**÷Wheat or Chaff?**

John Charles Ryle

**÷**Wheat or Chaff?

"Watch"

"Prove All Things"

Are You Regenerate?

How Should A Child Be Trained?

Be Not Slothful, But Followers

**÷Wheat or Chaff?**

* " Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather hia wheat into the garner ; but he •will burn up the chaff -with unquenchable fire."— Mat 3:12.
* Reader,
* You see a question at the head of this page. For whom do you think it is meant? Is it for corn merchants and farmers only, and for none else ? If you think so, you are much mistaken. It is meant for every man, woman, and child in the world. And among others, it is meant for you.
* The question is drawn from a verse of Scripture which is now before your eyes. The words of that verse were spoken by John the Baptist. They are a prophecy about our Lord Jesus Christ, and a prophecy which has not yet been fulfilled. They are a prophecy which we shall all see fulfilled one day, and God alone knows how soon.
* Reader, I invite you to begin the new year by looking at the great truths which this verse contains. I invite you to listen to me, while I unfold them, and set them before you in order. "Who knows but this text may prove a word in season to your soul ? Who knows but my question may help to make this year the happiest year in your life ?

Listen, before you begin once more to walk your appointed path of duty. Listen, before you start once more on some rouml r,f business. Listen, before you plunge once more into some course of useless idleness and folly. Listen to one who loves your soul, and would fain help to save it, or draw it nearer to Christ. Who knows what a year may bring forth ? Who can tell whether you will live to see another one ? Be still, and listen to me a few minutes, while I show you something out of the word of God.

I. Let me show you, in the first place, *the two great classes into which this world may be divided.*

There are only two classes of people in the world, in the sight of God, and both are mentioned in the text which begins this tract. There are those who are called *the wheat,* and there are those who are called *the chaff.*

Viewed with the eye of man, the earth contains many different sorts of inhabitants. Viewed with the eye of God, it only contains two. Man's eye looks at the outward appearance:— this is all he thinks of. The eye of God looks at the heart:—this is the only part of which he takes any account. And tried by the state of their hearts, there are but two classes into which people can be divided :—either they are wheat, or they are chaff.

Reader, who are the wheat in the world ? Listen to me, and I will tell you.

The wheat means all men and women who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ,—all who are led by the Holy Spirit,—all who have felt themselves sinners, and fled for refuge to the salvation offered in the Gospel,—all who love the Lord Jesus, and live to the Lord Jesus, and serve the Lord Jesus,—all who have taken Christ for their only confidence, and the Bible for their only guide, and" regard sin as their deadliest enemy, and look to heaven as their only home. All such, of every church, name, nation, people, and tongue,—of every rank, station, condition, and degree,—all such are God's wheat.

Show me men of this kind anywhere, and I know what they are. I know not that they and I may agree in all particulars, but I see in them the handiwork of the King of kings, and I ask no more. I know not whence they came, and where they found their religion ; but I know where they are going, and that is enough for me. They are the children of my Father in heaven. They are part of his wheat.

All such, though sinful, and vile, and unworthy in their own eyes, are the precious part of mankind. They are the sons and daughters of God the Father. They are the delight of God the Son. They are the habitation of God the Spirit. The Father beholds no iniquity in them:—they are the members of His dear Son's body ; in Him He sees them, and is well pleased. The Lord Jesus discerns in them the fruit of His own travail and work upon the cross, and is well satisfied. The Holy Grhost regards them as spiritual temples, which He Himself has reared, and rejoices over them. In a word, they are the wheat of the earth.

Reader, who are the chaff in the world ? Listen to me once more, and I will tell you this also.

The chaff means all men and women who have no saving faith in Christ, and no sanctification of the Spirit, whosoever they may be. Some of them perhaps are infidels, and some are formal Christians. Some are sneering Sadducees, and some self-righteous Pharisees. Some of them make a point of keeping up a kind of Sunday religion, and others are utterly careless of everything except their own pleasure and the world. But all alike who have the two great marks already mentioned,—no faith and no sanctificatkm,—all such are chaff. From Paine and Voltaire to the dead churchman who can think of nothing but outward ceremonies,—from Julian and Porphyry to the unconverted admirer of sermons in the present day,—all, all, are standing in one rank before God; all, all are chaff.

They bring no glory to God the Father. They honor not the Son, and so do not honor the Father that sent Him. They neglect that mighty salvation, which countless millions of angels admire. They disobey that word which was graciously written for their learning. They listen not to the voice of Him who condescended to leave heaven and die for their sins. They pay no tribute of service and affection to Him who gave them life, and breath, and all things. And therefore God takes no pleasure in them. He pities them, but He reckons them no better than chaff.

Yes ! you may have rare intellectual gifts, and high mental attainments. You may sway kingdoms by your counsel, move millions by your pen, or keep crowds in breathless attention by your tongue. But if you have never submitted yourself to the yoke of Christ, and never honored His Gospel by heartfelt reception of it, you are nothing in His sight. Natural gifts without grace arc like a row of cyphers without a unit before them : they look big, but they are of no value. The meanest insect that crawls is a nobler being than you are. It fills its place in creation, and glorifies its Maker with all its powers, and you do not. You do not honor God with heart and will, and intellect and members, which are all His. You invert His order and arrangement, and live as if time was of more importance than eternity, and body better than soul. You dare to neglect God's greatest gift, His own incarnate Son. You are cold about that subject which fills all heaven with hallelujahs. And so long as this is the case, you belong to the worthless part of mankind. You are the chaff of the earth.

Reader, let this thought be graven deeply in your mind, whatever else you forget in this tract. Remember there are only two sorts of people iy the world. There are wheat, and there are chaff.

There are many nations in Europe. Each differs from the rest. Each has its own language, its own laws, its own peculiar customs. But God's eye divides Europe into two great parties,—the wheat and the chaff.

There are many classes in England. There are peers and commoners,—farmers and shopkeepers,—masters and servants,—rich and poor. But God's eye only takes account of two orders,—the wheat and the chaff.

There are many and various minds in every congregation that meets for religious worship. There are some who attend for a mere form, and some who really desire to meet Christ,— some who come there to please others, and some who come to please God,—some who bring their hearts with them and are not soon tired, and some who leave their hearts behind them, and reckon the whole service weary work. But the eye of Jesus only sees two divisions in the congregation,—the wheat and the chaff.

There were thousands of visitors to the great exhibition of 1851. From Europe, Asia, Africa, and America,—from North, and South, and East, and West,—crowds came together to see what skill and industry could do. Children of oar first father Adam's family, who had never seen each other before, for once met under one roof. But the eye of the Lord saw only two companies thronging that large palace of glass,— the wheat and the chaff.

Reader, I know well the world dislikes this •way of dividing professing Christians. The world tries hard to fancy there are three sorts of people, and not two. To be very good and very strict does not suit the world :—they cannot, will not be saints. To have no religion at all does not suit the world :—it would not be respectable;—" thank God," they will say, " we are not so bad as that." But to have religion enough to be saved, and yet not go into extremes,—to be sufficiently good, and yet not be peculiar,—to have a quiet, easy-going, moderate kind of Christianity, and go comfortably to heaven after all,—this is the world's favorite idea. There is a third class,—a safe middle class,—the world fancies, and in this middle class, the majority of men persuade themselves they will be found.

Reader, I denounce this notion of a middle class as an immense and soul-ruining delusion. I warn you strongly not to be carried away by it. It is as vain an invention as the Pope's purgatory. It is a refuge of lies,—a castle in the air,—a Russian ice-palace,—a vast unreality,—an empty dream. This middle class is a class of Christians nowhere spoken of in the Bible.

There were two classes in the day of Noah's flood,—those who were inside the ark, and those who were without; two in the parable of the Gospel net, those who are called the good fish, and those who are called the bad ; —two in the parable of the ten virgins, those who are described as wise, and those who are described as foolish ;—two in the account of the judgment-day, the sheep and the goats ;— two sides of the throne, the right hand, and the left;—two abodes when the last sentence has been passed, heaven and hell.

And just so there are only two classes in the visible church on earth,—those who are in the state of nature, and those who are in the state, of grace,—those who are in the narrow way, and those who are in the broad,—those who have faith, and those who have not faith, —those who have been converted, and those who have not been converted,—those who are with Christ, and those who are against Him, —those who gather with Him, and those who scatter abroad,—those who are wheat, and those who are chaff. Into these two classes the whole professing church of Christ may be divided. Besides these two classes there is none.

Reader, dear Reader, see now what cause there is for self-inquiry. Are you among the wheat, or among the chaff? Neutrality is impossible. Either you are in one class, or in the other. Which is it of the two ?

You attend church perhaps. You go to the Lord's table. You like good people. You can distinguish between good preaching and bad. You think Popery false, and oppose it warmly. You think Protestantism true, and support it cordially. You subscribe to religious societies. You attend religious meetings. You sometimes read religious books. It is well: it is very well. It is good : it is all very good. It is more than can be said of many. But still this is not a straightforward answer to my question,—Are you wheat, or are you chaff?

Have you been born again ? Are you a new creature ? Have you put off the old man, and put on the new *?* Have you ever felt your sins, and repented of them ? Are you looking simply to Christ for pardon and life eternal ? Do you love Christ ? Do you serve Christ ? Do you loathe heart-sins, and fight against them ? Do you long for perfect holiness, and follow hard after it? Have you come out from the world ? Do you delight in the Bible ? Do you wrestle in prayer ? Do you love Christ's people ? Do you try to do good to the world ? Are you vile in your own "WHEAT OR CHAFF. 17

eyes, and willing to\* take the lowest place ? Are you a Christian in business, and on weekdays, and by your own fire-side ? Oh ! think, think, think on these things, and then perhaps you will be better able to tell the state of your soul.

Reader, I beseech you not to turn away from my question, however unpleasant it may be. Answer it, though it may prick your conscience, and cut you to the heart. Answer it, though it may prove you in the wrong, and expose your fearful danger. Rest not, rest not, till you know how it is between you and God. Better a thousand times find out that you are in evil case, and repent betimes, than live on in uncertainty, and be lost eternally.

Reader, remember my question,—meditate on it at the beginning of a new year. Are you wheat or chaff?

II. Let me show you, in the second place, *the time when the two great classes of mankind shall be separated.*

The text at the beginning of this tract fore2

18 WHEAT OR CHAFF.

tells a separation. It says that Christ shall one day do to His professing Church what the farmer does to his corn. He shall winnow and sift it. He shall throughly purge His floor. And then the wheat and the chaff shall be divided.

There is no separation yet. Good and bad are now all mingled together in the visible Church of Christ. Believers and unbelievers, —converted and unconverted,—holy and unholy,—all are to be found now among those who call themselves Christians. They sit side by side in our assemblies. They kneel side by side in our pews. They listen side by side to our sermons. They sometimes come up side by side to the Lord's table, and receive the same bread and wine from our hands.

But it shall not always be so. Christ shall come the second time with His fan in His hand. He shall purge His Church, even as He purified the temple. And then the wheat and the chaff shall be separated, and each go to its own place.

Before Christ comes separation is impossiWHEAT OR CHAFF. 19

ble. It is'not in man's power to effect it. There lives not the minister oh earth who can read the hearts of every one in his congregation. About some he may speak decidedly,—• he cannot aboui all. Who have oil in their lamps, and who have not,—who have grace as well as profession, and who have profession only and no grace,—who are children of God, and who of the devil,—all these are questions which, in many cases, we cannot accurately decide. The fan is not put into our hands.

Grace is sometimes so weak and feeble, that it looks like nature. Nature is sometimes so plausible and well-dressed, that it looks like grace. I believe we should many of us have said that Judas was as good as any of the Apostles ; and yet he proved a traitor. I believe we should have said that Peter was a reprobate when he denied his Lord, and yet he repented immediately, and rose again. We are but fallible men. We know in part, and prophesy in part. We scarcely understand our own hearts. It is no great wonder if we cannot road the hearts of others.

But it will not always be so. There is One coming who never errs in judgment, and is perfect in knowledge. Jesus shall purge His floor. Jesus shall sift the chaff from the wheat. I wait for this. Till then I will lean to the sitlo of charity in my judgments. I would rather tolerate much chaff in the Church, than cast out one grain of wheat. He shall sooa come who has His fan in His hand, and then the certainty about every one shall be known.

Before Christ comes I do not expect to see a perfect Church. There cannot be such a thing. The wheat and the chaff, in the present state of things, will always be-found together. I pity those who leave one Church and join another, because of a few faults and unsound members. I pity them because they are fostering ideas which can never be realized. I pity them, because they are seeking that which cannot be found. I see chaff everywhere. I see imperfections and infirmities of some kind in every communion on earth. I believe there arc few tables of the Lord, if any, where all the communicants are converted. I often see

loud-talking professors exalted as saints. I often see holy and contrite believers set down as having no grace at all. I am satisfied if men are too scrupulous, they may go fluttering about like Noah's dove all their days and never'find rest.

Reader, do you desire a perfect Church ? You must wait for the day of Christ's appearing. Then, and not till then, you will see a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Then, and not till then, the floor will be purged.

Before Christ comes I do not look for the conversion of the world. How can it be, if He is to find wheat and chaff side by side in the day of His second coming ? I believe some Christians expect that missions will fill the earth with the knowledge of Christ, and that little by little sin will disappear, and a state of perfect holiness gradually glide in. I cannot see with their eyes. I think they are mistaking God's purposes, and sowing lor themselves bitter disappointment. I expect nothing of the kind. I see nothing, in the Bible, or in the world around me, to make me expect it. I have never heard of a single parish entirely converted to Grod, in England, or Scotland, or of anything like it ?—A.nd why am I to look for a different result from the preaching of the Gospel in other lands ? I only expect to• see a few raised up as witnesses to Christ in every nation, some in one place and some in another. Then I expect the Lord Jesus will come in glory, with His fan in His hand. And when He has purged His floor, and not till then, His kingdom will begin.

*No separation and no perfection till Christ comes !* This is my creed. I am not moved when the infidel asks me why all the world is not converted, if Christianity is really true. I answer, it was never promised that it would be so in the present order of things. The Bible tells me that believers will always be few,— that corruptions, and divisions, and heresies, will always abound, and that when my Lord returns to earth, He• will find plenty of chaff.

*No perfection iitt, Christ comes !* I am not disturbed when men say, " Make all the peopie good Christians at home before you send missionaries to the heathen abroad." I answer, if *1* am to wait for that, I may •wait for(iVor. When we have done all at home, the Church will still be a mixed body,—some wheat and much chaff.

But Christ will come again. Sooner or later there shall be a separation of the visible Church into two companies, and fearful shall that separation be. The wheat shall make up one company. The chaff shall make up another. The one company will be all gudly. The other company will be all ungodly. Each shall be by themselves, and a great gulf between, that none can pass. Blessed indeed shall the righteous be in that day ! They shall shine like stars, no longer obscured with clouds. They shall be beautiful as the lily, no longer choked with thorns. Wretched indeed will the ungodly be! How corrupt will corruption be when left without one grain of salt to season it! How dark will darkness be when left without one spark of light! Ah ! Reader, it is not enough to respect and admire the Lord's people. You must belong to them, or you will one day be parted from them forever. There will be no chaff' in heaven. Many, many are the families where one will be taken and another left.

Who is there now among the readers of this tract that loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity ? If I know anything of the heart of a Christian, your greatest trials are in the company of worldly people,—your greatest joys in the company of the saints. Yes! there are many weary days, when your spirit feels broken and crushed by the earthly tone of all around you,—days when you could cry with David, " Woe is me that I dwell in Mesech, and have my habitation in the tents of Kedar." And yet there are hours v.hon your soul is so refreshed and revived by meeting some of God's dear children, that it seems like heaven on earth. Do I not speak to your heart ? Are not these things true ? See then how you should long for the time when Christ shall come again. See how you should pray daily that the Lord would hasten His kingdom, and say to Him, " Come quickly, Lord Jesus." Then, and not till then, shall be a pure unmixed communion. Then, and not till then, the saints shall all be together, and shall go out from one another's presence no more. Wait a little. Wait a little. Scorn and contempt will soon be over. Laughter and ridicule shall soon have an end. Slander and misrepresentation will soon cease. Your Saviour shall come and plead your cause. And then, as Moses said to Korah, " the Lord will show who are His."\*

Who is there among the readers of this tract that knows his heart is not right in the sight of God ? See how you should fear and tremble at the thought of Christ's appearing. Alas ! indeed for the man that lives and dies with nothing better than a cloak of religion ! In the day when Christ shall purge His floor, you

\* " This is certain, when the elect are all converted, then Christ will come to judgment. As he that rows a boat, stays till all the passengers are taken into his boat, and then he rows away: so Christ stays till all the elect are gathered in. and then he will hasten away to judgment." *Thomas Watson.* 1660.

•will be shown up and exposed in your true colors. You may deceive ministers, and friends, and neighbors,—but you cannot deceive Christ. The paint and varnish of a heartless Christianity will never stand the fire of that day. The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. You will find that the eye which saw Achan and Gehazi, has read your secrets, and searched out your hidden things. You will hear that awful word, " Friend, how eamest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment ?" Oh ! tremble at the thought of the day of sifting and separation. Surely hypocrisy is a most losing game. Surely it never answers to act a part. Surely it .never answers, like Ananias and Sapphira, to pretend to give God something, and yet to keep back your heart. It all fails at last. Your joy is but for a moment. Your hopes are no better than a dream. Oh J tremble, tremble, tremble, and repent.

Reader, think on these things. Remember my question. Meditate on it, as you begin a new year. Are you wheat or chaff?

III. Let me show you in the third place, *the portion which Christ's people shall receive, when He comes to purge His floor.*

The text at the beginning of this tract tells us this in good and comfortable words. It tells us that Christ shall " gather His wheat into the garner."

When, the Lord Jesus comes the second time, He shall collect His believing people into a place of safety. He will send His angels and gather them from every quarter. The sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and the graves the dead that are in them, and the living shall be changed. Not one poor sinner of mankind who has ever laid hold on Christ by faith shall be wanting in that company. Not one single grain of wheat shall be missing and left outside, when judgments fall upon a wicked world. There shall be a garner for the wheat of the earth, and into that garner all the wheat shall be brought.

Ah! Reader, it is a sweet and comfortable thought, that " the Lord careth for the righteous." But how much the Lord cares for them, I fear is little known, and dimly seen. They have their trials beyond question, and these both many and great. The flesh is weak. The world is full of snares. The cross is heavy. The way is narrow. The companions are few. But still they have strong consolations, if their eyes were but open to see them. Like Hagar they have a well of water near them, even in the wilderness, though they often do not find it out. Like Mary, they have Jesus standing by their side, though often they are not aware of it for very tears.

Bear with me, while I try to tell you something about Christ's care for poor sinners that believe in Him. Alas ! indeed that it should be needful. But we live in a day of weak and feeble statements. The danger of the state of nature is feebly exposed. The privileges of the state of grace are feebly set forth. Hesitating souls are not encouraged. Disciples are not established and confirmed. The man out of Christ is not rightly alarmed. The man in Christ is not rightly built up. The one sleeps on, and seldom has his conscience pricked. The other creeps and crawls all his days, never thoroughly understands the riches of his inheritance. Truly this is a sore disease, and one that I would gladly help to cure. Truly it is a melancholy thing that the people of God should never go up to mount Pizgah, and never know the length and breadth of their possessions. To be brethren of Christ, and sons of God by adoption ;—to have full and perfect forgiveness, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;—to have a place in the book of life, and a name on the breast-plate of the Great High Priest in heaven ;—all these are glorious things indeed. But still they are not the whole of a believer's portion. They are upper springs indeed, but still there are nether springs beside.

The Lord takes pleasure in His believing people. Though black in their own eyes, they are comely and honorable in His. They are all fair. He sees no spot in them. Their weaknesses and shortcomings do not break off the union between Him and them. He chose them, knowing all their hearts. He took them for His own with a perfect understanding of all their debts, liabilities, and infirmities, and He will never break His covenant and cast them off. When they fall, He will raise them again. When they wander, He will bring them back. Their *prayers* are pleasant to Him. As a father loves the first stammering efforts of his child to speak, so the Lord loves the poor feeble petitions of His people. He endorses them with His own mighty intercession, and gives them power on high. Their *services* are pleasant to Him. As a father delights in the first daisy that his child picks up and brings him, even so the Lord is pleased with the weak attempts of His people to serve Him. Not a cup of cold water shall lose its reward. Not a word spoken in love shall ever be forgotten. He told the Hebrews of Noah's faith, but not of his drunkenness,—of Rahab's faith, but not of her lie. Oh ! Reader, it is a blessed thing to be God's wheat!

The Lord cares for His believing people *in their lives.* Their dwelling-place is well known. The street, called strait, where Judas dwelt, and Paul lodged,—the house by the sea-side, where Peter prayed, were all familiar to their Lord. None have such attendants as they have:—angels rejoice when they are bora again ; angels minister to them ; and angels encamp around them. None have such food: —their bread is given them, and their water is sure, and they have meat to eat of which the world knows nothing. None have such company as they have.—The Spirit dwelleth with them. The Father and the Son come to them, and make their abode with them. Their steps are all ordered from grace to glory. Those that persecute them persecute Christ Himself, and those that hurt them hurt the apple of the Lord's eye. Their trials and temptations are all measured out by a wise Physician:—not a grain of bitterness is ever mingled in their cup, that is not good for the health of their souls. Their temptations, like Job's, are all under God's control:—Satan cannot touch a hair of their head without their Lord's permission, nor even tempt them above that which they shall be able to bear. As a father pitieth his own children, so does the Lord pity them that fear Him. He never afflicts them willingly. He leads them by the right way. He withholds nothing that is really for their good. Come what will, there is always a needs-be. When they are placed in the furnace, it is that they may be purified. When they are chastened, it is that they may become more holy. When they are pruned, it is to make them more fruitful. When they are transplanted from place to place, it is that they may bloom more brightly. All things are continually working together for their good. Like the bee they extract sweetness even out of the bitterest flowers. Ah! Reader, it is a blessed thing to be Christ's wheat.

The Lord cares for His believing people *in their deaths.* Their times are all in the Lord's hand. The hairs of their heads are all numbered, and not one can ever fall to the ground without their Father. They are kept on earth till they are ripe and ready for glory, and not one moment longer. When they have had sun and rain enough, wind and storm enough, cold and heat enough,—when the ear is perfected, —then, and not till then, the sickle is put in. They are all immortal till their work is done. There is not a disease that can loosen the pins of their tabernacle, until the Lord gives the word. ' A thousand may fall at their right hand, but there is not a plague that can touch them till the Lord sees good. There is not a physician that can keep them alive, when the Lord gives the word. When they come to their death-bed, the everlasting arms are round about them, and make all their bed in their sickness. When they die, they die like Moses, according to the word of the Lord, at the right time and in the right way. And when they breathe their last, they fall asleep in Christ, and are at once carried, like Lazarus, into Abraham's bosom. Ah! Reader, it is a blessed thing to be Christ's wheat. When the sun of other men is setting, the sun of the believer is rising. When other men are laying aside their honors, he is putting his on. Death locks the door on the unbeliever, and shuts him out from hope. But death opens the door to the believer, and lets him into paradise.

And the Lord will care for His believing people *in the dreadful day of His appearing.* The flaming fire shall not come nigh them. The voice of the Arch-angel and the trump of God shall proclaim no terrors to their ears. Sleeping or waking, quick or dead, mouldering in the coffin, or standing at the post of daily duty,—believers shall be secure and unmoved. They shall lift up their heads with joy, when they see redemption drawing nigh. They shall be changed, and put on their, beautiful garments in the twinkling of an eye. They shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Jesus will do nothing to a sin-laden world till all His people are safe. There was an ark for Noah when the flood began. There was a Zoar for Lot when the fire fell on Sodom. There was a Pella for early Christians when Jerusalem was besieged. There was a Zurich for English Reformers when Popish Mary came to the throne. And there will be a garner for all the wheat of the earth in the last day.

Ah! Reader, it is a blessed thing to be Christ's wheat.

I often wonder at the miserable faithlessness of those among us who are believers. Next to the hardness of the unconverted heart, I call it one of the greatest wonders in the world. I wonder that with such mighty reasons for confidence we can still be so full of doubts. I marvel above all things, how any can deny the doctrine that Christ's people persevere unto the end, and can fancy that He who loved them, so as to die for them upon the cross, will ever let them be cast away. I cannot think so. I do not believe the Lord Jesus will ever lose one of His flock. He will not let Satan pluck away from Him so much as one sick lamb. He will not allow one bone of His mystical body to be broken. He will not suffer one jewel to fall from His crown. He and His bride have once been joined in an everlasting covenant, and they shall never, never be put asunder. The trophies won by earthly conquerors have often been wrested from them, and carried off; but this shall never be said of the trophies of Him, who triumphed for us on the cross. " My sheep," He says, " shall never perish." (Joh 10:28.) I take my stand on that text. I know not how it can be evaded. If words have any meaning, the perseverance of Christ's people is there.

I do not believe when David had rescued the lamb from the paws of the lion, that he left it weak and wounded to perish in the wilderness. I cannot believe when the Lord Jesus has delivered a soul from the snare of the devil, that He will ever leave that soul to take his chance, and wrestle on in his feebleness against sin. the devil, and the world.

Reader, I dare be sure, if you were present at a shipwreck, and seeing some helpless child tossing on the waves, were to plunge into the sea, and save him at the risk of your own life, —I dare be sure you would not be content with merely bringing that child safe to thore. You would not lay him down when you had reached the land, and say, " I will do no more ; —he is weak,—he is insensible,—he is cold ;— it matters not:—I have done enough,—I have delivered him from the waters,—he is not drowned." You would not do it. You would not say so. You would not treat that child in such a manner. You would lift him in your arms. You would carry him to the nearest house. You would try to bring back warmth and animation. You would use every means to restore health and vigor. You would never leave him till his recovery was a certain thing.

And can you suppose the Lord Jesus Christ is less merciful, and less compassionate ? Can you think he would suffer on the cross and die, and yet leave it uncertain whether believers in him would be saved ? Can you think He would wrestle with death and hell and go down to the grave for our sakes, and yet allow our eternal life to hang on such a thread as our poor miserable endeavors.

Oh ! No ! He does not do so. He is a perfect and complete Saviour. Those whom He loves, He loves unto the end. Those whom He washes in His blood He never leaves nor forsakes. He puts His fear into their hearts, so that they shall not depart from Him. Where He begins a work there He also finishes. All whom He plants in His garden enclosed on earth, He transplants sooner or later into paradise. All whom He quickens by His Spirit He will also bring with Him when He enters His kingdom. There is a garner for every grain of the wheat. All shall appear in Zion before God.

From false grace man may fall, and that both finally and foully. I never doubt this. I see proof of it continually. From true grace men never do fall totally. They never did and they never will. If they commit sin like Peter they shall repent and rise again. If they err from the right way, like David, they shall be brought back. It is not any strength or power of their own, that keeps them from apostasy. They are kept because the power, and love, and promises of the Trinity are all engaged on their side. The election of God the Father shall not be fruitless :—the intercession of God the Son shall not be ineffectual:—the love of God the Spirit shall not be labor in vain. The Lord shall keep the feet of His saints. They shall all be more than conquerors through Him that loved them. They shall all conquer and none die eternally.\*

Reader, if you have not yet taken up the cross and become Christ's disciple, you little know what privileges you are missing. Peace with God now and glory hereafter,—the everlasting arms to keep you by the way, and the garner of safety in the end;—all these are freely offered to you without money and without price. You may say that Christians have tribulations ;—you forget that they have also consolations. You may say they have peculiar sorrows ;—you forget they have also peculiar joys. You see but half the Christian life. You see not all. You see the warfare ;—but not the meat and the wages. You see the tossing and conflict of the outward part of Christianity ; you see not the hidden treasures which lie deep within. Like Elisha's servant, you see the enemies of God's children; but you do not, like Elisha, see the chariots and horses of fire which protect them. Oh ! judge not by outward appearances. Be sure that the least drop of the water of life is better than all the rivers of the world. Remember the garner and the crown. Be wise in time.

\* " Blessed forever and ever be that mother's child whose faith hath mado him the child of God. The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us, the countenance of the heaven may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, the stars their glory: but concerning the man that trusteth in God,—what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection towards God, or the affection of God to him *V—Richard Hooker.* 1585.

Reader, if you feel that you are a weak disciple, think not that weakness shuts you out from any of the privileges of which I have been speaking. Weak faith is true faith, and weak grace is true grace; and both are the gift of Him who never gives in vain. Fear not, neither be discouraged. Doubt not, neither despair. Jesus will never break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. The babes in a family are as much loved and thought of as the elder brothers and sisters. The tender seedlings in a garden are as diligently looked after as the old trees. The lambs in the flock are as carefully tended by the good shepherd as the old sheep. Oh ! rest assured it is just the same in Christ's family, in Christ's garden, in Christ's flock. All are loved. All are tenderly thought of. All are cared for. And all shall be found in His garner at last.

Reader, think on these things. Remember my question at the beginning of a new year. Meditate upon it. Are you wheat or chaff?

IV. Let me show you, in the last place, *the portion which remains for all who are not Christ's people.*

The text at the beginning of this tract describes this in words which should make our ears tingle,—Christ shall " burn up the chaff with fire unquenchable."

When the Lord Jesus Christ comes to purge His floor, He shall punish all who are not His disciples with a fearful punishment. All who are found impenitent and unbelieving,—all who have held the truth in unrighteousness— all who have clung to sin,—stuck to the world and set their affections on things below,—• all who are without Christ,—All such shall come to an awful end. Christ shall " burn up the chaff."

Their punishment shall be *most severe.* There is no pain like that of burning. Put your "finger in the candle for a moment if you doubt this and try. Fire is the most destructive and devouring of all elements. Look into the mouth of a blast furnace and think what it would be to be there. Fire is of all elements most opposed to life. Creatures can live in air, and earth, and water; but nothing can live in fire. Yet fire is the portion to which the Christless and unbelieving will come. Christ will " burn up the chaff with fire."

Their punishment shall be *eternal.* Millions of ages shall pass away, and the fire into which the chaff is cast shall still burn on. That fire shall never burn low and become dim. The fuel of that fire shall never waste away and become consumed. It is " unquenchable fire."

Oh ! reader, these are sad and painful things to speak of. I have no pleasure in dwelling on them. I could rather say with the apostle Paul, " I have great sorrow." But they are things written for our learning, and it is good to consider them. They are a part of that Scripture which is all profitable, and they ought to be heard. Painful as the subject of hell is, it is one about which I dare not, cannot, must not be silent. Who would desire to speak of hell-fire if God had not spoken of it ? When God has spoken of it so plainly, who can safely hold his peace ?

I dare not shut my eyes to the fact, that a deep-rooted infidelity lurks in men's rninds on the subject of hell. I see it oozing out in the utter apathy of some: they eat, and drink, and sleep as if there was no wrath to come. I see it creeping forth in the coldness of others about their neighbors' souls ; they show little anxiety to pluck brands from the fire. I desire to denounce such infidelity with all my might. Believing that there are terrors of the Lord, as well as the recompense of reward, I call on all who profess to believe the Bible, tc be on their guard.

I know that some do not believe there is any hell at all. They think it impossible there can be such a place. They call it inconsistent with the mercy of God. They say it is too awful an idea to be really true. The devil of course rejoices in the views of such people. They help his kingdom mightily. They are preaching up his old favorite doctrine, "ye shall not surely die."

I know furthermore that some do not believe that hell is eternal. They tell us it is incredible, that a compassionate God will punish men forever. He will surely open the prison-doors at last. This also is a mighty help to the devil's cause. " Take your ease," he whispers to sinners,—" if you do make a mistake never mind, it is not forever."

I know also that some believe there is a hell, but never allow that anybody is going there. All people with them are good as soon as they die,—all were sincere,—all meant well, and all, they hope, got to heaven. Alas ! what a common delusion is this ! I can well understand the feeling of the little girl who asked her mother where all the wicked people were buried, " for she found no mention on the gravestones of any except the good."

And I know very well that some believe there is a hell, but never like it to be spoken of. It is a subject that should always be kept back in their opinion. They see no profit in bringing it forward, and are rather shocked when it is mentioned. This also is an immense help to the devil. " Hush, hush !" says Satan, " say nothing about hell." The fowler wishes to hear no noise when he lays his snares. The wolf would like the shepherd to sleep while he prowls around the fold. The devil rejoices when Christians are silent about hell.

Reader, all these notions are the opinions of man. What is it to you and me what man thinks in religion ? Man will not judge us at the last day. Man's fancies and traditions are not to be our guide in this life. There is but one point to be settled, " what says the word of God."

Do you believe the Bible ? Then depend upon it, *hell is real and true.* It is as true as heaven,—as true as justification by faith,—as true as the fact that Christ died upon the cross, —as true as the Dead Sea. There is not a fact or doctrine which you may not lawfully doubt if you doubt hell. Disbelieve hell, and you unscrew, unsettle, and unpin everything in Scripture. You may as well throw your Bible aside at once. From "no hell" to " no God " there is but a series of steps.

