

## THE INVISIBLE LINE.

The restraint of the Gospel is the most perfect liberty. A divine hand holds us from evil that we may be free to do good.

When I was a child my nearest neighbor had occasion to repair some breaks in the roof of one of his barns. So he sent his "hired man" aloft to do the work. There was not a sign of any staging built nor so much as a cleat nailed on to steady himself by. But, catching a glimpse of the man, from our place, I saw him walking up and down the old fashioned roof as erect and unconcerned as if he were only pacing a parlor floor. So I was naturally curious to learn how he did it. But coming a little nearer, I saw a long, tough cord securely tied about his waist and extending over the ridge of the roof, while down in the rear of the barn stood the proprietor holding the cord very firmly with both hands. When the man wanted to walk down toward the eaves, he would sing out, "More rope, more rope!" Instantly the proprietor would hear him, though out of sight, and would begin cautiously paying out the cord, a few inches at a time. When the workman wished to return and ascend the steep roof, he again called out the proper signal, the rope would tighten, and he would walk up as leisurely as he would have mounted a broad stairway. Now this man was bound with the cord and firmly held by the power of another. But who can fail to see that this restraint was really what gave him liberty. The more carefully the cord was grasped and handled the [R337 : page 2] more complete the liberty of the workman--not to fall and to break his neck, but to go up and down and do the repairs in safety. The bond made him free.

So God gives men liberty, through the restraints of the Gospel. He throws the cords of his protection around the believer, allowing him to go up and down at will, scaling heights, treading paths of danger, passing securely anywhere in response to the call of duty. His bonds always, draw upward, never downward. The freedom which sin gives, of which so many boast, is the freedom which the breaking or the loosening of that cord would have given to the man upon the roof-- perfect freedom to loose his footing and to plunge into remediless ruin. He who is willing to submit his erring nature to the divine restraints of the Gospel, will forever "walk at liberty," unhampered by self, untouched by sin, and carry with him a witness of safety and of peace that armed guards and castle walls and munitions of rocks could not assure. --*N.E. Methodist.*

=====