

Sunday Reading.

The Insufficiency of Morality.

They who have clean hands and a pure heart, and they only, shall be admitted to membership in the church triumphant. No reasonable man can hope for the Divine favor, and for companionship with angels, while yet his soul is defiled. The dismal stain must be washed out; the record of his past transgressions must be effaced.

But how many hope for Heaven on the ground of mere rectitude of conduct. They believe the Scriptures and reverence the Deity; they abstain from crime and give to the poor; they pay their debts and go to church, and this is the foundation of their blissful anticipations. The fallacy of this system is apparent; it does not touch the depravity of the heart; it makes no provision for sins of neglect. Has not the moralist been born a sinner in common with all men? Has a radical change ever passed upon him? Does he not love the world supremely?

This shallow pietism, so prevalent in the world, overlooks the Atonement. It teaches no lively trust in the Redeemer, superinduced by repentance and faith. The man must be fitted for celestial society, not by having his heart cleansed by the application of the blood of Jesus, made through the agency of the Holy Ghost. He is to acquire a meekness for Heaven by doing no harm, and by walking uprightly before his fellow men. He can do as well without redemption as with it. It is a dead letter. Surely such a hope must be delusive. There is scarcely a page of inspiration which does not pronounce it to be utterly valueless.

We are nowhere informed in the Scriptures that this less than negative religion will stand the test in the last day. It is said, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

"He that believeth not shall be damned." "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." And if anything could be more emphatic, it is this, "Ye must be born again."

The neglectors of the great Salvation shall not escape; the nations that forget God shall be subject to his wrath; the slothful servant shall be cast into outer darkness; "if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha," that is let him be accursed.

The young man in the gospel kept the commandments outwardly, but still his conscience told him that all was not well—Hence, he asked the Master what good thing he should do to inherit eternal life. He felt that he *hoped*. But he scarcely knew what. The Saviour saw that he was destitute of the sum of Religion. The great element of true piety was wanting. He loved the world. And hence the command to go and sell all that he had and give to the poor.—The Master saw that as long as he retained his property it would be as a mill-stone to sink him into the depths of despair. But behold that young man as he goes away determined not to comply. With all his fair exterior, he desired his possessions more than he did Jesus and Heaven. He loved the world and the love of the father was not in him.

Now who is as good as this young man? What moralist renders outward obedience to all the commandments? And the crew and the practice of this youth were insufficient to admit him into the number of the faithful, who can hope for acceptance on the score of common integrity alone?

He who has no better plea than this at the final Judgment, will, most assuredly, hear from the lips of Him that sitteth on the throne, that most appalling word "De-Part!"

GO PREACH MY GOSPEL, GO! There is a voice upon the earth.

A voice that comes from far,

A voice from where the distant graves.

And perhapes harken ye;

'Tis not the song of triumph, nor

The scream of heathen rage;

But 'tis a cry for gospel light,

The echo of the age.

The echo of the age.