

Religious Intelligencer

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E. McLEOD, Editor.

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.—PETER.

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True and False Conversions Distinguished.

Continued.

3. The only sure means to prevent fatal deception in this matter is, to try all our experiences by that inflexible standard, the word of God. This is like silver seven times purified. It is everlasting truth. It will determine what is right, and what is wrong in our opinions, experiences, and practices. "The word which I speak unto you," said the Saviour, "the same shall judge you in the last day." By the help of God's word, we may anticipate the judgment of the great day, as it relates to ourselves. If we have evidence that we now possess the religion approved by the Bible, we have just so much evidence that our religion will stand the test of the great day; for Bible religion, and no other, will meet the approbation of the Judge.

You cannot know, with infallible certainty, that your most religious neighbor is a real saint; but you know, with the same infallible certainty with which you know the truth of God's word, that Abraham, David, Paul, Peter, John, and many others, were real saints. Therefore, you may know, that if you have the same religious experiences which they had, your religion will bear the inspection of the great day. You are assured that Jesus Christ always did those things which pleased his Father; if, therefore, you have the spirit of Christ, and follow in his steps, you are in the path of life.

The Bible is all of it calculated to teach us the nature and effects of true religion. When it exhibits the holiness of God, we are not only preserved with the great object of love, but also with the pattern for our imitation. All who are born of God resemble their Father, for they are "partakers of the divine nature." In God's law we also learn what true religion is. The law which says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself," is true religion in requirement. When this law is written upon the heart, as it is by regenerating grace, then there is true religion in experience.

What, reader, have been your views of sin, and of your own sinful character in particular? The Holy Spirit reproves, or convinces of sin. Those who are saved are all convinced of sin. The commandment comes, and sin revives in their view; they now see what they before heard, viz. that they are sinners. Now they know every man the plague of his own heart. The want of this previous conviction of depravity, is probably the cause of the premature growth of the seed which fell on stony places. It is represented as springing up too soon. There had been an alarm, but no deep conviction of sin. There is nothing more clearly revealed in the Bible, than the entire sinfulness of man's heart, and its total opposition to God. Natural men are called the enemies of God, and haters of God; and this is said concerning them all, without exception. See Rom. 1:30; 5:10; 8:7.

I do not know into the hands of what particular persons these pages will fall; but I know, that they will fall into the hands of none but those who either are, or have been enemies to God. And now, reader, let me ask, Have you been made sensible of this enemy? If you have been renewed, you have undoubtedly seen that the whole of your unregenerated heart was contrary to God. This sight, given by the illumination of the Spirit, has led you to loathe yourself in your own eyes. The repentance which needeth not to be repented of, is a godly sorrow for sin. It is such a hatred of sin as the holy God possesses. If you have any godly sorrow for sin, you weep, not merely for the sake of being forgiven, but because you have sinned. You would sorrow if you thought you should never be forgiven; and you will not cease sorrowing, when you have evidence that you are forgiven.

Much of the evidence of the genuineness of our experience depends on our growing conviction of the evil of sin, and of the sinfulness of our own hearts in particular. As the holy influence of religion widens in the soul, sin will be proportionately hated. This is the reason why eminent Scripture saints appear to be most deeply affected with their remaining depravity. See Job 42:1-6, and Rom. 7:24. What saint in his day was superior to Job, and what Christian was ever more sanctified than Paul; and yet who ever appeared more vile in their own sight, or more burdened with sin than they? The man whose heart is changed departs from iniquity; he watches and prays, and strives against it; but still he cries out, "Behold I am vile!" "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

It is the work of the Spirit, not only to convince of sin, but also of righteousness. John 16:8. Those who are truly taught by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, are first convinced that they are sinners, deserving evil, and nothing but evil, at the hand of God. They see that the tears of repentance do not atone for their sins. They see that no works of righteousness which they can do, will satisfy divine justice. The penitent is convinced that God is righteous; that the law is righteous; and that God must do nothing to cloud the evidence of his righteousness, or diminish respect for his law. This prepares his mind to be greatly delighted with the coming out of Christ. Here he sees justice and mercy met together. The righteousness

of God declared, the law honoured, sin condemned, and the sinner pardoned. Reader, has the Father drawn you to the Son; and have you, through the Son, come to the Father? Is Christ, the Lord, your righteousness and strength? Have you discovered an entire distinction between going about to establish your own righteousness, and submitting yourself to this righteousness of God? Love to God exists in every renewed heart; and this is no modification of selfishness; it is a disinterested self-love. If all we do in the service of God, be done solely with reference to ourselves, it is wholly unacceptable. If he be not delighted in, as a great, holy, and glorious being, we have in reality no interest in his favor.

