentalities may be employed in its promotion, so far as the work is genuine, it is *Divine*. Every real convert is born of the *Spirit*. There may be proselytes where the influence of the Holy Ghost is scarcely recognized or felt. But when souls are really saved, and fitted for Heaven, there God works in a supernatural manner. His Spirit melts, subdues and changes sinful hearts. He influences man to yield—working in him to will—and then enables him to carry out the good resolutions he has formed, working in him to do of his good pleasure. Would you see a revival. Then be filled with the *Spirit*. Just as certainly as you are, souls will be brought to Christ through your efforts. But in order to do this you must,

First. Consecrate yourself fully to God.

The Spirit never dwells in a divided heart. There may be zeal where self reigns. And zeal may bustle about, build churches and parsonages, endow colleges, and make a display before the world, but it alone cannot save souls. The present age does not need more activity so much as it needs more deadness to the world, more of a spirit of unreserved consecration to God, his truth, and his cause. How few are there who *listen always to the voice of God*, who dare stand by his truth when it is unpopular to do so? How few are there so fully given up to God as to act up to their own convictions of right at all times and in all places? Does not expediency, instead of conviction of right, control the actions of most professing Christians, and ministers of the Gospel? So long as this is the case, revivals of religion will be superficial in their nature, and limited in their extent.

Second. You must lead a life of self-denial.

He who would live in the Spirit must mortify self. He who lives in sensual indulgence need not expect to have any considerable measure of the Spirit of God. "Sensual, not having the Spirit," is a brief but truthful description of too many who come around the altars, and occupy the pulpits of Christian churches. Ministers may defend with ram-

parts of subtle logic and plausible sophistry, the pleasure ground on which the church and the world meet in in loving embrace, but he who would have the Spirit of God, must not come down upon the plains of Ono.

PREACHING.

THE London *Christian Observer*, on the question, "Why preaching does so little good," asks:

"Is it not because, while the world has apparently come nearer to the Church, the Church has really drawn nearer to the world? It seems as if a mutual approximation had taken place, and a mutual sacrifice had been made; but in truth the sacrifice has been chiefly on one side, and that on the wrong side. Things which are, perhaps, not unlawful in themselves, have become a snare to the great mass of professors of religion. The world has smiled upon them, and they have too often been fascinated."

Some instances of the inconsistency of Christians, such as taking great pains to attend a fashionable concert of music one evening, and the next deterred by fear of taking cold from attending church or lecture close at their doors, are cited, and then the writer proceeds:

"And when the world sees such conduct on the part of Christian neighbors, what other inference can they be expected to draw from it than that professing Christians do not believe what they profess; that their religion is but a cloak, which hangs loosely upon them, and which they are glad at any time to cast off, in order that they may enjoy the pleasures of sense? This is one great cause which serves to neutralize the effect of the most earnest and faithful ministrations of the Christian Sabbath and sanctuary. It is doubted whether the minister means what he says, when he denounces the love of the world, and of the things of the world; because they who profess the greatest attachment to his ministry are so little affected by his preaching. And if he who thus preaches begins himself to descend to any kind of frivolities, then he may preach like an angel, without ever converting one sinner from the error of his ways."

TOUCHING INCIDENT.

SOME two or three weeks since, a little girl in West Newton, predicted her own death.

When apparently in her usual health, she was suddenly taken with croup, and died the same night, exclaiming just before her death: "Do you see the angels over there? they have come for me." The following communication from a valued correspondent narrates an incident of a similar touching and remarkable character, and equally well authenticated:—*Boston Journal*.

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained praise."—PSALM viii. 2.

Jennie Sharp, only daughter of Elisha B. Pratt, Esq., of this city, died Feb. 3, 1857, at the age of three and a half years, after a short illness. A few weeks since she arose early in the morning and got into her mother's bed, saying "Mother, I dreamed that I saw God, and he asked me to come and live with Him." "What did you say to Him, my child?" "I told him, I do not want to leave my dear father and mother, and my dear little brothers." Her father then asked her, "What did God say then?" "He said," she replied, "You may stay with them a little longer." A short time before her death, she whispered to one of her playmates, then visiting at the house, "I am going to be an Angel." It was an affecting sight when this beautiful creature lay in her coffin—surrounded by flowers—her small hands clasped on her bosom—and her little chair by its side, in which her fond parents would never see her more.

Hast thou gone up to God on the wings of the morning,
Ere sin cast a shadow, or grief woke a sigh—
While fresh to thy young eye the world was just
dawning,

And bright shone this beautiful dome of the sky?

Didst thou see Him, whom heavenly hosts are ador-
ing—

Whom Sages and Saints longed to see—but in vain—
Who veil'd his own glory, our lost race restoring,
And rose from the dead in his glory again?

