

The Evangelical Witness

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FORWARD

Shall this life of mine be wasted? Shall this vineyard lie uncultured? Shall true joy pass by unattended, and this soul remain uncultured? Shall this hour still spend its treasures On the things that fade and die? Shall it count the hollow pleasures Of bewilding 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? Shall these feet of mine still tread, On the bright and Morning Star? Shall these feet of mine still stray, 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, Life away in dreams of idleness, No! I was not born to trifle, Longings such as these within.

The Papal War.

It is 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 with 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 admissions of a Prince never seated on a precarious throne, and who would be sure to be felled from the throne by the sword of a successor. The Pope's policy is now being abandoned, and it is clear 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 dispenses, and can scarcely now believe that the lines which he has hitherto supported them can be so suddenly and so unceremoniously withdrawn.

Review of the Month.

The chief event of religious interest of the past month has been the very extensive observance of the second week of January as a season of prayer, in accordance with the Letters of Conviction. In London, and all parts of the country, as well as in America, France, Germany, and Switzerland, many thousands of Christians have assembled to unite in supplication for the outpouring of the Spirit, and for those blessings which flow from His presence. No season of prayer has ever been more generally observed. This appears the more remarkable when it is remembered that the invitation came from a district of the outlying heathendom of India, almost unknown even by name. In perusing the invitation, we cannot but be struck with the faith and confidence which it manifests. Those heathen nations whose invitation was the assurance that their voices would be heard; and it has been heard and responded to in every part of the world. God thus

again proves that faith is powerful to overcome every obstacle. The season has been one of great blessing, and it has passed away, leaving the Church better fitted for her work and conflicts. In London, the effects of this season, in promoting Christian zeal and unity, have been very remarkable. The great movement, which has been affecting many parts of the country, appears since more visibly to be approaching the metropolis.

Numerous special services in all parts have been opened in London during the past month. A new, and perhaps somewhat questionable feature, has been introduced in the hiring of a number of the low theatres on Sabbath evening for the purpose of preaching. The ministers appear on the front of the stage. The method which has been adopted, both by the English and the dissenting ministers, is to present all the aspects of the ordinary gatherings. The special services in the cathedral, and in Exeter Hall, St. James' Hall, &c., have been revived, and are numerously attended. The Wesleyans have been actively urging their just claims to chaplaincies in the army. We see no principle on which they can be excluded, when Romanists, who are not of any established church, are admitted. The presence of a small body of Wesleyan and other dissenting chaplains could not but be of great advantage to the State, both in promoting true religion, and in counteracting the insidious plans of the Jesuit chaplains. The Wesleyans appear to be making great progress in their educational arrangements.

The Papal agitation in Ireland has been continued, though the ardour of the multitude has to some extent diminished. Dr. Dixon, the Romish primate, has published a missive anathematizing the French Emperor. A petition to the Government, which contrasts in its moderate tone with the speeches of the bishops, has been numerously signed by Romanists of influence, requesting it to lend its aid for the maintenance of the Holy See in spiritual matters.

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.

Salvation Easy and Difficult.

There are two classes of texts in Scripture especially contradictory of each other—the one representing the ease, and the other the difficulty, of obtaining salvation. On the one hand, we have passages which us 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.

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 send him flying attendant difficulties which he will find it hard to overcome. If he wishes a comparatively easy course he must have an 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 side of Christ, or he is always to realize his presence, and to be sure 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 is 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 homeward 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 manifestly 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.

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.

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 Sennacherib, who were "dashed against our disappointment" from such "falling brooks."

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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 precious promise:—"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."