

# THE EARNEST CHRISTIAN AND GOLDEN RULE.

VOL. XXIV.

SEPTEMBER, 1872.

No. 3.

## GO FORWARD.

BY REV. B. T. ROBERTS.

God speaks in nature to every one who has ears to hear. His works proclaim his wisdom and his power. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."—Ps. xix. 1. So that if we go forth at night and gaze upon the stars, with which the sky is studded, the sight is not merely beautiful, it is declarative of the majesty of Him by whose power the worlds were made, and by whose providence they are sustained. All through the Bible, the great facts of nature are employed to illustrate and enforce the great truths which relate to our spiritual and eternal welfare.—Would we see a vivid representation of the onward march of a real Christian? We are told to watch the first streak of morning light that appears in the east, and note its steady progress, until it culminates in the dazzling splendors of the midday sun. *The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*—Prov. iv. 18.

The change from midnight darkness to daylight is very great. So is the change from being a sinner to being a justified believer in Jesus. But this change, great as it is, does not imply

such a completion of the work of grace, as precludes any farther advancement. Indeed what has been done, is but the beginning of a transformation which is to go on, perhaps forever. *But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*—2 Cor. iii. 18.

The context shows plainly that this change from one blessed state to another still more blessed, is to take place here. A contrast is drawn between Jews and Christians. There is a veil upon the heart of the Jews when they read Moses. This veil is taken away from those who have become Christians. There is nothing to intercept the vision. *We all with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord.* The result of this clearness of vision is an ever-progressing experience. The Scriptures are unfolded more and more to the mind;—we see new meanings in old familiar texts; and thus growing in the knowledge of the Lord, we keep growing in grace to the end of our pilgrimage.

1. *To retain the grace we have, it is necessary to seek more.* This is true, no matter what degree of grace a person may enjoy. Conviction will soon die away, unless he who is under conviction goes forward and seeks pardon. Indifference will take the place of concern.

*The grace of justification can be kept only by going on in our experience.*—This will be apparent if we consider the nature of justification. It is the opposite of condemnation. No person can be both justified and condemned at the same time. See Rom. viii. 1. But any one is condemned who refuses to obey plain commands of the Bible.—*This is the will of God even your sanctification.*—1 Thess. iv. 3. If one refuses to do the will of God, from that moment he ceases to be justified. But he who is not aiming at sanctification is not doing the will of God; therefore he is not justified.

*Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*—Mat. v. 48. No one is obeying this command who is not going forward in his experience.\* This text does not require that we should attain to the perfection of God; but assigns his perfection as the reason why we should possess a complete, symmetrical, Christian character.

*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*—2 Pet. iii. 18. Let us grow ever so fast, or ever so long, we cannot outgrow this command. It follows us clear to the end of life. The tree that ceases to grow begins to decay. Corruption begins where growth stops.

2. *Eminent saints have become such by a long and steady growth in grace.* Conversion is an instantaneous work. It takes God but a very short time to sanctify a soul fully. But ripeness of Christian experience is attained only by passing through the storms and sunshine to which time exposes us. Abraham was a believer all his days. But it was when he was ninety-nine years old, that the Lord appeared to him and said

unto him: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect."

Paul's conversion was miraculous. Afterwards he was favored with visions and revelations, and was caught up to paradise. Still we hear him saying: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii. 13, 14. This was the motto of the Apostle. He did not live on the experience of the past. His food was not old manna.

Do not think of standing still. The route to Heaven is not over a tread-mill. You may travel ever so fast upon a tread-mill—it will not take you to the skies. If you have a bright experience in the past, thank God for it; but do not live in the past, however pleasant it has been. Make each day an improvement upon the former. Let there be a sensible growth in the Divine life from year to year. Men of business keep on acquiring while business is prosperous. Let your business be to lay up treasures in Heaven—to become better and better fitted for the society above.

Take God for your leader, and then, no matter where your route lies, go forward. Do not be afraid to follow anywhere He leads. If seas lie before you, as you set foot in them, they will part and open for you a way. Difficulties must yield to one who goes resolutely forward. Be determined to be a saint, and you will be one. Be not discouraged at any progress, however slow, but see to it that you are making steady advances in the Divine life.

## THE FAITHFUL MAN.

BY REV. JOHN FETTERHOFF.

To him nothing is impossible, *nothing* difficult; whether to bear or undertake. He walks every day with his Maker; and talks with him familiarly, and lives ever in heaven, and sees all earthly things beneath him. When he goes into converse with God, he wears not his own clothes; but takes them still out of the rich wardrobe of his Redeemer, and then boldly presses in, and claims a blessing. The celestial spirits do not scorn his company. He deals in these worldly affairs as a stranger, and has his heart ever at home in heaven. Without the approval of God he dares do nothing; and with it he dares do any thing. His war is perpetual—without a truce, without intermission; but his victory certain. The shield that he ever bears can not be pierced. If his hand be wounded, yet his heart is safe; if he is tripped, he is seldom foiled: never vanquished. He has clean hands and a pure soul, fit for God to dwell in; all the rooms are set apart for his holiness. If iniquity calls at the door and craves entertainment, it meets with a repulse.

He is allied so high, that he dare call God Father, his Saviour brother, heaven his patrimony; and he thinks it no presumption to trust to the attendance of angels. His understanding is enlightened with beams of divine truth; God has acquainted him with his will, and what he knows he dare confess. If torments, or death, stand betwixt him and Christ, he condemns them.

His experiments have drawn forth rules of confidence, which he dares oppose against all the fears of distrust. He thinks it safe to look to God to do again what he has already done, and what he has promised. What hath God given which he cannot give?—What have others suffered which he may not be enabled to endure?

Is he threatened banishment, he sees the dear evangelist in the isle of Patmos. Is he in danger of being cut to

pieces, he sees Isaac under the saw. Drowning, he sees Jonah diving in the living gulf. Burning, he sees the three children in the hot furnace, walking in company with Jesus. Of wild beasts, he sees Daniel in the sealed den, amidst his terrible companions. Of being struck, he sees the first martyr (Stephen) under a shower of stones, in sight of heaven. He emulates their pain, their strength, their glory.

He wearies not himself with cares; for he knows he lives not of his own cost, or idly omitting means—but not using them without diffidence. In the midst of ill humors and amazements, his countenance changes not; for he knows both whom he has trusted, and whither death can take him. He is not so sure he shall die, as that he shall be restored, and thus out-faceth death with his resurrection.

Finally he is rich in works, busy in obedience, cheerful and unmarred in expectation, in common opinion miserable, but in true judgment more than a man.

If you would be converted, you must understand *from what* you must turn: and this is, in a word, from your carnal self, which is the end of all the unconverted; from the flesh, that would be pleased before God, and would still be enticing you; from the world, that is the bait; and from the devil, that is the angler for souls, and the deceiver. And so from all known and wilful sins.

Next, you must know *to what* you must turn; and that is, to God as your end; to Christ as the way to the Father: to holiness as the way appointed you by Christ; and to the use of all the helps and means of grace afforded you by the Lord.

Lastly, you must know *by what* you must turn; and that is by Christ, as the only Redeemer and Intercessor; and by the Holy Ghost, as the Sanctifier; and by the word, as his instrument or means; and by faith and repentance, as the means and duties on your part to be performed. All this is of necessity.—*Baxter.*



## LIFE-WORK.

BY ISAAC M. SEE.

Do not be waiting for your life-work. It is already before you in abundant quantity. It may be not to your taste, but do it, and do it well. It may be out of your spiritual sphere, but for that very reason may be more important to prepare you for what is to come. In no case let any one be looking into the future for life-work. Your life may be very short.

The dear Lord is calling all His people to the work of His vineyard. He has different offices for the different peculiarities of His chosen. He is the Leader, the King, and Head over all things to His church. He has not placed you where you are, or permitted you to be placed there, without a plan. The plan in which He hath abounded toward you in all wisdom and prudence, has designed *two things in your present field.*

1. *Your own education in some one or more points of experience, or of practice, or of outside work.* He trains the people whom He has fully saved, by life lessons; that they may be more competent for their peculiar work, or may learn how to rest every case upon Himself. It is well to be doing all we can in our present field. It is always out of course to be cultivating any sort of spirit which seeks the marvelous. If God wants you to do anything, He will not work you up into a fever about it. He will lead you on from step to step, by consecutive grades until you shall be fit for His service in the particular form before you. Or, if He bring you at once into some new position, it will be with the sweet calmness of a trusting soul. He will not give you "the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Stand ready, beloved, to be equipped for any work; or to be led through the dark valley, and to go up higher. We know you do if you are fully saved. That is your choice,—to be, to do, to go, as God pleaseth. You have now no will of

your own. That is your happiness;—God's will—whether it be in work, or suffering, or glory. How blessed such a willing mind and such an education!

2. *The Lord has also designed, in your present field, something good for others.* He has not saved you to have your life thrown away on the air.—Where He has sent you some one will be helped. His cause will be advanced. His truth will be spread abroad. Let God use you, and your impress, or His impress through you, will be made upon present and coming generations. It may be only an aching head to which you are called to minister—but the Lord may show you there an aching heart, waiting for the testimony of his grace: or He may, in that very scene of pain, open to you some effectual door for the declaration of the healing virtues of the fountain.

It is blessed to know that now, having received his full salvation, we can never go anywhere without fruit-bearing. We may not see much of the fruit, but our happy souls, our cheerful voices, our saved powers will be so engaged for God, that the sorrowing will be comforted, the lost will be saved, the doubters will become fewer, the sick will be glad; and especially the Lord's people shall be raised into simpler faith, and higher Christian life.

When God fully saves men and women, He has them where they can be used for His wonderful works. AND THEY ARE ALREADY IN THEIR LIFE-WORK.

CHRISTIANITY.—Pure genuine, undiluted Christianity, though a self-denying, humbling religion, gives more than it takes away; it gives a peace which the world, with all its promises and blandishments, cannot give. It gives humility, which, far from prohibiting the exercise of talents, only encourages their consideration of Him who gave them; with that prostration of heart, and self-renouncing spirit, which will lead the possessor to exclaim, "Who hath made me to differ? What have I, that I have not received?"



DEACON GRAY'S EXAMPLE  
AND ITS INFLUENCE.

BY MRS. G. W. FRENCH.

People thought Deacon Gray a very good man.

He would talk to the Sabbath-school children, fill the minister's place when it chanced to be left vacant, and his "temperance talks" would have done no discredit to any popular lecturer.

More than a score of years he has been a deacon, receiving all the honors of that office, being supposed to possess all the required qualifications.

He had a son who trifled with the demon of the wine cup, until it brought shame and misery upon the family, took away his money, his health, finally his life. People pitied the father, spoke of his kindness to the son's stricken family.

Still there was something wrong about Deacon Gray—something that condemned him in the minds of a very few, that puzzled a few more, but something that people generally knew nothing about.

"Why is Deacon Gray never nominated for any town office?"

"Dishonest at heart," was the abrupt and only reply that could be obtained.

By and by a little more of the secret was made public.

"What made Deacon Gray appear so strangely this morning?" said one man to another, as they came away from the Deacon's after vainly attempting to transact some business with him.

"The fume of brandy was sufficiently strong to furnish me an explanation."

"You do not mean that the Deacon was under the influence of liquor!"

"That is just what I meant, and it is nothing new for him."

"Nothing new for Deacon Gray to be intoxicated! You must be mistaken. Why I should just as readily believe any minister guilty of such a charge."

"Well whether you believe it or not it is true; and I tell you Deacon Gray is the biggest hypocrite I ever knew.—

Just think of his 'temperance talks,' and all the time he was keeping liquor in his cellar, using it every day. Why how do you suppose his son came to be a drunkard? By tasting his father's 'sling' when a mere child, then stealing the accursed stuff to gratify the appetite he could not control.

