

A Great Change in the Employment of Genius and Talent.

Every age has its peculiarities. Changes of the deepest interest are continually occurring in the natural and moral world, and while there is a general uniformity in the course of events to enable us to anticipate from the past what will be in future, the alterations are so great as to surprise and astonish. Progress is the watchword of the present day, and whatever has not this fascinating inscription on the face of it, is accounted stale and unworthy of attention. All progress, however, is not improvement, and everything is not necessarily the best. The more valuable may be thrown aside to give place to some novelty, which, in its turn is to yield to another change, and all may be in the downward road of luxury, effeminacy, and the greater depravation of sentiment and morals. In everything of a moral nature there is a tendency to deteriorate. Communities and individuals as they advance from small beginnings, and increase in wealth and power become more corrupt, luxurious and worldly. This may not always be the case, and we many contemplate many honorable and happy exceptions, claiming our devout gratitude to the Author of all good.

A great change has taken place in the employment of the highest genius and talents, no less noticeable than that in the mechanic arts and the various branches of industry. In past ages, brilliant powers sought to display themselves and secure admiration, by feats of arms and military exploits. Everything was pugilistic. Wrestling, boxing, fighting, cunning and artifice in circumventing and destroying the foe were the highways to fame and glory. The cestus and the gauntlet entered into every amusement, and the play-ground was an arena of blood. The Crusades moved all Europe, and vast armies were seen coming up upon the breadth of the earth, as if the world had been one great slaughter-house. Promotion and renown were sought on the battle-field, and the most bloody warrior, if successful, was the most praised and honored. Knight and chivalry emblazoned the names of multitudes who were distinguished chiefly for the carnage and destruction poured around them. A single example of one whom history has immortalized, may suffice. The Chevalier Bayard lived in the time of Ferdinand of Spain and Louis of France. It is said of him that like Leonidas at Thermopylae, or the Roman Cincinnatus who defended a bridge against the whole army of Porsenna, Bayard defended a similar passage against an army of Spaniards. "With an eye that seemed to look out from every part of his body, at the same time," says the historian, "and a hand and weapon that seconded admirably every movement of his eye, he beheld, and foiled his assailants, crowding in on every side." He mowed them down to block up the narrow gorge which he defended, or hurled them into the river to perish in its sweeping flood. For this and similar feats his name has been transmitted through all subsequent time. Thanks to a kind providence, genius and talents have found a different scope in our day. They have taken a new direction, and are acquiring laurels which shall never fade, but shall flourish with increasing freshness and beauty through all coming time. Useful inventions, the art and the power of doing good, and benefiting to the utmost a world lying in wickedness, are assuming their proper place in human estimation, and receiving the just meed of praise. Robert Raikes, the author of Sabbath Schools, may well be contrasted with Leonidas, or Chevalier Bayard. He stood in the breach, and did much to save not a kingdom, but a world from a host of crimes spreading destruction in their progress. The originator of Bible, Tract and Missionary Societies; the invention of steam navigation, the power-loom, or the art of conveying information with lightning speed on the telegraphic wires, are the men whom the world now delight to honor. Those who have taught how to instruct the deaf, the dumb and the blind, how to restore reason to the lunatic, and how to snatch the inebriate from the drunkard's grave and return him to the walks of usefulness, who have arrested the progress of intemperance and licentiousness and swayed the minds of men with the love of purity and truth and rectitude, have found a rich reward and will have a more lasting fame than all the heroes who have waded through seas of blood, or clambered over heaps of slain in the way to power and eminece. After an experience of almost six thousand years, the world is growing wiser, and beginning to learn that it is better to

spend its resources in improving the condition of its inhabitants, than in destroying them. The light which dawned on Calvary and which had been darkened by the smoke of the pit, broke out afresh in the reformation in the sixteenth century, and is spreading its cheering beams over the earth. The missionary of the cross, armed with the simple weapons of the Gospel, is subduing the nations to the Prince of Peace. Behold him in the darkest regions, planting the standard of Immanuel on the strong fortresses of the enemy, and the stoutest hearts yielding to the melting strains of divine mercy. Men of rank, and wealth, and power are bringing their talents and laying them at the feet of Jesus. Savage tribes and pagan devotees are quitting their ferocity and their idols, and receiving a meek and quiet spirit, and coming to worship together in the temples of Jehovah. "The rough places are being made smooth, and the crooked ways straight—instead of the thorn there is coming up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar the myrtle, and it shall be for a name and a praise in the earth." Such and so glorious are the changes in prospect, that soon will be witnessed the realization of the animating declaration, "Behold I create a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, but be ye glad and rejoice in that which I create."

Motives for Giving.

