

on any account. In a few years the advantages of these engagements manifestly appeared; the blessings of the upper and nether spring followed me; health and happiness attended my family and prosperity my business. At length such was the rapid increase of my trade, and the importance of devoting every possible moment to my customers, that I began to think whether family prayer did not occupy too much of our time in the morning. Pious scruples arose respecting my intentions of relinquishing this part of my duty; but at length worldly interests prevailed so far as to induce me to excuse the attendance of my apprentices, and not long after it was deemed advisable, for the more eager prosecution of business, to make the prayer with my wife, when we arose in the morning, suffice for the day.

Notwithstanding the repeated checks of conscience that followed this base omission, the calls of a flourishing concern and the prospect of an increasing family appeared so imperious and commanding that I found an easy excuse for this fatal evil, especially as I did not omit prayer altogether. My conscience was now almost seared with a hot iron, when it pleased the Lord to awaken me by a singular providence.

One day I received a letter from a young man who had formerly been my apprentice, previous to my omitting family prayer. Not doubting but I continued domestic worship, his letter was chiefly on this subject; it was couched in the most affectionate and respectful terms; but judge of my surprise and confusion when I read these words: "O, my dear master, never, never shall I be able sufficiently to thank you for the precious privilege with which you indulged me in your family devotions! O sir, eternity will be too short to praise my God for what I learned there. It was there I first beheld my lost and wretched state as a sinner; it was there that I first knew the way of salvation; and there that I first experienced the preciousness of 'Christ in me, the hope of glory.' O sir, permit me to say, never, never neglect those precious engagements; you have yet a family and more apprentices; may your house be the birth-place of their souls!" I could read no further; every line flashed condemnation to my face. I trembled—I shuddered—I was alarmed lest the blood of my children and apprentices should be demanded at my soul-murdering hands.

Filled with confusion and bathed in tears, I fled for refuge in secret. I spread the letter before God. I agonized, and ———, but you can better conceive than I can describe my feelings; suffice it to say, that light broke in upon my disconsolate soul, and a sense of blood-bought pardon was obtained. I immediately flew to my family, presented them before the Lord, and from that day to the present I have performed this duty, and am determined, through grace, that whenever my business becomes so large as to interrupt family prayer, I will give up the superfluous part of my business, and retain my devotion: better to lose a few shilling than become the deliberate murderer of my family, and the instrument of ruin to my own soul.

### Miscellaneous.

#### AUGUSTINE'S CONVERSION.

AN ENCOURAGING EXAMPLE.

Towards the close of the fourth century, when Christianity was losing its primitive lustre and power, God raised up Augustine as a powerful instrument of sustaining, for a time, evangelical truth. Augustine had a pious mother and an infidel father. His mother was careful of his early religious instruction. But so far as his father had the controul of his education, it was conducted without regard to religion. Once during his childhood, he remembered to have been the subject of special alarms of conscience during a sickness, which soon subsided. His father proposed to educate him liberally, and kept him constantly at school. But at first he had a disrelish for study, and employed himself much in reading the Latin poets, because the heathen mythology and licen-

tious character of the poetry suited the corruption of his heart. At length he felt the stimulus of ambition, and was spurred on to intense exertions. His models for imitation while at school, were of the most corrupting class. An idea of the polluted moral atmosphere which he breathed, may be formed from the fact, that it was common for his associates to commend each other for recitals of their own lewdness, provided they did it in elegant language.

Here he came into a whirlpool of baseness, and was so lost to principle and honor that he even robbed his own parents, for the means of gratifying his passions. At the age of sixteen, just before his father died, he was sent to Carthage to complete his education, and especially to perfect himself in the study of eloquence, so that he might be able to teach rhetoric for a living. On leaving his home at this time, his mother, knowing that he had given himself to lewdness, without restraint, solemnly warned him of the wickedness of his course. But he was even so hardened in it, and so disposed to glory in his shame, that he would have blushed to be thought less wicked than others, and would have invented falsehoods to represent his case worse than it was. He deliberately committed theft for the mere sake of doing it.

At Carthage he acquired a great passion for theatrical amusements. He also made great efforts to excel at the forum, but soon found that his mind was not adapted to it. He next gave himself to the study of philosophy, and to the reading of Cicero. With this author he was highly pleased; but strange as it may seem, his pleasure was diminished by his finding no mention of the name of Christ, which name his mother had taught him to reverence. Thus it was shown that the traces of his religious education were not wholly obliterated. He turned from Cicero to the Bible. But here the pride of his heart was disgusted, and his blindness prevented his apprehension of the truth.

