

HOME,
THE SCHOOL,
AND
THE CHURCH;
OR THE
PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION REPOSITORY.

EDITED BY
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ARTICLE I.

THE RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE AND THE APPLIANCES OF THE PARENTAL RELATION.*

BY THE REV. LOYAL YOUNG, OF BEAVER, PA.

JUDGES 13: 12 (last clause),—"How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?"

WHEN Israel took possession of their promised heritage, and drove out the nations of Canaan, they left a people on their southwestern borders, warlike, impetuous, and of prodigious bodily stature. For centuries they were a thorn in the side of God's chosen people. Often were the latter trodden down and crushed by these relentless Philistines. But if their tyranny was grievous, their idolatry was enticing. And this was the true secret of their power. They tempted Israel to worship Dagon and Baalzebub. It was only when Israel yielded to idolatry, that these powerful enemies triumphed, and riveted the chains of their servitude. When Israel repented and cried to God, deliverers were raised up, and the church became free.

One of these deliverers was Samson, whose athletic frame and strength of muscle made him more than a match for the strongest and bravest of his foes. Being set apart by Heaven as the deliverer of his country, he felt religiously bound to fulfil his mission. And when moved by divine impulse, he carried consternation and death into the ranks of the enemy. Neither green withs nor new ropes could bind him; massive city gates were borne aloft on his shoulders to the mountain height; and the firm pillars of Dagon's temple were thrown down by a single impulse.

Introductory to his birth, the angel of the covenant announced to his parents (Manoah and his wife), that they were about to be honoured as the parents of a mighty deliverer of his country. Manoah, impressed with the responsibility of the trust thus to be committed to them, in the education of a child for such a work, and

* This discourse was delivered by appointment before the Synod of Pittsburgh, in the year 1853, and requested for publication.

The preceding sermon on "Walking with God" was selected for publication on account of its practical character, and its suitableness to the purposes of our Educational Annual. It was first published in the year 1746.

ARTICLE XVII.

REVIVAL IN CENTRE COLLEGE, KENTUCKY, IN 1852.

BY THE REV. JOHN C. YOUNG, D.D., PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE.*

MR. EDITOR:—You have several times recently alluded, in your paper, to a revival reported to be in progress in the Presbyterian Church, in Danville. Your readers may probably desire to have some short account of this work of grace, as it is known that the effects of such a work, in a church which embraces in its congregation the students of a college, are not confined to a particular town or neighbourhood. Its most important and permanent effects are often, indeed, felt in distant places and in future years. Unless, then, you shall have received some other notice of the facts, you can publish the following brief and hasty sketch:—

From the latter part of January there appeared to be an increase of interest in hearing the Gospel—an increase scarcely perceptible perhaps, except by a preacher, and manifested only in the countenances of the hearers. Coincident with this was an increased sense of duty on the part of some of the pious students to converse with others on the subject of religion. A weekly prayer-meeting was commenced on Thursday night, in the college, besides the one held on Sabbath afternoon. The day appointed for fasting and prayer for colleges, on the last Thursday in February, was observed much more generally by the church here than in former years. But, although the public exercises, both, in the morning and at night, were attended by an unusually large number of the people as well as the students, and there was more than ordinary seriousness, still, there was no marked evidence of God's gracious visitation. On the night of the second Sabbath of March there seemed to be a deep and solemn impression, and a considerable number subsequently referred to the services of that night, as the occasion of their first feeling the influence of God's truth and Spirit in convincing them of their guilt and danger. Arrangements having been made a month before to commence services, preparatory to the Communion, on Thursday, the eleventh of March, we began by holding on that night a meeting for prayer; on Friday and Saturday there was preaching, morning and

* This article originally appeared in the Presbyterian Herald, in 1852. DR. YOUNG, at the time, was Pastor of the First Church in Danville, as well as President of the College.—EDITOR.

night. On Saturday morning the congregation was remarkably large, and we noticed a very uncommon degree of interest and seriousness during the preaching. Eight persons were examined and admitted to the Communion.

