

it was really he who spoke through the mouth of Bayer) was content to quote a single passage of Scripture or of the Fathers in favour of the doctrine maintained; and at another he proved his thesis so much the more strongly, that he appeared only to be declaring it. With a single stroke he pointed out the sad consequences that would follow the rejection of the faith he professed, or with one word showed its importance for the prosperity of the Church; so that while listening to him, the most violent enemies were obliged to acknowledge to themselves that there was really something to say in favor of the new sect. (To be continued.)

Religious Miscellany.

NOVEL-READING.

Novel-reading is pernicious to man as an intellectual being. Novels make few appeals to reason. This neglect soon engenders an aversion to profound thought, which results in inability. They are not reliable in point of history, and to the novel-reader history and all truly instructive reading, soon becomes void of interest. Neither do novels refine the imagination, as they are said to do. The imagination is refined by the contemplation of the pure, the beautiful, the perfect, and the sublime; while the characters of novel literature are the distortion of these high attributes. The practice creates a vague habit of reading, and injures the memory. It is insatiable, and leaves the mind in a perplexed and painful state, and often terminates in insanity.

Novel-reading is pernicious to man as a social being. Authors who are practical examples of social infidelity, will not inculcate this virtue strongly in their productions. It is asserted that an eminent foreign novelist closed his door against his noble and confiding wife, because she refused being accessory to his connubial perfidy. Another popular author is known to be practically void of respect for the social relations of men.

Novels often endow their heroes with angelic natures, place them in gilded palaces, incircled with wealth and luxury. Life is represented as void of all labor and ease, and the characters are pictured as living in the extreme of bliss. With what rapture the ardent, youthful mind gazes upon the splendid picture! How soon the appropriate duties of life become irksome. He flies from home and friends and innocence, and plunges into the rude world to swell the number of the socially lost. Such reading promotes domestic discords and separations. It promotes a neglect of domestic duties by preoccupying the mind. It promotes a petulance of disposition by holding the mind long in an intense state of reverie and excitement, and then suffering its sudden reaction. It promotes melancholy and dejection by picturing conditions in life which are so far above reality that they cannot be attained. It promotes extravagant ideas of life, and thereby reduces many happy families to want. By painting human nature in ideal forms, it promotes disrespect and inconstancy in friendship, and subverts the pure simplicity of domestic love.

Novel-reading is pernicious to man as a religious being. Eminently good men are not generally authors of novels. One whose moral principles are not fixed, is not a beacon for others to follow. A polluted heart will betray itself, let the mesh which it may employ be however ingeniously woven. Every incidental precept of virtue will be counteracted by a volume of vice. Such reading produces a recklessness of religious deportment, and pollutes the fountain of religious action. It perverts money and time, and presents an injurious example. It withdraws the soul from the contemplation of the divine and eternal, and fills it with regrets when the awful hour of retrospection comes.

The most devoted student can read but a small portion of the vast world of books. Duty and expediency prompt him to make such a selection as will tend to heighten his aspirations for a sublime and happy destiny. O. A. C.

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

You are placed in solemn circumstances. Eternity rolls its boundless waves just before you. Every year, every month, every week, every day, every hour, lessens the distance between you and the unchangeable state to which you are hasten-

ing. The precise moment of your entrance into this untried, unknown world, is hidden from you. Death often comes and knocks at the door at a time when least expected. At a time when men think not, they receive the awful summons. And often they are hurried away, little time being allowed for preparation. Many, while they know they must die at some time, never in their lives think seriously of the matter. When the summons reaches them, they are taken by surprise. It is practically a new subject; they are alarmed and filled with consternation. They cling to hope as long as there is a ray of hope, that they may be spared a little longer. But when it is announced to the unhappy sufferer that there is no hope of recovery—that the physician has given him up. O what a poignant anguish pierces the soul! Who can describe the horror by which the guilty sinner is overwhelmed?

Are you prepared for death? Some one is perhaps ready to say, "I am no worse than my neighbors. I have never done anything very bad. I have tried to live a good life, I hope that I shall find favor of the Lord when I come to die." And is this all the ground of hope you have? Are you willing to appear before the judgment-seat, with no better righteousness than this? Though you may have lived a decent moral life, yet you have failed to love God with all your heart. His service you have habitually neglected. The offers of mercy made in the gospel, you have rejected. Unless you obtain a better preparation your soul will be lost, and your misery will be great. And though you may be in no worse a condition than many of your neighbors, yet it will be small alleviation, when enduring the torments of the damned, that many others are in the same condemnation. No doubt, they that perish will have company enough, but this will be no alleviation, but perhaps an aggravation of their misery. "Wide is the gate and broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." The judge is at the door. Be ye therefore ready. —American Messenger.

IT'S ALL LIGHT.

