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TERMS.

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From Newcomb's Young Ladies' Guide.

HARMONY OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

"And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." 2 Pet. I. 5, 7.

In the first chapter I spoke of the importance of growth in grace, and enumerated some of the fruits of the Spirit. I revert to the same subject again for the purpose of showing the importance of cultivating the several Christian graces in due proportion, so as to attain a uniform consistency of character.

Nothing delights the senses like harmony. The eye rests with pleasure on the edifice which is complete in all its parts, according to the laws of architecture; and the sensation of delight is still more exquisite, on viewing the harmonious combination of colors, as exhibited in the rainbow or the flowers of the field. The ear, also, is ravished with the harmony of musical sounds, and the palate is delighted with savory dishes. But take away the cornice, or remove a column from the house, or abstract one of the colors of the rainbow, and the eye is offended; remove from the scale one of the musical sounds, and give undue prominence to another, and harmony will become discord; and what could be more insipid than a savory dish without salt?

So it is with the Christian character. Its beauty and loveliness depend on the harmonious culture of all the Christian graces. If one is deficient, and another too prominent, the idea of deformity strikes the mind with painful sensations, somewhat similar to those produced by harsh, discordant musical sounds, or by the disproportionate exhibition of colors.

It was, probably, with an eye to this, that the apostle gave the exhortation above quoted. He was exhorting to growth in grace; and he would have the new-man grow up with symmetrical proportions, so as to form the "stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus," not having all the energies concentrated in one member, but having the body complete in all its parts, giving a due proportion of comeliness, activity, and strength to each. Thus, he says, *Add to your faith, virtue.* By faith, I suppose we are to understand the elementary principle of the Christian character, as exhibited in regeneration; or the act which takes hold of Christ. But we are not to rest in this. We are to add *virtue, or strength and courage, to carry out our new principles of action.* But this is not all that is needed. We may be full of courage and zeal; yet, if we are ignorant of truth and duty, we shall make sad work of it—running headlong, first into this extravagance, and then into that—disturbing the plans of others, and defeating our own, by a rash and heedless course of conduct.

Young Christians are in danger of making religion consist too exclusively in emotion, which leads them to undervalue knowledge. But while emotion is inseparable from spiritual religion, knowledge is no less essential to intelligent emotion. Ignorance is not the mother of devotion; and though a person may be sincerely and truly pious, with only the knowledge of a few simple principles, yet, without a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of religious truth, the Christian character will be weak and unstable, easily led astray, and carried about by every wind of doctrine. Knowledge is also essential to a high degree of usefulness. It expands and invigorates the mind, and enables us, with divine aid, to devise and execute plans of usefulness with prudence and energy.

But knowledge alone is not sufficient; nor even knowledge added to faith. Temperance must be added, as a regulator both of soul and body. All our appetites and passions, desires and emotions, must be brought within the bounds of moderation. And to temperance must be added patience, that we may be enabled to endure the trials of this life, and not to faint under the chastening hand of our heavenly Father. As it is through much tribulation that we are to enter into the kingdom of heaven, we have need of patience, both for our own comfort, and for the honor of religion. Indeed, no grace is more useful in the ordinary affairs of life. It is the little every-day occurrences that try the Christian character; and it is in regard to these that patience works experience. Many of these things are more difficult to be borne than the greater trials of life, because the hand of God is less strikingly visible in them. But patience enables us to endure those things which cross the temper, with a calm, unruffled spirit, to encounter contradictions, little vexations, and disappointments, without fretting or repining; and save us from sinking under severe and protracted afflictions.

To patience must be added godliness, "which is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." To be godly, is to be, in a measure,

like God. It is to be "renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created us," and to have the same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus. This is the fruit of that patience which works experience, and results in hope, which maketh not ashamed.

To godliness must be added brotherly kindness; which is but acting out the state of heart expressed by *godliness*, which indicates a partaking of divine benevolence.

Then comes the crowning grace of CHARITY, "which is the bond of perfectness," comprehending the whole circle of the social virtues.