On Sabbath morning, at the close of the services, according to our custom, when any unusual seriousness is manifested in the congregation, we addressed the impenitent, and invited any of them who might desire the prayers and counsel of the people of God to aid them in seeking salvation, to come forward and occupy the seat in front of the pulpit. While there seemed to be much solemnity of feeling, only two or three persons accepted the invitation. But, at night, the Spirit of God seemed to be poured out in the preaching of his word, and when we closed by repeating the invitation of the morning, between thirty and forty came forward, the most of them young men. After preaching on Monday morning, it was determined to continue the meetings during the week, but not in such a way as to interfere with the recitations of the college. A prayer-meeting was held in the church, at 3½ o'clock, every afternoon, and an inquiry-meeting at the same hour in the session-room; preaching at night.

The manifestations of divine grace appeared to increase, until, on the next Sabbath night, as many as from 140 to 150 gave public evidence of their desire to seek the kingdom of God. With the intermission of Thursday night, the meetings were continued through the ensuing week. They were closed on the night of Sabbath, the 28th, and in the morning of that day ninety-two, who had been examined by the session during the previous week, were admitted to the Communion of the Lord's Supper. To thirty of these the rite of baptism was administered. A considerable number of others have professed a hope of salvation, besides those who have united with our church. Some of them have been examined by the Session, but their admission has been postponed until their parents can be consulted, as they are minors, whose parents are either not professors of religion, or, at least, not members of the Presbyterian Church. Our rule, in all such cases, is to admit only with the consent of the parents. Some have united with other churches, with which their families were connected, and some have, from various causes, deferred for a time their public profession.

Very few of the recent converts have reached middle life. There are, indeed, very few heads of families here, who are not members of the church. The large mass of our recent addition is composed of the youth of the church. Among them are forty of the students of college.

We have witnessed a number of revivals, in which there was much more excitement, and apparently stronger feelings than were exhibited on any occasion during the progress of this work; but we never attended meetings in which a sense of personal interest in the offered salvation of the Redeemer was more general and pervading. There was scarcely an individual to be met with who did not exhibit

interest in the question: "What must we do to be saved?" We do not mean to be understood as expressing either a favourable or unfavourable opinion of revivals marked by strong excitement. We have witnessed enough of revivals, and seen enough of their permanent fruits to have become satisfied that the strength and pungency of feeling, manifested while under the conviction of sin or the apprehension of the Divine displeasure, is *no proof for or against* the genuineness of a conversion. The entire surrender of the soul to God, and full faith in the merits of the Saviour may be *preceded by one kind of law work on the heart or by another*. The character of a *conversion* is not to be inferred from the character of its *antecedents*; and the fruits of a holy life are the results of a new heart, not of the still sinful exercises that precede regeneration.

The church was indebted for very valuable aid to brethren Scott, Snyder, Barnes, and Cheek.

And now, while we ought humbly and gratefully to acknowledge the entire grace of this most unmerited display of God's mercy, in the conversion of so many precious souls, a number of whom we pray and trust that he will use as ambassadors of Christ, we ought not the less readily and thankfully to direct attention to the fact, that this outpouring of the Spirit is another of the proofs, which God, from time to time, is giving to us that "He will be inquired of by his people to do these things for them." This is the third time, since we have been connected with the college here, that it has received a great spiritual blessing, *almost immediately after the observance of the day of fasting and prayer for colleges*. And, although during this period, we have had six or seven other occasions when many were here gathered into the kingdom of Christ, *on none of these occasions* did the college share so largely in the blessing of God, as it did during the three revivals that were connected with the day alluded to. This affords great encouragement to the people of God, here and everywhere, to pray earnestly and continually for the youth of our land; and especially should prayer be daily made for those who, by their education, are training for the exercise of great influence and power.—God alone can make us a holy and a happy people, and he will do it *mainly by the conversion of the young, in answer to prayer*. God alone can enable us to send out ambassadors of the Prince of peace to all nations. And his mighty power, exercised in converting the young, will give us the power fully to enter upon this glorious work.

May we not ask and expect the prayers of all who love the cause of Zion, in behalf of those among us who have recently commenced so young to run the Christian race, that *all* may so run as to attain, and that *many* may be inspired by God to determine that they will devote their lives to persuading others to commence this race, and to encouraging them to persevere in it?

Yours, truly,

J. C. YOUNG.