

A SMALL DISCIPLE.

There are such. We have seen them. If our readers never saw one, we are glad.—We will give a brief description of one, hoping that they may be profited by the picture.

1. He has small acquaintance with the Bible. If the actual worth of that book could have been an incitement to a large acquaintance with it, or the earnest injunction of its Author to study it had prevailed, there would have been knowledge of it. But they have both failed. The Scriptures are a territory into which he has taken only now and then a hasty ramble. Long and diligent journeying there, to know what might be known, has never been practised. Hence a very small circle of ideas would embrace all his knowledge of the lively oracles.

2. He is very sparing in his attendance upon Christian privileges. Custom, and perhaps other motives, make him acquainted with the sanctuary on the Sabbath, but he is seldom discernable on other occasions. This neglect helps to keep him small. If he only had the heart to turn into all the fat pastures that are open to him he might find ample food, and increase in spiritual stature.

3. His prayers are small. The whole heart and soul is not in them, only a part of it.—And when but a small part of the soul is engaged, the prayers themselves cannot be otherwise than small. They do not go largely forth, expanding and increasing, as they must from a heart all on fire with love and zeal. They are fettered and cramped, and are dwarfish. There is nothing of the giant about them.

4. His faith is small. A grain of mustard-seed is too large and object for the comparison. If his faith filled but that small measure, Zion would not be long in learning that man's spiritual strength. But he has only dim visions of eternal things. Instead of soaring upward as on eagle's wings, he grovels and creeps. If you were to place him beside some of the men of strong faith that may be found in Zion, you would be surprised at the contrast.

5. He is very small also in his charities.—They are drops, small drops, and not very near together either. We have heard one commended who gave all she had, which is a large donation; and of others who had given themselves—and of others who have done what they could. All this is large and noble. But this disciple was never found in such company. It is pitiful to see one who is so largely indebted to God's beneficence, as a disciple, and one whose profession implies so much, and one whose hopes embrace so large and glorious an inheritance hereafter, it is pitiful to find charity with him a small affair. It ought to be one of the largest of his Christian graces. Indeed Paul would have disciples abound in it so much that it would be like a mantle, covering and binding together all other Christian graces—the very "bond of perfectness." We wish this disciple had hearkened to Paul. What a noble position he might have held, compared with the sorry spectacle he now presents.

Now, because all these things are true, we do not see how we can call the person any thing else than a small disciple. We looked about for a better name, but could not find one. The Scriptures speak of growing in grace, and of rising "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." But it has not been so in this case. We have to tax charity heavily to hope he ever began to grow at all. We trust there is some life in what so nearly resembles a dead body. But all the indications are so small, that we cannot but have anxiety.

We should like to make a personal address to all the small disciples who read this article. But we have misgivings about its being of any use, because the really small disciple is the last person to suspect his own diminitiveness. He would not dream this article had any relation to him. Hence the shot would fly harmless over his head. We will leave him, therefore, hoping that to some of our readers, this account of the small disciple shall be at least of some advantage.—*Boston Rec.*

Learning and Inspiration.

There is instruction in the use which God has made of human learning, in the conveyance of inspired truth to the sacred page.—To cut off the grounds of an error, that has appeared in our day—the error which makes Inspiration to be but a quality common to all eminently pious men, God has, in some instances, miraculously inspired the minds of wicked men—as in the case of Balaam. To

show that inspiration is something different from genius or learning. He has, in some instances, inspired illiterate men; yet, He has employed no writers of his Scriptures but holy men, and most of the writing was done by learned men.

Moses, the writer of the five first books, was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt—then the seat of science for the world. Next to him, the most distinguished literary agent in producing the Old Testament was Ezra.—He bore the office of High Priest, after the return of the Jews from captivity; and, to him, at that important era, was committed the work of editing the Sacred writings that had been produced between his day and that of Moses. He compiled the Chronicles from the State-records, and brought the history down to the return from the captivity, and he collected and arranged in order the Sacred Books, that had been written before, and published a uniform edition of them. The Psalms, and other poetical works, which had been written in separate pieces, and on a great variety of occasions, and scattered through so many centuries, he collected and arranged.—And this work he did under a Divine Commission and Authority, so that the book, as edited by him, stood as an authentic record of God's writing, having had either an inspired author or editor, or both.

