

For the Christian Messenger.

Letters to a Young Preacher.

LETTER IV. IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." This inspired direction, given to a young preacher, (1 Tim. iv. 12, 2 Tim. ii. 15), clearly evinces it to be the duty of such a one to improve his mind with diligence, in order that he may be qualified for the discharge of his ministerial functions in a manner acceptable to his maker, and beneficial to his fellow men. "That the soul be without knowledge is not good," (Prov. xiv. 2,) is an axiom of general application. It is, however, especially applicable to those persons whose business it is to instruct men in matters of the utmost importance. Unquestionably, then, every minister of religion ought to cultivate his mental powers by the acquisition of useful knowledge.

A man who would enter any other profession must devote time, incur expense, and endure mental toil, in preparing himself for it. Assuredly, then, he who proposes to devote his life to the gospel ministry, cannot reasonably expect to be exempt from such preparatory course. If it be in his power, in consistency with other duties, to obtain a thorough education, he should by all means do so. The facilities now afforded for this purpose, ought to be appreciated and improved. Any one whose pecuniary means are insufficient, should be aided by liberal contributions.

I hope, however, the time will never come when the Baptists will attempt to exclude from the ministry every man who has not received a collegiate education. Some men are evidently called to the work so late in life, in such a state of bodily infirmity, with pecuniary resources so limited, or under such circumstances of various kinds, that this acquisition is out of their reach. Their exclusion from the sacred office would be exceedingly detrimental to the interests of Zion.

But if a man can not take a thorough course, he should take a partial one, if that be in his power. At all events, every man who regards it as his duty to preach the gospel, is unquestionably under obligation to labor diligently for the improvement of his mind. He should "give attendance to reading." If he can, by dint of close application, and by such assistance as may be obtained, acquire a knowledge of the original languages of the Bible, he may derive great advantages therefrom. It seems to me, however, that every man who expects to preach, ought at least, to make himself acquainted with his own language, so that he may speak it with propriety. Education is now so generally diffused, that violations of plain rules of English Grammar are noticed by many persons. These are liable to be prejudiced against the truths thus inaccurately uttered. Indeed it is desirable, though not so indispensable, that a preacher should set an example with reference to accuracy of speech, as well as in relation to moral conduct and Christian deportment.

But whatever a minister's attainments may be, he should guard against indulging the delusive idea, which has been entertained by some, that he has finished his studies. Knowledge imperfectly acquired, and presently forgotten, can be of no real service. A preacher who had professedly gone through a regular course in college, frankly stated to me one fact with reference to his studies. In the denomination to which he belonged it was expected, though not absolutely required, that candidates for the ministry should understand Hebrew. He knew on what Psalm he would be examined. Having obtained a slight knowledge of the rudiments of the language, he got a student who was a proficient in it to assist him in preparing his lesson. He then passed through his examination, and was recognized as a Hebrew scholar. He shewed me the books in his library; but added, "I have not looked into them since; and now I do not think I know all the letters." On trial I found his conjecture on this point correct.

The acquiring of education, and the obtaining of books, may be compared to learning a trade, and procuring the appropriate tools. If a man subsequently make no use of these, both the art and the implements will be comparatively valueless. Learning, like every other good thing, may be lost through neglect. He who has it not, should labor diligently for the attainment of it; and he who has it, should industriously improve the treasure possessed, that it may be retained and increased, and rendered useful.

Caution, however, in reference to this subject, as well as all others, is necessary. If a mower would labor comfortably and advantageously, he must have his scythe well ground, and must

whet it frequently. But if he spend all the time in these preparatory exercises, he will accomplish nothing. If he devote to these the principal part of the time, he will do but little work. Ministers who are fond of study are liable to err by devoting too much time and attention to that which should be regarded only as a preparation, to fit them for active and useful labor in the Lord's harvest. In my youthful days I made some inquiries, by letter, of a senior and educated minister with reference to studies. In the closing part of his reply, he gave me advice to this effect:—"Take pains to improve your mind by useful study; but neglect no present opportunity of doing good." I am not aware, my dear young Brethren that on this point I can give you better advice.

Yours in gospel bonds,  
CHARLES TUPPER.

Aylesford, Jan. 17th, 1861.

ERRATA.—In Letter II. C. M., Jan. 9th, p. 13th, first sentence, for "inevitable" read "incredible." Paragraph 3rd for "man" read "men."

For the Christian Messenger.

Divine Sovereignty.

[The following Essay by Rev. Perez F. Murray, was read before the Annapolis County Ministerial Conference, and by the request of that body sent to the Christian Messenger for publication.]

