

## THE FAITHFUL AFRICAN.

The following anecdote is related in a sketch of the life of Elder Toler, published in the "Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers," by James B. Taylor.

"An aged brother, now connected with the Nomini church, in referring to the introduction of the gospel in his own vicinity, by Elder Toler, thus describes the particulars of his own conversion. Having spoken of a journey he had taken to the south, he says: 'On my return from Carolina it appeared to me that the world was turned upside down. I found the whole family alarmed, and earnestly inquiring what they should do to be saved. My wife and a favorite servant-man became deeply concerned, and I was left alone; my prejudice and enmity were raised to the utmost height. Though I would not go to meeting myself, I never opposed my wife and servant. I began to hate Mr. Toler as the destroyer of my peace. Mr. Pierce, and some of his children professed to be converted, and were baptized—among them my servant-man. When they told me of his conversion, I thought he was ruined; and would have parted with him for a trifle.

Cupid commenced exhorting his colored brethren; I could hear him at all hours of the night, singing, and it tormented me. On a Sunday night, I heard a loud talking in the kitchen, and went round to the back door to listen,—and lo, he was lamenting his poor master's situation,—that if he died unconverted he would be eternally miserable. It raised my anger to such a pitch, that I came to the resolution that I would next morning chastise him for his insolence. Thus I returned and went to bed. I have often wondered at the goodness and forbearance of God.

'In the morning, by light, I took my whip and went to the stable, determined to execute my threat. The moment I set my foot on the sill of the door I caught his eye, fixed on me. He was a very humble man. 'Master,' says he, 'I hope you won't be angry: I want to talk with you.' I was disarmed in a moment, and told him he might say what he pleased.—I dropped my whip, and have not seen it since. He commenced with his experience, (the first I had ever heard.) I found something working in my heart that I never felt before, assenting to the truth of what he said. I was thoroughly convinced that if I died without just such religion as Cupid had experienced, I should be miserable forever. He broke out in a warm exhortation, and I was obliged to turn away, lest he should see my tears. I returned to the house, and told my wife if she would get the Bible and call the family together, I would try to worship God. This was joyful news."

Elder Toler has gone to his rest; but in these aged disciples we see the fruit of his labors, while he published salvation to the perishing, through a precious Redeemer. They too, will soon sleep in death, and then there will be a joyful meeting, where all will flourish in immortal youth.

This aged African presents in his devotion to his Saviour an example worthy of imitation. How many for the coat he possesses, or some such memorial of earthly greatness, would sacrifice the deathless soul; but he feels that all this honor is perishing, and that the Saviour's love is infinitely more precious. O that all would seek the same precious Redeemer, who is able to save to the uttermost, and in whom there is neither bond nor free, or distinction of complexion, but all one; and all who love him will shine together in eternal day.

## A Fitness of Things.

*There is a fitness in things.* There are things so unfitted to each other, that nothing can make them match. A fish cannot live in the air, nor a bird in the water. And will not the man without Christ's image be so unfit for heaven, that his whole soul would be unhappy? Say not, then, while you refuse the transforming light of the gospel of Christ, "God is just and he will not banish from heaven so small a sinner as I am." *There is a fitness in things.* If justice were to give your unrenewed soul a place in heaven, you would be miserable amidst its unfitting glory—in tears amidst the joyful millions—in despair, at the thought of so wretched an eternity!—Say not, "God is merciful, and a father cannot banish his beloved child from his presence and blessing!" *There is a fitness in things.* What if God should bring you to himself—to his brightness of eternal glory—and you were to stand exposed in his own presence for ever? Your God would be a consuming

fire—that healing light would burn you as an oven! Say not, "I do not see myself worse than others." *There is a fitness in things.* What would comparison with others avail you, if you were wafled to the company of just men made perfect, if you were not perfect?—to the Saviour's presence, if you were not like him?—to heaven, if you were not fitted for it? Say not, "I trust I shall get to heaven when I die." *There is a fitness in things.* The kingdom of heaven is not "within you," while you live; how can you be fitted for it when you are dead? Nay, could you reach the highest mansions of the blessed, how should you be blessed, without their blessedness begun? Could you come nearest to St. Paul, and St. John, who leaned on his Master's breast; could you have leave to go with them on those errands of love, for which they are fitted by their likeness to the Lord, and shine next to those brightest stars;—alas, for you! you are not Paul-like, or John-like, that you should be a partner in their joys!