The limits of these pages do not allow a full discussion of the subject; but I cannot refrain from affectionately cautioning every one, into whose hands this treatise may fall, to be on his guard against a religion of his own device, and against depending on those, as evidences of grace, which are of mere human invention.

One man thinks he has experienced a change of heart, because he has had a remarkable dream. Another has seen a wonderful light; another has had a vision of the Saviour; another has heard a voice speaking to him; and another has had a Scripture promise immediately and unexpectedly suggested to his mind: like this, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Many are confident that they are converted, when they have no other evidence of it but such things as these. But where, I would ask in the word of God, are they taught that these are evidences of conversion? I know that, in the days of old, the Most High made revelations of his will by dreams, by visions, and by audible sounds; but these revelations are not to be expected; nor were they then confined to his sanctified ones. The king of Egypt, and his chief butler and baker, had divine communications made to them in dreams, but this did not prove them to be anything more than mere natural men. Balaam had visions of the Almighty; but he was a sinner still. These are never mentioned in the Bible as the things by which the men of grace obtain evidence of their gracious state.

Carefully examine the experience of the man after God's own heart, as they are contained in the book of Psalms and you will find no dreaming experiences. His love to God's word on account of its purity, his delight in divine ordinances, and his respect to all the commandments, are his evidences. Read Christ's sermon on the mount; it is a searching portion of Scripture. The religion which it inculcates must be felt and practised by us, or we are on the sand, and our building will fall. But what is the religion of the sermon on the mount? It is poorness of spirit, mourning for sin, hungering for righteousness, shining as lights in the world, loving and forgiving enemies, praying and giving alms, not from a spirit of ostentation, but from a spirit of devotion, a spirit of benevolence. This is a specimen of the religion taught in that noted sermon; yea, in all Christ's sermons. But there is not the least intimation that dreams and visionary appearances constitute any part of the religion of those whom the Saviour will own as his disciples. It is not intimated in any of the discourses of Christ, that if a man has a "text of Scripture" which contains a promise, suggested to his mind; or whispered in his ear, or spoken in the air over his head, this proves him to be born of God.

How then, I would ask, comes it about, that so much dependence is placed on these things? Christ has furnished us with a great variety of evidences of grace. These are overlooked, and evidences of our own making, or of mere human invention, are depended on. What folly can exceed this? To call strips of common paper bank-notes, and sell our houses and lands for them, would not be folly comparable to this. There is religion, which is solid and substantial; which "changes all the heart," and makes it the residence of the sweet grace of the Spirit, and the principle of holy action. What is this? The word? What are dreams, and visions, in comparison to such religion as this? See 1 Cor. 13:1-7.

(To be continued.)

A Lesson for Preachers and Hearers.

The following incident is related by the late Rev. Abner Jones, Free Will Baptist Minister in Portsmouth, N. H. Mr. Jones was dependent for the support of a family of five children on the contents of the contribution boxes on Sunday, which were sometimes less than a dollar. He says of one period in his life.

This year was also remarkable for its being the commencement of a series of cold and backward seasons, which found a fit termination in the ever memorable cold summer of 1816. These and the war, as may well be supposed, produced a season of great scarcity, in which provisions of all kinds were very dear, and the poor were much pinched. Cloth, of all descriptions, was also very high, so that I found it exceedingly difficult to live comfortably.