Do you believe the Bible ? Then depend upon it *hell will have inhabitants.* The wicked shall certainly be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God. These shall go away into everlasting punishment. The same blessed Saviour who now sits on a throne of grace, will one day sit on a throne of judgment, and men will see there is such a thing as the wrath of the Lamb. The same lips which now say " come, come unto me," will one day say " depart, ye cursed !" Alas ! how awful the thought of being condemned by Christ Himself, judged by the Saviour, sentenced to misery by the Lamb!

Do you believe the Bible? Then depend upon it, *hell will be intense and unutterable woe.* It is vain to talk of all the expressions about it being only figures of speech. The pit, the prison, the worm, the fire, the thirst, the blackness, the darkness, the weeping, the gnashing of teeth, the second death,—all these may be figures of speech if you please. But Bible figures mean something beyond all question, and here they mean something which man's- mind can never fully conceive. Oh! reader, the miseries of mind and conscience are far worse than those of the body. The whole extent of hell, the present suffering, the bitter recollection of the past, the hopeless prospect of the future, will never be thoroughly known except by those who go there.

Do you believe the Bible ? Then depend upon it, *hell is eternal.* It must be eternal, or words have no meaning at all. Forever and ever,—everlasting,—unquenchable,—never-dying,—all these are expressions used about hell, and expressions that cannot be explained away. It must be eternal, or the very foundatiojjs of heaven are cast down. If hell has an end, heaven has an end too. They both stand or fall together. It must be, or else every doctrine of the Gospel is undermined. If a man may escape hell at length without faith in Christ, or sanctification of the Spirit, sin is no longer an infinite evil, and there was no such great need for Christ making an atonement.—And where is there warrant for saying that hell can ever change a heart, or make it fit for heaven ? It must be eternal, or hell would cease to be hell altogether. Give a man hope, and he will bear anything. Grant a hope of deliverance however distant, and hell is but a drop of water. Ah ! reader, these are solemn things. Well said old Caryl, " FOREVER is the most solemn saying in the Bible." Alas ! for that day which will have no to-morrow,—that day when men shall seek death and not find it, and shall desire to die, but death shall flee from them ! Who shall dwell with devouring fire ! Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings ! \*

Do you believe the Bible ? Then depend upon it, hell is *a subject that ought not to be kept back.* It is striking to observe the many texts about it in Scripture. It is striking to observe that none say so much about it as our Lord Jesus Christ, that gracious and merciful Saviour, and the apostle John, whose heart seems full of love. Truly it may well be doubted whether we ministers speak of it as much as we ought. I cannot forget the words of a dying hearer of Mr. Newton's, " Sir, you often told me of Christ and salvation: why did you not oftener remind me of hell and danger?"

Let others hold their peace about hell if they will: I dare not do so. I see it plainly in Scripture, and I must speak of it. I fear that thousands are on that broad way that leads to it, and I would fain arouse them to a sense of the peril before them. What would you say of the man who saw his neighbor's house in danger of being burned down, and never raised the cry of " fire ?" What ought to be said of us ministers if we call ourselves watchmen for souls, and yet see the fires of hell raging in the distance, and never give the alarm ? Call it bad taste, if you like, to speak of hell. Call it charity to make things pleasant, and speak smoothly, and soothe men with constant lullaby of peace. From such notions of taste and charity may I ever be delivered ! My notion of charity is to warn men plainly of danger. My notion of taste in the ministerial office, is to declare all the counsel of God. If I never spoke of hell, I should think I had kept back something that was profitable, and should look on myself as an accomplice of the devil. Reader, I beseech you, in all tender affection, beware of false views of the subject on which I have been dwelling. Beware of new and strange doctrines about hell and the eternity of punishment. Beware of manufacturing a God of your own—a God who is all mercy but not just,—a God who is all love, but not holy,—a God who has a heaven for everybody, but a hell for none,—a God who can allow good and bad to be side by side in time, but will make no distinction between good and bad in eternity. Such a God is an idol of your own, as really as Jupiter, or Juggernaut, —as true an idol as any snake or crocodile in an Egyptian temple,—as true an idol as was ever moulded out of brass or clay. The hands of your own fancy and sentimentality have made Him. He is not the God of the Bible, and beside the God of the Bible there is no God at all. Your heaven would be no heaven at all. A heaven containing all sorts of characters indiscriminately would be miserable discord indeed. Alas ! for the eternity of such a heaven. There would be little difference between it and hell. Ah! reader, there is a hell! There is a fire for the chaff! Take heed lest you find it out to your cost too late.

Beware of being wise above that which is written. Beware of forming fanciful theories of your own, and then trying to make the Bible square in with them. Beware of making selections from your Bible to suit your taste—refusing, like a spoilt child, whatever you think bitter,—seizing, like a spoilt child, whatever you think sweet. What is all this but taking Jehoiakim's penknife ? What does it amount to but telling God, that you, a poor short-lived worm, know what is good for you better than He. It will not do. It will not do. You must take the Bible as it is. You must read it all, and believe it all. You must come to the reading of it in the spirit of a little child. Dare not to say, " I believe this verse, for I like it. I reject that, for I do not like it. I receive this, for I can understand it. I refuse that, for I cannot reconcile it with my views." Nay ! but 0 man, who art thou that repliest against God ? By what right do you talk in this way. Surely it were better to say over every chapter in the Word, " Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."—Ah ! reader, if men would do this, they would never deny hell, the chaff, and the fire.

Think on these things once more. Meditate upon them. Remember my question, " Are you wheat or chaff."

And now, reader, let me say four things in conclusion, and then I have done. I have shown you the two great classes of mankind, the wheat and the chaff. I have shown you the separation which will one day take place. I have shown you the safety of the Lord's people. I have shown yon the fearful portion of the Christless and unbelieving. I commend these things to your conscience as in the sight of God.

1. And now settle it down in your mind that the things of which I have been speaking are *all real and true.*

*-* I do believe that many never see the great truths of religion in this light. I firmly believe that many never listen to the things they hear from ministers as realities. They regard it all, like Gallic, as a matter of names and words, and nothing jni»r«,—a huge shadow,— a formal part-acting,—avastsham. llacaulay's History of England, Dickens's last Novel, the latest news from California, New Zealand, or New York,—all these are things they realize. They feel interested and excited about them. But as to the Bible and heaven, and the kingdom of Christ, and the judgment-day,—these are subjects that they hear unmoved. They do not really believe them. If Layard had dug up at Nineveh anything damaging the truth and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, it would not have interfered with their peace for an hour.

Reader, if you have unhappily got into this frame of mind, I charge you to cast it off forever. Whether you mean to hear or forbear, awaken to a thorough conviction that the things I have brought before you are real and true. The wheat, the chaff, the separation, the garner, the fire,—all these are great realities,—as real as the sun in heaven,—as real as the paper which your eyes behold. For my part, I believe in heaven, and I believe in hell. I believe in a coming judgment.. I believe in a day of sifting. I am not ashamed to say so. I believe them all, and therefore write as I do. Oh! reader, take a friend's advice, live as if these things were true.

2. Settle it down in your mind, in the second place, that the things of which I write *concern yourself.* They are your business, your affair, and your concern.

Many, I am satisfied, never look on religion as a matter that concerns themselves. They attend on its outward part, as a decent and proper fashion. They hear sermons. They read religious books. They have their children christened. But all the time they never ask themselves, " What is all this to rne ?" They sit in our churches like spectators in a theatre or court of law. They read our writings as if they were reading a report of an interesting trial, or of some event far away. But they do not say to themselves, " I am the man."

Reader, if you have this kind of feeling, depend upon it, it will never do. There must be an end of all this if ever you are to be saved. You are the man I write to, whoever you may be that reads this tract. 1 write not specially to the rich. I write not specially to the poor. I write to everybody who will read, whatever his rank may be. It is on your soul's account that I am pleading, and not another's. You are spoken of in the text that begins this tract. You are this very day either among the wheat or among the chaff. Your portion will one day either be the garner or the fire. Oh! that men were wise, and would lay these things to heart! Oh! that they would not triflo, dally, linger, live on half-and-half Christians, meaning well, but never acting boldly, and at last awake when it is too late.

3. Settle it down in your mind in the third place, that if you are willing to be one of the wheat of the earth, *the Lord Jesus Christ is willing to receive you.*

Does any man suppose that Jesus is not willing to see His garner filled ? Do you think He does not desire to bring many sons to glory ? Oh ! but you little know the depth of His mercy and compassion, if you think such a thought. He wept over unbelieving Jerusalem. He mourns over the impenitent and the thoughtless in the present day. He sends you invitations by my mouth this hour. He invites you to hear and live, to forsake the way of the foolish, and go in the paths of understanding. " As I live," He says, " I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ?"

Oh ! reader, if you never came to Christ for life before, come to Him this very year. Come to Him with the penitent's prayer for mercy and grace. Come to Him without delay. Come to Him while the name of the new year is still strange to you. Come to Him before the winter is past, and let the spring find you a new creature.

If you are determined to have the world, and the things of the world,—its pleasures and its rewards,—its follies and its sins ;—if you must have your own way, and cannot give up anything for Christ and your soul;—if this be your case, there is but one end before you. I fairly warn you. I plainly tell you. You will sooner or later come to the unquenchable fire.

But if any man is willing to be saved, the Lord Jesus Christ stands ready to save him. " Come unto me," He says, " weary soul, and I will give you rest. Come, guilty and sinful soul, and I will give you free pardon. Come, lost and ruined soul, and I will give you eternal life."

Oh! reader, let this message be a word in season. Arise and call upon the Lord. Let the angels of God rejoice over one more saved soul. Let the courts of heaven hear the good tidings that one more lost sheep is found.

4. Settle it down in your mind last of all that if you have committed your soul to Christ, *Christ will never allow that soiil to perish.*

The everlasting arms are round about you. Lean back in them' and know your safety. The same hand that was nailed to the cross is holding you. The same wisdom that framed the heavens and the earth is engaged to maintain your cause. The same power that redeemed the tribes from the house of bondage is on your side. The same love that bore with and carried Israel from Egypt to Canaan is pledged to keep you. Ah ! reader, they are well kept whom Christ keeps. Oar faith may repose calmly on such a bed as Christ's omnipotence.

Take comfort, doubting believer. Why are you cast down ? The love of Jesus is no summer-day fountain: no man ever yet saw its bottom. The compassion of Jesus is a fire that never yet burned low; the cold, gray ashes of that fire have never yet been seen. Take comfort. In your own heart you may find little cause for rejoicing. But you may always rejoice in the Lord.

You say your faith is so small. But where is it said that none shall be saved except their faith be great ? And after all, "who gave thee any faith at all ?" The very fact that you have any faith is a token for good.

You say your sins are so many. But where is the sin, or heap of sins that the blood of Jesus cannot wash away ? And after all, " who told thee thou hadst any sins? That feeling never came from thyself." Blessed indeed is that mother's child who really knows and feels that he is a sinner.

Take comfort, I say once more, if you have really come to Christ. Take comfort, and know your privileges. Cast every care on Jesus. Tell evey want to Jesus. Roll every burden on Jesus,—sins,—unbelief,—doubts,— fears,—anxieties,—lay them all on Christ. He loves to see you doing so. He loves to be employed as your high priest. He loves to be trusted. He loves to see His people ceasing from the vain effort to carry their burdens for themselves.

I commend these things to your notice. Only be among Christ's wheat now, and then as sure as the Bible is true, you shall be in Christ's garner hereafter.

Reader, I heartily pray that this tract may do you good. If it does, I have one request to make. Name the writer before the throne of grace. Pray for me.

I remain, your affectionate friend,

J. C. RYLE.

**÷"Watch"**

* Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth
* to meet the bridegroom. ' And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ' They that were foolish took their lamps and took no
* oil with them: ' But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ' While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and

slept.

'And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the

bridegroom cometh : go ye out to meet him. "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. " And the foolish said unto the wise. Give us of your

oil, for our lamps are gone out. "But the wise answered, Not so: lest there be not

enough for us and you ; but go ye rather to them

that sell, and buy for yourselves. " And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came :

and they that were ready went in with him to the

marriage : and the door was shut. 'Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying. Lord,

Lord, open to us. 'But he answered and said. Verily T say unto you, I

know you not. 'Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor

the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matt.

xxv 1-13.)

Reader,

I have something to say to you about the verses before your eyes. If you do not know them it is high time that you should. If you do know them, it will not hurt you to know them better. They concern us all, whether ministers or people, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, old or young. They concern all who profess and call themselves Christians. They can never be known too well.

These verses make up one of the most solemn parables that our Lord Christ ever spoke ; partly because of the time at which it was spoken, partly because of the matter which it contains.

As to the time, it was but a few days before our Lord's crucifixion. It was spoken within view of Gethsemane and Calvary, of the cross and the grave.

As to the matter, it stands as a beacon to the Church of Christ in all ages. It is a witness against carelessness and slothfulness,— against apathy and indifference about religion, —and a witness of no uncertain sound. It cries to thoughtless sinners, " A.wake!" It cries to true servants of Christ, " "Watch !"

There are many trains of thought which this parable opens up, that I must of necessity leave alone. I have neither time nor space to follow them out. I do not sit down to compose a learned commentary, but to write a simple plain tract. I shall only clear my way by explaining two things, which otherwise might not be understood. And when I have done that, I shall keep to those main truths, which it is most useful for you and me to know.

The marriage customs of the country where the parable was spoken, call for a few words of explanation. Marriages there generally took place in the evening. The bridegroom and his friends came in procession to the bride's house after night-fall. The young women who were the bride's friends were all assembled there, waiting for him. As soon as the lamps and torches, carried by the bridegroom's party, were seen coming in the distance, these young women lighted their lamps, and went forth to meet him. Then having formed one united party, they all returned together to the bride's home. As soon as they arrived there they entered in, the doors were shut, the marriage ceremony went forward, and no one else was admitted. All these were familiar things to those who heard the Lord Jesus speak, and it is right and proper that you should have them in your mind's eye while you read this parable.

The figures and emblems used in the parable also call for some explanation. I will give you my own view of their meaning. I may be wrong. I freely admit that they are not always interpreted exactly in the same way. But you have a right to have my opinion, and I will give it you shortly and decidedly.

I believe the parable to be a prophecy all the way through. ,

I believe the time spoken of in the parable is the time when Christ shall return in person to this world, and a time yet to come. The very first word, the word " then," compared •with the end of the twenty-fourth chapter, appears to me to settle that question.

I believe the ten virgins carrying lamps represent the whole body of professing Christians, the visible Church of Christ.

I believe the bridegroom represents our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

I take the wise virgins to be the true believers, the real disciples of Christ, the converted part of the visible Church.

I take the foolish to be the mere nominal Christians, the unconverted, the whole company of those who have no vital godliness.

I take the lamps which all alike carried, to be that mere outward profession of Christianity, which every one possesses who has been baptized, and never formally renounced his baptism.

I take the oil which some virgins had with their lamps, and others had not, to be the grace of the Holy Ghost, that unction of the Holy One, which is the mark of all true Christians.

I consider the coming of the bridegroom to mean the second coming or advent of the Lord Christ, when he shall return in the clouds with glory.

I consider the going to the marriage of the wise virgins, to mean the believer's entrance into his full reward in the day of Christ's appearing.

I consider the shutting out of the foolish virgins, to mean the exclusion from Christ's kingdom and glory of every soul whom he shall find unconverted.

I offer these short explanations to your attention. I am not going to enter into any unprofitable discussion about them. And without saying another word in the way of preface, I will at once go on to point out the great practical lessons which the parable of the ten virgins is meant to teach us.

I. Learn, first of all, that the visible Church of Christ will always be a mixed body till Christ comes again.

II. Learn, secondly, that the visible Church is always in danger of neglecting the doctrine of Christ's second advent.

III. Learn, thirdly, that whenever Christ does come again, it will be a very sudden event

IV. Learn, fourthly, that Christ's second advent will make an immense change to al the members of the visible Church, both good and bad.

Reader, let me try to set each of these four truths plainly before you. If I can bring you, by God's help, to see their vast importance, I believe I shall have done your soul an essential service.

I. Learn, first of all, that *the visible Church of Christ will always be a mixed body, till Christ comes again.*

I can gather no other meaning from the beginning of the parable we are now considering. I there see wise and foolish virgins mingled together in one company,—virgins with oil, and virgins with no oil, all side by side. And I see this state of things going on till the very moment the bridegroom appears. I see all this, and I cannot avoid the conclusion that the visible Church will always be a mixed body, 'till Jesus comes again. Its members will never be all unbelievers : Christ will always have His witnesses. Its members will never be all believers : there will always be a vast proportion of formality, unbelief, hypocrisy, and false profession.

I frankly say that I can find no standing ground for the common opinion, that the visible Church will gradually advance to a state of perfection,—that it will become better and better, holier and holier, up to the very end,— and that little-by little the whole body shall become full of light. I see no warrant of Scripture for believing that sin will gradually dwindle away in the earth, consume, melt, and disappear by inches, like the last snow-• drift in spring. Nor yet do I see warrant for believing that holiness will gradually increase, like the banyan tree of the East, until it blossoms, blooms, and fills the face of the world with fruit. I know that thousands think in this way. All I say is, that I cannot see it in God's word.

I fully admit that the Gospel appears sometimes to make rapid progress in sotne countries ; but that it ever does more than call out an elect people, I utterly deny. It never did more in the days of the Apostles. Out of all the cities that Paul visited, there is not the slightest proof that in any one the whole population became believers. It never has done more in any country from the time of the Apostles down to the present day. There never yet was a parish or congregation in any part of the world,—however favored in the ministry it enjoyed,—there never was one, I believe, in which all the people were converted. At all events I never read or heard of it, and my belief is the thing never has been, and never will. I believe that now is the time of *election* of universal conversion. Now is the time for the *gathering out* of Christ's little flock. The time of general obedience is yet to come.

I fully admit that missions are doing a great work among the heathen, and that schools and district-visiting are rescuing thousands from the devil at home. I do not undervalue these things. I would to God that all professing Christians would value them more. But men appear to me to forget that Gospel religion is often withering in one place, while it is flourishing in another. They look at the progress of Christianity in the West of Europe. They forget how fearfully it has lost ground in the East. They point to the little flood-tide of. Tinnevelly and Krishnaghur. They forget the tremendous ebb in North Africa, Egypt, and Asia Minor. And as for any signs that all the ends of the earth shall turn to the Lord, under the present order of things, there are none. God's work is going forward, as it always has done. The Gospel is being preached for a witness to every quarter of the globe. The elect are being brought to Christ one by one, and there is everything to encourage us to persevere. But more than this no missionary can report in any station in the world.

I long for the conversion of all mankind, as much as any one. But I believe it is utterly beyond the reach of any instrumentality that man possesses. I quite expect that the earth will one day be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. But I believe that day will be an entirely new dispensation : it will not be till after the Lord's return. I would not hesitate to preach the Gospel, and offer Christ's salvation to every man and woman alive, but that there always will be a vast amount of unbelief and wickedness until the second advent I am fully persuaded. The Gospel net rnay perhaps be spread far more widely than it has been hitherto, but the angels shall find abundance of bad fish in it as well as good in the last day. The Gospel laborers may possibly be multiplied a thousand-fold, and I pray God it may be so; but however faithfully they may sow, a large proportion of tares will be found growing together with the wheat, at the time of harvest.

Reader, how is it with your own soul ? Remember, that till the Lord Jesus Christ comes again, there always will be wise and foolish in the Church. Now which are you ?

The wise are those who have that wisdom which the Holy Ghost alone can give. They know their own sinfulness. They know Christ as their own precious Saviour. They know how to walk and please God, and they act upon their knowledge. They look on life as a season of preparation for eternity,—not as an end, but as a way,—aot as a harbor, but as a voyage,—not as a home, but as a journey,— not as their full age, but their time of school. Happy are those who know these things! The world may despise them—but they are the wise.

The foolish are those who are without spiritual knowledge. They neither know Q-od nor Christ, nor sin, nor their own hearts, nor the world, nor heaven, nor hell, nor the value of their souls as they ought. There is no folly like this. To expect wages after doing no work,—or prosperity after taking no pains,— or learning after neglecting books,—this is rank folly. But to expect heaven without faith in Christ,—or the kingdom of God without being born again, or the crown of glory without the cross and a holy walk,—all this is greater folly still, and yet more common. Alas! for the folly of the world !

Reader, till the Lord Jesus Christ comes, there always will be sjme who have grace, and some who have not grace, in the visible Church. Now, which are you ? How is it with your own soul ?

Some have nothing but the name of Christian : others have the reality. Some have only the outward profession of religion : others have the possession also. Some are content if they belong to the Church, others are never content, unless they are also united by faith to Christ. Some are satisfied if they have only the baptism of water, others are never satisfied unless they also feel within the baptism of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of atonement. Some stop short in the form of Christianity, others never rest until they have also the substance.

Reader, the visible Church of Christ is made up of these two classes. There always have been such. There always will be such until the end. There must no doubt be borderers and waverers, whom man's eye cannot make out, though God's eye can. But gracious and graceless, wise and foolish, make up the whole visible Church of Christ. You, yourself, are described and written down in this parable. You are either one of the wise virgins, or one of the foolish. You have either got the oil of grace, or you have got none. You are either a member of Christ, or a child of the devil. You are either travelling towards heaven, or towards hell. Never for a moment forget this. This is the point that concerns your soul. Whatever your opinion may be on other points this is the one that you should never lose sight of. Let not the devil divert your attention from it. Say to yourself, as you read this parable, " I am spoken of here."

II. Learn, secondly, that *the visible Church is always in danger of neglecting the doctrine of Christ's second advent.*

I draw this truth from that solemn verse in the parable, " While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." I am quite aware that many good men explain these words in a different way. But I dare not call any man master. I feel that I am set for the proclamation of that which my own conscience tells me is true, and I cannot be bound by the opinions of others. There are such things as erroneous interpretations received by tradition, as well as false doctrines received by tradition, and against both I think we ought to be on our guard.

I do not believe that the words, " they all slumbered and slept" mean the death of all; though many think so. To my mind such an interpretation is contrary to plain facts. All the professing Church will not be sleeping the sleep of death, when Jesus comes again. St. Paul himself says in one place, " We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed ;" (1 Cor. xv. 51,) and in another, " We which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air." (1 Thess. iv. 17.) Now the interpretation of which I speak involves a most awkward contradiction to these two plain texts.

I do not believe that the words were meant to teach us that the whole professing Church would get in a slumbering and sleeping state of soul; though many think so. I would not be misunderstood in saying this. I do not foi a moment deny that the love of even the brightest Christians is very cold, and that neither their faith nor works are what they ought to be. All I mean to say is, that this is not the truth which appears to me to be taught here. Such a view of the text seems to me to wipe away that broad line of distinction between believers and unbelievers, which, with all the shortcomings of believers, undoubtedly does exist. Sleep is one of those very emblems which the Spirit has chosen, to represent the state of the unconverted man. " Awake thou that sleepest," he says, "and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Ephes. v. 14.)

But what does the verse mean ? I believe that the words, " all slumbered and slept," are to be interpreted with a special regard to the great event on which the whole parable hinges, even the second advent of Christ. And I believe our Lord's meaning was simply this, that during the interval between the first and second advent, the whole church, both believers and unbelievers, would get into a dull and dimsighted state of soul about the blessed doctrine of his own personal return to earth.

And, Reader, I say deliberately, that so far as my own judgment goes, there never was a saying of our Lord's more thoroughly verified by the event. I say that of all doctrines of the Gospel, the one about which Christians have become most unlike the first Christians, in their sense of its true value, is the doctrine of Christ's second advent. I am obliged to say this of all denominations of Protestants. I know not of any exception. In our view of man's corruption, of justification by faith, of our need of the sanctifying work of the Spirit, of the sufficiency of Scripture,—upon these points I believe we should find that English believers were much of one mind with believers at Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, or Rome, in former times. But in our view of the second advent of Christ, I fear we should find there was a mighty difference between us and them, if our experience could be compared. I am afraid we should find that we fall wofully short of them in our estimate of its importance ; that in our system of doctrine it is a star of the fifteenth magnitude, while in theirs it was one of the first. In one word, we should discover that compared to them in this matter *we slumber and sleep.*

*I* must speak my mind on this subject, now that I am upon it. I do so most unwillingly. I do so at the risk of giving offence, and of rubbing against the prejudices of many whom I love. But it is a cross I feel it a duty to take up. And speak I must.

I submit then that in the matter of Christ's second coming and kingdom, the Church of Christ has not dealt fairly with the prophecies of the Old Testament. We have gone on far too long refusing to see that there are two personal advents of Christ spoken of in those prophecies,—an advent in humiliation, and an advent in glory,—an advent to suffer, and an advent to reign,—a personal advent to carry the cross, and a personal advent to wear the crown. We have been slow of heart to believe All that the prophets have written. The aposties went into one extreme: they stumbled at Christ's sufferings. We have gone into the other extreme: we have stumbled.at Christ's glory. We have got into a confused habit of speaking of the kingdom of Christ as already set up amongst us, and have shut our eyes to the fact that the devil is still prince of this world, and served by the vast majority; and that our Lord, like David in Adullam, though anointed, is not yet set upon his throne. We have got into a vicious habit of taking all the promises spiritually, and all the denunciations and threats literally. The denunciations against Babylon, and Nineveh, and Edom, and Tyre, and Egypt, and the rebellious Jews, wo have been content to take *literally* and hand over to our neighbors. The blessings and promises of glory to Zion, Jerusalem, Jacob, and Israel we have taken *spiritually,* and comfortably applied them to ourselves and the Church of Christ. To bring forward proofs of this would be waste of time. No man can hear many sermons, and read many commentaries, without being aware that it is a fact.

Now I believe this to have been an unfair system of interpreting Scripture. I believe that the first and primary sense of every Old Testament promise as well as threat is the *literal* one, and that Jacob means Jacob, Jerusalem means Jerusalem, Zion means Zion, and Israel means Israel, as much as Egypt means Egypt, and Babylon means Babylon. That primary sense, I believe, we have sadly lost sight of. We have adapted and accommodated to the Church of Christ the promises that wore spoken by God to Israel and Zion. I do not mean to say that this accommodation is in no sense allowable. But I do mean to say that the primary sense of every prophecy and promise in Old Testament prophecy was intended to have a literal fulfilment, and that this literal fulfilment has been far too much put aside and thrust into a corner. And by so doing I think we have exactly fulfilled our Lord's words in the parable of the ten virgins, —we have proved that we are *slumbering and sleeping* about the second advent of Christ. But I submit further, that in the interpretation of the New Testament the Church of Christ has dealt almost as unfairly with our Lord's second advent, as she has done in the interpretation of the Old. Men have got into a habit of putting a strange sense upon many of those passages which speak of the coming of the Son of Man, or of the Lord's appearing. And this habit has been far too readily submitted to. Some tell us that the coming of the Son of Man often means death. No one can read the thousands of epitaphs in churchyards, in which some text about the coming of Christ is thrust in, and not perceive how wide-spread this view is. Some tell us that our Lord's coming means the destruction of Jerusalem. This is a very common way of interpreting the expression. Many find Jerusalem everywhere in New Testament prophecies, and like Aaron's rod they make it swallow up everything else. Some tell us that our Lord's coming means the general judgment, and the end of all things. This is their one answer to all inquiries about things to come.

Now I believe that all these interpretations are entirely beside the mark. I have not the least desire to underrate the importance of such subjects as death and judgment. I willingly concede that the destruction of Jerusalem is typical of many things connected with our Lord's second advent, and is spoken of in chapters where that mighty event is foretold. But I must express my own firm belief that the coming of Christ is one distinct thing, and that death, .judgment, and the destruction of Jerusalem, are three other distinct things. And the wide acceptance which these strange interpretations have met with, I hold to be one more proof that in the matter of Christ's second advent the Church has long *slumbered and slept.*

The plain truth of Scripture I believe to be as follows. When the number of the elect is accomplished, Christ shall come again to this world with power and great glory. He shall raise His saints, and gather them to Himself. He shall punish with fearful judgments all who are found His enemies, and reward with glorious rewards all His believing people. He shall take to Himself His great power, and reign, and establish an universal kingdom. He shall gather the scattered tribes of Israel, and place them once more in their own land. As He came the first time in person, so He shall come the second time in person. As He went away from earth visibly, so He shall return visibly. As He literally rode upon an ass,— was literally sold for thirty pieces of silver,— had His hands and feet literally pierced,—was numbered literally with the transgressors,— and had lots literally cast upon His raiment, —and all that Scripture might be fulfilled,— so also shall He literally come, literally set up a kingdom, and literally reign over the earth, because the very same Scripture has said that it shall be.

The words of the angels in the first of Acts are plain and unmistakable : " This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts i. 11.) So also the words of the Apostle Peter : " The times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord : and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 19-21.) So also the words of the Psalmist: " When the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory." (Psalm cii. 16.) So also the words of Zechariah : " The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." (Zech. xiv. 5.) So also the words of Isaiah : " The Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem and before his ancients gloriously." (Isaiah xxiv. 23.) So also the words of Jeremiah : "I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." " I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-place, and the city shall be built on her own heap." (Jerem. xxx. 3, 18.) So also the words of Daniel: " Behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, shall serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. vii. 13, 14.) All these texts are to my mind plain prophecies of Christ's second coming and kingdom. All are yet without their accomplishment, and all shall yet be literally and exactly fulfilled.

I say " literally and exactly fulfilled," and I say so advisedly. From the first day that I began to read the Bible with my heart, I have never been able to see these texts, and hundreds like them, in any other light. It always seemed to me that as we take literally the texts foretelling that the walls of Babylon shall be cast down, so we ought to take literally the texts foretelling that the walls of Zion shall be built up,—that as according to prophecy the Jews were literally scattered, so according to

L

prophecy the Jews will be literally gathered,— and that as the least and minutest predictions were made good on the subject of our Lord's coming to suffer, so the minutest predictions shall be made good which describe our Lord's coming to reign. And I have long felt it is one of the greatest shortcomings of the Church of Christ, that we ministers do not preach enough about this advent of Christ, and that private believers do not think enough about it. A few of us here and there receive the doctrine, and profess to love it, but the number of such persons is comparatively very small. And after all, we none of us live on it, feed on it, act on it, work from it, take comfort in it, as much as God intended us to do. In short, the bridegroom tarries, and we all *slumber and sleep !*

It proves nothing against the doctrine of Christ's second coming and kingdom, that it has sometimes been fearfully abused. I should like to know what doctrine of the Gospel has not been abused. Salvation by grace has been made a pretext for licentiousness,—election an excuse for all manner of unclean living,—and justification by faith a warrant for ant.inomianism. But if men will draw wrong conclusions, we are not therefore obliged to throw aside good principles. We do not give up the Gospel because of the outrageous conduct of the Anabaptists of Munster, or the extravagant assertions of Saltmarsh and William Huntington, or the strange proceedings of Jumpers and Shakers. And where is the fairness of telling as that we ought to reject the second advent of Christ, because there were Fifth Monarchy Men in the days of the Commonwealth, and Irvingites and Millerites in our own time. Alas! men must be hard pressed for an argument, when they have no better reasons than this!

It proves nothing against the second advent of Christ, that those who hold the doctrine differ among themselves on many particular points in prophecy. Such differences need never stumble any one, who recollects that unity on great points is perfectly consistent with disagreement on small ones. Luther and Zuinglius differed widely in their views of the Lord's Supper :—yet who would think of saying that therefore Protestantism is all false ? Fletcher and Toplady were both clerg37men in the Church of England, but differed widely about Calvinism:—yet where would be the sense of saying that all Evangelical religion was therefore untrue ? In common fairness this ought to be remembered when people talk of the differences among those who study prophecy. . It is possible for men to differ much as to the meaning they place on the symbols in the book of Revelation, and yet on the matter of Christ's coming and kingdom they may be entirely and substantially agreed.

It proves nothing against the doctrine that it is encompassed with many difficulties. This I fully concede. The order of events connected with our Lord's coming, and the manner of His kingdom when it is set up, are both deep subjects, and hard to be understood. But I firmly believe that the difficulties connected with any other system of interpreting unfulfilled prophecy are just twice as many as those which are said to stand in our way. I believe too that the difficulties connected with our Lord's second coming are not half so many as those connected with His first, and that it was a far more improbable thing, " a priori," that the son of God should come to *suffer,* than it is that He should come to *reign.* And after all what have we to do with the " how," and " in what manner" prophecies are to be fulfilled ? Is our miserable understanding of what is possible to be the measure and limit of God's dealings ? The only question we have to do with is, " Has God said a thing?" If He has, we ought not to doubt it shall be done.

For myself I can only give my own individual testimony; but the little I know experimentally of the doctrine of Christ's. second coming, makes me regard it as most practical and precious, and makes me long to see it more generally received.

I find it a powerful spring and stimulus to holy living;—a motive for patience, for moderation, spiritual-mindedness,—a test for the employment of time,—and a gauge for all my actions,—" Should I like my Lord to find me in this place,—should I like Him to find me so doing ?"

I find it the strongest argument for missionary work. The time is short. The Lord is at hand. The gathering out from all nations will soon be accomplished. The heralds and forerunners of the King will soon have proclaimed the Gospel in every nation. The night is far spent. The King will soon be here.

