

DUTY OF THE STRONG TO THE WEAK.

This is the Christian principle, coming not alone in the way of recommendation to our independent judgment or complacent pity, but obligatory upon our conscience. *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.* But is it not a rational principle too? Who made thee to differ, my rich, my wise, my influential brother? Whence thy original faculties for outward or inward acquisition? And how have befallen the opportunities of success? Has thy own hand carved out the way to fortune? Has a lucky contingency blessed thee? Or has a providential pillar of fire and cloud moved before thee and led thee to the places of abundance, flowing with milk and honey? Art thou not in debt to God for all, and if thou usest all thy faculty, the acquirement, on thy own aggrandizement and pleasure, dost thou not, as a faithless trustee, defalcate in his sight, and go on to die in fatal insolvency?

But unanswerably just as such interrogation is, it is not the cold consciousness of mere duty as a bounden task that the next appeals, but to the noblest affections in the human heart. We are so made that the appeal of weakness in all its forms, whether that of helpless childhood, adult necessity, or infirm age, is the most moving of all appeals to a truly generous mind. "*Respect the burden!*" said Napoleon to one angry at being slightly jostled by some laborers with their heavy loads passing by. "*Respect the burden!*" A noble sentiment. Be considerate of all those in a state of dependence and toil; treat them in a patient and forbearing manner.

Society is not a mass of separate individuals, loosely passing by each other without vital connections, but a unit, like the living frame of the human body. There is what an ingenious French metaphysician calls a *solidarity* a common life in the human family. One member cannot suffer, but all the members suffer with it. To injure or neglect a human being, is in some way certainly, to wound or weaken ourselves.

If the relations of mutual service are broken, if abject poverty, discontent social jealousy are permitted to form and fester, it cannot be for the permanent happiness of any; it may be to the woe of coming generations of our own blood, if not of ourselves, and the strong man who declines to do his part in binding all in the soft chains of fraternity and good offices, is thus not only a violator of God's law, and of his wide social obligations, but a traitor to his own class, and a foe to his children, and his children's children.

Christianity, so far from being revolutionary, asserts the gradations of life, higher and lower, stronger and weaker, both on earth and in heaven, as providentially existing, yet existing not to separate, but unite;—to unite men more closely than they would be on the dead level some would establish, of equal attainment and universal competition, to unite them especially by the generous consideration and help, freely flowing from every higher to every lower place of possession and knowledge, Christ himself setting the great example, showing the most wonderful ministration of strength to weakness the world ever witnessed.

No good work in which men can be engaged, whatever may be the peculiarity of its means or outward limitation of its sphere, is isolated from the common interest and welfare. The common interest and welfare! Let that be our sentiment. Oneness of nature, mutual dependence of friendly offices, the same political offices, social welfare, and religious hopes, do indeed bind us together. A thousand daily circumstances in open sight bear witness that we are members one of another.

In whatever special avocation engaged, it becomes us to take a broad and solemn view of our responsibility. It is nothing less than for the forming in our day of one link in the great chain of the Divine Providence in human progress. The last historian of England, Macaulay, writing with the pen of the impartial recorder, declares that the chief agent in the two great deliverances of his country,—putting an end to the tyranny of nation over nation, and to the property of man in man, effacing the distinction between Norman and Saxon, and between master and slave, was religion. To what so vast and desirable end is religion, then, through the fidelity of its friends, incompetent! Shall it not put an end to all unjust distinctions and efface all unholy oppressions? And what is our part, but through whatever individual or social methods we can handle, to apply this most potent of all agents to the life and insti-

tutions of our own time? Seeing that like our forerunners, only a step further on, we too are in the midst of God's far-reaching plans, with the privilege, if we will, to co-operate in His glorious purposes, shall we choose our part in seeking selfish ends, which by His Almighty justice shall be crushed into disappointment and emptiness, or rejoice with life, heart and substance to put ourselves into the line of His own grand benevolent procedure, and thus feel that in all we do, we are exercising His irresistible strength.—*Rel. Mag.*

An Incident.

