

OUR BANNER.

Vol. XV.

MAY, 1888.

No. 5.

LIVING UNTO GOD.*

BY PROF. J. K. M'CLURKIN, D. D., ALLEGHENY CITY, PA.

"He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."—2 Cor. v. 15.

The most momentous question which God requires a rational being to answer is this: What shall I do with my life; how shall I mould and develop the immortal principle which was placed in my hands with the first breath of being? To what end shall its energies be directed? To what purposes shall its powers be turned? This is the profoundest problem that meets us in this world, because life takes character from its purposes. The aims of life determine what the life is and what it is to be. If its purposes are base, the life will travel a downward path; if its aims are true, the life will rise even unto the glory that is not of earth. Thus, what shall be the chief end of man may well be taken as the starting point in our religious training.

As to the true answer to this vital question we are not left in doubt; for Christ presents himself as the highest end of life. He came into this world not only to save the soul, but to set himself before the life as the end which is to draw and attract every faculty of its nature, every impulse of its being. We fully respond to the glorious purposes of Christ's redeeming mission, only when we can say with Paul, "For me to live is Christ;" only when we can say Christ is the object of our desires, the culmination of our plans, the fruition of our hopes, the goal of our strivings, the crown of our being. In the world of glory, too, the anthems of praise never fall below this inspiring note, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." In this light Christ stands before

* A sermon delivered before the Missionary Society of the theological students of the R. P. Seminary, in the Central Church, March 18th, 1888, and published by request.

discussion be brought about any time in the near future, it is not impossible that this would soon be the case. It is reported,—and we fear the reports are true,—that there are members of the U. P. church who sing hymns of human composition in the worship of God, and that their sessions take no notice of such conduct; that other members of the same church belong to secret organizations, and are not asked to renounce such connection. The reasoning which says because members of our church are unfaithful to one distinctive principle we should give it up would say, were we connected with the U. P. Church, because members of the church disregard the law of Christ's house as to the matter of praise and as to secret societies, let us set aside the law and enter the Presbyterian Church. When there, very probably, members would be found whose faith and practice do not accord with the standards of the church, and yet they are not called to account; and so we might go on from one denomination to another, until we give up the church altogether. The logic of such a position, as it seems to me, is destructive of church doctrine as well as of church purity.

Let us not go down to the plains of Ono, even to promote that for which we all labor and pray, the unity of the church; rather let our answer be to those who would entice us, "We are doing a great work, and we cannot go down." Our work, in part, is to bring others up to the high platform on which we stand. My judgment is that we can never effectually accomplish this work but by holding fast our distinctive principles. The union of the churches is a desirable thing, but union at the expense of the sacrifice of principle will prove a delusion and a snare. May God deliver our church from such a union.

A SEVERE REBUKE.

BY THE REV. J. M. FOSTER, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

EDITOR OUR BANNER: When I read your editorial current number (March) of your periodical, my first impression was that it was an assault upon our position of political dissent. But reading it over a second time I found it a severe rebuke for our unfaithfulness; in that we have been so tardy and half-hearted in giving publicity to the sins that occasioned our dissent, and a timely warning that we will certainly lose our position as a church unless we bestir ourselves and do quickly the work of national reformation to which Providence has called us.

I believe our only salvation as a church is to marshal our forces for a National Reform campaign. Let that campaign be for a year. Let two agents be put in every State and Territory in the Union. Let them speak in every county-seat and principal city, and publish it in every paper, secular and religious. Let an agent be sent to

Washington who will go through the churches there, interview the President and his Cabinet, senators and representatives and judges of the Supreme Court, and get a hearing in senate chamber, such as Rev. A. M. Milligan, D. D., secured in 1863. And let twenty thousand dollars be raised for that special work.

The nation will thus be warned, and if she does not repent God's judgments will come upon her; and our Church will have done a work worthy of her glorious history. "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed; and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Editorial.

OUR DISTINCTIVE TESTIMONY.

An article in excellent spirit, from the pen of the Rev. John Alford, of Beaver Falls, Pa., appears in the March *R. P. Advocate* on the "Difference between the two Synods." The aim of the writer is to call attention to the large measure of agreement there is, and to awaken interest and call forth effort in behalf of unity and harmony, so that the old breach may be healed, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church again present a united front. In full and hearty sympathy with this aim, and with the same brotherly spirit, let us look at the matter and consider our differences that they may be removed.

A main feature of his article is the statements prepared by the respective committees of the two Synods in 1858, setting forth the views of each. Our committee consisted of Drs. T. Sproull, J. B. Johnston, and J. M. Willson with Elder A. Bowden. Their committee: Drs. H. McMillan, J. N. McLeod, A. M. Black, and W. Willson. The following are the statements. First, by the committee of our Synod:—

1. That we dissent from the Constitution of the United States because of its immoralities.
2. That this dissent from the Constitution requires to abstain from oaths of allegiance and from oaths of office binding to support the Constitution.
3. That it prohibits voting for officers, who must be qualified by an oath to support the Constitution.
4. That it prohibits sitting on juries, as explained by our Testimony, understanding that such juries do not include various juries, where there is neither an incorporation with the government, an oath to an immoral law, nor any implied engagement to support the Constitution.