I find it the best answer to the infidel. He sneers at our churches and chapels, at our sermons and services, at our tracts and our schools. He points to the millions, who care nothing for Christianity, after 1800 years of preaching. He asks me how I can account for it, if Christianity be true ? I answer, It was never said that all the world would believe and serve Christ under the present dispensation. I tell him the state of things he ridicules was actually foreseen, and the number of true Christians, it was predicted, would be few. But I tell him that Christ's kingdom is yet to come, and that though we see not yet all things put under him, they will be so one day.

I find it the best argument with the Jew. If I do not take the prophecy of Isaiah literally, I know not how I can persuade him that the fifty-third chapter is literally fulfilled. But if I do, I have a resting-place for my lever which I know he cannot shake. How men can expect the Jews to see a Messiah coming to suffer, in Old Testament prophecies, if they do not themselves see in them a Messiah coming to reign, is past my understanding.

And now is there any one among the readers of this tract who cannot receive the doctrine of Christ's second advent and kingdom ? I invite that man to consider the subject calmly and dispassionately. Dismiss from your mind traditional interpretations. Separate the doctrine from the mistakes and blunders of many who hold it. Do not reject the foundation because of the wood, hay, and stubble which some have built upon it. Do not condemn it and cast it aside because of injudicious friends. Only examine the texts which speak of it as calmly and fairly as you weigh texts in the Romish, Arian, or Socinian controversies, and I amhopeful as to the result on your mind. Alas! if texts of Scripture were always treated as unceremoniously as I have known texts to be treated by those who dislike the doctrine of Christ's second advent, I should indeed tremble for the cause of truth.

Is there any one among the readers of this tract who agrees with the principles I have tried to advocate ? I beseech that man to endeavor to realize the second coming of Christ more and more. Truly we feel it but little compared to what we ought to do, at the very best. Be gentle in argument with those that differ from you. Remember that a man may be mistaken on this subject, and yet be a holy child of God. It is not the slumbering on this subject that ruins souls, but the want of grace. Above all avoid dogmatism and positiveness, and specially about symbolical prophecy. It is a sad truth, but a truth never to be forgotten, that none have injured the doctrine of

the second coming so much as its over-zealous friends.

III. Learn in the third place, that *whenever Christ does come again, it will be a very sudden event.*

I draw that truth from the verse in the parable which says, " at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him."

I do not know when Christ will come again. I should think it most presumptuous if I said that I did. I am no prophet, though I love the subject of prophecy. I dislike all fixing of dates and naming of years, and I believe it has done great harm. I only assert positively that Christ will come again one day to set up his kingdom on earth, and that whether the day be near or whether it be far off, it will take the church and world exceedingly by surprise.

It will come on men suddenly. It will break on the world all at once. It will not have been talked over, prepared for, and looked forward to by everybody. It will awaken men's minds like the cry of "fire" at midnight. It will startle men's hearts like a trumpet blown at their bedside in their first sleep. Like Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, they will know nothing till the very waters are upon them. Like Dathan and Abiram and their company, when the earth opened under them, the moment of their hearing the report of the visitation will be the same moment when they will see it with their eyes. Before they can recover their breath and know where they are, they shall find that the Lord is come.

I suspect there is a vague notion floating in men's minds, that the present order of things will not end quite so suddenly. I suspect men cling to the idea, that there will be a kind of Saturday-night in the world, a time when all will know the day of the Lord is near,—a time when all will be able to cleanse their consciences, look out their wedding garments, shake off their earthly business, and prepare to meet their God. If any reader of this tract has got such a notion into his head, I charge him to give it up forever. If anything is clear in unfulfilled prophecy, this one fact seems clear, that the Lord's coming will be sudden, and take men by surprise. And any view of prophecy which destroys the possibility of its being sudden,—whether by interposing a vast number of events as yet to happen, or by placing the millennium between ourselves and the advent,—any such view appears to my mind to carry with it a fatal defect. Everything which is written in Scripture on this point confirms the truth that Christ's second coming will be sudden. " As a snare shall it come," says one place.—"As a thief in the night," says another.—"As the lightning," says a third.—" In such an hour as ye think not," says a fourth.—" When they shall say, peace and safety," says a fifth. (Luke xxi. 35. 1 Thess. v. 2. Luke xvii. 24. Matt. xxiv. 44. 1 Thess. v. 2.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself uses two most striking comparisons when dwelling on this subject. Both are most teaching, and both ought to raise in us solemn thoughts. In one He compares His coming to the days of Lot. In the days when Lot fled from Sodom, the men of Sodom were buying and selling, eating and drinking, planting and building. They thought of nothing but earthly things: they were entirely absorbed in them. They despised Lot's warning. They mocked at his counsel. The sun rose on the earth as usual. All things were going on as they had done for hundreds of years. They saw no sign of danger. But now mark what our Lord says, " the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke xvii. 28-30.)

In the other passage I allude to, our Lord compares his coming to the days of Noah. Do you remember how it was in Noah's day ? Stay a little, and let me remind you. When the flood came on the earth in Noah's time, there was no appearance beforehand of anything so awful being near. The days and nights were following each other in regular succession. The grass, and trees, and crops were growing as usual. The business of the world was going on. And though Noah preached continually of coming danger, and warned men to repent, no one believed what he said. But at last one day the rain began and did not cease : the waters rose and did not stop: the flood came, and swelled, and went on, and covered one thing after another, find all were drowned who were not in the ark. Now mark what our Lord says, "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of man: they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." (Luke xvii. 26, 27.) The flood took the world by surprise,—so also will the coming of the Son of man. In the midst of the world's business, when everything is going on just as usual,—in such an hour as this the Lord Jesus Christ will return.

Reader, the suddenness of the Lord's second advent is a truth that should lead every professing Christian to great searchings of heart. It should lead him to serious thought, both about himself and about the world.

Think for a moment how little the world is prepared for such an event. Look at the towns and cities of the earth, and think of them. Mark how most men are entirely absorbed in the things of time, and utterly engrossed with the business of their callings. Banks, counting-houses, shops, politics, law, medicine, commerce, railways, banquets, balls, theatres,— each and all are drinking up the hearts and souls of thousands, and thrusting out the things of God. Think what a fearful shock the sudden stoppage of all these things would be, the sudden stoppage which will be in the day of Christ's appearing. If only one great house of business stops payment now, it makes a great sensation. What then shall be the crash when the whole machine of worldly affairs shall stand still at once ? From money-counting and earthly scheming, from racing after riches and wrangling about trifles, to be hurried away to meet the King of kings, how tremendous the change! From dancing and dressing, from opera-going and novel-reading, to be summoned away by the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, how awful the transition ! Yet remember, all this shall one day be.

Look at the rural parishes of such a land as ours, and think of them. See how the minds of the vast majority of their inhabitants are buried in farms and allotments, in cattle and corn, in rent and wages, in rates and tithes, in digging and sowing, in buying and selling, in planting and building. See how many there are who evidently care for nothing, and feel nothing, excepting the things of this world ; who reck nothing, whether their minister preaches law or Gospel, Christ or antichrist, and would be utterly unconcerned if the Archbishop of Canterbury was turned out of Lambeth Palace, and the Pope of Rome put in his place. See how many there are of whom it can only be said that their belly and their pockets are their gods. And then fancy tho awful effect of a sudden call to meet the Lord Christ,—a call to a day of reckoning, in which the price of wheat and the rate of wages shall be nothing, and the Bible shall be the only rule of trial! And yet remember, all this shall one day be.

Reader, picture these things to your mind's eye. Picture your own house, your own family, your own fireside. What will be found there ? Picture above all, your own feelings, your own state of mind. And then remember, that this is the end towards which the world is hastening. There will be no long notice to quit. This is the way in which the world's affairs will be wound up. This is an event which may possibly happen in your own time. And surely you cannot avoid the conclusion that the second coming of Christ is no mere curious speculation. It is an event of vast practical importance to your own soul.

" Ah!" I can imagine some reader saying, " This is all foolishness, raving and nonsense; the man is beside himself. This is all extravagant fanaticism. Where is the likelihood, where is the probability of all this? The world is going on as it always did. The world will ast my time." Do not say so. Do not drive away the subject by such language as this. This is the way that men talked in the days of Noah and Lot, but what happened ? they found to their cost that Noah and Lot were right. Do not say so. The Apostle Peter foretold eighteen hundred years ago that men would talk in this way. " There shall come in the last days scoffers," he tells us, " saying, where is the promise of His coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet. iii. 34.) Oh! do not fulfil his prophecy by your unbelief.

Where is the raving and fanaticism of the things which I have been saying ? Show it to me if you can. I calmly assert that the present order of things will come to an end one day. Will any one deny that ? Will any one tell me we are to go on as we do now forever ? I calmly say that Christ's second coming will be the end of the present order of things. I have said so because the Bible says it. I have calmly said that Christ's second coming will be a sudden event, whenever it may be, and may possibly be in our own time. I have said so, because thus and thus I find it written in the word of God. If you do not like it, I am sorry for it. One thing only you must remember,—you "are finding fault with the Bible, not with me.

IV. Learn in the last place, that *Christ's second coming' will make an immense change to all members of the visible church, both good and bad.*

I draw this truth from the concluding portion of the parable,—from the discovery of the foolish virgins that their lamps were gone out, —from their anxious address to the wise, " give us of your oil,"—from their vain knocking at the door when too late, crying, " Lord, Lord, open to us,"—from the happy admission of the wise who were found ready, in company with the bridegroom. Each and all of these points are full of food for thought. But I have neither time nor space to dwell upon them particularly. I can only take one single broad view of all. To all who have been baptized in the name of Christ,—converted or unconverted,—believers or unbelievers,—holy or unholy,—godly or ungodly,—wise or foolish,— gracious or graceless,—to all the second advent of Christ shall be an immense change.

It shall be an *immense change to the ungodly,*—to all who are found mere nominal Christians,—a change both in their opinions and positions.

All such persons, when Christ comes again, shall see the value of real, spiritual religion, if they never saw it before\* They will do in effect what the parable describes under a figure, —they will cry to the godly, " Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out."

Who does not know, that, as things are now, spiritual religion never brings a man the world's praise ? It never has done, and it never does at this day. It entails on a man the world's disapprobation,—the world's persecution,—the world's mockery,—the world's opposition,—the world's ridicule,—the world's sneers. The world will let a man. serve the devil and go to hell quietly, and no one lifts a little finger to stop him, or says, " be merciful to your soul." The world will never let a man serve Christ and go to heaven quietly ; everybody cries, " Hold hard," and does everything that can be done to keep him back.

Who has not heard of nicknames in plenty bestowed on those who follow Christ and try to be saved ;—Pietists, Puritans, Methodists, Fanatics, Enthusiasts, Calvinists, Ultra-religionists, the Saints, the righteous over-much, the very good people, and many more ? Who does not know the petty family persecutions which often go on in private society in our day ? Let a young person go to every ball, and opera, and race-course, and worldly party, and utterly neglect his soul, and no one interferes,—no one says, " spare thyself,"—no one says, " take care, remember God, judgment, and eternity." But let him only begin to read his Bible, and be diligent in prayer,—let him decline worldly amusement, and become particular in his employment of time,—let him seek an evangelical ministry, and live like an immortal being;—let him do this, I say, and all his friends and relations will probably be up in arms. " You are going too far. You need not be so very good. You are taking up extreme views." This, in all probability, is the very least that such a person will hear. If a young woman, she will bo marked and avoided by all her equals. II a young man, he will be set down by all who knew him, as weak, silly and precise. In short such a person will soon discover that there is no help from the world in the way to heaven, but plenty of help in the way to hell.

• Alas ! that it should be so : but so it is. These are ancient things. As it was in the days of Cain and Abel, as it was in the days of Isaac and Ishmael, even so it is now. They that are born after the flesh will persecute those that are born after the spirit. The cross of Christ will always bring reproach with it. As the Jews hated Christ, so the world hates Christians. As the Head was bruised, so also the members will be. As contempt was poured on the Master, so it will be also on the disciple. In short if a man will become a decid

ed evangelical Christian, in the present order of things, he must count the cost, and make up his mind to lose the world's favor. In a word, he must be content to be thought by many little better than a fool.

Reader, there will be an end of all this when Christ returns to this world. The light of that day will at length show everything in its true colors. The scales will fall from the poor worldling's eyes. The value of the soul will flash on his astonished mind. The utter uselessness of a mere nominal Christianity will burst upon him like a thunder-storm. The blessedness of regeneration and faith in Christ, and a holy walk, will shine before him like Mene, Mene, Tekel, Peres, on the wall of the Babylonian palace. The veil will fall from his face. He will discover that the godly has been the wise, and that he has played the fool exceedingly. And just as Saul wanted Samuel when it was too late, and Belshazzar sent for Daniel when the kingdom was deserting from him, so will the ungodly turn to the very men they once mocked and despised, and cry to them, " Grive us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out."

But as there will be a complete change in the *feelings* of the ungodly, in the day of Christ's second advent, so will there also be a complete change in their *position.* Hope, the plank to which they now cling to, and on which they generally depend to the very last, hope will be entirely taken away in that awful day. They will seek salvation with earnestness, but not be able to find it. They will run hither and thither in a vain search for the oil 'of grace. They will knock loudly at the door of mercy, and get no answer. They will cry, " Lord, Lord, open to us," but all to no purpose. They will discover to their sorrow that opportunities once let slip can never be regained, and that the notions of universal mercy always to be obtained, is a mere delusion of the devil.

Who does not know that thousands are urged to pray and repent now, who never attempt it ? They mean to try one day perhaps. Like Felix, they hope for a convenient season.

They fancy it will never be too late to seek the Lord. But there is a time coming when prayer shall be heard no longer, and repentance shall be unavailing. There is a time when the door by which Manasseh and Saul the persecutor entered, shall be shut and opened no more. There is a time when the fountain in which Magdalene and John Newton and thousands of others were washed and made clean, shall be sealed forever. There is a time when men shall know the folly of sin, but like Judas, too late for repentance;— when they shall desire to enter the promised land, but like Israel at Kadesh, not be able ;— when they shall see the value of God's favor and covenant blessing, but like Esau, when they can no longer possess it, when they shall believe every jot and tittle of God's revealed word, but like the miserable devils, only to tremble.

Yes! reader, men may come to this, and many will come to this in the day of Christ's appearing. They will ask and not receive. They will seek and not find. They will knock and the door shall not be opened to them. Alas ! indeed, that so it should be. Woe to the man who puts off seeking his manna till the Lord's day of return ! Like Israel of old he will find none. Woe to the man who goes to buy oil when he ought to be burning it! Like the foolish virgins, he will find himself shut out from the marriage supper of the Lamb. Oh ! that professing Christians would consider these things ! Oh ! that they would remember the words of our Lord have yet to be fulfilled, " When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are : then shall ye begin to say, we hava eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets : but he shall say, I tell you I know you not whence ye are, depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." (Luke xiii. 25-27.)

But as Christ's second coming will be a mighty change to the ungodly, so will it also be a *mighty change to the godly.*

They shall at length be freed from everything which now mars their comfort. " The door shall be shut." Against the fiery darts of Satan,—against the loathsome weakness of the flesh which now clings to them,—against the unkind world, which now misrepresents and misund'erstands them,—against the doubts and fears which now so often darken their path,—against the weariness which now clogs their best efforts to serve the Lord,—against coldness and deadness,—against short-comings and backslidings,—against all these the door shall be shut forever. Not one single Canaanite shall be found in the land. They shall no longer be vexed by temptation, persecuted by the world, warred against by the devil. Their conflict shall all be over. Their strife with the flesh shall forever cease. The armor of God, which they have so long worn, shall at length be laid aside. They shall be where there is no Satan, no world and no sin. Ah! reader, the second Eden shall be far better than the first. In the first Eden the door was not shut; our joy wus but for a moment. But blessed be God, in the second Eden, the Lord shall shut us in.

And as the godly shall enjoy a freedom from all evil in the day of Christ's appearing, so shall they also enjoy the presence of all good. They shall go in with the bridegroom to the marriage. They shall be forever in the company of Christ, and go out no more. Faith shall then be swallowed up in sight. Hope shall become certainty. Knowledge shall at length be perfect. Prayer shall be turned into praise. Desires shall receive their full accomplishment. Hunger and thirst after conformity to Christ's image, shall at length be satisfied. The thought of parting shall not spoil the pleasure of meeting. The company of saints shall be enjoyed without hurry and distraction. The family of Abraham shall no more feel temptations, nor the family of Job, afflictions ; nor the family of David, household bereavements ; nor the family of Paul, thorns in the flesh; nor the family of Lazarus, poverty and sores. Every tear shall be wiped away in that day. It is the time when the Lord shall say, " I make all things new."

Oh ! reader, if God's children find joy and peace in believing even now, what tongue shall tell their feelings whan they behold the King in His beauty ? If the report of the land that is far off has been sweet to them in the wilderness, what pen shall describe their happiness, when they see it with their own eyes ? If it has cheered them now and then to meet two or three like-minded in this evil world, how their hearts will burn within them, when they see a multitude that no man can number, the least defects of each purged away, and not one false brother in the list ? If the narrow way has been a way of pleasantness to the scattered few who have travelled it with their poor frail bodies, how precious shall their rest seem in the day of the gathering together, when they have a glorious body like their Lord's ? Then shall we understand the meaning of the text, " In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." (Psalm xvi. 11.) Then shall we experience the truth of that beautiful hymn, which says,

Let me be with thee where thou art,

My Saviour, my eternal rest;
Then only shall this longing heart

Be fully and forever blest

Let me be with thee where thou art,

Thy unveil'd glory to behold;
Then only shall this wand'ring heart

Cease to be false to thee and cold.

Let me be with thee where thou art,

Where none can die, where none remove ;

There neither death nor life shall part
Me from thy presence and thy love.

Is there a man or woman among the readers of this tract who ever laughs at true religion ? Is there one who persecutes and ridicules vital godliness in others, and dares to talk of people being over-particular, and righteous over-much ? Oh ! beware what you are doing; again, I say, beware. You may live to think very differently. You may live to alter your opinion, but perhaps too late. Ah! reader, there is a day before us all when there will be no infidels, no ! not one. There is a day when the disciples of Paine, and Voltaire, and Emerson, shall call on the rocks to fall on them, and on the hills to cover them. Before the throne of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord. Remember that day, and beware.

Is there among the readers of this tract some dear child of God, who is mocked and despised for the Gospel's sake, and feels as if he stood alone ? Take comfort. Be patient. Wait a little longer. Your turn shall yot come. When the spies returned from searching Canaan, men talked of stoning Caleb and Joshua because they brought a good report of the land. A few days passed away, and all the assembly confessed that they alone had been right. Strive to be like them. Follow the Lord fully, as they did, and sooner or later, all men shall confess that you did well. Never, never be afraid of going too far. Never, never be afraid of being too holy. Never, never be ashamed of desiring to go to heaven, and of seeking to have a great crown. Millions will lament in the day of Christ's return, because they have not got religion enough ;—not one will be heard to say that he has got too much. Take comfort. Press on.

And now, reader, it only remains for me to close this tract by three words of application which seem to me to arise naturally out of the parable of which I have been writing. I heartily pray to God to bless them to your soul, and to make them words in season.

1. My first word of application shall *be a question.* I take the parable of the ten virgins as my warrant, and I address that question to every one of my readers. I ask you, " Are you ready ?" Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, " They that were ready went in with the bridegroom to the marriage,"—they that were ready and none else. Now here in the sight of God, I ask each and every reader, Is this your case ? Are you ready ?

I do not ask whether you are a churchman, and make a profession of religion.—I do not ask whether you attend an evangelical ministry, and like evangelical people, and can talk of evangelical subjects, and read evangelical tracts and books. All this is the surface of Christianity. All this costs little, and may be easily attained. I want to search your heart more thoroughly, and probe your conscience more deeply. I want to know whether you have been born again, and whether you have got the Holy Ghost dwelling in your soul. I want to know whether you have any oil in your vessel while you carry the lamp of profession, and whether you are ready to meet the bridegroom,—ready for Christ's return to the earth. I want to know, if the Lord should come this week, whether you could lift up your head with joy, and say, " this is our God ; we have waited for him ; let us be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." These things I want to know, and this is what I mean when I say, " are you ready ?"

" Ah!" I can imagine some one saying, " this is asking far too much. *To be ready for Christ's appearing !* this is far too high a standard. This is extravagance. There would be no living in the world at this rate. This is a hard saying. Who can bear it ?" I cannot help it. I believe this is the standard of the Bible. I believe this is the standard Paul sets before us when he says the Thessalonians were " waiting for the Son of God from heaven," and the Corinthians " waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. i. 10. 1 Cor. i. 7.) And the standard Peter sets before us when he speaks of " looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God." (2 Peter iii. 12.) I believe it is a mark that every true believer should be continually aiming at, to live so as to be e'ver ready to meet Christ. God forbid that I should place the standard of Christian practice a hair's breadth higher than the level at which the Bible places it. But God forbid that I should ever put it a hair's breadth lower. If I do, what right have I to say that the Bible is my rule of faith.

I want to disqualify no man for usefulness upon earth. I require no one to become a hermit, and cease to serve his generation. I call on no man to leave his lawful calling and neglect his earthly affairs. But I do call on

every one to live like one who expects Christ to return, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; to live like a pilgrim and a stranger, ever looking unto Jesus ;—to live like a good servant, with his loins girded, and his lamp burning ;—to live like one whose treasure is in heaven, with his heart packed up and ready to be gone. This is readiness. This is preparation. And is this too much to ask? I say unhesitatingly, that it is not.

Now, reader, are you ready in this way ? If not, I should like to know what good your religion does you. What is it all but a burdensome form ? What is it but a mere temporary cloak that will not wear beyond this world ? Truly a religion that does not make a man ready for everything,—for death, for judgment, for the second advent, for the resurrection,— such a religion may well be looked on with suspicion. Reader, if your religion does not make you ready for anything, you may depend the sooner it is changed the better.

2. My second word of application shall be *an invitation.* I address it to every one who feels in his conscience that he has no grace in his heart,—to every one who feels that the character of the foolish virgins is his own. To every such person I give an invitation this day, in my Master's name. I invite you " to awake and flee to Christ."

Reader, if you are a man of this sort, you know that all within you is wrong in the sight of Grod. Nothing can be said more true about you than that you are asleep,—asleep not merely about the doctrine of Christ's second advent, but about everything that concerns your soul. You are wide awake perhaps about temporal things You read the newspapers it . may be, and are mighty in " the Times." You have your head stored with earthly wisdom and useful knowledge. But you have no heart-felt sense of sin, no peace or friendship with Grod, no experimental acquaintance with Christ, no delight in the Bible and prayer. And yet you are a sinner, a dying sinner, an immortal sinner, a sinner going to meet Christ, a sinner going to be judged. What, I would put it to your conscience as an honest man, what is all this but being asleep ?

How long is this to go on ? When do you mean to arise and live as if you had a soul ? When will you cease to hear as one who hears not ? When will you give up running after shadows, and seek something substantial? When will you throw off the mockery of a religion which cannot satisfy, cannot comfort, cannot sanctify, cannot save, and will not bear a calm examination ? When will you give up having a faith which does not influence your practice,—having a book which you say is God's word, but treat as if it was not,—having the name of Christian, but knowing nothing of Christ ? Oh ! reader, when, when shall it once be ?

Why not this very year ? Why not this very day ? Why not at once awake and call upon your God, and resolve that you will sleep no longer ? I set before you an open door, I set before you Jesus Christ the Saviour, who died to make atonement for sinners,—Jesus who is able to save to the uttermost,—Jesus willing to receive. The hand that was nailed to the cross is held out to you in mercy.—The eye that wept over Jerusalem is looking on you with pity.—The voice that has said to many wanderers " thy sins are forgiven," is saying to you " come to me." Go to Jesus first and foremost if you would know what step to take. Think not to wait for repentance, and faith, and a new heart, but go to him just as you are. Go to Him in prayer and cry, " Lord save me, or I perish. I am weary of sleeping ; I would fain sleep no longer." Oh ! awake thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light.

Sun, moon, and stars are all witnessing against you ; they continue according to God's ordinances, and you are ever transgressing them. The grass, the birds, the very worms of the earth, are all witnessing against you : they fill their place in creation, and you do not. Sabbaths and ordinances are continually witnessing against you; they are ever proclaiming that there is a God and a judgment, and you are living as if there were none. The tears and prayers of godly relations are witnessing against you ; others are sorrowfully thinking you have a soul, though you seem to forget it. The very gravestones that you see every week are witnessing • etgainst you ; they are silently witnessing, life is uncertain, time is short, the resurrection is yet to come, the Lord is at hand. All, all are saying, awake, awake, awake! Oh! reader, the time past may surely suffice you to have slept. Awake to be wise. Awake to be safe. Awake to be happy. Awake and sleep no more.

3. My last word of application shall be *an exhortation* to all true believers, to all who have the oil of grace in the.ir hearts, and have fled for pardon to the blood of the Lamb. I draw it from the words of the Lord Jesus at the end of the parable. I exhort you earnestly " to watch."

I exhort you to watch against everything which might interfere with a readiness for Christ's -appearing. Search your own hearts. Find out the things which most frequently interrupt your communion with Christ, and cause fogs to rise between you and the sun. Mark these things, and know them, and against them ever watch and be on your guard.

Watch against sin of every kind and description. Think not to say of any sin whatever, "Ah! that is one of the things that I shall never do." I tell you there is no possible sin too abominable for the very best of us all to commit. Remember David and Uriah. The spirit may be sometimes very willing, but the flesh is always very weak. You are yet in the body. Watch and pray.

Watch against doubts and unbelief as to the complete acceptance of your soul, if you are a believer in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus finished the work he came to do:—do not tell Him that He did not. The Lord Jesus paid your debts in full:—do not tell Him that you think He left you to pay part. The Lord Jesus promises eternal life to every sinner that comes to Him :—do not tell Him, even while you are coming, that you think He lies. Alas! for our unbelief! In Christ you are like Noah in the ark, and Lot in Zoar,—nothing can harm you. The earth may be burned up with fire at the Lord's appearing, but not a hair of your head shall perish. Doubt it not. Pray for more faith. Watch and pray.

Watch against inconsistency of walk and conformity to the world. Watch against sins of temper and of tongue. These are the kind of things that grieve the Spirit of God, and make His witness within us faint and low. Watch and pray.

Watch against the leaven of false doctrine. Remember that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light. Remember that bad money is never marked bad, or else it would would never pass. Be very jealous for the whole truth as it is in Jesus. Do not put up with a grain of error merely for the sake of a pound of truth. Do not tolerate a little false doctrine one bit more than you would a little sin. Oh ! reader, remember this caution. Watch and pray.

Watch against slothfulness about the Bible and private prayer. There is nothing so spiritual but we may at last do it formally. Most backslidings begin in the closet. When a tree is snapped in two by a high wind, we generally find there has been some long-hidden decay. Oh ! watch and pray.

Watch against bitterness and uncharitableness towards others. A little love is more valuable than many gifts. Be eagle-eyed in seeing the good that is in your brethren, and dimsighted as the mole about the evil. Let your memory be a strong box for their graces, but a sieve for their faults. Watch and pray.

Watch against pride and self-coneit. Peter said at first, " though all men deny thee, yet will not I." And presently he fell. Pride is the high road to a fall. Watch and pray.

Watch against the sins of Galatia, Ephesus, and Laodicea. Believers may run well for a season, then lose their first love, and then become lukewarm. Watch and pray.

Watch not least against the sin of Jehu. A man may have great zeal to all appearance, and yet have very bad motives. It is a much easier thing to oppose anti-christ than to follow Christ. It is one thing to protest against error : it is quite another thing to love the truth. So watch and pray.

Oh ! my believing readers, let us all watch more than we have done. Let us watch more every year that we live. Let us watch that we may not be startled when the Lord appears.

Let us watch *for the world's sake.* We are the books they chiefly read. They mark our ways far more than we think. Let us aim to be plainly-written epistles of Christ.

Let us watch *for our own sakes.* As our walk is, so will be our peace. As our conformity to Christ's mind, so will be our sense of Christ's atoning blood. If a man will not walk in the full light of the sun, how can he expect to be warm ?

And above all, let us watch *for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake.* Let us live as if His glory was concerned in our behavior. Let us live as if every slip and fall was a reflection on the.honor of our King. Let us live as if every allowed sin was one more thorn in His head, one more nail in His feet, one more spear in His side. Oh ! let us exercise a godly jealousy over thoughts, words, and actions, over motives, manners, and walk. Never, never let us fear being too strict. Never, never let us think we can watch too much. Legh Richmond's dying words were very solemn. Few believers were ever more useful in their day and generation. Of few can it be said so truly that he "being dead yet speaketh." But what did he say to one who stood by while he lay dying ? " BROTHER, BROTHER, WE ARE NONE OF US MORE THAN HALF AWAKE."

**÷"Prove All Things"**

* "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."— 1 Thess. v. 21.
* Reader,
* You live in days when the text before your eyes is one of the first importance. The truths it contains are especially truths for the times. Give me your attention for a few minutes, and I will try to show you what I mean.
* There were three great doctrines or principles which won the battle of the Protestant Reformation. These were : — first, the sufficiency and supremacy of Holy Scripture : — secondly, the right of private judgment : — and thirdly, justification by faith only, without the deeds of the law.

These three principles were the keys of the whole controversy between the Reformers and the Church of Rome. Keep firm hold of them when you argue with a Roman Catholic, and your position is unassailable ;—no weapon that the Church of Rotne can forge against you shall prosper. Give up any one of them, and your cause is lost. Like Samson with his hair shorn, your strength is gone. Like the Spartans betrayed at Thermopylae, you are out-flanked and surrounded. You cannot maintain your ground. Resistance is useless. Sooner or later you will have to lay down your arms, and surrender at discretion.

Remember this. The Roman Catholic controversy is upon you once more. You must put on the old armor, if you would not have your faith overthrown. The sufficiency of Holy Scripture,—the right of private judgment,—justification by faith only,—these are the three great principles to which you must always cling. Grasp them firmly, and never let them go.

Reader, one of the three great principles to which I have referred appears to me to stand forth in the verse of Scripture which heads this page,—I mean the right of private judgment. I wish to say something to you about that principle.

The Holy Ghosf by the mouth of St. Paul says to us " Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good." In these words you have two great truths.

I. The right, duty, and necessity of private judgment. " Prove all things."

II. The duty and necessity of keeping firm hold upon truth. " Hold fast that which is good."

I propose to dwell a little on both these heads.

I. Let me speak first, of the *right, duty, and necessity of private judgment.*

"When I say the *right* of private judgment, I mean that every individual Christian has a right to judge for himself by the Word of God, whether that which is put before him as religious truth is God's truth, or is not.

When I say the *duty* of private judgment, I mean that God requires every Christian man to use the right of which I have just spoken ;

—to compare man's words and man's writ*m* ings with God's revelation, and to make sure that he is not deluded and taken in by false teaching.

And when I say the *necessity* of private judgment, I mean this,—that it is absolutely needful for every Christian who loves his soul, and would not be deceived, to exercise that right, and discharge that duty, to which I have referred; seeing that experience shows that the neglect of private judgment has always been the cause of immense evils in the Church of Christ.

Now the Apostle Paul urges all these three points upon your notice when he uses those remarkable words, " Prove all things." I ask your particular attention to that expression. In every point of view it is most weighty and instructive.

Here, you will remember, the Apostle Paul is writing to the Thessalonians,—to a Church which he himself had founded. Here is an inspired Apostle writing to young inexperienced Christians,—writing to the whole professing Church in a certain city, containing laity as well as clergy,—writing, too, with especial reference to matters of doctrine and preaching, as we know by the verse preceding the text, " despise not prophesyings." And yet mark what he says: " Prove all things."

He does not say, ' Whatsoever Apostles,— whatsoever evangelists, pastors and teachers, —whatsoever your bishops,—whatsoever your ministers tell you is truth, that you are to believe." No! he says, " Prove all things." He does not say, "Whatsoever the universal Church pronounces true, that you are to hold." No ! he says, " Prove all things."

The principle laid down is this, " Prove all things by the Word of God :—all ministers, all teaching, all preaching, all doctrines, all sermons, all writings, all opinions, all practices, —prove all by the Word of God. Measure all by the measure of the Bible.—Compare all with the standard of the Bible.—Weigh all in the balances of the Bible.—Examine all by the light of the Bible.—Test all in the crucible of the Bible.—That which can abide the fire of

the Bible, receive, hold, believe, and obey. That which cannot abide the fire of the Bible, reject, refuse, repudiate, and cast away."

Reader, this is private judgment. This is the right you are to exercise if you love your soul. You are not to believe things in religion, merely because they are said by Popes or Cardinals,—l>y Bishops or Priests,—by Presbyters or Deacons,—by Churches, Councils, or Synods,—by Fathers. Puritans, or Reformers. You are not to argue, " Such and such things must be true, because these men say so." You are not to do so. You are to prove all things by the Word of God.