Some years ago, one of the agents of one of our benevolent societies—an agent not now in the field—made quite a sensation in all the assemblies which he addressed, by dwelling on the remunerative results of giving to benevolent objects. He had collected a great variety of anecdotes or facts, illustrating his theme, and gave them with such rhetorical accompaniments as made the most of them, in the impression upon the audience—even to the extent of raising in the minds of some, doubts of the literal truth of the recitals. This mode of presenting the subject seemed to be eminently successful for a time, and yet it was followed with such more remote results, that the experiment will probably not be soon repeated.

Now it is clear, that there was a substratum of truth in those representations—that in the providence of God, temporal blessings are often connected with the beneficent habits of individuals; and there is even a natural tendency in such habits to outward thrift. But there is danger in exalting a secondary motive to the place of a primary one; and there is a special danger of too much exalting this motive, since it appeals to the very selfishness which we wish to subdue. It is not consonant with the wisdom of God, to hire men to acts of charity, and pay them in their own coin. There is a class of interesting facts under the head of the secular benefits of Sabbath-keeping, from which every good man may draw edification. Yet these are not the reasons why we should keep the Sabbath. So of the secular results of beneficence. The Scriptures sometimes speak of them—enough to satisfy us that we shall be no losers by our benefactions—but they give no prominence to them, among the motives to beneficence.

The main motive presented in the New Testament is the love of Christ, who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. Next to this is the fact that our own sanctification is promoted by our acts of benevolence. We are required to exercise ourselves in doing good, that thereby we may become more the children of our Father in heaven, who does good to the evil and unthankful. God needs not our help in feeding the poor; but he engages us in it, in order to make us benevolent like himself. Because it is more blessed to give than to receive, he lays on us a law that secures our giving; and he does it in greater kindness to us than to those who are to receive our bounty. The whole arrangement of things which brings the poor to us, in dependence on our benefactions, and opens before us a world to be evangelized, is an arrangement full of rich advantages to us; through it, God lays on us a necessity of cultivating benevolent affections.

All the ends of God's love to man are comprehended in his transformation from supreme selfishness to supreme love to God, and impartial love to man; and this aid is not secured without much exercise in acts of love. So all human suffering that pleads for human charity, is suffered to exist, among other purposes, as a means of developing benevolence in us. The wants of the poor and of the heathen are

among our most important means of grace—means not to be dispensed with—means without which our Christian progress would be sadly defective. This being the case, our own spiritual good, to be secured by our benefactions, should be held forth as a prime motive for our beneficence. And if this be a leading reason why we should give, we see the great adaptiveness to the end of that rule of action given by Paul in 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. For if the sole purpose were to train a person to such habits as should enlarge the heart with love to God and man, we see it exactly adapted to the end. It requires one to enter at once on systematic habits of giving; to repeat his gifts as often as once a week; to extend them to the limit of the ability which God gives; to recognize God's hand in all his gifts from week to week; to deposit the gifts on the Sabbath out of a heart warm with prayer and praise; and to make the Sabbath devotions tributary to a more effective giving, and the gifts tributary to the devotions. Thus we see the blended wisdom and goodness of God in the very structure of this rule, aiming to the promotion of our growth in grace. And they, who treat this rule as a nullity, are neglecting a means of spiritual growth which they can ill afford to lose. God has appointed that his children shall have their spiritual thrift by this means. We might almost as well blot out the Sabbath from the calendar, and resolve that we will go on our way to Christian perfection without the advantages of the sacred rest, as without the advantages of this mode of cultivating active beneficence.—*Presbyterian.*

"Apostolic Succession."

This is the title of a pamphlet of about 40 pages, by Dr. Noyes, pastor of the Roger Williams church, Providence. It is a cutting production, and will be read with very great interest by all those who desire to know on what grounds the extravagant claims of Episcopacy to the unseemly pre-eminence it assumes, are set up. The work abounds in quotations from the Scriptures, and also from the Christian fathers and other early writers. We make the following extract from it:

"It (Episcopacy) makes the spirit of religion subservient to its form; whereas the doctrine of the New Testament is that the form is less than the power. Here is a sincere, faithful, zealous and useful minister of the Gospel, and from the best light he has, he supposes himself qualified to preach the Gospel as the New Testament requires. He honestly believes that the subject of uninterrupted apostolic succession is a perfect maze, and that neither he nor any one else can trace his ordination back so far. Episcopacy says, 'this man is an unauthorized teacher, and when he attempts to perform any ministerial duties, he is guilty of profanity;' and in accordance with this view, all English dissenting ministers, and all ministers of American churches, that are not Episcopalian, are excluded from Episcopal pulpits: as their preaching would profane the sanctuary of God. * Thus Episcopacy tells us that the greatest lights that ever shone in Europe or America—like Calvin, Luther, Zuingli, Arminius, Baxter, Doddridge, Hall, Payson, Cary and Judson—had no right to preach the Gospel, and in doing so they were guilty of the same kind of profanity for which God smote King Uzziah with leprosy."

