

Youth's Department.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS.

XLIII. DAVID.—CONTINUED.

365. One of the greatest drawbacks upon the general excellence of David's character was his sinful conduct connected with Uriah the Hittite and his wife Bathsheba.—Can you relate the striking and beautiful allegory in which the sin of David is described? as well as the effect which was produced on his mind upon hearing it?—(2 Sam.)

366. David having on this occasion been guilty of the crime of murder, his life was justly forfeited, but God graciously declared to him that he had put away his sin from him, so that he should not die.—Where do you find this declaration?—(2 Sam.)

367. Since however by this guilty procedure he had made the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, and as he was more over a public character, it was necessary that some public as well as lasting token of God's displeasure should be inflicted upon him.—Can you tell the three particulars in which his just punishment consisted?—(2 Sam.)

368. One of the marks of God's displeasure was manifested in the death of David's infant child.—Can you describe the affectionate but submissive conduct of David upon this trying occasion?—(2 Sam.)

369. The principal punishment however inflicted on David connected with this guilty transaction was the accomplishment of the declaration that "The sword should never depart from his house."—Can you specify the instances in which this was more particularly fulfilled in the premature deaths of three of David's children?—(2 Sam. & 1 Kings.)

370. Which of the Psalms of David do you conceive to have more especial reference to this transaction, and which describes the feelings of deep humiliation which he subsequently cherished?—(Psalms.)

371. In what parts of this penitential Psalm does he pray for deliverance from the guilt of murder? and from which of his petitions do you infer that he was apprehensive lest he should become a castaway, and should have the influence of the Holy Spirit totally withdrawn?—(Psalms.)

CHURCH CALENDAR.

Jan. 27.—Septuagesima Sunday.  
30.—King Charles the Martyr  
Feb. 2.—Purification of the Virgin.  
3.—Sexagesima Sunday.  
10.—Quinquagesima Sunday.  
13.—Ash Wednesday.

PASSING THOUGHTS.

BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

No. XVII.

THE CONSTELLATION.

One of the first objects that attracted my infant attention was the constellation of Orion. There is no personal event of any moment within my recollection—no change, in a life replete with sudden and unexpected changes—that I cannot in some way connect with the principal stars of Orion. To ascertain upon a starlight night, at bedtime, what was the relative position of my sparkling friend, ever formed a matter of careful investigation, when I happened, as a child, to be domiciled beyond the paternal roof; and I believe it is the case to the present time. No scientific inquiries, no stores of astronomical knowledge, are concerned. It is one of those predilections, or involuntary associations, that neither time nor change can affect; unless as the lapse of the one, and the bereavements of the other, draw closer the ties that endearing recollections have strengthened with every passing year. Many a wild and beautiful thought of childhood, many a romantic idea of opening youth, many a soothing reflection of riper years, seems to hang in clusters on the magic form of Orion; revealing themselves to me, while I gaze "in dreamy mood" upon its familiar outline.—In all there is a sweetness known only to such as love to look into the past; but more than the mere luxury of reveries I have found in that constellation.

I can realise the scene with heart-thrilling accuracy, when one glimpse of that bright phantom, as it then seemed, was worth to me all the splendour of a thousand noonday suns. My nominal home was then in another hemisphere; the Atlantic rolled between me and all that could constitute a home. Winter, such as our England knows not, nor can conceive of, had set in with a severity unusual even in that climate. At a very late hour I was returning from a scene of giddy mirth, where the laugh and the song had fettered a youthful party round the supper table until midnight struck unheeded, and a reluctant separation sent them on their respective paths. Mine lay along a track sufficiently defined by the tread of many feet, and the pressure of many sleighs; but on either side the unbroken, though undulating, surface of snow stretched off in the dreariest monotony imaginable. To the right it terminated in low lands, and the undistinguishable course of a river; on the left, a drift, that covered with its swell the intersecting views of wooden fence—for no hedge-rows blossom there—became by degrees level with a higher range of fields; then, sinking for a space, it rose again at the horizon, not in the flat line that marked the opposite extremity, but in those peculiar masses that shew a forest, or rather an impenetrable wood of low thick trees, to be buried beneath them. We had ascended a rising ground, which shut out the cluster of houses recently quitted; and the onward path was lost in a confused distance.