I know such doctrine sounds shocking in some men's ears. But I write it down advisedly, and believe it cannot be disproved. I want to encourage no man in ignorant presumption or ignorant contempt. I praise not the man who seldom feads his Bible and yet sets himself to pick holes in his minister's sermons. I praise not the man who knows nothing but a few texts in the New Testament, and yet undertakes to settle questions in divinity which have puzzled God's wisest children. But still I hold with Bishop Bilson (a. D. 1575), that " all hearers have both liberty to discern and a charge to beware seducers; and woe to them that do it not." And I say with Bishop Davenant (a. D. 1627), " we are not to believe all who undertake to teach in the Church : but must take care and weigh with serious examination, whether their doctrine be sound or not."\*

Reader, men may dislike the doctrine of private judgment, but there is no doubt that it is continually taught in the Word of God.

This is the principle laid down in the eighth chapter of Isaiah, 19th verse. These words wure written, remember, at a time when God

\* " The people of God are called to try the truth, to judge between good and ill, between light and darkness. God hath made them the promise of His Spirit, and hath left unto them His word. They of Berea, when they heard the preaching of Paul, searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so as he taught them, and many of them believed. So do you: give heed to instruction and yet receive not all things without proof and trial that they are not contrary to the wholesome doctrine of the word of God."—*Bishop Jewel, Author of ihe Apology of the Church of England.* 1583.

was more immediately king over His Church, and had more direct communication with it than He has now. They were written at a time when there were men upon earth who had direct revelations from God. Yet what does Isaiah say ? " When they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter : should not a people seek unto their G-od ? for the living to the dead ? to the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." If this be not private judgment, what is ?

This again is the principle laid down by our Lord Jesus Christ in the sermon on the Mount. Remember what He says :—" Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruit" (Matt. vii. 15.) How is it possible that men shall know these false prophets, except they exercise their private judgment as to what their fruits are ?

This is the practice you find commended in the Bereans in the Acts of the Apostles. They did not take the Apostle Paul's word for granted, when he came to preach to them. You are told, that they " searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so;" and *"therefore,"* it is said, "many of them believed." (Acts xvii. 11, 12.) What was this again but private judgment?

This is the spirit of the advice given in 1 Cor. x. 15 : "I speak as unto wise men ; judge ye what I say :" and in Coloss. ii. 8: " Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit:" and in John iv. 1: " Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God :" and in 2 John 10 : "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house." If these passages do not recommend the use of private judgment, I do not know what words mean. To my mind they seem to say to every individual Christian, "Prove all things."

Reader, whatever men may say against private judgment, you may depend it cannot be neglected without immense danger to your soul. You may not like it, but you never know what you may come to, if you refuse to use it. No man can say into what depths of false doctrine you may be drawn, if you will not do what God requires of you, and " prove all things."

Suppose that in fear of private judgment, you resolve to believe whatever the Church believes. Where is your security against error ? The Church is not infallible. There was a time when almost the whole of Christendom embraced the Arian heresy, and did not acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ to be equal with the Father in all things. There was a time before the Reformation, when the darkness over the face of Europe was a darkness that might be .felt. The General Councils of the Church are not infallible. When the whole Church is gathered together in a General Council, what says our 21st Article ? " They may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation, have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture." The particular branches of the Church are not infallible. Any one of them may err. Many of •them have fallen foully, or have been swept away. Where is the Church of Ephesus at this day ? Where the Church of Sardis at the present time? Where the Church of Hippo in Africa ? Where the Church of Carthage ? They are all gone ! not a vestige of any of them is left. Will you then be content to err merely because the Church errs ? Will your company be any excuse for your error ? Will your erring in company with the Church remove your responsibility for your own soul ? Oh ! Reader, it were surely a thousand times better for a man to stand alone, and be saved, than to err in company with the Church, and be lost! It were better to prove all things, and go to heaven, than to say, " I dare not think for myself," and go to hell.

But suppose that, to cut matters short, you resolve to believe whatever your minister believes. Once more I ask, Where is your safety ?—Where is your security ? Ministers are not infallible, any more than Churches. All of them have not the Spirit of God. The very best of them are only men. Call us Bishops, Priests, Deacons, or whatever names you please, we are all earthen vessels. I speak not merely of Popes who have promulgated awful superstitions, and led abominable lives. I would rather point to the best of Protestants and say, " beware of looking upon them as infallible,—beware of thinking of any man (whoever that man may be) that he cannot err." Luther held consubstantiation :— that was a mighty error. Zuinglius, the Swiss Reformer, went out to battle, and died in the fight:—that was a mighty error. Calvin, the Geneva Reformer, advised the burning of Servetus:—that was a mighty error. Cranmer and Ridley urged the putting of Hooper in prison because of some trifling dispute about vestments :—that was a mighty error. Whitgift persecuted the Puritans:— that was a mighty error. Wesley and Top

lady in the last century quarrelled fiercely about Calvinism :—that was a mighty error. All these things are warnings, if you will only take them. All say, " Cease ye from man." All show us that if a man's religion hangs on ministers, whoever they may be, and not on the Wotd of God, it hangs on a broken reed. Never make ministers Popes. Follow us so far as we follow Christ, but not a hair's breadth farther. Believe whatever we can show you out of the Bible, but do not believe a single word more. Neglect the duty of private judgment, and you may find, to your cost, the truth of what Whitby says, " The best of overseers do sometimes make oversights." You may live to experience the truth of what the Lord said to the Pharisees, " When the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch." Reader, be very sure no man is safe against error, unless he acts on St. Paul's injunction, —unless he " proves all things" by the Word of God.

Reader, I have said that it is impossible to overrate the *evils* that may arise from neglecting to exercise your private judgment. I will go further, and say that it is impossible to overrate the *blessings* which private judgment has conferred both on the world and on the Church.

I ask you to remember that the greatest discoveries in science and philosophy, beyond all' controversy, have arisen from the use of private judgment. To this we owe the discovery of Galileo, that the earth went round the sun, and not the sun round the earth. To this we owe Columbus's discovery of the new continent of America. To this we owe Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood. To this we owe Jenner's discovery of vaccination. To this we owe the printing-press, the steam-engine, the power-loom, the electric telegraph, railways, and gas. For all these discoveries we are indebted to men who dared to think for themselves. They were not content with the beaten path of those who who had gone before. They were not satisfied with taking for granted that what their fathers believed must be true. They made experiments for themselves. They Brought old established theories to the. proof, and found that they were worthless. They proclaimed new systems, and invited men to examine them, and test their truth. They bore storms of obloquy and ridicule unmoved. They heard the clamor of prejudiced lovers of old traditions without flinching. And they prospered and succeeded in what they did. We see it now. And we who live in the nineteenth century are reaping the fruit of their use of private judgment.

And, Reader, as it has been in science, so also it has been in the history of the Christian religion. The martyrs who stood alone in their days, and shed that blood which has been the seed of Christ's Gospel throughout the world ; —the Reformers, who, one after another, rose up in their might to enter the lists with the Church of Rome,—all did what they did, suffered what they suffered, proclaimed what they proclaimed, simply because they exercised their private judgment about what was Christ's truth. Private judgment made the Waldenses, Albigenses, and the Lollards, count not their lives dear to them, rather than believe the doctrines of the Church of Rome. Private judgment made Wickliffe search the Bible in our land, denounce the Romish Friars, and all their impostures,—translate tho Scriptures into the vulgar tongue, and become " the morning star" of the Reformation. Private judgment made Luther examine Tetzel's abominable system of indulgences by the light of the Word. Private judgment led him on step by step, from one thing to another, guided by the same light, till at length the gulf between him and Rome was a gulf that could not be passed, and the Pope's power in Germany was completely broken. Private judgment made our own English Reformers examine for themselves and inquire for themselves as to the true nature of that corrupt system'under which they had been born and brought up. Private judgment made them cast off the abominations of Popery, and circulate the Bible among the laity. Private judgment made them draw from the Bible our Articles, compile our Prayerbook, and constitute the Church of England as it is. They broke the fetters of tradition, and dared to think for themselves. They refused to take for granted Rome's pretensions and assertions. They examined them all by the Bible, and because they would not abide the examination, they broke with Rome altogether. All the blessings of Protestantism in England, all that we are enjoying at this very day, we owe to the right exercise of private judgment. Surely if we do not honor private judgment we are thankless and ungrateful indeed !

Reader, I warn you not to be moved by the common argument, that the right of private judgment is liable to be abused,—that private judgment has done great harm, and should, be avoided as a dangerous thing. Never was there a more miserable argument! Never was there one which when threshed proves so full of chaff!

*Private judgment has been abused!* I wruld like the objector to tell me what good gift of God, has not been abused ? What high principle can be named that has not been employed for the very worst of purposes ? Strength may become tyranny, when it is employed by the stronger to coerce the weaker; yet strength is a blessing when properly employed. Liberty may become licentiousness, when every man does that which is right in his own eyes, without regarding the rights and feelings of others ; yet liberty, rightly used, is a mighty blessing. Because many things may be used improperly, are we therefore to give them up altogether ? Because opium is used improperly by some, is it not to be used as a medicine on any occasion at all ? Because money may be used improperly, is all money to be cast into the sea ? You cannot have good in this world without evil. You cannot have private judgment without some abusing it, and turning it to bad account.

But private judgment, people say, *has done more harm than good !* What harm has private judgment done, I would like to know, in matters of religion, compared to the harm that has been done by the neglect of it? Grant for a moment that among Protestants, who allow private judgment, there are divisions. Grant that in the Church of Rome, where private judgment is forbidden, there are no divisions. I might easily show that Romish unity is far more seeming than real. Bishop Hall, in his book called " The Peace of Rome," numbers up no less than three hundred differences of opinion maintained in the Romish Church. I might easily show that the divisions of Protestants are exceedingly exaggerated, and that mo st of them are upon points of minor importance. I might show that, with all the varieties of Protestantism, as men call them, there is still a vast amount of fundamental unity and substantial agreement among Protestants. No man can read the " Harmony of Protestant Confessions" without seeing that.

But grant for a moment that private judgment has led to divisions, and brought about varieties. I say that these divisions and varieties are but a drop of water when compared with the torrent of abominations, that have arisen from the Church of Rome's practice of disavowing private judgment altogether. Place the evils in two scales,—the evils that have arisen from private judgment, and those that have arisen from no man being allowed to think for himself. Weigh the evils one against another, and I have no doubt as to which will be the greatest. Give me Protestant divisions, certainly, rather than Popish unity, with the fruit that it brings forth. Give me Protestant variations, whatever a man like Bossuet may say about them, rather than Romish ignorance,—Romish superstition,—Romish dajrkness,—and Romish idolatry. Give me the Protestant diversities of England and Scotland, with all their disadvantages, rather than the dead level, both intellectual and spiritual, of the Italian Peninsula. Let the two systems be tried by their fruits,—the system that says, " Prove all things," and the system that says, " Dare to have no opinion of your own,"—let them be tried by their fruits in the hearts, in the intellects, in the lives, in all the ways of men, and I have no doubt as to the result.

Reader, I warn you above all things not to be moved by the specious argument, that it is *humility* to disallow private judgment, that it is humility to have no opinion of your own, that it is the part of a true Christian not to think for himself!—*•*—

I tell you that such humility is a false humility, a humility that does not deserve that blessed name. Call it rather laziness. Call it rather idleness. Call it rather sloth. It makes a man strip himself of all his responsibility, and throw the whole burden of his soul into the hands of the minister and the Church. It gives a man a mere vicarious religion, a religion by which he places his conscience and all his spiritual concerns under the care of others. He need not trouble himself! He need no longer think for himself! He has embarked in a safe ship, and placed his soul under a safe pilot, and will get to heaven! Oh ! beware of supposing that this deserves the name of humility. It is refusing to exercise the gift that God has given you. It is refusing to employ the sword of the Spirit which God has forged for the use of your hand. Blessed be God • our forefathers did not act upon such principles. Had they done so, we should never have had the Reformation. Had they done so, we might have been bowing down to the image of the Virgin Mary at this moment, or praying to the spirits of departed saints, or having a service performed in Latin. From such humility may the good Lord ever deliver you!

Reader, as long as you live, resolve that you will read for yourself, think for yourself, judge of the Bible for yourself, in the great matters of your soul. Have an opinion of your own. Never be ashamed of saying, " I think that this is right, because I find it in the Bible," and " I think that this is wrong, because I do not find it in the Bible." " Prove all things," and prove them by the Word of God.

As long as you live beware of the blindfold system, which many commend in the present day,—the system of following a leader, and having no opinion of your own—the system which practically says, " Only keep your Church, only receive the sacraments, only believe what the ordained ministers who are set over you tell you, and then all shall be well." I warn you that this will not do. I warn you that if you are content with this kind of religion, you are periling your immortal soul. Let the Bible and not any Church upon earth, or any minister upon earth, be your rule of faith. "Prove all things" by the Word of God.

And, above all, as long as you live, look forward to the great day of judgment. Think of the solemn account which every one of us shall have to give in that day before the judgment seat of Christ. We shall not be judged by Churches. We shall not be judged by whole congregations. We shall be judged individually, each by himself. What shall it profit you or me in that day to say, " Lord, Lord, I believed everything the Church told me. I received and believed everything ordained ministers set before me. I thought that whatever the Church and the ministers said must be right?" What shall it profit us to say this, if we have held some deadly error ? Surely, the voice of Him that sits upon the throne will reply, " You had the Scriptures. You had a book plain and easy to him that will read it in a child-like spirit. Why did yon not use the Word of God when it was given to you ? You had a reasonable soul given you to understand that Bible. Why did you not " Prove all things," and thus keep clear of error ?" Oh! Reader, if you refuse to exercise your private judgment, think of that awful day and beware.

II. And now let me speak of the *duty and necessity of keeping firm hold upon truth.*

The words of the Apostle on- this subject are pithy and forcible. " Hold fast," -he says, " that which is good." It is as if he said to us, " When you have found the truth for yourself, and when you are satisfied that it is Christ's truth,—that truth which the Scriptures set forth,—then get a firm hold upon it, grasp it, keep it in your heart, never let it

go."

He speaks us one who knew what the hearts of all Christians are. He knew that our grasp of the Gospel, at our best, is very cold,—that our love soon waxes feeble,—that our faith soon wavers,—that our zeal soon flags,—-that familiarity with Christ's truth often brings with it a species of contempt,—that, like Israel, we are apt to be discouraged by the length of our journey,—and, like Peter, ready to sleep one moment and fight the next,—but, like Peter, not ready to " watch and pray." All this St. Paul remembered, and, like a faithful watchman, he cries, by the Holy Ghost, " Hold fast that which is good."

He speaks as if he foresaw by the Spirit that the good tidings of the Gospel would soon be corrupted, spoiled, and plucked away from the Church at Thessalonica. He speaks as one who foresaw that Satan and all his agents would labor hard to cast down Christ's truth.

He writes as though he would forewarn men of this danger, and he cries, " Hold fast that which is good."

Reader, the advice is always needed—needed as long as the world stands. There is a tendency to decay in the very best of human institutions. The best visible Church of Christ is not free from this liability to degenerate. It is made up of fallible men. There is always in it a tendency to decay. Wo see the leaven of evil creeping into many a Church, even in the Apostle's time. There were evils in the Corinthian Church, evils in the Ephesian Church, evils in the Galatian Church. All these things are meant to be our warnings and beacons in these latter times. All show the great necessity laid upon the Church to remember the Apostle's words, " Hold fast that which is good."

Many a Church of Christ since then has fallen away for the want of remembering this principle. Their ministers and members forgot that Satan is always laboring to bring in false doctrine. They forgot that he can transform himself into an angel of light,—that he can make darkness appear light, and light darkness, truth appear falsehood, and falsehood truth. If he cannot destroy Christianity, he he ever tries to spoil it. If he cannot prevent the form of godliness, he endeavors to rob Churches of the power. No Church is ever safe that forgets these things, and does not bear in mind the Apostle's injunction, " Hold fast that which is good."

Reader, if ever there was a time in the world when Churches were put upon their trial, whether they would hold fast the truth or not, that time is the present time, and those Churches are the Protestant Churches of our own land. Popery, that old enemy of our nation, is coming in upon us in this day like a flood. We are assaulted by open enemies without, and betrayed continually by false friends within. The numbers of Roman Catholic churches and chapels, and Schools, and conventual and monastic establishments, are continually increasing around us. Month after month brings tidings of some new defection from the ranks of the Church of England to the ranks of the Church of Rome. Already the clergy of the Church of Rome are using great swelling words about things to come, and boasting that, sooner or later, England shall once more be brought back to the orbit from whence she fell, and take her place in the Catholic system. Already the Pope is parcel

ling our country into bishoprics, and speaks like one who fancies that by and bye he shall divide the spoil. Already he seems to foresee a time when England shall be as the patrimony of St. Peter's, when London shall be as Rome, when St. Paul's shall be as St. Peter's, and Lambeth Palace shall be as the Vatican itself. Surely now, or never, we ought all of us to awake, and " Hold fast that which is good."

We supposed, some of us, in our blindness, that the power of the Church of Rome was ended. We dreamed, some of us, in our folly, that the Reformation had ended the Popish controversy, and that if Romanism did survive, Romanism was altogether changed. If we did think so, we have lived to learn that we made amost grievous mistake. Rome never changes. It is her boast that she is always the same. The snake is not killed. He was scotched at the time of the Reformation, but was not destroyed. The Romish Antichrist is not dead. He was cast down for a little season, like the fabled giant buried under Etna, but his deadly wound is healed, the grave is opening once more, and Antichrist is coming forth. The unclean spirit of Popery is not laid in his own place. Rather he seems to say, " My house in England is now swept and garnished for me ; let me return to the place from whence I came forth."

And, reader, the question is now, whether we are going to abide quietly, sit still, and fold our hands, and do nothing to resist the assault. Are we really men of understanding of the times ? Do we know the day of our visitation ? Surely, this is a crisis in the history of our Churches and of our land. It is a time which will soon prove whether we know the value of our privileges, or whether, like Amalek, " the first of the nations," our " latter end shall be that we perish forever." It is a time which will soon prove whether we intend to allow our candlestick to be quietly removed, or repent, and do our first works, lest any man should take our crown. If we love the open Bible—if we love the preaching of the Gospel —if we love the freedom of reading that Bible, no man letting or hindering us, and the opportunity of hearing that Gospel, no man forbidding us—if we love civil liberty—if we love religious liberty—if these are precious to our souls, we must all make up our minds to hold fast, lest by and bye we lose all.

Reader, if we mean to hold fast, every parish, every congregation, every Christian man, and every Christian woman, must do their part in contendng for the truth. Each should work, and each should pray, and each should labor, as if the preservation of the pure Gospel depended upon himself or herself, and upon no one else at all. The Bishops must not leave the matter to the Priests, nor the Priests leave the matter to the Bishops. The clergy must not leave the matter to the laity, nor the laity to the clergy. The Parliament must not leave the matter to the country, nor the country to the Parliament. The rich must not leave the matter to the poor, nor the poor to the rich. We must all work. Every living soul has a sphere of influence. Let him see to it that he fills it. Every living soul can throw some weight into the scale of the Gospel. Let him see to it that he casts it in. Let every one know his own individual responsibility in this matter ; and all, by God's help, \vifl be well.

If we would hold fast that which is good, we must never tolerate or countenance any doctrine which is not the pure doctrine of Christ's Gospel. There is a hatred which is downright charity—that is, the hatred of erroneous doctrine. There is an intolerance which is downright praiseworthy—that is the intolerance of false teaching in the pulpit. Who wjjuld ever think of tolerating a little poison given to him day by day ? If men come among you who do not preach " all the counsel of God," who do not preach of Christ, and sin, and holiness, of ruin, and redemption, and regeneration; and do not preach of these things in a Scriptural way, you ought to cease to hear them. You ought to act upon the injunction given by the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament, " Cease, my son to hear the instruction which causes to err from the words of knowledge." (Prov. xix. 27.) You ought to carry out the spirit shown by the Apostle Paul, in Gal. i. 8. " Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other doctrine unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed." If we can bear to hear Christ's truth mangled or adulterated,—and can see no harm in listening to that which is another Gospel,—and can sit at ease while sham Christianity is poured into our ears,— and can go home comfortably afterwards, and not burn with holy indignation,—if this be the case, there is little chance of our ever doing much to resist Rome. If we are Content to hear Jesus Christ not put in his rightful place, we are not men and women who are likely to do Christ much service, or fight a good fight on His side. He that is not zealous against error, is not likely to be zealous for truth.

If we would hold fast the truth, wo must be ready to unite with all who hold the truth, and love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. "We must be ready to lay aside all minor questions as things of subordinate importance. Establishment or no establishment,—liturgy or no liturgy,—surplice or no surplice,—bishops or presbyters, all these points of difference, however important they may be in their place and in their proportion,—all ought to be regarded as subordinate questions. I ask no man to give up his private opinions about them. I wish no man to do violence to his conscience. All I say is, that these questions are wood, hay, and stubble when the very foundations of the faith are in danger. The Philistines are upon us. Can we make common cause against them, or can we not ? This is the one point for our consideration. Surely it is not right to say that we expect to spend eternity with men in heaven, and yet cannot work for a few years with them in this world. It is nonsense to talk of alliance and union, if in a day like this there is to be no cooperation. The presence of a common foe ought to sink minor differences. We must hold together—depend upon it—all Protestants must hold together, if they mean to " hold fast that which is good."

Some men may say, " This is very troublesome." Some may say, " Why not sit still and be quiet?" Some may say, " Oh, that horrid controversy! What need is there for all this trouble ? Why should we care so much about these points of difference ?" I ask, what good thing was ever got or ever kept without trouble? Gold does not lie in English cornfields, but at the bottom of California rivers. Pearls do not grow in English hedges, but deep down in Indian seas. Difficulties are never overcome without struggles. Mountains are seldom climbed without fatigue. Oceans are not crossed without tossings on the waves. Peace is seldom obtained without war. And Christ's truth is seldom made a nation's property, and kept a nation's property, without pains, without struggles, and without trouble.

Let the man who talks of " *trouble"* tell me where we should be at this day, if our forefathers had not taken some trouble *?* Where would be the Gospel of England if Martyrs had not given their bodies to be burned ? Who

shall estimate our debt to Cranmer, Latimer, Hooper, Ridley, and Taylor and their brethren ? They held fast that which was good. They would not give up one jot. They counter ed not their lives dear for the Gospel's sake. They labored, and they travailed, and we have entered into their labors. Shame upon us, if we will not take a little trouble to keep with us what they so nobly won! Trouble, or no trouble,—pains or no pains,—controversy or no controversy,—one thing is very sure, that nothing but Christ's Gospel will ever do good to our own souls. Nothing else will maintain our Churches. Nothing else will ever bring down God's blessing upon our land. If, therefore, we love our own souls, or if we love our country's prosperity, or if we love to keep our Churches standing, we must remember the Apostle's words, and " hold fast" firmly the Gospel, and refuse to let it go.

And now, reader, I have set before you two things. *One* is the right, the duty, and necessity of private judgment. *The other is,* the duty and necessity of keeping firm hold upon truth.—It only remains for me to apply these things to your own individual conscience by a few concluding words.

For one thing, if it be your duty to " prove all things," let me beseech and exhort you to arm yourself with a thorough knowledge of the of the written Word of God. Read your Bible regularly. Become familiar with your Bible. Prove all religious truth when it is brought before you by the Bible. A little knowledge of the Bible will not suffice. Depend upon it, a man must know his Bible well, if he is to prove religious teaching by it; and he must read it regularly if he would know it well. There is no royal road to a knowledge of the Bible. There must be reading, daily, regular reading of the book, or the book will not be known. As one said quaintly, but most truly, " Justification may be by faith, but a knowledge of the Bible comes only by works." The devil can quote Scripture. He could go to our Lord and quote Scripture when he wished to tempt him. A man must be able to say, from his knowledge of Scripture, when he hears Scripture falsely quoted, " Thus it is written again," lest he be deceived. Neglect your Bible and nothing that I know of, can prevent your becoming a Roman Catholic, an Arian, a Socinian, a Jew, or a Turk, if a plausible" advocate of any of these false, systems shall happen to meet you.

For another thing, if it be right to " prove all things," take care to try every Roman Catholic doctrine, by whomsoever put forward, by the written Word of God. Believe nothing, however speciously advanced,—believe nothing, with whatever weight of authority brought forward,—believe nothing, though supported by all the Fathers,—believe nothing, except it can be proved to you out of the Scripture. That alone is infallible. That alone is light. That alone is God's measure of truth and falsehood. " Let God be true, and every man a liar." The New Zealanders' answer to the Romish priest who went among them is an answer never to be forgotten. They heard these priests urge upon them the worship of the Virgin Mary. They heard them recommend them to pray to saints. They heard them advocate the use of images. They heard them speak of the authority of the Church of Rome, the supremacy of the Pope, the antiquity of the Romish communion. They knew the Bible, and they heard all this calmly, and gave one simple but memorable answer:— " *It cannot be true, because it is not in the Book."* All the learning in the world could never have supplied a better answer than that. Latimer, or Knox, or Owen could never have made a more crushing reply. Let this bo our rule when we are attacked by Romanists, or semi-Romanists, let us hold fast the sword of the Spirit, and say in reply to all their arguments, " *It cannot be true, because it is not in the Book."*

Last of all, if it be right to "hold fast that which is good," let us make sure that we have each laid hold personally upon Christ's truth for ourselves. Reader, it will not save you and me to know all controversies, and to be able to detect everything which is false. Head knowledge will never bring you and me to heaven. It will not save us to be able to argue and reason with Roman Catholics, or to detect the errors of Pope's bulls or Pastoral letters. Let us see that we each lay hold upon Jesus Christ for ourselves by our own personal faith. Let us see to it that we each flee for refuge, and lay hold upon the hope set before us in His glorious Gospel. Let us do this and all shall be well with us, whatever else may go ill. Let us do this, and then all things are ours. The Church may fail. The State may go to ruin. The foundations of all establishments may be shaken. The enemies of truth may for a season prevail. But as for us, all shall be well. We shall have in this world peace, and in the world which is to come life everlasting, for we shall have Christ, and having Him we have all. This is real good, lasting good, good in sickness, good in health, good in life, good in death, good in time, and good in eternity. All-other things are but uncertain. They all wear out. They fade They droop. They wither. They decay. The longer we have them the more worthless we find them, and the more satisfied we become, that everything here below, is " vanity and vexation oi Spirit." But as for hope in Christ, that is *always* good. The longer we use it the better it seems. The more we wear it in our hearts the brighter it will look. It is good when we first have it. It is better far when we grow older. It is better still in the day of trial, and the hour of death. And best of all, depend upon it, will it prove in the day of judgment.

Reader, if you have not yet laid hold on this hope in Christ, seek it at once. Call on the Lord Jesus to give it to you. Give Him no rest till you know and feel you are His.

If you have laid hold on this hope, hold it fast. Prize it highly, for it will stand by you when everything else fails.

**÷Are You Regenerate?**

* Reader,
* I wish to speak to you about Regeneration, or being born again.
* The subject is a most important one at any time. These words of our Lord Jesus Christ to Nicodemus are very solemn,• " Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. •3.) The world has gone) through many changes since those words were spoken. Eighteen hundred years have passed away. Empires and kingdoms have risen and fallen. Great men and wise men have lived, labored, written, and died. But there stands the rule of the Lord Jesus unaltered and unchanged. And there it will stand, till heaven and earth shall pass away,—" Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
* But the subject is one which is'doubly important in the present day. Things have happened which have drawn special attention to it. Men's minds are full of it, and men's eyes are fixed on it. Regeneration is discussed in newspapers. Regeneration is talked of in private society. Regeneration is argued about in courts of law. Surely it is a time when every true Christian should examine himself upon the subject, and make sure that his views are sound. It is a time when we should not halt between two opinions. We should try to know what we hold. We should be ready to give a reason for our belief. When truth is assailed, those who love truth should grasp it more firmly than ever. Oh! for a greater spirit of decision throughout the land ! Oh! for a more hearty determination to be always on the Lord's side !

Reader, I invite you to listen *id* me, while I try to bring this disputed question before you. I feel deeply that I can tell you nothing new. I know I can say nothing which has not been better said by better men than myself. But every additional witness may be of use in a disputed cause. And if I can only throw a little Scripture light on the subject of Regeneration, and make it plain to plain readers of the Bible, I shall thank God and be abundantly satisfied. What are the opinions of men to you or me ? He that judgeth us is the Lord ! One point has to be ascertained and only one,—" What saith the Scripture of truth•?"

Now I propose to attempt three things :—

I. Firstly, to explain *what Regeneration, or being born again means.*

II. Secondly, to show *the necessity of Regeneration.*

III. Thirdly, to point out *the marks and evidences of Regeneration.*

If the Lord God shall enable me to make these three points clear to you, I believe I shall -have done your soul a great service.

I. Let me then first of all explain, *what Regeneration, or being born again, means.*

Regeneration means, that change of heart and nature which a man goes through when he becomes a true Christian.

I think there can be no question that there is an immense difference among those who profess and call themselves Christians. Beyond all dispute there are always two classes in the outward Church—the class of those who are Christians in name and form only, and the class of those who are Christians in deed and in truth. All were not Israel who were called Israel, and all are not Christians who are called Christians. " In the visible Church," says an article of the Church of England, " the evil be ever mingled with the good."

Some, as the thirty-nine articles say, are " wicked and void of a lively faith: others, as another article says, are made like the image of God's only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, and walk religiously in good works." Some worship God as a mere form, and some in spirit and in truth. Some give their hearts to God, and some give them to the world. Some believe the Bible, and live as if they believed it: others do not. Some feel their sins and mourn over them : others do not. Some love Christ, trust in Him, and serve Him : others do not. In short, as Scripture says, some walk in the narrow way, some in the broad ; some are the good fish of the Gospel net, some are tho bad ; some are the wheat in Christ's field, and some are the tares.\*

I think no man with his eyes open can fail to see all this, both in the Bible, and in the world around him. Whatever he may think about the subject I am writing of, he cannot possibly deny that this difference exists.

Now what is the explanation of the difference ? I answer unhesitatingly, Regeneration, or being born again. I answer, that true Christians are what they are, because they are regenerate, and formal Christians are what they are, because they are not regenerate. The heart of the Christian indeed has been changed. The heart of the Christian in name only, has not been changed. The change of heart makes the whole difference.\*

\* " There be two manner of men. Some there be that be not justified, nor regenerated, nor yet in the state of salvation ; that is to say, not God's servants. They lack the renovation or regeneration; they be not come yet to Christ."—*Bishop Latimer's Sermons,* 1552.

This change of heart is spoken of continually in the Bible, under various emblems and figures.

Ezekiel calls it " a taking away the stony heart, and a giving an heart of flesh ;"—" a giving a new heart, and a putting within us a new spirit." (Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26.)

The Apostle John sometimes calls it being " born of God,"—sometimes being " born again,"—sometimes being " born of the Spirit." (John i. 13; iii. 3 ; iii. 6.)

The Apostle Peter in the Acts calls it, " repenting and being converted/' (Acts iii. 19.)

The Epistle to the Romans speaks of it as a " being alive from the dead." (Rom. vi. 13.)

\* The reader must not suppose there is anything new or modern in this statement. It would be an endtess work to quote passages from standard divines of the Church of England, in which the words " regenerate and unregenerate" are used to describe the difference which I have been speaking of. The pious and godly members of the Church are called " the regenerate,"—the worldly and ungodly are called "the unregenerate." I think no one well read in English divinity, can question this for a moment.

The second Epistle to the Corinthians calls it " being a new creature, old- things have passed away, and all things become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.)

The Epistle to the Ephesians speaks of it as a resurrection together with Christ, " You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," (Ephes. ii. 1,) as " a putting off the old man which is corrupt,—being renewed in the spirit of our mind,—and putting on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephes. iv. 22, 24.)

The Epistle to the Colossians calls it " a putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." (Coloss. iii. 9, 10.)

The Epistle to Titus calls it, " the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii. 5.)

The first Epistle of Peter speaks of it as " a being called out of darkness into God's marvellous light." (1 Peter ii. 9.) And the second Epistle as " being made partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter i. 4.)

The first Epistle of John calls it a " passing from death to life." (1 John iii. 14.)

All these expressions come to the same thing in the end. They are all the same truth, only viewed from different sides. And all have one and the same meaning. They describe a great radical change of heart and nature,—a thorough alteration and transformation of the whole inner man,—a participation in the resurrection life of Christ,—or, to borrow the words of the Church of England Catechism, " a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness."\*

This change of heart in a true Christian is so complete, that no word could be chosen more fitting to express it than that word " Regeneration," or " new birth." Doubtless it is no outward, bodily alteration, but undoubtedly it is an entire alteration of the inner man. It adds no new faculties to a man's mind, but it certainly gives an entirely new bent and bias to all his old ones. His will is so new, his taste so new, his opinions so new, his views of sin, the world, the Bible, and Christ so new, that he is to all intents and purposes a new man. The change seems to bring a new being into existence. It may well be called being *born again.*

\* " All these expressions set forth the same work of grace upon the heart, though they may be understood under different notions." *Bishop Hopkins.* 1670.

This change is *not always given to believers at the same time in their lives.* Some are born again w'hen they are infants, and seem, like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, filled with the Holy Ghost even from their mother's womb. Some few are born again in old age. The great majority of true Christians probably are born again after they grow up. A vast multitude of persons, it is to be feared, go down to the grave without having been born again at all.