"He was ruined before he left home—ruined by his own father,—and just think how people pitied the deacon! If they had only known who was to blame—"

"Why did you not tell them?"

"I hardly know. Only a few of us knew about it; and something, I really cannot tell what, has kept us from betraying him."

"He is a *Christian* and a *deacon* you know!"

"A fine specimen of them all I guess."

"No, I do not think so."

"There are some who are *naturally* honest; but their religion, as they call it, makes them no better. I used to think there was something good about religion, but I have seen so many hypocrites that I have made up my mind it is all a humbug."

It is wrong to condemn Christianity because some who profess to follow Christ go astray; but the world's people will do it, and while they do, it is our duty to watch closely lest we too cause some honest heart to become skeptical.

Few of us are guilty of Deacon Gray's fault,—but nearly all have some pet sin that may be a stumbling-block in the way of some one whose soul is as precious in the sight of God as our own.

Christianity is an individual work; the grace of God converts soul by soul. Each soul is a world in which a creation peculiar to itself must be accomplished. The Church is but the assembly of all the souls in which this work is wrought, and who are now united because they have but "one spirit, one Lord, one Father."

## PROVIDENCE AND SIN.

BY REV. G. W. MARCELLUS.

It has given us some little trouble to determine satisfactorily to our own minds, how far "providence is concerned about sin." Providence morally considered, is the conduct of the first cause towards the moral world: giving direction to, and superintending moral action. *Moral action*, implies a moral agent; but, an action is rendered moral chiefly by two things: First, That it is voluntary. Second, That it has respect to some rule of right; which determines it to be good or evil. "Moral good or evil," says Locke, "is the conformity or disagreement of our voluntary actions to some law, whereby good or evil is drawn upon us from the will or power of the law Maker."

Now we come to notice the point in hand; which is, to see how far providence advances with a moral act; and prompts to the committing of said act if it be good; or to the restraining from it if it be found evil. We cannot take our position either with the "rigid Predestinarian" or with the wild Epicurean. The former teaches "that God *absolutely* predestinates sin, and *necessarily* brings it about to accomplish his absolute decrees of eternally saving some through Christ, and eternally damning all the rest of mankind through Adam. The latter teaches "that God does not at all concern himself about our sins, but leaves us to go on as we please, and as chance directs." Both these sentiments are erroneous: but the latter is preferable, from the fact that it is better to "represent God as doing *nothing*, than as doing *wickedness*." The truth lies between these two sentiments: *i. e.*, God in his providence is *peculiarly concerned about sin*. This we shall see from the following considerations. 1. *That God in his providence does morally hinder or check the committing of any internal sin.* This he has done in two ways. 1st. By forbidding sin in his written word; which clearly points out moral good and moral evil. "All

Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

2d. By preserving the powers of soul and body, in that state in which we are able to reason upon, and judge of moral actions; and by enduing us with moral liberty whereby we may abstain from the committing of sin. Added to this, he has supplied us with a variety of motives, and helps to resist every solicitation to evil. These motives are as numerous as the threatenings and promises. They consist in exhortations and warnings; the strivings of the Holy Spirit, in admonitions of conscience; the counsels of and directions given by holy men; in the influence of holy angels; in the tears and blood of Jesus; in the many prudential and organized means which God has employed to keep his children from sin, and to strengthen them in the performance of duty. We deduce from the above the following conclusion: That, God in his providence has adjusted events to moral ends. He so arranges circumstances that they may serve, together with restraining grace, and the light of the Holy Spirit to bias the mind over on the side of moral rectitude.

2. *God frequently hinders the outward commission of sin, though it has been committed in the intention.* This is done by special acts of providence.—God took special care of Lot by sending two angels, who smote the wicked men of Sodom with blindness, so they could do him no harm; he hindered Pharaoh from enslaving the Israelites, by drowning him in the red sea; he hindered Balaam from cursing Israel, by crushing his foot, and causing the dumb ass to rebuke him; Jeroboam was also hindered from hurting "the man of God" who "came out of Judah," and "stood by the altar," and cried against it; such was his rage, that he put forth his hand saying: "*Lay hold on him.*" "And his hand, which he put forth against him dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him." Herod was hindered from destroying the babe of Beth-

lehem, by the warning of Joseph to flee to Egypt.

The Scriptures, as well as ancient and modern history, abound with accounts of the "ordinary and extraordinary interpositions of divine providence," both in the detection of wickedness, and in the preservation of those whom the wicked intended to destroy. We need to go no further into history than to notice, "the Monitor and Merrimack" engaged in the late war. The "Merrimack" freighted with her engines of death, which consisted of eight nine-inch Dahlgren guns, and four seven and a half-inch Brooks' rifle guns, started in her work of devastation and ruin. Such was her success at first, that her officers were filled with pride and courage, and vainly supposed her equal for any and all emergencies. But, in the providence of God, her race though swift was short. On the next morning after she began her fearful work, what was discovered but a little insignificant something, (which by derision was called a "yankee cheese-box") steaming directly up by her side. The conflict began, which lasted four hours. The Merrimack exhausted her skill, but every shot "rolled harmless from the turret of the Monitor." The commander of the Merrimack, chagrined "at the audacity of his opponent, strove to dash upon her and thus crush and sink her." This also failed. Meantime the Merrimack received a shot which passed through her iron coat. The fearful monster, boiling with rage, gathered "momentum" and sought to drive her iron beak through the side of her opponent. This had the sad effect of shivering her own timbers; thus she was compelled to leave the field of strife sadly crippled, and greatly mortified. This great national victory called forth gratitude and thanksgiving unto God from every true and loyal American heart. Truly "the genius and science of Ericson had triumphed." But, supposing he had been compelled to go to foreign lands for aid and support, and thus the project had been delayed? We might suppose many other contin-

gencies; such as improper material, a discrepancy in the mechanical work, or had the mighty ocean been at "high sea" and thus detained her passage. — These nor any other hinderances were permitted to come to pass, for the God of providence superintended the whole matter in such a manner, as to save a favored nation from a fearful defeat, and give them a permanent and glorious victory.

Thus it is, we believe, that God does in innumerable instances, in His own time and manner hinder or check the outward commission of sin, though it has been committed in the intention. It is done according to his infinite wisdom, and for the perfection of His purposes. There are other points of interest connected with the subject that we will notice (providence permitting) at some future time.

#### KEEPING THE HEART.

Your care and diligence in keeping your heart will prove *one of the best evidences of your sincerity*. I know no external act of religion that distinguishes the sound from the unsound professor. It is wonderful to consider how far hypocrites go in all external duties, how plausibly they can order the outward man, hiding all their indecencies from the observation of the world. But then, they take no heed in their hearts; they are not in secret, what they appear to be in public; and before this trial no hypocrite can stand. It is confessed, they may in a fit of terror, under a pang upon a death-bed, cry, out of the wickedness of their hearts; but alas, there is no heed to be given to those extorted complaints: no credit is to be given to the testimony of one upon the rack, because it may be supposed that the extremity of the torture may make him say anything to be eased. But if self-jelousy, care, and watchfulness be the daily working and frame of thy heart, it strongly argues your sincerity; for what but the sense of a divine eye, what but the real hatred of sin as sin, could put thee upon heartily performing those sa-



cred duties which lie out of the observation of all creatures? If, then, it be a desirable thing in thine eyes to have a fair testimony of thine integrity, and to know of a truth that thou fearest God, then study thy heart, watch thy heart, keep thy heart.

### GRACE SUFFICIENT.

BY AUSTIN Q. HAGERMAN.

"My grace is sufficient for thee."

Oh, most inestimable gem of the Lord's own giving, are these words: "My grace is sufficient for thee!" They were spoken in the heart of a suffering apostle, and by him delivered to us, as a priceless jewel of comforting truth, a cheering cordial to sustain many buffeted hearts.

What weight, and fullness, and heavenly lustre are in these six words!—What delightful, exalting nearness of friendship and heart-touching tenderness of love they manifest: "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*"

That word translated "grace" is very full of meaning. It signifies "favor," "free gift," "friendship," "enjoyment," "reward." The Lord's favor and friendship, and reward shall suffice us, without trying to eke them out with the favor of men, the friendship of the world, and the reward of earthly fame and riches. "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*"

How many tried, afflicted ones these words have comforted! They have comforted, and they do comfort my own heart. Though disabled for a good while in body, yet the Lord's favor enables my soul to be strong in His strength. Abiding trust in Him gladdens me with the joy of the Lord. One need not repine under affliction, if through it he finds that "the power of Christ" rests upon him.

O suffering, tried one, whosoever thou art, whosoever thou mayst be, canst thou not consent to lay aside all thy broken reeds, and leave all the deceitful sources of temporal happiness, and try earnestly to pray in spirit and

in truth, for faith, and love, and power; to fully believe and quietly rest in these words of the Lord: "*My grace is sufficient for THEE?*"

### TWO WAYS.

BY JOHN HARDEN.

The young love to meet for amusement. It is highly important that the young be brought up to love strictly moral principles. Unless this is the case, they will be led on from one class of gatherings to another, until they will at last be found in the ball room or theatre.

The course we pursue in after life depends greatly on the use we make of time in our youth. If we are industrious, and improve every moment as we should, we will be sure to make a bright mark in the world. But if we are idlers, and murder the golden moments, we need never expect to accomplish any thing.

The great future all lays before us. In it we may become good and useful, or we can become bad and disgraceful.

Parents should labor for the elevation of their children, to the highest standard of solid, practical piety. Every effort should be made; all the openings of providence should be heeded, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, filled with the mind that was in Christ.

Not a child in this country should be allowed to go on the stage of life without having attained all the knowledge for him.

The laws are in his favor. All nature is open for his admission as a student.

Then let the young reject the simple, heart-sickening amusements of the day, and seek pleasure in knowledge.

Happy is the man who is content to traverse this ocean to the haven of rest, without ging into the wretched diving-bells of his own fancies. There are depths, but depths are for God.—Eph. i. 5.

## SPIRITUAL POWER.

BY MRS. JANETTE OSMAN.

"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."—Acts i. 8.

There is much said and written about God's people being endued with the power they had on the day of Pentecost. There is a great deal of praying for it. What is that power, and what is the preparation necessary to receive it?

It was preceded by the work of entire consecration, and heart purity. We read of the deficiencies in the Christian character of the disciples, prior to this. We read of their striving by the way which should be greatest; of their rejoicing that devils were subject to them; and when Jesus was taken by a wicked mob, Peter was ready to use carnal weapons, and all of the disciples forsook him. They thus manifested unholy ambition, and a lack of love for Christ.

Jesus knew that his disciples were not prepared to do and suffer in His cause, until the work of purity was wrought in their hearts. Hence they were commanded "To tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high."

With all the experience they had from the teachings and life of Christ, it took ten days of consecration, and humiliation, in earnest prayer, to prepare the way for the descent of the Holy Ghost. Jesus was just as willing to send the promise of the Father the first day, as the tenth, had the disciples been ready to receive it. And it is just as true now with his followers that are seeking this baptism of power. Jesus wants to give it to them just as soon as they can use it to his glory. But in how many instances there remains the ten days' work of preparation from which they shrink.

God sees so much in an unsanctified heart, that would mar his work, that he cannot trust such souls with greater power. What they need is heart purity; such as the disciples received on the day of Pentecost, and then they

will have the power given them to do their work for Jesus.

All are weak and powerless, who have inward foes to contend with.—They think themselves well fortified and guarded; but some sudden provocation, finds them weak and an easy prey to their enemies. We cannot become strong to overcome, until our hearts are so thoroughly cleansed from sin, that when the devil comes he shall find nothing in us,—nothing to respond to his suggestions or temptations. We cannot become powerful in promoting God's cause, until this work is accomplished. Self clamors so for ease, and for the pre-eminence, that we need to be "buried with Christ by baptism into death," to enable us to be strong to take up, and firm to sustain, the consecrated cross.