On Saturday morning, as I was sitting in my study, pondering the poverty of my condition, my wife came in with her accustomed inquiry of "Well, Mr. Jones, what shall we have for dinner?" adding, "we have not a grain of meal;" flour was out of the question for a particle of meat of any kind in the house. Then the sugar is out, there is

no butter, and in fact there is nothing to eat, and to-morrow is Sunday." So saying she quit the room leaving me in such a state of mind as may well be conceived, when I say that a solitary one dollar bank-note was the only money I had on earth, and no prospect whatever appeared of getting any until the accustomed weekly contribution should be paid in my hands. And what would a single dollar do at the prevailing high prices, towards feeding seven hungry mouths for two days? I saw no way of escape, and in the agony of spirit which may well be guessed, I lifted up my heart in supplication to Him who feedeth the ravens when they cry. And a singular answer to my prayer I seemed speedily to attain.

I had just risen from my knees, when my wife again appeared at the door, all unconscious of the struggle which was going on within me, and ushered a gentleman into my study. His whole appearance was of that shabby genteel which betokens a broken down gentleman, and from the first moment of beholding him, I took him to my confidence, as unfortunate, but not debased.

"Sir," said he, "I am a stranger to you, and you are utterly so to me, save that I once heard you preach in —. My home is in that place—if indeed I may now claim a home. I staid from that port nearly a year since, with all my earthly possessions embarked in a promising adventure. My ship fell into the hands of the enemy, and I became a prisoner; my property of course became lawful plunder. After suffering many hardships and much indignity, I effected my escape on board a vessel bound to St. John. From that place to this I have worked my way along with incredible pain and fatigue. I have suffered much from hunger, cold, and wet, and have spent many a night in the open woods. And here I am, in one word, sir, penniless, and altogether too much worn down to proceed further without aid. I have friends in —, to whom I am pressing on as fast as I can, and who will relieve my necessities when I reach them. I am an utter stranger in your town, and you are the only person I ever knew or saw in the whole place. I cannot beg, and I feel entirely reluctant to ask a loan of an entire stranger."

Here was a struggle. I was poor, very poor; but here was one poorer than I. I had a hungry family to feed—so had he; and more a heart-broken one, who were even now mourning him as dead. I could not hesitate a moment. I thrust my hand mechanically into my pocket, and pulling out my last dollar, which I pressed upon the unfortunate mariner, for he could hardly be persuaded to take it, when he knew how low my finances were—I blessed him in God's name, and he left me with no word of thanks; but I knew that, had I from a full purse bestowed a liberal sum, he could not have felt more grateful.

When he had gone, and absolute hunger for me and mine stared me full in the face, I began to doubt the propriety of my act in taking the very bread from my children's mouths to feed a stranger. But it was now too late to repent. The last dollar was gone, and my children must go dinnerless and supperless to bed. For myself I cared nothing, but how would my family bear this unusual fasting? I seized my hat and cane and rushed into the street to escape from my own thoughts, which had become too painful to endure. I knew not—care not whether I should bend my steps.

As I was walking moodily and mechanically on, thinking over all the bitterness of my situation, suddenly the thought came in my mind: "Why should I despair? Have I ever gone hungry, even for a day—me and mine? Has not the Lord provided hitherto? And will he not in time to come?—in the present time?" I had scarcely concluded this soliloquy, when one of my neighbors, whom I knew to be a Universalist, and whom I had occasionally at my meetings—members of his family came frequently—accused me with "Good morning, Mr. Jones, I have been thinking for some time past that I ought to discharge a debt I owe you."

I was not aware, I replied, that you had incurred such an obligation.

"O, but I have," said he, "my family goes occasionally to hear you preach, and once in a while I go myself. Now, as I laborer is worthy of his hire, and as I wish no man to labor for me without pay, I beg you will accept this trifle as in part a liquidation of the debt."

The "trifle" was a five dollar note, which I received with feelings that I will not mock by attempting to describe. I returned to my house, and after again falling on my knees, humbled under a sense of want of confidence in God, and grateful for his goodness to me, all unworthy as I felt myself to be, I sallied forth to the market, and soon came back laden with the things necessary to our comfort.

Personal Appearance of Christ.

The following interesting document was published in the "Churchman's Magazine" as early as the year 1807, whence we transfer it by request to our columns. It purports to be a description of the person of our Lord Saviour, as it was found in an ancient manuscript by Publius Lentulus, President of Judea, to the Senate of Rome.