Where all the qualities exist, in due proportion, they will form a lovely character, harmonious and beautiful as the seven colors of the rainbow; yea, with the addition of an eighth, of crowning lustre. But, if any one suffers his religious feelings to concentrate on one point, as though the whole of religion consisted in zeal, or devotional feeling, or sympathy, or the promotion of some favorite scheme of benevolence, you will find an exhibition of character as unlovely and repulsive as though the seven colors of the rainbow should concentrate in one, of livid hue, or pale blue, or sombre gray; as disagreeable as though the sweet melody of a harmonious choir were changed into a dull, monotonous bass; and as unsavory as a dish of meats seasoned only with bitter herbs.

This disproportionate development of Christian character is more frequently seen in young converts; especially such as have not received a thorough Christian education, and are, consequently, deficient in religious knowledge. They find themselves in a new world, and become so much absorbed in the contemplation of the new objects that present themselves to their admiring gaze, that they seem almost to forget that they have any other duties to perform than those which consist in devotional exercises. If these are interrupted, they will fret and worry their minds, and wish for some employment entirely of a religious nature. They wonder how it is possible for Christians to be so cold, as to pursue their worldly employments as diligently as they do who take this world for their portion; and often you will hear them breaking out in expressions of great severity against older Christians, because they do not sympathize with them in these feelings. Their daily employments become irksome; and they are tempted even to neglect the interests of their employers, with the plea that the service of God has the first claim upon them. But they forget that the service of God consists in the faithful performance of every social and relative duty, "as unto the Lord, and not to men," as well as the more direct devotional exercises; and that the one is as essential to the Christian character as the other. The Bible requires us to be "diligent in business," as well as "fervent in spirit;" and the religion of the Bible makes us better in all the relations of this life, as well as in our relations with God.

Young Christians are also prone to undervalue little things. The greater things of religion take such strong possession of their souls, that they overlook many minor things of essential importance. In seasons of special religious awakening, this mistake is very common; in consequence of which, many important interests suffer, and the derangement which follows makes an unfavorable impression as to the influence of revivals. The spirit of the Christian requires that every duty should be discharged in its proper time. The beauty of the Christian character greatly depends on its symmetrical proportions. A person may be very zealous in some things, and yet quite defective in his Christian character, and the probability is, that he has no more religion than shows itself in its consistent proportions. The new energy imparted by the regenerating grace of God may unite itself with the strong points of his character, and produce a very prominent development; while, in regard to those traits of character which are naturally weak, in his constitutional temperament, grace may be scarcely perceptible. For instance, a person who is naturally bold and resolute, will be remarkable, when converted, for his *moral courage*; while, perhaps, he may be very deficient in *meekness*; and the one who is naturally weak, and irresolute, will, perhaps, be remarkable for the mild virtues, but very deficient in strength and energy of character. Now, the error lies in cultivating almost exclusively those Christian graces which fall in with our prominent traits of character. We should rather bend our energies, by the grace of God, chiefly to the development of those points of character which are naturally weak, while we discipline, repress, and bring under control, those which are too prominent. This will prevent deformity, and develop a uniform consistency of character.

There is, perhaps, a peculiar tendency to this one-sided religion in this age of excitement and activity; and the young convert, whose Christian character is not matured, is peculiarly liable to fall into this error. The mind becomes absorbed with one object. The more exclusively this object is contemplated, the more its importance is magnified. It becomes to his mind, the *main thing*. It is identified with his ideas of religion. He makes it a *test of piety*. Then he is prepared to regard and treat all who do not come up to his views on this point, as destitute of true religion; though they may exhibit a consistency of character; in other respects to which he is a stranger. This leads to denunciation, alienation of feeling, bitterness and strife. But one of God's commands is as dear to him as another; and we cannot excuse ourselves before him, for disobeying one, on the ground that we practice another. The perfection of Christian character consists in the harmonious development of the Christian graces. This is what I understand by the "stature of a perfect man in

Christ Jesus," a man who has no deformity; who is complete in all his members, and all his faculties.

DANGER OF SECRET SINS. BY REV. JOHN TODD.

These secret sins are peculiarly dangerous.—They probably harden more hearts, sear more consciences, and ruin more souls, than do open day-light sins. Shall I tell you why they do? Why are secret sins so dangerous?