How much Christians need this baptism of power! Nothing short of this experience will enable us to overcome in these times, when the real cross is ignored, and formality, worldly conformity, and spiritual death, so generally prevail.

We not only need this experience for ourselves, we need it to labor for others. We do not read about failures with the disciples after this day of Pentecost: but everywhere their labors were attended with wonderful success.

This will be true generally of God's people. They must, they will succeed. But nothing can be substituted for this thorough work in the heart. We may have natural or acquired ability, it will only please the ear. God alone can reach the heart; and in proportion as we are united to God, and are endued with power from on high, will we be successful in winning souls. I pray the Lord to get his people under conviction more and more, for the complete work of salvation to be wrought in their hearts.

Multitudes are thronging the road to death and hell: the world presents many attractions; the devil is skillful in his work of ruin: and shall God's people be weak and powerless?

God forbid! May they seek the

anointing that abideth, that shall make them mighty through God, in pulling down the strongholds of sin.

#### AT LAST.

At last!

The night is at an end,  
The dawn comes softly up,  
Clear as its own clear dew;  
And weeping has gone out,  
To let in only songs  
And everlasting joy;  
At last!—Amen!

At last!

The Prince of Life has come,  
The Church is glorified,  
The sleepers have awoken,  
The living have been changed;  
Death has at last been slain,  
And the grave spoiled for ever!  
At last!—Amen!

At last!

The curse is swept away,  
The serpent-trail effaced;  
The desert smiles with green,  
And blossoms like the rose.  
'Tis more than Eden now,  
Earth has become as heaven!  
At last!—Amen!

At last!

Satan is bound in chains;  
The Church's ancient foe,  
Old enemy of Christ,  
Has fallen, with all his hosts;  
And Babylon the Great  
Has sunk to rise no more!  
At last!—Amen!

At last!

Israel sits down in peace;  
Jerusalem awakes,  
Her King at length has come,  
Messiah reigns in power;  
The heavens rejoice and sing,  
And earth once more is free!  
At last!—Amen! —Bonar.

Jesus is called the "arm of the Lord." He is his working arm, the arm which dispenses all his blessings. How blessed to have this arm to lean upon! still more blessed to know that this arm is beneath us—still more blessed to find his arm around us, clasping us to his bosom, and saying, "This is my beloved, in whom I, too, am well pleased."

#### PERVERSENESS.

"And ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward."—Jude ii.

The Church had "lost her youth" when such things could be written of her.

For that very reason the picture is a truer likeness of the Church now.

These later books of the New Testament, less attractive perhaps, less beautiful, than the earlier, are even more life-like and more vocal to us. The scene represented is that which we look upon: the world has come in upon the Church, and the result is that mixed, that motley, that patchwork society, which we scarcely know by which of the two names, Church, or world, to designate.

In such times the Old Testament starts again into life, with its characters so typical, so representative, so everlasting, therefore, as beacons and lighthouses, warning us off perilous shoals, and disclosing to us those invisible rocks upon which fallen human nature, because it is such, will make, because it has made, shipwreck.

St. Jude brings together in this verse three such characters—Cain, Balaam, Korah. Each one is a deep study. Cain, the type of jealousy; whether in its more obvious forms, or its subtler—more especially in that form in which it becomes a jealousy of graces, the grudging to another of higher attainment in goodness, of a clearer or more assured standing in the favour and approval of the All-Holy. "Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother: and wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

Korah, type of insubordination, especially spiritual insubordination. Not satisfied with being a Levite, he must be a priest: not contented to be separated from the congregation to minister, he must seek the priesthood also; nay, cares not, excluded himself, if he annihilate the office, level all ranks, and say to the priest and the mediator, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the



congregation are holy, every one of them." Such is the sin, not so much of him who goes forth to preach Christ without what we may call a legal ordination, but rather of him who sets aside the Divine Priest, of whom Aaron was the type, and will rush in, where Angels fear to tread, into the very Holy of Holies, refusing the one Atonement, spurning the one Mediation, carrying his own censor, not kindled from the one, one Altar of Sacrifice, but at the common hearth, the profane kitchen fire, of human nature, of the self-will, of weak wavering purpose, of poor sin-stained, sin-enfeebled devotion. This is that "gainsaying of Korah," "denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ," which St. Jude places side by side with "the way of Cain" and with "the error of Balaam."

Balaam—strange man! Strange as a man; stranger far as a ministerial, a prophetic, an inspired man! Strange, monitory, awful person! Set there in full view, on the highway of the ages, every feature, every lineament, portrayed to the life, to bid every one who hath an ear—most of all, men, like him, employed, called, ordained, used, of God—to hear and fear!

St. Jude's words concerning him—explained by St. Peter's, explained also by St. John's—will give us the key to this recondite, this mysterious, this locked-up character; a character studied for ages, and never exhausted.

"Woe unto them," these corrupt, corrupting Churchmen, "for they . . . ran greedily." The figure is strong—"They were poured forth"—like a reservoir breaking its banks, and carrying havoc and desolation into the peaceful slumbering valley below. "Poured out," the Psalmist says, "like water that runneth apace." Such is the emblem of a man who has abandoned himself to some "heart's lust," and is now "let to follow his own imagination."

In this case the abandonment follows a law. Though a license, it is a license of imitation. Sin itself runs in ruts and grooves; when it counts itself most free, it is but binding itself by a prece-

dent. These men, self-abandoned and God-abandoned, do but follow "the error of Balaam."

You must not regard "error" as a casual word, to be replaced at pleasure by "mistake," or "deception," or "folly," or "sin." "Error" in Scripture is a strong and a definite form of evil. Certainly it is so here. St. Peter applies the cognate verb for "error" to this same case and character. He says, "They have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam." The "error" of Balaam is a straying or wandering from a straight, direct, forthright way. That is the essence of Balaam's sin. "Thy way," God said to him, "is perverse before me." Crooked, twisted, wayward, unprincipled—that is the mind, that is the character, that is the course, the career, the life, of the modern as of the ancient son of Beor.

That it was, as St. Jude adds, an error "for reward;" that Balaam, as St. Peter adds, "*loved his wages*" (the word is the same), and that those "wages" were "wages of unrighteousness;" that the particular motive was covetousness, that "lust of the eye," "unsatisfied with getting," which St. John makes one of the three contents of "the world"—this is an accident of the character. Every perverseness, every crookedness, every "error" (in the Scripture sense of "error"), has, of course, its perverting, distorting, misleading object—but that "reward" of the "error," that motive of the straying, that twisting of the self-will, may be gold, may be rank, may be popularity, may be some idol of inordinate affection, of love, or lust: for the meaner, the more mundane and grovelling spirit, there is the "house full of silver and gold;" for the loftier soul, there is the promise of name and fame, present or posthumous; for the gentler and lovelier nature, there is the hope of some sweet, some delicious affection, which shall people a home or a heart with pleasures, and make earth itself a paradise and a heaven. The Scripture word for "covetousness" holds all these. It is a

word expressing, in the most general way, the lust of having: but that having may be of any sort: wherever there is a greed, there is a covetousness, whether it be the greed of wealth, or the greed of honor, or the greed of pleasure.—Scripture says that “covetousness” is “idolatry;” where there is an idol, whatever its feature, its shape, or its material—where there is some object, it matters not what, occupying, for the moment, God’s throne, which is man’s heart—there is the “reward,” the “wage,” for which Balaam “erred,” left the straight road of principle and sought the tortuous by-path of a crooked self-will.

We have grasped the character, we have almost drawn the moral, when we have thus apprehended the meaning of the one word “error.” It is the synonym of “perverseness.” It is the opposite of rectitude. It is the opposite of that singleness, simplicity, unity of view and aim, which God makes the characteristic of saintliness, the condition of progress, of attainment, of grace. “I came out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me.” “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body also shall be full of darkness.” And “if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness”—the darkness of duplicity, of self-deception, of hypocrisy, of the life-lie!

My brethren, in vain were the history of Balaam written in the Bible, read year by year in the Churches, if we leave him as remote, obsolete, unreal, half-imaginary man—if we take no pains to set him “evidently” before our mind’s eye, alike in the brighter and in the darker traits of his character and of his life. He too, unwilling we may be to think it, was a man of like passions as we are: he too had his innocent childhood, his developing youth, his gradually shaping and forming self, his opportunities as well as his trials, his efforts after good as well as his lapses and relapses into evil: he too is—let

the thought have its solemn import and weight—*was, and therefore is, and therefore shall be*: like us, being born, he is still looking for judgment!

Mark then in him, as in a real person, these special points of interest. Place the better first.

Balaam had a religion. Not of Israel, he knew and he worshipped Israel’s God. Like Melchizedek, like Job, like many an unrecorded nameless man (doubtless) scattered here and there on God’s earth, Balaam had received from tradition, or had elaborated for himself, by such arguments as St. Paul deemed sufficient, that belief in “the Eternal Power and Godhead” which marked him off, absolutely, from the world of polytheists and idolaters. To have kept his faith pure, in a God-multiplying, God-corrupting age, was something.

It was more, to be a worshipper of the God thus known. There are men amongst us, in a Christian age, who have a religion indeed, but no worship. Strange, frightful, condemning inconsistency! Not only to “hold the truth in unrighteousness”—overmastering passion, involuntary infirmity, might account for that—but to believe in a God, and not to worship—not even to seek, not even (like lost spirits) to tremble before Him—who shall excuse this? Balaam believed, and therefore worshipped.

You may say, it was an insincere worship. You may say, it is a strange plea for worship to propose us to Balaam’s. I cannot agree with you. Something did come of Balaam’s worship. Balaam would have been a more wicked man still if he had not diligently worshipped.

Look at the history. We are apt to read the Scripture narratives as though the one only question were—was the person in question, on the whole, righteous or wicked? This is not our business. Judgment is God’s. We have to weigh actions, and to estimate consequences, one by one. We hold no such doctrine—we find no encouragement for it in the Bible—as that of *apotheosis* and *apodiabolosis*—one man

all good, another man all evil: and therefore we say even of Balaam, we say it of Pilate, we would say it, if we could, if Scripture gave us any opening for it—perhaps Scripture does give us just one opening for it—even of Judas, “This was right and that was wicked,” leaving it to God to pronounce sentence upon the soul and upon the man.

Balaam had an aspiration. He was not satisfied to be as the wicked. He would at least end well. “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!” The future world was before him—its judgment first, then its eternity—and it was something, it was more than all have, so much as to wish for that heaven “wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Stranger still, Balaam had an inspiration. God dealt with him. God communicated to him of his secrets. “Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said; he hath said, which heard the words of God and knew the knowledge of the Most High; which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open—

“I shall see Him, but not now—

I shall behold Him, but not nigh—

“there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel—

“Alas! who shall live

When God doeth this?

Balaam had a conscience. His conduct, in each particular, was regarded in a conscientious light. A king’s messenger came for him; he must take counsel with God. The answer is unfavorable: God refuses: depart! They return, with larger offers, with more urgent entreaties: even then—though it was wrong to ask leave—he will not go without leave: he persuades himself that he has it: imagining it to be revoked, he will go back: again the voice seems to say, Go with the men: he goes, and there, before disappointed king and sullen or threatening nobles, he bears, again and again, a true and manful testimony, pronounces God’s

benediction upon a foe whom he was summoned to curse, and returns to his far home without the reward: the more his heart was set upon it, the stronger surely the force of that conscience which has triumphed in him to spurn it!

I will dare to say a thing which I doubt not has been in your hearts before I utter it; namely, that a superficial reader, a shallow thinker, or a half-believer, is inclined to justify Balaam, thus far, at the expense of Balaam’s God; to say, If God said, “Go with the men,” how could He afterwards be angry because he went? if the prophet did wrong in going, had not God the Lord (the words, strange as they sound, are in substance in Scripture) first “deceived the prophet?”

