

From the Christian Intelligencer and Evangelical Guardian.
NATURAL AND MORAL ABILITY.

The Scriptures teach that the whole nature of that man whose soul has not been washed in the fountain of redemption and grace, is defiled with sin. He is "altogether an unclean thing." Not a single faculty is exempt. "To the defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even the mind and conscience is defiled." Such is the constitution of man's nature, that, if depraved at all, the depravity affects all his powers. Man is the subject of moral purity or defilement, as possessing a moral nature; He has a moral nature, as possessing a soul endowed with reason, freedom of choice, and conscience, or the faculty of perceiving moral relations, of choosing or refusing things of moral obligation, and of being sensible of moral desert. But the soul is *immaterial and indissoluble*. The understanding is not one constituent part of the soul; and the will, another; and the affections, another; but the same indissoluble spirit acts in understanding, in will, &c.; and the understanding, the will, &c., are only powers or faculties of this indissoluble and immaterial spirit. Now, that which is *indissoluble*, if it be at all depraved, is *all* depraved. There may be degrees in its depravity; but the depravity, whatever in degree, affects the whole of it, for it cannot be divided. To talk, therefore, of the soul being partly depraved, and partly undraped, is to talk absurdly.

This defilement amounts to an utter inability to live holy—to know, serve, and enjoy God. He is "dead in trespasses and sins—without strength." "The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them; for they are spiritually discerned." "No man can come unto me except the Father which sent me draw him."

The nature of this inability is the subject of much controversy. Much, of late, has been said on the subject of moral and natural ability, and too often the subject has been left in greater perplexity and confusion; and while the New School have been verging towards, or plunging into the whirlpool of Pelagianism, is there not some reason to fear that some of the Old School will dash on the rock of fatalism? It might be wished that the (arbitrary) distinction of natural and moral ability had never been made, and that it were for ever abandoned; for the minds of the majority of Christians will never be able to keep it distinctly in view, and so long as the distinction is used, will be led into misapprehension and error and dispute. Perhaps the simple truth may be set forth as follows, in language used in the popular sense.

1. **Man, as a proper subject of moral obligation—as an accountable agent—possesses (constitutional) capacity of nature** for knowing, serving, and enjoying God. By this capacity of nature, I mean, those faculties—intellect, will, or freedom of choice, and conscience—which man possesses, as man, and by the possession of which he is distinguished from the brute, which perish, and is endowed with powers susceptible of the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of God—susceptible of holiness. This capacity of nature man possesses now as truly as before the fall, and before as well as after regeneration. The fall took it not away; regeneration does not give it. Strip man of it and he ceases to be man—he ceases to be a moral and accountable agent, and becomes as incapable of sin as of holiness.

2. By the fall all these faculties are defiled with sin—depraved, not destroyed. Man has ceased to be a *pure* moral agent, but *not* to be a *moral* agent. He has become a *corrupt* moral agent, but still he is a moral agent. His constitutional powers, in virtue of which he has a capacity for knowing and serving God, and is subject to moral obligation, remain; but they are all depraved—*even* the mind and conscience is defiled. And this depravity is such that man is utterly *unable* (as is shown above) to know, serve, and enjoy God.

3. But it is the inability of *moral depravity*—it places man in all his powers in opposition to the moral law. This contrariety to the divine law, in all his faculties, is invincible, except by divine grace. This inability is not like that of the eye to see, or the arm to lift a weight, or the intellect to grasp an idea, neither of which, when it exists, implies moral turpitude or contrariety to the law of God; but this does, and is, therefore, every where, and under every form, *sinful*. With the understanding it is a sinful *blindness*; with the memory, a sinful *forgetfulness*; with the judgment, a sinful *error*; with the conscience, a sinful *insensibility*; and with the will, a sinful *rebelliousness*. And the sinner can no more overcome the blindness of his mind than the hardness of his heart. The latter is inseparable from the former, sustaining it, and sustained by it. The blindness of the mind keeps the hardness of the heart undisturbed; and the hard heart approves and strengthens the blindness of the mind. It is indissoluble spirit acting in reference to the same moral things, and in all its powers acting wrong, and unable, in any of its powers, to act right. The mind is blind and cannot see; the powers of intellection may be great, but there is no *spiritual discernment*—no seeing so as to realize; and the heart loves to have it so.