There lived in this time in Judea, a man of singular character, whose name is Jesus Christ. The barbarians esteem him a pro-

phet; but his followers adore him as the immediate offspring of the immortal God. He is endowed with such unparalleled virtue as to call back the dead from their graves, and to heal every kind of disease with a word or a touch. His person is tall and elegantly shaped; his aspect amiable and revered. His hair flows in those beautiful shades which no painted colors can match, falling into graceful curls below his ears, agreeably couching on his shoulders, and parting on the crown of his head, like the head dress of the sect of Nazirites. His forehead is smooth and his cheeks without a spot, save that of a lovely red. His nose and mouth are formed with exquisite symmetry; his beard is thick and suitable to the hair of his head, reaching a little below his chin; and parted in the middle, like a fork; his eyes are bright, clear and serene. He rebukes with majesty; counsels with mildness; and invites with the most tender and persuasive language. His whole address whether in word or deed, being elegant, brave, and strictly characteristic of so exalted a being; no man has seen him laugh; but the whole world has frequently beheld him weep; and so persuasive are his tears, that the multitude cannot withhold their tears from joining in sympathy with him. He is very modest, temperate, and wise. In short whatever this phenomenon may be in the end, he seems at present a man of excellent beauty and divine perfections, every way surpassing the children of men.

Retributions.

If there is one lesson more remarkably brought out than another in the great series of passing events, it is that the Lord laughs at those who take counsel together against him and dashes them in pieces with his rod of iron.

When Czar Nicholas, the Greek patriarch, and Prince Menschikoff conspired together to stop the progress of Christian missions in Turkey, little did they dream that in one short year they would all three be numbered with the dead.

When Brooks trampling the honor of the American Republic as well as his own in the dust, by brutally assaulting Senator Sumner in the Senate Chamber, and when his uncle Senator Butler loudly grieved in the act, little did they dream that before twelve months had run their course, they would be suddenly summoned in a most awful manner to answer at a tribunal where neither corruption nor intimidation will avail in the last.

When those idols of the American people, Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, lent their immense influence to pass the fugitive slave Bill, and thereby deprive the poor fugitive from unrighteous bondage of his last chance of escape, little did they dream that both their stars had in that act paid and set forever—hat they would themselves be rejected and despised even by the slaveholders for whom they had sacrificed honor and conscience, and had ere a few months they would sink broken-hearted and almost unlamented into the grave.

When Lord John Russell, by a disreputable trick, annulled and reversed the decision of the British House of Commons, to shut the Post Office on the Sabbath, little did he think that his fall from power would be speedy, ignominious, and so far at least, final. He was once the idol of the British nation, and now there is almost none so poor as to do him honor.

When the Indian native authorities, Mahomedan and Brahmin, conspired together, some months ago, against the progress of Christianity, and put to death all the Christians, men, women, and children, who fell into their power, little did they dream in their mad rage, that before the year expired they would be slain in battle, hang on gibbets, or blown from the cannon's mouth by a mere handful of pale-faced, from a small country at the other side of the Globe.—*Montreal Witness.*

The Princess Royal.

The London Correspondent to a New York paper gives the following interesting sketch of the Princess Royal on the occasion of her marriage:—

"The marriage of the Princess Royal, 'England's first born hope,' is the event of the day. A few words respecting the royal bride may not be unacceptable. I saw her on the way from Buckingham Palace to St. James'. For the first time since her accession to the throne, the Queen was not the principal object of attraction in a state procession. The daughter, for once, was regarded for the time with greater interest than the mother. The genial light of the unclouded sun fell upon the youthful countenance of the princess—and as she passed beyond the gates of the palace, she received the acclamations of myriads of people, with grace and dignity marvellously bewitching. Calm, thoughtful, gentle, there was in her expression something extremely touching, which subdued the cheer of many, and turned it into the earnest exclamation: 'God bless her!' The common sentiment of the people is that of admiration and affection, mingled with sympathy and hope. She found in old St. James' (turned into a royal palace) the most brilliant assemblage of rank and beauty, waiting to greet her silently, but with kindred feelings. As she passed through the saloons and crowded corridors into the royal chapel, every spectator was moved by the glance, sensitive and confi-