1. Change of place and circumstances does not aid you to break away from them.

You know that if you have fallen into open sins, a change of place may aid you to break from them. Men sometimes leave their home, go abroad, mingle in other scenes, in other occupations, with other companions, for the very purpose of forming new habits, and breaking away from old ones. And they are successful too. A man who is tempted to be intemperate, may, by going to a spot where others do not drink, and where liquors are not to be had, become a temperate man. Another who is in the habit of using profane language, may, by going among society where this vice is discountenanced, break himself away from the habit. So you may, by going to a new place, easily stop violating the Sabbath; for you can break away from tempting companions by going to another place. Young men frequently are benefited by going to another place of residence. They can leave all their old habits behind them; they can easily begin anew. Not so with secret sins. These you carry with you; they live in any soil, they flourish under any clime. They are not destroyed by going away from home, by change of residence, by forming new acquaintances; they cling to the soul. They abide with you wherever you go. Many a one has been exceedingly disappointed in this respect. He thought by a change of place he was to change his character. But, no! the spots abide with the leopard, the darkness of the Ethiop's skin will not be washed out.

You may mingle in new scenes, form new acquaintances, enter new business, follow new amusements; but if you are under the habit and power of secret sins, you meet them alone, just as you always have done. You have no new weapons of defense, no new means of conquering them, and they come like an armed man, and conquer you, as they always have done.

The sinner has taken his staff and gone away on the hard privilege, but his secret sins find him even on the mount of Calvary, and conquer him still. He flees to the mountains, and shuts himself up in the walls of the monastery, and hopes that the thick walls will shut out sin. Alas! he finds that they will scale the highest walls, find him in the remotest cell, and there slay him still. He calls for the scourge and the lash and by self torture hopes to drive away these secret sins. Alas! they nestle deep within, and no scourging will reach them. The sinner may toss on his pillow, unable to sleep, and they are not wearied; he may fast, and they are not starved out. He may cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this sin and death?" and the groanings do not bring deliverance. The leprosy of the soul still remains, unabated, undestroyed.

2. Secret sins produce a continual warfare between the conscience and the desire of the heart.

Did you never see men becoming more and more irritable in temper, more morose, and apparently dissatisfied with everything around them? The reason in very many cases is (I do not say in all), that they are dissatisfied with themselves. They are at war with themselves. They live in secret sin, and the conscience stings and clamors; and having this painful, constant dissatisfaction with themselves, every thing without seems to go wrong.

Hence they are irritable, hence they become sour and morose.

Many a face, which now smiles, would look very differently were the soul delivered from the dominion of secret sin so that the conscience might be at rest. Are there none here who can understand what I am saying?

Did you never see men who seemed to be laboring under a premature old age, without any visible cause? The hair becomes gray, the eye sunken, the limbs feeble, and the house of clay falling into decay in early manhood?

The reason is, in very many cases, that there is such a painful, constant warfare between the conscience and the inclinations that the man is worn out.

He lives in secret sins. He tries to break away, his conscience upbraids him with ingratitude, with inconsistency, with breaking his vows; and then come his sins, rushing in like a torrent, driving out thought, banishing reflection, leading the soul captive, and making it a slave to sin. The passions subside, the temptations conquer, and retire, when the conscience begins to groan the soul. In this way premature old age, irritability, misanthropy, are brought on—the soul groaning in agony, but still in heavy chains!

3. Secret sins return often.

Let it ever dwell in the memory, that what returns often, forms the habit, controls the soul, and makes the man. It is not the fever fit, which returns once in a great while, that is so dreadful. But that which comes so often will burn and destroy the patient. Let temptations come upon the soul only once or twice in a year, and it can recover from the shock; it can brace itself up; it can set a double guard; it can be ready the next time. But if it comes frequently, giving the conscience no time to form new and contrary

habits, then those temptations are, awru. indeed Other temptations can occur only occasionally. You can be tempted to dishonesty only when you are making a bargain; to slander only when you are in conversation; to dissipation only when in company; to break the Sabbath only when it returns; but at all times you carry your heart with you; at all times you can turn your thoughts within, and indulge in secret sins. In the morning you will, or will not, worship God in the closet; you will, or will not, read his word; you will, or will not, examine the heart, and repeat this worship at evening. The morning and evening return every day; you will have the temptation to sin return every day, and if not very careful, you will fall every day.

