

8. Neither must it be concealed, that the *difficulty of salvation is increased in proportion as this worldly love is cherished.* "How hardly shall they that have riches" (or vehemently desire to have them) "enter into the kingdom of heaven." For "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever."

9. Finally,—"*Covetousness is idolatry*"—and no idolater, as such, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. The loss of heaven, and of the soul, is the greatest loss an immortal being can sustain: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Thus have we endeavoured to point out plainly and faithfully, some of the great and manifold evils which spring from the love of money: and this we have done, not in the way of reproof, or in the spirit of unworthy and ungenerous suspicion of the piety of individuals in this respect; but in humble imitation of the Apostle, "*warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*" May God, of his infinite mercy, save the professors of religion, rich and poor, every where, from covetousness.

II. THE DECLARATION OF THE APOSTLE IS ILLUSTRATED AND CONFIRMED BY SEVERAL MELANCHOLY EXAMPLES RECORDED IN THE SCRIPTURES. To some of these it may be instructive to refer:—

1. The first is Balaam, (Numb. xxii.) of whom it is said, "*he loved the wages of unrighteousness.*" It is believed that Balaam was once a good man, and a true prophet; but becoming covetous, he fell from God, and desecrated his office. Balaam, king of Moab, envious of the prosperity, and dreading the power of the Israelites, as they were spread abroad in the neighbourhood of his dominions; sent to Balaam to come and curse them, that he might the more easily overcome them, promising him a great reward. This the fallen prophet, for the sake of the reward, was willing to do, had he the power; but instead of cursing them, he was constrained to bless them. Disappointed and vexed at losing the promised reward, before he returned to his own country, he instructed the Moabites and Midianites to send their daughters into the camp of the Israelites, to draw them into sin and idolatry. His wicked counsel was followed, and succeeded. "Israel joined himself to Baal-peor"—and God became their enemy, and four and twenty thousand of the people died of the plague. Moses, to avenge the crime on the Midianites, is directed to make war upon them,—"*And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses, and they slew all the males, and they slew the kings of Midian—Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword.*" Thus miserably perished the covetous, money-loving prophet; and there is reason to fear that Balaam is not the only prophet who has perished through covetousness.

2. Take another example in the case of Achan, who coveted and secreted in his tent, of the spoils of Jericho, "*a goodly Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight,*" which were among the things accursed and devoted of the Lord. And now mark how miserably this covetous sinner perished: "*So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor; and Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.*"

3. Another case in Jewish history presents itself—the case of Gehazi, the servant of the prophet Elisha. (II. Kings v. 20–27.) "*Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria,*" being

cured of his leprosy by Elisha, offered him, in gratitude for the benefit he had received, a present, or reward; which the prophet generously declined receiving. Gehazi, however, followed him, and under pretence that two young men, sons of the prophets, had arrived, requested, as from his master, a talent of silver, and two changes of raiment. These are delivered to him: but what follows? Detected in covetousness, falsehood, and injustice, by the prophet; he dismissed him from his family, and banished him from the congregation, saying, "*The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever.*" And he went out from his presence a leper, as white as snow." Here we see covetousness leading to falsehood, and terminating in disgrace and misery:

4. How awful and admonitory is the case of Judas, a disciple and apostle of the Lord Jesus. The love of money was doubtless the root and origin of his great crime. For thirty pieces of silver he scrupled not to betray and sell his Lord and Master to his implacable enemies the Jews, who sought to destroy him. How fearful the result! Full of horror and despair at the unnatural crime he had committed, in gratifying his thirst for money by betraying his kind and innocent Master; he, by an act of self-destruction, went and plunged himself into endless woe. Matt. xxvii. 3–5.

5. The case of Ananias and Sapphira, of whom we read in the Acts, (v. 1–10,) furnishes another melancholy instance and proof of the natural, and almost necessary alliance of covetousness with falsehood, of which we have before spoken. Their love of money, prompted these two professors of religion to tell a deliberate lie to save their money, and their falsehood was visited with signal and terrible punishment, in their being in a moment smitten to death—dying with a lie in their mouth: lying to God the Holy Ghost.