ing, which she cast around. After the ceremonial, for the moment she was fairly overcome, and mother and daughter lost in each other's embrace, gave vent to emotions they were unable any longer to repress to meet the requirements of State. The Princess Royal is a great favorite where she is known. At Balmoral she visited every cottage in the district, distributed books, made kind inquiries, and left among them all some token of remembrance. When it was known that she was about to leave her native land, and might not return to the Highland home of the Queen, parties came to the castle to bid her farewell. She wished to meet them, but the scene was too much for her feelings, and Prince Albert was commissioned to express in her name her warm interest and sincere desire for their welfare. It is a hopeful circumstance that the ministry at the Church in Balmoral was simple, instructive, and purely evangelical. The Royal Princess was attached to the preachers, and sent a special invitation to one of the most earnest and faithful of them to attend the marriage. It is not surprising that one so young, so fair, and so amiable, should command popular respect and affection. The nation parts with the first born of Victoria with regret, and too early: they would retain her to add to and bless an English home; but if she must go, they will follow her with the most fervent prayers, that the alliance may lead to the peace and happiness of all.

God's Care of the Poor and Destitute.

On the border of Derbyshire, at Light-burn, near Whaleybridge, lived Anne Longstone, a poor but industrious and pious woman. She was one of the first Methodists in that neighbourhood. The means by which she got her bread were laborious, and so inadequate to her general necessities, that she was frequently called to exemplify the literal import of the well-known petition in the Lord's prayer, and to ask and trust day by day for her daily bread. This was her request; God inspired it; and gave her his promise, that "her bread should be given, and her water should be sure." This she proved in various instances. She served the full measure of her days, in those years and ten; nor then did the promise of her heavenly Father fail. She hoped in his word, and proved his providential care to the end of her pilgrimage, which was as singular as it was glorious. The calls of hunger pressing her to prepare herself a little food, she examined her stock of provisions, and found that, when brought together, it amounted only to a few potatoes. This scanty supply appears, however, to have been quite equal to her present desires. Sitting down to prepare her little food in the presence of her God, and on the borders of heaven, she observed to her neighbor, "This is all the food I have got; but my heavenly Father, who sent me this, can send me more when I want it;" and added, "I am not well, but thanks to the Friend of sinners, I can still sing his praises." Then, as it conscious that the hour of her departure was at hand, she began to sing these memorable lines,

"Soon shall I pass the vale of death,
And in His arms shall lose my breath;
O! then my happy soul shall fly,
My Jesus hath done all things well."

Having offered this, her last tribute of praise while on earth, to God her Redeemer, she sunk down, closed her eyes, and expired.

This venerable woman had God's grace in her heart, his promise in her Bible, a circle of Christian friends who knew her worth, and an ample supply for her wants, which, if not amounting to thousands of gold and silver, was quite sufficient to excite the confidence of God's children in a state of poverty. She had enough, and a few potatoes to spare. Say who thirst after the treasures of the earth, and ye, who already possess and set your hearts upon them; say, will you, can you vie with this poor woman, when you advance o'erside the confines of the grave, and the magin of an awful eternity?—*Wes. Magazine.*

The Cross and the Heart.

At Sorrente, Italy, is a curious petical inscription, engraved on a slab of marble inserted in the outer wall of a church. It begins and ends alternately with the human words for "cross" and "heart." The following is, as near as possible, a literal translation:—

Cross, most adored! to thee I give my heart:
Heart I have not, except to love the cross.
Cross, thou hast won my wayward, alien heart:
Heart, thou hast owned the triumph of the cross.
Cross, tree of life! to thee I nail my heart:
Heart cannot live, that lives not on the cross.
Cross, by thy blood the cleansing of my heart:
Heart, be thy blood an offering to the cross.
Cross, thou shalt have the homage of my heart:
Heart, thou shalt be the temple of the cross.
Cross, blest is he who yields to thee his heart:
Heart, rest secure, who cleaveth to the cross.
Cross, key of heaven, open every heart:
Heart, every heart, receive the holy cross.

