

THE IMPORTANT INQUIRY.

"Is thine heart right?"—2 Kings x. 15.

BY A WORKING MAN.

This is a question of great importance. It demands attention. It deserves consideration. It should be pondered carefully, considered seriously, examined prayerfully, and answered cautiously. It is not, "Is thine head right, or thy creed right, or thy profession right?" but "Is thine heart right?" Wishing you to come to a correct conclusion in this important matter, we say,

First, *A right heart is a broken heart* (Ps. li. 17). The penitent is deeply humbled before God, contrite for his past offences, and sensible of his own unworthiness. He looks back, and his sins terrify him. He looks forward, and judgment troubles him. He looks inward, and guilt oppresses him. He feels condemned. He stands alarmed. He knows his danger. He fears death. He dreads hell. While thus troubled, the Saviour speaks; He says unto him, "Look unto me, and be ye saved" (Is. xlv. 22). He raises his head.—He looks to the cross, and gazes upon Him whom his sins have pierced, and he mourns and is in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born (Zech. xii. 10).—He looks again; his burden falls; his fears are gone; his guilt is removed; and he feels that as far as the east is from the west, so far hath God removed his transgressions from him (Ps. ciii. 12). He looks upward, and says, "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." He speaks exultingly to the pious, and says, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation" (Is. xlii. 12). A heart like this is broken for sin, cleansed from sin, and set against sin; and such a heart is right in the sight of God.

Secondly, *A right heart is a new heart* (Ezek. xxxvii. 26). One given by God, fixed upon God, and drawn out after God. His language is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Ps. lxxiii. 25). God spake to him, and said, "Seek ye my face." His heart replied, and said, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek" (Ps. xxvii. 8). He sought Him with his whole heart, and when he had found Him, exclaimed, "I have found Him whom my soul loveth" (Sol. iii. 4). Christ is precious to him. He loves Him supremely, obeys Him willingly, works for Him cheerfully, trusts in Him only, relies upon Him wholly, looks to Him daily, speaks of Him highly, and serves Him with his whole heart and soul. Once he saw no beauty in Him that he should desire Him; but now He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. He just suits his case, supplies all his need, and sweetly cheers his soul.—He is beauty to his eyes, music in his ears, and joy to his heart. He looks to Him for wisdom, trusts in Him for safety, and relies upon Him for salvation. In a word, Christ is all and in all to him; his desire is to be like Him, and it will constitute his heaven to be with Him,—to see His lovely face, dwell in His sweet embrace, and sing of the wonders of His love. A heart like this is right; it is the temple of the Spirit, the dwelling-place of God.

And now, dear reader, I repeat the solemn question—"Is thine heart right?" Is it renewed by Divine grace, cleansed by the blood of Christ, purified by faith, and set upon things above? Is Christ valued? Is the Bible loved? Is sin abhorred? Is holiness desired? Are saints dear? Is your treasure in heaven? If so, thy heart is right. Keep it with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life (Prov. iv. 23). But, is sin cherished? Is prayer neglected? Is the Bible unopened? Is the gospel slighted? Is Christ made light of? Is the Sabbath desecrated? Is any known sin loved or practised? If so, thou hast need to tremble: thy wickedness is great; thy state dangerous; thy heart filthy; thy doom dreadful, and thy damnation slumbereth not. God is angry with you; Satan is deceiving you; Sin is hardening you; death is near you, and hell awaits you. Every moment your case gets more hopeless, your state more dangerous, your salvation more difficult, and your damnation more likely to take place. Repent, therefore, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die? (Ezek. xviii. 30, 31.) Sinner, God speaks. He speaks in mercy.—

He speaks to thee. He says: My son, give me thine heart (Prov. xxiii. 26). He knows it is wrong, and He desires to make it right. Right for health, and right for sickness; right for life, and right for death; right for earth, and right for heaven; right for time and right for eternity; right for this life, and right for that which is to come.

My fellow-sinner, soon you must die!—Death is certain—it is near—it may be very near to you, whose eye is now reading this page. You may die this year—this day—this hour—yea, this moment. Eighteen Hundred and Fifty is fast approaching its close; but long before it is gone you may be in eternity. Are you prepared for the solemn change?—"Is thine heart right?" But after death comes the judgment! God has spoken it, prophets foretold it, the apostles preached it, believers expect it; and though infidels mock at it, and sinners forget it, each and all of us must be at it! Are you ready for the trial? Are you prepared to stand the solemn scrutiny?—"Is thine heart right?"—*The Appeal.*

[From the Watchman and Reflector.]

An Unsound Argument Exposed.

The main argument against Strict Communion, is thus stated in the last number of the Princeton Review, in an article called forth by the recent work of Prof. Curtis, issued by the American Baptist Publication Society. "Him whom Christ receives and acknowledges as his disciple, his professed disciples refuse to admit to Christ's table! Can any reasoning about symbols of communion, and the necessity of preserving the primitive doctrine of baptism, prove this to be right? Impossible?"