We are brought thus into the heart of a great mystery, which nevertheless the Bible bids us face bravely if we cannot solve.

Those words of the prophet Ezekiel, concerning him who comes to God with an idol in his heart, and whom God answers accordingly, enunciate a principle of the divine procedure. He who applies to God for license to do wrong—he who prays to God, not with a frank but with a false heart—he who first resolves, and then consults—he who brings to his prayer for God’s direction a mind made up to disregard it—he who, not satisfied with one plain answer, must come again and yet again to the throne of grace, as though to change the purpose of the Unchangeable, and constrain His sanction for a self-indulgence already forbidden—to such an enquirer God will vouchsafe no further light: rather will He visit with a judicial delusion the soul which sought, which implored, which compelled it: the “word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk thou in it,” shall become a lying word to the man who will have it so: God Himself shall resent (with reverence be it spoken) the insolence which insists upon His permitting the prohibited: at last He Himself shall say, or seem to say, “Go with the men,” and yet His anger shall be kindled because the man went.



We may be shocked, we may be staggered, we may be irritated, by the enunciation of the principle; yet is it not scriptural, is it not experimental, is it not true, is it not just? Would you dare to treat thus any human superior? Would you dare to come and come again to a father, to a master, to a sovereign, for a second answer which shall contradict the first? Would it be good for you that you should be suffered thus to presume? Brother! would it be good for you to be suffered thus to use the mercy-seat of the All-Holy? May there not be, in the deepest inmost hiding-place of the divine counsels, even a purpose of compassion in this mysterious rule, "He that setteth before his face the stumbling-block of his iniquity, and so cometh to enquire, I the Lord will answer him by myself, and let him go his own way, his desire granted, yet a leanness withal in his soul?"

It was thus with Balaam. It was thus with the disobedient prophet, when he allowed the voice of a man to reverse the clear direction received in the ear of his soul from his God. It was thus with King Ahab, when he would have "a prophet of the Lord besides" to get an oracle of confirmation for the lying spirit in his flatterers.—"Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so"—was the sentence, upon an obstinate sinner, of a judicial delusion in the name of the Lord. It shall be thus in the last awful catastrophe of the wilful self-deceivers—they have listened all their life long to the lying spirit; at last "God shall send them strong delusion"—it is the very word of the text, "and energy of error"—"that they shall believe the lie."

The subject has been one of perpetual self-application. It suffered us not to wait for a more formal distribution. Gather up, I pray you, in conclusion, these brief lessons.

1. Rest not in religion. Balaam was religious. You see what came of it. Religion means restraint. Balaam put a restraint upon himself. First he will not go, because God refuses leave.—

Then he will not go, unless he can get leave. Then, when he goes, he will only speak the right word. He keeps to it. He does speak only the right word. He loses all by his religion. He returns a disappointed man; but he has done his duty. He was religious, and he has religiously acted. Yet this same religion, which makes him punctilious as to the letter, has no word for him concerning the spirit. He does not curse, but he teaches Balak now to seduce. Better, ten thousand times, that he had cursed than that he had tempted! But that religion which stopped the malediction suffered the seduction.

What was wanting? Why was it that the religious man was so wicked—that he threw that frightful stumbling-block before Israel—that he died at last among God's enemies, slain, with the five kings of Midian, as the worst, the deadliest foe of God's people, that his name is put between the name of Cain and of Korah, and handed down to all time loaded with a Church's execrations? Why? Because formal religion is not what God asks. Formal religion may tie the hands, may fetter the steps, may gag the mouth: religion does keep many men decent, respectable, conscientious, honored in their generation: but formal religion never touches the heart, never brings the self-will into harmony with the will of God, never cleans the breast, and clears the soul, and cleanses the shrine, for a noble, a confiding, a self-forgetting communion with the unseen; gives no sufficient motive, inspires no available strength, for difficult decisions, for ambiguous turnings, for the self-crucifixions involved in the Cross, for the transformation which qualifies for heaven. For these things—and at any moment of your life these things may be suddenly required of you—for these things, nothing negative will avail you—no mere check, no mere chain, no mere foregoing or refusing: there must be a positive thing for these emergencies; that which Balaam lacked, and therefore came twice for leave; that which Balaam lacked, and therefore went with the princes, by God's per-

mission, yet under God's anger. There must be a positive thing, which formal religion is not; and that positive thing, being interpreted, is the love of God.

2. Finally, "keep yourselves from idols." Oh, it is not easy. So many things look beautiful in God's world—are beautiful—let none gainsay it.—Pretend not, for it is unreal, that the neglect of men, that the contempt of men, that the hatred of men, is intrinsically better than the honor, the admiration, the confidence, the love. Pretend not to like poverty better than riches, or sickness than health, or solitude than society, or isolation of spirit than the love of the lovely. Pretend not to see nothing attractive, nothing admirable, I had almost said nothing divine, in that character which realizes your ideal, in that soul which seems to make God Himself so true to you and so lovely. It is not to a condition of unlovingness that God calls you. Not such was Christ's. God Himself is love. Only this: keep the throne for your God. Let nothing, let no one, sit where He has set His own seat, in the shrine of that soul which is from Him and for Him. Be willing to wait for your consolation. Suffer earth and time to dress themselves for you in sober, sombre, sad apparel. "To exalt duty, and sacrifice inclination"—"to be neither deterred by pain, nor tempted by pleasure; to yield to no pity for one's own hardships and woes; to forbear from fantasies concerning the unequal portions of happiness and misery dealt out in life; to find what there is to do, and forthwith to do it heartily"—such be it to live! And then, in prospect, as, at last, in experience—then, to die shall be gain!—*C. J. Vaughan.*

Love is a universal master; whether clothed in magnificence or poverty, it is a species of Omnipotence. If a man have love in his heart, he may talk in broken language, but it will be eloquence to those who listen. It is a want of surcharge of divine grace in the heart that makes men lean, barren, and unfruitful.

## PREACHING TO CHILDREN.

Is it not our privilege and duty, as preachers of Christ, to do more preaching to children? I think of nothing in my own ministry with so much regret, and so little respect, as I do of my omissions here. We get occupied with great and high subjects that require a handling too heavy and deep for children, and become so foiled of our estimate of what we do, that we call it coming down when we undertake the preaching to children; whereas it is coming up rather; out of the subterranean hells, darkness, intricacies, dungeon-life profundities of old, grown-up sin, to speak to the bright daylight creatures of trust and sweet affinities and easy conviction. And to speak to these fitly, so as not to thrust in Jesus on them as by force, but have him win his own dear way, by his childhood, waiting for his cross, tenderly, purely, and without art—oh how fine, how very precious, the soul equipment it will require of us! I think I see it now clearly: we do not preach well to adults, because we do not preach, or learn how to preach, to children. Jesus did not forget to be a child; but if he had been a child with us, we should probably have missed the sight of him. God's world contains grown-up people and children together: our world contains grown-up people only. And preaching only to these, who are scarcely more than half the total number, it is much as if we were to set our ministry to a preaching only to bachelors. We dry up in this manner, and our thought wizens in a certain pomp of pretence that it is hollow and not gospel. The very certain fact is, that our schools of theology will never make qualified preachers till they discover the existence of children. Let every young man who is going to preach put himself to it, first of all, in that afternoon service we just now spoke of, there to begin a ministry wise enough and rich enough in gospel meaning, to take the heart of children.

Some of us, I know, will say that

they have, alas! too much thinking to do for this other exercise. It puts them to the strain and shapes their habit, and how can they unstring their bow? Yes, brethren, we have all much thinking to do; but if we are up among God's thoughts, it will not strain us to think them, and scarcely more to have ascended the level where they are. Up through all created being and scripture knowledge, we shall be climbing, out of all darkness and obscurity, mounting fast and far toward the light; we shall go steadily over the rough hills of obstruction; we shall ascend the highest peaks to watch for the day; and when we see the east begin to be streaked with gray, the gray changing into purple, and the purple into gold, shall it not be much, that, if we have our children with us, they will see God's light as clearly and be as glad in it as we?—*Horace Bushnell.*

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**SUCCESS.**—My friend, if thou hadst all the artillery of Woolwich trundling at thy back in support of an unjust thing, and infinite bonfires visibly waiting ahead of thee, to blaze centuries long for thy victory on behalf of it, I would advise thee to call a halt, fling down thy baton, and say, "In God's name, no!" Thy "success?" Poor devil, what will thy success amount to? If the thing is unjust, thou hast not succeeded; no, not though bonfires blazed from north to south, and bells rang, and editors wrote leading articles, and the just thing lay trampled out of sight to all mortal eyes an abolished and annihilated thing. Success! In a few years thou wilt be dead and dark—all cold, eyeless, deaf; no blaze of bonfires, ding-dong of bells or leading articles, visible or audible to thee again at all forever. What kind of success is that?—*Carlyle.*

—♦♦♦—  
 Sinners sometimes say they would be Christians if they thought they could "hold out;" but do they ever think of whether they will be able to long "hold out" in the course they are pursuing?

## PERFECTING LOVE TO GOD.

Beloved, there are few of us who know much of the depths of the love of God; our love is shallow, ah, how shallow! Love to God is like a great mountain. The majority of travelers view it from afar, or traverse the valley at its base; a few climb to a halting place on one of its elevated spurs, whence they see a portion of its sublimities; here and there an adventurous traveler climbs a minor peak, and views glacier and alp at closer range; fewest of all are those who scale the topmost pinnacle and tread the virgin snow. So in the Church of God. Every Christian abides under the shadow of divine love; a few enjoy and return that love to a remarkable degree; but there are a few, in this age sadly few, who reach to seraphic love, who ascend into the hill of the Lord, to stand where the eagle's eye hath not seen, and walk the path which the lion's whelp hath never trodden, the high places of complete consecration and ardent self-consuming love. Now, mark you, it may be difficult to ascend so high, but there is one sure route, and only one, which the man must follow who would gain the sacred elevation. It is not the track of his works, nor the path of his own actions, but this, "We love him because he first loved us." John and the apostles confessed that thus they attained their love. For the highest love that ever glowed in human bosom there was no source but this—God first loved that man. Do you not see how this is? The knowledge that God loves me casts out my tormenting dread of God; and when this is expelled, there is room for abounding love to God. As fear goes out, love comes in at the other door. So the more faith in God the more room there is for soul-filling love.

Again, strong faith in God's love brings great enjoyment; our heart is glad, our soul is satisfied with marrow and fatness when we know that the whole heart of God beats towards us as forcibly as if we were the only creatures he had ever made, and his whole



heart were wrapt up in us. This deep enjoyment creates the flaming love of which I have just now spoken.

If the ardent love of some saints often takes the shape of admiration to God, this arises from their familiarity with God, and this familiarity they would never have indulged in, unless they had known that he was their friend. A man could not speak to God as a friend, unless he knew the love that God hath toward him. The more true his knowledge and the more sure, the more close his fellowship.

Brethren beloved, if you know that God has loved you, then you will feel grateful; every doubt will diminish your gratitude, but every grain of faith will increase it. Then, as we advance in grace, love to God in our soul will excite desire after him. Those we love we long to be with; we count the hours that separate us; no place so happy as that in which we enjoy their society. Hence love to God produces a desire to be with him; a desire to be like him, a longing to be with him eternally in heaven, and this breaks us away from worldliness; this keeps us from idolatry, and thus has a most blessedly sanctifying effect upon us, producing that elevated character which is now so rare, but which wherever it exists is powerful for the good of the church and for the glory of God. Oh that we had many in this church who had reached the highest platform of piety. Would to God we had a band of men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. It may help those who aspire to mount high in grace, if they keep in mind that every step they climb they must use the ladder which Jacob saw. The love of God to us is the only way to climb to the love of God.

