

### "Who will shew us any Good?"

By good we are to understand, something that will please, gratify, satisfy: something that is adapted to give contentment and enjoyment. There is nothing wrong in such a desire. It is the instinctive, and natural enquiry of a dependent, rational creature. It belongs to God alone to be the fountain of his own blessedness, and to contain all the springs of happiness in himself. God, and he only, is self-sufficient. All created beings are dependent, not only for existence, but for bliss. Man, especially as a fallen creature, must look out for himself; must travel, so to speak, from home for good. This desire and enquiry after "good," is neither virtuous nor vicious; it has no moral character, but it is simply an instinct. It is right or wrong according to the choice we make to gratify the desire. It is a positive, absolute, and uncontrollable necessity of our nature, to wish to be happy; for it is an impossibility to wish to be otherwise.—In common, therefore, with the people of God, the people of the world desire good.

But notice the INDEFINITENESS of the enquiry: *any* good. True, the word "*any*" is put in by our translators, and is not in the original Hebrew: but it is implied in the vagueness of the general term "good." Now what should have been the enquiry? What should *now* be the enquiry of every rational creature? I answer, it should have been this, "Who will shew us the good? Tell us what is the chief good? Instruct us what is that good which our souls need, which God has provided for us, and which, when possessed, will satisfy us?" Is it not evident that such should be the nature and object of our inquiries? Ought we to be satisfied with *anything*, whether suitable or unsuitable; satisfying or unsatisfying? Is it worthy of a thinking being, and in reference to so important matter as his happiness, to set out with so vague a guide as that word "*any*," in quest of bliss? Ought we not to institute a most rigid and anxious investigation into the constitution, condition, wants, woes, and capacities of our soul; and equally into the provisions which God has made for our contentment and enjoyment? If there were no means of ascertaining these matters, or if all things were equally adapted to satisfy us, then it were rational enough to ask for *any* thing; but when there is a danger that shadows may be pursued instead of substances; and poison may be taken instead of food, we should be more intelligent, discriminating, definite, and settled in our choice.

Yet is not this the way of the multitude? Have they any precise notions of true happiness, either as to its nature, its sources, or the method of obtaining it? Is not the great question, "What is good," unsettled? The whole subject is to them, wrapped in impenetrable darkness. And hence they are running up and down in the world, and amidst the confusion of many voices we hear but one distinct and prevailing sound, and that is "Any good." What they want beyond the vague notion of happiness, they cannot tell you. One supposes it is wealth; another, rank; another, fame; another, pleasure; another, friendship; another knowledge; another, love; and others, perpetually changing their opinion, conclude by turns that it is all these. About nothing have the minds of men been more divided and unsettled than the nature of the supreme felicity. VARRO, a learned heathen, reckoned up more than two hundred opinions on this subject, which existed in his time: a striking illustration of, and comment upon, the expression, "There be many that say who will shew us any good." And no less a convincing proof of the necessity of an infallible oracle to decide the question; of a heavenly revelation to develop the mystery. The oracle has decided; the revelation has been given, and yet "the many" with the response in their possession, are still enquiring for "*any*" good.—*J. A. James.*

### Beneficence as a means of a Revival.

That alms-giving so enters into the essence of vital religion, as to stand among the means of revival, is not a new idea. Edwards, in his day, insisted on it as one of the prominent requisites. And this is the more remarkable, since there were then few of the evangelizing agencies that now exist, to have turned his mind, to lay such emphasis upon this duty.—He must have come to the conclusion, by that deep insight into the springs of religious character, for which he was so remarkable. In showing what was needful to promote revivals, he says:—

"If God's people in this land were once

brought to abound in such deeds of love, as much as in praying, hearing, singing and religious meetings and conference, it would be a most blessed omen. Nothing would have a greater tendency to bring the God of love down from heaven to that of earth. So amiable would be the sight in the eyes of our loving and exalted Redeemer, that it would soon, as it were, fetch him down from his throne in heaven, to set up his tabernacle with men on earth. I do not remember ever to have read of any remarkable out-pouring of the Spirit, that continued any long time, but what was attended with an abounding in this duty. So we know it was with the great effusion of the Spirit, that begun at Jerusalem in the apostles' days. So in the remarkable revival of religion in Saxony—which began by the labours of the famous Professor Franck, and has now been carried on for above thirty years, and has spread its happy influence into many parts of the world. It was begun and has been carried on by a wonderful practice of this duty. And the remarkable blessing that God has given to Mr. Whitfield, and the great success with which he has crowned him, may well be thought to be very much owing to his laying out himself so abundantly in charitable designs. And it is foretold that God's people shall abound in this duty in the time of the great out-pouring of the Spirit, which shall be in the latter days, 'The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. But the liberal deviseth liberal things and by liberal things shall he stand.'

