

THE
CHRISTIAN WITNESS,

AND

Church Member's Magazine:

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF

THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

1847.

"Train up thy children, England, in the ways
Of righteousness, and feed them with the bread
Of wholesome doctrine! Send thy swarms abroad!
Send forth thy humanizing arts,
Thy stirring enterprise,
Thy liberal polity, thy gospel light!
Illumine the dark idolater,
Reclaim the savage! O thou Ocean Queen,
Be these thy toils, now thou hast laid
The thunderbolt aside.
He who hath blest thine arms
Will bless thee in these holy works of peace.
Father! thy kingdom come, and as in heaven
Thy will be done in earth!"

SOUTHEY.

THE PROFITS OF THIS WORK

ARE

DEVOTED TO THE BENEFIT OF AGED MINISTERS.

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JANUARY, 1847.

Theology and Biblical Illustration.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIFE.

To every person of unprejudiced reflection, who derives his views simply from the word of God, what can be more solemn than Human Life? When we contemplate it in itself, in the influence which it exerts, and in the vast and awful consequences resulting from it, it is clothed with inexpressible solemnity.

Human Life is most solemn from its *brevity*. It is a course which is soon run. It is "a vapour" which is soon exhaled. It is "a tale" which is soon told. It is a glass, the sands of which soon descend and disappear. The flying cloud—the withering grass—the quickly-fading flower—the arrow, just propelled from the string, are appropriate and impressive emblems of the life of man. "It appeareth only for a little time, and then vanisheth away." "Thou hast made my days as a hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee."

Human Life is most solemn from its *uncertainty*. It is just as fluctuating as it is transitory. When we are soberly regarding it, we find that we can calculate on nothing—depend implicitly on nothing. Instead of anticipating a year, we cannot confidently expect a day; we dare not "boast" even of "a moment." In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, we may be cut down, and removed to the invisible and eternal world.

Human Life is most solemn from the *work which we have to do*. What engagements are to be discharged, and how are those engagements perpetually recurring! What labours are to be endured, and in how patient and cheerful a manner are those labours to be borne! What difficulties are to be encountered, and how readily are those difficulties to be met—how boldly and vigorously are they to be overcome! What enemies are to be contended against, and how determinately must we grapple with those adversaries at every step of our journey! What changes are to be realised, and how

THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS.

TO ADVERTISERS.

THE guaranteed Monthly Sale of the CHRISTIAN WITNESS being upwards of Thirty Thousand Copies, diffused throughout the three kingdoms, renders it incomparably the most advantageous medium for Advertisements of Books, Schools, Sales of Property, Charitable Institutions, Apprentices, Servants, or Situations Wanted, and General Business.

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LONDON, MARCH 1, 1847.

STATE EDUCATION.

NEW dangers threaten the liberties of our country. Government, taught by experience, has begun to walk warily in the development of its Educational projects. In the Premier's Address to his Constituents striking prominence was given to the question of Education. The vigilance of the leaders of Voluntary Education was awake, a prolonged and vigorous discussion was carried on till Parliament assembled, when, in the Sovereign's address, not a syllable was heard on the subject! The trick succeeded. This unexpected silence was ascribed to prudence, desperate of success. Some even believed it was the result of a conversion to the views of the Voluntaries that the business were best let alone, and that no interference was required. Thus it was hoped that, for the present, once more, all danger was past. In due season a voice was heard in Parliament proclaiming the decision of the Government, quietly stating that, from the conflicting views of religious parties, it was impracticable to introduce any general measure, and that, therefore, the Government had NO PLAN to offer. Not they! It was, to be sure, vexatious and very disheartening; very! Still there was no help for it. They would leave the old, ugly, incommodious edifice standing as it was, merely striking out a new door, adding a porch to it, with three new windows, rebuilding a gable, digging a sewer some thirty feet deep all round the house, to dry the old damp walls, and building a large shed behind the kitchen to store wood for domestic purposes. This, which, of course, was next to nothing, was all the Government intended. And lest plain men should weakly fear that the wood store might end in the conflagration of the building, or the surrounding sewer bring it to the ground a mass of ruins, Lord Brougham rose and echoed the words of the speaker—NO PLAN

