

"AND HE BROUGHT HIM TO JESUS."

What Andrew here did with Simon, we are to do with our fellow-creatures,—we are to bring them to Jesus.

But can men be brought to him now? Did he not say, I am no more in the world? How happy were they who lived when he was on earth! They could repair to him in every trouble, and tell him every distress. Ye benevolent neighbors! you could carry the paralytic, and place him beneath the very eye of Mercy. You anxious father! you could go to him, and say, "Sir, come down ere my child die." You Martha and Mary, as soon as Lazarus was afflicted, you could send to him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." And cannot you, my dear readers, cannot you apprise him of your desire or your grief? Have not you, at your disposal, a messenger, that you can dispatch to him in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye? "While they call, I will answer; and when they speak, I will hear." And has he not said, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world? and wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of you? If these words be true, he can be, he must be, he is, with his ministers and people now. Though no longer visible, he is accessible. We may apprehend him as to his essential presence, by which he fills heaven and earth. We may apprehend him also as to his peculiar presence, by which he is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. He is to be found in the Scriptures; in his house; at his table; on his throne; in the garden and the field—

"Where'er we seek him he is found,
And every place is holy ground."

But can we bring souls to him? Not efficiently. This is the work of God only. "No man can come unto me, except the Father that hath sent me draw him." And the sooner we are convinced of this, the better. We shall then make all our attempts in dependence on the agency of his Spirit; and thus honouring him, he will honor us. But we may do this instrumentally. For God makes use of means; and he employs men; and employs them not only to do good to their fellow-creatures temporally, but spiritually—not only to relieve their bodies, but to save their souls. And various and many are the ways in which we may thus bring men to Jesus. We may do it by intercession; for he hears prayers for others, as well as for ourselves. We may do it by the influence of example. Nothing speaks so loud as the silent eloquence of a holy, consistent, and lovely life. By this, wives may win their husbands without the word; and servants may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. By this, all may be useful. All cannot be learned; all cannot be rich; but all may be exemplary. We may do it by instruction. Thus Andrew brought Peter—We have found, says he, the Messiah. And thus the woman of Samaria brought her neighbors, saying, "Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" By a word fitly spoken—a letter—an invitation to hear the gospel—the commendation of a good book—the diffusion of the Bible—the sending forth missionaries—the supporting of ministers, whose office is to turn men from darkness to light,—by all these, and many more, we may be the means of introducing souls to Jesus.

But why should we be concerned to bring them? Four things should make us alive to this work. First: To feel a concern for it, is an evidence of grace. There cannot be a better. Indeed, every other evidence is fallacious without this; and this is always to be found in a real Christian. For however he may walk in darkness, as to a knowledge of his own interest in divine things, and draw the conclusion that he has no part nor lot in the matter; he never is insensible and indifferent to the success of the gospel and the salvation of souls. This makes the eye sparkle upon whose lid hangs the shadow of death. Secondly: To attempt it is a duty. A duty that cannot be declined, without the greatest guilt. A duty arising from the relation in which we stand to our fellow-men, as bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. A duty enforced by the will of God, clearly made known in the injunction, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men;" for what good can equal this? Thirdly: To accomplish it, is the most glorious enterprise. What is the rescue of a whole nation from civil bondage, compared with the deliverance of one soul from the power of darkness, and translating it into the kingdom of God's dear Son? Can a trifle

throw heaven into ecstasy? But there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. The work, therefore, is its own motive; its success is its own recompense. And so the apostle deemed it: "If a man err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Fourthly: To fail in it is no disgrace. Yea, failure here is infinitely more honourable than success in any other enterprise. But wise and good efforts are never in vain. If they are useless as to the direct object, they do good collaterally. If they relieve not the beneficiary, they bless the benefactor. His prayers and endeavors return not void into his own bosom. We are a sweet savor of Christ not only in them that are saved, but in them also that perish. The promise is not made to success—for this does not belong to us; but to exertion. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

But while we endeavor to bring others to Jesus, let us see to it that we have come to him ourselves. It is awful to think of being the instruments of his grace, while we are not the subjects.

"Great King of grace! my heart subdue;
I would be led in triumph too,
A willing captive to my Lord,
And sing the victories of his Word." JAY.

Criticising Christians.

There is one word in our vocabulary so cold and chilling in its nature that it makes one shudder, whenever he thinks of it. That word is criticism. Now, I do not contend that the word in itself is not a good one, or that criticism may not be indulged in with profit at times; but to be carried to the extent it often is, is certainly very repugnant to good taste and good manners; and that a Christian should be in the constant practice of cold heartless criticism, is worse than all.

