

THE ONTARIO EVANGELIST.

"Go speak to the people ALL the words of this Life."

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POETRY.

PRAYER.

Lord, what a change within us one short hour spent in thy presence will prevail to make; What heavy burdens from our bosoms take; What parched grounds refresh, as with a shower! We kneel—and all around us seems to lower, We rise—and all the distant and the near, stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear. We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power! Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong, Or others, that we are not always strong, That we are ever overcome with care, That we should ever weak or heartless be, Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer, And joy and strength and courage are with thee?
—Trench.

ORIGINAL.

LETTER FROM CHINA.

Opium is a terrible curse, and a great hindrance to the progress of the gospel. A large percentage of the people smoke the drug—some say fifty per cent., others putting it even higher still. The use of this drug is injuring the country far more than any epidemic or plague could, and the judgment day alone will reveal all the consequent horrors—starved wives and children, ruined homes, and blasted prospects, suicides, and murders. It is awful to contemplate the depth of moral degradation resulting from the perversion of this medicine from its proper use. There must be hundreds, yea thousands of suicides in China daily from this cause. Sometimes jealous wives take the poison to spite one another. It is the Chinaman's painless way of ending his weary life. As you pass through a village or city you can usually point out the opium habitues by their lean frames, cadaverous faces and starving eyes. It is a foul leprosy which taints the soul as well as the body, and the man who smokes opium is easily led into all other forms of debauchery. I occasionally question these slaves of opium who are often in the ranks of the beggars and frequently I hear the story of farm and buildings being sold to buy the drug, and of gradual reduction to beggary and shame. If it is thus with the brute who gives way to his appetite, what must be the misery of the poor wives and children! This horrid sin hinders the gospel, because the drug is sent into the country by Christian (?) England, and when we preach against the sin the people throw it up to us that we send the opium to them. Canada protests against England's bad treatment of Ireland; why should she not protest against, and try to suppress this terrible crime against fifty times as many people as Ireland contains? It is to be feared that England will never wipe away this stain, and we must tell the Chinamen that they must discriminate between the good and the bad. They must learn that the gospel has only partially reclaimed England from lust, and that the desire of gain can yet stupefy our country's conscience. I tell them when the gospel gains more power in England then no more opium will be sent to them from India. But alas! the disease seems already to have taken a death-grip, and China is sowing many of her fertile fields with that which will sap her life blood. What can become of a people whose officials are nearly all addicted to such a vice? The gospel is their only hope. It "brings life and immortality to light," and is the only power to raise this people from their fatal materialism. It is but natural when all the strife is for happiness in this world that people should use such stimulants as wine and opium, for they "cannot see afar off," but look only to the present gratification. Thank the Lord we have our hopes set on something grander than all this world's glory and pleasures. God grant that we who bear his name in this dark heathen land may be kept free from all that is sensual and devilish, and may constantly point the people away from the vanities of time to the realities of eternity, and may we live such lives of faith in our risen Saviour as may lead the Chinese to forsake opium and all other fleshly lusts and live for spiritual things.

Now that I am commencing my medical work,

I meet many of the evils of the drug among my patients. I keep a bottle of mustard lately at the door of my dispensary, and the gateman can give it out to relieve those contemplating suicide. Six cases of suicide have come to a missionary in Nankin in one day. I have a former Chinese preacher of the gospel in my dispensary breaking-off this habit which he acquired about 10 years ago. It is a very difficult habit to overcome and requires great determination. Trust in Jesus, when the Chinese learn of him will give the needed strength.

W. E. MACKLIN.

March 17th, 1888.

SELECTIONS.

HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE.

