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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

GILBOA.

King Saul is on the field,
Once more around him stand,
With banner, sword and shield,
The chosen of the land.
But not with former pride
He takes his wonted place,
For his heart had turned aside,
And the Lord has hid his face.

Now from Gilboa's height
Are seen in marshalled show,
Like waving forests bright,
The legions of the foe.
Strong is the son of Kish,
He bears no coward's name,
Yet pallid grows his cheek,
And tremulous his frame.

Disguised, in secret hour,
To Endor Saul has sped,
"O thou with mystic power;
Call up the mighty dead."
The spell is wrought in gloom,
The prophet's form appears,
And dire the words of doom
That smite the monarch's ears.

The morrow's sun has shone,
The hosts are in array,
The battle blast is blown,
And deadly is the fray;
Now Askalon may laugh,
And Gath avenge the past,
For Irael is but chaff
Before the Gentile blast.

Saul's best lie dead around,
His sons are with the slain,
Their corpses strew the ground,
Like sheaves of autumn grain;
Stands high the kingly form,
And the Archer's aim is true,
What hand can stay the storm
What can the monarch do!

Though weak his arm to-day,
His hand is on his sword,
No uncircumcised shall slay
The anointed of the Lord;
Gilboa ends his reign,
He falls upon the brand,
And David's right has ta'en
The sceptre from his hand

S. S.

Religious.

A HIGHER TONE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE, THE NECESSITY OF THE CHURCHES.

THE CIRCULAR LETTER FROM THE PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION TO THE CHURCHES OF WHICH IT IS COMPOSED.

Published by request of the Association.
Dear Brethren,—

The first enquiry, in connection with the subject in hand, is relative to the nature, source, and development of spiritual life.

Spiritual life is the indwelling of God in the soul. Under this condition there is mutual fellowship between the creature and the Creator. God regards with benignity his own image, and the man acknowledges his responsibility and declares his dependence.

This condition is not the natural development of the soul in its fallen state. Discord, pain, woe, are the natural productions. Left to itself, the soul must ever remain dead to a true appreciation of spiritual and divine concerns. Hence whenever spiritual life is recognized, its origin must be attributed to some power without and not within the soul. That power is wielded by the Holy Spirit of God. He only, is competent to impart divine life. This is his especial work. He uses particularly for this purpose the Holy Scriptures, the influence of men to whom he has already imparted life, and his providential dealings. By these the avenues to the heart are laid open, by which divine life may be imparted and received.

Every life must have its sphere of operation, its modes of expression and growth. Spiritual life has its seat in the affections, it finds expression in feelings, thoughts, words, deeds, and reaches its true development in the formation of christian character. Its

operation is hidden, secret, but its results must eventually be seen or felt in outward manifestations. Hence the great difference between men, religiously considered, will be perceptible, not so much in unseen soul-experiences, as in their power on the outward life. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The only religious guide, which comes to us with the authority of external evidence and internal strength, is the Word of God—the Bible. And the only perfect representative of that directory of morals worked out in human history, is the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Hence the true expression of the spiritual life will be found in a perfect submission to Christ, and its highest development will be a life of implicit obedience. So that, in proportion as christians approach that pattern, they will promote the growth and show the reality of their spiritual life.

As we take a survey of our churches to-day, what report can we bring concerning the standard of christian life? It may be true, that greater effort than ever before in our history is being made for the cause of Truth, and very much good is being accomplished; our churches are growing in numbers and strength; many of the hitherto spiritually destitute are now reached. Bible schools are sustained; sanctified education receives a share of attention; and the Foreign Missionary enterprise calls forth men, contributions and prayers. And yet, we fear there is reason to believe that the mass of professing christians live far from the path of privilege and duty; and that there is a present necessity for the cultivation of a higher tone of spiritual life among the followers of Christ.

The truth of this observation will appear manifest from the following considerations.

The progress of truth and righteousness is less rapid than we should expect. Scripture encourages the followers of Jesus to expect the completion of great designs for the good of the race. "Many great and precious promises" await fulfilment. Gradually the work is advancing to completion. But how slowly! Results are not commensurate with the number of professed labourers. As we examine the statistics from year to year, how small the rate of increase! As we view the localities where these churches are situated, how numerous are the unconverted! There surely is some grave defect, where so few victories are won for Christ.

