

Youth's Department.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS.

XXX. BETHANY.

253. Bethany was a village near to Jerusalem, to which our Lord occasionally retired after the labours of the day.—Can you tell the names of three persons residing there, to whom he was peculiarly attached?—(John.)

254. On the Saviour's returning to Jerusalem on one occasion, after having previously lodged in Bethany, a striking miracle was performed on a barren fig-tree.—Can you relate the circumstances, as well as the instruction which the Saviour grafted on the incident?—(Matthew.)

255. The Lord Jesus, after his resurrection, led his disciples out with him to Bethany.—Do you remember what transpired while he was there conversing with them?—(Luke.)

XXXI. BETHLEH.

256. Bethel signifies "The House of God."—Can you tell then to what transaction this city owed its name? and likewise by what name it was previously called?—(Genesis.)

257. Do you recollect the name of a distinguished prophetess who dwelt near to this city?—(Judges.)

258. This city, in the earlier history of the Israelites, as well as afterwards, appears to have been a place of no small importance. One of the Israelitish judges took this city, together with Gilead and Mizpeh, in his yearly circuit.—Can you refer to this circumstance, as well as point out the name of the individual in question?—(1 Samuel.)

259. Bethel was afterwards conspicuous as being the great seat of idolatry, and especially for the worship of one of the golden calves.—Under which of the kings of Israel was this idolatry established?—(1 Kings.)

CHURCH CALENDAR.

July 1.—	Third Sunday after Trinity.
8.—	Fourth do do
15.—	Fifth do do
22.—	Sixth do do

THE BAPTIZED FAMILY.

(Continued from our last.)

The character of one of their younger children, ANNA AMELIA, had been marked with peculiar seriousness from her infancy. She seemed, indeed, almost like an unearthly being. At the time of her baptism, Mrs. R. appeared to realize a peculiar and unusual confidence in the divine promises. She felt the full assurance of faith in relation to this child, that God would regenerate her, and make her his own by adoption and grace. The manner in which her mind was at that time impressed, was afterwards frequently made the subject of reflection. Like Mary, "she kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." And when she saw this dear child growing up, with her affections apparently fixed on God, she could not but hope that the Lord had sanctified her, even from her baptismal birth.

Several years had now elapsed since the death of Henry.—Anna Amelia had nearly reached her thirteenth year. She had for some time manifested such a love for prayer, and for reading the Holy Scriptures, and evinced such an apparent abhorrence of sin—such a fear of offending God—such tenderness of conscience, and so anxious a solicitude to please her heavenly Father, and to trust in his mercy through Christ, and her conduct was all so sweetly accordant with the spirit and requirements of the Gospel, that her parents could no longer doubt, that God had taken her for his own child. Often did they converse with her about eternal things, and always were they more and more impressed with the certainty that she was truly born of God.

Can there be a more interesting being on earth, than a young, beautiful girl of thirteen, blooming in all the freshness of health—buoyant with all the sprightliness of childhood,—and yet exhibiting the sweetness and loveliness of all the Christian graces spread over her character in chastened and child-like simplicity?

Such a sweet and lovely one was Anna Amelia. She was growing up the delight, and almost the idol of her parents' hearts. Suddenly the blight of disease fell upon this loved one. She sank under its power, and soon exhibited symptoms that were truly alarming. All of a father's anxiety and a mother's love could not prevail for her rescue, or compel the fell destroyer to relax his grasp. Her brothers and sisters gathered around her sick bed with weeping eyes. She more than guessed its meaning!

At length she was plainly told that hers was a mortal sickness. After the first agitation had passed away she exhibited great and unbroken composure, and sweetly said—"I am willing to go wherever the hand of God shall conduct me." Thus died Anna Amelia, at the early age of thirteen, full of faith and hope.

This seemed a dreadful stroke to the sorrowing parents and bereaved brothers and sisters. But still they had rich sources of consolation. Though God had taken away two of this baptized family, the departed had both left them the brightest evidences of their adoption into the divine family.