The Sovereignty of God, is his power and right of dominion over his creatures; this being allowed, it follows as a necessary consequence that all the creatures he has made are disposed of according to his own will. That he made the world and all things that are therein, is firmly established on the authority of the Holy Scriptures and every reasonable man must come to the same conclusion, unless blinded by prejudice. When we reflect on the world around us, the Heavens above us, the form and fashion thereof, the Planetary System all regulated by fixed laws, and established in their several courses, and then turn to the various creatures which inhabit this earth, from man the Lord, or chief of the Creation, to the meanest or least of the insects that crawl on the earth, and perceive their adaptation, to the several circumstances in which they are placed, how can we do otherwise than perceive an Almighty Power, combining infinite wisdom and goodness, exercising itself, according to His own will,—creating, arranging, and disposing of all things according to his own pleasure; thus in the works of creation do we see the broad stamp of Divine Sovereignty standing forth in bold relief on all his own works.

And again in the upholding of all the stupendous works in setting bars and bounds to the great and wide sea, the Sovereign power of God is manifest, in exercising his dominion in the heavens, over the earth, as well as controlling the elements, making them subservient to his purposes, it is evident, that "Judgment, and justice, are the habitation of his Throne." In reference to his creatures, there is evidently the same Sovereign control exercised in exalting one, and putting down another, in making one rich, and another poor,—in bestowing health on one, and withholding it from another, and in all the changing circumstances of life, Jehovah is doing his pleasure,—therefore it becomes us to be still and know that He is God.

In reference to the salvation of the church, the same glorious doctrine of divine sovereignty stands forth as the Alpha and Omega of the whole great and glorious plan. The election of Christ as the Head over all the church, the choice of his people in him before all worlds;—the work of redemption by Christ; the work of regeneration by the Divine Spirit; the deliverance the children of God obtain while here; their sanctification and glorification; all obtained by the Sovereign power of God,—whose purpose shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.

Again. In the control which God exercises over the wicked he holds them in check. They propose; their purposes are frustrated; they rage, but "He makes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of that wrath he restrains;" he exhorts and admonishes them to repent,—they refuse,—and he suffers their evil doings; yet the time will come when he will exercise his power and punish them for their wickedness.

His power has been manifested in punishing wicked men. The destruction of the antediluvians,—the inhabitants of Sodom, &c., shew that Jehovah punishes the wicked when and how he pleases. We see instances of divine sovereignty in both punishing the wicked and at the same time delivering the righteous, as in the case of Noah, Lot, Israel at the Red sea, Daniel, the three worthies, &c.

And if we turn to instances of conversion to God, to what can we attribute the great and marvellous change in Saul of Tarsus, and in the Phillippian jailor. Some may say these are out of the ordinary course. It is true the circumstances of individuals may differ, but the hearts of men are all alike under the power and dominion of sin. The process of conversion may be different in some, but the power to change the mind and subdue the will, is the same in all cases. "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth," (James. i. 18). It is evident, that such is the opposition of man's carnal mind to God, that nothing short of almighty power, could subdue it, and bring the sinner a willing captive to the feet of Jesus.

It is evident from the Scriptures, that God will manifest his sovereign power and make known the justice of all his sovereign acts, in a coming day, and that he has appointed a day for this very purpose. All who have cavilled at this doctrine and opposed it, will there and then be silenced, and that forever. In that day he shall utter his voice and call to the Heavens above, and to the earth beneath, and to the dark regions of Hell. And the Heavens, the Earth, the Sea and Hell itself shall empty, and send forth their countless multitudes at his command—and be arraigned before the great white throne, where God is judge Himself, then there will be none to dispute his Sovereign rights—to dispose of his creatures according to his own will and pleasure. There and then he will be acknowledged by devils as the Sovereign Lord, there also wicked men will have to bow and confess his sovereign power. There holy angels, and redeemed men, will also acknowledge him as their Sovereign Lord, and rejoice in seeing him wear the crown, and ascribe "all honour, wisdom, power, and glory, unto him, that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb." Now some are ready to conclude that the doctrine of divine Sovereignty excuses men from blame and as they cannot resist the power of Jehovah, therefore they are excusable in continuing in sin—but the Scriptures take quite a different view from this. Men are not under any necessity to sin against God. Sin is a voluntary act of the person who commits it—God prohibits it. Man, in opposition to the will of God indulges in it, in this he acts freely, he could do otherwise if he would; to deny this would make man a mere machine, acted upon by a power which he could not control, and therefore not accountable for his conduct. The word of God, teaches us that man is an accountable being and consequently a free agent. The great difficulty lies simply in the bias of the mind—and the minds of all men, in a state of nature being sinful, is evidently the cause of their hatred to God and aversion to his ways. What the result of this would be none can tell, if God as a sovereign did not sit above and control and hold them in check. Thus while we hold the doctrine of God's sovereignty and man's free agency, yet man's power is necessarily limited, while that of the Eternal Jehovah is alone unlimited; but in dealing with man he comes down to their capacities and instructs, counsels, and admonishes them, to deter them from sin, and lead them to holiness. And when these fail, as fail they have, and will,—while men are under the influence of a carnal mind, it becomes necessary, in order that Christ may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, that God the Father should put forth his divine power,—and make whatever instrument he pleases to employ effectual in the salvation of the elect.