This change of heart *does not always begin in the same way* in those who go through it after they have grown up. With some, like the Apostle Paul and the jailer at Philippi, it is a sudden and violent change, attended with much distress of mind. With others, like Lydia of Thyatira, it is more gentle and gradual: their winter becomes spring almost without their knowing how. With some the change is brought about by the Spirit working through afflictions, or providential visitations. With others, and probably the greater number of true Christians, the word of God preached or written, is the means of effecting it.\*

This change is *one which can only be known and discerned by its effects.* Its beginnings are a hidden and secret thing. We cannot see them. Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us this most plainly : " The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.) Would you know if you are regenerate ? You must try the question, by examining what you know of the effects of Regeneration. Those effects are always the same. The ways by which true Christians are led, in passing through their great change, are certainly various. But the state of heart and soul into which they are brought at last, is always the same. Ask them what they think of sin, Christ, holiness, the world, the Bible, and prayer, and you will find them all of one mind.

\* " The preaching of the word is the great means which God hath appointed for Regeneration: ' faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' (Rom. x. 17.) When God first created man, it is said that ' he breathed into his nostrils the breath of *life,'* but when God new ere- • ates man, he breathes into his ears. This is the word that raiseth the dead, calling them out of the grave; this is that word thatopens the eyes of the blind, that turns the hearts of the disobedient and rebellious. And though wicked and profane men scoff at preaching, and count all ministers' words, and God's words too, but so much wind, yet they are such wind, believe it, as is able to tear rocks and rend mountains; such winds as, if ever they are saved, must shake and overturn the foundations of all their carnal confidence and presumption. Be exhorted therefore more to prize and more to frequent the preaching of the *word."—Bishop Hopkins.* 1670.

This change is *one which no man can give to himself, nor. yet to another.* It would be as reasonable to expect the dead to raise themselves, or to require an artist to give a marble statue life. The sons of God are " born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 13.) Sometimes the change is ascribed to God the Father, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us again unto a lively hope." (1 Peter i. 3.) Sometimes it is ascribed to God the Son, " the Son quickeneth whom he will."' (John iii. 21.) " If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." (1 Johnii. 29.) Sometimes it is ascribed to the Spirit, —and He in fact is the great agent by whom it is always effected ; " that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John iii. 6.) But man has no power to work the change. It is something far, far beyond his reach. " The condition of man after the fall of Adam," says the tenth Article of the Church of England " is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God." No minister on earth can convey grace to any one of his congregation at his discretion. He may preach as truly and faithfully as Paul or Apollos: but God must " give the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 6.) He may baptize with water in the name

of the Trinity : but unless the Holy Ghost accompanies and blesses the ordinance, there is no death unto sin, and no new birth unto righteousness. Jesus alone, the great Head of the Church, can baptize with the Holy Ghost. Blessed and happy are they, who have the inward Baptism as well as the outward.\*

Reader, I lay before you the foregoing account of Regeneration. I say it is that change of heart which is the distinguishing mark of a true Christian man,—the invariable companion of a justifying faith in Christ,—the inseparable

\* " The Scripture carries it, that no more than a child can beget itself, or a dead man quicken himself, or a nonentity create itself; no more can any carnal man regenerate himself, or work true saving grace in his own soul."— *Bishop Hopkins.* 1670.

" There are two kinds of Baptism, and both necessary; the one interior, which is the cleansing of the heart, the drawing of the Father, the operation of the Holy Ghost: and this baptism is in man when he believeth and trusteth that Christ is the only method of his salvation."—*Bishop Hooper.* 1547.

" It is on all parts gladly confessed, that there may be in divers cases, life by virtue of inward baptism, where outward is not found."—*Richard Hooker.* 1692.

" There is a baptism of the Spirit as of water."—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.* 1660.

consequence of vital union with him,—and the root and beginning of inward sanctification. I ask you to ponder it well before you go any further. It is of the utmost importance that your views should be clear upon this point,— *what Regeneration really is.*

I know well that many will not allow that Regeneration is what I have described it to be. They will think the statement I have made, by way of definition, much too strong. Some hold that Regeneration only means admission into a state of ecclesiastical privileges,—being made a member of the Church,—but does not mean a change of heart. Some tell us that a regenerate man has a certain power within him 'which enables him to repent and believe if he thinks fit, but that he still needs a further change in order to make him a true Christian. Some say there is a difference between Regeneration and being born again. Others say there is a difference between being born again and conversion.

To all this I have one simple reply, and that is, *I can find no such Regeneration spoken of anywhere in the Bible.* A Regeneration which only means admission into a state of ecclesiastical privilege may be ancient and primitive for anything I know. But something more than this is wanted. A few plain texts of Scripture are needed; and these texts have yet to be found.

Such a notion of Regeneration is utterly inconsistent with that which St. John gives us in his first Epistle. It renders it necessary to invent the awkward theory that there are two Regenerations, and is thus eminently calculated to confuse the minds of unlearned people, and introduce false doctrine. It is a notion which seems not to answer to the solemnity with which our Lord introduces the subject to Nicodemus. When he said, " Verily, verily, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," did he only mean, except a man be admitted to a state of ecclesiastical privilege? Surely he meant more than this. Such a Regeneration a man might have, like Simon Magus, and yet never be saved. Such a Regeneration he might never have, like the penitent thief, and yet see the kingdom of God. Surely he must have meant a change of heart. As to the notion that there is any distinction between being Regenerate and being born again, it is one which will not bear examination. It is the general opinion of all who know Greek, that the two expressions mean one and the same thing.

To me indeed there seems to be much confusion of ideas, and indistinctness of apprehension in men's minds on this simple point, what Regeneration really is,—and all arising from not simply adhering to the word of God. That a man is admitted into a state of great privilege when he is made a member of a pure church of Christ, I do not for an instant deny. That he is in a far better and more advantageous position for his soul, than if he did not belong to the Church, I make no question. That a wide door is set open before his soul which is not set before the poor heathen, I can most clearly see. *But I do not see that the Bible ever calls this Regeneration.* And I cannot find a single text in Scripture which warrants the assumption that it is so. It is very important in theology to distinguish things that differ. Church privileges are one thing. Regeneration is another. I, for one, dare not confound them.\*

I am quite aware that great and good men have clung to that low view of Regeneration to which I have adverted.! But when a doctrine of the everlasting Gospel is at stake, I can call no man master. The words of the old philosopher, are never to be forgotten, " I love Plato, I love Socrates, but I love truth better than either." I say unhesitatingly, that those who hold the view that there are two Regenerations, can bring forward no plain

\* The mixture of those things by speech, which by nature are divided, is the mother of all error."—*Hooker.* 1595.

f For instance, Bishop Davenant and Bishop Hopkins frequently speak of a " sacramental regeneration," when they are handling the subject of baptism, as a thing entirely distinct from spiritual regeneration. The general tenor of their writings is to speak of the godly as the regenerate, and the ungodly as the unregenerate. But with every feeling of respect for two such good men, the question yet remains,— What Scripture warrant have we for saying there are two regenerations *t* I answer unhesitatingly, we have none at all.

text in proof of it. I firmly believe that no plain reader of the Bible only would ever find this view there for himself, and that goes very far to make me suspect it is an idea of man's invention. The only Regeneration that I can see in Scripture *i»,* not a change of *state,* but a change *of heart.* That is the view, I once more assert, which the Church Catechism takes when it speaks of the "death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness," and on that view I take my stand.

Reader, the doctrine before you is one of vital importance. This is no matter of names and words, and forms, about which I am writing, and you are reading. It is a thing that you and I must feel and know by experience, each for himself, if we are to be saved. Try, I beseech you, to become acquainted with it. Let not the din and smoke of controversy draw off your attention from your own heart. Is that heart changed ? Alas ! it is poor work to wrangle, and argue, and dispute about Regeneration, if after all we know nothing about it within.

r

Reader, Regeneration, or new birth, is the distinguishing mark of every true Christian. Now just consider what I say. *Are you Regenerate, or are you not ?*

II. Let me show you, in the second place, *the necessity there is for our being Regenerate, or born again.*

That there is such a necessity is most plain from our Lord Jesus Christ's words in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel. Nothing can be more clear and positive than His language to Nicodemus, " Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of •God." " Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." (John iii. 3, 7.)

The reason of this necessity is the exceeding sinfulness and corruption of our natural hearts. The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians are literally accurate, " The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God", for they are foolishness unto him." (Cor. ii. 14.) Just as rivers flow downward, and sparks fly upward, and stones fall to the ground, so does a man's heart naturally incline to what is evil. We love our soul's enemies, we dislike our soul's friends. We call good evil, and we call evil good. We take pleasure in ungodliness, we take no pleasure in Christ. We not only commit sin, but we also love sin. We not only need to be cleansed from the guilt of sin, but we also need to be delivered from its power. The natural tone, bias, and current of our minds must be completely altered. The image of God, which sin has blotted out, must be restored. The disorder and confusion which reigns within us must be put down. The first things must no longer ba last, and the last first. The Spirit must let in the light on our hearts, put everything in its right place, and create all things new.

It ought always to be remembered that there are two distinct things which the Lord Jesus Christ does for every sinner whom He undertakes to save. He washes him from his sins in His own blood, and gives him a free pardon :—*this is his justification.* He puts the Holy Spirit into his heart, and makes him an entire new man:—*this is His Regeneration.*

The two things are *both absolutely necessary to salvation.* The change of heart is as necessary as the pardon ; and the pardon is as necessary as the change. Without the pardon we have no right or title to heaven. Without the change we should not be meet and ready to enjoy heaven, even if we got there.

The two things are *never separate.* They are never found apart. Every justified man is also a regenerate man, and every regenerate man is also a justified man. When the Lord Jesus Christ gives a man remission of sins, He also gives him repentance. When He grants peace with God, he also grants power to become a son of God. There are two great standing maxims of the glorious Gospel, which ought never to be forgotten. One is, " He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) The other is, " If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom; viii. 9.)

Reader, the man who denies the universal necessity of Regeneration, can know very little of the heart's corruption. He is blind indeed who fancies that pardon is all we want in order to get to heaven, and does not see that pardon without a change of heart would be a useless gift. Blessed be God that both are freely offered to us in Christ's Gospel, and that Jesus is able and willing to give the one as well as the other.

Surely you must be aware that the vast majority of people in the world *see nothing, feel nothing; and know nothing' in religion as they ought.* How and why is this, is not the present question. I only put it to your conscience, is it not the fact ?

Tell them of the sinfulness of many things which they are doing continually ;—and what is generally the reply ? " They see no harm."

Tell them of the awful peril in which their souls are, of the shortness of time, the nearness of eternity, the uncertainty of life, the reality of judgment. They feel no danger.

Tell them of their need of a Saviour,—mighty loving, and divine, and of the impossibility of being saved from hell except by faith in Him. It all falls flat and dead on their ears. They see no such great barrier between themselves and heaven.

Tell them of holiness, and the high standard of living which the Bible requires. They cannot comprehend the need of such strictness. They see no use in being so very good.

There are thousands and tens of thousands of such people on every side of us. They will hear these things all their lives. They will even attend the ministry of the most striking preachers, and listen to the- most powerful appeajs to their consciences. And yet when you come to visit them on their death•beds, they are like men and women who never heard these things at all. They know nothing of the leading doctrines of the Gospel hy experience. They can render no reason whatever of their own hope.

And why and wherefore is all this ? What is the explanation, what is the cause of such a state of things ? It all comes from this,—that man naturally has no sense of spiritual things. In vain the Sun of righteousness shines before him : the eyes of his soul are blind, and cannot see it. In vain the music of Christ's invitations sounds around him:—the ears of his soul are dteaf, and cannot hear it. In vain the wrath of God against sin is set forth :—the perceptions of his soul are stopped up,—like the sleeping traveller, he does not perceive the coming storm. In vain the bread and water of life are offered to him :—his soul is neither hungry for the one, nor thirsty for the other. In vain he is advised to flee to the Great Physician :—his soul is unconscious of its disease ; why should he go ? In vain you put a price into his hand to buy wisdom :—the mind of his soul wanders,—he is like the lunatic, who calls straws a crown and dust diamonds,—he says, " I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Ah! Reader, there is nothing so sad as the utter corruption of our nature. There is nothing so painful as the anatomy of a dead soul.

Now what does such a man need ? He needs to be born again and made a new creature. He needs a complete putting off the old man, and a complete putting on the new. "We do not live our natural life till we are born into the world, and we do not live our spiritual life till we are born of the Spirit.

But, Reader, you must furthermore be aware that the vast majority of people *are utterly unfit to enjoy heaven in their present state.* I lay it before you as a great fact. Is it not so?

Look at the masses of men and women gathered together in our cities and towns, and observe them well. They are all dying creatures,—all immortal beings,—all going to the judgment-seat of Christ,—all certain to live forever in heaven or in hell. But where is the slightest evidence that most of them are in the least degree meet and ready for heaven ?

Look at the greater part of those who are called Christians, in every part throughout the land. Take any parish you please, in town or country. Take that which you know best. "What are the tastes and pleasures of the majority of people who live there? What do

.they like best, when they have a choice ? What do they enjoy most, when they can have their own way ? Observe the manner in which they spend their Sundays. Mark how little delight they seem to feel in the Bible and prayer. Take notice of the low and earthly notions of pleasure and happiness, which everywhere prevail, among young and old', among rich and poor. Mark well these things, and then think quietly over this question,—" What would these people do in heaven ?"

You and I, it may be said, know little about heaven. Our notions of heaven may be very dim and indistinct. But at all events, I suppose we are agreed in thinking that heaven is a very holy place,—that God is there,—and Christ is there,—and saints and angels are there,—that sin is not there in any shape,— and that nothing is said, thought, or done, which God does not like. Only let this be granted, and then I think there can be no doubt the great majority of people around us are as little fit for heaven as a bird for swimming beneatli the sea, or a fish for living upon dry land.\*

And what is it that they need in order to make them fit to enjoy heaven ? They need to be regenerated and born again. It is not a little changing and outward amendment that they require. It is not merely the putting a restraint on raging passions and the quieting of unruly affections. All this is not enough. Old age,—the want of opportunity for indulgence,—the fear of man may produce all this. The tiger is still a tiger, even when he is chained, and the serpent is still a serpent, even when he lies motionless and coiled up. The alteration needed is far greater and deeper. They must every one have a new nature put within them. They must every one be made new creatures. The fountain-head must be purified. The root must be set right. Each one wants a new heart and a new will. The change required is not that of the snake when he casts his skin, and yet remains a reptile still. It is the change of the caterpillar when he dies and his crawling life ceases ; but from his body rises the butterfly,—a new animal with a new nature.

\* " Tell me, thou that in holy duties grudgest at every word that is spoken;—that thinkest every summons to the public worship as unpleasant as the sound of thy passing bell; that sayest, ' When will the Sabbath be gone, and the ordinances be overT What wilt thou do in heaven *1* What shall such an unholy heart do there, where a Sabbath shall be as long as eternity itself; where there shall be nothing but holy duties; and where there shall not be a spare minute, so much as for a vain thought, or an idle word? What wilt thou do in heaven, where whatsoever thou shalt hear, see, or converse with, all is holy ? And by how much more perfect the holiness of heaven is than that of the saints on earth, by so much the more irksome and intolerable would it be to wicked men, for if they cannot endure the weak light of a star, how will they be able to endure the dazzling light of the sun itself!"—*Bislwp Hopkins.*

All this and nothing less, is required. Well says the Homily of Good Works, " They be as much dead to God that lack faith, as those are to the world that lack souls."

The plain truth is, the vast proportion of professing Christians in the world have nothing whatever of Christianity except the name. The reality of Christianity, the graces, the experience, the faith, the hopes, the life, the conflict, the tastes, the hungering and thirsting after righteousness,—all these are things of which they know nothing at all. They need to be converted as truly as any among the Gentiles to whom Paul preached, and to be turned from idols and renewed in the spirit of their minds as really, if not as literally. And one main part of the message which should be continually delivered to the greater portion of every congregation on earth is this, " Ye must be born again." I write this down deliberately. I know it will sound dreadful and uncharitable in many ears. But I ask any one to take the New Testament in his hand, and see what it says is Christianity, and compare that with the ways of professing Christians, and then deny the truth of what I have written, if he can.

And now let every one who reads these pages remember this grand principle of Scriptural religion, " No salvation without Regeneration, no spiritual life without a new birth, no heaven without a new heart."

Think not for a moment that the subject of this tract is a mere matter of controversy, an empty question for learned men to argue about, but not one that concerns you. Away with such an idea forever ! It concerns you deeply. It touches your own eternal interests. It is a thing that you must know for yourself, feel for yourself, and experience for yourself, if you would nver be saved. No soul of man, woman, or child, will ever enter heaven without having been born again.\*

And think not for one moment that this Regeneration is a change which people may go through after they are dead, though they never went through it while they were alive. Away with such a notion forever! Now or never is the only time to be saved. Now, in this world of toil and labor,—of money-getting and business,—now you must be prepared for heaven, if you are ever to be prepared at all. Now is the only time to bo justified, now the only time to be sanctified, and now the only time to be born again. So sure as the bible is true, the man who dies without these three things will only rise again at the last day to be lost forever.

\* " Make sure to yourselves this great change. It is no notion that I have now preached unto you. Your natures and your lives must be changed, or, believe it, you will be found at the last day under the wrath of God. For God will not change or alter the word that is gone out of his mouth: he hath said it; Christ, who is the truth and word of God, hath pronounced it, that without the new birth or regeneration, no man shall inherit the kingdom of God."—*Bishop Hopkins.* 1670.

You may be saved and reach heaven without many things which men reckon of great importance,—without riches, without learning, without books, without worldly comforts, without health, without house, without land, without friends ;—but *without Regeneration you will never be saved at all.* Without your natural birth you would never have lived and moved and read this tract on earth;—without a new birth you will never live and move in heaven. I bless God that the saints in glory will be a multitude that no man can number. I comfort myself with the thought that after all there will be ' much people" in heaven. But this I know and am persuaded of from God's word, that of all who reach heaven there will not be one single individual who has not been born again.\* \* " Regeneration, or the new birth, is of absolute neces

" Are you born again ?" I say to every one whose eye is upon this page. Once more I repeat what I have already said, " no salvation without a new birth."

III. Let me in the third place, point out *the marks of being regenerate, or born again.*

It is a most important thing to have clear and distinct views on this part of the subject we are considering. You have seen what Regeneration is, and why it is necessary to salvation. The next step is to find out the signs and evidences by which a man may know whether he is born again or not,—whether his heart has been changed by the Holy Spirit, or whether his change is yet to come.

Now these signs and evidences are laid down plainly for us in Scripture. God has not left us in ignorance on this point. He foresaw how some would torture themselves with doubts and questionings, and would never believe it was well with their souls. He foresaw how others would take it for granted they were regenerate who had no right to do so at all. He has therefore mercifully provided us with a test and gauge of our spiritual condition in the First Epistle general of St. John. There he has written for our learning what the regenerate man is, and what the regenerate man does,—his ways, his habits, his manner of life, his faith, his experience. Every one who wishes to possess the key to a right understanding of this subject, should thoroughly study this First Epistle of St. John.

sity unto eternal life. There is no other change simply necessary, but only this. If thou art poor, thou mayest so continue, and yet be saved. If thou art despised, thou mayest so continue, and yet be saved. If thou art unlearned, thon mayest so continue, and yet be saved. Only one change is necessary. If thou art wicked and ungodly, and continuest so, Christ, who hath the keys of heaven, who shutteth and no man openeth, hath himself doomed thee, that thou shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." —*Sis/top Hopkins.* 1670.

Reader, I invite your particular attention'to these marks and evidences of Regeneration, while I try to set them before you in order. Forget everything else in this tract if you will, but do not forget this part of it. I might easily mention other evidences beside those I am about to mention. But I will not do so. I would rather confine myself to the First Epistle of St. John, because of the peculiar explicitness of its statements about the man that is born of God. He that hath an ear let him hear what the beloved Apostle says about the marks of regeneration.

*1,* First of all, St. John says, " "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ;" and again, " Whosoever is born of God sinneth not." (1 John iii. 9 ; v. 18.)

A regenerate man *does not commit sin as a habit.* He no longer sins with his heart and will, and whole inclination, as an unregenerato man does. There was probably a time when he did not think whether his actions were sinful or not, and never felt grieved after doing evil. There was no quarrel between him and sin ;—they were friends. Now he hates sin, flees from it, fights against it, counts it his greatest plague, groans under the burden of its presence, mourns when he falls under its influence, and longs to be delivered from it altogether. In one word, sin no longer pleases him, nor is even a matter of indifference : it has becoma the abominable thing which he hates. He cannot prevent it dwelling within him. " If he said he had *no* sin, there would be no truth in him ;" (1 John i. 8,) but he can say that he cordially abhors it, and the great desire of his soul is not to commit sin at all. He cannot prevent bad thoughts arising within him, and short-comings, omissions, and defects appearing both in his words and actions. He knows, as St. James says, that " in many things we offend all." (James iii. 2.) But he can say truly, and as in the sight of God, that these things are a daily grief and sorrow to him, and that his whole nature does not consent unto them, as that of the unregenerate man does.

Reader, I place this mark before you. What •would the apostle say about you ? Are you born of God ?\*

\* " The interpretation of this place that I judge to he the most natural and unforced is this : ' He that is born of God doth not commit sin ; that is, he doth not sin in that malig- • nant manner in which the children of the devil do : he doth not make a trade of sin, nor live in the constant and allowed practice of it.—There is a great difference betwixt regenerate and unregenerate persons in the very sins that they commit. All indeed sin; but a child of God cannot sin, that is, though he doth sin, yet he cannot sin after such a manner as wicked and unregenerate men do."—*Bishop Hopkins.* 1070.

2. Secondly,—St. John says, " Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (1 John v. 1.)

A regenerate man believes that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour by whom his soul can be pardoned and redeemed, that He is the divine person appointed and anointed by G-od the Father for this very purpose, and that beside Him there is no Saviour at all. In himself he sees nothing but unworthiness, but in Christ he sees ground for the fullest confidence, and trusting in Him he believes that his sins are all forgiven and his iniquities all put away. He believes that for the sake of Christ's finished work and death upon the cross he is reckoned righteous in Grod's sight, and may look forward to death and judgment without alarm. He may have his fears and doubts. He may sometimes tell you he feels as if he had no faith at all. But ask him whether he is willing to trust in anything instead of Christ, and see what he will say. Ask him whether he will rest his hopes of eternal life on his own goodness, his own amendments, his prayers, his minister, his doings in Church and out of Church, either in whole or in part, and see what he will reply. Ask him whether he will give up Christ, and place his confidence in any other way of salvation. Depend upon it, he would say, that though he does feel weak and bad, he would not give up Christ for all the world. Depend upon it he would say he found a preciousness in Christ, a suitableness to his own soul in Christ that he found nowhere else, and that he must cling to Him.

Reader, I place this mark also before you. What would the Apostle say about you ? Are you bom of God ?

3. Thirdly,—St. John says, " Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." (1 John ii. 29.)

The regenerate man is *a holy man.* He endeavors to live according to God's will, to do the things that please God, to avoid the things that God hates. His aim and desire is to love God with heart and soul, and mind and strength, and to love his neighbor as himself. His wish is to be continually looking to Christ as his example as well as his Saviour, and to show himself Christ's friend by doing whatsoever Christ commands. No doubt he is not perfect. None will tell you that sooner than himself. He groans under the burden of indwelling corruption, cleaving to him. He finds an evil principle within him constantly warring against grace, and trying to draw him away from God. But he does not consent to it, though he cannot prevent its presence. In spite of all shortcomings, the average bent and bias of his way is holy,—his doings holy,—his tastes holy,— and his habits holy. In spite of all his swerving and turning aside, like a ship beating up against a contrary wind, the general course of his life is in one direction,—toward God and for God. And though he may sometimes feel so low that he questions whether he is a Christian at all, in his calmer moments he will generally be able to say with old John Newton, " I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world, but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am."\*

Reader, I place this mark also before you. What would the Apostle say about you ? Are you born of God ?

4. Fourthly,—St. John says, " We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (1 John iii. 14.)

A regenerate man *has a special love for all true disciples of Christ.* Like his Father in heaven he loves all men with a great general love, but he has a special love for them who are of one mind with himself. Like his Lord and Saviour, he loves the worst of sinners and could weep over them, but he has a peculiar love for those who are believers. He is never so much at home as when he is in their company. He is never so happy as when he is among the saints and the excellent of the earth. Others may value learning, or cleverness, or agreeablene'ss, or riches, or rank, in the society they choose. The regenerate man values grace. Those who have most grace and are most like Christ, are those he loves most. He feels that they are members of the same family with himself, his brethren, his sisters, children of the same Father. He feels that they are fellow-soldiers, fighting under the same captain, warring against the same enemy. He feels that they are his fellow-travellers, journeying along the same road, tried by the same difficulties, and soon about to rest with him in the same eternal home. He understands them, and they understand him. There is a kind of spiritual freemasonry between them. He and they may be very different in many ways,—in rank, in station, in wealth. "What matter ? They are Jesus Christ's people. They are his Father's sons and daughters. Then he cannot help loving them.

\* " Let none conclude that they have no grace because they have many imperfections in their obedience. Thy grace may be very weak and imperfect, and yet thou mayest be truly born again to God, and be a genuine son and heir of heaven."—*Bishop Hopkins.* 1670.

Reader, I place this mark also before you.

What would the Apostle say about you ? Are you born of God ?

5. Fifthly,—St. John says, " Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." (1 John v. 4.)

A regenerate man *does not make the world's opinion his rule of right and wrong.* He does not mind going against the stream of the world's ways, notions, and customs. " What will men say ?" is no longer a turning point with him. He overcomes the love of the world. He finds no pleasure in things which most around him call happiness. He cannot enjoy their enjoyments :—they weary him :— they appear to him vain, unprofitable, and unworthy of an immortal being. He overcomes the fear of the world. He is content to do many things which all around him think unnecessary, to say the least. They blame him :—it does not move him. They ridicule him :—he does not give way. He loves the praise of God more than the praise of man. He fears offending Him more than giving offence to man. He has counted the cost. He has taken his stand. It is a small thing with him now whether he is blamed or praised. His eye is upon Him\*that is invisible. Him he is resolved to 'follow whithersoever he goeth. It may be necessary in this following to come out from the world and be separate. The regenerate man will not shrink from doing so. Tell him that he is unlike other people, that his views are not the views of society generally, and that he is making himself singular and peculiar. You will not shake him. He is no longer the servant of fashion and custom. To please the world is quite a secondary consideration with him. His first aim is to please God.

Reader, I place this mark also before you. What would the Apostle say about you ? Are you born of God ?

6. Sixthly,—St. John says, " He that is begotten of God keepeth himself." (1 John v. 18.)

A regenerate man is *very careful of his own soul.* He endeavors not only to keep clear of sin, but also to keep clear of everything which may lead to it. He is careful about the company he keeps. He feels that evil communicaMons corrupt the heart, and that evil is far more catching than good, just as dis.nse ia more infectious than health. He is careful about the employment of his time ; his chief desire about it is to spend it profitably. He is careful about the books he reads:—He fears getting his mind poisoned by mischievous writings. He is careful about the friendships he forms :—it is not enough for him that people are kind and amiable and good-natured :—all this is very well; but will they do good to his soul ? He is careful over his own daily habits and behavior:—He tries to recollect that his own heart is deceitful, that the world is full of wickedness, that the devil is always laboring to do him harm, and therefore he would fain be always on his guard. He desires to live like a soldier in an enemy's country, to wear his armor continually, and to be prepared for temptation. He finds by experience that his soul is ever among enemies, and he studies to be a watchful, humble, prayerful man.

Reader, I place this mark also before you. What would the Apostle say of you ? Are you born of God ?

Such are the six great marks of Regeneration, which God has given for our learning. Let every one who has gone so far with me read them over with attention and lay them to heart. I believe they were written with a view to settle the great question of the present day, and intended to prevent disputes. Once more then I ask the reader to mark and consider them.

I know there is a vast difference in the depth and distinctness of these marks among those who are regenerate. In some people they are faint, dim, feeble, and hardly to be discerned. You almost need a microscope to make them out. In others they are bold, sharp, clear, plain, and unmistakable, so that he who runs may read them. Some of these marks are more visible in some people, and others are more visible in others. It seldom happens that all are equally manifest in one and the same soul. All this I am quite ready to allow.

But still, after every allowance, here we find boldly painted the six marks of being born of God. Here are certain positive things laid down by St. John as parts of the regenerate man's character, as plainly and distinctly as the features of a man's face. Here, is an inspired Apostle writing one of the last general Epistles to the Church of Christ, telling us that a man born of God does not commit sin,— believes that Jesus is the Christ,—doeth righteousness,—loves the brethren,—overcomes the world, and keepeth himself. And more than once in the very same Epistle when these marks are mentioned, the Apostle tells us that he who has not this or that mark is " not of God." I ask the reader to observe all this.

Now what shall we say to these things ? What they can say who hold that Regeneration is only an admission to outward Church privileges, I am sure I do not know. For myself I say boldly, I can only come to one conclusion. That conclusion is, that those per• sons only are regenerate who have these six marks about them, and that all men and women who have not these marks, are not regenerate, are not born again. And I firmly believe that this is the conclusion to which the apostle wished us to come.

Reader, *have you these marks?* I know not what your opinions may be on this muchdisputed subject of Regeneration. I know not on which side you may rank yourself. But once for all I warn you, if you find nothing in yourself answering to the marks I have beon speaking of, you have ' reason indeed to be afraid. Without these marks it is vain to fancy you are scripturally regenerate. The witness of the Apostle John is clear and express that you are not. There must be a certain family likeness be'tween God and His children. Without it you are none of His. There must be some visible evidence of the Spirit being within you, as plain as the stamp upon gold and silver, however small. Without this evidence you are only boasting of a false gift. Show me thy faith without thy works, said the A.postle James, when hu wrote against those who were content with a dead faith. Show me thy regeneration without its fruits, is an argument that ought to be pressed home on many a conscience in the present day.

Reader, *if you have not these marks,* awake to a sense of your danger. Arise from your sleep of indifference and unconcern. Know the immense peril of hell and eternal misery in which you stand. Begin to use diligently every means by which God is ordinarily pleased to give grace to men's hearts, when they have not received it in their youth. Be diligent, in hearing the Gospel preached. Be diligent in reading the Bible. Be diligent, above all, in prayer to the Lord Jesus Christ for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

If you take this course I have every hope for you. None ever sought the Lord Jesus Christ in simplicity and sincerity, and sought in vain.

If on the contrary you refuse to take this course, and will continue as you are, I have little hope for you, and many fears. If the Bible be true, you are not yet born again. You will not use the most likely means to obtain this mighty blessing. "What can I say but this, " The Lord have mercy upon your soul ?"

Reader, *if you have these marks* I have been speaking of, be advised, and strive every year to make them more clear and plain. Let your repentance be a growing habit,—your faith an increasing faith,—your holiness a progressive holiness,—your victory over the world a more decided victory.—your love to the brethren a more hearty love,—your watchfulness over yourself a more jealous watchfulness. Take this advice, and you will never repent it. This is the way to be useful and happy in your religion. This is the way to put to silence the opposition of the enemies of truth. Let others, if they will, have Regeneration on their tongues, and nowhere else. Let it be your care to have it shining forth in your life, and to feel it in your heart.

Reader, I commend what I have been saying, to your serious consideration. I believe that I have told you nothing but what is God's truth. You live in a day of gross darkness on the subject of regeneration. Thousands are darkening God's counsel by confounding baptism and regeneration. Beware of this. Keep the two subjects separate in your mind. Get clear views about regeneration first of all, and then you are not likely to fall into mistakes about baptism. And when you have got clear views hold them fast, and never let them go.

I remain, your affectionate Friend,

J. C. RYLE.

he Reader who wishes to ascertain the true view of the Church of England, on the Doctrine of Regeneration, is referred to the Author's larger work on the subject; where he will find the point fully discussed, and the objections commonly raised against the statements of the preceding pages fully considered.

**÷How Should A Child Be Trained?**

* " Train up a child in the way he should go : and ,when he is old he will not,depart from it."—Prov. xzii. 6.
* I Suppose that most professing Christians are acquainted with the text at the head of this page. The sound of it is probably familiar to | your ears, like an old tune. It is likely you have heard it, or read it, talked of it, or quoted it, many a time. Is it not so ?
* But, after all, how little is the substance of this text regarded ! The doctrine it contains appears scarcely known; the duty it puts before us seems fearfully seldom practised. Reader, do I not speak the truth ?
* It cannot be said that the subject is a new one. The world is old, and we have the experience of nearly six thousand years to help us. We live in days when there is a mighty zeal for education in every quarter. We hear of new schools rising on all sides. We are told of new systems and new books for the young, of every sort and description. And still, for all this, the vast majority of children are manifestly *not* trained in the way they should go, for when they grow up to man's estate they do not walk with God.

Now. how shall we account for this state of things ? The plain truth is, the Lord's commandment in our text is not regarded; and therefore, the Lord's promise in our text is not fulfilled.