Very sad, after forty-six years! Very sad indeed; but there is no plan. Three Bishops in succession, and then an Archbishop, stood up to echo—NO PLAN! Yes; these reverend rulers of both spiritual and temporal kingdoms bore a four-fold testimony to the worth of the thing, called—NO PLAN! They unite to bless the noble propounder, because he had propounded—nothing! He had not touched the existing order of things. When praise is heard from Lambeth it behoves mankind to suspect and tremble! Mr. Baines has unmasked this piece of senatorial craft in a manner which exceedingly enhances the value of his previous and all but inappreciable labours. Addressing Lord Lansdowne, he proceeds as follows:

The following heads will give an idea of the uses you mean to find for the public money:—

1. Grants to Normal Schools, so much per student.
2. Grants in aid of the salaries of Schoolmasters.
3. Grants to Schoolmasters for training Pupil-Teachers and Stipendiary Monitors.
4. Grants to the Pupil Teachers and Stipendiary Monitors during their service.
5. Grants to Students in Normal Schools.
6. Gratuities to Schoolmasters of several kinds.
7. Grants in aid of School Field Gardens.
8. Grants in aid of School Workshops.
9. Grants in aid of School Kitchens and Washhouses.
10. Superannuation Pensions to Schoolmasters, two-thirds of their former salary and emoluments.
11. Grants for Workhouse Schools, Schools of industry, and Penal Schools.
12. Grants, as at present, for building Schoolhouses.
13. Salaries of a great number of Inspectors
14. Expenses of the head office in London, with Secretaries and Clerks.

Now it is very convenient for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and exceedingly conducive to the success of your measure, that the above items of charge will not come all at once on the finances. But if the plan should be adopted by Parliament, they are all sure to be incurred ultimately, and a few years hence they will con-

rent in twain the thick veil of guilt and wrath which interposed between us and our God. When Adam was driven out of Paradise, a flaming sword kept the way of the tree of life. The veil of the temple had a similar use under the Jewish dispensation; but Christ, by his death, hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. There is now the freest access to a Paradise of fairer bloom and more enduring bliss than Eden's lovely garden. Oh! what a privilege is this! Are we conscious of guilt or unworthiness?—Are we afraid or ashamed to look to God? Let us lift up our heads and our hearts with joy. Christ hath died. The veil is rent from the top to the bottom, and we behold the God whom we have offended seated upon a throne of grace, and hear him saying to us, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else: a just God and a Saviour!"

D. T.

Stonehaven, February, 1847.

HOW TO LIVE ON CHRIST.

THE very figure which Christ uses illustrates this idea; "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Now, how does a branch bear fruit? Not by incessant effort for sunshine and air; not by vain struggles for those vivifying influences which give beauty to the blossom, and verdure to the leaf;—it simply *abides* in the vine, in silent and undisturbed union; and the fruit and blossoms appear as of spontaneous growth.

How, then, shall a Christian bear fruit? By efforts and struggles to obtain that which is freely given; by meditations on watchfulness, on prayer, on action, on temptation, and on dangers? No, there must be a full concentration of the thoughts and affections on *Christ*; a complete surrender of the whole being to him; a constant looking to him for grace. Christians in whom these dispositions are once firmly fixed, go on calmly as the sleeping infant borne in the arms of its mother. Christ reminds them of every duty in its time and place—reproves them for every error—counsels them in every difficulty—excites them to every needful activity. In spiritual, as in temporal matters, they take no thought for the morrow—for they know that Christ will be as accessible to-morrow as to-day, and that time imposes no barrier on his love. Their hope and trust rest solely on what he is willing and able to do for them; on nothing that they suppose themselves able and willing to do for him. Their talisman for every tempt-

ation and sorrow, is their oft-repeated, child-like surrender of their whole being to him; as the infant in every trouble finds a safe asylum in the bosom of its mother.

Some may say, "Truly this is a very delightful state of feeling, but how shall we obtain it? How shall we begin?"

We answer, just in the same way that a sinner begins the Christian life, by coming to the Saviour, and making a full, free, and hearty surrender of his body, soul and spirit; fully resolved, in future, to resign the whole to the Redeemer's direction. And having made this general surrender, make it also in particular, in reference to every circumstance of every day.