4. This inability is *natural*; inasmuch as man, in his present fallen condition, is, "by nature"—from the womb—descended from guilty and corrupt Adam—just such a corrupt, depraved, creature—so totally depraved in all the powers of his moral constitution, as to be unable, as well as indisposed, to be holy, or to know, love, and enjoy God. It is natural also, because it affects his *whole nature*.—There is with him not only the hardness of the heart, but the blindness of the mind. They go together, and it is folly to separate them. They are joined one to the other, acting and reacting. You see it in children—not only wrong passions and wills, but dullness to learn what is good and quickness to learn *evil*—great forgetfulness of good, and great retentiveness of evil. "They have the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

5. In consequence of this inability there is a necessity for the exercise of Almighty power to change, not physically, but spiritually and morally, the *whole soul*. And the divine power does effect renovation of the *entire man*. Among many other passages which might be quoted to prove this, Eph. i. 19-23 in connection with Eph. ii. 1-6 is strikingly convincing, from which it appears that when sinners, who are "dead in trespasses and sins," are "quickened" in regeneration, they experience the "exceeding greatness of God's power"—according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." And that this Almighty power of God does effect a renovation of the *entire man*, we have sufficient proof, 2 Cor. v. 17: "If any man be in Christ

he is a *new creature*; old things have passed away; behold *all things are become new*."

6. Man having the capacity of nature before described, there is room for the use of means, adapted to him, as a rational, moral, and accountable agent; it is by the use of these means, and the exercise of man's powers in the use of them, that the Holy Spirit effects this change. Whatever else may be instrumental, the word of truth is the great means: James i. 18. And it must be used. Without the special aid of the Spirit the sinner may, by the word, be rationally convinced of his sin and misery, and of the fact that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour, and an all-sufficient, suitable, and gracious Saviour. But it requires the Holy Spirit to give him a realizing, and abiding, and heart-affecting sense of these things. Yes; for this there is need of "the demonstration of the Spirit and of power." And there is need likewise of the same power to go along with the light, thus introduced into the understanding, to the heart, and obtain an entrance there, and give a controlling influence over the affections and will, and by this means, over the conduct. Now, in this there is an influence on the sinner's mind and heart, by the Spirit, without the word, and a contemporaneous (though, in the order of nature, subsequent) influence by the same Spirit, through the word. There is a revelation of truth and duty in the word—the sinner reads and hears—intellectually understands and speculatively is convinced. Here he stops—he cannot move a step farther, and the revelation of truth and duty can do nothing more. So far as the *realizing discernment* of that which is good is concerned, the man is blind; and though the sun of revelation is shining full-borne upon him, he cannot see. The Holy Spirit must do something by a *direct agency* upon the organ of *vision* before it will take in the light, and form the image of spiritual things upon the retina of the soul. The instant he does this, the light of revelation darts in, and the things of God revealed in that light are *realized*. Just so with the affections and the will. In what is now realized in the mind, are presented the motives and considerations under which the heart should love and choose that which is good. But, then, the heart is under an unconquerable alienation—it abhors that which is good, and cleaves to that which is evil. Now, here the Spirit must exert a direct omnipotent agency on the heart, and renovate it. The instant this is done, the heart yields to the considerations and motives presented in the understanding, and the affections play, and the will moves, under their controlling influence, delighting in, and choosing that which is good.

Now, in this view, the use of means of grace is important. God's promise warrants the hope, that the man, in the diligent exercise of his powers, as a rational, moral agent, makes himself acquainted with the truth and will of God, shall be renewed in the spirit of his mind; and then, in the knowledge of God's truth and will, with which he has stored his mind, he possesses the material on which his renovated soul subsists and acquires vigor; he has a treasure of light in his mind, under the moral influence of which his soul acts aright.—There is need of it in regeneration. The mind needs it; the affections and the will need it. With it he cannot be illuminated—without it he cannot choose that which is good—without it he cannot turn to God. The most perfect eye cannot see in the absence of light; the most exquisite taste cannot relish it, which is not subject to it.