There is little manifest spiritual enjoyment among christians. Christ has provided for the happiness of his followers. This is one of the grand motives to receive him. He encourages them by his near relation to them, in the similitude of the vine and the branches. He assures them of his love unto death, "that their joy may be full." That is no mere taste of transient pleasure, but a calm deep constant river of holy peace and happiness. Now while there are a goodly number of christians who abide in the conscious enjoyment of their Master's provision, there are a multitude who live under a cloud only now and then enjoying an interval of light. To verify this, there is only need to be present at conferences, to attend prayer meetings and to visit christian homes. It is too often the same unhappy relation of doubts and tears with a very indefinite consciousness that they are God's children, and entitled to his covenant blessings. Life seems dark and mysterious, and they grope on in sadness. That the religious life so generally assumes this gloomy unhappy aspect certainly demands our serious attention and careful consideration.

There is little active service for Christ. Church records show a respectable number of professors of religion. But how many of them are actively engaged in christian work? There are comparatively few. The large majority, by their listlessness and indifference, press heavily on the hearts and fetter the hands of those anxious for the prosperity of Zion.

There is no lack of employment. The home circle, the church, the Sunday school, the spiritually destitute in our own country, and the millions of heathen in foreign lands call loudly for assistance. They want men with talents consecrated to Christ to instruct them in the "way of salvation." There are hosts of men in the church, endowed with talents admirably adapted for every variety of christian usefulness. And in the church there is an abundance of means, if righteously given to its proper use, to send such men to the destitute, everywhere. We do not wait for instructions, the order has already been given, "Go work to-day in my vineyard." But how many spend the day idly! How painfully evident has this fact become to many of our brethren, who, whilst bearing the "burden and heat of the day," long for brighter times, and yet bear up under the crushing weight, as they must in the place of prayer with but a few who hail with delight the precious season; as they assemble around the Table of their Lord, and miss so many who should join them in the expressive ordinance; or as they meet for the arrangement of financial matters to find so few in their place and discover that the Lord's money has already been appropriated to personal aggrandizement. This is a sad spectacle. Truly to-day "the harvest is great but the laborers are few."

The taunts of the infidel are still flung in the face of Christianity. From what we have seen, this is what we might expect. The tardiness of its progress, the mournful appearance of its adherents, and the coldness and negligence of its members are to-day held up as objects of derision and scorn by the ungodly.

That Christianity should hold sway, and still increase under such adverse circumstances, proves its divinity. But that fact does not wipe away the shame and reproach of misrepresentation. Surely the necessity for a higher tone of spiritual life is suggested by such considerations.

Are we satisfied to remain longer in such a position? Let us rally our forces. We need not expect to occupy higher ground without a struggle.

Satan, our arch enemy, is ever on the alert to hinder any movement which will tend to the overthrow of his kingdom. He will marshal his legions and make the most of our natural depravity and the multifarious seductions of evil in the world to barricade the way. But we need not fear to enter the conflict. We are Christ's. All the machinations of the Devil framed against us will ultimately fail. Our great concern will be to hear the Master's voice directing our course and immediately obey. For this purpose we will ponder well his word, study attentively his life, and covet and seek an intimate communion in heart and life with our great Head.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

BY REV. W. H. MENTZER, PENNSYLVANIA.

There are two points in reference to which, it seems to me, the church needs quickening: First, in that the Sabbath-school belongs to the church and is hence really a divine institution. Second, in that the Sabbath school saves the children, and that it is really worth while to save an infant soul.

About this latter allow me a few words. That is a bad theory which values things only as they are of present actual utility. There is a future usefulness belonging to some things in this world. What we cannot use to-day may be of eminent service to-morrow. I have ten dollars to-day, above my actual need for the expenses of to-day, but I would be a dunce to reckon my surplus a worthless abundance. A similar analogy holds in reference to children in the Sabbath-school. The child doesn't seem now to be of much account, and we are too apt practically to say, "Better wait for more age." But this thing of taking no notice of a

child is a great mistake. Let shame paint the cheek for such conduct. We should labor for the salvation of the children in view of the grand manhood and womanhood to be revealed in them.

On this point we, as Baptists are, or should be, very sensitive. The fallacy is heralded abroad that we don't care much what becomes of the children because we do not sprinkle them; and while such an impression is a flaunting error, we should take care to remove every possible ground of its seeming truthfulness. We do recommend to the youth the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Bible stands with us in withholding the ordinance of baptism from innocent babes; but then the worth of a child's soul must not be forgotten by us. The one grand, glorious object of the Sabbath-school is to bring the children to Jesus. To this end the church should stretch every nerve in this field of labor. Would that pastors, superintendents, teachers and all could grasp this one idea, that the Sabbath-school is for the salvation of the children. This work must be an ignominious failure until we rally and believe that its aim and motive is to place the lambs in Jesus' arms. We should bring the Shepherd nigh by a personal application of the Word, for in the soul of the least child there is a crevice for the lodgment of divine truth.