God is love. He came down to the little one's dwell-
ing,

And he spake in a still small voice to her ear,
As He spake on the Mount—when the storm had
ceased swelling,

And the earthquake and fire—to Elijah, the seer.

For the Angels of childhood are always beholding
The face of our Father in Heaven, we know—
And the words which she breath'd a great truth were
unfolding—

"I shall soon be an Angel!"—And is it not so?

Weep no more! that thy lovely and lov'd one is taken
Like rending the chords of the heart though it
seem,—

For the death-robe of earth laid aside and forsaken,
She is happy with Him whom she saw in her dream!

FREE METHODIST CONVENTION.

The first session of the Eastern Convention of the Free Methodist Church was held in Rushford, Alleghany Co. N. Y. It was composed of fourteen lay delegates, and fourteen preachers. The district chairmen were authorized to employ ten other preachers. Still all the places that called for preachers could not be supplied. Men full of faith and the Holy Ghost, who seek not their own ease or profit, but the salvation of souls, are in great demand. Though in its infancy, the Free Methodist Church could profitably employ a hundred such men. In the work of soul-saving—in trying to reach the masses, and lead them by the way of the Cross to Heaven, there is too little competition among the "leading denominations" of our country.

There appears to be a very general tendency to display. Fine edifices, fine musical instruments, fine singing, and fine sermons, are all the rage. Be it ever the business of the Free Methodists to preach the Gospel to the poor, and hold out to all the self-denying doctrines of Christ.

THE WEEKLY PAPER.

The propriety of starting one at present was very fully discussed. The want of having a medium in which the many misrepresentations of our actions and motives can be corrected, is very generally felt. But the financial risk is considerable.

A weekly paper at the present time would almost unavoidably involve us in controversy. Those who are leaving no means untried to destroy us, have put so many weapons into our hands, that might be employed to our advantage and their discomfiture, that the temptation to use them would, we fear, be irresistible. But to beget and foster a controversial spirit among the people of God would be a great calamity. What we most need is, a general, deep, and thorough revival of religion. A rehearsal of the wrongs we have suffered, and of the misdeeds of others, will not be very likely to save souls. If we stick to this, the

Lord will be our defence. *Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.* So we look upon the worst of encouragement to start a weekly paper at this time, as providential. As soon as the Lord puts it into the hearts of those who have the means to supply what is necessary to place the enterprise upon a safe basis, a weekly paper will, we have no doubt, be commenced. From eight hundred to a thousand dollars are needed to buy type, press, and other fixtures. A committee consisting of A. W. Perry, D. E. Tyler, George Worthington, G. W. Holmes, J. Handley, Rev. A. F. Curry, Rev. J. W. Reddy, W. H. Doyle, E. S. Woodruff, Rev. T. W. Read, Charles Denny, and Seth M. Woodruff, was appointed to raise the above amount for this purpose. The pilgrims of the west were invited to participate in this enterprise.

THE APPOINTMENTS

Were made by a committee of five laymen and five preachers, as follows:

GENESSEE DISTRICT.—Chairman. Holley—to be supplied. Albion—Rev. L. Stiles, Kendall, M. N. Downing. Rochester and Chili—Daniel M. Sinclair. Buffalo, Thirteenth Street—James Mathews. Second Free Methodist Church—supplied by S. K. J. Chesbrough and others, Cary and Shelby, J. B. Freeland. Asbury—to be supplied. Carlton and Yates—supplied by A. C. Leonard. Alden—to be supplied. Pekin, Tonawanda—Porter and Wilson, Russell Wilcox, Judah Mitchell, Arthur King, and Isaac Williams.

ALLEGHANY DISTRICT.—A. F. Curry, Chairman. Alleghany—A. F. Curry. Wales and Springbrook—Ephraim Herrick. West Falls—supplied by Levi Metcalf. East Otto—supplied by Otis Bacon. Rushford—J. W. Reddy. Gowanda and Collins—to be supplied. Chemung—T. W. Read, Henry W. Spears. Perry—A. A. Phelps. Cadiz—supplied by A. B. Mathewson.

A. A. Phelps was ordained deacon. The preachers went to their appointments with, we believe, the determination to have revivals of religion. May the Great Head of the Church abundantly bless their labors for the salvation of souls.

MIRACULOUS GIFTS.

AMONG many other things charged upon those who, in western New York, are trying

to "walk in the light," is that of claiming the exercise of miraculous powers or gifts in the theological sense of the term. We know of no one who makes any such pretensions. In our judgment, the best way to meet such charges, is with silence. The attempt to repel them clothes them with an importance to which they are not entitled. But the late convention thought otherwise. They judged that it was best to make the effort to set ourselves right before the public. So they passed the following resolution, which was introduced by Rev. L. STILES.