Ante-soter.—"What is the use," said the pupil of a medical friend of ours one morning to his master on their way to a place of worship, "what is the use of going so often to church, when you only hear the same things over again?" "What is the use," replied his master, "of breakfasting, dining, and supping, every day, when you only eat the same things over again?" "I do not see," said the youth, "that old men at all resemble each other. I must eat to support my life and nourish my body, which, otherwise would languish and die." "The cases are more parallel than you are aware," rejoined the master. "What feed is to the body, the ordinances of religion are to the soul. As the natural life is the one will languish and decay, unless we maintain it by the bounties of God's providence, so the divine life in the other will wither and pass away, unless we have recourse to the provisions of grace." "How does it happen then?" inquired the young man of our friend, "that all have not the same relish for religious exercises, while all have the same appetite for their bodily food?"

"There," answered the master, "you again mistake the matter. It is very true, when our bodies are in health, we desire and relish our daily bread. But when we are sick, it is widely different; we have then not only no relish for our food, but even loathe it; and not unfrequently desire that which is unnatural and injurious. So it is with the soul. When that is at peace with God, through the redemption which is in Christ, it is in health; and not only desires, but relishes, these exercises of devotion and cannot exist without them. But while the soul continues in sin, it is in a state of disease; and having no appetite for spiritual food, it dislikes both the Lord's day a weariness, and avoids the society of his people. For as bodily disease, unless removed by the hand of skill, will speedily terminate our present existence, so the continuance of that spiritual disease, I mean sin, which we derive from our first parents, will issue in that spiritual and eternal death which consists in the everlasting exclusion of the soul from the presence and favor of its Creator."—Lond. Ec. Mag.

Several ways which learn men to be intemperate. 1. *Idleness*. Whenever people are *idle*, and have nothing to do, they feel very uneasy and unhappy. Then they think if they can get some strong drink, it will make them feel lively. And, having nothing else to do, they will go to the taverns and grog-shops, and get something to drink. So, if we wish the people to be *temperate*, we must learn them not to be *idle*.

2. *Gambling*. Another thing that makes people uncomfortable and uneasy, and so makes them wish for strong drink, is the practice of *gambling*. When a person loses in this way, he knows he has got nothing for his money, and it makes him feel very unhappy. Then he is apt to drink strong drink, in order to forget his misery.

3. *Excess in Eating*. Some people learn to be intemperate in *drinking*, by first becoming intemperate in *eating*. When people eat too much it makes them thirsty, restless and uneasy. And then they wish to drink. One intemperate indulgence of the appetite is apt to lead to another.

The person that would not wish to be a drunkard, should take care not to let his appetite be *his master* in *anything*.

4. *Bad Company*. Bad company is another thing that leads people into intemperance. Almost all sorts of bad people love strong drink. Keep away, then, from all *sorts* of bad company.

TIME.

The following forcible remarks on the value of time to the young are from the address of *David Paul Brown*, Esq., to the literary societies of Rutgers College, N. J. We commend them to the attentive perusal of these to whom they are addressed.—*Gal. Observer*.

Another and most important subject, is Time: in considering which, I should not be unmindful of the draught already made upon your attention.

The time of life is short,
To spend that shortness basely, 't were too long,
The time did ride upon a dial's point,
Sul enting at the arrival of an hour!

Or in language more solemn, and not less affecting or poetically beautiful—"Man is of few days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and contumely not." Yet is it not most extraordinary, that surrounded as we are by these lessons upon the brevity and importance of time—Time: the very tenure by which we hold all our earthly, may I not say all our heavenly interest; time, without which nothing can be achieved, with which if carefully improved, the world is too narrow for the majesty of man; and he would seem ever, while moving in a temporal sphere to entrench upon eternity. I say it is not most marvelous, that thus permitted to enjoy this precious heritage, we should in some instances actually employ one-half of our lives in inventing means for wasting or escaping from the other. Time may be said to be the very soil of our existence. We may convert it by patient culture, into a smiling paradise or abandon it as a bleak and barren and blasted heath to the tempest and the wrath of offended Heaven. We measure and divide, decorate and improve every moment or portion of it—fill it with fragrant flowers and luscious fruit, refreshing abhors and gay parades—there the laurel and the palm shall flourish—the vine and the fig tree shall cling and cluster together, and the whole soul shall revel in a wildness of sweets. The improvement of time is the first and best step towards a blessed eternity.