And as Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, so Ezra combined the learning of the Chaldeans and Persians, with that of the Jews. So, when the light of the New Testament was about to break forth upon the world, most of its pages were penned by men, who, like Ezra, were ready scribes in the law of Moses. Luke, the author of the Acts and of one of the Gospels, was a finished scholar. Paul, the author of most of the Epistles, was not only master of all Hebrew learning, but was so at home in the Greek classics, that he was able to vanquish the philosophers with their own weapons. While the Gospel was about to go forth among nations that were exalting the wisdom of men above that of God, there must needs be something in the form of its dispensation, that should go to stain the pride of man. So it was ordered, that illiterate fishermen should be the majority of the college of apostles, and that the most learned of the apostles should make no parade of his learning, and no reliance on the excellency of speech or of wisdom. And yet, while contempt was thus poured—not on learning, but on the pride of learning—Divine wisdom ordered it, that most of the matter, both of the Old and New Testaments, should have been conveyed to us by the pens of the learned.—This has been done, however, in a way to leave full conviction, that Inspiration is something radically different from learning or piety.—*Puritan Recorder.*

The Relation of Piety to Education.

This is not merely the relation of an effect to its cause. No training, either of the intellect or the heart, that human ingenuity can devise, can ever impart piety. No mere discipline, intellectual or moral, can ever kindle a spark of spiritual life in the soul. This can be done alone by the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. True piety then, where ever it exists, is uniformly and invariably the fruit of regeneration. Yet its relation to education is intimate and essential. If moral culture is one of the highest aims of education, there can be no true moral excellence without the previous preparation of piety. No principle, sufficiently pure and elevating to make it worth implanting in the heart, can take root and flourish there till the soil is prepared by the regenerating grace of God; after this there remains in the heart a fixed and abiding affinity for truth and holiness, which will constitute an encouraging pledge of success to every well directed effort towards moral discipline.

Piety, too, by freeing the mind from the dominion of the baser passions, furnishes the most essential preparation for intellectual improvement. Not only so; when the intellect is properly invigorated, piety alone can direct it, and keep it steadily turned to those high and noble objects which are alone worthy of its powers. The aid which piety affords also in the accumulation of useful knowledge can be treasured up and retained only by the aid of a proper classification; but it is piety that suggests the first law of order. It teaches us to see every thing in its relations to God, and is constantly suggesting those final causes everywhere, both in matter and in mind, which lead us to adopt new views of the universe, and new and more adoring conceptions of its

glorious Author. Piety, therefore, supplies the vine to which the fruits of knowledge are found adhering as clusters of rich and luxuriant grapes, all ready for vintage.

Thus, while piety is in no instance the effect of education, it facilitates and is essential to the highest kind of education, and suggests its right use when attained.

Indeed where there is no piety, education can be of no great or paramount value. The mind which has not the love of God, could it be known that it is to remain thus for ever, would scarcely be worth educating; the best thing we could do for it, would be to let it alone, lest we only increase its capacity for misery, and aggravate its doom. But since we know that God is merciful, that He is a hearer of prayer, and that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, parents have encouragement to commence the work of education, even before the signs of piety are visible. They toil in hope; they sow the seed of truth, and then offer up their humble prayer that the God of all grace would sanctify to the mind its discipline and its acquisitions.

But where the proof of piety is already seen, and still more, where there is evidence of a call of God to the work of preaching Christ to lost sinners, what a soil is here for the reception of truth! How rich the harvest that may be expected in return! How criminal to neglect the education of such a mind as this! But hundreds of such minds are now adorning our churches, and are looking up to those who hold the keys of the Lord's treasury, for the means to qualify them for their momentous task. What response are they to receive?

Evening Prayer before the Sleep of Death.

Less than two years since, an esteemed brother in the ministry attended family worship as usual in the evening, and then retired,—but died within five minutes afterwards.

Less than two months since, an estimable sister in our church, attended evening worship as usual with her husband, then retired, and within five minutes was struck with death, and passed to her account without another word. Neither of these had any more reason to expect such a sudden summons, than the writer or reader of this has to apprehend a similar one to-night.

"How many fall as sudden—few as safe?"

There was not only a Christian propriety, but a sacred beauty, in the fact, that their last conscious act of any importance on earth was an act of worship. "Thy will be done"—and then they dropped into the arms of their Redeemer.

"Thou our Shepherd and we thy sheep"—and immediately they heard his voice calling them to lie down in green pastures and beside the still waters. What a mistake—what a misfortune for both, had they died without that last prayer!

Criminals condemned to death, sometimes kneel and pray beside their open graves; but how different the untroubled, unconstrained prayer of the Christian at the side of his bed on which he is then to lie down for his long repose.

