

Evangelical Witness

PROVE ALL THINGS: HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.—1 Thess. v. 21.

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DAVID LAIRD, Editor and Proprietor.

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FORWARD

Shall this life of mine be wasted!
Shall this vineyard lie uncultivated!
Shall true joy pass by unnoted,
And this soul remain uncultivated!
Shall this heart still spend its treasures
On the things that fade and die!
Shall it count the hollow pleasures
Of bewitching vanity!
Shall these lips of mine be idle—
Shall I open them in vain!
Shall I not with God's own bride
Their frivolities restrain!
Shall these eyes of mine still wander!
Or no longer turned afar,
Fix a firm gaze and fondle
On the bright and Morning Star!
Shall these feet of mine delay
Still in ways of sin be found,
Braving snares, and madly straying
On the world's bewitching ground!
No! I was not born to trifle
Laid away in dreams of idleness,
No! I was not born to slumber
Longings such as these within.

Where the cross, God's love revealing,
Sets the fettered spirit free;
Where it sheds its wondrous healing,
There, my soul, thy rest shall be.
Then no longer idly dreaming
Shall I fling my years away;
But such precious hours redeeming,
Wait for the eternal day.

The Papal War.

In his manner of dealing with the Emperor Napoleon the Pope is more than ordinarily fallible, even according to the rule which we apply to temporal potentates. For ten years he has been maintained in his throne by French arms, and for ten years he has listened to a passive and immutable obedience to the constant admissions which he has received to reform his government and redress the miseries of his people. No doubt, the Pope and his ecclesiastical advisers thought that they might safely despise the admonitions of a Prince never seated on a precarious throne, and who would be sure to be driven from the throne by the support from his clergy, so necessary to the permanency of his dynasty. They never thought that the time would come when a Prince who had endured so much would at last assume a tone better corresponding to the power which he dispensed, and can scarcely now believe that he will be no party to forcing back on the people of the Romagna a yoke which they have just shaken loose.

To such an announcement the Pope replied at the beginning of this month with a conditional blessing, and now, at the end of the month, has arrived at the point of launching an encyclical letter against the Emperor, in which there is neither blessing nor condition, but downright and straightforward denunciation. The breach has widened rapidly, and the thunder of the arms of the Vatican which at one time or other have shaken the foundation of every throne in Europe. The Emperor of the French by no means finishes from the controversy. His semi-official journals announce that, though the Emperor will still observe the utmost moderation towards the Pope, though he will even defend him by arms should he be menaced with expulsion from Rome; yet, if the political authority of the Pope be everywhere else destined to experience another crisis the responsibility will fall, not on France, but on himself. Nor is this all. The encyclical letter of the Pope appeared in the *Univers*, but it was the last song of the dying swan. The *Univers* has been suppressed. The right divine of the French Government to put down, in humble imitation of the Pope, all opinions which are not in strict accordance with his feelings or its interests, has been exercised without scruple, and the *Univers* is mute.

ally been the most zealous opponents of Papal pretensions. France herself once won, and had, and prized her Gallic liberties. Richelieu himself once had to renounce his exorbitant pretensions that he was a Frenchman before he was a Churchman. The whole warp and woof of our English history, long before the Restoration, is interwoven with struggles against the Pope. All our laws of property were, even in those times, directed to the defeat of the machinations of the Pope. It must always be so. It is an inevitable necessity that an enlightened people must be hostile to a Power which, on either count, sheds blood and sheds blood at home, and which does so upon principles that forbid the advance of the human race. The Emperor of the French, fortunately, rules over a nation which is not very sensitive to such influences as the Pope can use. The Pope's power for political purposes exists in Europe only among the ignorant and always converts of the Catholic community. If the Emperor goes to work, the Pope has much more to fear from Napoleon than Napoleon has to fear from the Pope.