6. In justice to the subject, we ought not to omit adverting to the solemn lesson which our Lord has left us when he said to the Jews on a certain occasion, "*Take heed, and beware of covetousness,*" and then spake a parable unto them, saying, "*The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods; and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*"

7. Finally,—The Apostle speaks of some who had "*erred from the faith,*" who had apostatized from the Gospel, and whose doctrinal and practical backslidings might be traced to the love of the world: and who had "*pierced themselves through with many sorrows,*" or, as the original word imports, "*stabbed, or transfixed themselves in every part.*" And how many professors of religion are still doing this? How many lose their religion by yielding to this passion! And who can lose his religion, though he should gain the world, without losing his peace and comfort, and punishing, if not destroying his soul? Who so truly miserable as the covetous and fallen professor, whether he be rich or poor?

These, brethren, are facts furnished by scripture history, which awfully confirm the doctrine of the Apostle; and it is probable that our own observation, if not our own history and experience, may furnish many more. Let us, then, be instructed and warned by the teaching of the Apostle, and by these examples from scripture, to flee from covetousness; remembering that fallen man is a selfish creature, and that to inordinate self-love—love of money—and love of the world, men are naturally more strongly inclined than to any other evil. Let us confess our sin, and seek forgiveness from God, if we have cherished any feeling, or any affection, inconsistent with Christian charity, or supreme love to God. And let us seek a cure for this radical, and awfully predominant and productive evil of which the Apostle warns us, in the regenerating and sanctifying grace of God.—"*That we put off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the*

spirit of our mind, and that we put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Then shall we be ready to every good word and work—then shall the love of money, "*the root of all evil,*" give place to the love of God, which is the root of all holiness—and we shall be disposed and prepared duly to estimate, and faithfully to employ whatever talents God may have intrusted to us, whether of property or influence, to his glory, and to promote the best interests of our fellow-men, and "*use this world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.*"

Z.

BIOGRAPHY.

JOHN KNOX.

JOHN KNOX, the celebrated Scottish reformer, was born in the year 1505. The place of his nativity has been disputed. That he was born at Gifford, a village in East Lothian, has been the most prevailing opinion; but some late writers, relying on popular tradition, have fixed his birth-place at Haddington, the principal town of the county. In his youth, he was put to the grammar-school at Haddington; and, after he had acquired the principles of the Latin language there, his father sent him, about the year 1524, to the University of St. Andrew's, at that time the most distinguished seminary in the kingdom. Knox acquired the Greek language before he arrived at middle age; but we find him acknowledging, as late as the year 1530, that he was ignorant of Hebrew—a defect in his education which he exceedingly lamented, and which he afterwards got supplied during his exile on the continent. Knox, and Buchanan, his fellow collegian, soon became disgusted with such studies as were at that time prosecuted in the University, and began to seek entertainment more gratifying to their ardent and inquisitive minds. Having set out in search of knowledge, they released themselves from the trammels, and overleaped the boundaries prescribed to them by their timid conductor. But we must not suppose that Knox was able, at once, to divest himself of the prejudices of his education, and of the times; for he continued for some time captivated with these studies, and prosecuted them with great success.

After he was created Master of Arts, he taught philosophy, most probably as a regent in one of the colleges of the University. His class became celebrated, and he was considered as equalling, if not excelling, his master, in the subtleties of the dialectic art. About the same time, although he had no interest but what was procured by his own merit, he was advanced to clerical orders, and ordained a priest before he reached the age fixed by the canons of the church. This must have taken place previous to the year 1530, at which time he had arrived at his twenty-fifth year, the canonical age for receiving ordination.

At this time, the fathers of the Christian church, Jerome and Augustine, attracted his particular attention. By the writings of the former, he was led to the Scriptures as the only pure fountain of divine truth, and instructed in the utility of studying them in the original languages. In the works of the latter, he found religious sentiments very opposite to those taught in the Romish Church, who, while she retained his name as a saint in her calendar, had banished his doctrine, as heretical, from her pulpits. From this time he renounced the study of scholastic theology; and, although not yet completely emancipated from superstition, his mind was fitted for improving the means which Providence had given for leading him to a fuller and more comprehensive view of the system of evangelical religion. It was about the year 1535, when this favourable change commenced; but it does not appear that he professed himself a Protestant before the year 1542.

The necessity for a reformation in Scotland at that time is generally admitted; and Knox now commenced the arduous duties of a reformer. The reformed doctrine had made considerable progress in Scotland before it was embraced by Knox. Patrick Hamilton, a youth of royal lineage, obtained the honour, not conferred upon many of his rank, of first announcing its glad tidings to his countrymen, and of sealing them with his blood.