Let us imagine a day spent on this principle. You awake in the morning and commend yourself to Christ's care for the day. The first temptation that besets you may lead you to a waste of time. Say immediately, "Lord, assist me in this particular." The next may be a temptation to irritation.—Cast yourself again on Christ for this. A few hours after, you may be tempted to censorious remarks on some neighbour.—Cast yourself upon Jesus. A while after, you may perhaps forget yourself and give utterance to some hasty or ill-judged expression.—Turn instantly to Christ, confess your fault, and ask further help. If you find yourself beset with uncommon difficulties and temptations, and in danger of forgetting what manner of spirit you are of,—steal from your avocations, though but for a few moments,

and ask help of Jesus. The practice of having a full and stated *season* of prayer *at noon*, cannot be too highly commended. The middle is usually the most unspiritual part of the whole day. The cool of the morning is generally to every one a time of good purpose and resolution, and the quiet of the evening is often devoted to penitence and retrospection; but the noon is too often a season of hurry and bustle—there is therefore so much the greater need that we then consecrate a portion of the time as a stated season of prayer. But the Christian, who would live as Christ directs, must beware of making *seasons* of prayer the substitute for that constant recurrence to him, which we have endeavoured to inculcate. Morning and evening the little child is with its mother in a long and fond embrace; it listens with rapture to the expressions of her affection, and willingly renders the tribute of promised obedience. But in times of difficulty or danger, it instinctively runs to the same arms for protection, without reflecting whether the danger be great or small.

A direction of great importance to one who would live this life, is this:—In your sins, troubles, and temptations, make no distinction between *great* and *little* things. Remember that nothing that has the slightest bearing on your improvement and spiritual progress is insignificant in the estimation of Christ. Now it is a fact, that Christians are more impeded in their progress by little things, than by great ones;—because, for great things, they seek the strength of Christ, and for little ones, they act on their own. But if the little accidents of every day's occurrence, the petty annoyances to which every one is subjected, be sufficient to ruffle the temper and excite an unchristian spirit, they are to *you* matters of very serious moment; and as such, you must regard them—nor can you fully abide in Christ but by attaching to such things that just importance, which shall lead you to refer them to Him with the same freedom that you feel in reference to what you commonly call serious affairs. If you are conscious of peculiar and besetting faults, familiarize your mind to those incidents of the life of Jesus which show a particular bearing on them. If you are irritable, examine all those incidents which show his untiring patience; if you are proud, those which exhibit his humility; if you are worldly, those that show his spiritual-ity; if you are negligent and careless in

duty, those which show his incessant zeal and activity. Study them, understand them, keep them in memory, and pray to him to infuse into you the same spirit. The memory, too, may well be stored with those sacred songs descriptive of the character of the Saviour, or imploring his Divine aid; for their sweet words will sometimes come to you in hours of temptation like gentle messages from our Lord.

The remarks now made are intended as general hints; but the only teacher of the true life of faith, is Christ! Go to him, and ask him to direct you. Christ is willing to make *you* just as meek, just as patient, just as lovely as he is; and if you desire it earnestly, if you desire it more than everything else, if you are willing to give up all beside for it, he will explain to you practically what is meant by “abiding in him,” and by his coming to make his abode with you. Then your Christian race will be full of love and joy; more like the free flight of a bird, than the struggles of a captive. You will naturally lay aside every weight, and the sin that easily besets you, and run with patience the race that is set before you, because your whole soul will be so filled with the view of Jesus at its termination; you will be so inspired with admiration, hope and joy, that you will run because you cannot hold back;—the spectators, the race-course, all about you, will be forgotten in the view of Jesus, at once your helper, your judge, and your eternal reward!

H. B. STOWE.

EJACULATORY PRAYER.

“PRAYER,” says an able writer, “procures many blessings—averts many evils. It is man's first duty; the first in order, and the first in importance. It is our highest consolation. It brings us nearest our God, and is our only refuge in the time of trouble.” The truth of these sentiments all have felt who are in the habit of engaging in the solemn exercise of prayer.

The Scriptures declare that “men ought always to pray, and not to faint; to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.”

“Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and with supplication for all saints,” is the positive injunction of the Divine word. In