Next there came an important crisis in his history. He fell in with the writings of the Manichees, a libertine sect, who held, essentially, the same views that are now held by the Pantheists, or Parkerites. He adopted their views, and ridiculed Christianity. For nine years from this, he continued involved in all corruption, sinking deeper. But his mother followed him with unaltered hope and incessant prayer. She went to a certain bishop and besought him to undertake to refute the errors of her son, and reason him out of them. But knowing his cast of mind, he thought there was little to be hoped from such attempts. So he told her to let him alone, and continue praying, and he would discover his error. With a flood of tears she persisted in her request, till, out of patience with her, he said, "Begone, it is not possible that the child of such tears should perish!" This impressed her mind like a voice from heaven, and she persisted in her prayers, and her son in his wickedness.

He continued till the twenty-eighth year of his age deceiving and being deceived, a slave of lust, and devoted to all the impieties of the Manichean sect. His mother had supported him till he had finished his education at Carthage. He then returned to his native place, and supported himself by teaching rhetoric. There he had an intimate friend whom he had seduced into his errors. This friend was taken dangerously sick, and while in a state of unconsciousness in his fever, his friends had, according to a superstition of the times, caused him to be baptized, expecting his immediate death. But he recovered. And when his consciousness returned, and probably after he had had some serious reflections upon his position, Augustine attempted to ridicule his baptism, and he admonished him for it. At this Augustine was confounded, and deferred the matter, hoping for a more fit opportunity to efface his impressions. But the man soon died, and the circumstance threw him into great distress, and cast a gloom over every object, and induced a purpose to travel abroad to relieve his mind. He went to Carthage, and fell in with a Manichean bishop, named Faustus, who was fascinating the multitudes. But having detected him in gross imposture, his faith in the sect was sum-

what shaken. He next resolved to visit Rome; but was earnestly resisted by his mother, who followed him to the sea, resolved either to retain him or go with him. But by deceiving her, he got off alone; and she could follow him only with her tears and prayers. At Rome he was taken sick, and came near to death. When he recovered, he found his former views still more shaken. Soon he went to Milan, where he formed an acquaintance with Ambrose, the famed bishop of that place, whose marked kindness made an impression upon him. He attended the preaching of Ambrose, more attracted by his eloquence than the gospel preached. But the truth gradually gained upon him, exposing more and more his former fallacies.

In the meantime his mother had found him out, and arrived at Milan. He disclosed to her his state of doubt. She said that she believed that before she left the world she should see him a sound believer. She attended the preaching of Ambrose with delight, and he was charmed with the fervour of her piety. As for Augustine, he continued examining this and that form of philosophy, vacillating between truth and error, till finally he warmly embraced the truth of the gospel, and yielded himself to its power; and his mother triumphed in the abundant answer to her many prayers.

Soon after the mother and son determined to return to Africa, their home. But she seemed to have accomplished the object of living, and to have lost hold on life. When they arrived at the mouth of the Tiber, preparing for their voyage, she said, "Son, I have no delight in life; why am I here?" One thing only, your conversion, was the object for which I wished to live. My God has given me this in large measure; what do I here?" Five days after, she fell into a fever and died.—N. E. Puritan.

#### DR. DUFF, OF CALCUTTA.

It is now twenty years since Dr. Duff went to India, where his labours have marked a new era in missionary enterprise. Never was any man more remarkably raised up for the work he had to do, nor do we know any post for which it will be more difficult to find a worthy successor. Nevertheless, we think the time has come, when not only for his own sake, but for the interests of the Church at large, and especially for the cause of Indian Missions, Dr. Duff should be withdrawn from Calcutta. In the natural course of things, after so long and arduous service, we cannot look for more than a few years more work from him in that field. Nor will the labour now be of such importance as it has been in years past. The ground has been broken, and the Mission well organized, so that others can carry on what he has been enabled by God's grace to plan and commence. To remove to Europe before his constitution is further weakened, and to foster and direct the missionary spirit in the churches at home, is, we humbly conceive, the course of duty to which Dr. Duff is now called, and for which in providence the way is opened up.

The Presbyterians, both in London and in Edinburgh, are at this moment at a loss to find a Theological Professor for the training of their students and missionaries. For either of these posts Dr. Duff is pre-eminently qualified. We should of course prefer to see him in our own English College, where his name would attract not only Scotchmen and Presbyterians, but students from various denominations, in the present low state of the Dissenting institutions and colleges of England. The presence of such a man in London in these times would give fresh impulse to the cause of Protestant and Evangelical truth, and in more ways than we can now refer to, would be of incalculable service to the Church of Christ. We venture to say that his long residence abroad has not shaken his staunch adherence to the Presbyterian system, while at the same time his engagement in missionary work and his intercourse with brethren of other Churches, have given that enlargement of view and catholicity of spirit, so universal among Presbyterians, and which are essential to the prosperity of our cause in England. We hope that to this matter