Hence the conversion of a child is not unthinkable or impossible. I believe that many children grow up into converted manhood. They don't know when they were converted, but they are conscious of the fact, and that's all we want. And these are the best souls. I have more faith in the conversion of a child at ten than a man at forty. He who comes to Christ early in life is worth more to himself and others than he who comes late. Away, then, with that old thread-bare idea that one soul is worth as much as another. I don't believe it. Souls are the same in kind, but vastly different in degree. There is a certain magnitude to souls, and the large soul is the best soul. There is some value in soul culture, some worth in soul expansion, some virtue and some stock in trade in early training. A child is worth much in view of what he may be. That man makes a better soldier who comes into rank young and spry than he who enters with rheumatic limbs and stiffened joints. That soul has many chances for being best that begins to grow and develop in earliest childhood.

Let us not begin too late, therefore, to cultivate the heart. When we speak of soul-culture, let us not forget the children. The world is busy to sow its seed of tares and thistles in their season; nor will it stop, unless stopped, until it has sown the last seed of soul poison. There is a kind of pity of pity that may be used to reach the children. There is a certain unique power of sympathy and love within the Christian attainment by which we can win the young. There is for us a counterpart blessing to that which Jesus pronounced on children when "he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Let us be on the alert for the salvation of the children.—Baptist Teacher.

INVESTING MONEY.

The world is full of trouble. It is inconvenient to be poor, and it is embarrassing to be rich. Here is a dear friend who is startled to find himself the owner of a small fortune, and is puzzled to know what to do with it. He is anxious to get good advice. Look at the following extract from his very serious letter:

"A hundred dollars saved from my yearly income. Truly, virtue and industry and economy have their reward." [Alas, how quickly does sudden wealth generate pride!] "But what shall I do with the money?—that is the question. How shall it be invested so that the interest from it will smooth the path of weary age? In common with

other capitalists, I have sunk money in strange ventures. A spare hundred went into the 'Ever-Bubbling Oil Well,' and just then the well ceased to bubble. Another hundred went into 'North Pacific' bonds, which all the newspapers in the land—religious and secular—solely asserted were as good as Government bonds. My last hundred went to establish on a sure foundation the 'Aurora Insurance Company.' For a season the 'Aurora' made a brilliant display, and it dazzled our vision; but soon it quietly faded into thin air, and left not a trace behind."

No wonder, dear friend, after such a run of misfortunes, you are anxious to know what to do with that hundred dollars. You have tasted "the deceitfulness of riches," and are a sadder, perhaps a wiser, man. If it be true that "misery loves company," why, then, dry your eyes and congratulate yourself. A cloud of witnesses arises over all the land to testify that your experience is—but the echo of their own.

How to invest superfluous cash! That is a question to which a great many people would like a satisfactory answer. Answers enough are given in the financial columns of every city newspaper; but the answers are not always satisfactory. While the editorials breathe the language of calmness and of truth, the advertisements are sometimes rose-colored and inaccurate in several small particulars. Few men who wish to borrow money will knowingly state what is false; but then, they naturally think well of their securities. This is an infirmity of human nature which we must make due allowance for. The "city" bonds are on a city—not yet built, but going to be—and all its lots are "corner" lots. The railroad bonds will pay twenty per cent. as soon as the road is opened to the travelling public. The silver vein in Utah is a solid mass fifty feet in all directions, and a few thousand dollars will purchase the needful machinery. Better before your chance is gone take some stock. Marvellous enterprises there are which promise millions, and expect stockholders to live and grow fat on empty promises. They cry up their bonds like the quick-tongued auctioneer his wares: "Going—going—your last chance—going—going,"—the public invests its money—"gone" is the sudden cry, and sure enough, the money and company are gone, and a host of mourners are left. But it was the panic that did it. If times had been good, the companies would have carried on active operations, and would have, by a secret and mysterious process extracted gold from brick-dust hardened card-board into iron plates, and coaxed sun-beams from cucumbers; and we should all have been rich. And then no missionary society could spend the money as fast as we would give it. It was only the financial panic which kept the millennial glory from shining over the world within the next ten years. Alas!

We shall not presume to tell our friend how to invest his money. Should he lose it, he will blame us, and we shrink from the responsibility. We shall preserve a becoming silence, and only refer him to Wall street, where he will find none but men who are by profession honest and true, though sometimes, like the rest of us, mistaken in their judgements of things and so sadly misunderstood. But this one thing we shall tell him: How he ought not to invest that spare hundred dollars. What we say to him will apply to all persons whose savings are small, and who cannot afford to run needless risks. Do not invest in a company which is just starting. It promises well, but the risk is too great. Doubtless new banks, railroads, insurance companies, and business enterprises of all kinds must be started. Capital must be advanced and risks must be run. Let men of means take hold of them and make, if they can, ten per cent. Small investors had better get their seven per cent. in a company which for years has paid its dividends.