

## Who Cares for a Little Tract?

The time was when it was said, "The elegantly written volumes of popular authors commend themselves to our perusal; we wish our friends to read them, and we are fond of discussing their merits; but who cares for a little tract of four pages, or deems it worthy of notice?" But we suppose that time to have gone by, and that the importance of distributing tracts is now more correctly estimated. The New-York City Tract Society now sustains twenty-one city missionaries, under whose superintendence, and with whose co-operation, a hundred thousand tracts are scattered monthly over every part of this island, though chiefly amongst the poor, by about one thousand two hundred visitors. It also aids Sabbath and public schools, Bible and temperance societies, and other good institutions. During many years there has not been a single month in which it has not been the privilege of this Society to record the conversion of souls to God through its instrumentality; and frequently it is honored as the means of reclaiming backsliders. Each missionary presents a monthly report to the Board; and the following incidents are not the whole, but only a selection from one of those reports.

About three months ago, the tract, "Am I self-deceived?" was left on board a fishing-smack. The master of that vessel now tells us, that then both he and one of his men were backsliders, and says, "That tract seems to have been sent especially to me. I said to myself, Am I self-deceived? Perhaps I am. Then conscience asked, Have you lived as you ought? Have you acted on board, and on shore as a Christian should have done? Have you not been ashamed of Christ? Have you not, for four months past, neglected to pray with your crew? Oh, I felt bad indeed! I was exceedingly troubled, and felt that I must change my course of life. From that time I humbled myself before God, and, blessed be his name, he has restored to me the joy of his salvation. I took the tract to my fellow-backslider, and told him that we must have prayer in the cabin in the evening. At first he objected; but when he had read the tract, he felt as I did, and willingly agreed to take part in the exercise. Our little crew consisted of five persons, and in the evening they were all present. While I was praying, one of the men cried out, Won't you pray for me, Captain? Oh, do pray for me! I have been one of the most wicked men that ever lived! We did pray for him; and in view of God's merciful dealings with us, we humbled ourselves more and more. That man's anguish of spirit was very great; but after four days the Lord gave peace to his soul." The missionary has conversed with these three men, and found them all rejoicing in God their Saviour. Here is another case. A gentleman asked a visitor for a tract, and said, "A short time since I was an infidel, and lived very wickedly; but a tract was put in my hand, I know not by whom, and, thinking the title, 'I am an infidel,' a peculiar one, I read it; and I thank God that he made it the means of showing me my wretched condition as a sinner, and of leading me to Christ. Now I know that he hath power upon earth to forgive sin, and I have the witness in myself that I am born of God." He added much more to the same effect, and shed tears of gratitude as he spoke of the mercy of God. Another man met a person from whom he had received a tract a year before, and, calling the circumstance to his remembrance, related how it had been made the means of his conversion. When he received the tract, he was a debased drunkard, but now he is a consistent member of a Christian church. We are also informed that the tract given him, and which was entitled "The barren fig-tree," has been blessed to several persons to whom he lent it. The same report speaks also of a husband and his wife who were Papists, but, through reading a tract, were led to see their condition as sinners against God, and their need of a better absolution than Popish priests could give. They are now regular attendants upon an evangelical ministry, and expect soon to cast in their lot with the people of God.

These cases, though selected from the report of only one of the tract missionaries, are necessarily given with much brevity; but they show that the New-York City Tract Society is engaged in the important work, upon which the Lord condescends to bestow his blessing. In the four months that have elapsed of the present year, ninety-six conversions have been recorded.—*N. Y. Recorder.*

## The Simultaneous Conversion.

When residing where I commenced my ministerial labours, I had in my congregation a newly married couple of very intelligent and interesting young people. Neither of them were pious, but both were adorned with many personal graces. Shortly after Mrs. W. had given birth to her first-born, I paid a lengthened visit. I deemed this a fitting opportunity to press upon them the importance of personal piety; and, after tea, I proposed reading and family prayer. I saw it gave pleasure.

"My dear sir, you are now a father. Your child is born to live forever. Think of this. It will devolve on you to train the child up in the fear of the Lord; but, unless you yourself are brought into fellowship with him, the duty will be but imperfectly discharged. Allow me, then, to ask you one question:—Do you ever feelingly and earnestly pray for the salvation of your own soul?"

"My friend was deeply affected, his eye was fixed on me, but he was silent; and in a moment, by a sudden spring, of which I was unconscious until I saw the movement, his beloved wife, on exclaiming, "My dear John," threw her arms round his neck, and there was an audible weeping. I was literally taken by surprise; nor could I refrain from sympathizing with my friends, who were for some minutes too powerfully overcome by excess of feeling to give any explanation of the cause of it.