Peter had a temptation come—it was a new one—it overwhelmed him; he sinned; but he repented and recovered. Judas indulged in secret sins—he carried the bag constantly, and sinned constantly; and it made him so covetous that he could sell his Lord for money; it turned his heart to a devil, and it would have been good for that man had he never been born.

These sins, which return often, destroy the soul. Could you read the heart, the aching heart of the Christian, who is striving to conquer his sins, you would find that he is the most deeply burdened with those sins and habits which he formed before his conversion. They had so eaten into the soul, so become a part of the fixed habits of the man, that he still groans under their dominion!

THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING.

In the morning, when the spirits are as fresh as the scenes we contemplate, it is delightful to mark the grandeur and the beauty of the works of God in the "hushed breath" of morn, diffusing health and gladness, accompanies the joyful brightness of the early smile. It imparts a cheerfulness to every inhabitant of the world; and while the dewey grass sparkles in the first beams of the opening day, and the foliage of the trees quivers joyously in the early breezes, the "beasts of the field" significantly declare their joy, and the "fowls of the air" warble their delight. But while all the rest of the creation is loud and plain in the language of thankfulness, is man alone to be dumb and thankless? Shall his heart be dead amidst the life which reigns around him? Shall his spirit be languid and dormant, while the low of the cattle and the music of the birds invite him to praise?

In the evening too, when "the shadows are stretched out," the season is propitious for pious contemplation and grateful praise.—Though the sun has sunk, he leaves a radiance behind him, and there lingers still upon the world a beautiful though diminished brightness. If the song of the birds has died away, there is still a music to greet the ear. The murmur of the brook and the whisper of the breeze afford a melody not ungenial to the sober spirit of the hour; and when the shades of night are darkening on the landscape, we can contemplate with profit the splendors of yonder upper world which break forth when this one is enveloped in gloom, and there, as in the scenes around us which brighten in the sun-beam, we can trace the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of Him who "maketh the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice, and crowneth the year with goodness."

While the present aspect of nature, and the comforts with which, through the Providence of God, we are surrounded, should awaken gratitude and produce contentment in us all, it should have this influence especially upon those who are more immediately dependent on the soil of nature and the gifts of heaven.—There is something very striking in the consideration that the tiller of the ground obtains his subsistence immediately, as it were, from the bounties of the earth and by none of those reflected modes by which it is acquired by the majority of mankind,—that his stay and dependence is not on the caprice of man, but on the unfailing bounty of God. Unstable are the proud ones of the world on their highest elevation,—wealth and honor are appendages which the merest gust of fortune may sweep away,—and numberless are the incidents which may, in an instant, change the condition of the most prosperous; but amidst the fluctuations which mingle distress and ruin around him, the proprietor of land and tiller of the soil remembers and can confide in the promises from above, that "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

And what though that independence, security, and comfort must be purchased by the sweat of the brow, by the unremitted fatigue of daily toil! Is that to be compared to the labor and weariness, to the watchfulness and anxiety, of the care-worn spirit and the harassed mind? While the one is renovated by the repose of a night, and rises in the morning fresh as the landscape around him, the other has no experience of that soothing balm; the mind, harassed and disquieted itself communicates its misery to its material companion. And what is there in the indulgence of morbid sensibilities, in the gratification of an artificial taste, comparable to the pure and rational delight which he enjoys who participates with a lively interest in those emotions which nature and its bounties must call up in the heart? In them he can discover more to win him to contentment with the world and to gratitude to God, than could all the pomp and splendor which wealth can spread around him.—He, indeed, is to be envied in his lot who thus pursues his pilgrimage,—who lives secure of the unfailing bounty of his heavenly and guardian Friend, and who strives to ensure a continuance of that care and love by a life of devotion to His service. Free from the vanity and vexa-

tion which the course of worldly ambition presents,—enwrapped in the joys and endearments of domestic life,—with a conscience untroubled, a heart at peace with God,—he can pursue, as none can better pursue, the way that leads to heaven.