Indeed Edwards dwells on this idea at length, as one of great importance. He says, "We seem as yet to have little notion of the duty as taught in the New Testament." Further, "So far as I can judge by the Scripture, there is no external duty whatever, by which persons will be so much in the way, not only of receiving temporal benefits, but also spiritual blessings—the influences of God's Holy Spirit."

We know that the Scriptures are full of this idea. The fast, which God has chosen, is represented to be—"to deal thy bread to the hungry." And the reward of doing it is thus described—"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall answer." Assurance of hope is made to be the result of beneficence, in this "Love not in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and hereby we know, that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

God rewarded Abram's deeds of charity with rich discoveries of himself, when he spent so much and risked his life to redeem Lot and his people from captivity, and refused all reward, and bestowed the spoils taken upon the sufferers. "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in vision, saying fear not Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Christ upon earth was fed by the charity of his female followers. To them he discovered himself first after the resurrection—even before he did it to his twelve disciples. Rebecca, a remarkable type of the church, found her husband while doing a deed of charity. Christ was revealed to Cornelius in consideration of his alms as well as his prayers. And all that is wanting to bring multiplied and edifying examples in present experience is a better practice under the rule of charity given us in the Scriptures.—*Puritan Recorder.*

### The great Discoveries of the Age, God's Agents.

Quick and easy communication is a feature of these times of fraternity and humanity.—The same power which had shortened the Hudson and Ohio, impatient of limits to its range, emboldened by success, has rushed forth upon the broad Atlantic, and reduced by more than half the long and perilous distance between the Old World and the New. Read the almost plaintive words of Richard Baxter; the scarcely-uttered hope cherished by him that the time might come when access could be had to the Orient, and say if God's hand is not in this unlooked-for propinquity of the nations. The passage from this port to Bombay by way of Liverpool, Trieste, and the Red Sea, can now be made by steam in a shorter time than many a sailing vessel has consumed between London and Boston. Along the Bosphorus, this new agent is breaking down the rigidity and breaking up the apathy of the Turk. Doubling the Cape of Good Hope, it has startled the sleep of the Bengalee and Chinaman. By its unconscious working in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Baltic,

it has done more to diffuse intelligence, liberty, and life, than any other providential power whatever. It is a power which does not belong exclusively to commerce. Commerce! why, it is itself God's agent. The great sea was not intended to be a mere manufactory of cotton and tobacco. It is a highway of emerald and sapphire for the footsteps of Christianity. Henceforth nothing is done in a corner. Nothing is too remote to escape attention.—The steamers which crowd their way through stormy seas, the roads of iron which bind whole continents together, the clicking wires which run their electric network through the air, are the great nerves of human sympathy, and are destined to the high office of uniting the whole race of man in a loving brotherhood.—*Rev. Dr. Adams, in Chris. Rev.*

### How to use a Religious Periodical.

Every Christian ought to consider the religious books and periodicals which come into his hands as *means of doing good*, committed to him by Providence, which he is bound to employ as efficiently as he can, to promote the cause of piety. A vast amount of good is done in this way by active Christians throughout our land. As soon as they have read any article or any work of useful practical tendency, their minds instinctively inquire, "Which of my neighbours or friends would be interested or profited by this?" "Here is something," say they, which exactly meets such an one's case." "This article would interest the Sabbath school; I will show it to the superintendent." "This book will do good to such a family; I will lend it to them." The instrument of good is thus carried to the point where its effect is needed.

There is another view of this subject which ought not to be overlooked. The value of a printed book or pamphlet consists in the fact, that it is capable of telling its story to a vast number of individuals as well as to one. One man, for example, who receives this magazine, sends it to the Sabbath school, that it may be read there. It accordingly interests and profits a hundred and fifty, instead of one. He lends the work successively to half a dozen mothers, that they may read the article on the early religious instruction of children. His daughter takes it to the meeting of a charitable society, so that, if desired, some of its pages may contribute to their enjoyment and instruction, while at work, and thus this single copy accomplishes its work on hundreds of minds.

Another man reads his copy, and leaves it a few days to be read in his family, and then shuts it up in a dark closet, idle and unemployed for ever. It has done good perhaps to ten minds, when it is just as capable of doing good to a hundred. The story which it has told to a few, it is ready and willing to tell with equal fidelity to many, and if its possessor does not avail himself to the utmost of its power, he loses a great portion of the value of the work, and incurs moreover the guilt of keeping his means of doing good buried, not employed.—*Abbott.*

### Beware of Prosperity.

We have surveyed the influences in the midst of which the members of our churches do, for the most part, live, and we do not believe that there is any power that can keep them from being swept away, but the power of God *realized in the soul*. It is our full conviction that when secular affairs reach a certain degree of prosperity, there are no restraints known among men, no subbaths, no church bonds, no family influences, no habits and no conscience that will long resist the rising stream, which first rushes over and then sweeps them away! A soul that lives as seeing Him who is invisible, can stand. Nothing but the sense of God; nothing but the eye of God felt, nothing but the heart of God sending tides upon ours, can redeem a Christian from the dangers of an overwhelming Prosperity.

