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WHOLE SERIES.
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POETRY.

Between two Verses.

"When he came to himself, he said, I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned, make me as one of thy hired servants."—LUKE XV. 19.

Will He receive me?—me, wand'ring wild,
Who long have strayed in sinful blindness.

Unworthy to be called His child?
Will He show me loving kindness?
In far off land from want I perish,
Away from home and friendly care;
With none to love, none to cherish,
I will return with humble prayer.
Will he receive me?

Will he receive me? Sure he is good;
E'en hired servants still supplying
With bounteous care their daily food,
While here his son with hunger's dying.

I will return, with deep repenting
I'll serve Him as His humble slave;
I will return, perhaps relenting,
His mercy may the sinner save.
Will he receive me?

"And he arose and came to his father.
But when he was yet a great way off,
his father saw him and had compassion,
and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him."—LUKE XV. 20.

ASSOCIATIONAL SERMON.

True Wisdom, its great work, its rich reward.

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE
NOVA SCOTIA EASTERN BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION AT RIVER HEBERT,
JULY 10TH, 1876.

By Rev. J. E. GOUCHER.

(Published by special request.)

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."—DAN. XII. 3.

I. True wisdom, What is it?

You answer broadly, That enlightenment or knowledge which enables one to make the most of life. We do not object to the definition, though it will be variously interpreted by individuals who regard it from different standpoints. I suppose the man of rich estate in our Lord's parable thought he was making the most of life while adding acre to acre and bringing the whole to the highest state of cultivation, when tearing away old premises and building new ones of larger capacity, and crowding granaries, storehouses and barns with the fruits of the soil. The time had come for which he had toiled so hard and long. He could now spend the evening of his days in luxurious retirement.

Was he wise? The world's answer is, Yes, he did aright to be industrious and saving, to take advantage of all favouring circumstances, and when his fortune would warrant it, to promise himself ease and contentment now that he is exempt from living by the sweat of his brow. But the world overlooks the sordid principles that had governed all his life and acts, he had lived only for self and the present life, and when death came, it proved him to be, what God pronounced him, a fool; it separated him from his worldly goods, and he had nothing left. "So," says our Lord, "is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." But it may be objected that this is an extreme type of worldliness and selfishness, that it is probable this man in his struggle for wealth, rode rough-shod over the poor, was deaf to the cries of the fatherless, and blind to the tears of the widow. Well, be it so.

Let me take an example of milder type from the same history. Here is a young man who has risen to opulence, we know not how, but he seems to have retained all those finer feelings and sensibilities that actuate noble souls. He is so amiable and lovable that our Lord himself regards him with admiration and affection. He was a Jew, well versed in the law. He had striven hard, and not without success, to keep the commandments. His profession of honesty and chastity lies unchallenged before the Lord. He seemed an earnest and sincere seeker after the highest attainable

good. We watch him with breathless interest while those solemn test words are trembling on the Saviour's lips, "Sell that thou hast." The strain was too heavy; his agitated breast heaves with emotion, that manly brow contracts, and his noble form assumes an unyielding, if not defiant attitude. The required sacrifice is too great, and sadly he turns away, while the tender gaze of Jesus follows his retreating figure.

Was he wise? Did he make the most of life? He represents a host of every age whom the world applauds. They are honest, industrious, amiable, and highly respectable. So far, good; but they barter an eternal inheritance for the bursting baubles of time, they allow their love for worldly wealth to block their entrance into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. "This, their way, is their folly."

To make the most of life with many is to expand the intellect, to enlarge their stock of knowledge. Not content to reap where others have sowed they must break up new ground, they must dive into unsounded depths, and tread paths of knowledge untrodden hitherto. This is well so far as it goes, but if our researches terminate with human knowledge, if we do not widen the sphere of observation beyond the boundaries of this world and the present life, then all our garnered stores of learning will not be accounted by God true wisdom.

Again, you think you make the most of life when you are extracting from the passing days the greatest amount of pleasure. That may or it may not be true. Sure I am, pleasure is not the great end of life.

If the years of our earthly sojourn were the sum total of human existence then I would say to be as happy as possible would be making the most of life. But this is not the case. This life is but the dawn of an unending day, the narrow vestibule of the grand temple of eternity, the wardrobe where mortals are expected to attire themselves for the Banqueting Hall of the King of kings. The life to come is largely dependant upon the character of the life that now is.

If we would make the most of life, beloved, we must so shape our ends, so compass the sphere of present opportunity, so spread our sails as to catch every favouring breeze, especially, so yield ourselves to God in Christ that we may have an abundant entrance ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

True wisdom is true religion; despised by the multitude, professed by many, but loved and practically illustrated by few. Its characteristics as given by the Apostle James are, "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Here are the attributes of true religion, whether viewed objectively, as revealed in the Scriptures, or subjectively, as revealed in the lives of true believers. These answer to each other as face answers to face in a glass, as the type to the printed page. Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Then a public avowal of Christ before the world. Afterward faithful continuance in well-doing. These, on the manward side, are the successive steps in wisdom's ways.

