

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

Who has not regarded with admiration the child-like confidence which the ancient patriarchs reposed in God? Whatever they might be called upon to perform, or wherever they might be commanded to go, obedience was yielded without hesitation or doubt. It was the God of Abraham—Jehovah—that spake, and there was no reason why they should distrust his word. The proof of his faithfulness was daily before them—they could not doubt. It is this simple trust which so strongly marks the character of these ancient men, and gives such a charm to their history.

The same God who watched over them—who was their guide, their guardian, their almost familiar friend—is our God, and is unchanged. It only requires in us the same humble reliance on Him, which they manifested, in order that we may enjoy the same consoling influences. God is still Jehovah—is still the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and he looks with no less interest now on the concerns of his children, than he did on those of the patriarchs who watched their flocks in the wilderness. The troubles of life and the sources of anxiety were not less numerous, or less trying, with them than with us; but their confidence in God was unshaken, and they never had reason to suppose that it was misplaced.

TRUST IN PROVIDENCE.

There are times at which, more than others, we seem to need the consolations of a trust in Divine Providence. While prosperity and quiet attend our steps, we hardly feel that our own strength is not sufficient for us; but when adversity comes—when our hopes are blasted—when our most strenuous efforts to supply our own wants have proved unavailing, and absolute distress is threatening us—we feel the need of the support of a more than human arm. That arm is always near, and happy are they who can feel its power. Perhaps no class of the community at the present time need more the consolations of a trust in Divine Providence than the husbandman. But let him remember, that Abraham's God is still the God of the faithful.

HAPPY—thrice happy is that man, who, amid all the adversities of life, can repose an unwavering trust in the wisdom, benevolence, and integrity of God. There is an inexpressible sweetness in the thought that our Heavenly Father is guiding all things for our good—that the bitterest cups of affliction contains a healing medicine for the soul, and the darkest clouds of Providence is but the robe, in which our faithful friend comes near, and communes with our spirit.

He who would be truly wise, must follow the requirements of Him who "spake as never man spake before. True wisdom prompts us to be cheerful in the discharge of duty, and to trust at all times in the rectitude of God's moral government. Thus will present peace be multiplied.

DAMASCUS.

There is no city, with the exception of Jerusalem, so interesting as this. It is the oldest city upon the earth, and stands a solitary, stately monument, in the midst of decay. Babylon and Thebes were its contemporaries, but the former has passed away without leaving a trace of its magnificence, and the latter is represented only by its startling ruins. Still Damascus remains, and is now, with the exception of Constantinople, the largest city of the East.

Here are the "Abama and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus," again calling up the thrilling story of the Syrian Leper and the Hebrew Prophet. Hither Saul, with his relentless persecutions, followed the early Christians; and near its walls, "the voice from heaven," and the "light above the brightness of the sun," arrested his footsteps.

The identity of the spot has been preserved to this day—the Christians of the city using it as a burial place.

The traveller can still walk through the "street called Straight," and is shown by the credulous monk the very house occupied by Judas, where Paul passed his hours of blindness, and where, at the command of Ananias, the scales dropped from his eyes.

So rich is this country in fruits and flowers, that it has been called, in all ages, the "garden of the

world." It is related of Mohammed, that when, after crossing the desert, he saw this luxuriant valley, he exclaimed that he desired but one paradise, and therefore would not enter here for fear of forfeiting his interest in the paradise he anticipated after death, but turned aside without a close inspection of this tempting scene.

Damascus has a peculiar importance in connection with the progress of Christianity in these parts. It has already been visited by the Agents of the Bible and Missionary Society. Being the great mart where eastern and western merchandise is exchanged—the general rendezvous of Islam caravans from the north and east, in their progress to Mecca; and rendered comparatively a safe residence by the efficiency of Mehemet Ali, it opens one of the most important and extensive fields of missionary labour.

Another Paul may yet preach Christ in Damascus, and the moral aspect of this delightful country may present as cheering an appearance as the rich displays of its natural scenery.—*Zion's Herald*.

GENERAL LITERATURE.

THE OLD FAMILY BIBLE.

AN INCIDENT FROM REAL LIFE.

Whoever has travelled among the Scottish hills and dales, cannot have failed to observe the scrupulous fidelity of the inhabitants to the old family bible. A more honourable trait of character than this cannot be found; for all men, whether Christians or infidels, are prone to put reliance in those who make the bible their confidant—and whose well-thumbed pages show the confidence their owners possess in it.

A few years ago, there dwelt in Ayrshire an ancient couple, possessing of this world's gear sufficient to keep them independent from want or woe, and a canny daughter to bless their gray hairs and tottering steps. A callant of a farmer became enamoured of the daughter; and she, nothing loath, consented to be his. As the match was every way worthy of her, the old folks consented, and as they were desirous to see their bairn comfortable, the two were made one. In a few short years, the scythe of time cut down the old people, and they gave their bodies to the dust, and their souls to the Creator.