And now I must spend a minute in putting the truth of my text to the test. I want you not to listen to me so much as to listen to your own hearts, and to God's word a minute, if you are believers. What is it we have been talking about? It is God's love to us. Get the thought into your head a minute; God

loves me—not merely bears with me, thinks of me, feeds me, but loves me. Oh, it is a very sweet thing to feel that we have the love of a dear wife, or a kind husband; and there is much sweetness in the love of a fond child, or a tender mother; but to think that God loves me, this is infinitely better! Who is it that loves you? God, the maker of heaven and earth, the Almighty. All in all, does he love me? Even me? If all men, and all angels, and all the living creatures that are before the throne loved me, it were nothing to this—the Infinite loves me! And who is it that he loves? *Me*. The text saith "us." "We love him because he first loved us." But this is the personal point—he loves me, an insignificant nobody, full of sin—who deserved to be in hell; who loves him so little in return—God loves *me*. Beloved believer, does not this melt you? Does not this fire your soul? I know it does if it is really believed. It must. And how did he love? He loved me so that he gave up his only begotten Son for me, to be nailed to the tree, and made to bleed and die. And what will come of it? Why, because he loved and forgave me—I am on the way to heaven, and within a few months, perhaps days, I shall see his face and sing his praises.

#### SCRIPTURE DEATH-BEDS.

It is remarkable how very few examples of the deaths of the faithful are given us in the New Testament. We have that of Stephen, and that of the penitent thief; we have few, if any, besides. We read that Lazarus was sick and died; we have no particulars of his death. We read of the deaths of John the Baptist and James, but nothing of what they said or did when dying. There is no scriptural account of the deaths of Paul, or Peter, or John. We are told how they lived, how they thought and spake of death; but the last scene of their lives is not described to us by any inspired pen.—*Hambleton*.

## THE MAN WANTED WHEN HE IS GONE.

"Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah; even in his own city."—1 Sam. xxviii. 3.

And yet he was missed—and yet he was wanted.

The world soon resumes its habits after most deaths: for few deaths it even suspends them. Four years after a death—which was the interval here—scarce two or three men in a generation are so much as thought of out of their own immediate circle. We can be dispensed with, we can be replaced, the busiest, the wisest, the greatest of us. There is but one heart, for most men—not one, for very many—in which the void left is permanent. Statesmen, Churchmen, generals, orators, poets, philosophers, of whom we said in the lifetime that the loss would be irreparable—they are gone, and we have borne it: new events have occurred, new ideas have arisen, new combinations and complications of circumstances—at last we feel that the same man restored would be behindhand in his knowledge, would be inappropriate in counsel: give us the living man for the living, and be contented to deck with flowers, or to wet with your tears, the graves of the departed.

How is it, then, that one or two men are not only missed, but wanted again, sorely wanted, when they are gone? How was it, let us ask of God's Word, that this particular prophet, was missed, was wanted, by king and people, when he had been dead four years? Saul, in this crisis of his fate, with the Philistines making war upon him, and God departed and silent, will break his own laws, will undo his own exploits, will expose himself to disgrace and danger by unlawful commerce with necromancers, if he may have but five words with Samuel. And yet their relations in life had been unsatisfactory: their communications, as king and seer, had been closed long before death: the prophet had even given away the throne, had even anointed the successor. There must have been something—we know

that there was something—in that character, which made it everlasting, indestructible, in its influence. In so far as any influence is permanent, it will be found to share these characteristics.

1. The life of Samuel, the character of Samuel, was one all through. There was no break in it. There was no dissolute youth to be patched up by spasms and convulsions of repentance into a grave manhood and a reverend old age. Samuel was not only "lent to the Lord" from his childhood—was not only brought up in a priestly house, amidst sights and sounds of religion: from his infancy he had been religious. When other youths around him were disgusting men with the Lord's offering by the unholy familiarity with which they touched the sacrifices and banded words with the worshippers, he moved amidst holy things holily: he felt it a solemn responsibility to sleep in the precincts of the sanctuary: he was alert and waking when the unknown Voice reached him—ready, when he knew what the Voice was, to answer instantly, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth."

Thus Samuel supplies the counterpart and correction of more exciting experiences. His is the history of a life brought up from childhood in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. "In quietness and in confidence" was that "strength" matured, because there had been no drying up of the first dew of the youth—no loss or forfeiture of original grace—only that early "planting in the courts of the Lord," which "brings forth more fruit in the age," and "shows how true the Lord its strength is."

The grace of Conversion is mighty and wonderful. A sinner turned from the error of his way is the cause of joy in heaven. It is the joy over a recovery from deadly sickness. It is the joy over a restoration from drowning or shipwreck. It is the joy over a lost one found, over a life given back from the dead.

There is but one thing greater. And that is, the unity of a life which has

been all God's from the cradle to the grave. A life that has had no rent in it, and no chasm; and that, not because it was all colorless and passionless and loveless, but for the very opposite reason, that it was all brightness, all zeal, and all devotion.

The terrible saying, "The greater the sinner the greater the saint," is as ignorant as it is immoral. The Law should teach us better, if not the Gospel. Where in the Book of God do we find it written that Conversion ought to be the Church's hope? Blessed be God, His love lies deeper than doctrine, and therefore we trust in His grace with the reparative as with the preventive processes of the spiritual life: but we cannot allow that sin, still less a half-lifetime of sin, is the necessity of His people: we cannot consent to rank higher among Gospel experiences the life that has been reclaimed than the life that has been protected.

The life before us to-day was a unit life; not a life cleft in twain—one half soiled and spotted and stained, the other half washed and cleansed and purified. A life all one—and all God's.

I know that it is idle to address men of mature age as if they could begin afresh and make all things new. It is like preaching in a hospital upon the blessings of a good constitution. We are to-day such as we are. God can justify and sanctify—God Himself cannot unmake the thing that has once been. Still, for humility's sake, for truth's sake, for the Gospel's sake, let us feel, let us sorrowfully feel this—that God's highest, most durable, most beautiful works on earth are for the unit lives, for those virgin souls which early knew, and never left, the first love. It is to these that sinners turn in their distress—it is to these that they tell their soul's deepest sorrows: sympathy with sin helps not, it defeats rather, sympathy with the sinner: the Sauls turn to Samuels; they turn not to the Manassehs, scarcely to the Magdalenes.

There is not enough said in our Churches, of the power of an unfeigned purity. It is a rare grace—it

ought to be a great ambition. It is the condition of some service; it is the beauty and the crown of all. I doubt whether Samuel would have been wanted, four years after his burial, by a restless disconsolate king, if he had lacked this first characteristic—of a unit life.

2. The second was, an absolute disinterestedness.

It is this quality that he dwells upon in the appeal of his old age. "Behold, here I am: witness against me this day before the Lord and before His anointed. Whose ox have I taken? . . . of whose hand have I taken any bribe?" "And they said, Thou hast not taken aught of any man's hand."

From the first day to the last, he had lived for his people. His time, his strength, his judgment, his voice, his intercession, all had been theirs. For more than a hundred years, he was God's and Israel's. It is impossible to over-estimate the power of this grace—disinterestedness. "I seek not mine own glory." "I seek not yours, but you." Whosoever this grace is, in dimmest, most clouded reflection, there is power. Believe that a man lives neither for money, nor for rank, nor for power, nor for fame—and you trust him with your all. Samuel died, as he had been born, in that house at Ramah. In that house he was buried. It is a sort of parable of disinterestedness.—Even for his burial place he had just the home. Saul knew, every Israelite knew, that no event, political or ecclesiastical, neither consecration nor coronation, could affect, in the slightest degree, the circumstances of Samuel. He lived for God and the people. Therefore there was a blank and there was a void when he was gone. Four years after his burial, the poor king's cry was, "Bring me up Samuel."

I do not say that no man can be disinterested who accepts office, or stipend, or title. Even to Samuel, when men came to enquire about their strayed cattle or their embarrassing duty, they brought a present in their hand. Even Samuel was asked to their feasts, and



they waited for him to say the grace. Office is no sinecure. Some men accept it as their cross, and resign it with jubilation. Some men exercise it as their daily sacrifice, and feel their days at once embittered by it and shortened. Some of the most disinterested persons that ever lived have been ministers, bishops, judges, kings. It is the man that makes the office, not the office the man. I only say that disinterestedness is the condition of influence. You may have power—coarse brutal strength—without it; for there is a brute force of office, as well as of body: but power and influence are seldom united—never, where self-interest rules.

I do not doubt that Saul did full justice to the disinterestedness of Samuel. I do not doubt that he said to himself, that awful night before Gilboa, There was once a man who would have given me of his best—counsel, sympathy, Oh—far above all to-night—prayer! He would not have deserted me—he would not have spurned me in my extremity: he gave me up because he thought me crooked—because he could not make me straightforward in God's service: but oh! to-night, could I but see him, he would pity me! "Bring me up Samuel!"

3. I will add a third characteristic—what I will venture to call the adaptability of Samuel.

He lived in an age of transition. He was the last of the judges—he was the first of the prophets. Much more than this—he was also the designator and anointer of two kings—the authoritative inaugurator of a system which he disapproved—of a human in place of a theocratic throne.

His very soul was shaken, was convulsed, by the innovation. He thought it impolitic, and he thought it wrong.—His prepossessions, his opinions, were all against it. It contradicted his idea of the very meaning of the Chosen People. He disapproved, he argued, he warned, he remonstrated, he rebuked, he all but refused. He did not refuse. He saw God in the error. It was a retrograde step; but sin had gone

first, and then came necessity. It is a true type of the trial, and the duty, of politicians, of ecclesiastics, who live in transitional times. They cannot but feel—they cannot but suffer. They do well to remonstrate—they do well to reprove. They cannot, they ought not to throw themselves into the new. They must be solitaries, in spirit. They must feel keenly the lost good, the foreseen evil. Yet they do not well to take the one step beyond. They have no right to seclude and separate themselves. They are citizens still, if nothing more, in God's Israel; and to retire because all are not to their mind, is to repudiate the franchise. Nor must they stand only on earth's highway, like ghosts and spectres, to "squeak and gibber" of a bygone perfection. Seriously, sadly, mournfully, yet manfully too, they must address themselves to the work that is, and to the world in which it must be done. Till God gives their discharge, they are in His army. They are at the post assigned—they must do what they can. When He sees that they are superannuated, He will say the "Well done," and the "Come up hither."

Saul must have felt that no officer of his army was half so loyal to him, after all, as Samuel. No one would have died with him, in God's cause, more cheerfully—not even the generous, the noble, the chivalrous Jonathan.

Men do trust these sad-hearted, these old-world, these out-of-date-heroes—when they see them, at the same time, earnest to lend a hand to the practical, and to make the most of that which is. No work is more true, none therefore more effective, than that of these workers not for pleasure but for duty. You see it in public life—you see it in private.

These are they who would fain dream themselves back into earlier, fairer, sunnier days—but will not because they ought not. Here has God set me—here will I dwell. Sparta is my city, not Athens or Corinth; it may be duller, less graceful, less attractive than another's capital—but God made it mine, and I will "adorn" it.

These are they whose home is not lovely nor loving—whose fireside is sullen or churlish—whose gentle aims have been frustrated, and who find but a solitude when they looked for a paradise. Yet they make the best of it; expressive saying! how vast the difference between the "best" of it and the "worst!" They adapt themselves to the position; and God adorns the winter of old age with a few blossoms of hope and promise, telling of an inheritance above, beyond—an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away.