What vain expectations are these! Without the likeness of Christ, to see him as he is! Without his image formed in you, to rejoice in his worship and service! Without the essential principles of blessedness to be forever blessed! Beside the throne of God and the Lamb—amidst those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" who have "purified themselves even as he is pure"—and yet in all your impurity! Where "nothing entereth that defileth," and yet in all your defilement! Expect to enter heaven on the score of justice or mercy; but on what score do you expect to be happy in a place, and company, and glory, for which you are utterly unfit? Suppose the false, true. Say, there will be no difference made hereafter between the righteous and the wicked—they will inherit the same glory—be all gathered around the same throne—and all have part in the same song of praise to God and the Lamb;—alas! you are making a difference, which place and privilege cannot alter; you are making a gulf between yourself and blessedness, which you can never pass. *There is a fitness in things.* To all eternity, the unholy must remain unblest. Should death this moment meet you as you are, refusing the light and image of the Saviour, would you not refuse the glory, if your eye were to open on him—to behold him as he is—and must not you receive a miserable doom?

*There is a fitness in things.* If you expect or intend, in a year or two, or ten, or twenty, or fifty, to enter heaven by the gate of death, then "Be diligent to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless."—*Nott's Sermons.*

"I do wish I knew how much Pa gives to Charitable Societies."

Lucy was sitting with her mother by a cheerful fire one morning, when a hard rain had kept her from school. The mother was silently employed with her sewing, while the sprightly little girl, about eight or nine years old, was amusing herself with looking over some pamphlets and periodicals, which lay among the books on the table.

"Ma," said Lucy at length, "I have been looking through these names in the Missionary Herald, and Bible and Tract Reports, which uncle B. lends you and Pa to read, and I can't find Pa's name anywhere in the account of the money that is given; why don't he put his name down as Uncle B. does, and Mr. R., and Mr. G., and so many gentlemen?"

"I suppose, my dear," said the mother, as the little girl continued turning over the leaves of the pamphlets, "your Pa doesn't wish to have his name published to the world with the amount of his charities."

"Well, Ma, then why don't he put something into the plate, when we have collections taken up for the missionaries, and the different societies which our minister recommends? The plate comes to our pew with bills and half dollars, and two shilling pieces in it, and I never see Pa put any thing in."

"Your father, Lucy, can't afford to be giving continually to so many different objects."

The thoughtful and intelligent little girl looked up from her books, and cast a glance around upon the splendid furniture which adorned the parlor. She couldn't understand this reason, and thought, no doubt, "my father might at least afford to give to some of them." She was silent for a time, but again asked, "Ma, why don't you go to some of the societies where the ladies meet and sew? or

why couldn't you make some pretty article for the Fair, such as Aunt B. makes?"

"I haven't time to attend the societies, or to make such articles," said the mother, without raising her eyes from the elegantly wrought collar, around which she was placing a costly lace.

Lucy was again silent, and laying down her book, looked intently into the fire. By and by she asked, "Ma, how long have you and Pa belonged to the church?"

"Lucy," said her mother, "little girls should not ask so many questions."

"Well," said Lucy, "I do wish I knew whether Pa ever gives any money to the societies, for ever since I heard Mr. —'s text last Sunday, 'The silver and the gold are the Lord's, I have been afraid Pa keeps too much of it.'"

God knows that the children of his professing people will ask them questions. He told the children of Israel what they should answer, when their children asked wherefore they did such things, they were to say, that the Lord had thus commanded them to do. But God has no where told his people how they should explain their neglects or omissions of duty to their children; and hence, when young minds (as prolific in inquiries as those of the young wandering Israelites) propose such questions as the above to their professing parents, what else can they say than to repeat the erroneous, and too common reply, "Children should not ask questions."

## Feed the Flock of God.

At the present day, when hundreds and thousands of young people are uniting themselves with our churches, it becomes a matter of serious inquiry, How are all those to be so trained as that they shall be prepared for extensive usefulness? That we have not done for the lambs of our flocks, what was incumbent on us to do, is lamentably apparent in the almost hopeless inefficiency of many now numbered as members of our churches. Who has not felt his heart pained within him, when, in the social prayer-meeting, he has feared to call on this or that brother to take a part in the exercises, lest he should refuse? And who has not been subjected to the most painful humiliation, when he has looked round for some brother or brethren, to lay to a helping hand in the prosecution of some pious design, but he has met with the chilling reply, "we are incompetent, we are too weak to engage in such business."

Now verily there is a fault somewhere. Is it in the piety of these individuals? This may be the case, but the want of intelligent piety on the part of these persons may be the result of their not having received proper attention when they first became members of the church. Were they then told that they had but just entered the school of Christ? Was it distinctly impressed on their minds, that the Bible must be their constant companion? That they would be under the necessity of praying daily—of praying in the family circle—of praying at the social prayer-meetings? Or were they given to understand that it would be their privilege to live a life of religious ease—to subject themselves to no labour in order to prepare themselves for usefulness in the precious cause which they professed to love?