Instead of praying less, a Christian should pray more; instead of letting his business run into the time set apart for the family and for the prayer meeting, he should build the bank higher and more jealously guard that time from invasion. Instead of security, and the intoxication of hope, and the garrulous folly of security, Christians ought now to take hold of hands, talk more with each other of religious interests; hold each other up, and take common resistance to the common danger!

But above all, let two dangers be resisted—1. Do not let property of worldly men change your ideas of right and wrong. Do not imitate worldly men against your consci-

ence for the sake of their prosperity. Read the thirty-seventh Psalm and see if you are not already in need of such caution!

2. Do not become so drunk with success as to feel that it is your own skill and energy alone that has prospered you. Read Deut. 8: 11-20. The warning of this solemn passage was never more needed than now. Atheism is the child of Prosperity; not an avowed, philosophical atheism, a child of the *thoughts*; but that corrupt atheism of the heart, that neither sees a God, nor feels the need of any; but insolently says to a man's own right hand, thou art my God;—thy skill and thy power have achieved this prosperity!—*Weekly Church.*

### THE CHRISTIAN.

A Christian is born of God, engrafted into Christ, and a habitation for the Holy Spirit. His nature is renewed, his mind illuminated, his spirit changed. He is not what he was, for grace hath made a difference; he is not what he desires to be, for grace is not yet perfected; he is not what he shall be, for grace shall be consummated in glory. The knowledge of Christ is his treasury; the mind of Christ his evidence; the love of Christ his song; conformity to Christ his life; to be with Christ his pre-eminent desire. By faith he rests on Christ, receives Christ, and looks to Christ. He hears Christ's words, treads in Christ's steps, and seeks Christ's approbation. He speaks the language of Christ's kingdom, reveres Christ's laws, obeys his ordinances, wears his costume, and lives to his glory. The life of Christ within him is the principle of his being; and because Christ lives, he shall live also. In the Christian, Christ lives and speaks and acts. He is Christ's representative on earth, his witness before men, and his follower before God. The Christian hearkens to Christ's teachings, rests on Christ's sacrifice, avails himself of Christ's mediation, and cheerfully obeys Christ's laws. He inquires, What would Christ have me know, what do, and what enjoy? To know Christ, is Christianity intellectual; to obey Christ, Christianity practical; to enjoy Christ, Christianity experimental; and to be like Christ, Christianity perfected. As bread to the hungry, as water to the thirsty, as the rock in the sultry day, is Christ to the Christian.

The Christian is in the world, but not of it; among the world, but yet separate from it; passing through the world, without attachment to it. The idolator boasts in his idols, the Mahometan in the false prophet, and the Romanist in the Virgin Mary, but the Christian glories only in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian is a man, and may err; an imperfect man, and may sin; but a renewed man, and shall have his fruit unto life eternal. The Christian is a warrior, and must fight; but he is a conqueror, and must prevail. The Christian sojourns on earth, but dwells in heaven; he is a pilgrim in the desert, but an enrolled denizen of the skies. The Christian is the impress of Christ, the reflection of the Father, and the temple of the Holy Ghost.—Contrast him with the infidel in his faith; with the profligate in his life; with the merely moral man in his heart, and with the Pharisee in his spirit. His pedigree is from Jehovah, his nature from Heaven, and his name from Antioch. O Christian! great is thy dignity, refugent thy glory, interminable thy blessed hope. All things are thine; thou art Christ's, and Christ is God's.—*N. Y. Recorder.*

FACTS IN BRIEF.—Out of every thousand men twenty of them die annually. The number of inhabitants of a city or county is renewed every thirty years. The number of old men who die in cold weather is to the number of those who die in warm weather, as seven to four. The men able to bear arms form a fourth of the inhabitants of a country. The proportion between the deaths of women and that of men is 100 to 108. The probable duration of female lives is sixty; but after that period the calculation is more favorable to them than men. One-half of those who are born die before they attain the age of seven. Among 3,125 who die, it appears by the registers that there is only one person of one hundred years of age. More old men are found in elevated situations than in valleys and plains.

GOOD PROPERTY.—Knowledge of the right kind, will always command subsistence, respect, influence and honour. And it is a very safe possession. Thieves cannot steal it; fire cannot burn it; storms at sea cannot sink it. Men cannot deprive you of it in any way. God only can take it away from you by bodily or mental disease.