

# THE EARNEST CHRISTIAN

AND

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### CHARITY.

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God is just. His long-suffering and his mercy are infinite, but these do not, in any degree, detract from his justice. If he takes some of the human family to dwell with himself, 'mid scenes of purity and bliss such as imagination never conceived; and consigns others to the pit of woe, to

Regions of sorrow, doleful shades,  
Where peace and rest can never dwell,

It will be for reasons so striking that even the guilty sufferers can not complain, but every mouth will be stopped and every tongue will confess to the justice of the Divine procedure. Men go to Heaven because they have sought and obtained the qualities that adapt them for the society of the holy; others go to hell because they have fitted themselves for the companionship of proud and fallen spirits. They are unlike in destiny because they are unlike in character. A Christian in the popular sense of the term, and a Christian in the Bible sense of the term, bear but little resemblance to each other. The cut of their garments may be alike—the forms they use may be the same; but in many essential particulars they are as far apart as heaven and hell. The one is not of the world, the other is of the world. The Christian approved of the world has virtues—and virtues of an attractive and showy character. The true follower of Jesus is dead unto the world, and his graces are based upon the complete annihilation of self, and are such

as the natural man never did, and never can exhibit, or appreciate.

It is astonishing how many good qualities one may possess and still miss of gaining Heaven. Our Saviour declares that, on the day of judgment, *MANY* will say unto him, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* They may have done all that they professed,—the Saviour does not question that—but this does not secure them from the dreadful sentence, "*Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire!*"

A few weeks since while riding on the cars, I opened my Greek Testament and read a few verses of the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians. With the words I was perfectly familiar. I could repeat them from memory. But at this time there was a power in them such as before I had never perceived. I trembled and wept, and groaned; and at the first opportunity fell upon my face and besought the Lord to bestow this indispensable grace upon me in all its fullness. Since then scarcely a day has passed that I have not read this chapter, and, with earnest supplications, followed after charity. This is the great want of the church—the great want of the times—the great want of the very best Christians of the present day. But let us not mistake and think that we have charity when we have only its semblance. There is no other Christian grace so fully described in the Bible as this, and there is no one concerning which so general a misapprehension exists.

Let us look at its nature as described by the pen of inspiration,