I have sometimes heard pieces of beautiful music, and at the close found myself feeling happier and better; and then have had my pleasant thoughts suddenly interrupted and dispelled by some would-be critic remarking upon the style of the performer, or the want of science, it may be, in the composition. Listeners of that stamp ought never to hear a note of good music so long as they live. This by all means is bad enough; but I refer more particularly to another class of critics.

The house of God usually contains them, and I say it to my sorrow. I assume the position that all Christians visit the sanctuary on the Sabbath with a desire to worship God, to increase in knowledge and grow in grace.—But when such an one carries with him a critic's eye or ear, will he leave the sanctuary filled with the bread of heaven, or retire with barrenness and leanness in his soul? Unquestionably the latter, because he does not carry with him a humble and teachable spirit. Does it follow, because a minister of the gospel does not possess the eloquence of a Masillon or a Bossuet, that his discourse is to be condemned without mercy? It would be well for such heartless critics, such Christians, to remember, that he against whom they are thus turning their tongues is a servant of the Most High. If they would constantly bear this in mind, would they dare to condemn so cavalierly the preacher, whose discourse comes not entirely up to their exalted notions, or whose manner is not quite so easy and graceful as they could wish?

But this crying sin of Christians is not confined wholly to the house of God. Even our social evening exercises are subject to the same unpleasant intrusion. How often has my heart been deeply pained to hear professing Christians speaking lightly of this brother and that brother, who happened to use language not strictly grammatical in prayer or exhortation, in one of our evening prayer-meetings! God grant that such criticising Christians may be few, and that those who have hearts to speak or pray in our conference and prayer-meetings may do it without the fear of man before their eyes, whether they can speak by rule or not. One such Christian is worth many of those who sit and coldly criticise while their hearts are far away from the place of prayer, and plastered over with the dirt and mire of the world. If education enables one to use language that sounds smooth and pleasant to the ear, let him remember that it is God's gift, and be thankful; but let him not sneer at him who possesses it not. Many of our most devoted Christians are uneducated; but how much more acceptable in God's sight must such an one be than the educated Christian who has

no heart to pray, but who sits coldly by and comments! One such Christian among a little band of Christ's devoted followers, is like an iceberg in a balmy day in June, not refreshing, but casting a chill and gloom on the spirits of all who are within the reach of its influence.

The sin of which I am speaking is not confined to any one sect, but is common to all in a greater or less degree. Its baneful influence can easily be traced, and in all cases should be heartily deprecated and deeply lamented.

Oh, that Christians would bear these things in mind, and act according to the dictates of their consciences, remembering that God understandeth the heart.—*Congregational Journal*.

Character of Theological Students.

The following, from the pen of the venerable Dr. John Pye Smith, is a portion of an address delivered at the opening of "New College," a union of three Dissenters' colleges which have heretofore existed in different places in and near London, known as Homer-ton, Cowend, and Highbury Colleges. After speaking of the system of instruction among the Hebrews, the early Christians, and Reformers, he alludes to the impropriety of the attempt to educate young men for the ministry who had given no evidence of conversion.—Speaking of England, and alluding to the custom of the Dissenters who unite in the same institution, scientific, literary and theological instruction, he says:—

It was not until the organization of the institutions, whose happy union is this day proclaimed, that satisfactory evidences of conversion to God, in encouraging any young man to devote himself to the ministry, were thoroughly understood to be of imperative and absolute necessity. Upon this foundation as the immovable rock in their separate form, and now in their union, it is our resolution, and our trust in God, that our colleges shall ever stand. The desirableness and practicability of this union must appear to every thoughtful mind. The knowledge of God and the salvation of man include all truth and all happiness. The conviction and enjoyment of this we desire to communicate to all men; and to do so we wish to improve and enlarge our instruments, and, at the same time, to concentrate our strength. The cause and the time demand this. Never before has come into being such a multitude and cogency of reasons for the exertion. The providence and grace of God work out his purposes by the use of means.—Our duty is to find the best means to the best ends, and to work them in the best manner. Only, in so doing, can we hope for an effectuating blessing from "Him who worketh all things." His universe rises up around as the unfathomable past, the immeasurable present, the awful future—all wrapped in the infinity of his presence. His doings are explored with a penetration and an accuracy with Bacon, or Leibnitz, or Newton never probably imagined. Natural knowledge and the physical sciences have left their ancient landmark far in the backward distance. The wheels of time seem to be even accelerated. Discovery and invention, efforts prodigious and results which overwhelm the strongest minds, have become almost familiar to us. Yet there are men who obtrude themselves upon sense and reason, men blind to heavenly beauty, untouched by the majesty of wisdom, holiness, and love.

