

Religious Miscellany.

TO YOUNG WOMEN.

My young female friend, are you a stranger to true piety? How sad then is your condition! Religion is the brightest ornament among the many that adorn your sex. And among females religion finds the greater part of its decided votaries. Women were among the most affectionate and faithful of the disciples of the Lord. They watched beside his cross when his own apostles forsook him and fled. They were last at his cross, and first at his sepulchre. And what they were to the divine Master, they have since been to his feeble servants laboring in his work. The piety and consistency of Christian females has been a chief source of encouragement and comfort to the ministers of the gospel; and probably of the truly pious two thirds are women. But you, my young friend, want that chief glory of an immortal nature.

Oh, how can you trifle with your God, with your Judge, and with your deathless soul? Perhaps you are so timorous that a flash of lightning alarms you; and yet you can trifle with the terrors of God's wrath, and the horrors of Satan's reign. Alas, if you persist in slighting humble piety, it may soon be said of you, when dead and gone, "Here lies one who loved the world, but it has left her for ever; who lost her soul for its gayeties and pleasures, and its pleasures are for ever over. Unhappy girl; how different her lot from theirs who loved and followed Christ the Lord!"

How many are thus unhappy. Look at a young woman who is openly irreligious. She is false; without remorse can violate the law of truth. She is perhaps profane; was nursed up in sin, and loves it. She scorns true piety, and laughs at its restraints. Wretched girl; little does she think to whom she belongs, and whither she is going. Her lord is Satan, and her home is hell.

Behold a prayerless girl: like the brutes in the field, she rises and lies down careless of the God that gave her being, and before whose dreadful bar she must shortly stand. She seeks no blessings for eternity, and she has none. No heaven is hers; no peaceful rest awaits her. She is without God, and without Christ, and without hope.

See a third: her idol is dress and display. She thinks much of adorning the body, but nothing of adorning the soul. A new garment fills her with delight, and puffs her up with pride; but she slight the robe of righteousness. The body that must soon mingle with the dust is all her care. The soul that must live for ever is utterly neglected. Whose is she; what must she shortly be, when the grave is her home, and her only suit a shroud? Then must that idolized body be a loathsome mass of corruption and decay, hidden from the sight of men; and that neglected soul, without one ornament of grace, must be for ever deformed and hateful and hellish amidst the poverty and gloom of perdition.

A few years ago some particulars were related to the writer respecting a young woman who had died just before. This unhappy girl was what thousands are, devoted to the world. The love of dress reigned in her breast. Dress was her idol. The time for a fair was approaching, and she had a new garment in which she designed to attend its scenes of dissipation. Part of several preceding Sabbaths had been employed in preparing some of her apparel, as she usually left this work for that sacred day. On Saturday evening before the fair, she was not quite well; the next morning, however, she attended to some worldly business. In the evening of that profaned Sabbath she became ill, and soon sunk into a state of insensibility. Thus she continued till Friday, the day of her anticipated pleasure; but on that day about three o'clock she expired, at the very time when she would probably have been in the fair, had not disease and death disappointed her expectations. Some time before she died the hair was shaved from her head; she was then sufficiently sensible to say, "Not my hair, not my hair, I am tormented in my soul!"

Behold another. She feels convictions of her sin and folly, and listens to pious instructions; but she will not give her youth and herself to God. She goes forward, sinning against light and knowledge, till she gets into a state of hardened indifference. Ah, whose is she? What are her prospects? The God she trifles with will soon cease to pity her. The Spirit she resists will soon cease

to strive with her. The Saviour she slight will soon cease to invite her. The heaven she neglects will soon be shut against her. Then what will this poor trifle be for ever?

View one young woman more. She is very different from those already described. In disposition amiable; in conduct commendable. She respects religion, and esteems its friends; yet she is not its possessor. She is but almost a Christian. Then what is she? Still, like others, a perishing creature. What are her prospects? Alas, as dark as theirs. Soon, unless she became a Christian indeed, she must be shut out from that heaven of which she often hears; she must be separated eternally from those whose piety she respects but does not imitate. Unhappy girl, to be so near the kingdom and yet to come short at last!

A pious minister relates, that he visited a female on her dying bed who had indulged false hopes of heaven; and listened to her awful regrets for time past, and to her prayers that she might not die. "I cannot die—I cannot die!" she exclaimed. "My Bible will rise up in judgment against me. I've forgotten God, and served the world, and now he is taking me away for ever. Oh, I cannot die!" Vain exclamations; she could not flee from death.

My young friend, what are you? Is either of these representations a description of yourself?—J. G. Pike.

ON CHRISTIANS IMITATING CHRIST.