Perhaps there is no time when the mind so eagerly turns inward, to brood again over an habitual sorrow, as at the close of a sustained effort to appear light-hearted and serene. It was my case, with many aggravations, just then; and the desolateness of that frozen scenery was but a type of the dreary waste that my spirit displayed. I walked forward, endeavouring to fancy myself alone; and with gloomy satisfaction, if such a word was then admissible, I secretly claimed the character of an outcast from all that was pleasant, all that was cheering, all that was allied to joy, or hope, or consolation, in a cold and comfortless world. In this mood I looked slowly around me, then raised my eyes, in listless abstraction, above the heavy line of snow-capped woods, and there, sparkling among myriads of stars, with an effulgency as indescribable as was the piercing keenness of the atmosphere, I beheld Orion.

And in Orion I beheld my distant, long-lost home; I remembered the magnificent lines that shaded my favorite walk; I saw the tall spire of the venerable minister, from behind which the constellation used to steal upon my sight; I beheld the purple clusters of the vine that mantled my father's house, and the smiling faces that rejoiced beneath them.—

What though the abode was now another's home, and the party scattered, and the paternal head laid low in the dust, beneath that massive cathedral roof, and in the scenes that rose to my mental view, I could never, never more rejoice: still, for a moment—and such a moment too, of mid-winter without and within—they were again my own, with all their sunbeams and flowers, glad looks and loving smiles.—My heart beat freely, my step rose lightly, and when the short, sweet vision dissolved in tears, they were tears of resignation, almost of thankfulness. Any sensation is preferable to that of a warm and loving heart striving, against its nature, to become a misanthropic icicle; and from such a wretched struggle Orion had delivered me.

It will be evident, that at the time referred to, I had not learned to take heed to the light shining in a dark place, nor to watch for the rising of the day-star in my heart. I considered the heavens the work of God's fingers, but without a reference to the vileness of man, or the amazing love of God in Christ to him. In fact, I knew neither the one nor the other. I grieved not as a sinner, but as a sufferer; and the consolation to be drawn from visible things well suited an earthly nature. Far higher and holier thoughts are now interwoven with those splendid monuments of Divine power—the architecture of the heavens. But though sin atoned for, and salvation wrought out, and an incorruptible, undimmed, unfading inheritance laid up for God's people, are the substance of the tale which the heavens are telling to earth, still a soft and shadowy recollection of all that sweetened or that saddened bygone times, cleaves to the starry forms that won my childish attention, and have hovered around my path to this hour. They are chroniclers of much that would otherwise be forgotten, and which it is profitable to remember. They tell a tale of sin, of ingratitude, rebellion and presumptuous pride, on the one side; of long-suffering mercy, forbearance, forgiveness, and blessing on the other; of dangers wantonly dared, and deliverances miraculously wrought. With a voice more eloquent than angel's tongue could utter, they deliver the admonitory words, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, and whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no."

DONNE.

To Mr. Coleridge is due the merit of having recalled the learned attention to the extraordinary excellencies of this great and good man, who enjoyed the friendship and admiration of all the eminent individuals of an epoch fruitful in intellect. Day after day, year after year, the press has sent forth its gilded swarm of buzzing authorlings; hour by hour the minute piles of their insect architecture have been growing up, interrupting the flow of purer waters, and gradually forcing in a wrong direction the entire current of our literature. The mention of Donne, in the Table Talk, attracted the notice of two or three inquisitive scholars; and his sermons, after sleeping for a century upon the shelves of the University Library at Cambridge, were taken down to gratify a newly awakened curiosity. A similar circumstance happened, we believe, at another great national establishment. We hail with delight the dawn of a better and more salutary taste. The Roman citizens adorned the vestibules of their dwellings with the images of their ancestors; so that in their incomings and outgoings, the faces of the patriot, the warrior, and the philosopher, were ever present, to remind them of their exploits, and to stimulate them to their imitation. The design was crowned with success. The virtue of one generation was transferred, by the magic of example, into several; and heroism was propagated through the commonwealth. May we behold a corresponding veneration for our mighty ancestors in the faith! Let us consult the oracular Dead for an answer to our difficulties; let us descend into the sepulchres of these holy teachers of the truth; and whatever may be the weakness of our mental frame, whatever the organic debility of our imagination; we shall, like him who was cast into the tomb of Elisha, be revived and strengthened, and made to stand upright. Donne is, in the broadest, truest, and most comprehensive signification of the name, an evangelical preacher. Robert Hall dwells earnestly upon the want of unction in the great divines of the preceding centuries; he admits the copiousness, the purity, the exactness of their moral instruction, and the general propriety and accuracy of their decisions; he admires the splendour of their genius, the illumination of their learning, the exuberance of their invention; but he complains of their viewing moral duties too much apart from the light of revelation, of their omission to inculcate the great and pressing truth, that by the deeds of the Law no flesh living shall be justified. The agency of the Spirit he considers to be insufficiently honoured or acknowledged; the doctrine of the atonement too negligently and weakly enforced. Hence he arrives at the conclusion, from the general character of their works, that they deemed a belief in the evidences of revealed religion, united to a correct deportment in social life, a satisfactory fulfilment of the demands of Christianity; and as a natural and irresistible corollary of the proposition he has constructed, he pronounces them to be unsafe guides in matters of faith. We entertain the hope of reversing this decision upon the theological and scriptural merits of the illustrious writers whose cause we are advocating. But however strongly, for the sake of argument, we may admit these objections to bear upon his contemporaries and successors, they are totally inapplicable to Donne, of whom we suspect the able critic just quoted to have known very little. Whether or not the Cross of Christ be dimly seen through the exhortations of the Bishop of Down and Connor, its shadow lies broad and deep upon every page of the Dean of St. Paul's; the agony of Gethsemane is always present to his remembrance; the darkness of the Crucifixion breathes a solemn gloom over his feelings; Jesus is the name before which he delights to prostrate his genius. The extension of these remarks will only allow us to adduce two instances of the imaginative manner in which an obvious thought presented itself to his apprehension. The first is a simile:—