Here is an argument which is deemed unanswerable, but which, we think, involves several unsound and unscriptural positions.

1. It involves a *non sequitur*. In these words more is comprehended in the conclusion, than is contained in the premises. Reduced to a syllogism, it should stand thus—"Him whom Christ receives as a disciple, his professed disciples should receive as such: this man is a disciple of Christ, therefore his professed disciples should receive him as such." Thus stated the argument is sound. And this is precisely the practice of our churches.—But as stated by the Reviewer, there is a *fallacy of the middle term*; that is, more is meant by the term *received*, in the conclusion than in the premises. Can anything be plainer in the commission, than that Christ recognizes men as disciples, and as such receives them to his mercy before baptism? and by baptism, to the observance of all other things by him commanded? If the question then means, Do you receive this man as a disciple, on the evidence of his conversion, we say, yes, joyfully. He is received by us, precisely as he is by Christ, as a pardoned believer, and as such, a candidate for baptism and the church, with all its duties and privileges. But suppose he objects to be baptized, on the ground of his dedication to God by his parents in infancy. We should tell him that does not affect his duty in the least; for every one baptized by the Apostles on the day of Pentecost had been dedicated to God in infancy. What could he reply? He might plead that his conscience was satisfied; that Christ had received him, and that we ought to receive him to the Lord's table on this ground. But he forgets that we also have a conscience to be satisfied as well as he; and that we should be unfaithful to Christ and to him, to receive him on such grounds to one ordinance without the other. So Peter received Cornelius and his friends as disciples, on the evidence of the Holy Ghost, that Christ had received them; but he "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

2. It assumes that every disciple of Christ, as such, has a right everywhere, and at all times, to the Lord's table. If this be so, not only is baptism set aside, but all suspension and excision for heresy, disorder, or immorality, is wrong, unless that the parties are not disciples of Christ. Is the Reviewer really prepared to maintain this position with all its consequences? Is any body of Christians ready to act upon it? Is it consistent with the scriptural laws of discipline? Would it not work interminable confusion in all churches and denominations?

3. It assumes that men, as disciples of Christ may have *rights* in churches, where they have no correspondent *obligations*. Is this so? Is it equitable? Is it consistent with the purity, or independence, or honor, or peace of the churches? *Privileges* may

be granted to visiting brethren from abroad; but in the Reviewer's argument, the Lord's Supper is claimed in all cases as a *right*—even by those professed disciples who refuse to come under the yoke of Christ, in baptism and church fellowship. Is not this contrary to common sense, as well as the Scripture?

4. It assumes that the Lord's Supper is not a symbol of special church relations. But this is the point in dispute, and therefore cannot, consistently with sound reasoning, be assumed.

5. It assumes that even if the Lord's Supper be such a symbol, or whether it be or not, it is at all events of greater importance than Christian Baptism. And that its importance is so immeasurably superior, that even the primitive doctrine of Baptism "may safely be abandoned, rather than the right of every disciple, unconditionally, to the Supper. But where is this idea taught in the Scripture? Surely not in the Great Commission, where the Supper is not mentioned, but baptism is. Not in the Acts of the Apostles, where the baptism of disciples is recorded at least five times as frequently as the breaking of bread. Not in the Epistles, where about the same proportion is observed, though we should very naturally have expected the reverse. Whence, then, does the Reviewer, and those who think with him, derive authority for this notion that baptism is of less importance than the Supper? and may safely, nay, in all charity, where opinions differ, *must* be sacrificed to it? We are sometimes charged with an "idolatry of baptism," because we plead for its primitive observance. We believe the charge most unrighteous, as well as uncharitable. But is it either unjust or unkind to admonish our Reviewer that the sacrament of the Supper *has been idolized* by the immense majority of Pedobaptists in some forms, and that *there is danger* that it may be in others?

Prayer for the Ministers of the Gospel.

We are glad to meet with a tract specially enforcing this duty. This tract, which has been issued by the American Baptist Publication Society, urges the duty of prayer for the ministry with impressive force, and deserves to be widely circulated in our churches. It was written, we understand, by a pastor in our immediate vicinity, who has been led to feel the claim which this subject has upon the attention of Christians. We quote the annexed passage:

To divide aright the word of life, so as to win souls and feed the flock of God; to avoid all hurtful extremes, without becoming tame and spiritless; to present truth in its just proportion, giving to each doctrine and precept its due place and prominence; to preach the law and the gospel in their opposition and their harmony; to cut off the anxious sinner from all hope of salvation by works, as the necessary fruits of faith, and upon holiness as dispensable to salvation; to encourage, without exciting a false hope; to reprove, without casting down; to warn faithfully, yet with tears; to arouse the careless, reclaim the wandering, confirm the weak, instruct the ignorant, comfort the sorrowing; to be zealous according to knowledge, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, a good steward of the mysteries of God, who will give himself continually to prayer and the ministry of the word, and watch for souls as one that must give an account and who, in all shall humble himself and exalt Christ; this is the solemn duty of the minister. Yes, constantly must he study and preach that gospel, which is a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. Is not a momentous responsibility involved in the dispensation of such a gospel? A mistake here may be attended with fatal results. If the minister fail to preach the truth, or the whole truth, or to preach it in a right spirit and manner, and in connection with much prayer, if he forget at any time his solemn charge, and speak only to please the ear, and so as to lull the conscience, what language can measure the disastrous influence upon his hearers, or the guilt which his own soul has incurred? If there is a woe for that minister who preaches *not* the gospel, what shall be the woe for him, who professing to preach it, gives the trumpet an uncertain sound, so that his hearers prepare not for the battle? The minister and his people will meet before the judgment seat of Christ. There they will bear witness, both the saved and lost, to his care or carelessness of souls.

"Nothing," said Baxter, "can be more indecent than to hear a dead preacher speaking to dead sinners the living truth of the living God;" and nothing, we may add, can involve

greater guilt. Oh! it is solemn work to watch for souls. The minister, "as against his study door, should hear the surges of eternity, hour by hour, breaking in their awful and incessant roar." It is from the depths of eternity that the solemn voice comes up into his ear which warns him to be faithful.

John Welsh, an eminent Scotch preacher of former days, is said to have prayed seven or eight hours a day. He used to keep a plaid on his bed, that he might wrap himself in it when he rose during the night. Sometimes his wife found him lying on the ground, weeping. When she complained, he would say, "O, woman! I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, and I know not how it is with many of them." Such was his sense of the awful responsibility of his office. In view of these things, can we wonder that an inspired preacher once wrote, in behalf of himself and his associates in the ministry—"Brethren, pray for us! And may not your pastors, with peculiar emphasis, repeat the request—*Brethren, pray for us!* They need your prayers, and they earnestly implore them. Are they invested with an office involving so solemn a responsibility, and duties so various and arduous, and yet are they but men, having peculiar trials and temptations—may they not be allowed to present an importunate appeal?"—*Ch. Watchman & Reflector.*

The Sinner's Warrant to Pray.

When God says to the sinner—Ask and ye shall receive—seek and ye shall find—knock and it shall be opened—does he tantalize him and put him upon praying without a warrant? We know, as a matter of fact and experience, that it has been by prayer that every sinner, finding money, has knocked and called at the gate of Divine mercy. But the sinner having no spirit of adoption, and no intimacy at the throne of grace, doubts of his warrant to come and expect an answer. He has read, that the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. And whenever he has tried to pray, he has found himself repelled from the throne.

Yet it is an undoubted truth, that God in all sincerity invites a world of ruined sinners to confide in his mercy, and come to him for salvation. And if the sinner may not look upon himself as pardoned, and set among God's children, he may come to God as a creature, dying of his wounds, and open those wounds before a compassionate God, and let them plead for him. And though he has no warrant to ask of God any gift, for a selfish and therefore rebellious end, he is required to let his repentance flow forth in channels of prayer and confession of sin. He is required to turn to God; and the first act of turning to him will very naturally take the form of prayer. That casting of the soul on the work of the Redeemer, that surrender of all to him—that committing of the soul to him to be washed in his blood, new created by his Spirit, and ruled by his laws—that entering into covenant with him, which conversion involves, is a proper work for prayer. And for a prayer of this kind, to be offered by the most guilty and hardened sinners, there is a full warrant.

Though God cannot be pleased with the prayers uttered by one still determined to continue in rebellion, nothing hinders the success of the prayer of the publican—God be merciful to me a sinner. Indeed, the whole drift of the Gospel teaching goes to bring the sinner to pray such a prayer. And rarely does renewing grace come upon the sinner until the solitudes of the soul are sufficiently awake to engage it to intense earnestness in prayer.—*Puritan Recorder.*

The Power of Divine Truth.

At a meeting of the London Religious Tract Society, the Rev. James Hill, formerly of Calcutta, related the following fact respecting Captain Connolly, whose overland tour to India had lately been published.

The Captain went out, a stranger to God, and to true religion; but his sisters were pious ladies, and one of them happened before he went to put into his baggage a Bible. I think he had never read, never looked into it. It so happened, that on his journey to India he was taken captive by a tribe of Turcomans, through the treachery of his guide. He was made prisoner for a short time. On one occasion he was loading a camel with his own baggage, which had been taken from him, and out dropped the Bible which his sister had given him. He took it up; he had never read it before, and he sat down on his own baggage; that he was employed in loading upon the camel, and he read of the "unsearchable riches