The reasons and motives for the suppression of the *Univers* are thus set forth in the following Report of the Minister of the Interior to the Emperor:—
"The journal the *Univers* has made itself the organ, in the periodical press, of a religious party whose pretensions are every day in more direct opposition with the rights of the State. Its incessant efforts are directed to dominate over the French clergy, to trouble consciences, to agitate the country, to sap the fundamental bases on which are established the relations of the Church and of civil society."
This open war upon our most ancient national traditions is dangerous to the very religion which it compromises, by mixing it up with passions unworthy of it, by associating it with doctrines irreconcilable with those duties of patriotism which the French clergy has long and justly held incompatible with a respectful submission to the civil law in spiritual matters.

The religious press has mistaken the mission of moderation and peace which it ought to fulfill. The journal the *Univers* above all, inaccessible to the warnings which have been given it, has been every day on the last limits of violence. To it are due those ardent polemics in which regrettable attacks never fail to respond to its provocations, and the scandals of which are a subject of profound sorrow to the clergy as to all good citizens.

The true interests of the Church, as well as those of the public peace demand imperiously that an end should be put to these excesses. A government founded on the national will does not fear discussion, but it ought to know how to protest efficaciously against those who would shake or compromise them, public order, the independence of the State, the authority and dignity of religion.

It is with this object that I propose to your Majesty to apply to the journal the *Univers* the 32d article of the decree of the 17th February, 1852, and to pronounce the suppression of that periodical. The doctrines and pretensions which that journal would propagate among its readers are not only in direct opposition to the principles of the Constitution, but are in direct opposition to the principles of the Constitution. Some awkward truths are enunciated. The government reminds its clerical advisers of the "organic laws" of Napoleon I., by which no papal bull or brief can circulate in France without permission of the civil authorities. It is as good as telling the Pope that even in spiritual matters his authority is nothing without the consent of the assembled church; and that he abuses his position when he speaks of temporal things *ex cathedra*, and in the tone of the chief Pontiff. The days of Bossuet are recalled, and the declaration of 1682—that the papal authority is strictly confined to things temporal. We are no longer, it is said, in the times of Boniface and Innocent; and it would be "perilous" for the Pope to pretend to such prerogatives. Above all, it is regretted that the Emperor has not been able to recall the Emperor, and who could find no better refuge from their subjects than the baggage-waggons of Salferino! The Pope is warned not to go beyond its spiritual dominion, or to try again to subject Kings and sovereigns to ecclesiastical power. The Emperor, however, in this all but official declaration of the imperial policy, is that in which Napoleon III. now seems to say to the Pope what he some time ago said to the Italian States, viz: "That the duty of France is accomplished." He now tells Rome that he will do no more for her, as he formerly warned the Italian States, that he will do no more for her, as he formerly warned the Italian States.

The first General Assembly of the recently united Presbyterian churches in Victoria, was held in November. We have not had space to report any part of the proceedings, but these were harmonious, and augured well for the future of the union. The question of the withdrawal of all State grants from the churches, is more and more agitating the Australian colonies and Tasmania.—*News of the Churches.*

Persecution in Madagascar.
The latest intelligence received from the Island of Madagascar states that the late of Madagascar, C. de la Roche, directed against all professing Christians, remained unrelaxed in their severity, and

multitudes, both of men and women, who have been convicted of believing the truths and practicing the duties of the gospel, are now suffering poverty, imprisonment, and slavery. But, while the condition of these sufferers should awaken our tenderest sympathy, it is gratifying to learn that for some months past these oppressive and sanguinary laws have not been put in force as regards new victims. A kind and powerful influence has been, through the merciful providence of God, exerted on behalf of his suffering saints, and the effort has happily been successful to the extent now indicated. For the present, however, seems to be the Island on the part of any Christian missionary, or, indeed, of any foreigner, is prohibited, and communication with the suffering Christians is all but impracticable. But notwithstanding the long-continued and accumulated afflictions they have endured, and constant dangers to which they are still exposed, believers still continue to increase in the churches of Madagascar, and are multiplied, and this applies not only to the capital, but to different parts of the Island.

Treasury.
Remarks of John Newton.
Satan will seldom come to a Christian with a gross temptation: a green log and a candle may be safely left together; but bring a few shavings, then some small sticks, and then larger, and you may soon bring the green log to submit.