"But as a thoughtful man, a pensive, a considerate man, that stands still for a while, with his eyes fixed upon the ground before his feet, when he casts up his head, hath presently, instantly, the sun, the heavens for his object; he sees not a tree, nor a house, nor a steeple by the way, but as soon as his eye is departed from the earth where it was long fixed, the next thing he sees is the sun in the heavens; so when Moses had fixed himself long upon the consideration of his own insufficiency for this service, when he took his eye from that low piece of ground, himself,—considered as he then was,—he fell upon no tree, no house, no steeple, no such consideration as this,—God may endow me, improve me, exalt me, enable me, qualify me with faculties

fit for this service; but his first object was that which presented an infallibility with it," &c. &c.

The second is a metaphor:—

"The ashes of an oak in the chimney are no epitaph of that oak, to tell me how high or how large that was. It tells me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell. The dust of great persons' graves is speechless too,—it says nothing, it distinguishes nothing. As soon the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldst not, as of a prince, whom thou couldst not look upon, will trouble thine eyes if the wind blow it thither; and when a whirlwind hath blown the dust of a churchyard into the church, and the man sweeps out the dust of the church into the churchyard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again, and to pronounce, this is the patrician—this is the noble flour; and this the yeomanly—this the plebeian bran?" Coleridge adds a brief and expressive "very beautiful indeed!" to the passage; and his editor compares it with Hamlet, Act V. Sc. I. The sermon was preached March 8, 1838.—Church of England Quarterly Review.

The Garner.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS EVANGELICAL.

Know this, that in the righteousness evangelical, one duty cannot be exchanged for another, and three virtues will not make amends for one remaining vice. He that oppresses the poor, cannot make amends by giving good counsel; and if a priest be simoniacal, he cannot be esteemed righteous before God by preaching well, and taking care of his charge. To be zealous for God and for religion is good, but that will not legitimate cruelty to our brother. It is not enough for a man to be a good citizen, unless he be also a good man; but some men build their houses with half a dozen cross sticks, and turf is the foundation, and straw is the covering, and they think they dwell securely; their religion is made up of two or three virtues, and they think to commute with God, some good for some bad; as if one deadly wound were not enough to destroy the most healthful constitution in the world. Deceive not yourselves. It is all one on which hand we fall; "The moon may burn us by night as well as the sun by day; and a man may be made blind by the light of the sun as well as by the darkness of the evening;" and any one great mischief is enough to destroy one man. Some men are very meek and gentle naturally, and that they serve God withal, they pursue the virtue of their nature: that is, they tie a stone at the bottom of the well, and that is more than needs; the stone will stay there without that trouble; and this good inclination will of itself easily proceed to issue; and, therefore, our care and caution should be more carefully employed in mortification of our natures, and acquist of such virtues to which we are more refractory, and then cherish the other too, even as much as we please; but at the same time we are busy in this, it may be, we are secret adulterers, and that will spoil our confidences in the goodness of the other instance. Others are greatly bountiful to the poor, and love all mankind, and hurt nobody but themselves; but it is a thousand pities to see such loving, good-natured persons to perish infinitely by one crime, & to see such excellent good things thrown away to please an uncontrolled and a stubborn lust; but so do some escape out of a pit, and are taken in a trap at their going forth; and stepping aside to avoid the hoar-frost, fall into a valley full of snow. The righteousness evangelical is another kind of thing: it is a holy conversation, a god-like life, a universal obedience, a keeping nothing back from God, a sanctification of the whole man; and keeps not the body only, but the soul and the spirit, unblameable to the coming of the Lord Jesus.—Bishop Jeremy Taylor.