Mr. Peabody one day came in from a walk. His wife said to him, "I have been thinking of our situation, and have determined to be submissive and patient." "Ah," said he, "that is a good resolution; let me see what we have to submit to. I will make a list of our trials. First, we have a home; we will submit to that. Secondly, we have the com-

forts of life; we will submit to that. Thirdly, we have each other. Fourthly, we have a multitude of friends. Fifthly, we have God to take care of us." "Ah!" said she, "pray stop—I will say no more about submission."—*Rev. J. F. Clarke.*

The way to true excellence is not to affect eccentricity, nor to aspire after the performance of a few splendid actions, but to fill up our lives with a sober, modest, sincere, affectionate, and uniform conduct. Real greatness attaches to character, and character arises from a course of action. We do not esteem a man for one, or two, or three good deeds, any further than as these deeds are indications of the real state of his mind. We do not estimate the character of Christ himself so much from his having given sight to the blind or restored Lazarus from the grave, as from his going about continually doing good.—*A. Fuller.*

THE BEST BOOK.—I have many books that I cannot sit down to read: they are, indeed, good and sound; but, like half-pence, there is a great quantity to a little amount.—There are silver books; and a very few golden books; but I have one book worth more than all, called the Bible; and that is a book of bank-notes.—[Newton.]

New York Correspondence.

NEW YORK, Feb. 25th, 1858.

Mr. Editor.—Religious subjects seem now to attract more attention than for many years before in this city. The daily prayer meetings are still increasing, and all with with remarkable attendance and most gratifying results. Revivals have taken place in many churches, and an uncommon interest seems to pervade all. The ordinary services are more largely attended, and the impressions very solemn.

A committee of laymen have recently made the Sabbath Desecration of our city a subject of special attention. It is found that there are 9,692 places open on Sabbath either for business or amusement; of these 2,419 are business houses and places of amusement; 3,408 are drinking places; 2,419 are stores for the sale of dry goods and kindred wares; 18 for concerts, mostly theatres.

To the attainment of most it is found that in 1834 all the city ordinances against Sabbath desecration, not superseded by state laws, disappeared from our statute books, save an ordinance to prohibit the use of fireworks on that day. Equally astonishing to most, it is found that there is an ordinance which prohibits religious meetings in the Park and other public places, only as conducted by a minister under the written permission of the Mayor and Aldermen. There appears to be thus care taken by the city fathers lest the drunken revelry be disturbed by religious services, while there is no care that the latter be disturbed by the former as was the case among the fathers from whom our country received her glory.

The report which the committee has made calls attention to the fact that in twenty years in Scotland—a season of laxity as to Sabbath observance—the revenues from distilleries ran up from £4,739 to £192,000—a fact of most fearful import. Crime and pauperism increase in the direct ratio of liquor drinking. The enemies of the Bible everywhere seem to be bent upon the Sabbath, as if to have drunken revelry supplant the solemn services of the Sabbath. Many know not what they do, while others are actuated by malicious intent. We believe in the onward progress of light as to the great laws of civilization, it will be associated with that every one who reveres not the Sabbath, is a hater of the material prosperity of his country, a hater of liberty and intelligence, as well as a hater of God and the Bible.

The committee requested all the pastors of the city to preach on the subject of Sabbath observance last Sabbath—the day preceding the anniversary of Washington's birth, as if to make a simultaneous appeal to the patriotic and religious interests of our citizens to do something toward rescuing the Sabbath from its present shameful desecration. I believe the request was generally heeded. I noticed that the police commissioners at their first meeting after, passed unanimously a resolution instructing the Police rigidly to enforce the state and city laws on this subject; and it is to be hoped a healthful public opinion may be created.

In politics every thing is in suspense—awaiting the action of Congress on the Kansas bill, which the administration with all its force is striving to carry through, and which dooms that suffering land to slavery. The administration, we have reason to fear, will succeed, as it now lacks but two or three votes. Our country, so accustomed to agitation, has never known anything probably to be compared with that which will follow if this shameful fraud becomes a law. Few, if any, of the northern men who vote for it will ever be returned to Congress.

During a week or two past, in the city of Washington, three or four challenges to duels have passed and been accepted. One duel has passed but without any wound, save in one of the combatants' hats—the loss in the hat seems to have made it a forfeit whole; the others, it is hoped, will be equally bloodless.