4. Finally, and far above all, the real indispensableness of Samuel was his living communion with God Most High.

From that first night at Shiloh—when the child ran three times to the old priest, and was at last told what to say if the Voice should speak again—on through the tens and fifties of years in the fulness of which he found his last rest in his house at Ramah—Samuel had been the living medium of God's communications with Israel. "The word of the Lord was precious in those days: there was no open," no common, spread-abroad, "vision." God in those days spoke through a prophet, and the prophet of those days was Samuel.—When he was gone, there was no one. Think of the helplessness! How dreary must have been a God-silent earth! Yes, we may imagine it a relief to be "let alone"—a relief, to have the excuse of not knowing—a relief, to hear no "word behind us, saying, This is the way!" Have we tried it? Have we tried it, I do not say in days of merriment and nights of feasting—I do not say while life is quite young, and everything is decked in gay colors, even this sombre, this monotonous, this heart-aching earth—but have we tried the being without God's voice in some season of calamity, of terror, of grief, of remorse? Have we tried it when conscience was sore and irritable, when memory was black with frightful sin, and anticipation hot with flames of judgment? What would we not give,

at such a moment, for that saintly mother whose very face shone with God's light, or that devout pastor who seemed to pass from the closet which was God's sanctuary to the pulpit which was God's oracle? Can we not enter *then* into the disconsolate cry of the king hurrying blindfold to his ruin, "Bring me up Samuel?" God is silent to me—neither by dream nor by vision will He condescend to speak to me, a sinner that has flung away grace—Oh, bring me where I can hear the echo of His revelation—bring me to the man, dead or living, whose ear, from childhood, God has opened!

Strange it seems, very strange, that we should, of our own will, go back from Gospel to Law—from the open countenance to the dim reflection—from "the Spirit poured upon servants and handmaidens," to the privileged, the sparing gift of that Spirit to prophets, one in their generation! Yet, brethren, our appeal is to you—and "heart answereth to heart" in making it—which of all us is this day in vital, living, face-to-face converse with the God revealed to us in His Son? Suffer, I pray you, lay to heart the word of enquiry—Have you spoken, you, and you, in this very service, to a God living and listening and almighty to answer? Remember, neither preacher nor priest can do this for you—neither director, nor confessor, nor sage, nor saint. In these days of grace and the Gospel, the man deals with God, or nothing! You can put nothing, no one, between—neither parent, nor friend, nor minister—neither service, nor sacrament—neither angel, nor saint, nor virgin—direct, or none, is the communication; and he who communicates not has not the Spirit, and he who has not the Spirit of Christ is none of His.

Oh, it were sinking, and not rising, in this appeal, to speak to you of the absolute loss of influence involved in separation from God. It is true—it is true—to have God in you, to have access to Him and to use it, this, this is power! This it is which makes you a force and a might in your generation—

this it is which makes your friend, which makes your home, which makes your country, miss you when you have been four years dead. The man who brought into my life, into my soul, God's message—Oh, bring him back! He comes not, but you can do better! You can do that which he did—you can cry to God, and He shall hear you; yea, He will be with you in trouble; with His eternal life will He satisfy you, and show you His salvation—*C. J. Vaughan in Sunday Magazine.*

### BURNING BIBLES IN ROME.

In this age of civilization, in this century of intelligence, in this day of Christian charity, and in this year of our Lord 1872, we still burn Bibles in Rome. By "we" I do not mean Christians of the Holy Catholic Church; but Roman Catholics. I personally repudiate and abjure Romanism as applied to Catholic faith and religion—therefore wash my hands of this crime; yet I must in duty hold up the sacrilege to the execration of indignant Christians, bowing in shame while they heap the sacred ashes burning upon my head, as well as others, as being of the household of the faithless.

This recent burning of Bibles took place at Frascati, the nearest town and summer resort of the Romans, which lies across the Campagna, in the lap of the Alban Hills, a half hour's ride by the train; and is, religiously speaking, held by the Jesuits. But the people of the town have manifested a great desire during the last year to possess and read the Bible, and the Protestant missionaries and ministers have given away and sold many hundred copies among them. Of course, this was not long in coming to the knowledge of the priests, who have their party in charge and everybody in surveillance; and Bible hunting was soon made a specialty. When a sufficient number was found, a bonfire was made in the yard of the cathedral, the priests lighting the fire. It was a significant fact that the sacred pile was crowned by a portrait of the

king, which altogether meant: Thus perish the persecutor of the Church and the sum of all heresies—Victor Emmanuel and the Bible!

An English Protestant minister of Rome, the Rev. Mr. Wall, being told of the sacrilegious act, went in person to see with his own eyes what he could scarcely believe from hearsay; and saw the smouldering pile, and gathered up the fragments of the burnt Word of God. It is this gentleman who had given me the facts, and also a burnt page, which I find to be from the 10th chapter of Matthew, 15th and 16th verses: "Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore, wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

Now, we do not believe that these misguided and bigoted priests meant to insult God by this shameless act of destroying his Holy Word; but they meant to show their hatred of all Christian attempts to let the world know anything of Him except what they choose, and what is endorsed by their party and their Pope and printed by their infallible printing presses, and neither their party nor their Pope endorses the Bible, except with commentaries that condemn it! Nor do we attempt to deny that these same Bible-burners are actuated by the same spirit that burnt such as I am—an accuser of priestly atrocities and Papal heresies—three hundred years ago. It is the same old spirit that went "mad with zeal" in the Saviour's time; and later on, inoculated with the Roman virus, developed into spiritual hydrophobia, and even now it cannot bear the sight of the Living Water.

And no one knows what Papal infallibility and the *Syllabus* mean who can doubt but that their founders and framers would force us to repentance, if they could—if not with the fagot and thumbscrew, at least, with the tender arm of civil law, and prison-walls, with bread and water. They dare not, be-



cause they cannot. Advancing civilization, science, and culture, national unity and international harmony, with the Oriental and Anglican schisms and the Luther's Reform, and, over and above all, the spreading of the Word of God, has slowly but surely changed these things; and we can to-day, thank God, live and move, walk the streets unmolested, sleep undisturbed, assemble for prayer, and read our Bible in Rome! But it was not a hundred years ago that we could not do these things—not fifty, nor five, nor two, until the 20th of next September!

There was one consoling episode connected with this Bible-burning that we cannot omit to record, as it shows that even in the darkest crimes of superstition and bigotry, the public sentiment of justice is not entirely obliterated. The boys of the streets, the ragamuffins of Frascati, being witnesses of the impious act, and feeling somewhat of the sentiment of abhorrence and condemnation of sacrilege that must be inherent in every baptized child, stoned the priests that lighted the fire. There is hope for that town. Those poor, ignorant, ragged boys of Frascati will vote some day; and they will never forget the Bibles and the portrait of their king that they saw burnt in the yard of the cathedral by the priests!

It is only now and then that the hidden contest that is raging between light and darkness comes to the surface of society and takes on the form of a battle or an event. Yet the great combat is going on and increasing daily; and one of the most important of the great silent conflicts that is stirring the dominion of Rome is the conflict of the Rosary and the Bible. Time will tell which will be the victor, and which the guide of life and the consolation of the soul—the ten thousand times ten thousand *Ave Marias* repeated on the strings of beads, or the reading of the Word of God.

The Protestant ministers have become embarrassed, in turn, not knowing what to do with the rosaries, relics, scapulars, unprofitable books, and the

various other objects that make up the *petite devotion* of many Catholics, which have been given up to them by persons convinced of the uselessness of these things. One of the missionaries, possessing a large stock of these "religious objects," asked my advice as to their disposition. I told him, whatever he did, not to burn them, as bonfires were bad precedents; and that it seemed to me the best thing to do, for the persons who scrupled about returning these objects, would be to give or send them back to their priests, simply and respectfully saying that they had no further use for them. All things should be done in a respectful manner. Charity, charity! As I rewrite this last blessed word I put the text to myself. Perhaps I was a little too indignant against those priests that burnt the bibles, and a little too glad that the boys threw stones at them. If I was, may God and the priests and the boys forgive me; but, nevertheless, the act was ignoble, infamous, and sacrilegious! I am sorry for the priests who burnt those Bibles. I am sorry for the people who gave them up. I am sorry for Rome. I am sorry for the church. I am sorry for myself.

But, as the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church, so the flames of those Bibles burnt in Rome, while they reveal the thick gloom that prevails here, will help to dispel the darkness of Italy, and enlighten the world; and their ashes, borne by the winds of Heaven, will enrich the seed that is being sown broadcast throughout the earth, and the fruit shall be better and more abundant. God grant that there may be harvesters enough to gather it in. —  
*A Catholic.*

The blossom, when crushed, yields its sweetest fragrance; the swan breathes its most thrilling melody in its death-song. No character, however lovely, is perfected until it has passed through the ordeal of suffering. It spiritualizes the whole inner life; it detaches the soul from earthly things, to which it has, perchance, clung heretofore, and brings it nearer to the things invisible.

## SELFISHNESS.

He that lives through his whole life, concentrating upon himself all the bounties of God, and gives nothing to his fellow-men, is not a Christian, though he may be a very moral man.

Consider the wickedness of what seldom passes for a wicked life. I am not speaking of a life of vice and crime, which is the diseased form of all wickedness—wickedness carried to its most morbid condition. But see how, *all through life, men of repute, men of standing, men of influence, men that are praised while they live and are eulogized when they die, are men that are given to the lust of pride and vanity.* They live inordinately for themselves. They do not actually do harm, it may be; but they are men who are full of ambition all for themselves. They are like the oak which stands in the night to gather dew for itself, and then, if the wind in the morning shakes it, is willing to part with the few drops that it really can not hold on to; and they call themselves benevolent! There are men that spread abroad gigantic arms, and gather the wealth of heaven—whatever God's bounty can give them—meaning it all for themselves; and a few accidental drops of kindness here and there give them some claim to generosity and benevolence. But where are the channels into which their life flows? Where are the uses that these great forces, concentrating in them, subserve? They live for pride, for vanity—the meanest of all feelings when it is in excess—and for self. They live for every thing but others. Now and then a stray benefaction alleviates their conscience; now and then a crumb, as it were, they give to the Lord, that he may not bring accusation against them: but the vast mine which they work from day to day; the wide-sweeping net by which they drag the depths of the wondrous ocean; the vast harvest-field which they reap—these are all for self. Revengeful, jealous, full of rivalries and competitions, and full of injuries to other men in thought or in

deed, or in both, they live through life, and are at death mourned over as being men that had some flaws, but that, after all, were very excellent men.

Ah! when a man is dead, and you are sure that he is out of the way, you can afford to praise him. It is when men are living that we are not so charitable about it. I have not the least particle of prejudice against the thistles that were on my place last year. It is those that are there now that I do not like. The nettles that I remember when I was a boy I am very charitable toward; but the nettles that were in my hands last week I do not feel so about. When I look at the *stramonium* that is swelling on the bloated ground, when I look at the thistles and the various noisome pestilent weeds that spring up from the dunghill, and see how rank they are, filling the air with vapor, and how they subsist on that which belongs to nutritious plants, how I abhor them!

There is many a man in jail who is better than many a man that goes honored and praised in your midst; and God has more complacency in the former than in the latter. He has not much in the former; but he has none at all in the latter.

A bloated, self-indulgent man, a man who keeps within the bounds of the law only because there is safety, because there he may more abundantly indulge his selfishness; the obese, prosperous man, that lives for his lower nature, and yet is counted not far from the kingdom of heaven—what shall we say of such men, and of lives such as theirs?

You need not be a criminal, you need not be a very wicked man, you may neither riot nor debauch, you may neither steal nor gamble; and yet, you may live stained, leprous, spotted, and hideous before God, before all holy angels, and before right-thinking men.—Your life may be a vast activity; and yet, it may be a huge vortex where every thing tends to that centre—self. And that is to be wicked enough. You do not need to be any wicked. And

yet, you may be as wicked as that, and still be very respectable in the eyes of men.

My dear Christian brethren, this question comes home very nearly to us. What we are doing for others, is to measure our following the Lord Jesus Christ; and not what we are doing of necessity, but what we are doing on purpose, what we are doing consciously, what we are striving to do, what we put our heart and soul into.