Let him, then, rejoice in his lot and give thanks to God who orders it so. Though the wholesome and innocent exercise,—to gain a relish for the food which he gleans and provides, and a desire for the repose which recruits his wearied frame. But while he looks out with a grateful spirit on the handy work and beneficence of Almighty God, as presented at this season, let him—let us all, turn an attentive eye to our own spiritual progress, and see whether it has been correspondent to the perfection at which the vegetable world has now arrived; whether, when the earth is decked in its costliest array and the latest crowns the year, we have been making advances to that holiness which befits the aspirants for heaven; whether we are preparing for that general harvest of humanity, when the fruits shall be gathered in and the tares cast aside and consigned to "unquenchable fire." While the inanimate world smiles around us in its glory and exhibits the evidence of its perfection, it were sad if the human heart alone presented a fruitless solitude or a moral ruin.—Uncongenial as is that soul,—deteriorated as it is by the influence of original sin, the means of its culture are provided by a hand stronger than the one which caused the ruin. The seeds of truth and holiness which a kindly agency drops there may, by the dew of heaven's blessing, be so fostered and advanced, that the desert of the soul, bleak and dark as it is, may still "rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Amongst the Jews there was a sabbatical year for the land, and to Christians there is a weekly recurring Sabbath for the soul. Let it not be lost or wasted, but on God's own day, let the spirit be refreshed and fitted for those scenes which await us when the body shall be mouldering in the grave. Then when "the angels shall be the reapers," may we hope to be gathered into the "garner" of Almighty God, and admitted into mansions prepared by Him who "died that we might live."—THE CHURCH.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF SLAVES IN THE SOUTH.

We find in the African Repository a letter from Mr. Gurley, Corresponding Secretary of the American Colonization Society, dated Vicksburg, Miss. July 6, from which we make the following extract:

It is delightful to observe an increasing concern for the religious instruction of the slave population, among all sects of Christians throughout this south-western country. No field of better promise is opening for the effects of true and judicious Christian ministers, than among this population in the south. The planters (with some exceptions) are disposed to encourage their servants to meet on the Sabbath, on their respective plantations, and receive instruction on religious subjects, from preachers who enjoy public confidence. Several Methodist ministers in the State of Mississippi are devoting themselves exclusively to the religious instruction of the slaves. A Presbyterian clergyman has for several years past been devoted to this good work on four or five of the plantations in the neighborhood of Natchez, and been wholly supported by their proprietors. Loss of health has compelled him to leave his post; but another gentleman has been found ready to occupy it. Planters who have long been unmindful of their obligations to secure the benefits of Christianity, as preached by true-hearted ministers to their servants, are now disposed to adopt measures for the purpose.

The Methodist colored congregation in New Orleans is large, and comprises three or four hundred members of the society, who are not surpassed (as I was told by their preacher, a very intelligent white minister) for their exemplary lives and Christian spirit, by any church in that city. Nearly all are slaves, but they have been able to subscribe about \$2,000 for the erection of a church—in that in which they now worship being small and inconspicuous.

The Rev. Mr. Marshall, of the Methodist church, preaches every Sunday afternoon to a large congregation of the colored people in Vicksburg, who have made a subscription of about \$1,000 towards the construction of a church.

A portion of the colored population of Natchez and seats in the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, and in the construction of the Episcopal church (now well nigh completed,) ample accommodations are made for their benefit.

GOOD WORKS.—There are two opposite mistakes relating to good works; both alike inconsistent with the Gospel, and destructive of the purposes of christian life. For whilst some have disclaimed and neglected them, as needless in the matter of salvation, there have been others to extol and preach them up as meritorious. These latter detract from the merits of Christ, and the efficacy of our faith in him; whilst the former obstruct that purity and holiness of life which he requires. St. Paul, whatever account some have given of his notions, observed the middle between both extremes, so far from deifying the virtue of good works, that he earnestly insisted on the necessity of "righteousness and temperance;" both of justice to our neighbor and of purity in ourselves; and yet, on the other hand, so far from ascribing any merit to them, that, as we may fairly gather from the whole tenor of his writings, he reckoned them vastly short of the measures of perfection; and for that reason to be no way acceptable in themselves, but only as they were done upon a principle of faith, and in obedience to the laws of God. It is only when performed out of such pious dis-