

GENERAL READING

THE FALL OF EMPIRES.

Of all the Empires whose rise and fall have been recorded in history, there is not one that has owed its ruin or decay to checking the lust of unmeasured territorial acquisition.

BISMARCK'S COURAGE.

It was in 1866. Bismarck—then Count Bismarck—was returning from the Palace, where he had been to see the King.

THE STRENGTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

Some of the best testimonies for Christianity have come from men not popularly identified with it. Says Macaulay:

FAMILY READING.

THE WEEK OF PRYER, 1879.

The Circular of the Council of the Evangelical Alliance has been published, and, although it is somewhat early, we think it well to put its contents before our readers as soon as it comes into our hands.

SUNDAY, January 5th.—Sermons.—“The years of the right hand of the most high.”—Psalm lxxvii, 10.

MONDAY, January 6th.—Praise.—Praise to God for his long-suffering kindness and mercy; for the goodness of his providence; and especially for salvation in Jesus Christ, and for the blessings enjoyed under the present dispensation of the Holy Ghost.

TUESDAY, January 7th.—Prayer.—For the power of the Holy Spirit to rest upon and operate in the Church of God everywhere, so that the disciples may be led into all the truth; that errors in doctrine and corruption of Scriptural worship may be stayed; that faith and hope, brotherly kindness and charity may be increased; and that the general tone of spiritual life may be elevated in communion with the Lord.

WEDNESDAY, January 8th.—Prayer.—For the energetic operation of the Holy Spirit in the world at large, convincing men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; and bringing those who are merely nominal Christians under the quickening and transforming power of the Truth.

THURSDAY, January 9th.—Prayer.—For the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon all flesh; for the continuance of peace; for the establishment of righteous government; for the spread of enlightenment, goodwill, and love of justice among all nations, and for their conversion to Christ; for the removal of intemperance, and other social evils; special prayer for the nation, its Sovereign, and all in authority.

FRIDAY, January 10th.—Prayer.—For the blessing of the Spirit of God to accompany evangelistic and missionary labours, and render them fruitful to Christ; for the turning of all Israel to the Lord; for the growth and stability of the young churches gathered from heathen communities; for the revival of Bible Christianity in Eastern lands; and for the preaching of the Gospel among all nations, and for “obedience” on the part of those who go not themselves to this work.

SATURDAY, January 11th.—Prayer.—For those who preside over the Churches of the Saints, and for all who are called to preach and to teach; for the due observance of the Lord's day; for the wise guidance of biblical translators and critics; for successful resistance to secularism and infidelity; and for the Divine blessing to accompany and follow the General Conference of Christians of various nations to be held this year in Switzerland.

SUNDAY, January 12th.—Sermons.—Looking for “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—1 Cor. i. 9; and Matt. xxiv. 42-51.

WHAT HAPPENED IN A SNOW STORM.

Nearly a century ago there lived a pious man named Christian Zirchel, a mile northeast of Frederick, Maryland, which was then a staggering village. By his industry Zirchel had supported his family in what was then regarded a moderate competence.

man help, what would become of them? No earthly probability that any traveller would come into such an out of the way place through such snow. From the depth and compactness of the snow it might lie for several weeks.

She then took her Bible and read from the thirty-seventh Psalm: “Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass.”

The day passed, but no signs of help. The second day the prayers of the good woman became more fervent. A mere morsel had been left for a scanty breakfast, and now the children were crying for dinner.

The man said: “I paused for some time before knocking at your door. I overheard parts of your prayer; I have learned its general import. I saw a drover from Washington county, I sold a drove of cattle in Baltimore, and am on my way home. The roads through the woods are so drifted that I lost my way. I saw the smoke from your chimney, and came here to ask what direction I am to take for your village.

She informed him that for several days her children had been on short allowance and had merely a crumb to eat; the last morsel was gone. It was impossible for her or her little ones to make their way through the snow to the nearest house a mile off.

When he returned, by the assistance of his horse spreading down the snow, he could find a path through the door. He also aided in getting additional fuel from the woods, and then gave her about five dollars in coin, and said: “So late in the season, this heavy snow cannot last long. Your meal will keep you in bread for several weeks; by that time you can buy with this money more provisions.”