"Unspeakable—
A goodness beyond thought and power divine."

These men must not be left without rebuke and refutation. Their false-hearted assumptions of evangelical phraseology, and their rhapsodies of hypocritical devotion on the one hand, and the attempted resurrection of superstitious fooleries by deceivers and deceived on the other, must be exposed to the daylight of true knowledge and honest argument. A comprehensive and upright philosophy, a faithful treatment of ecclesiastical questions, and a cordial acquiescence in the Word of God, must be the character of our ministers, and by them must be impressed upon the understanding of our fellow Christians. The immeasurable extent of the works of creation, and their unfathomable antiquity, must be held in harmony with the coinciding infinity of God's condescension to the smallest worm, to the invisible animalcule, and to the moral agent of all dependent intelligences. The decrees of Jehovah from past eternity, their execution in righteousness and grace to the eternity future, and the distinct subsistencies of the one God,—the majesty of the law, the works of re-

demption and regeneration, the full accountability of man, the rules of indefeasible duty through the vast range of obligation to man and God, the retributions of eternity,—these, and all their collateral principles of belief and holiness, our ministers must be qualified to maintain with lucid demonstration, with meekness to opponents, and fully illustrated by their own practical character. We expect that many will go forth from the New College to "set themselves for the defence and confirmation of the gospel," by writings marked with honorableness and benevolence. But from all it is our demand and expectation, that they will make their highest employ the "preaching which God hath bidden." To this one thing they are to devote their powers and consecrate their acquisitions,—all science and literature, all eloquence, poetry, and history, and the all-pervading practice of prayer.

Millions without God.

Seven hundred millions of immortal and eternity-bound beings now live on this earth without the lamp of life. Unblest with schools, churches, hospitals, wholesome laws, and strangers to civilization with its train of refined and humane institutions; large numbers of them devoid of the arts and sciences; addicted to rapine, murder, and every barbarous atrocity; deluded in their religious notions; ignorant of the true God, their duty and destiny; worshipping senseless idols, and practising the most revolting rites of self-torture; one half of the race having no protection; abandoned to the grossest immoralities, ignorance and slavery; having no voice in their marriage; wasted in spirits, wearing away life in tears; and in death, forced by custom to lie down in sorrow, on the funeral pile of deceased husbands, as the great poet has said, "like patience on a monument smiling at grief;" and all this because the Bible is not there; their altars red with human blood, and groaning under hecatombs of sacrificial victims; their divinity an idolatrous polytheism; their source of merit, expiatory sufferings; their intellect stupidly imbruted; their morals corrupt; and their exit from time a terrible leap in the dark; they crowd all the highways to eternity, hovering in dense clouds over the brink of the great gulf, to be swept off by the dark wings of death's angel, at the rate of seventy-five thousand per day.

All earth's winds and waves have caught the groans and tears of these sighing and perishing millions and rolled them around the world: weaving them into an anthem of sorrow, whose reverberating thunder is rising into the boundless heavens, and girdling the everlasting throne. One writer has represented the whole pagan world as sitting at the feet of Christendom, like Lazarus at the rich man's gate, in rags and wounds, and peniless, asking for the crumbs that fall from our sumptuous table. They ask for bread; not for that which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life; not for the corruptible manna which our Fathers did eat in the wilderness and are dead, but the living bread of heaven, the Holy Scriptures, which a man may eat and never die.—*Presbyterian Advocate*.

Near Views of Eternity.

Eternity is another thing than we ordinarily take it to be in a healthful state. O, how vast and boundless! O, how fixed and unalterable! O, of what infinite importance is it that we be prepared for eternity! I have been just a dying, now for more than week; and all around have thought me so. I have had clear views of eternity; have seen the blessedness of the godly, in some measure; and have longed to share their happy state, as well as been comfortably satisfied that through grace, I shall do so: but O, what anguish is raised in my mind for those who are Christless, for those who are mistaken, and who bring their false hopes with them to the grave! The sight was so dreadful, that I could by no means bear it; and I said under a more affecting sense than ever before, "Who can dwell with everlasting burnings!" O! methought could I now see my friends, that I might warn them to see to it, that they lay their foundation for eternity sure.—*Brainerd*.

Divine retribution belongs to Eternity, and is distant and vague; human retribution is uncertain, depending upon discovery and other fortuitous circumstances; but moral retribution is as sure as life, as sure as death, as sure as the sin out of whose bosom it springs.