

Duty of making a Profession of Religion.

It is due to the Church.—To the Church is committed the great work of converting the world. The burden of this duty is immense, and Christians need all the sympathy, comfort and encouragement under it that they can receive. The greatest of all encouragements, next to the promise of God, is seeing the success of their labors in the gospel. It was among our Lord's most bitter trials that he was rejected of men; that when he called, none answered; and that all the day long he stretched forth his hand, but no man regarded. So does the Christian's heart faint in the time when few avow themselves penitents; while there is no joy this side of heaven-like; the joy of harvest, when the work of the Lord is prospering in our hands. The angels in the presence of God are glad over one sinner that repenteth; but they have not the joy of the Christian who has been the instrument of bringing that penitent out of his peril. For you, reader, the Church has been praying; Christians have been exhorting you by word and example to secure the salvation of your soul; if you have received any good influence from religion, it has been among other means, through their prayers and exertions. Do you owe them no return? Should you not make their hearts glad by declaring that you too will be one of Christ's people, a witness of his grace, and a crown of their rejoicing? Oh, how their hearts yearn over you! How they long for your coming out from the world, to take your place with them at the sacramental table! Shall they look again, and be again disappointed?

Christians have a great work to do, and there are but few of them to do it. They need help, open, honest, avowed help. Every new accession to their number, every fresh laborer, that comes in answer to their prayers for more laborers in the vineyard, cheers their spirits. They work with renewed energy, because in you they see that they have one opponent the less, and one fellow-laborer more, whose sympathy, prayers, and counsel, they may count upon. Will you not give them help to bear their burdens, rejoice with them in their joy, and weep with them in their sorrow? Do you not owe it to them for the Master's sake, whom they serve, and their own? You may think that you do sympathize with them, pray with them, and even labor with them, in your concealed religion; but they knew nothing of what you hide from their eyes. As a secret friend, you are little better than an open enemy. Oh! come out of your hiding place and make their hearts glad!

It is due to yourself.—You are not only to believe in Christ, that you may be saved; but to work out your salvation with fear and trembling; (Phil. ii. 12.) A profession of faith in Christ is not merely an entrance upon a Christian life, but the means of strengthening and animating us in it. For this reason the sacramental board is crowned with bread, the emblem of nourishment, and wine, the emblem of joy.—It is the means which Christ has divinely appointed; and, as has been observed, you have no right to expect his gracious furtherance in your endeavors after a holy life, except you use the means of his appointment, any more than you can expect strength of body without using food and drink.

An open profession of faith will strengthen your inward resolutions. You will be no longer a wavering, undecided thing; afraid to follow the world into sin, and yet afraid to avow your choice of better principles. Confess yourself candidly a servant of Christ; a weak, imperfect, sinful servant, it may be, but an honest, well-meaning, well-endavouring one. You will then have more respect for yourself as a religious person. You will feel the force of your position before the world; and, bearing the name of Christ, you will be more careful, lest that holy name be abused through your negligence or wrong. You will have a thousand promises to rest upon that you have not now; for every promise made to the Church you will share in. You will have the benefit of many thousand prayers, that you have not now; for every prayer for the Church, breathed by Christians in private or public throughout the world, will be put up for you. You will have the sincere love, sympathy, counsel and good company of all God's true people; for they will know you, greet you, and hold fellowship with you as one of Christ's family.

The Judicious Mother.

"Religion as it should be," or the Life of Ann Thane Peck, is one of the most interesting pieces of Biography of a young person, we ever met with. The subject of this Memoir was early a Christian; lived her short term, eminently devoted and useful; and died in great triumph, at the age of eighteen.

Among the passages that strike the reader, is one respecting her mother. When Ann was about ten years old, being the subject of deep religious impressions, she retired on one occasion to pray, and continuing much longer than usual, her mother thought it best to interrupt her. On entering her place of retirement, "Oh, mother!" was the first exclamation of the weeping child, "I am such a sinner! I fear there is no mercy for me." Her mother immediately knelt down by her side, says the biographer, with feelings which none but a mother could indulge; and spending some minutes in prayer, sat down to instruct her daughter in the way of salvation.

But what instruction did she give? Did she soothe the child by assuring her of her innocence? Did she tell her she had always been a good child?—that her faults, at most, were very slight, and that God would easily forgive them?—that she should not feel so distressed, there was no occasion for her trouble. So many mothers would have taught, and many fathers too. But this judicious mother pursued a different course. "Truly, my child," said she, "you are just as great a sinner, as you think you are; but for just such sinners Jesus died; and that you are a sinner is the very reason why you should trust him." p. 43.