The following are the concluding remarks: "Now while we are ever willing to extend the right hand of fellowship to pious Episcopalians, we must wage an uncompromising war with the unchristian system of Episcopacy itself; and we do believe there is too much light in the community for men to admit that the priests of this order are the only true authorized preachers of the Gospel. Our sons and our daughters will never cease to venerate the names of Baxter, Carey, Judson, Randall, and Marks. But all who, in their arrogance, dare venture to call such men authorized teachers, may expect that the just rebuke of ten thousand tongues will thunder in their ears. 'Who art thou, O great mountain?—Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.'"

To the work is appended a long list of Popes, and a list, also, of English Archbishops. We hope it will find an extensive sale.—*Morning Star.*

I OUGHT TO PRAY MORE.—For one I am convinced that I do not pray enough. I feel this conviction daily. As a half-fed man is conscious that he needs more food, so my half-finished soul tells me that I need more pray-

er. I need it to give me strength to quicken my languishing graces, to enliven my affections, to vitalize my relations to the church, and to spiritualize all my conversation.

I MUST PRAY MORE. I am in a world of sin; unholy influences are pressing me on every side. The spirit of the world assails me at every step; in all the domestic, social, and business relations of life, I meet it and feel it, and without more prayer, I shall yield to it. Alas, I have yielded; am still yielding, and there is no alternative but more prayer! I must pray more, or be swept down by the tide. Lord, save, or I perish!

I WILL PRAY MORE.—A good resolution! May I have grace to keep it! How many such have been broken! Let me, then, first of all, pray for grace to do what I see needs to be done. And let me remember that it is prayer that I need, communion with God, intercourse with heaven, fellowship with the Holy Spirit. I need the penitence, humility, self-abasement, and self-renunciation which prayer alone can secure. I need the faith, and hope, and love which prayer alone can awaken.

I will pray more, then, because it is my duty to do so. I am morally and spiritually unfit to engage in God's service as I am. I have reason to fear that my offerings may be an abomination unto the Lord. But my obligation to serve God remains. I ought to do Christian duty, and bring my gifts to the altar. And God is waiting to be gracious! willing to give his Spirit to those who ask him.

Then I ought, and must, and will pray more for others, for my family, friends, the church, the world, and especially for my pastor!—Alas, how have I forgotten him of late. Lord, take not from me thine Holy Spirit! Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee. O, teach me and help me to pray. My fainting and inconsistent heart turns to thee. O, strengthen me with strength in my soul.

ZEAL FOR GOD.—The celebrated Edmund Burke, once said, "History was philosophy teaching by examples." It is a beautiful and striking definition. We would use it in speaking of the lives of devoted servants of God, but with the phraseology a little altered—"History is Christianity teaching by examples." And in no way is true Christianity more effectually taught, except perhaps, by those "living epistles," mentioned by an apostle. How often has it roused the flagging energies of God's people, and slamed their selfishness and cowardice, to read those simple and unvarnished accounts in the sacred volume of the zeal of Paul, the love of Mary, the disinterestedness of Moses, or of all these as they are combined in perfection and delineated in the history of our great Exemplar. So when reading the life of a Payson, a Brainerd, a Taylor, a Sherman, a McChesney or a Page, what sincere Christian has not felt himself reproved for his lukewarmness, and resolved anew to lead a holier life, and glorify his God and Saviour more by treading in the footsteps of those sainted worthies.

PRAYER.—The potency of prayer hath subdued the strength of fire; it hath bridled the rage of lions, hushed anarchy to rest, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, expanded the gates of heaven, assuaged diseases, repelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction; hath stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunder-bolt; in a word, it hath destroyed whatever is an enemy to man. Prayer is a haven to the shipwrecked mariner, an anchor unto them that are sinking in the waves, a staff to the limbs which totter, a mine of jewels to the poor, a security to the sick, a healer of diseases and a guardian of health; prayer at once secures the continuance of our blessings and dissipates the cloud of our calamities. Prayer: O blessed prayer; thou art the unwearied conqueror of human woes, the firm foundation of human happiness, and the source of ever during joy. The man who can pray truly, though languishing in extreme indigence, is richer than all beside; whilst the wretch that never bows the knee, though proudly seated as monarch of nations, is of all men most destitute.—*Chrysostom.*

Dr. Johnson used to say, 'He who waits to do a great deal of good at once, will never do any.'