At a meeting lately held in Southampton, England, Sir Charles Wilson, Director-General of the Ordnance Survey, after a passing reference to small industries carried on in Eastern countries, as contrasted with the large manufactories of Western kingdoms, said that having been a good deal mixed up with Palestine exploration, they might like to know what he really thought of the results. The opinion he had formed from the surveys and excavations, and from the discovery of inscriptions, was that the Bible was of all ancient books the most wonderfully accurate in relation to geographical and historical facts. There were many points which people used not to understand in connection with the historical and geographical portions of the Bible. Many of these had now been explained; and the more they knew, the clearer it became that the Bible was not wrong in regard to its facts, but the people did not possess sufficient information to understand them. Quite recently there had been some very wonderful discoveries in Egypt; and at Tell Mahuta, not far from Tell-el-kebir, had been found the ruins of the Pithom of the Bible. Not only this, but also some of the treasure-chambers which the children of Israel were employed in building for the Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph." The discovery of this town had thrown a great deal of light upon the route taken by the Israelites upon leaving Egypt. They could not tell at present exactly the route taken, but could draw a line within very narrow limits, and were able, for instance, to say within ten or twelve miles which way they went when leaving Egypt for Palestine. Another recent discovery was the excavation of Pharaoh's house at Tahapanes (or Tahpanes); mentioned two or three times in Jeremiah, and it was extremely interesting to have uncovered the very house mentioned by Jeremiah. In Palestine there had been many discoveries, but not of recent date. The latest was that of an inscription in the rock-hewn channel which conveys the water of the Fountain of the Virgin to the pool of Siloam. It was very interesting, as proving that the language of the Israelites about 700 B. C. was the same pure Hebrew that is used in the earlier books of the Bible, and was the oldest inscription in the Hebrew yet discovered.—*The Worker.*

STUDY OF THE BIBLE

REV. HORATIUS BONAR, D. D.

Do not skim it or read it, but study it, every word of it; study the whole Bible, Old Testament and New; not your favorite chapters merely, but the complete Word of God from beginning to end. Don't trouble yourself with commentators; they may be of use if kept in their place, but they are not your guide. Your guide is "the Interpreter," the one among a thousand (Job xxxiii, 23) who will lead you into all truth (John xvi, 13), and keep you from all error. Not that you are to read no book but the Bible. All that is true and good is worth the reading, if you have time for it; and all, if properly used, will help you in the study of Scriptures. A Christian does not shut his eyes to the natural scenes of beauty spread around him. He does not cease to admire the hills, or plains, or rivers, or forests of the earth, because he has learned to love the God that made them; nor does he turn away from books of science or

true poetry, because he has discovered one book truer, more precious and more poetical than all the rest together. Besides, the soul can no more continue in one posture than the body. The eye must be relieved by variety of objects and the limbs by motion, so must the soul by change of subject and position. Let the Bible be to us the book of books, the one book in all the world whose every word is truth, and whose every verse is wisdom. In studying it, be sure to take it for what it really is, the revelation of the thoughts of God given us in the words of God. Were it only the book of divine thoughts and human words, it would profit little, for we never could be sure whether the words really represented the thoughts; nay, we might be sure that man would fail in his words when attempting to embody divine thoughts; and that, therefore, if we have only man's words, that is man's translation of the divine thoughts. But, knowing that we have divine thoughts embodied in divine words, through the inspiration of an unerring translator, we sit down to the study of the heavenly volume; assured that we shall find in all its teaching the perfection of wisdom, and its language the most accurate expression of that wisdom that the finite speech of man could utter. Every word of God is as perfect as it is pure (Psa. xix, 7; xli, 6). Let us read and re-read the Scriptures, meditating on them day and night; they never grow old, they never lose their sap, they never run dry. Don't let man's book thrust it into a corner; don't let commentaries smother the truer and the better. Beware of light reading. Shun novels, they are the literary curse of the age; they are to the soul what ardent spirits are to the body. See that your relish for the Bible be above every other enjoyment, and the moment you begin to feel greater relish for any other book, lay it down till you have sought deliverance from such a snare, and obtained from the Holy Spirit an intenser relish, a keener appetite for the Word of God. (Jer. xv, 6; Psa. xix, 7, 10.)

DON'T HEAR EVERYTHING.

The art of not hearing should be learned by all. It is fully as important to domestic happiness as a cultivated ear, for which so much time and money are expended. There are so many things which it is painful to hear, many which we ought not to hear, very many which, if heard, will disturb the temper, corrupt simplicity and modesty, detract from contentment and happiness, that every one should be educated to take in or shut out sounds, according to his pleasure. If a man falls into a violent passion, and calls us all manner of names, at the first word we should shut our ears, and hear no more. If, in our quiet voyage of life, we find ourselves caught in one of those domestic whirlwinds of scolding, we should shut our ears as a sailor would furl his sails, and, making all tight, scud before the gale. If a hot and restless man begins to inflame our feelings, we should consider what mischief these fiery sparks may do in our magazine below, where our temper is kept, and instantly close the door. If, as has been remarked, all the petty things said of one by heedless or ill-tutored idlers were to be brought home to him, he would become a mere walking pincushion stuck full of sharp remarks. If we would be happy, when among good men, we should open our ears; when among bad men, shut them. It is not worth while to hear what our neighbors say about our children, what our rivals say about our business, our dress, or our affairs. The art of not hearing, though untaught in our schools, is by no means unpractised in society. We have noticed that a well-bred woman never hears a vulgar or impertinent remark. A kind of discreet deafness saves one from many insults, from much blame, from not a little connivance in dishonorable conversation.—*Treasure Trove.*