"I never sir," he replied, when he was sufficiently composed to speak, "had one feeling thought about the salvation of my soul, till last Sabbath three weeks, when you preached from Gen. iii. 9.

"Was it in the morning?" asked his wife.

"Yes," I replied.

"And about what time, sir, did you commence the sermon?"

"About half-past eleven."

She was silent for some time, evidently striving against the strong tide of feeling which had set in.

"It was exactly at that hour," she at length said, "and on that morning, when solemn thoughts, which have often sprung up in my mind within the last twelve months, came upon me with great force. They were too painful and oppressive to be borne; but I knew not from what source to obtain relief. My hymn-book was lying on my dressing table. I opened it, and began reading a hymn, and thought I never read one so beautiful; but when I came to the following verses, I fell on my knees at the throne of grace; and, for the first time in my life, committed my soul to the compassionate love of my Saviour:

O, would the Lord appear,  
My malady to heal!  
He knows how long I've languished here,  
And what distress I feel.

Here, then, from day to day,  
I'll wait, and hope, and try:  
Can Jesus hear a sinner pray,  
Yet suffer him to die?

No; he is full of grace:  
He never will permit  
A soul, that fain would see his face  
To perish at his feet.

It was indeed a touching sight to behold the husband and his wife emerging together out of the mere forms of religion; and, under a keen sense of guilt and unworthiness, coming to Jesus Christ to be saved. From the first impressions of divine truth on their hearts, till the hour when my interrogation led to the grand discovery that they both had left the dark prison-house of spiritual ignorance and alienation from God, they had been praying for each other's conversion; dreading lest the other should be left to perish; but now, under very strongly excited feelings, they exchanged mutual congratulations on account of what the Lord had so unexpectedly done for them.

We knelt down together at the throne of grace, and offered our united thanksgiving for this marvellous manifestation of the loving kindness of God our Saviour; and, as their minister, I solemnly dedicated them to his service, with their first-born, the living pledge of their mutual love. I then withdrew, musing as the reader may naturally suppose, on the singular coincidence as to time, when the same spiritual effects were produced in both, in different places, and by a different order of means. Within the space of a few months I had the gratification of seeing them under my

pastoral charge. Mr. W. became an office-bearer of the church; and both lived to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.—*Presbyterian of the West.*

## Commerce and Conscience.

Commercial men do not lose conscience. I speak of them not as men, but as commercial men. Practical commerce, at best, is as cold as a stone. *Business is Business.* On Sunday, the exemplary merchant hears from the pulpit, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," and he says amen to that. On Monday he hears the genius of commerce say, "Every man for himself," and he says amen to that. He has one conscience for Sunday and another for Monday. If I wished to send consternation along the exchange, and panic to the tables of money changers, I would not send war nor pestilence, but I would bring down love's brightest angel, benevolence, before the sweet splendor of whose face the financial men flee away. Why! the Lord's Prayer would bring down fire from heaven if answered. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," would be the death knell of banks and offices—the *caucus* would vomit out its impurity—the slave would go up—the master would go down—the crooked places would be made straight, and the rough places smooth. If every brick in every wall which had been laid in transgression, and every nail driven in sin, and every bale and box brought forth in iniquity, were to groan and sigh, how many articles around us would remain silent? How men would shriek and cry out, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" If every article of trade in any store, that was there through wrong, were to fly through the air to the rightful ownership, what a flight of bales and boxes and sugar casks should we see! The Lord's Prayer would be a very unsafe prayer to pray, if it were answered. But is not the wrong as much here, as if it was thus demonstrated before our eyes?

The lawyer is often pure in private life. Go to him at home, and ask him to lie or cheat for you, and he will scorn you with flaming anger. But you go to his office, and ask him to do substantially these very things, in the way of business, in your case, and he will do it. Houses have a parlor door, a kitchen door, and a cellar door, and so have men. Bring some article to the parlor door which is contraband there, and men say, "What, bring such things here?" (The sin is not in bringing the thing, but in bringing it to the wrong door!) Pass it along to the kitchen, and if refused there, roll it into the cellar. Nothing comes amiss there. It is a great art to know the philosophy of getting entrance and selecting entrance at the different doors of a man's heart.

The Christian is the man who carries his conviction of right into ALL his conduct, who has one conscience, and but one, for every kind of business, and every hour of life, who will not do at a caucus what he would not do at home. His stops are all voiced together, so that all portions of his nature bleed into one sublime and magnificent harmony. Such a life hath the world for its cathedral, and the world will listen to it.—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

## The City on a Hill.

"How did Roger Sherman vote?" inquired Mr. Jefferson once as he entered the halls of Congress while a question was being taken; and, as the story goes, he recorded his own vote on the same side, without knowing much of the merits of the question itself. This was a high tribute to the good sense of the Connecticut shoemaker, and proved him to be a man for others to steer by.