II. Having noticed the nature of true wisdom, let me bring before you wisdom's great work. It is not a treasure to lie in the mind like gold in the coffers of the miser unemployed, or simply to feast our eyes upon. It is a thoroughly operative principle. It is, in fact, the new life, Christ the wisdom of God, enshrined in the human soul, and Christ, whether in heaven, on earth, or in a believer's heart, is always and everywhere a worker. You may be wise unto salvation, you have obtained the pearl of great price, you have publically avowed your allegiance to Christ, you engage in the work of this life with holier feelings and nobler motives, you embrace many opportunities for spiritual development, private

duties are seldom neglected, and you imagine this is all you can do, all you are required to do. My brethren, I conceive it is just at this point the break is put upon the wheels of progress. Here our religion deteriorates into selfishness. It is, right, it is wise to carefully guard our own vineyard from intrusion, to surround ourselves with all the walls of defense that God in grace has provided. "But none of us," that is, no christian man "liveth to himself." According to the argument of Paul, and I may say the whole tenor of Scripture, our lives, as christians, are to be drawn up into a system of benevolent agencies. We are workers together with God. The saved portion of humanity is to act upon the unsaved masses till all are rescued from the ruins of the fall. The world's conversion is not very far off, when christian men and women everywhere come to realize that the object that brought Christ from heaven to earth, that hurried him on from the manger to Gethsemane and from thence to the Cross on Calvary, is the one paramount object of life. Then our ideal of a Christian church will be realized, then "wisdom will be justified of her children."

To "turn many to righteousness," is the Christian's great work. But how is this to be done? This is a question of grave import. May the Spirit of God direct the answer.

1. We must be impressed with the conviction that God calls us to this work, that it is *our* work. Just here numbers in our churches fail to realize their responsibilities. They have vague notions of duty in regard to helping forward in a general way the cause of God, by supporting the institutions of religion, but seem to have little or no idea of personal consecration to the work of saving souls. It is all well to devote a large portion of your substance to sustain the ministry in your midst and send peace ambassadors to distant lands. But this service, however important, must not supersede direct personal effort to "rescue the perishing."

Your ministers, however faithful cannot do your work. You have attempted to serve God by proxy all too long. Some members in our churches are, thank God, awaking to the importance of this matter and begin to sip the sweets of personal service. They begin to realize how much can be done in the workshop, on the farm, behind the counter, and in any and every place where they come into contact with unsaved men.

At this point, beloved, we must get a fair start in this blessed race for the world's conversion. Here, brethren in the ministry, the trumpet must give no uncertain sound. Our success as pastors will largely depend upon the number we, by the grace of God, are enabled to enlist in the direct work of *soul winning*.

The most successful church is not necessarily the largest numerically. Nor the one that boasts of its wealthy and influential membership, but rather the one which sends out into Christ's harvest fields the largest number of faithful, self-denying, soul-winning workers. To "turn many to righteousness," then, we must feel that God calls us to this special direct work, and give ourselves heartily to it.

2. But further, if we would "turn many to righteousness," we must get our own hearts moved more deeply for poor sinners. Man is not void of sympathy for his fellow. We gladly share our neighbour's sorrow and come to the rescue when temporal calamity threatens. The seen and temporal affect us much, the unseen and eternal but little. A whole community is stirred to its depths and draped in mourning when one of its honored citizens die, while hundreds in that same community are rushing with lightning speed to eternal doom, and the gay world dashes on, and, must I say it, the gay church too, but dimly comprehending the tremendous issues. These guilty slumbers must be broken. Whatever has produced this spiritual inertia, whatever has deadened

our perception of eternal verities and steeped to forgetfulness our religious sensibilities must be sought out and removed. All unholy alliances with the world must be severed. Scepticism that deadly nightshade, must be cut up by the roots, and whatever has a tendency, consciously or unconsciously, to tone down the threatened penalties of violated law or slighted mercy must be corrected. We must school ourselves to look out upon the sea of life and behold in every unsaved human being a goodly craft, bearing upon its crested wave a treasure, the value of which is infinitely beyond the arithmetic of angels to compute, while these crafts with this immortal treasure are being scuttled in mid-ocean by their own wretched, intoxicated crews, or rushing on without compass or rudder towards the gulf of perdition, the prey of every tempest, and the sport of the merciless billows.