"Resolved. That we, as individual members of this convention, do not believe that miraculous gifts in the commonly received theological sense of the term, are for us as Christians at the present day, to be obtained or exercised; nor do we believe that the gifts of healing, of working miracles, of prophecy of discerning of spirits, of divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, as miraculous gifts or powers, are any of them attainable by any of the children of God at the present day."

A great deal of the misunderstanding on this subject has arisen from a misconception of the meaning of the word miracle, in the theological sense of the term. Any special and marked interposition of God in behalf of his children, is denominated by some a miracle. It may be wonderful, but in the theological sense of the term it is not miraculous.

A miracle, in the theological sense of the term, is defined by Watson to be "An effect or event contrary to the established constitution or cause of things, or a sensible suspension or controlment of, or deviation from, the known laws of nature, wrought either by the immediate act, or by the concurrence, or by the permission of God, for the proof or evidence of some particular doctrine, or in attestation of the authority of some particular person."

The canon of Scripture is complete. We are not to look for any new revelations of the will of God. Hence no miracle will be performed for the confirmation of any new doctrines. As mighty wonders will yet be wrought as any of which our earth has heretofore been the theatre—the dead shall be raised, and the living changed, the earth and all its works shall be burned up, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, but these will not be miracles, in a theological sense. In

the philosophic sense, "A miracle is an effect which does not follow from any of the regular laws of nature, or which is inconsistent with some known law of it, or contrary to the settled constitution and cause of things."

It must be obvious to every careful reader of the Bible, that God designs that miracles should, in this sense, be continued in his church till the end of time.

THE REV. E. BOWEN, D. D., has just sent us a very able article on the subject of "SPIRITUAL GIFTS." It was not received in time for this number, but will be found in our next. This article alone is worth the subscription price of the magazine for a year.

THE EARNEST CHRISTIAN.

With the present number closes the first volume of the *Earnest Christian*. We would record our gratitude to God for the assistance He has so graciously afforded us. Its publication was commenced without subscribers, and without contributors, but, as we believed, at the call of God. The success has, so far, exceeded our most sanguine anticipations. But few ministers have acted as agents, or subscribed for themselves. On the contrary many have used all their influence to prevent its circulation. But by the blessing of the Lord it has lived. From the first the subscription list has been steadily increasing. Our friends have done nobly. They have our warmest thanks. We trust they will not be weary in well doing. Will you not at once send your subscription and get a neighbor or friend to subscribe also? We ought to have at least twice as many subscribers for the next volume. If our friends will work as hard for us for one month as we have for them the past twelve, it will be done. Do you say, "It shall be done?" Then set to work forthwith to send us three or four times as many subscribers from your post-office, as have taken the *Earnest Christian* there the past year.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS.

We expect several new, pious, and able contributors for the next volume. We have no desire to present a list of eminent names merely for show. A person may write well on many subjects, and yet write very poorly on experimental religion. A clear understanding of the subject is the first qualification to

good writing. Then a deep feeling of its importance will enable one of even small literary pretensions to write to edification. He who sees clearly and feels deeply, will generally write well. But however skillful one may be in the construction of sentences, if he write merely for the sake of writing, it will generally be to but little purpose. Hence the reason why so many titled divines write so poorly, if at all on experimental piety. They are not at home. They understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. They give mere theories. But theories do not feed hungry souls. We must have a deep, heartfelt experience to lead others into the high way of holiness.

What we have seen and felt,
With confidence we tell.

Our readers may expect to find in our pages the contributions of those who are in earnest. Encourage them and encourage us, by giving their productions a wide circulation. One can write just as easily, and generally a good deal better for ten thousand, than for a few hundred. We shall do our utmost to make the second volume of the *Earnest Christian* still better than the first has been, and many of our subscribers have thought that a single number was worth the subscription price for a whole year.

RENEW.

Do it at once. Do not put it off. Do not wait for an agent to call upon you. Send on your dollars. It will not take you five minutes to write a letter, and the postage will only be three cents. So do not wait for any body. We wish to know just as soon as possible, how many to publish for the next volume. Be particular to write your name, post office, county, and state, very plain. Be your own agent. And if you can get any of your neighbors to subscribe, send on for them.

PAY IN ADVANCE.

For our own safety, as well as for the benefit of our subscribers, we shall be obliged to adhere strictly to advance payment. If you have not a dollar at hand, you had better borrow it of some one near to you than owe it to us at a distance. We endeavor to "pay as we go," but to do this we must have payment in advance from our subscribers.

SPECIMEN NUMBERS.

If any of our readers will send us the Post Office address of any persons, that will probably subscribe another year for the *Earnest Christian*, we will send them a specimen number gratis. Send on the names at once.

