

## OUR BURDENS.

Poor child of sin and woe,  
Now listen to thy Father's pleading voice;  
No longer needst thou go  
Without a friend to bid thy heart rejoice.

I know thou canst not rest  
Until thou art from sin and sorrow free;  
Earth cannot make thee blest:  
Come, bring thy suffering, bleeding heart to Me.

CHRIST came into the world "to seek and to save that which was lost." The reason He assigned for eating with "publicans and sinners" was that they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; He "came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Though all the invitations of His Gospel message abound with characteristic traits, extending rather than limiting their application, yet they prove that while the provision of the Gospel is sufficient for all, it is free for each; even the poorest, the most wretched, and the vilest are not excepted. The unconverted and unawakened may not accept the invitation, but they unquestionably need the blessing, and ought to comply; they have been redeemed by its Author, and they may read their character and destitute circumstances in its descriptive terms.

*All are burdened with a load of guilt.*

"God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." This command implies that all have sinned; a supposition which is sustained by the Holy Scriptures, and which may be proved by an appeal to the life and conscience of every one. All the unconverted are not addicted to the same sins, nor chargeable with the same amount of guilt. But the man is not to be found who has not sinned, "and come short of the glory of God." Who, for instance, is not conscious of having on certain occasions indulged tempers which implied infidelity to God, hostility to man, and affinity to the prince of darkness,—tempers which, had they been expressed in language or embodied in action, would, without a figure of speech, have proved us to be the chief of sinners? Who is not conscious of having uttered, either thoughtlessly or intentionally, words which were calculated to poison the young, to pollute the chaste, to slander the absent, to harden the impenitent, to grieve the sorrowful, or to calumniate the excellent of the earth? And as for actions, who has not felt the necessity of crying, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who, O Lord, shall stand? Every mouth is stopped; and all the world is become guilty before God."

Even those whom men have deemed virtuous God may justly charge with utter forgetfulness of His presence, with a total disregard of His love, and with a contemptuous rejection of His Son. They have despised "the riches of His goodness," slighted the monitions of His Spirit, misapplied their immortal powers, and foolishly expended their time and talent in the pursuit of objects which neither merited their love, their labour, nor their confidence. Alas! they can neither review the past without remorse nor anticipate the future without fear. The chains of a moral slavery are on their spirits, the plague of a deep depravity rankles in their hearts, and the uncancelled guilt of ten thousand secret sins presses with leaden weight on their consciences. "The wages of sin is death"; and of "every sin" it may truly be asserted that it "deserves the curse of God, both in this life and that which is to come." Who can estimate the guilt of violating a law which the finger of God wrote, which is a transcript of the Divine mind, and which is, in an absolute sense, "holy, just, and good"? Who can estimate the demerit of creatures who, "for many long rebellious years," have preferred mammon to God, Belial to Christ, sin to holiness, and the sensual enjoyment of earth to the spiritual felicities of heaven; who have set at naught the supreme authority of the King of kings, loathed immaculate purity, trampled on infinite love, and impiously defied the thunders of almighty wrath? Guilt like this outweighs the mountains; it is heavier than the sand of the sea-shore. The mere imputation of it pressed the Son of God so that He sweat great drops of blood, and cried, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." How deep, oh, how tremendously deep must it sink us in the abyss of misery if we refuse to repent, and continue to slight His proffered rest!

But, blessed be God! though you may have missed it thus far, you need do so no longer. The Lord Jesus not only engages to confer it if you apply, but also undertakes to teach

you whatever is necessary to its reception and retention. "His commandments are not grievous," for they are dictated by love and bounded by reason. He requires nothing but what He has a right to demand; nothing which we are not compelled by reason, justice, and gratitude to perform. The duties He enjoins are no less necessary to our happiness than they are to His glory; and in all the labours and trials to which his people may be called, He engages that His grace shall be sufficient for them, for His strength is perfected in weakness.—From "Rest for the Weary in Jesus." By the Rev. P. M'Gowan.

## CYPRUS: ITS BIBLICAL HISTORY.

THE first reference to Cyprus in the New Testament is the statement in the Acts of the Apostles (iv. 36), that Barnabas was a native of Cyprus. This excellent man, whose original name was Joseph, or Joses, was a disciple of Christ, and, if we are to believe certain ancient authorities, was one of the seventy Evangelists. It is not improbable, however, that his conversion took place at a more subsequent date. It will be remembered that on the day of Pentecost there were gathered together in Jerusalem "Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven."

Cyprus, we cannot doubt, considering the large colony of Jews that was already established there, sent its contingent to attend the great festival in the Sacred City; and of that company, in all likelihood, was Barnabas, who, hearing Peter's sermon and participating in the influences of the Holy Ghost, became a convert to the Gospel; and being a man of some property, disposed of it by sale, and handed over to the Apostles the money it realised, that they might use it for the extension of the Christian cause. When the persecutor Saul had been brought under the power of the Gospel, and the disciples at Jerusalem, remembering his past career, were suspicious of his insincerity, Barnabas fulfilled the pleasing office of introducing him to their confidence, and declaring what wonders the Lord had already wrought by him.

To the fact that Cyprus was the native place of Barnabas, may we, with a little care, trace the fact that in the overruling providence of God this island occupied a conspicuous place in the first stages of Christian history. When the persecution arose about Stephen, and many of the disciples were scattered abroad, some of them "travelled as far as Cyprus," and preached the Gospel, confining their labours to the Jewish colonists. The result was that with the Divine blessing conversions took place; and not only so, but these Cyprian converts, animated with evangelistic zeal, hastened over to Antioch, and proclaimed the glad tidings to the Grecians resident there; and with such success, that a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.

The news was not long in reaching Jerusalem. It is possible the preachers were embarrassed with the magnitude of the work, or that perplexing questions may have arisen in their dealing with the Gentile converts, so that they needed counsel from head-quarters. Be this as it may, the Apostles and elders soon learnt of the good work that was going on; and after mutual consultation despatched Barnabas to Antioch, to make full inquiry, and to encourage the converts to steadfastness in the faith. We can easily perceive the wisdom of their selection, and can understand that, as a countryman or fellow-islander of these young or at least inexperienced preachers, Barnabas would be the most likely man to gain their confidence, and be serviceable to them. The result fully realised their expectation. The devoted Cyprian evangelist was delighted with what he saw and heard, and added greatly by his faithful exhortations to the strength of the Christian cause at Antioch. But seeing the magnitude the work was assuming, he hastened across to Tarsus to secure the co-operation of Saul. We can well believe that to the latter it would be a pleasant surprise when his old friend appeared in the streets of his native town, and so interested was he in the account given him of the gracious work going on, that he was easily persuaded to return with him to the Syrian metropolis, where "a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people."

[The above is selected from an interesting little volume entitled "Cyprus: Its Place in Bible History." By Rev. J. Thain Davidson. London: Hodder. 1s.]