This is the true ground for human hope. A false tenderness, that flatters a child or an adult, palliating sin and trying to make the heart comfortable in view of its own goodness, may give a temporary relief, but it is "healing the wound slightly." It smothers the fire, it may be, but does not extinguish it. It is the way to deceive the soul; prevent it from ever obtaining true Christian peace, and involve it, at length, in endless ruin. In the result on the child in question, her subsequent pious life and triumphant death, see the wisdom, mercy, and faithfulness of the contrary course. Let the anxious sinner, old or young, be directed to Christ. Christ is the light and life of men. The anxious sinner is in fact quite as great a sinner as he deems himself to be—yea, much greater. No one sees half his sins. But Christ can take them all away. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." And the fact that human beings are sinners, and great sinners, is the very reason why they should trust in him that they may be saved. "Christ came, not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." And oh! what results would be witnessed, were all parents, and all teachers, and religious guides of men, like the judicious mother above mentioned. What multitudes, with whom it is now otherwise, would early become Christians: live in usefulness, die in triumph, and rest at last in immortal glory. Let the parent and the guide of souls be wise, judicious and faithful.—N. E. Puritan.

Nourishing Grief.

Tears are not forbidden, and a perfect submission to the will of God does not dry them up.—The heart may bleed, while it bends to the stroke. No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; and would not be chastening, nor answer the purpose of chastening, if it were not so. But while the Christian is not called upon to be a stoic, we should not, like Jacob, refused to be comforted. There is always something to sweeten the bitter cup; and if every other alleviation be wanting, we have ever this, that it is the Lord who hath done it.

Suppose a dear friend is removed by death—perhaps a husband—he was a Christian, and his wife feels that it is well with him—that he has gone to that blessed world, "where they sin no more, neither sorrow any more, and there is no more death." And now, what shall she do, sympathize in his happiness, or sit down and pity herself? Shall she look on the glorious government of God, and rejoice to see it rolling on, or keep looking down on her own little plans, which lie crushed beneath it? Shall she with the eye of faith look forward to the time of reunion, or give herself up to those sweet memories, those tender recollections, which enervate the souls to take away its wings. Shall

she listen to the voice of his afflictive Providence which says, "Give me thine heart;" or shall she persist in giving all her thoughts and affections to the dear departed one, gazing on his picture, pressing that lock of hair to her lips, and going to the grave to weep there. Shall she listen to her husband speaking out of heaven, saying, "Don't weep, for in a moment you will be here?" Or shall she persist in looking forward to the long, weary, lonely path which seems to stretch on before her? Wounded feelings will incline us to the course, but the Word of God points out to the other, as the wiser and the happier way.

I know a child of sorrow who was called to part with the husband of her youth. He was a Christian, and his sick-room was the gate of heaven. She accompanied him through the valley of the shadow of death, and as his spirit took its flight, she seemed to see it enter heaven.

He landed in her view,
Midst flaming hosts above;
Her soul stood silent while he drew
Nigh to the throne of love,
And meekly took the lowest seat,
Yet nearest his Redeemer's feet."

From this hour her thoughts were with him there; and that strong sympathy in his happiness, which she had cherished for years she still continued to cherish. Full of the idea that her husband was in heaven, she had no inclination to visiting it, lest the effect should be to bring down her thoughts from heaven to earth. It was some months before she ventured to go there; and as she approached the tomb, a voice seemed to say, "why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here!"

Life is too short and too important, to be wasted in sighs and tears. If the tears will come, let us dash them away, and press onward. We have much to do, much for our own souls—much for the souls of others; and the time is short. "Now it remaineth that those who weep be as though they wept not, and those who rejoice, as though they rejoiced not, for the fashion of the world passeth away." Let us not indulge a morbid sensibility. Instead of dwelling on the lovely traits of the departed, and on his love for us, and on past scenes of happiness, rather let us turn our minds to the investigation and contemplation of the great truths of religion; and especially to the earnest pursuit of holiness. Let the question with us be not so much, "how can I endure this affliction?" as "how may I best improve it?" Let our prayer be not so much, "comfort me," as "sanctify it to me." Let us reflect less on the aggravating circumstances of affliction, and more on its design; and think rather of what we deserve than of what we suffer. Then in the fullness of judgment we may sing of mercy.

The Minister's Mission.