To our brethren in the ministry we would say most respectfully and affectionately, if heretofore we have not done our duty upon this subject, let us now attempt it. Let us see to it, that all our church members, especially those of them who are young, are making steady advances in the divine life. How pleasant would it be to find those with whom we are so closely connected, all ardent, all desirous to do something to help forward the mighty interests of Redeeming love! To accomplish an object so desirable, pastors of churches must feel that they are not simply to get along in a cold, do-little kind of way, but must task their energies to sustain Sunday-schools, Bible-classes, and every other instrumentality, which promises, under God, to be useful in the great work in which they are engaged.

The Apostle Peter meant something when he exhorted his brethren to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby." Now how is this desire to be kept alive? Why, certainly, by encouraging "babes in Christ" habitually to apply to that living fountain of spiritual nutriment, which the sacred oracles supply. And as ministers of Jesus Christ, we shall not be found in the discharge of our duty, if we suffer any "over whom the Holy Ghost has made us overseers,"

to become weak and sickly, for the want of such attention.

Brethren, we have thrown out these hints upon a subject of vast importance, hoping it will be agitated amongst us, until that improvement shall take place, which every child of God must desire, and for which he must pray.—*Ch. Index.*

## Co-operation with a Pastor.

A Minister and his Church, if they act conjointly, need never despair of being a light in the world, and of beholding others induced by their light to glorify God. But this is no less a supposition than that the minister, deacons, Sabbath-school teachers, leading brethren, in short, all the church, are united to co-operate in the great duties of religion, to sustain the meetings for conference and prayer, and to walk together in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. There must be union of effort and of feeling in every church, there must be the cordiality of love flowing from heart to heart, or it cannot act efficiently and be prosperous. If there be a lack on the part of any, the whole body suffers, just as naturally, if one member is injured the whole body suffers.

The whole church of Christ is like an army well disciplined and officered; and under their glorious Captain, the Lord of hosts, shall go on to certain victory. To the aid, everything good is to be brought; talent, learning, eloquence, experience, personal piety, and zeal; parents, teachers, old Christians, young converts, male and female, all are to come up unitedly to the help of the Lord. This co-operation is to be constant and untrifling; as well in the usual interests of religion as in revivals.

Let no church despair of the Divine blessing, which goes thus to the work of God.—Such light as will then be reflected on the world around, cannot long be hid; many shall see it, and fear and turn unto the Lord.—*Morning Star.*

## A Hint to Desponding Ministers.

A certain minister who had been very successful in his labors in the gospel vineyard, at length saw but very little fruit attending his ministrations. To be useless, he could not bear—his soul was bowed down under the discouraging prospects around him. Nothing on earth was so gloomy to him, as a spiritual death; for he had been used to showers of reformation and mercy, and nothing else could satisfy his mind. Seeing no outpouring of the Spirit, no sinners converted under his preaching for some time, his soul was beset with desponding and melancholy fears.

While thus exercised, he dreamed a gentleman hired him to work for him, and the price of his labor, per day, was stipulated. On inquiring what his employer would have him go about, he was informed he must go and hammer a certain rock to pieces. "That," he replied, "will do no good for the rock is large and hard, I could never break it to pieces."—"That is nothing to you," said the gentleman, "follow my direction, and I will pay you your wages."

The laborer then went to work; and though it appeared an endless, and therefore useless task, he labored with diligence and patience for the sake of his wages. After awhile, contrary to all his calculations, the mountainous rock broke into shivers.

The minister saw that the dream contained instruction for him; he felt the reproof, resumed courage, and was again blessed with seeing the rocky hearts of many of his hearers broken by the hammer of God's word.

## Preparation for Death.

When you lie down at night, compose your spirits as if you were not to awake till the heavens be no more. And when you awake in the morning, consider that new day as your last, and live accordingly. Surely that night cometh, of which you will never see the morning, or that morning of which you will never see the night; but which of your mornings or nights will be such, you know not. Let the mantle of worldly enjoyments hang loose about you, that it may be easily dropped when death comes to carry you into another world. When the corn is forsaking the ground, it is ready for the sickle; when the fruit is ripe, it falls off the tree easily. So when a Christian's heart is truly weaned from the world, he is prepared for death, and it will be the more easy for him. A heart disengaged from the world is a heavenly one, and then we are ready for heaven, when our heart is there before us.—*Barton.*