"SMOKING FLAX SHALL HE NOT QUENCH."

The man deserves not the name of Christian who feels no desire to be united to that God, who descended from Heaven, that our nature might thither ascend, and there continually dwell. The simplest and weakest among the followers of Jesus must surely have an earnest wish to be where his Leader and Guide has gone before, to prepare a place for him. Where his treasure is, there will his heart be also; and like the smoking flax, will send up some exhalations of desire towards that holy and happy mansion which is now preparing for him in his Father's house. So far from quenching this faint and feeble desire, the great Friend of human nature will kindly cherish it, and will breathe forth the gentle influence of his Holy Spirit, to nourish and increase it. From his high and heavenly abode, he looks down with complacency on his Church, his temple here below, and with watchful eye surveys the lamps of his sanctuary: where he finds empty vessels without any oil, without one spark of heavenly fire, like to those of the foolish virgins in the parable, he throws them aside as utterly unworthy of his care, because no longer fit for his service. But wherever he meets with the smallest particle of celestial fire, wherever he perceives the faintest spark of sincere love to him, wherever he beholds the principle of true piety, which, although just expiring, yet renders the heart susceptible of divine love, there will he bountifully afford his heavenly aid, to strengthen the feeble efforts of this decaying piety; he will blow up the languishing spark into a lively flame, and cause it to shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Where there subsists the smallest principle of true holiness, he will not fail to cherish it; under the kindly breathings of his heavenly grace, the smoking flax shall not be smothered, nor shall the rudest blasts that may assault it be able to quench it, because thus sheltered and protected by his all-powerful hand.—Dr. Skinner, Bishop of Aberdeen.

PERPETUAL OBLIGATION OF THE SABBATH.

In the Book of Genesis, the mention of this institution closes the history of the creation. An institution of this antiquity, and of this general importance, could derive no part of its sanctity from the authority of the Mosaic law; and the abrogation of that law no more releases the worshippers of God from a rational observation of a Sabbath, than it cancels the injunction of filial piety, or the prohibitions of theft and murder, adultery, calumny, and avarice. The worship of the Christian Church is properly to be considered as a restoration of the patriarchal, in its primitive simplicity and purity;—and of the patriarchal worship, the Sabbath was the noblest and perhaps the simplest rite.—Bishop Horsley.

Advertisements.

THE REV. R. V. ROGERS, Rector of Richmond, Bathurst District, has a vacancy in his family for a THEOLOGICAL STUDENT, Application, if by letter, to be post paid.  
Parsonage, Richmond,  
January 14th, 1839. 32—6w.

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THIS School, agreeably to a previous announcement, will be re-opened on Thursday, the 10th instant, in the District School-house, in this City, under the superintendence of MARCUS C. CROMBIE.

In presenting himself, in his official capacity, to this enlightened community, and in soliciting a share of their patronage, Mr. C. respectfully begs leave to intimate, that he has, for upwards of eighteen years, been an approved and a successful Teacher in Canada,—seven, in the Montreal Royal Grammar School; eight, Master of the Montreal Academic Seminary; and, for the last three years and upwards, Master of the Prince Edward District School.—As soon as the School warrants the expense, competent Assistants, French and Drawing Masters, will be engaged.

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By order of the Board of Trustees.

M. C. CROMBIE,

Principal.

Toronto, 7th January, 1839.

32—6w.

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Cobourg, January 18th, 1839. 32—6w.

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THE REVEREND J. SHORTT, of Port Hope, has a vacancy in his family for another pupil. Application and references (if by letter, post paid,) may be made to the Editor of "The Church."  
January 12, 1839. 31—6w.

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January 8, 1839. 31—6w.

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Toronto, July, 1838. 7-1f.

The Church

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(R. D. CHATTERTON, PRINTER.)