For the Christian Messenger.

English Correspondence.

From our own Correspondent.

FEELING IN ENGLAND RESPECTING THE FUGITIVE ANDERSON—SECESSION—MONEY MATTERS—CHINESE PEACE—THE FRENCH BLOCKADE OF GAETA—THE FUTURE OF ITALY—SEVERE WINTER WEATHER.

MR. EDITOR,—

Usually during our parliamentary recess we have a dearth of news, and are glad to fill our newspapers with stray paragraphs, and often find a difficulty in introducing political matters even when we meet a friend. At present, however, we have several topics of very general interest, in each of which we find an unusual diversity of opinion, so much so, and so anxious are we to know what is to be, that we feel we would almost like to precipitate events.

First then, on your own continent there is the tall talk of the Southern States, and in Canada the case of the fugitive Anderson. Taking up the last first, I am happy to say that public opinion here is fairly aroused in favor of liberty. How could it be otherwise? We should indeed

stultify all our noble deeds in Freedom's favor if we could permit that man to be handed over to the tortures of a slave master's execution.

A writ of *habeas corpus* will probably bring Anderson to England, and the law of the case will be argued before our judges, and if need be, the case must go from court to court till it be finally settled at the bar of the House of Lords.

Lord Brougham seems to have grown timorous in his senility, he does not speak against slavery now with the thrilling vehemence common to his younger years. There are however, advocates enough in this favored isle to plead the cause of the helpless, and no doubt the States' claim will be declared groundless. We cannot acknowledge the authority of one man trying to take away another man's liberty, and must applaud the resistance offered. Though death to the assailant was the result, the crime if any can only be "justifiable homicide." English justice must be vindicated and Anderson set free!

With regard to American affairs, it is hard for us to know what is intended. We are so accustomed to the brag and bounce of both North and South that we find it difficult to realize a secession of the slave states. Will other States follow South Carolina? What if ten or a dozen States do agree to form another Union? Why not, if such a scheme will add to the chance of peace? The character of slavery, as it exists in the South must prevent its long continuance in immediate connection with the free States. So long as the States form one union, there is a degree of public opinion which prevents the Slave States doing all they wish for their own security. Let them separate and be free to encourage one another, and we shall soon see a reign of terror amongst the poor slaves, by which they will destroy themselves. Recent private letters received in Manchester from Slave owners declare the state of life there for the whites to be most miserable. Every one dreads the negroes—even the women go armed day and night. A just retribution!

The derangement of the money market is by no means alarming to us. The panic-stricken capitalists of the United States hoard their gold, the rate of discount rises, while the price of other commodities falls. Fortunately for us, we can take advantage of this state of things. By a considerable export of gold, we have reaped the advantage of a very remunerative discount, and have supplied our markets with abundance of food and cotton at a reasonable price. Our deficient harvest under other circumstances would have caused general distress amongst our working classes but nothing like distress or want has been the consequence. Money is abundant and labor well employed at remunerative prices. Commerce flourishing on the whole, and home prospects good. The Bank of England has raised its rate of discount to 7 per cent this week. This is a measure of precaution rather than of necessity. It will prevent the Bank of France playing the old game of running upon us for gold, and may prove some check upon the Imperial expenditure. With 7 per cent in Paris, and 12 per cent in New York our trade is well able to stand firm with 7 per cent here. I am sorry to learn that some of the slave owners are trying the game of repudiation. Such rascality will not prosper.

The Chinese War is at last settled. We are once more at peace with all the world. Some anticipate only a continuance of quarrels, and show that we should have been the gainers if we had made a present to the Chinese of all our exports to China for the last 10 years, and escaped the wars. That may be true, but I am willing to believe that the result of the war will be good to China and good to us too. Our trade will certainly be enlarged, and the extent to which it may be enlarged is beyond our calculation. With trade we reasonably anticipate an enlarged sphere of action for our civilization, our literature, and our Christianity. Their Tartar conquerors have kept the Chinese in mental bondage. Fear seems to have been the great governing principle. Recent events will have opened the eyes of the public there. The latest telegrams from China state that the treaty of peace signed at Peking by Lord Elgin and Prince Kung the Emperor's brother has been posted on the walls of Peking and will be published in every province. Crowds have read this document and will publish far and wide the wondrous news of a small army of barbarians having taken Peking and frightened the Emperor into Tartary. It is the right way in all moral training of fallen men. He must first be made to fear, respect will grow and perhaps love. We must be content to pay for our follies. If we get off with eight millions, in addition to the two and a quarter millions indemnity we shall not grumble for we had been obliged to make up our minds for about ten millions cost of the war,