About ten months ago, Mr. John M. Spear, upon one of his usual visits to the police court, one morning, noticed among the prisoners a youth who was poorly clad, and for some cause was weeping. M. S. sat down by his side, and the following conversation ensued:—"Why are you here my son?" "I am accused of selling newspapers, sir, without a license." "Are you guilty?" "Yes sir." "Have you been arrested before?" "Yes, twice." "What for?" "For selling newspapers." "Why do you persist in doing it?" "Because I don't know what else to do to get a living." "Have you a father?" "No sir, my father is dead." "Is your mother living?" "My mother is a drunkard; she does not take any care of me; I don't know where she is now." As he uttered these last words, the deep waters of the little fellow's soul burst afresh, and he expressed his grief aloud.—"Where do you lodge?" continued the philanthropist. "Near Union Street, sir! I pay ninepence a night for my lodging in advance, and I buy two plates of beans in the course of the day, for which I pay as much more." "How do you spend your evenings?" "I walk about the streets, or go into the auction rooms." "Why don't you sit down in the house where you lodge, by the fire and read?" "Because the woman of the house is poor.—She has room for me at her fire." "Would you like to go into the country and work, if a place could be obtained for you?" "Yes sir, I would be glad to go and work for my living. I don't want to stay in Boston; but I have nobody to get a place for me." "I don't want to go down to the jail again."

Mr. Spear now spoke to the judge respecting the prisoner. Mr. Power, the clerk of the court, said that it would be no use to try to do anything for that boy, because he had been twice sent to the jail for the same thing before, and it did him no good. "That is a good and sufficient reason," was the calm and determined reply of Mr. S., "why he should not be sent there again."

After some conversation the judge reduced the fine to one cent and cost, which the philanthropist paid, and then taking the boy by the hand they both left the court. Now for the sequel. Mr. Spear took the boy to his own house and supplied him with food and clothing, and then obtained a good place for him in the country.

Last week, the day before Thanksgiving, the grateful boy, for the first time, came into the city to see his benefactor. He has been steadily at work at the place which Mr. Spear provided for him, and is still at work there, earning nine dollars a month and his board.

Such is the lesson which charity teaches us. We will not moralize upon the evil which would have pursued that boy, had he been left to the mercy of the police court, but thank the generosity of him whose wish is to heal the wounds of woe, and who always

* * * "hath a tear for pity and a hand Open as day for melting charity,"

for his noble service in the cause of humanity.—*Watchman & Reflector.*

Proportion of Divine Influence.

We sometimes enter into calculations of the amount of human agencies requisite to evangelize the world in a given time, and we induce the conviction that if the outward means would do it, we would secure the great result in a time not far distant, because in that case the event would be more within our reach, and would draw more powerfully upon the mind and heart. This raises a question of fact. Has the work hitherto lingered more for want of the effusions of the Spirit than it has for want of human agencies? Take the last fifty years, and see how vastly the human instrumentalities have increased, and it will be found that the amount of divine influence has, in that time, had a proportionate increase. Some months ago a correspondent of the N. Y. Observer gave the statistics, showing that rapid as had been the increase of population

in this country, the increase of the aggregate membership of evangelical churches had been still more rapid—the rate of increase had been so rapid, that if it should continue, it would, before the end of the present century, absorb in evangelical churches the whole population of the country, great as it would then be.

But if it be true that revivals and conversions have been so numerous, is it not true that the increase in the rate of the effusions of the Holy Spirit has been in this country as great as the increase of multiplication of the means of evangelizing. If this be so, there is no occasion for us to carry a slack hand, in doubt whether God will do his work. We see that he has actually been doing it, to an extent far beyond what we had supposed—to an extent fully equal to the rate of increase in human agencies. And indeed have we not a pledge, that in the general result, this rate of increase will be continued, and more than continued in all future time? God says, "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, and prove me if I will not pour you out a blessing, till there be not room enough to receive it."—*Puritan Recorder.*

When Christians desire to be Missionaries.

The pioneer of Foreign Missions in America, Samuel J. Mills, began to feel the desire to be a missionary when, after nearly three years of distressing anxiety, he felt the renewing power of the Holy Ghost. This spirit was communicated to others of his companions in college, during a revival of religion. It was deepened and confirmed by a season of fasting and prayer. It was still further communicated in a little meeting of brethren, who, kneeling before God, asked him to teach them their duty. These young men, thus impressed, asked counsel of venerable ministers, and they also asked God, and the spirit of missions kindled up in their souls. Thus it commenced in a work of grace, and has been fostered by prayer to God, and revivals of religion; and thus it has continued. Look at churches when revived, and you will find an increased interest in the cause of missions. They pray more, and they contribute more. The lamented Armstrong understood this well. Hence, when times looked dark for the Lord's treasury, his first inquiry was, "What are the signs of the times in respect to revivals?" He understood that the Lord opened not only the heart in revivals, but also the purse; and as men are made to feel more of the blessedness of the Gospel, they are more anxious to send it to the destitute.

Let there be powerful revivals of pure and undefiled religion all over our land, and there will be no want of missionaries, or funds to support them. Every church will have its offering, both of men and money, for the service of the Lord.—*Jour. of Missions.*

"Here am I, send me."