THE pious William Gordon was once discoursing to a friend, on his rapid approach to death, and the delighted hope he was permitted to entertain of the remission of his sins, and his full, unlimited pardon with God, through the atonement of a reconciling Saviour. It was not long before his decease, and his friend, in order to strengthen, if possible, his hopes, and administer fruits of further consolation, read a verse in the twenty-third Psalm: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

"Yes," said the dying saint in reply, "yes, if he were not with me, how dark it would be! but it's all light."

It was all light to him. Not a cloud hung over his heavenward prospect. Not a sound of grief nor a murmur of impatience rose from his lips. His illness was protracted, but this did not appal his spirit. It rather served to disencumber it of all earthly hindrances. With him, to draw nigh unto death was to draw nigh unto heaven.

Spectacle after spectacle burst upon his sight, glory after glory, revelation after revelation of distant and hitherto unapproachable splendor, so that the thousands who gathered from time to time at his bedside, were favored with descriptions of blessedness which banished scepticism and overawed unbelief.

Do you ask why it was that heavenly visions were disclosed to his expectant soul? Let him answer in his own expressive language: "I threw all my burden upon Christ." And then light came, great light, pure light, bright light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. —Christian Intelligencer.

SLANDER. Surgery may heal a bodily wound; but what balm can bind up the bite of a slanderous tongue? It runs like a contagion over the whole country, and cannot be recalled. Robbery may be recompensed by restitution; but how can you ever make amends to the man whom you have traduced? I tell you truly, not all the wealth you have in the world can wipe away the wrong you have done in such a case. —Robert Bolton, 1634.

A CONSCIENCE IN THE MATTER.

So said a lady, who called upon her pastor and presented him a dollar for foreign missions. Knowing her pecuniary circumstances, he felt unwilling to receive it. She stated that her heart was in this work, and that it was with pleasure she made the gift. Her pastor declined receiving it. She then said she had been accustomed from a child to give something every year to send the gospel to the heathen, and for a considerable period she had annually made an offering of one dollar for the object. She was then desired to return the money to her purse, with the assurance that the dollar should be paid for her. "Would that be my paying it?" was her quick reply. Then looking her pastor full in the face, with serious earnestness she said, "Sir, I have a conscience in this matter." The dollar could no longer be refused. It was sent on its errand of love.

This incident teaches us profitable lessons.

1. That those whose hearts are in the work of sending the gospel to every creature, as Christ has commanded, will give as well as pray. They voluntarily bestow their offerings, whether called upon or not. "God loves a cheerful giver."

2. That the importance of early forming the habit of giving cannot be too highly estimated. Those who have been accustomed to give from childhood will not be likely to neglect the duty in maturer years. "Train up a child," &c. Let those who conduct Sabbath-schools bear this in mind.

3. That individual, personal responsibility is what all Christians greatly need to feel. I must give something to send the gospel to the nations; God demands it. What others do cannot be set to my credit. "So, then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

"I have a conscience in this matter." Reader, is this true of you? Have you done what you could, to pour the light of heaven upon the nations that sit in darkness.—Macedonian.

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST. There is not a want in the sinner but there is a corresponding fulness in Christ, for "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Is the sinner hungry? Let him come to Christ, and he shall be made to partake of the bread of life. Is he thirsty? Let him come to Christ, and he shall be permitted to drink of the wells of salvation. Is the sinner sick? Let him come to Christ, and he shall have life and vigor infused into his soul. Is he naked? Let him come to Christ, and he shall receive a beautiful robe. Is he blind? Let him come to Christ, and he shall have his eyes opened to see wondrous things. Is he deaf? Let him come to Christ, and he shall hear the voice of uncreated harmony, speaking peace to his happy soul. Is the sinner burdened? Let him come to Christ, and his burden shall be taken away. Does he long for rest? Let him come to Christ, and he shall have sweet repose. Yes, no matter what may be the sinner's wants or woes, only let him come to Christ, and he shall be made rich and happy, throughout all time, and throughout all eternity. —Rev. Daniel Baker, D. D.

THE BETTER CHOICE.—A Quaker, residing at Paris, was waited on by four workmen, in order to make their compliments, and ask for their new year's gifts. "Well, my friends," said the Quaker, "here are your gifts; choose fifteen francs or the Bible."

"I don't know how to read," said the first, "so I'll take the fifteen francs."

"I can read," said the second, "but I have pressing wants." He took the fifteen francs. The third also made the same choice. He now came to a fourth, a lad about thirteen or fourteen years old. The Quaker looked at him with an air of goodness.

"Will you take these three pieces, which you may attain at any time by your labor and industry."

"As you say the book is good, I will take it and read it to my mother," replied the boy. He took the Bible, opened it, and found between the leaves a gold piece of forty francs.

The others hung their heads, and the Quaker told them he was sorry they had not made a better choice.

BEREAVEMENTS. O God, how they breakest into families! Must not the disease be dangerous when a tender-hearted surgeon cuts deep into the flesh? How much more when God is the operator, who afflicteth not from his heart, nor grieveth the children of men.—M. Cheyne.