Now it is not improbable that our Saviour had reference to the same thing in morals when he told his disciples that they were "cities on a hill." The idea seems to be something more than mere conspicuousness. When the Great Teacher first pronounced this memorable comparison of a good man with a conspicuous city, his eyes may have been looking to the ancient town of Saphet, which stood upon a lofty elevation, high above the waves of Galilee. It was in full sight, and seen from afar. It was as if he had said, "Ye are like yonder city of Saphet, set upon a hill." That city is always there, always in one place, lifting its white domes to the morning sun, and flashing back his evening rays from its high battlements. It is an object to take the compass by—an object by which the traveller from Syria and Lebanon may guide his steps. The fisherman, as he pushes his light shallop over the placid bosom of Gennesaret, knows

which way to steer his little craft, for yonder looms up Saphet, the "city on a hill." The dwellers hard by knew which way was North, and which was South, by looking out towards the lofty city. It was *always* on its hilly throne.

So is it with a man of Bible principle. He is a moral Saphet. Other men can steer by him. Other men often judge of the wisdom or rightfulness of things by the position which he occupies. They say, "We know that is right, for Mr. A. advocates it;" or, "We fear that it is wrong, for Mr. A. opposes it;" He is on a hill—firm, well established, not seeking to be conspicuous, but yet *not ashamed to be seen.* It requires a sound conscience to be all this. It requires holy and consistent living. This controlling and directing godliness of character "goeth not out" but by much prayer, watchfulness, self-denial and careful walking with God.—*Presbyterian.*

## SEEK THE PURITY OF DIVINE TRUTH.

Zeal for the purity of Divine truth has not kept pace with zeal for the salvation of sinners. \* \* \* Is it more important to propagate the gospel, than to preserve its purity? Paul thought it of more importance to contend for the purity of the gospel, than to extend its reception by his personal ministry.—He never laid down his weapons. He was unceasingly employed in combating the corruptions of the gospel. He considered the smallest modification or alloy as constituting another gospel; and instead of teaching the disciples to regulate their doctrine by the philosophy of the age, he warned them against the deceptions of philosophy. Let not Christians then provoke the Lord to give up his truth to be trampled by its enemies, by their sinful backwardness to acknowledge and defend it.—*Carson's "Knowledge of Jesus."*

REVERENCE IN THE PULPIT.—Children, says the N. Y. Observer, are impartial judges, and their judgment, as in the following case, should be heeded. A little girl in a neighboring city, had often heard the fame of a popular preacher, and desired her mother to take her to his church. The mother gratified her request, and when the little child was returning home, she looked up, and said, "Mother, I don't like the preaching of Mr. ———." "And why do you not?" "Because, mother, he speaks of God just as if he were his cousin."

A THOUGHT FOR EVERY DAY.—We see not in this life the end of human actions—their influence never dies. In ever widening circles it reaches beyond the grave. Death removes us from this to an eternal world. Time determines what shall be our condition in that world. Every morning when we go forth we lay the moulding hand on our destiny, and every evening when we have done, we have left a deathless impress upon our character. We touch not a wire but vibrates in eternity—not a voice but reports at the throne of God. Let youth especially think of these things, and let every one remember then in the world where character is in its formation state, it is a serious thing to think, to speak, to act.—*The Missionary.*

## The Rev. Rowland Hill on the Effects of Drunkenness.

"If you wish to be always thirsty, be a drunkard; for the oftener and more you drink the oftener and more thirsty you will be.

"If you seek to prevent your friends raising you in the world, be a drunkard; for that will defeat all their efforts.

"If you would effectually counteract your own attempts to do well, be a drunkard, and you will not be disappointed.

"If you wish to repel the endeavours of the whole human race to raise you to character, credit, and prosperity, be a drunkard, and you will most assuredly triumph.

"If you are determined to be poor, be a drunkard, and you will soon be ragged and penniless.

"If you would wish to starve your family, be a drunkard; for that will consume the means of their support.

"If you would be imposed on by knaves, be a drunkard; for that will make their task easy.

"If you would wish to be robbed, be a drunkard; which will enable the thief to do it with more safety.

"If you would wish to blunt your senses, be a drunkard, and you will soon be more stupid than an ass.

"If you would become a fool, be a drunkard, and you will soon loose your understanding.

"If you wish to unfit yourself for rational