The great commission under which the minister of Christ acts, reads: "Go ye into all the world, and preach my gospel to every creature.—He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Now let us consider this mission in reference to its present obligations. This world contains about one thousand millions of inhabitants, the principal part of whom are now, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, ignorant of the way of life and salvation: and were we to ascend some commanding eminence in creation, from which the whole of this vast population could be surveyed at a glance, how would the sight affect our hearts! what an amount of mental and moral beings should we behold groping their way in darkness to the grave. It is affecting to think that now, at this moment, there are about six hundred millions of our race, under the almost undisturbed domination of the Prince of darkness, and that even in Christian lands, in our own land, which we claim to be the most highly favored of lands, there are even here, multitudes who scarcely have heard of a Saviour, or who, to say the least, are most lamentably destitute of the means of salvation. Truly the harvest even now is plentiful, and the faithful, heaven-commissioned laborers are yet few. Even here if you could ascend some elevated spot, and look over the almost boundless extent of territory that belongs to this nation, how few places, comparatively, would you discover from which the voice of prayer and praise arose. Over how few tracts, comparatively, would your eye travel, on which the loveliness of a Christian landscape would be seen to smile!

How few lights burning amid the moral gloom! How few the number of those who publish salvation, appear upon the mountains! How small a portion of our fellow beings treading the upward path to heaven! What multitudes thronging the road to hell! Did Christ appoint the Christian ministry as the channel for conveying his gospel to every creature? Then ought we not still to "pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest?" The work is urgent. The call is loud. The motive is powerful. From every part of the earth we are addressed in tones of tenderest entreaty—"Come," and heaven utters its mandate—"Go." Here is an errand of mercy that angels might desire. Here is a career of benevolence, that the Son of God himself has commenced, and by sending us forth upon it, he reminds us that our highest emulation is to imitate him, and that our noblest deeds are those which are consecrated to his cause and kingdom.—Baptist Preacher.

The Hebrew Government.

The theme of Professor Wines' discourse, in his fifth lecture, was the great maxims on which Moses founded his civil policy.

The doctrine that agriculture constituted the best basis of the prosperity and happiness of a nation, was the third great principle of the Mosaic constitution. Not a single regulation favoring commerce was found in the entire code. This was remarkable, and would strike many persons, particularly in a commercial emporium, with astonishment. Doubtless one cause of this was, that Moses wished to separate the Israelites as much as possible from other nations for the prevention of idolatry. But indeed, was foreign commerce, he asked, the greatest blessing a State could enjoy? Was it the greatest enricher of nations? Did the Israelites find it so under Solomon? The treasure obtained by it proved a golden weight that crushed their free institutions. And had not we ourselves felt the evil effects of an over-estimate of foreign commerce, and a consequent neglect of agriculture? Was it not one of the causes of that terrible financial convulsion, which a few years ago shook this country like an earthquake?

A fourth fundamental principle of the government was universal education. Here the constitution shone with peculiar luster. Moses took the greatest pains to insure the instruction of all the children in the State, particularly in the knowledge of the laws, religion and history of their own country. Teaching was one of the great functions of the Levites.

A fifth principle was the encouragement of union, the union of hearts, opinions and sympathies throughout the nation. And this was more effectually secured by the annual and other festivals than was among the Greeks, by that stroke of the worldly policy, the institution of the public games.

A just balance of power between all the departments of government was the last maxim on which the policy of Moses was founded. Never was this great and wise principle more thoroughly wrought into political organization, than in the commonwealth of Israel.

Such were the great ideas on which Moses founded his government. What better basis of civil polity? What nobler maxims of political wisdom does the present century afford, despite its loud cry of social progress? The institutions founded on these maxims tower up amid the barbaric darkness and despotisms of antiquity, the great beacon light of the world.—Christian Intelligencer.

A SALUTARY THOUGHT.—There was a man who was universally reported to be a very liberal man and uncommon liberal in his dealings. When he had any produce of his farm to dispose of, he made it an invariable rule to give good measure, over good, rather more than could be required of him. One of his friends observing his frequently doing so, questioned him why he did it, told him he gave too much, and said it would not be to his own advantage. Now my friends, mark the answer of this Presbyterian:—"God Almighty has given me but one journey through the world, and when gone I cannot return to rectify mistakes. Think of this, friend: but one journey through the world."

THE LOVE OF GOD.—A very holy man once said, "Were the highest heavens my pulpit, and all the hosts of the redeemed, together with Adam's family, my audience, and eternity my day, redeeming love should be my text and sermon. Love never faileth."