If there be any of you, then, that desire to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give yourselves for others, as he gave himself for our comfort, *living or dying ye are the Lord's*—living or dying, and the one as much as the other.

And now, my sermon is done. We are accustomed, on the first Sunday after my return from my summer vacation, to hold a Communion—fit and beautiful service for our reunion; and we shall to-day sit down together as a Christian family to break the bread that signifies the broken body of our Lord, and to take the wine that signifies his blood which was shed for us. Will you make a more solemn and earnest consecration of yourselves to his life and example than you have made before? In that consecration will you not, purposely, from this hour, endeavor so to carry all that which God has given you, that you shall be a light, a staff, a fortress, a refuge, that you shall be a cloud laden with rain, a summer of bounty immeasurable, and constant to the very end, to those that are around about you?

He only mixes with the world with *safety* who does it not from inclination but necessity. I would have you mark carefully every thing that disposes or indisposes the mind to holy pursuits.—Persons of tender health are very careful to avoid whatever is hurtful, such as damp infectious rooms, blighting winds—they attend to the injunctions of their physicians, and the cautions of their friends. If people were but as careful about their spiritual health, we should see much stronger and taller Christians.

## TEACH THE CHILDREN HYMNS.

There is a chord in every human soul which is touched by poetry; hence the magical power of ballads, national songs, and religious hymns. Listen to the snatches of popular ditties which you hear in the streets from passers-by, after you have gone to bed, and you will own that metre and music have avenues to human souls, and consequently that they should be largely employed in religion. There is reason to believe, that versified truth has peculiar force upon the common mind; as it is certain that it affords aid to the memory.—Luther and the other reformers felt this, and hence arose the wonderfully rich collection of hymns in the German language, to which there is perhaps nothing comparable on earth. To this stock, Luther himself contributed much. He was aided by Hans Sachs, the poetical shoemaker. In a later period came Paul Gerhardt, the greatest hymn-writer of Germany, if not of the world. Wherever there are pious Germans, you find them with their beloved hymn-books; and from frequent use, they generally know great numbers of these hymns by heart.

It is an error to confine children to the learning of *children's hymns*, because, when they become older, these will have lost much of their fitness. Why should we not fill our children's minds with the choicest evangelical hymns in the language? These they will remember after we are dead and gone. They should not be merely learned *once*, and then left for others, but repeated again and again, and *sung over*, in order to fix them in the memory, and to lay a basis for the most lasting associations. The old words, and the old tune, come back on us with indescribable tenderness. Let the pious mother, when causing her boy to learn some sacred song, say to herself, "Perhaps, years hence, my son will remember the saving truth of this hymn, as having been taught him by his mother."



## EDITORIAL.

## LOST GRACE.

One may lose grace, and not know it. Not only so, he may even look upon himself as *established* in the faith, when he has actually lost the saving grace of God altogether out of his heart. Read the third chapter of Revelations, commencing at the fourteenth verse, and you will find that some fell into this state in the early days of Christianity. The Church of the Laodiceans still exists. It is large and flourishing. Its accessions are numerous and important. Many preachers and men of renown belong to it. There is no other church so respectable, in the eyes of the world. It threatens to swallow up all others.

Those who have lost the saving grace of God, and do not know it, are in the most dangerous condition that a human being can possibly be in. It was to such that the wise man had reference when he said: *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him.*—Prov. xxvi. 12.

Our Saviour addresses the same class when he says: *The publicans and the harlots enter into the kingdom of God before you.* If then, such is our danger, we need to guard well against it. *Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.*

1. *If you have lost patience, you have lost grace.* No matter what is the nature or the number of your trials. If you keep saved, the *trying of your faith worketh patience.*—Jas. i. 3. If you cannot take reproof, but feel like turning upon those who tell you of your faults, real or imaginary, it proves beyond a doubt, whether you are right or wrong in this particular instance, that you certainly are deficient in the saving grace of God. You are not as well off as you think you are. Instead of "getting the victory over your brethren," you ought to get down before God and get the victory over yourself. You have need to have your pride subdued, and your spirit chastened.

2. *If you have lost love, you have lost grace.* There is nothing plainer than this.

True religion consists very much in love to God, and love to man. If you have lost either, you have lost grace. How is it with you in this respect? Are you as ready to make sacrifices for the cause of God as formerly? Do you take as much delight in this worship as you once did?

Have you suffered no loss of love for the children of God? There was a time when you loved them as your own soul. You loved their society, and lost no opportunity of waiting with them for worship. You loved those most who loved God most.—The ground of your preference was—not engaging manners, or social position—but love for Jesus. Now, if all this has changed, and you court the society of the worldly, and forsake the humble disciples of Jesus, it is an unmistakable evidence of the loss of grace. You may attribute it to this cause or to that—to a loss of confidence—or to personal neglects, which you have received; but the real cause is, the fact that *you have backslidden in heart from God.* Seek to disguise it as you may, in the depths of your soul you know this is the case.

3. The loss of true humility is another unmistakable evidence of the loss of grace. You may have increased greatly in gifts, you may talk or pray with greater fluency, you may have a greater knowledge of Divine truth, and be able to state it, and defend it with greater clearness and ability; but if, notwithstanding all this, you have lost humility, you have lost grace. If you *feel* your importance, or put on dignified airs, or think that nothing can be done right unless you have a hand in it, there can be no question as to your spiritual position—you have lost grace.

We entreat you to be honest with God, and with your own soul. Begin to look at your condition as it is. Admit the unwelcome truth that you have lost grace from your heart. The first step necessary to regain your first love, is to *remember whence thou art fallen.*

Having seen your loss, *repent.* Confess your state before God and before man. Go to work as you did at first. Prompt action is demanded. You are in great danger. Unless you recover your lost grace, you

will lose your present light. You will adopt a wrong theory of religion. You will put darkness for light. You will take that which passeth current among men as being current with God. IF THE LIGHT THAT IS IN THEE BECOME DARKNESS, HOW GREAT IS THAT DARKNESS?

### HOW TO BUILD A CHURCH.

Mrs. Felt lives at Maple Grove, Saginaw Co., Mich. She is a quiet, ordinary woman, trying to follow the Lord fully. She makes no pretensions to either uncommon talent or energy. Some three years ago she felt a burden laid upon her heart. For some time she did not know what it was for. She saw that she must do more for the Lord than she was doing. It might be her duty to preach was suggested. Finally she settled down in the conviction that it was her duty to build a house of worship for the Free Methodists. She did not belong to them then, but saw that they were doing the work of the Lord. But how was it to be done? She had no means of her own. Her husband is a frontier farmer, in limited circumstances. The people generally, in the neighborhood are poor, and money scarce. It was suggested to her to ask her husband to give for a site, two acres of land on the corner of his farm. If he would consent to that, she would take it as an evidence that the enterprise was of God. He agreed to give it, and also to give every tenth day's work till the church was completed. She went among the neighbors and solicited contributions. She took whatever was given, from one cent. Some gave bed-quilts, which she exchanged for lumber. She herself gave every tenth pound of butter, and every tenth dozen of eggs. An irreligious man whom she asked for a contribution, told her he thought she had "church on the brain." He said that they owed him at the mill, but the debt was outlawed and he could not collect it. He gave her that debt. She went to the mill, and they readily gave her lumber to the full amount. As the means were raised the church went up. Every thing was paid for as they went along. The Rev. E.

P. Hart dedicated the church the 10th of August. It is a neat, convenient edifice, thirty feet by forty, well built, and nicely painted. It was all paid for, so that they had but ten dollars to raise at the dedication. The dedication services which commenced on Thursday, and lasted over the Sabbath, were seasons of wonderful power. The glory of God rested on the preachers so that they could hardly minister at the altar. The people came from miles away and pitched their tents around the church. At every service the altar was crowded with penitents, and many were saved. The whole region is under conviction.

DEDICATION AT MARSHFIELD.—Marshfield is a small village in the town of Collins, Erie Co., N. Y. It consists of three churches, a cheese factory, and two or three houses. It is in a rich dairy country. Of the two old churches, one is unoccupied—in the other a preaching service is held once in two weeks.

There is a large Free Methodist Society—the members of which helped build the vacant churches—especially one of them. But they could not be allowed to hold meetings in either of them. So they had to build. They have a comfortable, plain church, but too small for their congregations.

The dedication service, which we were permitted to attend, was a season of interest and profit. The expenses of the house were provided for, so we had no money to raise. The Lord is blessing His people on that circuit.

### CAMP MEETINGS.

AT PEKIN, NIAGARA CO., N. Y., there was a large attendance. The meeting was under the charge of G. W. Coleman, Chairman of the District. The preaching was plain, pointed, practical. Some were saved, and a good deal of light was shed upon the minds of the people. The meeting was interesting in its associations, as well as in itself. It was on this ground that the Free Methodist Church was organized

twelve years ago. No one then supposed that the movement would, in so short a time, reach its present proportions.

AT ROME, N. Y., there were about fifty tents. The Rev. E. Owen had charge. The interest was deep, and many were saved. The truth was well received, and there was a good deal of conviction among the people. We could not stay till the meeting was out, but we trust that the work went on in increasing power. There were conversions at this meeting which we expect will tell for good upon the cause of God, for years to come.

AT BLISSFIELD, MICH., there were thirty-two tents. It was the largest Camp Meeting we have held as yet in Michigan, and was generally considered one of the best. There were a good many conversions, and many entered into the rest of perfect love. At the last love feast there were over ninety clear testimonies—most of them to the power of Christ to save to the uttermost. The work in Michigan is going deep and spreading rapidly. It is only seven years, since Brother and Sister Hart, relying upon the Lord, started out alone to spread *true holiness* through the state. God has raised up faithful preachers, who are laboring zealously and successfully with them in this interesting field.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### MY FALL AND RESTORATION.

Ann Arbor, Mich., July 10th, 1872.

In the May number of '72 of this periodical, I wrote an article, of which this is a continuation.

For more than a year previous to that time, I had been a careful reader of the *Earnest Christian*. I admired its outspoken and uncompromising spirit, and its zeal in promoting Scriptural holiness.

As stated in my last letter, I attended a quarterly meeting at Moreville, some fifteen miles south of Ann Arbor, and joined the Free Methodist Church. Since that time several of the brethren in the ministry have visited our city, and preached a free gospel to hundreds upon the court

house square, and street corners. Among the number who preached to us were, Revs. Jones, Mathews, Campbell and Leonardson. The result is, a small class has been organized, and weekly meetings are held in private houses, which are increasing in interest, and in numbers.

We are expecting to have a place in which to worship the God of our Fathers, and to be favored with regular preaching at a period not far distant. Brethren, pray for us.

I shall now proceed with my personal narrative. I always had an aversion to the name and character of a backslider. I was thoroughly and radically converted on the night of the 12th of January, 1836, in the town of Marcellus, Onondago Co., N.Y. I was staying over night at the residence of Mr. George Christler. Through the influence of his son Amos, then an exhorter in the M. E. Church, I was prevailed upon to commence praying immediately for myself, having told him I had long felt a desire for religion.

I made up my mind to spend the night in prayer, and requested to room alone for that purpose. But before three o'clock in the morning, God for Christ's sake let my captive soul at liberty. When by the witness of the Spirit I was assured my sins were all forgiven me, I shouted aloud for joy in the still hours of the night. The next moment I began to wonder what the people, with whom I was staying for the night might think of me. But after a night of sorrow, unutterable joy came in the morning; and regardless of what they might think or say, I continued to rejoice with exceeding great joy.