Time is the price of immortality; and if it be squandered or misapplied in early life, when it is most productive and profitable, the remnant of our days shall be "spent in shallow pleasures and in miseries." Improve then the time—between the cradle and the grave there is a great work to be accomplished—the work of two worlds. Not a moment is to be lost—

For on our quickest decrees
The miserable and noiseless foot of time
Steals ere we can effect them."

Where is the man that can look back on his worldly course, uninfluenced by the thronging ghosts of murdered years,—of years numbered for ever with those beyond the flood, and bearing upon them the stain of shameful blushing record of misspent time. Alas! no man sees his penit till it overtakes him; no man listens to the voice of another's experience; he must taste the forbidden, fatal fruit himself; and the taste is DEATH. Could men but redeem the time, what agonies would be avoided; what triumphs enjoyed; what evils subdued; what remorse escaped. Money is said to be the parent of mischief; so far as it contributes to render us indolent or supine it may be true; the fastest friend of vice. An idler is like the sloth, that is said by naturalists, to pine and perish on the tree, from which it has eaten all the foliage.

He that disregards time in the *discrepancy* of his life, passes through a period which he may never reach. The past and the present are all that belong to us. To say nothing of the loss which we sustain, and the evils to which we are exposed by the late acquisition of knowledge, it is almost without an object; we die in the embrace. But supposing that the acquisition of knowledge were at all times equally beneficial to man, knowledge is not equally to be acquired and retained at all times. The tares of the world grow up in the mind and choke and destroy the good seed. It has often been observed, as a matter of surprise, that old age should perfectly remember early and remote circumstances, while perhaps the concerns and occurrences of yesterday are forgotten. When properly considered, where also is the wonder. The difference is that, between an inscription on the sand of the wave beaten shore, and on the eternal Rock. The mind, the immortal essence of man, is ever the same or perhaps grows brighter as it returns to the bosom of its God; but the physical faculties, through which it holds communion with the concerns of life, are broken and impaired by age; the functions of the body the outposts and sentinels of the mind, are asleep, and convey no distinct announcement to the citadel either of the approach of friend or foe. In other words, the impression thus made upon the brain is a dreamy, visionary, fugitive expression, that lasts for a moment and is then forever gone. Youth is the season for improvement; he that passes his maturity without knowledge, has no time left but for remorse. "For he," says a distinguished moralist, "that hopes to look back hereafter with satisfaction upon past years, must learn the present value of single minutes, and endeavor to let no particle of time fall useless to the ground. A sufficient deduction is made from our brief career, by the unavoidable appropriations of life."

Many imagine that time is most important to the aged. This is a glaring error. As well might it be said that winter was the most important season to the husbandman, who has neglected seed-time. That season of life, I appeal to all experience to confirm the doctrine, which is most vital to the happiness of man, and exercises the most powerful control over the prospects of life, *is that which ye now enjoy*. Rightly considered and appreciated, how blessed are the abodes of learning—how refreshing the shades of Academus—"full of flesh, verdure and unnumbered flowers, the negligence of nature." How enlivening the scene, when the young heart, inspired by sentiments which ripened into liberal exercise in future life, shall at the same time impart a rich reward to the possessor, and confer permanent and invaluable blessings upon the society to which he belongs. And yet, how seldom are these blessings appreciated, until they are lost! How often are they sacrificed or contemned for the vain pursuit of empty and delusive phantoms, which perish in the grasp!

Many imagine that time is most important to the aged. This is a glaring error. As well might it be said that winter was the most important season to the husbandman, who has neglected seed-time. That season of life, I appeal to all experience to confirm the doctrine, which is most vital to the happiness of man, and exercises the most powerful control over the prospects of life, *is that which ye now enjoy*. Rightly considered and appreciated, how blessed are the abodes of learning—how refreshing the shades of Academus—"full of flesh, verdure and unnumbered flowers, the negligence of nature."

How enlivening the scene, when the young heart, inspired by sentiments which ripened into liberal exercise in future life, shall at the same time impart a rich reward to the possessor, and confer permanent and invaluable blessings upon the society to which he belongs. And yet, how seldom are these blessings appreciated, until they are lost!

How often are they sacrificed or contemned for the vain pursuit of empty and delusive phantoms, which perish in the grasp!