What a remarkable personage was Jesus of Nazareth! The world never saw his like before—nor since. Unquestionably he was, to say the least, the greatest philanthropist, the most beneficent benefactor, that ever trod our earth. Always labouring for the good of man and the glory of God. And yet the world despised him, spat upon him, crucified him; brutally murdered its best friend; persecuted his followers; and endeavoured to exterminate his cause. But, alas for human policy and carnal wisdom! Christ's cause "was of God," and therefore could not "come to nought." From the day when three thousand publicly avowed allegiance to the despised Nazarene until now, Christ's kingdom has been making study and sure progress. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." But how is it that christianity has not extended wider than it has? We think the answer is obvious. Because christian influence has been criminally limited: because those who have professed the name of Jesus have not imitated Christ so much as they ought to have done. Had every disciple more strenuously "followed Christ" in going about doing good, we must think the world would by this time have been better than it is. Brethren, these things ought not so to be. If we are supine, Satan is not; if our energies lie latent, those of evil minds do not. No, truly it may be said, Satan "goeth about seeking whom he may devour." With a view to incite to greater usefulness, permit me to remind my fellow christians that

Opportunities to "do good," are numerous. Perhaps there never was a time when a well-disposed, rightly actuated man, might do more good than now. "Now" is, indeed, "the accepted time." Fields are extensive; crops are large, ripe already to harvest; seeming, almost audibly, to call for labourers. And will not labourers volunteer? Young man: you who profess to love Jesus, who form one of his church, what are you doing for christianity? Cannot you do more than you have hitherto done? Try. Is there not some village or hamlet near your residence where the people are perishing for lack of knowledge? Really, there is. Cannot you go, on some of these beautiful sabbath evenings, and if there be no in-door place, stand up in the open-air, and tell those poor sinners about Him who came to save them; and who is so willing, so able to save them? Christ has promised to be with and assist you. Go then, and may God bless you with success. Young woman; you too can work for Christ. Yes, all who love Jesus can and may labour for him. Do you inquire for your sphere of action? You can distribute those little "messengers of mercy"—tracts. You can invite others to accompany you to God's house. Indeed, there is much which you may do better than others for Christ. Go then, labour whilst you live for him who hath bought you with his blood, whose you are, and whom you ought to serve.

The time is very short. Now or never! Soon

we must quit earth, and render up our accounts to our Master in heaven. Will it be there our happiness to receive these words of commendation:—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Surely we think not wrongly when we say, our happiness in heaven will be augmented in reflecting that we lived and laboured for our Lord on earth. We should live each day as though it were our last. And in what position should we most like to be when the gladdening words reach our ear: "Come up higher?" Surely we should desire to be found labouring for Christ. Then we should put off the armour to receive the crown of victory. How cheering and glorious the thought! Considering then, that opportunities for usefulness are numerous, and that the time is very short, we should labour more diligently. We should be instant in season and out of season; imitating our Divine Master who went about doing good. Spirit of the living God, baptize us afresh in the fount of divine love, that we may arise with renewed zeal to serve our Lord and Saviour!

ETERNITY.

An old writer (Drexelius) relates, that a vain, ungodly man was lying sleepless on his bed, and being weary, and finding no rest, he began to think, would any be hired to lie thus for two or three years in darkness, without friends or amusements? Would any one be willing to be bound to a bed, though it were a bed of down, and never stir abroad? And he thought, no one would. Then he reflected that the time would come when, willing or unwilling, he, unless snatched away by a sudden stroke, must lie upon a bed of sickness and death; and he thought, "But what bed shall I have next, when death shall thrust me out of this? My body must rot in the earth; for this is the condition of all men after death. But what shall become of my soul in another world? Surely all men do not go to the same place after death. Do not some go one way, and some another? Is there not a hell as well as a heaven? Woe and alas! What kind of bed shall the damned find in hell? How many years shall they lie there? In what year after their first entrance shall the flames cease and be put out? Assuredly Christ does not only in word threaten to cast the wicked into everlasting fire, but will also cast them in indeed." These thoughts followed him, and he could not rest. Eternity still run in his mind. He tried to banish the solemn impression amidst companions and sinful delights, but in vain. Conscience, if seeming for a while asleep, soon awoke, and inflicted fresh stings upon his soul. He thought, "I am not certain whether I shall live till to-morrow or no: daily funerals sufficiently prove this. Oh eternity, if thy place be not in heaven, though it be on a soft down bed, thou canst not but be bitter and unpleasant." At length he fled from the paths of sin, and lived and died a pious man.—J. G. Pike.

FALSE AND TRUE REPENTANCE.—False repentance is the offspring of fear; true, of light from heaven, which makes sin appear exceeding sinful. False repentance seeks relief from its fears, and builds its hope on better obedience, suspicious of the atonement made on the cross; true, confides in this alone, having the heart sprinkled with the blood of Christ from an evil conscience. False repentance can consist with an aversion to God and his law; in true, there is a love to both. False repentance is temporary respecting gross sins, and then settles into a despicable form of religion; true, is an abiding self-abasement before God, for which there appears abundant cause, from growth in the knowledge of Him and of ourselves. In false repentance some beloved lust or base temper is spared, and a partial obedience is offered up to God; in true, the change is universal, and followed with all the fruits of the Spirit. False repentance will lead a man to obey God only so far as he may without persecution or reproach; true, is content to go through evil report, content with the praise of God, let men think or do as they please.—Venn.

PROFESSION WITHOUT PRINCIPLE.—"All you can tell me," said one on a dying bed "I have long well known; but I tell you that I have lived without real religion: I was forward in the Church, but fixed in the world, and my profession now only serves to terrify me."