Missionaries about to sail for their distant fields of labour, celebrate and hallow their parting with friends and their native land, by an act of worship. So did that brother and sister, without foreseeing the result, commend themselves and were commended by others to God, and then launched off upon the voyage that was to bear them over dark waters to the Haven of Eternal Rest.

Queen Esther desired the pious Jews to pray for her, ere she went into the presence of Ahasuerus; Jacob wrestled with the angel to the last moment possible, before he ventured to meet his injured and powerful brother Esau; and Stephen prayed until the heavens opened to receive his freed Spirit. Now what can be more appropriate than that the last act of probation—the finishing stroke of preparation for the presence of the Great King, should be an act of devout homage. Were one to choose for himself, would he not have his last associations with earth connected with such a scene, rather than with anything frivolous or worldly. Would he not have his last interview with friends on earth, remembered as a social religious service. No one is so thoughtless but he would wish to strengthen himself for his long journey, could he foresee his time of starting. No parent would omit evening prayer, if he had reason to think some one of his household would be called home before morning; and how dare any one omit it when he knows that this may be the case!

It would add solemnity and importance to our evening devotions, to remember that when we commit ourselves and all our precious interests to God's keeping, professing entire confidence in his wisdom and goodness, *He may on that very night take us at our word!*—*Puritan Recorder.*

Like Me.

Suppose all Christians were just like me! what would become of the world? Suppose none prayed more, or more fervently, how many sinners would be awakened? How many revivals sent? Suppose none were more faithful in exhorting the impenitent, how many would be led to Christ? If none evinced more of the power and spirit of holiness in their lives, how many gainsayers and sceptics would be convinced and put to silence? If none were more liberal than I am, how would the pastor be sustained, the gospel spread, the kingdom of the Redeemer extended to the ends of the earth? In short, if all Christians were just like me, when would the millenium come—the day of Zion's triumph, when there shall be one Lord, and his name one; every knee bowing, and every tongue confessing to him alone? Alas! have I not too much reason to fear that that happy day is yet far distant, if no one is to be more efficient in bringing it about than I am? Oh, if my faith, my zeal, and my liberality were the measures for the whole church, there would be a sad prospect for this dark, ruined world! Who would take care of our country, if no one was more willing to sacrifice his own ease and comfort for it than I am? Who would give the water of eternal life to the famishing millions in heathen lands, if no one had more bowels of compassion than I have? And why should any one feel more responsibility in these matters than I do? If I can free my skirts, why not others? Have we not all one Master, one Judge, to whom we must render an account? If, then I can answer for my delinquencies, others will have no more difficulty. There is no justice in easing one, while all the rest are burdened. If I can get a dispensation to serve mammon, or Belial, or self, why not others? If I may love the Lord with less than my whole mind, and soul, and strength, and my neighbor less than myself, so may every disciple of Jesus. And if I may seek the gratification of my own desires as the first end of my being, so may all the world besides. And Satan may riot amid universal ruin and death, till the last trump shall awake us all, to receive according to our deeds whether good or bad.

The Family Newspaper.

The silent influence of the religious newspaper in the family, and through 10,000 families, on the heart of the great community, is briefly stated by a writer unknown to us, in the following paragraph. "A large portion of our best moral impressions and sentiments have been suggested, reiterated, and fastened on the mind by the family press. The pulpit does much; parental instruction in many cases does much; but the press is, in the present day, necessary to both. Let any reader of a well-conducted family paper open its paper, and consider thoughtfully its contents. There are in a single number sometimes from 150 to 200 separate and distinct articles, each one conveying an idea, a fact, or a sentiment, and stated or illustrated so as to produce an effect, in enlarging the reader's store of knowledge, or giving a right direction to thought, feeling, or action. Must not all this have its influence, and in the aggregate a mighty influence upon the reader? No reflecting man can fail to see that the fifty-two visits in a year of a carefully conducted paper, intelligent, correct, elevated in its moral tone, and withal interesting in its contents, must exert a great and blessed influence upon domestic life. Children growing up under such influences, are far more likely to be intelligent, correct in their opinions and morals, and better prepared for the active duties of life, than they could possibly have been without it."—*British Banner.*

"I have done all I can to obtain the favour of God," says another, "and still I have not succeeded." Done all you can? Think a moment. What single act have you ever done solely to please God? And if you had given your heart first of all, that of itself would have been accepted. But all that you can give him while that is withheld goes for nothing.

Rectitude of will is the greatest ornament of the mind.