The hours of youth unemployed or misdirected, instead of adding their contributions to the enjoyments of life and supplying the pillow upon which advanced age may securely repose, often either anticipate an untimely doom, or condemn us in declining years, in order that last opportunities may be retrieved (if they ever can be retrieved), to those intolerable burdens which we shrink and recollect from the pride of health and vigor. He that is content, like the worthless weed, to vegetate where he grows, instead of embellishing the bosom of society by his moral and intellectual bloom and beauty, can scarcely be said to live. The enjoyments of existence are unknown to him—he takes no delight

in the accomplishments of those around him, for they remind him of his hours misspent, and faculties unimproved; and, deriving no pleasure from without, he has no world within, to which he can retreat for consolation or repose—"A cypress, not a bosom, hides his poor heart." In this condition he yields to the unholy blandishments of vice—herds like the prodigal, with swine, extinguishing the spark of the divinity which once blazed brightly within him, and prostituting his glorious birthright to perpetual shame.

THE MISSIONARY.—Extract from Dr. E. Porter's sermon on "The Duty of Christians to pray for the Missionary Cause."

"Among modern missionaries, though literal persecution and chains have seldom been known, severe labors and privations are common. A few examples, already familiar I am aware to many of my hearers, may illustrate this remark. The first is an incidental glance at the life of David Brainerd, from a cursory sketch of his own pen. 'I live,' said he, 'in the most lonely desert, about eighteen miles from Albany. My diet consists chiefly of boiled corn, and bread baked in ashes. My lodging is a little heap of straw laid upon some boards, a little above the ground, for it is a long room, without any floor, that I lodge in. My work is exceeding hard; I travel on foot a mile and a half almost daily, and back again, for I live so far from my Indians. Again he said, in my weak state of body, I was disturbed for want of suitable food. I had no bread, nor could I get any; but through divine goodness, I had some meal, of which I made little cakes. In these circumstances I felt sweetly resigned, and blessed God as much as if I had been a king. For the conversion of the heathen, I long and love to be a pilgrim. I would not exchange my present mission for any other business in the world.'"

Time is the price of immortality; and if it be squandered or misapplied in early life, when it is most productive and profitable, the remnant of our days shall be "spent in shallow pleasures and in miseries." Improve then the time—between the cradle and the grave there is a great work to be accomplished—the work of two worlds. Not a moment is to be lost—

For on our quickest decrees
The miserable and noiseless foot of time
Steals ere we can effect them."

DARING HIGHWAY ROBBERY.—We learn from the Boston *Advertiser* that on Sunday evening, as Messrs. Loke & Wells, provision dealers, were riding on the Salem turnpike, their horse was stopped and their money demanded by two desperadoes. They instantly sprang from their clause, and Mr. Loke seized a club, which fortunately lay in the road and attacked one of the robbers, and succeeded in felling him to the ground, when he was attacked by the other robber. Mr. Wells immediately came to his rescue, took the club which Mr. L. had wielded so successfully, and by a blow broke the guard of a sword and one of the fingers of the assailant, who took flight, Wells pursuing him. Another horse and clause, with two gentlemen, and another person whom they had found lying in the road, driving up, Mr. Loke requested that they would go to the assistance of Wells, whom he held his man down. They complied, and the other robber was soon captured.

In the mean time, the man that they had picked up in the road, recovered his senses, and recognized the robbers as the persons who had robbed him and left him for dead in the road. The two scoundrels were secured, examined before a justice of the peace in Chelsea, and committed to our jail in Leverett. The names given are Thomas Braden and Thomas Forsyth. The name of the person found apparently lifeless, is Manly H. Smith. We are at a loss for words to express our admiration of the spirit and resolution with which Messrs. Loke and Wells pursued the ruffians. A few such examples would have a salutary effect upon the gangs of highwaymen, burglars and incendiaries that prowl about the community.

THE STANDARD.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1835.

UNION IS STRENGTH.

The truth of this position is so nearly self-evident, that an attempt to demonstrate it, would approximate very nearly to the ridiculous. And yet, unaccountable as it may appear, wise men and good men are often found shutting their eyes against it. They have all the same great and important object in view—it is an object obviously feasible, provided they unite their efforts; but each one has his own favorite plan, and unless the others will co-operate with him in it, he will do nothing. Or what amounts practically to the same thing, each one