Fifty years ago a child gave a penny to the missionary box. A little tract, costing just one penny, was bought with it, and some one gave it to a young man, the son of a Burman chief. He traveled 250 miles to learn to read it. The Christian teachers taught him, and God gave him a new heart. He went home and preached to his people, and now there are 1,500 Christians living in that neighborhood, who would probably be heathens still but for that penny tract.

WHAT TO ENJOY.

It is a great thing to find how much there is to enjoy, to get some kind of a catalogue or inventory of the blessings Heaven has sent you. Why, there isn't a man in a thousand that has any religious conception of what God has given us to enjoy. All the revelations of science are helping us in that direction. When we come to see the beauty and order and beneficence of the arrangements of the universe, we find that God has been catering to our happiness in ways we had overlooked. To live in a world like this, with so much beauty, with singing birds and blooming flowers gilded by sunshine, a world in which God is painting cloud pictures, lake pictures and have no sense of enjoyment in them—what kind of a soul is that? It is a great thing to find out what there is to enjoy. Some people don't seem to have any idea that they have anything to be grateful for. They are perfectly blind to their mercies but wide awake to their miseries. They rehearse these every time you meet them. It is just as easy to cultivate the acquaintance of your mercies as your miseries, and it is a great deal pleasanter for your own enjoyment, just as it is a great deal pleasanter to be introduced to your friends than to your enemies.—*Christian at Work.*

THE SECRET OF FAILURE.

A young man once asked Baron Rothschild the secret of success, and the Baron looked him over with his keen black eyes, and said:—"I'd rather tell you the secret of failure. Why they fail seems to be the mystery with most young men. Here is the receipt. One hour a day with your newspaper; one hour a day with your cigarettes; one hour a day with your toilet; and my word for it the first position you obtain will be the best you ever will obtain." Those slender margins of time at the lunch hour and after dinner are the wise man's fortune. Three hours a day over and above your routine duties; with less than that Garfield became a classical scholar; with less than that Gladstone has made himself familiar with a dozen professions; with less than that Disraeli became a famous author; with less than that Mr. Arnold, a hurried newspaper man, has given the thought of the world a new impetus in his studies and writings upon the land of Asia; with less than that a thousand business men have become scholars and a thousand scholars have conducted a business.

THE OCCASIONAL DARK DAYS.

We need not complain of the dark days that come now and then. To be sure they are not so agreeable as the brighter ones, when the sunshine gilds everything with glory, and the air is full of healthful tonic and inspiration. The hill over there is dimmed by a heavy mist which deepens into a fog that gathers about its top, and spread all over the landscape there is a sobriety that, if the spirits are not very buoyant becomes a gloom and melancholy. The trees, standing motionless, look sad and hopeless, even the evergreens wearing a sombre air, and the sounds—be they the lowing of cows, the twitter of birds, the rumble of machinery, or the song of falling waters—seem to be set to a minor key, and so to stir up feelings of half-sorrow in those who hear them. But the experience is a good one after all. It is giving the other side of the soul a little exercise, after which the true side will be more readily assert itself. The consciousness, also, remains that the fogs will all clear away, and in beautiful light the old joy of the hills and fields will come back again. And so in Christian experience, though we wish habitual cheerfulness and gladness, the duller times will come. We are cast down; we sojourn in Meshech; the shadows hang about us; the pilgrim sorrows are on us; we long for wings like a dove that we may fly away and be at rest. That would be very bad if it were to continue, but it will not. The shadows shall flee away. The mourning shall pass, the weeping endure but for a night. Flinging away the sackcloth, and putting on the garments of praise, the song shall be begun that in it, varying moods will last forever.—*United Presbyterian.*