The young farmer having heard much of the promised land ayont the sea, gathered together his duds, and selling such as were useless, packed up those calculated to be of service to him, at his new home. Some neighbours, having the same itching for adventure, sold off their homes and homesteads, and with the young couple set sail for America.

Possessed of considerable property in the shape of "siller," this company were not like the generality of emigrants, poor and friendless, but happy, and full of hope of the future. The first thing done after the landing, was the taking out the old family-heir loom, and returning thanks and praise to Him who had guided the bark to a safe haven.

As the farmer's object in coming to this country was to purchase a farm, and follow his occupation, but little time was spent in the city he had arrived in, and as his fellow-passengers had previously determined on their destination, he bade them farewell, and with a light heart turned his face towards the setting sun. Indiana at this time was settling fast, and having heard of its cheap and fertile lands, he determined on settling within its borders.

On the banks of the Wabash he fixed on a farm, and paid cash for one half, gave a mortgage for the balance, payable in one year. Having stocked his farm, and put seed in the ground, he rested from his labour, and patiently awaited the time when he might go forth to reap the harvest. But, alas! no ears of grain gladdened his heart, or rewarded his toil. The fever of the country attacked him, and at the time when the fields were white with the fulness of the labourer's skill, death called him hence, and left his disconsolate wife a widow, and his only child an orphan.

We leave this first sorrow, and pass on to witness the struggles of the afflicted widow a year afterwards. The time having arrived when the mortgage was to be paid, she borrowed the money of a neighbour who had been very attentive to

her husband and herself—one who knelt at the same table with her to renew their professed obligations to the Giver of all good. Hard and patiently did she toil to repay the sum against the promised time; but all would not do; fortune frowned, and she gave way to her accumulated troubles. Dishheartened and distracted, she relinquished her farm and the stock for less than she owed her Christian neighbour, who, not satisfied with that, put an execution on her furniture.

On the Sabbath previous to the sale, she took courage, and strengthening herself with the knowledge of having wronged no one, went to the temple of her Father, and with a heart filled with humility and love, poured out her soul to Him "who turneth not away," and having communed, side by side, with her Christian neighbour, returned to her desolate home.

Here her fortitude had like to have forsaken her; but seeing the "old family bible," she reverently put it to her lips, and sought for consolation from its pages. Slowly she perused its holy and soul-inspiring verses, and gathered hope from its never failing promises, and while the tears flowed freely, her heart seemed to say:—

Within this holy book I trace
The life of Christ, his wondrous grace—
This anxious care and holy love,
Not earth's, not mine, but Heaven above.
The path is clear, the track is sure,
Why wait I then—these pangs endure?
O grant, my God, my life may be
Sincere and prayerful, Lord, to thee.

The day of sale having arrived, her few goods and chattels were, in due course, knocked off to the highest bidder. Unmoved, she saw pass from her possession article after article, without a murmur, till the constable held up the old family bible. This was too much. Tears flowed, and gave silent utterance of a broken heart. She begged the constable to spare her this memento of her revered and departed parents; and the humane man of the law would willingly have given it to her, but her inexorable creditor declared everything should be sold, as he was determined to have all that was owing him.

The book was, therefore, put up, and about being disposed of for a few shillings, when she suddenly snatched it, and declaring she would have some relic of those she loved, cut the slender thread that held the brown linen cover, with the intention of retaining it. The cover fell into her hands, and with it, two flat pieces of thin, dirty paper. Surprised at the circumstance, she examined them—and what was her joy and delight to find they each called for five hundred pounds on the Bank of England. On the back of one, in her mother's hand-writing, were the following words:

"When sorrow o'ertakes ye, seek yer bible."

And on the other, in her father's hand,—

"Yer Father's ears are never deaf."

The sale was immediately stopped, and the family bible given to its faithful owner. The furniture sold was readily offered to her by those who had purchased, which she gladly took back. Having paid off her relentless creditor to the uttermost farthing, and rented a small house in the village of ———, she placed the balance of her money in such a way as to receive interest enough to keep her comfortable, and is now able to enjoy the precepts of the old family bible without fear or molestation. Her time and attention is devoted to the bringing up of her bright blue-eyed Alice, and if the happy smiles of the countenance may be considered an index of the heart and mind, little Alice bids fair to be a shining star in the little community of which she at present forms but a unit.

At the meeting-house in the centre of the village, may be seen every Sunday, sitting about half way up the south aisle, a lady of about thirty years of age, dressed in deep mourning, with a face glowing with the beauty of holiness, but on whom may be seen deep traces of past sorrow.—At the public house in the same place, and at the same time, may also be seen a being in the garb of man, bloated, and sitting over the poisoning bowl. The one is the possessing widow—the other the professing neighbour.—*Philadelphia Chronicle*.