Haste, then to the rescue ye saved of the Lord. Launch the life-boat and bear down upon these sinking wrecks of humanity. Some realize their condition and have hoisted the signal of distress. They invite you to board them and pilot them to a haven of safety. We cannot, we must not turn a deaf ear to their cries, or their blood will crimson our skirts, nor must those be left to perish without a desperate effort to save them who have no realization of their danger and even ridicule our anxieties and look with supreme indifference upon the efforts we make for their salvation. Our language, with Doddridge, still must be,

"My God I feel the mournful scene;
My bowels year o'er dying men;
And fain my pity would reclaim,
And snatch the firebrands from the flame."

Would you "turn many to righteousness," then, in view of their terrible exposedness to eternal death, in view of the infinite value of the soul and the sinners' indifference in regard to its danger or its safety, get your hearts more thoroughly aroused on their behalf and study to find out arguments, to present motives, and produce incentives that, with God's blessing, may move and melt the heart of stone and so win them to Christ.

3. As this branch of our subject is of the utmost importance I would add further, if you would "turn many to righteousness," you must depend upon the Holy Spirit for that mysterious unction, that sacred anointing, without which success cannot be ensured. We cannot be too emphatic here. This has always been an article cardinal in the creed of Baptists and no amount of denominational prosperity or literary furnishing must blind us to its absolute importance. You pray often and earnestly that a double portion of the Holy Spirit may rest upon your ministers. They need it much, but, don't forget you need it as well.

The humblest disciple going forth under His influence and control will accomplish more for Christ and humanity than the man of talent who occupies high position in the church, if he have not this Divine anointing. Would it be too much to say that there are many private members in our churches who are honored, to win more souls to Christ, than many a pastor whose learning and eloquence make him famous in the eyes of men. They that honor God by depending upon his Holy Spirit, will in turn be honored of Him, while they that despise him by turning away from his promised help, shall by Him be so lightly esteemed that their work shall go for nought. Brethren, in the pulpit and in the pew, if we are to gather many jewels to adorn the brow of Jesus, the wisdom that makes us skillful in the blessed work must come from above.

(Conclusion next week.)

There is meaning in the anecdote told of the Scotch woman who was reading "Pilgrim's Progress, with Notes," and was asked by Scott himself if she understood the book. "Yes," she said, "all but the notes."

For the Christian Messenger.

Concerning the University of Halifax.

Mr. Editor,—

Does co-operation with this University involve the ultimate destruction of our denominational Colleges and the establishment in their place of one non-denominational teaching State University? If yea, then let the alarm be sounded, loud and long. If nay, then are we free to accept or reject, according as we may or may not discover merit in the new plan. For myself, I cannot foresee the unhappy consequences of which some of our people are fearful. We talk about this University being a stepping stone to a teaching University. Why we have that teaching University already—a Central University—a State University—every stone of which belongs to the Province as also every dollar of its revenues and every inch of the ground on which its magnificent proportions stand! We have had it for the last thirteen years in the very centre of the Province. It was created by Act of Parliament. It had large revenues. It got a Baptist Governor on its Board and a Wesleyan also, and a Churchman, and so on. It got a Baptist Professor from Acadia College. It even approached all the Colleges in a bland and winning way, asking them to consider the propriety of giving up the denominational system. In many other ways it has sought to gain ground and become the one Central Teaching University, to the overthrowing of all others, and yet, after thirteen years, what is it? A Provincial University—only in name. It has not destroyed the Colleges, or any of them, or hindered their growth and progress in any degree. And what it is in itself, Dalhousie owes to denominational zeal. The State teaching College is not congenial to our soil. It has never flourished. There is no depth of earth for it in this country. It never has and never can get firm root in Nova Scotia. We have, by one event and another, settled irrevocably into the denominational system, and we have on that plan built up Colleges which no government can overturn, which no amount of planning and manipulation can materially injure, which will continue to flourish as long as we, the owners of them, by our benevolence and counsel, support and direct them. You have seen the lordly oak planted by our forefathers; striking its roots as deep and wide as its great branches rise upward and overspread the earth. You might as well attempt to pull that tree up and cast it into the sea as to attempt to overthrow Acadia College. Those be strong and healthy roots she has planted in the hearts of the thirty thousand Baptists of these Provinces. Those be splendid branches she waves in the sight of all men. For many generations may they flourish. What I say of Acadia, may I not say of Kings and Mount Allison? Yea, verily. Do they accept the Government plan of one examination for all to lose themselves eventually in that grand central State teaching University? Nay, say. Do the Roman Catholics accept that plan to give up their individuality and commit their young men to the teaching of a State University? Not likely.

But I know the fearful ones are apprehensive that at the end of five years, when the College grants are to cease, the Government of that day may in some unexpected moment metamorphose this Examining University into a Teaching University! It is for such to show how this can be done. I presume the Government of that day will find it the most judicious thing to govern the country "according to the well understood wishes of the people." If the people of that day or of any future day say, We would not have a State teaching University if we could, and by reason of the long establishment of the denominational Colleges we could not if we would, the State University would then have to be again postponed indefinitely. But some will say, Great is the power of manipulation,