The benevolent man then took his leave riding through the unbroken snow in the direction of the village, where he found comfortable quarters for the night in the village inn.

“HOME, SWEET HOME.” On one occasion Howard Payne, the genial hearted, kind little man who wrote the immortal song of “Home, Sweet Home,” was walking with me in the great city of London, and pointing to one of the aristocratic streets in May Fair, where wealth and luxury had interposed to save her and her children from starvation.

“SUNNY PERSONS.” We all know them, and I have thanked God that they did exist in this world of clouds and shadows. They are men of like passions with ourselves, but somehow they seem to live in a higher atmosphere than do most of mankind.

A REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE.

Little Lincoln Melrose was a bright and active member of the Bedford-street Sunday-school in this city. At the early age of eleven years he fell a victim to that dreadful scourge of childhood—diphtheria. His sickness lasted nearly three weeks, and was a scene of unusual religious triumph.

“WHILE THY SERVANT WAS BUSY HERE AND THERE HE WAS GONE.” It was a most impressive sermon from that text. It was, in that special case, made applicable to the influences that rest upon one's soul, to the power and the strivings of the Holy Spirit, which, if regarded, may abide with us; but which, disregarded or disdained, may leave us forever.

“LET THAT MIND BE IN YOU.” Is it not wonderful condescension, that He who of old laid the foundations of the earth, and spangled the heavens with those beautiful orbs; He who only had to say, “Let there be light,” and the heavens were ablaze with His glory—when he comes to beautify His own dwelling place, has really to become the suppliant and ask permission to do it? He now no longer commands but He does entreat as a friend!

“Take this child and train him for me.”

Lord, while thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.” There used to be books for mothers; there are still. But, also, let us have an exhortation to fathers. Upon no other being can the care fall, and now is the only sure time. Mischief which is done is done early. We have seen men very solicitous about the fruit of trees; the worms had it, they would do anything to save the fruit. Alas! it was stung when it was green; a little care then would have saved it, now it is too late.

A SERMON FROM A PAIR OF BOOTS.

There lived forty years ago, in Berlin, a shoemaker who had a habit of speaking harshly of all his neighbours who did not feel exactly as he did about religion. The old pastor of the parish in which the shoemaker lived heard of this, and felt that he must give him a lesson.

“I will make them with pleasure, your reverence. Can I take the young man's measure?” “It is not necessary,” said the pastor; the lad is fourteen, but you can make my boots and his from the same last.”

“Your reverence, that will never do,” said the shoemaker, with a smile of surprise. “I tell you, sir, to make my son's on the same last.” “No, your reverence, I cannot do it.” “I must be—on the same last.” “But, your reverence, it is not possible, if the boots are to fit,” said the shoemaker, thinking to himself that the old pastor's wife were leaving him.

“Ah, then, master shoemaker,” said the clergyman, “every pair of boots must be made on their own last, if they are to fit; and yet you think that God is to form all Christians exactly according to your own last, of the same measure and growth in religion as yourself. That will not do either.”

“I thank your reverence for this sermon, and I will try to remember it, and to judge my neighbours less harshly in the future.”

“LET THAT MIND BE IN YOU.”

“Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” Hear His loving request. Shall it be granted? “Let that mind be in you, which was also in Christ.” Do not hinder. He purposes to adorn this living temple with all the graces of the Holy Spirit. He desires to make it worthy the Triune Deity. Jesus says, “If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

Again Jesus says: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Without the permission of the individual He cannot do it. If Jesus has not already done this for you, dear disciple, invite Him at once to undertake it. He loves to do it. “He will beautify the meek with salvation.” His work is perfect. The smallest flower, and the smallest animalcule unobservable to the naked eye, when put under the most powerful microscope, only brings out their beauty, and reveals their perfection. This is the reverse in the most finished and polished work of art, for in that case the glass will be certain to reveal imperfections. Dear reader, will you not permit Him to beautify His own temple, even your body? Will you not suffer Him to live in you, and reign in you, bringing every thought and every purpose into subjection to Himself? This is the will of God concerning us, and it was for this God died.