A Christian should never plead spirituality for being a sinner; if he be but a shoe-cleaner, he should be the best in the parish.

My principal method of defeating heresy is by establishing truth. One proposes to fill a basket with straw; now if I can fill it first with wheat, I shall defy the devil to get it out.

There are critical times of danger. After great services, honors, and consolations, we should stand upon our guard. Noah, Lot, David, and Solomon, fell in these circumstances. Satan is a footpad; a footpad will not attack a man in going to the bank, but in returning with his pocket full of money.

Christ has taken our nature into heaven to represent us; he has left us on earth with his nature to represent him.

God's word is certainly a restraint; but it is such a restraint as the iron which prevent children from getting into the fire.

If we were upon the watch for improvement, the common news of the day would furnish it: the falling of the tower in Siloam, and the slaughter of the Galileans, were the news of the day which our Lord imparted.

Paul and Jonah were both in a storm, but in very different circumstances.

I have read of many wicked Popes, but the worst Pope I ever met is Pope Sixtus.

There are two classes of texts in Scripture especially contradictory of each other—the one representing sin and the other holiness; the one representing the difficulty of obtaining salvation. On the one hand, we are assured of the fullness of a Saviour's love, the sufficiency of his atonement, the unqualified freeness of the gospel offer, the readiness with which God pardons and accepts the sinner, without righteousness or merit of any kind; and, on the other, we are forewarned of terrible conflicts, and the terms of his reception as a sinner pass this gate, if he carries along with him the burden of his sin. Of this he must be divested, and this cannot be done without some conflicts and persevering struggles. God makes the way easy—sin makes it difficult.

A man may be regenerate and not fully sanctified, and it is the effort to attain this sanctification that keeps the believer in a state of painful anxiety. Every step of his progress is resisted by the great adversary of souls, and what is still more distressing, by the remaining depravity of his own heart. Sin tempts and entices him on all hands and at all times, and if he give way for an instant to the influence, his progress is the far arrested; say, he retrogrades and his work is to be done over. At one time every thing appears propitious; his course is plainly marked out; his faith is unwavering; he leans upon Christ; heaven seems almost within his grasp; he walks with covetousness; he runs without fainting; he mounts up with eagle's wings; then again clouds lower and obscure his prospects; his efforts are feeble, his determination weakened; he loses sight of his Almighty Helper; his corruptions struggle for the ascendancy, and salvation seems next to impossible. Now, indeed, the gate is strait, and the hill Difficulty seems insurmountable. The terms of the gospel are still, "Take of the waters of life freely;" the compassion of a promising God is still unchanged; the love of Christ is as inexhaustible as ever; but he fails to realize these blessed truths, and unbelief of his heart unites him for taking advantage of them, while at the same it exposes him to the fiery darts of the enemy. Thus it is that he who is not a single difficulty in his way excepted those of his own creation. Had his surrender to God been perfect; had he ever maintained a vigilant watch, had he clung to Christ with a tenacious grasp, as all his salvation and desire, he would have encountered no such grievous reverses.

Here, then, the Christian may learn salutary lessons. He is straitened, not in God, but in himself.

As sin is the great obstacle in his way of heaven, it cannot be tampered with in its lightest form with impunity. One act of forgetfulness of God, one neglect of duty, one sinful indulgence in act or temper, may and will bring attendant difficulties which he will find it hard to overcome. If he wishes a comparatively easy course he must hate sin unqualifiedly, under whatever aspect it is presented; he must hold no truce with it; he must crucify it in his heart and members. He must remember, too, and remember always, that his safety and comfort depend on the clinging closely to the cross of Christ, or he is always to realize his presence, and to be sure of his present help. His object must be definite and ever in sight, to lay hold of eternal life; and against everything which tends to obscure and lessen the importance of this, he must vigilantly guard. In this way his striving will not be in vain. His Saviour will not withdraw from him while he confidently and affectionately trust him, and no enemy shall defeat him while clothed with the armour of righteousness. The difficulties of salvation will be obviated, and he will go on his way rejoicing that a full salvation is prepared for him, and the most ample aids furnished for its final possession.