I was soon thrust out into the ministry of the M. E. Church, and for twenty-five consecutive years continued a member, first of the Michigan, and after a division was effected, I was identified with the Detroit Conference until my dereliction became apparent to myself, and to those among who I labored. In this state of spiritual declension, I continued to receive my regular appointments at the hands of the conference some three or four years. During the last two years, at intervals I seriously contemplated laying aside the



duties of the ministry; which for the most part had become irksome to me. But to take this step involved open and public disgrace, from which I was deterred for a time. My mind was in a constant state of oscillation betwixt two. The spirit of the world with its fascinating charms gained the ascendancy over me. I no longer tried to conceal it; but was "led captive by Satan at his will." I no longer valued my standing in the conference, nor in the church. This was about the commencement of the late war, when political matters were carried to an extremity almost beyond a parallel.

Growing out of this state of things prejudices arose, which culminated in a bill of charges presented to the conference, involving moral delinquency; some of which I did not care to deny, and others were false and could not be proved. And because of the conflicting nature of the testimony, I was assured by the "Regency Party" afterwards, that none of them would have been sustained. I had no desire, nor did I intend to defend myself. I wrote my presiding elder that I should not be at the conference, and declared myself "*succeeded hereafter and forever from the whole concern.*"

In fact I was glad of the opportunity to cut loose from my moorings, and push out to sea; without compass or rudder, and drift at the mercy of the wind and the waves. I virtually, and deliberately said, "Father, give me that portion of goods which falleth to me, and straightway took my journey into a far country, and there wasted my substance in riotous living."

Previous to taking the above steps—which have caused me so much anguish of heart, and such deep penitence, and self-abasement before God and before the world—for eight or ten years in succession I had been engaged almost constantly in church building, the labor and oversight of which taxed my energies to the utmost, and monopolized nearly all my time. Financially I was hopelessly involved to the book concern of the M. E. Church, as well as to other parties. The circuits and stations were heavily taxed to carry forward their respective enterprises, especially in

completing the churches erected within their respective limits. My salary was inadequate to meet my current expenses. *There was a deficiency of nearly one-half my usual allowance upon all those charges except one, for the term of nine or ten years; and during that time the aggregate membership was more than doubled, and the real estate of the church increased in valuation upwards of \$12,000.* But I found myself bankrupt indeed.

This state of things pressed upon me heavily, and I gave up all for lost. I had borne up without complaint to an extremity, and now sunk under the pressure. And for several years of abandonment and dissipation, I entertained no hope of recovery. In fact, for most of the time I had no desire or concern respecting my perilous condition. My friends in the conference and in the church—for I still had many—were excited to pity, and manifested a deep felt sympathy on my behalf; earnestly desiring my recovery "out of the snare of the devil," and spared no pains or efforts that seemed to promise success. They prayed and counseled with me, and wept over me in vain. I was frequently moved, and deeply conscious of their heart-felt sympathy for my recovery. And in my lucid moments I appreciated their efforts; but at times it seemed to drive me to desperation. And then

"I sought for other joys;  
To think, would drive my soul to madness;  
In thoughtless throngs and empty noise  
I drowned one-half my bosom's sadness.

"But still a thought would steal,  
In spite of every vain endeavor;  
And fiends might pity what I would feel,  
To know that all was lost forever."

Thus my friends saw me rushing on to fearful ruin, which I was deeply conscious awaited me at any moment. The countenances of loved ones wore an aspect of sadness which the joyousness of youth could not efface. Many a time have they thrown their arms around my neck, and with sobbing hearts entreated me not to go to those dens of human ruin any more. And when at midnight, or in the "small hours of the morning" they heard a well known voice ring out, like maniac's scream

upon the burdened air, or the approach of the heavy foot-fall of one they once delighted to honor as their father, their cheeks were blanched, and their young and trembling hearts sunk within them.

But no pen is equal to the task—no language adequate to describe the anguish which wrung that heart that was awake at all hours of the night, ever watching,—and always keeping “a light in the window” to guide the erring steps of one who had wandered from the domestic circle.—Whose eyes were a fountain of tears, and whose prayers were ever ascending—and what was most remarkable—whose faith never wavered, never faltered—whose heart-yearnings laid hold of the omnipotence of God—his mercy and long-suffering with one hand, and with the other the wreck of a beloved companion whose feet were standing on the crumbling verge of hell; and when this slender foot-hold was fast giving way, still there she stood and cried, with a faith that “laughed at impossibilities.” “*I will not let thee go till thou bless*”—till thou give back my husband.

Others manifested a long and deep sympathy whose names I would like to mention, but their record is on high. In my financial embarrassment they not only came forward and liquidated the claims they held against me, but used their influence to have others do the same. Nor was this all; they recommended me to parties in Chicago as possessing good business qualifications which they believed might be made available to them; but which they desired most, might result in my reformation. The General Agent of the Union Dispatch Company called on me at their request, and offered me a situation in their employ. I told him frankly that if he knew all about me, he probably would not want me at all. He replied, that he was fully informed in reference to me. I had nothing more to say, and accepted the situation on condition he would travel with me for two weeks. After accompanying me some two days he placed the business in my hands, and left me to make a two weeks' trip alone. Every thing was done

to their entire satisfaction. I continued in the employ of this company for nearly three years. Whether on the whole it was any benefit to me, I am not now prepared to say. My downward course, notwithstanding my connection with them, became more certain and rapid. And my friends one after another began to relinquish their efforts in my behalf as unavailing and hopeless.

This at times filled me with the deepest chagrin. One influence after another failed to restrain, much less to reform me. I felt assured that nothing short of the power of God was adequate to reach my case; but this I did not dare to consider as available in my behalf. If I at times turned in that direction, I seemed headed off by such fearful passages of Scripture as the following, viz: “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much surer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”—Heb. x. 26-31. And again: “For it is impossible for any one who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame.”—Heb. vi. 4-6. Once more. “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”—2 Thess. ii. 11, 12

The above fearful texts of Scripture barred the door to the kingdom, and kept the way to the tree of life securely against my approach for a long time, even after I felt inclined to return unto the Lord.

Step by step I fought my way through the impediments which these passages threw in the way of my return. In the same order too in which they are here quoted. Especially the last text quoted from 2 Thess. Even after I received a ray of light, and a good degree of comfort in the Holy Ghost, the devil would thrust this passage before my mind, and throw me into doubt and despair in reference to the hopelessness of my spiritual state, suggesting to my mind, that it was all a delusion. I had sinned against so much light and knowledge, that there was no more mercy for me. And after having secured the clearest assurance of the divine favor, and the strongest evidence of my acceptance, he succeeded in sweeping it all away, and pushing me upon the very brink of despair, by telling me, that because I had "taken pleasure in unrighteousness," therefore God, even, had sent me strong delusion, that I might believe a lie, and that I might be damned. O what bitter anguish filled my soul at such times! Verily the "pains of hell got hold upon me, and I found trouble and sorrow." But by the grace of God, through the help of my companion, I was enabled to gain the victory over the devil. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord, to whom be all the glory!

S. C. Stringham.

#### A WORD FROM BUFFALO.

OBITUARIES.—Of what use are they? To gratify friends, or to glorify God? If truthful, God may be glorified.

What effect do they produce? Are they the means of stirring up others, or of only pleasing the small circle of friends?

We have them of all classes; an endless variety, and yet a wonderful sameness runs through them all.

They resemble the resolutions passed upon the death of persons in the church and out. "We bow to Him who doeth all

things well." "A copy sent to the family" —"and wear mourning thirty days."

Is not every "Bible Christian" an affectionate parent, a dutiful companion, obedient child, honest neighbor, zealous Christian? Why not then write *obituaries* of the *poor*, and of all such; and not only of a few?

Many times these notices bring to light traits never known before; and into prominence persons never known in life as active Christians.

What are dying words? Pleasant memories cluster around them. But it is the daily life, that makes the Christian a marked man, and makes "his memory blessed."

Should we pass by those who for years in humble life, it may be, followed God, and bring into notice those who after all hope was given up, sought God; and in the delirium of disease, it may be, shouted glory! Of all things, do not praise men for "death bed repentance."

Many curious statements are made in these notices.

One writes that God "ruthlessly tore" from the embrace of its parents, a darling child. Compare the meaning of "ruthlessly" with Job's expression: The Lord gave, etc.

Another thinks the character of one who gave up her religion on account of a wicked husband, but who was reclaimed a little while before death, deserved to have her funeral sermon preached from the words: "Their works do follow them." These are the works then to hold up, when God says: "My grace is sufficient"—where is the power to save under all circumstances?

Another writes of a child who like others died, but "*is now an angel*."

Where are we informed that human beings are changed into angels? I always thought we were going "to be like Him," not angels; but changed into "His glorious image."

Many we are informed are now in heaven, wearing crowns; walking the golden streets, anxiously looking for us, etc., etc. Then Solomon made a mistake when he wrote Eccl. ix. 5, 6. Also Peter when he



informed the multitude on the day of Pentecost, "For Daniel is not ascended into the heavens." If this is so, then where is the intermediate state, Wesley taught, and the Bible teaches?

What use will there be of a general judgment, if our friends have reaped the full reward of their doings?

Let us "hold fast the form of sound words." The word of God teaches us some lessons on obituaries.

"And Enoch walked with God." "He had this testimony that he pleased God." "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people." "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations; and Noah walked with God." "Joshua my servant is dead." How short, and yet how simple; how touchingly beautiful are they. I know we have fuller histories of them. But we have their faults also written. Let us then write our obituaries, remembering they will be sifted at the judgment.

*S. K. J. Chesbrough.*

#### LOVE FEAST.

MRS. EMMA C HILL.—Oh, how precious the Lord is to my soul! He is indeed very near me, even right around me; and how unworthy I am to be noticed by such a holy and Almighty God. I, who have had such exceeding wicked thoughts, and have so many times wounded Him afresh. Yes, I, who have almost thought there was no God; even I am now the recipient of His boundless mercies. He is now, while I write, very near to my soul. He has brought me through severe mental trials: but has been so gracious that He has at all times given me strength to overcome the enemy. He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and truly it has been so in my case. Now I feel resigned to His will. Let the world say what it will, I am determined to obey my Sovereign God in all things. Although I am deprived of many of the privileges which saints everywhere enjoy, yet I will trust in the Lord and wait for His time, and I think that He will not keep me wait-

ing long. But I can, thank God, enjoy His dear presence in my soul, and can read His dear, blessed word, if I can do no more. It has been five months since the Saviour spoke peace to my soul; and during that time, I have not had a single word spoken to help me onward. (There is not a single whole-hearted pilgrim that I am acquainted with in the place.) Through the influence of some back numbers of the *Earnest Christian*, I was led to the Saviour. I have heard but one sermon. It is scarcely possible for me to get to the nearest church, and that has no members that seem inclined to help the weary and the weak. But the Lord is ever near; He leads me on little by little, and now I can see Him by the eye of faith around and about me, and He does indeed help me and keep my feet on the Rock. With my soul I will ever praise the Lord, and may his name be glorified forever more.

MRS. A. W. STEARNS.—I love Jesus to-day, and He saves me just now. I feel that though He slay me yet I will trust Him. Jesus says in his word, If we will live godly in Christ Jesus we shall suffer persecution. The Devil is trying to get something to draw me from God, yet I have the victory that overcomes, and it is all Peace and joy in my soul. Blessed be his name! Halleluiah forever! I can say, What peaceful hours I now enjoy.

*Lenox, N. Y.*

MRS. H. L. STEARNS.—The Lord saves me to-day and his blood cleanses my heart from all sin. Glory be to His name! I love the narrow way and I love to do His will. Oh! how precious is the sound of Jesus' name to my soul. I feel the love of God burning in my soul while I am writing. Bless His name, and I expect to fight if I would reign with Him, and by His grace, I will make Heaven my home. How the Lord does bless me and give me the victory over every trial. Glory be to God! He helps me to live my religion every day. Praise His name! He does fill my soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

*Smyrna, N. Y.*