Reader, these things may well give rise to great searchings of heart. Suffer then a word of exhortation from a minister about the right training of children. Believe me, the subject is one that should come home to every conscience, and make every one ask himself the question, " Am I in this matter doing what I can ?"

It is a subject that concerns almost all. There is hardly a household that it does not touch. Parents, nurses, teachers, godfathers, godmothers, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters— all have an interest in it. Few can be found, I think, who might not influence some parent in the management of his family, or affect the training of some child by suggestion or advice. All of us, I suspect, can do something here, either directly or indirectly, and I wish to stir up all to bear this in remembrance.

It is a subject too on which all concerned are in great danger of coming short of their duty. This is pre-eminently a point in which men can see the faults of their neighbors more clearly than their own. They will often bring up their children in the very path which they have denounced to their friend as unsafe. They will see motes in other men's families, and overlook beams in their own. They will be quicksighted as eagles in detecting mistakes abroad, and yet blind as bats to fatal errors which are daily going on at home. They will be wise about their brother's house, but foolish about their own flesh and blood. Here, if anywhere, we have need to suspect our own judgment This too you will do well to bear in mind.\*

Come now, and let me place before you a few hints about right training. God the Father, God the Sou, God the Holy Ghost, bless them, and make them words in season to you all. Reject them not because they are blunt and simple ; despise them not because they contain nothing new. Be very sure, if you would train children for heaven, they are hints that ought not to be lightly set aside.

I. First then, if you would train your children rightly, *train them in the way they should go, and not in the way that they would.*

Remember, children are born with a decided bias towards evil, and therefore if you let them choose for themselves, they are certain to choose wrong.

\* As a minister, I cannot help remarking that there u hardly any subject about which people seem so tenacious as they are about their children. I have sometimes been perfectly astonished at the slowness of sensible Christian parents to allow that their own children are in fault, or deserve blame. There are not a few persons to whom I would far rather speak about their own sins, than tell them their children had done anything wrong.

The mother cannot tell what her tender infant may grow up to be—tall or short, weak or strong, wise or foolish ; he may be any of these things, or not—it is all uncertain. But one thing the mother can say with certainty, he will have a corrupt and sinful heart. It is natural to us to do wrong. " Foolishness," says Solomon, "is bound in the heart of a child." (Prov. xxri. 15.) "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." (Prov. xxix. 15.) Our hearts are like the earth on which we tread ;—let it alone and it is sure to bear weeds.

If then you would deal wisely with your child, you must not leave him to the guidance of his own will. Think for him, judge for him, act for him, just as you would for one weak and blind; but for pity's sake, give him not up to his own wayward tastes and inclinations. It must not be *bis* likings and wishes that are consulted. He knows not yet what is good for his mind and soul, any more than what is good for his body. You do not let him decide what he shall eat, and what he shall drink, and how he shall be clothed. Be consistent, and deal with his mind in like manner. Train him in the way that is scriptural and right, and not in the way that he fancies.

If you cannot make up your mind to this first principle of Christian training, it is useless for you to read any further. Self-will is almost the first thing that appears in a child's mind; and it must be your first step to resist it.

II. *Train up your child with all tenderness, affection, and patience.*

I do not mean that you are to spoil him, but I do mean that you should let him see that you love him.

Love should be the silver thread that runs through all your conduct. Kindness, gentleness, long-suffering, forbearance, patience, sympathy, a willingness to enter into childish troubles, a readiness to take part in childish l'oys,—these are the cords by which a child may be led most easily,—these are the clues you must follow if you would find the\* way to his heart.

Few are to be found, even among grown-up people, who are not more easy to draw than to drive. There is that in all our minds which rises in arms against compulsion ; we set up our backs and stiffen our necks at the very idea of a forced obedience. We are like young horses in the hand of a breaker :—handle them kindly, and make much of them, and by and by you may guide them with thread; use them roughly and violently, and it will be many a month before you get the mastery of them at all.

Now children's minds are cast in much the same mould as our own. Sternness and severity of manner chill them and throw them back. It shuts up their hearts, and you will weary yourself to find the door. But let them only see that you have an affectionate feeling towards them,—that you are really desirous to make them happy and do them good,—that if you punish them it is intended for their profit, and that, like the pelican, you would give your heart's blood to nourish their souls,— let them see this, I say, and they will soon be all your own. But they must be wooed with kindness if their attention is ever to be wdn.

And surely reason itself might teach us this lesson. Children are weak and tender creatures, and, as such, they need patient and considerate treatment. We must handle them delicately, like frail machines, lest by rough fingering we do more harm than good. They are like young plants, and need gentle watering,—often, but little at a time.

We must not expect all things at once. We must remember what they are, and teach them as they are able to Lear. Their minds are like a lump of metal,—not to be forged and made useful at once, but only by a succession of little blows. Their understandings are like narrow-necked vessels: we must pour in the wine of knowledge gradually, or much of it will be spilled and lost. Line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, must be our rule. The whetstone does its work slowly, but frequent rubbing will bring the scythe to a fine edge. Truly there is need of patience in training a child, but without it nothing can be done.

Nothing will compensate for the absence ot this tenderness and love. A minister may speak the truth as it is in Jesus clearly, forcibly, unanswerably ; but if he does not speak it in love, few souls will be won. Just so you may set before your children their duty,— command, threaten, punish, reason,—but if affection be wanting in your treatment, your labor will all be in vain.

Love is one grand secret of successful training. Anger and harshness may frighten, but they will not persuade the child that you are right; and if he sees you often out of temper, you will soon cease to have his respect. A father who speaks to his son as Saul did to Jonathan (1 Sam. xx. 30), need not expect to retain his influence over that son's mind.

Try hard to keep a hold on your child's affections. It is a dangerous thing to make your children afraid of you. Anything almost is better than reserve and constraint between your child and yourself, .and that will come in with fear. Fear puts an end to openness of manner; fear leads to concealment; fear sows the seed of much hypocrisy, and leads to many a lie. There is a mine of truth in the Apostle's words to the Colossians, " Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." (Coloss. iii. 2.) Let not the advice it contains be overlooked.

III. *Train your children with an abiding persuasion on your mind that much depends upon you.*

Grace is the strongest of all principles. See what a revolution grace effects when it comes into the heart of an old sinner,—how it overturns the strongholds of Satan,—how it casts down mountains,—fills up valleys,—makes crooked things straight,—and new-creates the whole man. Truly nothing is impossible to grace. ..

Nature too is very strong. See how it struggles against the things of the kingdom of God, —how it fights against every attempt to be more holy,—how it keeps up an unceasing warfare within us to the last hour of life. Nature indeed is strong.

But after nature and grace undoubtedly there is nothing more powerful than *education.* Early habits (if I may so speak,) are everything with us, under God. We are made what we are by training. Our character takes •the form of that mould into which our first years are cast.\*

We depend in a vast measure on those who bring us up. AVe get from them a color, a taste, a bias which cling to us more or less all our lives. We catch the language of our nurses and mothers, and learn to speak it almost insensibly, and unquestionably we catch something of their manners, ways, and mind, at the same time. Time only will show, I suspect, how much we all owe to early impressions, and how many things in us may be traced up to seeds sown in the days of our very infancy, by those who were about us. A very learned Englishman, Mr. Locke, has gone so far as to say, " That of all the men we meet with, nine parts out of ten are what they are, good or bad, useful or not, according to their education."

\* " He has seen but little of life who does not discern everywhere the effect of education ou men's opinions and habits of thinking. Two children bring out of the nursery that which displays itself throughout their lives."—*Cecil.*

And all this is one of God's merciful arrangements. He gives your children a mind that will receive impressions like moist clay. He gives them a disposition at the startingpoint of life to believe what you tell them, and to take for granted what you advise them, and to trust your word rather than a stranger's. He gives you in short, a golden opportunity of doing them good. See that the opportunity be not neglected, and thrown away. Once let slip, it is gone forever.

Beware of that miserable delusion into which some have fallen :—that parents can do nothing for their children, that you must leave them alone, wait for grace, and sit still. These persons have wishes for their children in Balaam's fashion,—they would like them to die the death of the righteous man, but they do nothing to make them live his life. They desire much, and have nothing. And the devil rejoices to see such reasoning, just as he always does over any thing which seems to excuse indolence, or to encourage neglect of means.

I know that you cannot convert your child. I know well that they who are born again, are born, not of the will of man, but of God. But I know also that God says expressly, " Train up a child in the way he should go," and that He never laid a command on man which He would not give man grace to perform. And I know too that our duty is not to stand still and dispute, but to go forward and obey. It is just in the going forward that God will meet us. The path of obedience is the way in which He gives the blessing. We have only to do as the servants were commanded at the marriage feast in Cana, to fill the water-pots with water, and we may safely leave it to the Lord to turn that water into wine.

IV. *Train with this thought continually before your eyes, that the soul of your child is the first thing to be considered.*

Precious, no doubt, are these little ones in your eyes; but if you love them, think often of their souls. No interest should weigh with you so much as their eternal interests. No part of them should be so dear to you as that part which will never die. The world, with all its glory, shall pass away ; the hills shall melt; the heavens shall be wrapt together as a scroll; and the sun shall cease to shine ; but the spirit which dwells in those little creatures, whom you love so well, shall outlive them all,

->

and whether in happiness or misery (to speak as a man,)will depend on you.

This is the thought that should be u ppermost in your mind, in all you do for your children. In every step you take about them, in every plan, and scheme, and arrangement, that concerns them, do not leave out that mighty question, " *How will this affect their souls?"*

Soul love is the soul of all love. To pet and pamper, and indulge your child, as if this world was all he had to look to, and this life the only season for happiness,—to do this is not true love, but cruelty. It is treating him like some beast of the earth, which has but one world to look to, and nothing after death. It is hiding from him that grand truth, which he ought to be made to learn from his very infancy, that the chief end of his life is the salvation of his soul.

A true Christian must be no slave to fashion, if he would train his child for heaven. He must not be content to do things merely because they are the custom of the world ;—to teach them and instruct them in certain ways, merely because it is usual;—to allow them to read books of a questionable sort, merely because everybody reads them ;—to let them form habits of a doubtful tendency, merely because they are the habits of the day. He must • train with an eye to his children's souls. He must not be ashamed to hear his training called singular and strange. What if it is ? The time is short—the fashion of this world passeth away. He that has trained his children for heaven, rather than for earth,—for God rather than for man,—he is the parent that will be called wise at the last.

V. *Train your child to a knowledge of the Bible.*

You cannot make your children love the Bible, I allow. None but the Holy Ghost can give us a heart to delight in the Word. But you can make your children acquainted with the Bible ; and be sure they cannot be acquainted with that blessed Book too soon, or too well.

A thorough knowledge of the Bible, is the foundation of all clear views of religion. He that is well-grounded in it will not, generally, be found a waverer, and carried about by every wind of new doctrine. Any system of training which does not make a knowledge of Scripture the first thing, is unsafe and unsound.

You have need to be careful on this point just now, for the devil is abroad, and error abounds. Some are to be found amongst us who give the Church the honor due to Jesus Christ. Some are to be found who make the Sacraments Saviours, and passports to eternal life. And some are to be found in like manner, who honor a Catechism more than the Bible ; .or fill the minds of their children with miserable little story books, instead of the Scripture of truth. But if you love your children, let the simple Bible be everything in training of their souls ; and let all other books go down and take the second place.

Care not so much for their being mighty in the Catechism, as for their being mighty in the Scriptures. This is the training, believe me, that God will honor. The Psalmist says of Him, " Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name;" (Psalm cxxxviii. 2,) and I think, that He gives an especial blessing to all who try to magnify it among men.

See that your children read the Bible *reverently.* Train them to look on it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, written by the Holy Ghost Himself, —all true, all profitable, and able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

See that they read it *regularly.* Train them to regard it as their soul's daily food,—as a thing essential to their soul's daily health. I know well you cannot make this anything more than a form ; but there is no telling the amount of sin which a mere form may indirectly restrain.

See that they read it *all.* You need not shrink from bringing any doctrine before them. You need not fancy that the leading doctrines of Christianity are things which children cannot understand. Children understand far more of the Bible than we are apt to suppose.

Tell them of sin, its guilt, its consequences, its power, its vileness—you will find they can comprehend something of this.

Tell them of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His Work for our salvation,—the atonement, the cross, the blood, tfie sacrifice, the intercession, —you will discover there is something not beyond them in all this.

Tell them of the work of the Holy Spirit in man's heart, how He changes, and renews, and sanctifies, and purifies,—you will soon see they can go along with you in some measure in this. In short, I suspect we have no idea how much a little child can take in of the length and breadth of the glorious Gospel. They see far more of these things than we suppose.\*

Fill their minds with Scripture. Let the word dwell in them richly. Give them the Bible, the whole Bible, even while they are young.

VI. *Train them to a habit of prayer.*

Prayer is the very life-breath of true religion. It is one of the first evidences that a man is born again. " Behold," said the Lord of Saul, in the day he sent Ananias to him, " Behold, he prayeth." (Acts ix. 11.) He had begun to pray, and that was proof enough.

Prayer was the distinguishing mark of the Lord's people in the day that there began to be a separation between them and the world. " Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." (Genesis iv. 26.)

\* As to the age when the religious instruction of a child should begin, no general rule can be laid down. The mind seems to open in some children much more quickly than in others. We seldom begin too early. There are wonderful examples on record of what a child can attain to, even at three years old.

Prayer is the peculiarity of all real Christians now. They pray,—for they tell God their wants, their feelings, their desires, their fears, and mean what they say. The nominal Christian may repeat prayers, and good prayers too, but he goes no further.

Prayer is the turning-point in a man's soul. Our ministry is unprofitable, and our labor is vain till you are brought to your knees. Till then we have no hope about you.

Prayer is one great secret of spiritual prosperity. When there is much private communion with God;—your soul will grow like the grass after rain ;—when there is little, all will be at a stand-still, you will barely keep your soul alive. Show me a growing Christian—a going forward Christian—a strong Christian— a flourishing Christian—and sure am I, he is one that speaks often with his Lord. He asks much, and he has much. He tells Jesus everything, and so he always knows how to act.

Prayer is the *mightiest* engine God has placed in our hands. It is the best weapon to use in every difficulty, and the surest remedy in every trouble. It is the key that unlocks the treasury of promises, and the hand that draws forth grace and help in time of need. It is the silver trumpet God commands us to sound in all our necessity, and it is the cry He has promised always to attend to, even as a loving mother to the voice of her child.

Prayer is the *simplest* means that man can use in coming to God. It is within reach of all,—the sick, the aged, the infirm, the paralytic, the blind, the poor, the unlearned,—all can pray. It avails you nothing to plead want of memory, and want of learning, and want of books, and want of scholarship in this matter. So long as you have a tongue to tell your soul's state, you may and ought to pray. Those words, " Ye have not because ye ask nqt, (James iv. 2,) will be a fearful condemnation to many in the day of judgment.

Parents, if you love your children, do all that lies in your power to train them up to a habit of prayer. Show them how to begin. Tell them what to say. Encourage them to persevere. Remind them if they become careless and slack about it. Let it not be your fault, at any rate, if they never call on the name of the Lord.

This, remember, is the first step in religion which a child is able to take. Long before he can read you can teach him to kneel by his mother's side, and repeat the simple words of prayer and praise which she puts in his mouth. And as the first steps in any undertaking are always the most important, so is the *manner* in which your children's prayers are prayed, a point which deserves your closest attention. Few seem to know how much depends on this. You must beware lest they get into a way of saying them in a hasty, careless and irreverent manner. You must beware of giving up the oversight of this matter to servants and nurses, or of trusting too much to your children doing it when left to themselves. I cannot praise that mother who never looks after this most important part of her child's daily life herself. Surely if there be any habit which your own hand and eye should help in forming, it is the habit of prayer. Believe me, if you never hear your children pray yourself, you are much to blame. You are little wiser than the bird described in Job, " Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them ; or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones,.as though they were not hers: her labor is in vain without fear." (Job xxxix. 14—16.)

Prayer is, of all habits, the one which we recollect• the longest. Many a gray-headed man could tell you how his mother used to make him pray in the days of his childhood. Other things have passed away from his mind perhaps.—The church where he was taken to worship,—the minister whom he heard preach, —the companions who used to play with him, —ail these, it may be, have passed from his memory, and left no mark behind. But you will often find it is far different with his first prayers. He will often be able to tell you where he knelt, and what he was taught to say, and even how his mother looked all the while. It will come up as fresh before his mind's eye as if it was but yesterday.

Reader, if you love your children, I charge you, do not let the seed-time of a prayerful habit pass away unimproved. If you train your children to anything, train them at least to a habit of prayer.

VII. *Train them to habits of diligence, and regularity about public means of grace.*

Tell them of the duty and privilege of going to the house of G od, and joining in the prayers of the congregation. Tell them that wherever the Lord's people are gathered together, there the Lord Jesus is present in an especial manner, and that those who absent themselves must expect, like the apostle Thomas, to miss a blessing. Tell them of the importance of hearing the word preached, and that it is God's ordinance for converting, sanctifying, and building up the souls of men. Tell them how the apostle Paul enjoins us not " to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;" (Heb. x. 25,) but to exhort one another, to stir one another up to it, and so much the more as we see the day approaching.

I call it a sad sight in a church, when nobody comes up to the Lord's table but the elderly people, and the young men and the young women all turn away. But I call it a sadder sight still, when no children are to be seen in a church, excepting those who come to the Sunday-school, and are obliged to attend. Let none of this guilt lie at your doors. There are many boys and girls in every parish beside those who oome to school, and you who are their parents and friends should see to it that they come with you to church.

Do not allow them to grow up with a habit of making vain excuses for not coming. Give them plainly to understand, that so long as they are under your roof it is the rule of your house for every one in health, to honor the Lord's house upon the Lord's day, and that you reckon the Sabbath-breaker to be a murderer of his own soul.

See to it too, if it can be so arranged, that your children go with you to church, and sit near you when they are there. To go to church is one thing, but to behave well at church is quite another: and believe me, there is no security for good behavior like that of having them under your own eye.

The minds of young people are easily drawn aside, and their attention lost, and every possible means should be used to counteract this. I do not like to see them coming to church by themselves,—they often get into bad company by the way, and so learn more evil on the Lord's day than in all the rest of the week. Neither do I like to see what I call " a young people's corner" in a church. They often catch habits of inattention and irreverence there which it takes years to unlearn, if ever they are unlearned at all. What I like to see is a whole family sitting together, old and young, side by side,—men, women, and children, serving God according to their households.

But there are some who say it is useless to urge children to attend means of grace, because they cannot understand them.

I would not have you listen to such reasoning. I find no such doctrine in the Old Testament. When Moses goes before Pharaoh, (Exodus x. 9,) I observe he says, "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters,—for we must hold a feast unto the Lord." When Joshua read the law, (Josh. viii. 35,) I observe, " There was not a word which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them." " Thrice in the year," (says Exod. xxxiv. 23,) " shall all your men-children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel." And when I turn to the New Testament, I find children mentioned there, as partaking in public acts of religion as well as in the Old. When Paul was leaving the disciples at Tyre for the last time, I find it said, (Acts xxi. 5,) " They all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city : and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed."

Samuel, in the days of his childhood, appears to have ministered unto the Lord some time before he really knew Him. (1 Sam. iii. 7.) " Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him." The apostles themselves do not seem to have understood all that our Lord said at the time that it was spoken; thus, (John xii. 16,) " These things understood not his disciples at the first, but when Jesus was glorified then remembered they that these things were written of Him."

Parents, comfort your minds with these examples. Be not cast down because your children see not the full value of the means of grace now. Only train them up to a habit of regular attendance. Set it before their minds as a high, holy, and solemn duty, and believe me, the day will very likely come when they will bless you for your deed.

VIII. *Train them to a habit of faith.*

I mean by this, you should train them up to believe what you say. You should try to make them feel confidence in your judgment,

and respect your opinions, as better than their ' own. You should accustom them to think that, when *you* say a thing is bad for them, it must be bad, and when *you* say it is good for them, it must be good ; that your knowledge, . in short, is "better than their own, and that they may rely implicitly on your word. Teach them to feel that what they know not now, they will probably know hereafter, and to be satisfied there is a reason and a needs-be for everything you require them to do.

Who indeed can describe the blessedness of a real spirit of faith ? Or rather, who can tell the misery that unbelief has brought upon the world ? Unbelief made Eve eat the forbidden fruit; she doubted the truth of God's word, " Ye shall surely die." Unbelief made the old world reject Noah's warning, and so perish in sin. Unbelief kept Israel in the wilderness, —it was the bar that kept them from entering the promised land. Unbelief made the Jews crucify the Lord of Glory,—they believed not the voice of Moses and the prophets, though read to them every day. And unbelief is the reigning sin of man's heart down to this very hour,—unbelief in God's promises,—unbelief in God's threatenings,—unbelief in our own sinfulness,—unbelief in our own danger,—unbelief in everything that runs counter to the pride and worldliness of our evil hearts. Reader, you train your children to little purpose if you do not train them to a habit of implicit faith,—faith in their parents' word, confidence that what their parents say must be right.

I have heard it is said by some, that you should require nothing of children which they cannot understand; that you should explain and give a reason of everything you desire them to do. I warn you solemnly against such a notion. I tell you plainly, I think it an unsound and rotten principle. No doubt it is absurd to make a mystery of everything you do, and there are many things which it is well to explain to children, in order that they may see that they are reasonable and wise. But to bring them up with the idea that they must take nothing on trust,—that they, with their weak and imperfect understandings, must have the " why" and the " wherefore" made clear to them at every step they take,—this is indeed a fearful mistake, and likely to have the worst effect on their minds.

Reason with your child if you are so disposed, at certain times, but never forget to keep him in mind (if you really love him), that he is but a child after all; that he thinks as a child, he understands as a child, and therefore must not expect to know the reason of everything at once.

Set before him the example of Isaac, in the day when Abraham took him to offer him on Mount Moriah. (Gren. xxii.) He asked his father that single question, " Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering ?" And he got no answer but this, " The Lord will provide himself a lamb." How, or where, or whence, or in what manner, or by what means, all this Isaac was not told ; but the answer was enough. He believed that it would be well, because his father said so, and he was content.

Tell your children too, that we must all be learners in our beginnings,—that there is an alphabet to be mastered in every kind of knowledge,—that the best horse in the world had need once to be broken,—that a day will come when they will see the wisdom of your training. But in the mean time if you say a thing is right, it must be enough for them,—they must believe you and be content.

Brethren, if any point in training is important, it is this. I charge you by the affection you have to your children, use every means to train them up to a habit of faith.

IX. *Train them to a habit of obedience.*

This is an object which it is worth any labor to attain. No habit, I suspect, has such an influence over our lives as this. Parents, determine to make your children obey you, though it may cost you much trouble, and cost them many tears. Let there be no questioning, and reasoning, and disputing, and delaying, and answering again. When you give them a command, let them see plainly that you will have it done.

Obedience is the only reality. It is faith visible, faith acting, and faith incarnate. It is the test of real discipleship among the Lord's people. " Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John xv. 14.) It ought to be the mark of well-trained children, that they do whatsoever their parents command them. Where indeed, is the honor which the fifth commandment enjoins, if fathers and mothers are not obeyed, cheerfully, willingly, and at once ?

Early obedience has all Scripture on its side. It is said in Abraham's praise, not merely he will *train* his family, but " he will *command* his children, and his household after him." (Genesis xviii. 9.) It is said of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, that when " He was young He was *subject* to Mary and Joseph." (Luke ii. 51.) Observe how implicitly Joseph obeyed the order of his father Jacob. (Gen. xxxviii. 13.) See how Isaiah speaks of it as an evil thing when " the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient." (Isaiah iii. 5.) Mark how the apostle Paul names disobedience to parents as one of the bad signs of the latter days. (2 Tim. iii. 2.) Mark how he singles out this *grace,* as one that should adorn a Christian minister, " A bishop must be one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." And again, " Let the deacons rule their children and their own houses well." (1 Tim. iii. 4, 12.) And again, an elder must be one " having faithful children, children not accused of riot or unruly." (Titus i. 6.)

Parents, do you wish to see your children happy ? Take care then that you train them to obey when they are spoken to,—to do *as* they are bid. Believe me we are not made for entire independence ;—we are not fit for it. Even Christ's freemen have a yoke to wear, :—they " serve the Lord Christ." (Coloss. iii. 24.) Children cannot learn too soon, that this is a world in which we are not intended to rule, and that we are never in our right place until we know how to obey. Teach them to obey while young, or else they will be fretting against God all their lives long, and wear themselves out with the vain idea of being independent of His control.

Reader, this hint is only too much needed. You will see many in this day who allow their children to choose and think for themselves, long before they are able, and even make excuses for their disobedience, as if it were a thing not to be blamed. To my eyes a parent always yielding, and a child always having its own way, are a most painful sight;—painful, because I see God's appointed order of things inverted and turned upside down;—painful, because I feel sure the consequence to that child's character in the end will be self-will, pride, and self-conceit. You must not wonder that men refuse to obey their Father which is in heaven, if you allow them, when children, to disobey their father who is upon earth.

Parents, if you love your children, let obedience be a motto and a watchword continually before their eyes.

X. *Train them to a habit of always speaking the truth.*

Truth-speaking is far less common in tho world than, at first sight, we are disposed to think. The whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is a golden rule which many would do well to bear in mind. Lying and prevarication are old sins. The devil was the father of them;—he deceived Eve by a bold lie ; and ever since the fall it is a sin against which all the children of Eve have need to be on their guard.

Only think how much falsehood and deceit there is in the world ! How much exaggeration ! How many additions are made to a simple story ! How many things left out, if it does not serve the speaker's interest to tell them ! How few there are about us of whom we can say, we put unhesitating trust in their word. Verily the ancient Persians were wise in their generation;—it was a leading point with them in educating their children, that they should learn to speak the truth. What an awful proof it is of man's natural sinfulness, that it should be needful to name such a point at all!

Reader, I would have you remark, how often God is spoken of in the Old Testament, as the God of *truth.* Truth seems to be especially set before us as a leading feature in the character of Him with whom we have to do. He never swerves from the straight line. He abhors lying and hypocrisy. Try to keep this continually before your children's minds. Press upon them at all times, that less than the truth is a lie; that evasion, excuse-making, and exaggeration are all half-way houses towards what is false, and ought to be avoided. Encourage them in any circumstance to bo *straightforward,* and, whatever it may cost them, to speak the truth.

I press this subject on your attention, not merely for the sake of your children's character in the world—though I might dwell much on this—I urge it rather for your own comfort and assistance in all your dealings with them. You will find it a mighty help indeed,'to be able always to trust their word. It will go far to prevent that habit of concealment, which so unhappily prevails sometimes among children. Openness and straightforwardness depend much upon a parent's treatment of this matter in the days of our infancy.

XL *Train them to a habit of always redeeming the time.*

Idleness is the devil's best friend. It is the surest way to give him an opportunity of doing us harm. An idle mind is like an open door, and if Satan does not enter in himself by it, it is certain he will throw in something to raise bad thoughts in our souls.

No created being was ever meant to be idle. Service and work is the appointed portion of every creature of G-od. The angels in heaven work,—they are the Lord's ministering servants, ever doing His will. Adam, in paradise, had work,—he was appointed to dress the garden of Eden, and to keep it. The redeemed saints in glory will have work,—" They rest not day and night," singing praise and glory to Him who bought them. And man, weak sinful man, must have something to do, or else his soul will soon get into an unhealthy state. We must have our hands filled, and our minds occupied with something, or else our imaginations will soon ferment and breed mischief.

And what is true of us, is true of our children too. Alas indeed for the man that has nothing to do ! The Jews thought idleness a positive sin : it was a law of theirs that every man should bring up his son to some useful trade,—and they were right. They knew the heart of man better than some of us appear to do.

Idleness made Sodom what she was. " This was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her." (Ezekiel xvi. 49.) Idleness had much to do with David's awful sin with the wife of Uriah;—I see (in 2 Sam. xi.) that Joab went out to war against Ammon, " but David tarried still at Jerusalem." Was not that idle ? And then it was that he saw Bathsheba —and the next step we read of, is his fall.

Verily, I believe that idleness has led to more sin than almost any other habit that could be named. I suspect it is the mother of many a work of the flesh ;—the mother of adultery, fornication, drunkenness, and many other deeds of darkness, that I have not time to name. Let your own conscience say whether I do not speak the truth. You were idle, and at once the devil knocked at the door and came in.

And indeed I do not wonder;—everything in the world around us seems to teach the same lesson. It is the still water which becomes stagnant and impure; the running, moving streams are always clear. If you have steam machinery, you must work it, or it soon gots out of order. If you have a horse you must exercise him; he is never so well as when he has regular work. If you would have good bodily health yourself, you must take exercise. If you always sit still, your body is sure at length to complain. And just so is it with the soul. The active, moving mind, is a hard mark for the devil to shoot at. Try to be always full of useful employment, and thus your enemy will find it difficult to get room to sow tares.

Reader, I ask you to set these things before the rriinds of your children. Teach them the value of time, and try to make them learn the habit of using it well. It pains me to see children idling over.what they have in hand, whatever it may be. I love to see them active and industrious, and giving their whole heart to all they do;—giving their whole heart to lessons, when they have to learn ;—giving their whole heart even to their amusements, when they go to play.

But if you love them well, let idleness be counted a sin in your family.

XII. *Train them with a constant fear of over-indulgence.*

This is the one point of all on which you have most need to be on your guard. It is natural to be tender and affectionate towards your own flesh and blood, and it is the excess of this very tenderness and affection which you have to fear. Take heed that it does not make you blind to your children's faults, and deaf to all advice about them. Take heed lest it make you overlook bad conduct, rather than have the pain of inflicting punishment and correction.

I know well that punishment and correction are disagreeable •things. Nothing is more unpleasant than giving pain to those we love, and calling forth their tears. But so long as hearts are what hearts are, it is vain to suppose, as a general rule, that children can ever be brought up without correction.

*Spoiling* is a very expressive word, and sadly full of meaning. Now it is the shortest way to spoil children to let them have their own way,—to allow them to do wrong and not to punish them for it. Believe me, you must not do it, whatever pain it may cost you, unless you wish to ruin your children's souls.

You cannot say that Scripture does not speak expressly on this subject. " He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes." (Prov. xiii. 24.) " Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." (Prov. xix. 18.) " Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it from him." (Prov. xxii. 15.) " Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod and deliver his soul from hell." (Prov. xxiii. 13,14.) " The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." " Correct thy son and he shall give thee rest, yea, he shall give delight to thy soul." (Prov. xxix. 15, 17.)

How strong and forcible are these texts ! How melancholy is the fact, that in many Christian families they seem almost unknown ! Their children need reproof, but it is hardly ever given; they need correction, but it is hardly ever employed. And yet this book of Proverbs is not obsolete and unfit for Christians. It is given by inspiration of God and profitable. It is given for our learning, even as the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians. Surely the believer who brings up his children without attention to its counsel, is making himself wise above that which is written, and greatly errs.

Fathers and mothers, I tell you plainly, if you never punish your children when they are in fault, you are doing them a grievous wrong. I warn you, this is the rock on which the saints of God, in every age, have, only too frequently, made shipwreck. I would fain persuade you to be wise in time, and keep clear of it. See it in Eli's case. His sons Hophni and Phinehas made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. He gave them no more than a tame, and lukewarm reproof, when he ought to have rebuked them sharply. In one word, he -honored his sons above God. And what was the end of these things ? He lived to hear of the death of both his sons in battle, and his own gray hairs were brought down with sorrow to the grave. (1 Sam. i. ii. 3.)

See too the case of David. Who can read without pain, the history of his children, and their sins ? Amnon's incest,—Absalom's murder and proud rebellion,—Adonijah's scheming ambition,—truly these were grievous wounds for the man after God's own heart, to receive from his own house. But was there no fault on his side ? I fear there can be no doubt there was. I find a clue to it all in the account of Adonijah (in 1 Kings i. 6.) " His father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" There was the foundation of all the mischief. David was an over-indulgent father,—a father who let his children have their own way,—and he reaped according as he had sown.

Parents, I beseech you, for your children's sake, beware of over-indulgence. I call on you to remember, it is your first duty to consult their real interest, and not their fancies and likings ;—to train them, not to humor them ; to profit, not merely to please.

You must not give way to every wish and caprice of your child's mind, however much you may love him ; you must not let him suppose his will is to be everything, and that he has only to desire a thing, and it will be done. Do not, I pray you, make your children idols, lest God should take them away, and

i break your idol, just to convince you of your folly.

Learn to say " No" to your children. Show them that you are able to refuse whatever you think is not fit for them. Show them that you are ready to punish disobedience, and that when you speak of punishment, you are not only ready to threaten, but also to perform. Do not threaten too much.\* Threatened folks, and threatened faults live long. Punish seldom, but really, and in good earnest;—frequent and slight punishment is a wretched system indeed.f

Beware of letting small faults pass unnoticed, under the idea " it is a little one." There are no little things in training children;—all are important. Little weeds need plucking up as much as any. Leave them alone, and they will soon be great.