Almost Home.
This is one of the most joyous expressions in the English language. The heart of the long-absent husband, father, or son, not only home-ward bound, but almost arrived, thrills with rapturous joy as he is on the point of receiving the embraces and greetings of the dear ones at home. So it is with the aged Christian, as, in the far advance of his pilgrimage, he feels that he approaches the boundary line, and will soon cross over to the land of promise. Many of his best friends had crossed over before him, and they have long been beckoning him upward and onward. They await his arrival with the joyful welcome of holy ones. And as tokens nearly on either hand, that the land of Beulah is near, he feels that he is almost home. The ripe fruit of a long Christian life is about to be gathered into the heavenly garner. Few sights on earth are more pleasing than aged, faithful Christians, strong in the Lord, almost home. We have some such among us, revered and beloved, whose faces we love to see in the sanctuary, and whose prayers bring down blessings upon our heads. They speak of many friends, most of whom have preceded them, but the reunion will soon come. Blessings be upon the fathers and mothers in Zion; and may their mantles fall on us.

What Example will do.
We know not when, nor to how great an extent, we may be the means of blessing others in the faithful discharge of duty, merely by the force of example. An aged and devoted Christian, now living in New Jersey, about forty years ago occupied the lower part of a house in the city of New York. It was his custom regularly to observe family worship. A young man and his wife resided at the foot of the cross, where they found peace in believing, and were rejoicing together in hope of eternal life. They at once consecrated themselves to the service of Christ by uniting with his people. But the blessing stopped not here. The young man, soon after his conversion, commenced studying for the ministry, which he entered, and went out to the far West, where he devoted his life in laboring for the salvation of souls.

God may use us as instruments for the advancement of his kingdom, and of eternal blessings to our fellow-men when we least expect it. What an incentive to Christian fidelity! Not unto us, not unto us, but to his name be the glory.—*Am. Mess.*

Have you been convinced of sin?
There are three things we should especially be convinced of (says the Rev. Matthew Mead):—
First, "Be convinced of the evil of sin," the filthy and heinous nature of it: this is the greatest evil in the world; it wrongs God, it wounds Christ, it grieves the Holy Spirit, it ruins a precious soul; all other evils are not to be named with this. My brethren, though to do sin is the worst work, yet to see sin in the best light; for sin discovered in its violence, makes Christ to be desired in his fulness.

But, above all, labor to be convinced of the mischief of an ungodly heart; what an abhorring it is to God, what certain ruin it brings upon the soul. Oh, think often upon the hypocrite's hell. (Matt. xiv. 15.)

Secondly, "Be convinced of the misery and desperate danger of a natural condition;" for till we see the plague of our hearts, and the misery of our state by nature, we shall never be brought of ourselves to seek help in another.

Thirdly, "Be convinced of the utter insufficiency and inability of anything but Christ Jesus to minister relief to thy soul in this case;" all things beside Jesus Christ are "physicians of no value;" duties, performances, prayers, tears, self-righteousness, avail nothing in this case; they make us like the troops of *Tem*, to return "battered and our disappointment" from such "failing broods."

Alas! it is an infinite righteousness that must satisfy for us, for it is an infinite God that is offended by us. If ever thy sin be pardoned, it is infinite mercy that must pardon it; if ever thou be reconciled to God, it is infinite merit must do it; if ever thy heart be changed and thy state renewed, it is infinite power must effect it; and if ever thy soul escape hell, it is infinite grace that must save it.

In these three things right and sound conviction lieth; and whosoever the Spirit of God worketh these thorough convictions, it is in order to a true and sound conversion.

Reader, have you seen yourself to be a lost sinner? Have you felt your sin to be a burden far too heavy for you to bear? Has the Spirit convinced you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment? Unless you are laid low, even in the very dust, by deep conviction of sin, you are never likely to be exalted in God's righteousness. Whatever you may think or feel, I would earnestly beseech you to ponder well this pregnant passage:—"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."