When the cry is, "Ho! for California and the placers!" hundreds of our pious young men gather up an outfit, speak a hasty farewell, and are off on the wintry wave, to face disease, and mingle in the society of the most abandoned amongst men,—not to save their souls, but to vie with them in accumulating heaps of gold. But when the inquiry comes, "Who will go to India, to China, to Africa, and labour in the Redeemer's work of salvation?" where is the prompt response, "Here am I, send me?" Alas our missionaries cry in vain. They must weep over the desolations of heathenism, and weep over the graves of their associates who have fallen under burdens that crushed them; and they, too, must sink into untimely graves, in the midst of their labours, because no helping hand comes to their relief from Christian lands. Our pious youths find more attraction in the pursuit of fame, ease, or affluence, than in self-denying labours to save the perishing. Their pious parents (it is feared) are willing to have it so. These are some of the features of religious society, which give to the godly in our land just cause of mourning. There others not are less melancholy. Though it cannot but be painful, it may be profitable to consider them.—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

A Good Conscience.

There cannot be found a better example than I have met with in reading some memoirs of the great and good Colston, founder of those excellent charities in London, Bristol, and elsewhere. I find this passage in his life. It happened that one of the most richly laden vessels was so long missing, and the violent storms having given every reason to suppose she had perished, that Colston gave her up for lost.—

Upon this occasion, it is said, he did not lament his unhappiness, as many are apt to do, and perpetually count up the amount of his losses; but with dutiful submission, fell upon his knees, and with thankfulness for what Providence had pleased to leave him, and with the utmost resignation, relinquished even the smallest hope of her recovery. When, therefore, his people came soon afterward to tell him that his ship had safely come to port, he did not show the signs of self-gratulation which his friends expected to see. He was devoutly thankful for the preservation of the lives of so many seamen; but as for the vessel and cargo they were no longer his—he had resigned them—he could not in conscience take them back. He looked upon all as the gift of Providence to the poor: and as such he sold the ship and merchandize—and most valuable they were—and, praying for a right guidance, distributed the proceeds to the poor. How beautiful is such a charity. Here is no false lustre thrown upon the riches and goods of this world, that, reflected, blind the eyes that they see not aright. The conscience of such a man as Colston was an arbiter even against himself, sat within him in judgment to put aside his worldly interest, and make a steady light for itself to see by, where naturally was either a glare or an obscurity, that alike might bewilder lest honest vision.—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

The Better Country.

We may venture to affirm, that if heaven was now fully laid open to our view it would be so impressing and engrossing as to render every thing here insignificant and uninteresting, and loosen and detach us from all our present engagements. St. Pierre, tells us of his returning to France in a ship that had been absent several years in the East Indies. "And when," says he, "the crew approached their native country, they were all eagerness to discern it. Some of them mounted the rigging; some of them employed the glass. By-and-by an exclamation was heard, 'Yonder it is!' Then they become thoughtful and listless.—But when they drew nearer, and began to discover the tops of the hills and towers, that reminded them of the spots on which they had been brought up, they knew not how to contain themselves. They dressed themselves in their best apparel; they brought out the presents designed for their connexions. But when the vessel entered the harbor, and they saw their friends and relations on the quay, stretching forth their hands to embrace them, many of them leaped from the ship, and other hands were employed to bring it to its moorings." Ah! Christians, could you see the better country from which you were born, and to which you are bound—could you behold your connexions there, ready to receive you, your station would soon be deserted, and other agents would be wanted to carry on their concerns.—*William Jay.*

"God With Us."

God with man! with ourselves! How inspiring the doctrine! Art thou a pilgrim, walking in perplexed ways? He is thy guide. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Thou art a creature of affliction and sorrow. He is with thee as thou passest through the water, and through the fire. "Call upon him in the day of trouble; he shall deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify him." Thou art tempted. But he is thy shield and thy strong tower. "In that he suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Dost thou feel thine own littleness and insignificance? Thy God thinketh upon thee. "The hairs of your head are all numbered." "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." Thou may'st be little and unknown amongst men, but a precious diadem in the hand of thy God. "He is high unto thee in all that thou call'st on him for." Various and changing may be the scenes thro' which thou passest. But all shall be tempered by his wisdom for thine own advantage. "All things work together for good unto them that love him." Thou shalt die. But when thou walkest in the valley and shadow of death he shall be with thee. Thou shalt molder in the dust. "But thy flesh also shall rest in hope;" for "in his book all thy members are written." And while adoring "Him that sitteth upon the throne," and "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne," God with us shall be the burden of our song forever. Is Christ our Emmanuel? God with us? Then let us take care that we are with him—coming to him habitually in acts of faith and love—walking with him, and before him—so shall he to us be all and in all, the strength of our heart, and our portion forever.