\* Some parents and nurses have a way of saying " naughty child," to a boy or girl on every slight occasion, and often without good cause. It is a very foolish habit. Words of blame should never be used without real reason.

•f As to the best way of punishing a child, no general rule can be laid down. The characters of children are so exceedingly different, that what would be a severe punishment to one child, would be no punishment at all to another. I only beg to enter my decided protest against the modern notion that no children ought ever to be whipped. Doubtless some parents use bodily correction far too much, and far too violently j but many others, I fear, use it far too little.

Reader, if there be any point which deserves your attention, believe me it is this one. It is one that will give you trouble I know. But if you do not take trouble with your children when they are young, they will give you trouble when they are old. Choose which you prefer.

XIII. *Train them, remembering continually how God trains His children.*

The Bible tells us that God has an elect people,—a family in this world. All poor sinners who have been convinced of sin, and fled to Jesus for peace, make up that family. All of us who really believe on Christ for salvation are its members.

Now *God* the Father is ever training the members of this family for their everlasting abode with Him in heaven. He acts as a husbandman purging his vines, that \* they may bear more fruit. He knows the character of each of us,—our besetting sins,—our weaknesses,—our peculiar infirmities,-—our especial wants. He knows our works and where we dwell, who are our companions in life, and what are our trials, what our temptations, and what are our privileges. He knows all these things, and is ever ordering all for our good. He allots to each of us, in His providence, the very things we need, in order to bear the most fruit,—as much of sunshine as we can stand, and as much of rain,—as much of bitter things as we can bear, and as much of sweet. Reader, if you would train your children wisely, mark well how God the Father trains His. He doeth all things well: the plan which He adopts must be right.

See then how many things there are which God *withholds* from His children. Few could be found, I suspect, among them, wh» have not had desires which He has never been pleased to fulfil. There has often been some one thing they wanted to attain, and yet there has always been some barrier to prevent attainment. It has been just as if God was placing it above our reach and saying, " This is not good for you ; this must not be." Moses desired exceedingly to cross over Jordan, and see the goodly land of promise ; but you will remember his desire was never granted.

See, too, how often God *leads* His people by ways which seem dark and mysterious to our eyes. We cannot see the meaning of all His dealings with us; we cannot see the reasonableness of the path in which our feet are treading. Sometimes so many trials have assailed us,—so many difficulties encompassed us, that we have not been able to discover the needs-be of it all. It has been just as if our Father was taking us by the hand into a dark place and saying, " Ask no questions, but follow me." There was a direct road from Egypt to Canaan, yet Israel was not led into it; but round through the wilderness. And this seemed hard at the time. " The soul of the people," we are told, " was much discouraged because of the way." (Num. xxi. 4.)

See, also, how often God *chastens* His people with trial and affliction. He sends them crosses and disappointments; He lays them low with sickness ; He strips them of property and friends ; He changes them from one position to another; He visits them with things most hard to flesh and blood; and some of us have well-nigh fainted under the burdens laid upon us. We have felt pressed beyond strength, and have been almost ready to murmur at the hand which chastened us. Paul the apostle had a thorn in the flesh appointed him, some bitter bodily trial, no doubt, though we know not exactly what it was. But this we know, he besought the Lord thrice that it might be removed; yet it was not taken away. (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.)

Now reader, notwithstanding all these things, did you ever hear of a single child of God who thought his Father did not treat him wisely ? No, I am sure you never did. God's children would always tell you, in the long run, it was a blessed thing they did not have their own way, and that God had done far better for them than they could have done for themselves. Yes! And they could tell you too that God's dealings had provided more happiness for them than they ever would have obtained themselves, «nd that His way, however dark at times, was the way of pleasantness and the path of peace.

I ask you to lay to heart the lesson which God's dealings with His people is meant to teach you. Fear not to withhold from your child anything you think will do him harm, whatever his own wishes may be. *This is God's plan.*

Hesitate not to lay on him commands, of which he may not at present see the wisdom, and to guide him in ways which may not now seem reasonable to his mind. *This is God's plan.*

Shrink not from chastising and correcting him whenever you see his soul's health requires it, however painful it may be to your feelings; and remember medicines for the mind must not be rejected because they are bitter. *This is God's plan.*

And be not afraid, above all, that such a plan of training will make your child unhappy. I warn you against this delusion. Depend on it, there is no surer road to unhappiness than always having our own way. To have our wills checked and denied is a blessed thing for us; it makes us value enjoyments when they come. To be indulged perpetually is the way to be made selfish ; and selfish people and spoiled children, believe me, are seldom happy.

Rea'der, be not wiser than God;—train your children as He trains His.

XIV. *Train them remembering •continually the influence of your own example.*

Instruction, and advice, and commands, will profit- little, unless they are backed up by the pattern of your own life. Your children will never believe you are in earnest, and really wish them to obey you, so long as your actions contradict your counsel. Archbishop Tillotson made a wise remark when he said, " To give children good instruction, and a bad example, is but beckoning to them with the head to show them the way to heaven, while we take them by the hand, and lead them in the way to hell."

We little know the force and power of example. No one of us can live to himself in this world; we are always influencing those around us, in one way or another, either for good or for evil, either for God or for sin.— They see our ways, they mark our conduct, they observe our behavior, and what they see us practise, that they may fairly suppose we think right. And never, I believe, does example tell so powerfully as it does in the case of parents and children.

Fathers and mothers, do not forget that children learn more by the eye than they do by the ear. The best of schoolmasters will not imprint on their minds as much as they will pick up at your fireside. Imitation is a far stronger principle with children than memory. What they see has a much stronger effect on their minds than what they are told.

Take care then what you do before a child.

It is a true proverb, " Who sins before a child, sins double." Strive rather to be a living epistle of Christ, such as your families can read, and.that plainly too. Be an example of reverence for the word of God, reverence in prayer, reverence for means of grace, reverence for the Lord's day.—Be an example in words, in temper, in diligence, in temperance, in faith, in charity, in kindness, in humility. Think not your children will practise what they do not see you do. You are their model picture, and they will copy what you are. Your reasoning and your lecturing, your wise commands and your good advice ;—all this they may not understand, but they can understand your life.

Children are very quick observers, very quick in seeing through some kinds of hypocrisy, very quick in finding out what you really think and feel, very quick in adopting all your ways and opinions, and you will generally find as the father is, so is the son.

Remember the word that the conqueror *Gse*sar always used to his soldiers in a battle. He did not say " *Go* forward," but " *Come."* Sc it must be with you in training your children. They will seldom learn habits which they see you despise, or walk in paths in which you do not walk yourself. He that preaches to his children what he does not practise, is working a work that never goes forward. It is like the fabled web of Penelope of old, who wove all day and unwove all night. Even so the parent who tries to train without setting a good example, is building with one hand and pulling down with the other.

XV. *Train them remembering continually the power of sin.*

I name this shortly in order to guard you against unscriptural expectations.

You must not expect to find your children's minds a sheet of pure white paper, and to have no trouble if you only use right means. I warn you plainly, you will find no such thing. It is painful to see how much corruption and evil there is in a young child's heart, and how soon it begins to bear fruit. Violent tempers, self-will, pride, envy, sullenness, passion, idleness, selfishness, deceit, cunning, falsehood, hypocrisy, a terrible aptness to learn what is bad, a painful slowness to learn what is good, a readiness to pretend anything in order to gain their own ends,—all these things, or some of them, you must be prepared to see, even in your own flesh and blood. In little ways they will creep out at a very early age; it is almost startling to observe how naturally they seem to spring up. Children require no schooling to learn to sin.

But you must not be discouraged and cast down by what you see. You must not think it a strange and unusual thing, that little hearts can be so full of sin. It is the only portion which our father Adam left us ; it is that fallen nature with which we come into the world ; it is that inheritance which belongs to us all. Let it rather make you more diligent in using every means which seems most likely, by God's blessing, to counteract the mischief. Let it make you more and more careful as far as in you lies, to keep your children out of the way of temptation.

Never listen to those"who tell you your children are good, and well brought up, and can be trusted. Think rather that their hearts are always inflammable as tinder. At their very best they only want a spark to set their corruptions alight. Parents are seldom too cautious. Remember the natural depravity of your children, and take care.

XVI. *Train them remembering continually the promises of Scripture.* . I name this also shortly, in order to guard you against discouragement.

You have a plain promise on your side, " Train up your child^in the way he should go, and when he is old he shall not depart from it." (Prov. xxii. 6.) Think what it is to have a promise like this. Promises were the only lamp of hope which cheered the hearts of the patriarchs before the Bible was written. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph,— all lived on a few promises, and prospered in their souls. Promises are the cordials which in every age have supported and strengthened the believer. He that has got a plain text upon his side need never be cast down. Fathers and mothers, when your hearts are failing and ready to halt, look at the word of this text, and take comfort.

Think *who it is that promises.* It is not the word of a man who may lie or repent, it is the word of the King of kings, who never changes. Hath He said a thing, and shall He not.do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good ? Neither is anything too hard for him to perform. The things that are impossible with men, are possible with God. Reader, if we get not the benefit of the promise we are dwelling upon, the fault is not in Him, but in ourselves.

Think too *what the promise contains,* before you refuse to take comfort from it. It speaks of a certain time when good training shall especially bear fruit,—" when a child is old." Surely there is comfort in this. You may not see with your own eyes the result of careful training, but you know not what blessed fruits may not spring from it, long after you are dead and gone. It is not God's way to give everything at once. " Afterwards" is the time when He often chooses to work, both in the things of nature and in the things of grace. " Afterwards" is the season when affliction bears the peaceable fruit of righteousness. (Hob. xii. 11.) " Afterwards" was the time when the son who refused to work in his father's vineyard, repented and went. (Matt. xxi. 29.) And " afterward" is the time to which parents must look forward if they see not success at once,—you must sow in hope and plant in hope.

" Cast thy seed upon the waters," saith the Spirit, " for thou shalt find it after many days." (Eccles. xi. 1.) Many children, I doubt not, shall rise up in the day of judgment and bless their parents for good training, who never gave any signs of it during their parents' lives. Go forward then in faith, and be sure that your labor shall not be altogether thrown away.

Three times did Elijah stretch himself upon the widow's child before it revived. Take example from him and persevere.

XVII. *Train them, lastly, with continual prayer for a blessing on all you do.*

Without the blessing of the Lord, your best endeavors will do no good. He has the hearts of all men in His hands, and except He touch the hearts of your children by His Spirit, you will weary yourself to no purpose. Water, therefore, the seed you sow on their minds with unceasing prayer. The Lord is far more willing to hear than we to pray ; far more ready to give blessings than we to ask them ;—but He loves to be entreated for them. And I get this matter of prayer before you, as the topstone and seal of all you do. I suspect the child of many prayers is seldom cast away.

Look upon your children as Jacob did on his; he tells Esau, they are " The children which God hath graciously given thy servant." (Gen. xxxiii. 5.) Look on them as Joseph did on his ; he told his father, '• They are the sons whom God hath given me." (Gen. xlviii. 9.) Count them with the Psalmist, to be " An heritage and reward from the Lord." (Psalm cxxvii. 3.) And then ask the Lord with a holy boldness to be gracious and merciful to His.own gifts. Mark how Abraham intercedes for Ishmael, because he loved him, " Oh, that IshmaeL might live before thee." (Gen. xvii. 18.) See how Manoah speaks to the angel about Samson, " How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him." (Judg. xiii. 12.) Observe how tenderly Job cared for his children's souls. " He offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all, for he said, it may be my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually." (Job. i. 5.) Parents, if you love your children, go and do likewise. You cannot name their names before the mercy-seat too often.

And now, reader, in conclusion let me once more press upon you the necessity and importance of using every single means in your power, if you would train children for heaven.

I know well that God is a sovereign God, and doeth all things according to the counsel of His own will. I know that Rehoboam was the son of Solomon, and Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, and that you do not always see godly parents having a godly seed. But I know also that God is a God who works by means, and sure am I, if you make light of such means as I have mentioned, your children are not likely to turn out well.

Fathers and mothers, you may take your children to be baptized, and have them enrolled in the ranks of Christ's church ;—you may get godly sponsors to answer for them and help you by their prayers ;—you may send them to the best of schools, and give them Bibles and Prayer Books, and fill them with head knowledge :—but if all this time there is no regular *training at home,* I tell you plainly, I fear it will go hard in the end with your children's souls. Home is the place where habits are formed ;—home is the place where the foundations of character are laid ;—home gives the bias to our tastes, and likings, and opinions. See then, I pray you, that there be careful training at home. Happy indeed is the man who can say as Bolton did upon his dying bed to his children, " I do believe not one of you will dare to meet me before the tribunal of Christ in an unregenerate state."

Fathers and mothers, I charge you solemnly before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, take every pains to train your children in the way they should go. I charge you, not merely for the sake of your children's souls ; I charge you for the sake of your own future comfort and peace. Truly it is your interest so to do. Truly your own happiness in great measure depends on it. Children have ever been the bow from which the sharpest arrows have pierced man's heart. Children have mixed the bitterest cups that man has ever had to drink. Children have caused the saddest tears'that man has ever had to shed. Adam could tell you so ; Jacob could tell you so; David could tell you so. There are no sorrows on earth like those which children have brought upon their parents. Oh! take heed, lest your own neglect should lay up misery for you in your old age; take heed, lest you weep under the ill treatment of a thankless child, in the days when your eye is dim, and your natural force abated.

If ever you wish your children to be the restorers of your life, and the nourishers of your old age; if you would have them blessings and not curses ;—joys and not sorrows;— Judahs and not Reubens ;—Ruths and not Orpahs ;—if you would not, like Noah, be ashamed of their deeds, and, like Rebekah, be made weary of your life by them,—if this be your wish, remember my advice betimes, train them while young in the right way.

And as for me, I will conclude by putting up my prayer to God for you all, that you may all be taught of God to feel the value of your own souls. This is one reason why baptism is too often a mere form, and Christian training despised and disregarded; you feel not for yourselves, and so you feel not for your children. You do not realize the tremendous difference between a state of nature and a state of grace, and therefore you are content to let them alone.

Now the Lord teach you all that sin is that abominable thing which God hateth. *Then,* I know you will mourn over the sins of your children, and strive to pluck them out as brands from the fire.

The Lord teach you all how precious Christ is, and what a mighty and complete work He hath done for our salvation. *Then,* I feel confident you will use every means to bring your children to Jesus, that they may live through Him.

The Lord teach you all your need of the Holy Spirit, to renew, sanctify, and quicken your souls. *.Then,* I feel sure you will urge your children to pray for Him without ceasing, and never rest till He has come down into their hearts with power, and made them new creatures.

The Lord grant this, and then I have a good hope that you will indeed train up your children well,—train well for this life, and train well for the life to coma ;• train well for earth, and train well for heaven ; train them for God, for Christ, and for eternity.

**÷Be Not Slothful, But Followers**

* BE NOT SLOTHFUL, BUT FOLLOWERS: A SERMON,
* PREACHED IN HELMING HAM CHURCH, ON THE DAY FOLLOWING THE FUNERAL OF GEORG1NA LOUISA TOLLEMACHE, THE BELOVED WIFE OF JOHN TOLLEMACHE, ESQ. M.P.
* This sermon is published at the request of some who heard it preached, and with my own hearty consent. I feel a melancholy pleasure in bearing my feeble testimony to the grace that was in her who is mentioned in it; and I only wish I could have done it with more power and effect. I have done what I could on short notice, and if any ask why I have said so much, I reply in the words of Solomon, " Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord SHE SHALL BE PRAISED."—*Proverbs* xxxi. 30.
* The 25th of July was indeed a sad day in Helminghatn, and a day, I trust, that will not soon be forgotten. We had to accompany the remains of one whom we all loved, from the home where she had adorned the doctrine of her Lord, to the house appointed for all living. It was a solemn and a trying scene.
* The coffin was borne by twelve of the most regular attendants at the weekly prayer meeting held in my parish.

The pall was supported by twelve of my brethren in the ministry, residing in the neighborhood.\*

We carried her over the path that she had so often loved to walk in on the Sabbath while living. We bore her into the little church where she had so often delighted to worship, and join in prayer and praise. We followed her to the silent vault where she was to rest, and there thanked God that she had been kept faithful unto death. And then we returned home, to sorrow,—but not as others without a hope of a joyful resurrection, and to feel how true is the saying, " Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

J. C. RYLE.

\* Rev. C. Bridges—P. Storr—J. W. Reeve—W. WoodLouse—-T. Davidson—H. T. Lumsden—T. D. West—C. Shorting—J. K. Tucker—J. B. Wilkinson—C. Holland—E. Barlee.

Inmnn.

"Be not slothful, but followers of them-who through faith and patience inherit the promises."—Hebrews vi. 12.

Brethren,

It is a difficult thing at any time to preach to immortal souls. Never did I feel it more difficult than I do this night. You know the subject which is uppermost in all our minds. I have to speak of one whom Grod has taken to Himself out of our little congregation,—one whom Jesus loved,—and one whom we had every reason to love and honor too. I would fain make the occasion profitable to you all, and the Lord being my helper I must try to do so;—but I feel it very hard.

One thing encourages me to make the attempt, and that is this. I know that she who is departed would have rejoiced if her death might be sanctified, and made useful to all who heard of it. I know her wish would have been to do good when she died, if possible, even, as we all know, she did good while she lived.

And more than this,—I feel it a solemn duty myself, as her minister, to turn to good account this day of visitation. Such opportunities are seldom given to a minister. Seldom, very seldom, can we speak so confidently about the character of members of our flocks, as I can of hers. Seldom, very seldom, can we follow those to whom we have preached, to their long home, with such real consolation, or use with such unwavering hope those beautiful words, " We give thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our sister out of the miseries of this sinful world."

Brethren, I wish to-night to make the character of her whom we have lost the illustration of our text, I wish to bear my testimony to the grace that was in her. I would try to show you the blessedness of living to the Lord. I would fain set before you the comfort of dying to the Lord, and leaving good evidences behind you. God forbid that the righteous should perish by our side, and we not lay it to heart! Oh ! let us rather set up each of us this day a stone of remembrance ; let us think, and learn wisdom.

Lift up your hearts, all ye that pray, and ask that the Holy Ghost raay be amongst us with power. Pray that I may be enajled to speak the truth as it is in Jesus, and that this truth may be fastened in your hearts like a pail in a sure place. Pray that we may all find it good to have come here to-night; that the death of her who is gone may be the life of many a soul, and her end the beginning »f godliness in many a heart.

The text I have chosen contains five things.

I. *Warning* words, " Be not slothful."

II. *Encouraging* words, "The promises."

III. *Quickening* words, " They who inherit."

IV. Words of *Instruction,* " Through faith and patience."

V. Words of *Duty, "* Be followers."

Upon each of these I desire to make a few remarks.

I. *First then there are solemn words of warning,* " *Be not slothful."*

Brethren, the apostle has here in view that indolent, lazy, idle frame of mind about religion, which is so natural to us all. Against this he bids you be on your guard.

There are four great weeds which grow naturally in the heart of every man alive,—and they are these, pride, sloth, worldliness, and unbelief. All of us are plagued with these enemies, more or less, and shall be to the end. The roots of them are within us, however much, by grace, we may mortify and keep them under; and until the walls of the old house are clean taken down, they and we shall not be divided.

I stand not now to say which is the worst of the four. All are dangerous. But this I will say, that sloth needs as much watching as any\*, and unless watched will do as much harm.

The unconverted man is worse than slothful. He sleeps soundly, and we cannot awaken him. He has eyes but sees not;—he has ears but hears not;—he has mind but thinks not;—he heeds not our sermons, and our counsels—on him they are all thrown away. And he dreams too. He fancies often that he is spiritually rich, when in reality he is poor,—that he is doing well, when in fact he is doing ill, —that he is all right, when in truth he is all wrong,—that he is at peace, when the Spirit says " there is no peace." To all such we can only keep on crying "Awake! awake!" But they do not seem to hearken. A few stray convictions,—a little fitful starting,—an occasional turning from one side to the other,—but nothing more can we see. Such men far too often sleep on till they are dead. " A little' more sleep and a little more slumber," they go on crying, and by and bye we have to meet them in their coffins at the churchyard gate ; and where is their hope ? Oh ! ye that pray, pray for the sleeping, pray for the living dead.

But even God's believing children have only too much need to be warned against spiritual sloth. They too are fearfully heavy, carnal, earthly-minded, compared to what they should be. They too are always inclining to become drowsy, and close their eyes, and need continual reminding to keep awake. Sad is it to see how soon their heads hang down, and their knees wax faint;—how soon their love becomes cold, their repentance dull, their zeal blunt, and their faith weak. Oh! what a palsy, what a worm at the root is this spirit of slumber!

Sloth is the reason why so many believers in the Lord Jesus continue only babes in grace. They ask little, and they obtain little. They take little pains, and so make little progress. Sloth causes little prayer,—little prayer causes little grace,—little grace causes little brightness.

Sloth is too often the reason why false doctrines are so readily received. Some men will not take the trouble to examine whether new opinions are true. They embrace them when put forth with any show of truth, without inquiring, " What saith the Scripture ?" They will often catch at any teaching which seems to save them labor of personal communion with Christ, personal growth in grace, personal sanctification, personal faith. Sloth has been the strength and support of many a heresy.

Brethren believers, if you would see good days, take the apostle's advice, and " Be not slothful." Guard against spiritual drowsiness. Watch against the beginnings of it. It is a sia that grows upon a man very quickly. " I cannot" to-day will soon lead on to " I will not" to-morrow. Jesus was not slothful in working the work of your salvation. The devil is not slothful in laboring to work your ruin. And why will you sleep ? Oh ! there will be sleeping enough in the grave,—there will be rest enough in the new Jerusalem,—but for the time present let us cast aside our slumber, let us all watch.

Anything, anything to be kept awake in a sleepy world ! Count that the best preaching which keeps your soul most awake ! Reckon those the best books which keep your soul most awake. Value those friends most highly who will not let your soul alone. Bless God for those conditions of life which keep youi eyes most open and fixed upon eternal things. Anything, anything, I say once more, to be kept awake!

Brethren believers, all things around you cry loudly, " Be not slothful." Everything says " Sleep not, do not stand still."

Mornings and evenings come and go in quick succession; years roll on one after another; harvests grow and ripen, and are cut and carried ; congregations change and alter by degrees, and face after face disappears. Friends and relations go forth, and are scattered far and wide. Gray hairs come here and there upon us, and remind us that we are getting nearer to our end. Grave after grave is opened in our sight for those we know,—and all these things are meant to teach the same lesson, " Sleep not! sleep not! do not stand still!"

Men and brethren, Jesus stands at the door of every heart among you and knocks. In every afflicting providence,—in every cross and trying visitation,—in every startling circurn

stance he brings before you, Jesus is calling to your soul, " Awake, arise, and come away." A voice from the tomb is crying to you all to-night, " Be not slothful, awake, and sleep no more." Oh ! let not that voice speak in vain!

II. *I pass on to speak of the second thing my text contains,*—*a word of encouragement, " the promises"*

The promises are God's gracious offers to sinful man of everything that man's soul requires. The word of God is full of them. It is a storehouse and treasury of promises, and whosoever will may take of them freely. Who is there among you that doubts God's love to sinners *1* Let him open his Bible and behold the promises. Come every one that is laboring and heavy-laden, come and see.

Here you will find *comfortable* promises for the life that now is. Grace for every man, woman, and child, that will have it. 'Pardon for the most guilty,—cleansing for the most corrupt,—forgiveness for the most ungodly ;— bread for the hungry, water for the thirsty, milk for the weak, wine for he heavy in heart, healing for the sick, rest for the heavy-laden, heart's-ease for the sorrowful, balm for the wounded, peace for the rebellious, life for the dead, riches for the poor, strength for the feeble, power for them that have no might,— and all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. " Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good,"—" Eat 0 friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, 0 beloved."

Here too you will find *glorious* promises for the life which is to come. Glory for every man, woman, and child, that will have it. A sure victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, in the end ; a better resurrection at the coming of the Lord ; a full acquittal in the day of judgment; a place at the right hand, and a robe of white; a rest from labor and weariness ; a freedom from indwelling sin ; deliverance from care and tears; an abode in heaven, which can never be taken down ; the fellowship of angels; the never-ending companionship of just men made perfect;—and above all, the presence of the Lamb of God himself;—and all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Surely there is encouragement here.

Here too you will find *broad* promises. God's promises are high as heaven, and wide as the sea. All are invited in them, and none shut out. They are for the poor as well as for the rich, for the unlearned as well as for the learned,—they arc for all. No man shall be able to say, " Jesus•held out no promise to me, Jesus never asked me to come to Him and be saved." The length, and breadth, and depth, and height, of the promises will make that man speechless in the day of judgment. Think not, any one of you, to shake off your own responsibility, and say, " God never called on me." The promises alone will be your condemnation. The broader they are the more hopeless will be your case. The wider the door, the more without excuse your soul, if •you do not enter in.

Here too you will find *sure* promises. God's promises were never broken—they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus; written in Christ's blood, and sealed by Christ's Spirit. They are the word of Him who cannot lie. They are not like the world's promises, vain, deceitful, treacherous, and disappointing. They are not like the devil's promises, smooth and plausible, but, as Eve found to her sorrow, foundationless and false. Our God is the God of truth. He never failed yet to keep His word, and He never will. If He hath said a thing He will do it, and if He hath spoken He will make it good. His word is better than man's deed. When He promises man has no need to doubt.

Brethren, this day I set before you the exceeding great and precious promises, comfortable, glorious, broad, and sure. I ask you to receive them, to come to Christ and live.

Promises have been the food of God's children in every age of the world. Enoch, Abraham, Moses, all lived upon them, and did well. Why should not you ? Promises are the lights set up to guide us into the harbor of eternal life;—no man ever steered by them yet, who did not find himself at last in the haven where he would be. Why should they not guide you ? Promises are the current money which supports God's people ;—we have not our King Himself yet, but we have, in the promises, His image and superscription. And all this treasure of promises is laid open to you.—Oh! see that you refuse not Him that speaketh. Reject not the strong consolation that is set before you. Here is encouragement for all who want it. The Kingdom of God is very nigh you. Jesus holds oat the golden sceptre to you all, and invites you to make your petition. Come then, and lay hold upon the promises this night;—ask, seek, believe, and live.

III. *Our text contains a quickening word ; it speaks of those who* " *inherit*" *the promises.*

Brethren, there have been millions of professing Christians of whom we could only say with weeping, they have no portion in the inheritance here spoken of. They have gone to their own place. They have inherited the lot of their own choosing. They have reaped according as they have sown. Weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; the worm ; the fire; blackness, darkness, hopelessness, despair ! This is the miserable cup they now drink.

Not so the redeemed of the Lord, who have heard Christ's voice, and followed Him. They sleep in Jesus, and are in peace. Of them the text says, " They inherit the promises." They have in hand what they had long looked for. They grasp what they had only seen through a glass darkly. They possess something substantial in place of hope. They obtain a reality instead of a thing known only by the hearing of the ear. And compared to this life all this is *inheritance* indeed.

I know well they do not yet receive their full reward. I know well their happiness will not be perfect until they are clothed in their heavenly bodies, at the coming of Jesus, and the resurrection of the just. But still I do believe they inherit a joy of which you and I can form but little conception; they reap already a degree of blessedness, of which at best we have but a faint idea.

They are *with Christ,* saith the Spirit—" Today," said Jesus to the dying thief, " to-day shalt thou be *with me* in paradise." " To depart," said Paul to the Philippians, " to depart and be *with Christ* is far better." Brethren, I may not be able to explain the state of those who sleep in Jesus, between the time of death and resurrection, but when I read they are with Christ, I feel it is enough.—Where He is there must be peace; where He is there must be comfort; where He is there must be joy. Their souls are with Christ, and I ask no more.

And then *they rest from their labor,* saith the Spirit. They have gone home. They are no longer tossed about on the restless sea of this never quiet world. They are no longer wearied with the daily conflict against indwelling sin. At length they may lay aside their armor, and say to the sword, " rest, and be still." Fighting and struggling, watching and fearing, wrestling and praying,—all this is over. They are safe at length, and the former things are passed away.

Comfort ye, comfort ye, with these words, all ye that mourn over departed believers. Comfort ye, comfort ye, refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears,—they "inherit the promises." Their warfare is accomplished ; their battle is fought; their course is run. They have. crossed Jordan; they have begun to enter the promised land ; they are forever beyond the reach of sin, the world, and the devil; they are gone to that place where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Oh! let us not sorrow over them, as those who have no hope.

Let us mourn, if you will for ourselves,— but not for them. We have still to labor, but they are at rest. We are still at sea, but they are safe in harbor. We are still in the wilderness, but they are at home. We are still carrying about a body of death and corruption, but as for them, their old house is at length taken down. Let us rather bless God that at last they inherit the promises. Let us give all diligence that we may go to them, and not allow ourselves to wish it possible that they might return to us.

IV. *The fourth thing our text contains, is a word of instruction. You are told the way in which men have inherited the promises. •It is* " *through faith and patience."*

This is the path that all the saints of God have walked in to this hour. There never has been, and there never will be, any other. From righteous Abel down to the last soul brought in by election of grace—all the heirs of promise will prove to have travelled by the same road : all will reach heaven by the same way.

Faith was the *strength* of all who inherit the promises. They believed on an unseen Saviour ; they looked not to themselves but to Jesus, and this made them all what they were. They lived by faith,—they stood by faith,— they walked by faith—:they kept the faith ; and so entered into rest. Being justified by faith they had peace with God. This was the victory that overcame the world, even their faith.

This kept them from *despair* when they thought of their own countless iniquities; they saw by faith the blood of Jesus, cleansing them from all sin. This kept them from *fainting* when they groaned under their own indwelling corruption ;—they saw by faith Jesus interceding for them at God's right hand,—bearing their names upon His breast and shoulders before the Father's throne. This kept them from *fear* when they looked forward to the day of Judgment; they saw by faith the white robe of Christ's righteousness around them, and the Lamb of God appearing as their advocate, and pleading their cause. This made them hold on through all the narrow way; they saw before them Him that is invisible ; they came up out of the wilderness leaning on the Beloved one ; they looked not at the things seen, which are temporal, but at the things unseen, which are eternal. Oh! brethren, well may the apostle Peter speak of faith as " precious faith."

And patience was the *character* of all who inherit the promises. They endured and were not weary of the Lord's service. They continued patiently in well-doing. They possessed their souls in patience, being assured that by and bye they would reap if they fainted not. They were content to wait on the Lord, and have their good things hereafter.

The rushing current of the fashion of this world, which set so strongly against them, could not prevail to turn them aside. They did not wait lazily for all around to join them ; they travelled patiently alone, rather than not travel towards heaven at all.

The vain pleasures of the world, which allure so many hearts, had no power to draw them out of the way. They had tasted the honey of the promises, and this made what the children of the world call happiness appear sweet no more. Like Moses, they chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. They esteemed the reproach of Christ no disgrace. They bore the cross—they thought lightly of the shame, for they had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

Brethren, would you inherit the promises ? This is the old path. This is the good way. If you love life, see that the faith and patience of the saints be yours.

V. *The last word I would have you remember in the text is a word of duly. The apostle says to us " be followers" of them who inherit the promises.*

Doing ought to be the fruit of hearing. Coming to church and attending, listening to sermons and admiring,—all this is a barren and unprofitable religion, so long as there is nothing done. Doing is the reality of religion ; action is the only real sign of life. "We preach in order that you may practise ;—we speak in order that you may do ;—we counsel in order that you may act. We cry " awake thou that sleepest," that we may see you arise and repent ;—we lift up Christ that we may see you arise and flee to the cross;—we urge you to grow in grace, that we may see you arise and press on. We want doing to be the result of all our sermons. Alas! that every week so much breath should be spent to so little purpose,—so much said and so little done.

Brethren, those who inherit the promises were all *doing* men,—not men of words only, but men of deeds. I want you all to be like them—I call upon you to be followers of their faith and patience. Walk in the footsteps of the flock of Christ, if ever you would be found in the true fold. Live after the example they have left behind them, if ever you would die their death. Imitate the conduct of the saints who have gone before you in this your day of grace, if ever you mean to be numbered with them in the day of glory.

They inherit. *Take comfort*—These words are written for your encouragement. Others, you see, have gone before you on the way that leads to everlasting life, and got safe home ;— why should not you ? They had no helps or advantages which are not freely offered to you. Their strength, their comforts, their provisions, the weapons of their warfare,—all are within your reach, and all may be your own.

They inherit. *Take care.*—These words may prove your condemnation. They were men of like passions with yourselves, but they overcame the world, the flesh, and the devil, by the blood of the Lamb. Surely their victory will leave you without excuse, if you are not saved also. Surely if their sins were forgiven, and their hearts renewed, the same can be done for you. The Lord's hand is not shortened—the Lord's grace is still sufficient—the Lord's ear is still open. The things that were possible for them are still possible for you. Oh ! if you would not be found speechless and defenceless in the great and dreadful day, walk in the tried path of faith and patience, " be followers of them who inherit the promises."

And now let me wind up all by speaking to you about her whom yesterday we carried to the grave ; whose honored remains are now waiting beneath our feet for the resurrection of the just. And let the things I have to say of her be taken home by each of you, as the application of my text.

It has pleased God to remove from amongst us one of the brightest members of our little congregation. One whom we all knew and honored has been added to the great cloud of witnesses, and now inherits the promises. I feel I should be neglecting a solemn duty if I did not try to impress the event upon you all. Suffer me then before the bustle of this selfish world has deadened your better feelings, before the impression that this awful blow has made becomes worn and indistinct,—suffer me to bear my feeble testimony to the grace that was in our departed sister, and to say to all, " Follow her even as she followed Christ."

Brethren, I shall speak of her who is gone without hesitation or reserve. Bear with me a little while I do it. Believe me I do it not to raise her reputation as a Christian,—she needs no praise of mine—I do it for your own benefit,—for the profit and edification of your souls.

There are many of you here, you know well, without Christ. Alas ! that it should be so. How am I straitened till I see you coming to Him by faith, and Christ be formed in you.— There are many of you here, you know well, lingering, undecided, halting between two opinions. Alas ! that it should be so. Oh! that I could hear of you coming out boldly from the world, and saying to Jesus, " there is none upon earth I desire beside thee."— There are not a few believers here, you know well, lukewarm and barren, compared to what they might be. Alas ! that it should be so. Oh ! that I may soon hear of you bearing much fruit.—Brethren, whatever be your state in God's sight, this night let me try to quicken one and all by the example I have to set before you.

This night I would fain show you that Christ's service is indeed pleasant, and that a person may be truly happy, and yet live unto God. This night I would have you all take notice that a Christian may live in this world of sin, and yet, by grace, not be of the world ; —that you may be encompassed by temptation, and yet keep yourself pure.—This night I would have you learn the lesson that a soul may have every draw-back, and yet, by grace, be eminently holy; that it is possible to be surrounded by all that can make life attractive, or gild earth, or obscure heaven, and yet for all that, to set your affection on things above, give your heart to Jesus, and be unspotted by the world. She that is gone is an example of the truth of what I say. " Follow her as she followed Christ."

Brethren, it is a hard thing to be rich, and at the same time a disciple of Christ. You that are poor do not think so. But you are mistaken : the Lord Jesus himself shall answer you. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Cease then to desire riches. Gold and silver are heavy weights to carry, if a man would so run as to obtain. It is far more difficult to follow Jesus and be rich than to follow Jesus and be poor. It is hard to walk in high places and not become giddy. Happy the man who is there and does not fall. It is hard to carry a full cup and not to spill it;—to live amongst comforts and luxuries and not to be insensib'y taken up with them ;—to dwell in the midst of sweet and pleasant things, and yet keep your soul in right tone, in vigor, and in health. But the things which are impossible with men, are possible with God. She that is gone did all this. Oh! let us bless God for giving us such a signal proof of what His grace can do.

Come now and listen to me while I single out some special features in her character as a Christian, and call your attention to them. I wish to dwell on some particular graces which shone most brightly in her. Time would not let me speak of those general things which she had in common with all the family of God. *I* must of necessity confine myself to particulars ; and I do it the more willingly because they are particulars in which believers are too often sadly deficient,—and because I shall thus give you a more real and living picture of what she was herself.

But while you listen, do not, do not misunderstand me. Do not go away and say that I Vld you about an angel and a perfect being— such as none can hope to be on earth. I do not say that she was such—I do not want you to look at her in that light. I am going to speak of a sinner, not of an angel,—a sinner saved by grace, and grace alone. I do not want to exalt her, but her Lord and master, whose Spirit made her to differ. Her gifts were not the easy-growing weeds of nature's garden, but the precious wheat which had been sown by the Holy Ghost. She was born by nature a child of wrath even as others. She became by redeeming mercy a child of grace; and all that she was, and did, and attained to, she owed to Christ. Christ was the fountain from which the stream of her good words and works all flowed. Christ was the root from which the precious fruits of the Spirit which she brought forth, all took their rise. Christ was the foundation on which the fair superstructure of her character was all raised, and all her holiness sprung from union with Him. What she was, she was by the grace of Grod, and as such I am not ashamed to speak fully of her. Her faults were her own, but her graces were jewels lent her by the King of kings; and I feel that in speaking of her as I shall do, I am not magnifying her so much as Christ.

1. *The first point that I would name in her character as a Christian was, her faith.*

I think this could not fail to strike any Christian who was long in her company. She seemed to believe, unhesitatingly, whatever God had said in the Bible. She never appeared to doubt as to what was right and duty, when once she had a plain text before her, and could see, " thus saith the Lord, and thus it is written." She appeared to enjoy a settled confidence and persuasion that whatever God said must be true,—whatever God promised would surely be performed,—and whatever God commanded ought implicitly to be obeyed ; and that to act on this belief was sure to bring a blessing and success.

Who can calculate the value of a spirit of faith like this? This is the spirit that turns mountains into valleys, and rough places into smooth. This is the spirit that expects great things, and so attempts great things,—that stops not for fear of failure, but goes on sure of success,—that goes down into the wilderness without fear, and believes it will be carried through without harm,—that halts not, saying, " the Canaanites are before us," but rather presses on, saying, " we must be conquerors, for God is on our side."

This is the spirit that does great exploits, and is the parent of gracious acts. It keeps a man in perfect peace,—it lifts him above the fear of evil tidings,—it makes him valiant for the truth,—it enables him to be patient in tribulation, and to feel confident " it is well;" —it gives him decision when he has to choose, —firmness wher> he proceeds to act,—confidence when he goes to pray. Such was the spirit, brethren, of her that is departed. She had an unhesitating faith.

Alas ! for the scarcity of such a spirit. How many of us appear certain of nothing at all! We hardly seem to believe that we profess, or to be really confident and sure of what we hold. There comes a trouble, and, like Peter, we look at the waves more than at Jesus, and begin to sink. There comes a danger, and, like Ahaz, our hearts are moved as the trees of the forest before the wind. Truly when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth ? Oh! brethren believers, it is a great grace to believe all that is written in the Bible. In this simplicity of faith, I charge you, follow her that is departed, even as she followed Christ.

*2. The second thing that I will name to you, was her love to the pure doctrines of Christ's Gospel.*

I do believe she loved the simple truth as it is in Jesus above gold and precious stones. It was sweeter to her than honey and the honeycomb. Not everything that is called Christianity in these days deserves the name:—there is often much talking about the Gospel, and yet no glad tidings proclaimed ; much preaching about Christ, and yet Christ crucified not really set forth. All this she knew well, and had an uncommon jealousy about soundness in the faith. She had none of that false charity which confounds light and darkness, hitter and sweet, truth and error, and dreams that all professing Christians mean the same in the end. Her charity was the apostolic charity, which can only " rejoice in the truth."

No quantity of learning or intellect in a preacher or speaker,—no possible amount of eloquence or reputation,—could ever win her confidence, unless she heard from that man sound speech about the leading doctrines of Christ's Gospel. Justification by faith,—regeneration,—sanctification, Christ the only way of salvation,—the indwelling of the Spirit the only sure mark of God's children,-\*-these were the truths she loved to see clearly stated, and when there was a deficiency on these points, whatever others thought she was not satisfied. She was one that seemed determined to " prove all things," and to hold fast nothing but what was good.

The false opinions of the day we live in, which have moved so many of whom we once hoped better things, never moved her. She saw the tide of fashion setting strongly in favor of new doctrines, and heard the specious reasonings of those who support them, but her own mind was never for a moment shaken.

The torrent of dangerous books which has of late years overflowed our country, books containing enough religion to attract but not enough to do good—books which please the eye, but do not profit the heart—books in which the first things are put last, and the last things put first,—books in which Christ has not his rightful office, and faith has not its rightful place;—all these which have carried so many Christians off their feet Had never any influence on her. She loved simple Gospel truth,—and everything else she counted unprofitable and vain,—unsaving, unsatisfying, and unsanctifying to man's soul.

Alas! for the scarcity of such a spirit as this !—Jealousy about sound doctrine appears almost unknown. Poison seems allowable if taken in small quantities. Errors of doctrine may now be overlooked, it seems, if only mingled with a certain quantity of truth. Brethren, take heed what you are doing. The absence of *one* single ingredient may neutralize your medicine and make it even hurtful. The presence of *one* single portion of arsenic may turn your whole loaf of bread into a deadly poison. Oh! in this godly jealousy for Bible truth, follow, I charge you, her that is departed, even as she followed Christ.

3. *The third particular point that I will mention in her character, was her love to all true Christians.*

She had a hand and a heart for almost all, and many of you have reason to know this,— but those who held the highest place in hfer regard, were the household of faith. Her delight was in the saints and the excellent of the earth; she honored them that feared the Lord. To be in the company of bright and eminent Christians seemed her chief enjoyment. She loved all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, whatever might be their rank or calling. She really seemed to feel that believers are all one family in Christ Jesus,—and like the early Church at Jerusalem, ought to have one heart and one soul,—and like members of one body to take a deep and lively interest in each other. You might say of her, as was said of an old Reformer, she " loved all in whom she saw *something of Christ.'1'*

And, brethren, ought not grace to be the chief thing in our esteem ? Is not that the one thing which God regards ? When the eyes of the Lord behold the earth, this is the only thing that he can see with unmixed satisfaction, for it is a part of Himself. The Lord seeth not as man seeth. Man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at tfrfe heart. He cares not for rank, and title, and wealth, and greatness; He values men according to their grace. A cottage where the fruits of the Spirit are brought forth is a more honorable place in His sight, than the most splendid palace where Christ is not magnified, and His name above every name. Surely we ought to be of the same judgment too.

And, brethren, is not this the frame of mind which will best fit us for an abode in heaven ? Grace will be everything in heaven, for it is the only door by which any one can pass to glory. Surely grace should be everything also •with you and me on earth. We should love all men, but especially the brethren.

This was the mind of her I speak of. She was a lover of grace. Nothing, I think, gave her more real pleasure than to hear of a work of grace having begun in any soul; and if that work went back she truly sorrowed, and if it went forward she truly rejoiced.

You who belong to my own congregation have little idea how well she was acquainted with you all by character, as well as by name. She took a deep interest in your spiritual condition. If there was at any time a soul among you in which there appeared to be some good thing beginning,—if any manor woman among you became unusually diligent about means of grace, or showed by your manner of life symptoms of some inward change,—no one, I really think, felt a more sincere interest about; that person than she did. She would inquire about him constantly. She would often ask how he was going on,—whether he was making progress,—whether he had any peculiar difficulties,—whether he was really growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,—whether he was indeed coming out from the world.

You little know how she took notice of all among you who were true Christians. Your names, your history, your trials, your circumstances, your character, all were familiar to her. She seemed to have in her mind a book of remembrance for all who feared the Lord, and thought, upon his name. The joy of angels over one sinner that reponteth is a kind of joy, I believe, to which she was no stranger.

Alas ! for the scarcity of this habit of mind in these days ! How few even of true Christians appear to realize it at all. How many believers hedge themselves in with suspicions and jealousies, and seemingly believe nothing, and hope nothing about others !

How little open-handed ness and open-heartedness can be found ! How many fasten down upon the faults of brethren, and refuse to see their good things! How few have an eye ready to see true grace in a neighbor, and a heart ready to cherish it and help forward its work ! What abundance there is of reserve, and coldness, and shyness, and silence ! What a dearth of communion, and confidence, and brotherly kindness and response !

Brethren, in this love to true Christians, follow, I charge you, her that is departed, even as she followed Christ.

4. *The next point I will notice in her character was, her unworldliness.*

You all know she might have had as much of what is called worldly happiness as she pleased. She did not give up the world because she could not keep it, nor turn away from it because it forsook her. Oh ! no ! She came out from the world by choice and not by necessity. Truly, if she had been mindful of the country from whence she came out, she might, like the patriarchs, have had opportunity to have returned. But she desired a better country, that is an heavenly. She might any day have joined in the world's pleasures, walked in the world's path, lived in the world's excitement. But she eared for none of these things. Oh! let us not forget this. Separation from the world is easy work, .com paratively, when you have nothing to tempt you to go into it, or your position makes it impossible;— but to keep clear of the world when there are no natural barriers to check you, this is indeed hard.

Seldom did I ever see one who thought less of the world, to all appearance, than she did. The love of the world, and the fear of the world, —the secret liking to go along with it, the secret dread of going against it,—neither of these seemed to have any effect upon her mind. She was no slave, as many are; she called not the world her master, but God. The world's ways, —the world's fashions,—the world's customs, —the world's opinions,—all these were nothing to her. She was free in the highest sense of the word ; for she was one of those whom the truth of Christ made free.

Let no one misunderstand me on this point. She never gave unnecessary offence, or sought to carry more crosses than God called upon her to bear. She was tenderly afraid of throwing stumbling-blocks in the way of others by needless eccentricities. She was one of all others who walked in wisdom towards them that were without, and tried as far as was lawful to win the world.

But this I say, she did not make the world her guide and counsellor. She did not live by its rules and standard, and wear its chains. She was not one who was ever asking that melancholy question, "What does the world do ? What is most *usual ?* What will people *say ?* What will be *thought* if I do such and such things ?" The world's sayings and doings and thinkings were but a drop of water in the balance to her; her grand question was, "What is the Lord's will concerning me ? What is written in the word of God ?"

And when she found her duty plainly marked out in Scripture, she did not stop, as many, till the world should come up and join her. She did not wait for all the world to become decided before she became decided, she would set her face steadily towards Jerusalem, even 328

though she went alone. Truly she was independent of man's opinion in religious things. The Bible was the map by which alone she steered, and she seemed to say to it as Ruth to Naomi, " "Whither thou goest, I will go."

Alas ! for the scarcity of such a character as this ! I fear there is far more worldliness among some of the children of God than we see upon the surface. It creeps out and bubbles up in many little things that they do. It oozes out in their entertainments and way of living,—in their apparel,—in their conversation,—in their employment of time,—in the education and dress of their children,—in the management of their households,—in the society they tolerate,—in the way they conduct their business or earthly callings.—In all these things the evidence of something rotten within may often be traced. Oh! the deceitfulness of our hearts! Many really live in such a way that the world would seem to be the first thing and to fill the best chamber in the heart;—and as for religion, it only has the vacant places,—lies on the top,—occupies the spare room,—is treated as a lodger and a visitor, and no more.

" Keep in with the world, as far as you can, and *afterwards* have as much religion as you can," that seems the rule by which many walk. Oh! the deceitfulness of our hearts ! —Few, very few, make the world bend to the Bible,—many, far too many make the Bible bend to the world.

Brethren, in this freedom from a worldly spirit, follow, I charge you, her that is departed, even as she followed Christ.

5. *The next point that I will mention in her character was, her zeal to do good to others.*

It is not her carefulness in doing good to the bodies of others that I speak of now—though many of you know I might dwell on this—I mean her carefulness to do good to souls. Neither shall I speak of what she was in this respect in all the varied relations of life that she filled, as a wife, a mother, a daughter, a mistress, and though last not least, I could testify, as a faithful friend. I might do it, but I forbear.

Her zeal to do good to souls was indeed unceasing. It was not merely shown in giving money to Societies, or subscribing to assist religious objects. Such zeal no doubt deserves our thanks, but we must not forget it neither requires time nor trouble from the giver. Her zeal was a far higher, nobler zeal than this. She was always trying to win *individual* souls to Christ. It seemed a constant employment with her. By word of mouth or by letter, by speaking or by writing, by warning or by encouragement, by exhortation or by advice,— by one way or another she appeared always trying to lead others to heaven. The salvation of souls seemed never out of her mind. Her life was a constant endeavor to draw others to Christ, to prayer, and to the word. Verily she had the true spirit of a Missionary, she had found the Gospel precious to her own soul, and she would have liked all the world to know its value too, and taste its comforts.

It is written of our Lord Jesus Christ that, " He went about doing good"—so also in a measure, you might say of her that is departed. She was like Dorcas—" full of good works." Few I believe, were ever for any period within her reach, who could not testify that what I say is true. High and low, rich and poor, old and young, masters and servants, all who have been for any time near her know what I mean ;—it will not be her fault if they never think of their souls. I suspect she never was long with any one without saying a word for God, or showing her interest in their salvation, by the gift of a tract or book.—All men could see she did not wish to go to heaven alone : the words of Moses to Hobab seemed a living principle in her mind, " Come with us and we will do thee good."

And think not her zeal was a zeal without *wisdom.* She was wonderfully taught by the Spirit how to speak a word in due season.— She was not one who would cast pearls before swine, or give that which is holy to the dogs; she had a very quick discernment of the time to speak, and what was best to say, and how it ought to be said;—her words were indeed " fitly spoken."

Her zeal too was a zeal always mingled with *kindness.* Some people, unhappily, put on such a tone and manner when speaking tc others about their souls, that they raise a dislike to the truths they want to enforce, and do as much harm as good. It was not so with her. Like the wise woman in thirty-first of Proverbs, " The law of kindness was in her lips." The persons to whom she spoke would never feel that she was a harsh reprover ;— whatever they might think of her opinions, they would have a deep impression, I think, that she was an affectionate well-wisher of their souls.

But her zeal was always accompanied with a holy *boldness.* She really seemed to fear the face of no man when she had God's work in hand ;—nothing made her afraid to speak out. I do believe she would have realized the saying of David—(Psalm cxix. 46)—" I will speak of thy testimonies before kings and not be ashamed." I do not think she ever shrunk from confessing Christ before men, whatever her company might be;—the words of David seemed engraven on her heart (Psalm Ix. 4), " Them hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."

Brethren, who shall calculate the amount of good that zeal like this does even in this dark world? Who can tell what might be done, if we who believe would speak, as she who is departed did, every one to his neighbor about his soul ?—All men have consciences. Many are only waiting for us to begin, and wondering that we hold our peace. It is a line of conduct that God loves, and God will honor. I declare to you my firm persuasion, that the judgment-day will tell us of numberless souls that are saved by this means. Many, *I* doubt not, will meet her of whom I am speaking, before the throne of God, and bless her for her faithful words.

Alas ! indeed, for the scarcity of this grace ! Seldom indeed do we find believers who are forward to speak to others about their salvation. Surely if our hearts were more full of Christ, our tongues would be more ready to speak of Him. If we felt the value of souls aright, we should not let them travel onwards towards destruction so easily. Oh ! you who are silent in your own homes, and before your friends, as if you had not a word to say on Christ's behalf;—Oh! you who live on as if Christ had never died, and behave in society as if there was no such book as the Bible,— take shame 'to yourselves for your half-heartedness, and resolve to lay it aside. Beware of cowardice under the name of prudence: beware of laziness under the cloak of humility.

Brethren, in this burning zeal for the souls of others, follow, I charge you, her that is departed, even as she followed Christ.

6. *The. next point that I will mention was, her cheerfulness.*

She was a Christian, and so she had her trials, and those not few. All God's brightest children are trained in the school of suffering, —they are sanctified and purified in the furnace of affliction. She had the daily plague of her own heart, as you and I have. She had the constantly recurring cross of ill-health tc bear. She witnessed sickness frequently, and deaths oft, among those she loved best. And yet for all this a stranger might almost suppose she had never known what trial was, and never had cause to shed a single tear.

Of all the Christians I ever did see, she certainly was the most bright and the most cheer| ful.—Of all I ever saw she seemed to have the most enjoyment of her religion. Many perhaps were more advanced than she was, but none, I am sure, were more truly happy in their Master's service. She never appeared to see clouds above her, but only blue sky. She *looked* like one who really felt she was going to heaven,—who really felt that she was washed, sanctified and justified,—who really felt that there was no condemnation for her, that her iniquity was all forgiven, her sin all pardoned, her name written in the book of life, and her mansion in heaven prepared.—Some Christians it does one good to *hear,* but she was one of the few that it even does one good to *see.*

And, brethren, let me tell you plainly, I think this rejoicing spirit is one that we are all bound to aim at. Some people may believe it very proper and scriptural to be always sad and cast down. I cannot see this in the Bible. I find that joy is a fruit of the Spirit, —we should pray for it as we do for meekness and temperance.—I find St. Paul telling the Fhilippians three times, to " rejoice in the Lord" always. I find St. Peter speaking of heaviness as the exception, and rejoicing as the rule.—Surely these things cannot be gainsayed.

She that is departed appeared to understand something of this. She was a constant witness - to all who saw her that it is a happiness and not a burden to serve God;—that His commandments are not grievous;—that there is great peace for those who love God's law ;— that the ways of Jesus are indeed ways of pleasantness, and His paths paths of peace. She was like a sunbeam, bright herself, and making others bright too.

Believe me, we ought to bear this in mind far more than we do. We ought to recommend our religion by our demeanor, and to make it beautiful as well as clear ; we ought to show men that we have joy and peace in believing, and that it is a comfortable thing to walk with God. It may not be fair to judge of the Gospel by the appearance of those who believe it, but so long as men do so, we should be very careful to throw no stumbling-blocks in their way. Let us beware lest we give men a disagreeable impression of religion by unnecessary sadness of countenance, and so bring up an unfavorable report of the good land, and cause offences to come. She that is departed has indeed left us a bright example in this respect: she was a living proof that " a merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

Alas! indeed, for the scarcity of this grace, even among true Christians ! How few seem to feel the harm that the absence of a rejoicing spirit must do to the world ! Oh! you who are always nourishing a gloomy frame of mind, as if it was essential to true religion;—Oh! you who live as if you were attending eternal funerals, and felt it a duty to be sad and melancholy ;—Oh ! you who look as if you were dissatisfied with your Master, your livery, your wages, and your work, and did not mind the world knowing it;—learn, I beseech you, to look on gloominess as a wrong thing, and learn of her who is departed, to rejoice in the Lord. Why should the children of a King go mourning all their days ? The Bible is not removed from you,—Christ lives, though all else die,— the love of the Father does not change, though all else fade,—the Spirit is not withdrawn, though all else be taken away. Why should you help the devil ? Why should you give the world occasion to say, " the Gospel does not bring peace ?"

Brethren, in this cheerfulness, follow her that is departed, I charge you, even as she followed Christ.

7. *The last particular point that I shall name in her character was, her consistency.*

Brethren, when I speak of consistency, I do not mean to tell you that she was a perfect, faultless person. I never heard of a literally perfect person. I do not believe there ever was one.—Abraham, the father of the faithful, was not perfect: David, the man after God's own heart, was not perfect: John, who leaned on the bosom of our Lord, was not perfect: and if any one told me of a child of Adam who had attained perfection, I should not believe him. Doubtless, she who has been taken from us was not perfect;—she was a sister of Abraham, and David, and John, and she had her faults.

But this I will say, she was one of the most equable Christians I ever met with. She was one in a thousand for being nearly always the same. She was always ready for the Bible, and the things of God. Christ and the word seemed always welcome to her heart. There was a wonderful freshness about her religious feeling : it never seemed faded, and old, and dry;—it was ever green. You could never speak of Scripture and the things of the world to come, without finding her ready to meet you.—And she would enter into it all so warmly, that a man might think she had never heard of the Gospel before that day.

Most Christians we meet with are sadly variable. They are seldom long the same. They are like the moon, sometimes waxing, sometimes waning. They are like the tide, sometimes high, and sometimes low. We cannot feel quite sure that we shall find them ready for spiritual conversation,—the door of their heart open, and their minds in a religious frame. But it was not so with her. Her heart seemed never quite out of tune. The cold damp weather of this world appeared to have little effect upon it. It was like a well-tuned instrument of music, generally in harmony with divine things: and seldom indeed would you fail in finding some string, at any rate, which would respond to the touch of religion. She was one that you could meet after a long absence with confidence, and feel sure that she had not altered,—that she was still the same.

Alas ! indeed, for the scarcity of this grace ! How many Christians are uncertain in their frames ! We have no assurance that we shall find them ready for communion about eternal things. One day we knock at the door of their hearts, and are at once admitted. Another day we stand knocking in vain until we are tired. There is no voice nor answer to our call, and we find to our sorrow, that to spiritual things our brother is *not at home.*

Brethren, in this consistency and equableness of spirit, follow her that is departed, I charge you, even as she followed Christ.

Such then were the leading points in the Christian character of her whom God has taken from us. I have purposely avoided those general features of character which she had in common with other children of God. Time would not allow me to touch on them, and even now, though I have said much, I could easily say far more.

But what were the roots from which the fair fruits I have been dwelling on, took their origin ? What was the hidden underwork — the unseen foundation — on which the building of her character all rested ? The things I have spoken of were the things seen — the face and hands of the clock : — what was the machinery out of sight, which influenced and moved the whole? Suffer me, brethren, to dwell for a moment on this matter. Believe me, these things are of first importance. Write them upon the table of your memory,—lay them to heart if you would really follow her,—mark them down, for they are indeed worthy to be had in remembrance.

Know then, *for one thing;* she had a very deep sense of the sinfulness of sin generally, and of her own sinfulness in particular. She was truly remarkable for real humility and self-abasement. And this was not put on like a cloak for Walking abroad, and merely talked of without being felt,—it was an every-day garment, it was sincere.

With all her good works she never appeared to have any high thoughts of her own usefulness. With all her spiritual attainments she never gave one the idea of being proud. She seemed to have an abiding sense of her own unworthiness, and to feel that at best she was an unprofitable servant. Nothing, I think, annoyed her more than to hear herself flattered and praised. Like Moses, her face shone, and she did not know it. I really believe, if asked who was the chief of sinners she would at once have written down her own name. Often have I heard her say that no man knew his own heart, if he would not willingly confess that he saw more evil in himself, than in any one else in all the world.

Oh! mark this, all you that are spiritually rich and increased with goods and think that you have need of nothing. He that humbleth himself is the man that shall be exalted. You must begin low if you would build high. Humble yourself if ever you would enter at the strait gate.

Know *for another thing,* that she was one who was ever looking to the Lord Jesus Christ. —Faith in Christ and communion with Christ, these were the main-springs of her life and made her what she was. She lived by faith in the Son of God;—Christ and His finished work her confidence against the guilt of sin, —Christ and His grace her strength against the power of sin.—Christ and His second coining her hope of deliverance from the presence of sin.—Christ was indeed all things to her. His blood, His atonement, His de:ith, His resurrection, His mediation, His intercession, Hiss love that passeth knowledge, His willingness to receive, His power to save, His second advent, these were the things which were her soul's delight.

Verily she did realize the mighty doctrine of the fifteenth of John, that " Christ is the vine and we are the branches"—that to abide in Him is the way to grow, to go-forward, to bear much fruit. She did seem to feel that looking to Jesus is the way to become like Him, •.and be filled with the Spirit;—that union with Him was the way to be strong, that without Him we can do nothing,—that through Him we can do all things,—that in ourselves we have nothing but weakness and sin,—but that believing on Jesus all things are ours.

Christ was the bread of her soul,—the bread on which she daily fed and became strong.

Christ was the light of her soul,—the light after which she walked and was not in darkness.

Christ was the fountain of her soul,—the fountain in which her conscience was daily washed and made clean.

Christ was the sun of her soul,—the sun in whose beams she walked and was made bright.

Christ was the shepherd of her soul,-—she came up out of the wilderness leaning on Him, and so was more than conqueror.

The preaching she delighted in was the preaching which contained most of Christ. The ministers-sbe valued most were those who spoke fully and freely of Christ. The texts she loved were those that said most of Christ. The books she liked best were those that exalted Christ. The friends she thought most highly of, were those who had most communion with Christ. Christ was the criterion by which everything was valued,—the standard according to which everything took its place in her mind,—the measure to which everything was referred. Brethren, Christ is all in Scripture, and Christ will be all in heaven ;— and she seemed to think He ought to be all in her heart.

Oh! mark this, all you that are content to give Christ a little honor, and no more,—who think to use Him as a make-weight to supply your deficiencies, but not as the corner-stone of your souls. Believe me, Christ must be everything in your life, if ever death is to be your gain.

Know *lastly,* brethren, that she who is departed was one of unwearied diligence in using private means of grace. Think not, I beseech you for one moment, that spiritual eminence was ever attained by any soul without spiritual diligence.—Such a notion is a delusion of the devil.—" There are no gains without pains," is the proverb of the world, and it holds good too about the soul. There never will be growth in grace without private labor and toil.

She of whom I speak was most diligent in the study of the Bible. She was such an one as David describes in the first Psalm, " Her delight was in the law of the Lord, and in His law did she meditate day and night."—She loved the Bible, and she searched it like one digging for hid treasure. Her reading was not a mere formal reading of a certain portion a day, as it often is, and then the book is put out of sight and out of mind. Her Bible seemed the meat and drink of her soul, more precious than her necessary food, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. And the word of Christ did " dwell in her richly." It dwelled in her,—not merely as a visitor or a lodger, but as an inhabitant; and it dwelled in her richly too : shone out in all the windows of her conversation. Like David, " She hid the word in her heart*;"* and this was one great means of keeping her from sin, and making her "thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

And besides this, she was most diligent, I believe, in private prayer. I suspect we little know how much she prayed, and this I am inclined to think was one great secret of her Christianity. Our public life will generally bear the impress of what we are upon our knees. I believe that prayer was the key that obtained her such abundant access to the treasury of grace that is laid up for the saints in Jesus. Prayer gave her power to walk straight forward through the world, not turning to the right hand or the left. Prayer enabled her to be, as she was, " steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

I belie.ve she knew what it was to pray without ceasing,—to watch unto prayer,—to continue instant in pr,ayer, to pray always and not to faint. I believe she realized something of the Spirit of adoption, and that just as a little child will go to its earthly parent, so did she go to her Father in heaven, and cast all her cares from the greatest to the least upon Him, saying, " Abba Father, this or that thing disturbs me ; Father, give me help, strength, grace sufficient for my need." Brethren, the praying people, the men of desires, these are the people that obtain the best gifts, these are the Christians that are strong.

Oh! mark this, you that are lazy and careless about means of grace, and yet wonder that you do not get on. Remember the word I give you this day, " The soul of the *sluggard* desireth and hath nothing, but the soul of the *diligent* shall be made fat."•—Prov. xiii. 4.

And now, beloved brethren, in conclusion let us all give God hearty thanks that he hath delivered our sister out of the miseries of this sinful world, and taken her home. Let us thank Him unfeignedly for the grace bestowed upon her, and for having mercifully lent her to us so long, that we might see what His grace can do.—Truly we have had amongst us an epistle of Christ,—we have seen a bright and shining light,—we have beheld a real Christian.—Let us bless God for such a privilege. The Lord grant that we may all follow her,—that we may all go to our homes to-night better for what we have seen and heard.

Oh! unconverted people in this congregation ! Oh! worldly men and worldly women, who mind earthly things and have not yet thought of turning to Grod!—Oh ! lingering souls who once did promise well, but now are hanging back and giving no sign of life !—Oh ! undecided souls who are halting between two opinions, having too much religion to be hap

py in the world, and keeping too much of the world to be happy in your religion !—Listen, I pray you, every one, to the appeal I make to your consciences this night;—listen, if ever you mean to listen to counsel in your lives.

See what a blessed thing it is to live and die a decided Christian ! See what a blessed thing it is to leave behind you great broad evidences ; to have made it plain whose you were, and whom you served, so that your friends can bury you without doubts, and speak and think of you with joy ! See what a crushing answer you have to-night to all your excuses and pretences! It *is* possible to have many temptations and yot be a bright Christian. It *is* possible to be happy,—yea far happier than you are,—and yet walk closely with God. She that has gone has left you all an example. Have you difficulties ? So had she.— Have you an evil heart ? So had she.—Have you the world to conquer ? So had she.—But she overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and so may you. Grace was sufficient for her, and it is also sufficient for you.

Oh! that this day might be a turning point in your lives ! Oh ! that it might be a time of awakening from spiritual sloth, a time of beginning a new life and a walk with God. Oh ! that the events of the last few days might convince you that this world is but a shadow and the world to come the reality,—that the things seen are all passing away, and Christ and the word the only portion which will never change !—Oh! that you may each go to your own chambers when you leave this house, and there pray as you never prayed before.

And you too, believing brethren, learn a lesson this night. See what the grace of God can do for flesh and blood like yourselves, and learn to be ashamed of your shortcoming, and your negligence, your unprofitableness, and your little fruit. Oh ! let the time past suffice you to have been cold and selfish ! Oh ! let 1he time to come prove to the world that you really have the mind of Christ! Why should not each one of you be an epistle of Christ, an epistle so plain that he who runs may read it ? Why should you not be bold ? Why should you not be zealous ? Why should you not be useful'.' "Why should you not bo light and salt in the middle of this dark, corrupt world? The Lord's arm is not straitened.—The free grace which made our departed sister what she was is still the same,—and Jesus says to you, " Ask and ye shall receive."

Awake then to a sense of your responsibilities,—awake to a sense of the happiness you are missing, and the good you are leaving undone ; awake and sleep no more. Shake yourselves from the chains that Satan would fain cast around you. " Lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet."—Think not what others are doing, think of Christ, and heaven, and souls, and sin :—let the dead bury their dead ; let others slumber if they will;—do.you seek firgt^lftft kingdom of God,—go forwitd^ go up, go on, and sleep no more.

Brethren, if you loved her that is departed, walk in her ways; if you loved her, follow in her steps. This is the true way to honor her —to follow her, even as she followed Christ.