The death of Anna Amelia made a deep impression upon the hearts of her two sisters. By this afflictive event, they were led to reflect upon their own unpreparedness to die.—The awful truth became written, with a diamond's point, upon their consciences, that they were sinners guilty and condemned before God: that they had never loved Him as they ought: that they had done nothing but sin all their lives.—They began to sorrow after a godly sort. They went to the feet of the Saviour, and found "joy and peace in believing." Mr. and Mrs. R. were more and more strengthened in the belief that God would certainly fulfil his covenant promises made to them in behalf of their offspring. Two of their dear children were now in the Church triumphant, and two had become, as they hoped, living members in the Church militant.

At the time that Anna Amelia fell sick and died, G., the eldest brother, was absent. As we have already remarked, he had become the commander of a vessel, and his life was chiefly passed amid the perils of the ocean. Though he was surrounded with great and numerous temptations, the influence of early instruction, and the pious example of his parents, operated with sufficient power to keep him from open immorality. Many of the voyages which he made were to the West Indies, where he met and formed intimacies with many individuals from the European continent, who had embraced those loose and sceptical notions which are so prevalent in France. The effect of this association was highly pernicious. Though G. had many serious reflections, he could not make up his mind to become a Christian. The opposition of the natural heart existed in undiminished power. He therefore, without scarcely being conscious of it, drank in the poison of infidelity:

He had naturally an amiable and affectionate heart, and felt most keenly the death of little Anna Amelia. He wept over her grave with all the fond affection of a devoted and almost heart-broken brother. A strange conflict of emotions was awakened in his mind, when he heard how she was sustained in death by the Christian's hope. But when he learned that his two elder sisters had professed to have experienced a change of heart, an indignant feeling arose in his mind which he could hardly suppress. His respect for his parents, however, restrained him from giving utterance to the laudable he felt for every thing relating to godliness. So great was the enmity of his heart at this time against the truth, as he subsequently acknowledged, that when he heard that his sisters were going to partake of the communion, for a moment he wished that some deadly poison were infused into the sacramental cup. Though he did not express these and similar feelings at the time, yet it was obvious to all his family, that he was utterly opposed to religion. Oh! what a dark hour was this to those bereaved parents! Their first-born, their eldest son, an infidel! The child that drew after him so much affection—that had been sacramentally washed in the baptismal water, and offered to God amid so many prayers—now ready to abjure Christ, and deny religion! What a trial was here for the faith of these Christian parents! Would God indeed bring in this son? Would he make him one of his regenerate people? Being not weak in faith, they considered not the apparent obstacles in the way—"They staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but were strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was also able to perform." They said very little to G., but sought continually to bring his mind imperceptibly under good and holy influences.—They believed that his infidelity was a disease of the heart, and that if he could be made to feel his sinfulness, and the obligation he was under to God, he would be constrained to cast his scepticism away, and flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him in the Gospel.

At this time he remained at home for several months.—They were months of deep anxiety to Mr. and Mrs. R.—In their solicitude for their living child, they almost forgot their sorrow for the one that had gone down to the grave.—At the family altar G. was ever particularly and affectionately remembered. Religious conversation was frequently addressed to the other children in his presence, though little was usually said directly to him. He became evidently troubled in his mind. It was manifest that he was not satisfied with his present state. All this, however, seemed only to increase the opposition of his heart to the truth.

At length he was induced to attend an evening lecture. In this instance, the preacher, though utterly unacquainted with G., seemed to delineate his character with great accuracy and to apply to him the truths of God, in a manner that stripped him of all his excuses, and left him a naked sinner, trembling at the bar of divine justice. It was a barbed arrow that went to the very centre of his heart. Now as the light broke in upon him, and he saw his true character, and the wickedness of his heart, "the iron entered into his soul, and he tasted the wormwood and the gall." He went home, and shut himself up, and tried to pray. He passed the whole night in anguish unspokenable. He felt that he was an awful sinner. Thick darkness settled down upon his soul. He saw that he had merited eternal wrath, and that it would be an act of infinite mercy, if he was saved from going down to the pit. All that he could do, was to fall down before the divine footstool and say, "Lord, have mercy on me." His voice went up, and entered that "ear which is never dull of hearing." The blessed Saviour appeared for his rescue. He became a most devoted, devoted, consistent Christian. Having become, by spiritual regeneration, the child of God, he delighted in nothing so much as in doing good. It became his meat and drink to glorify God—his point out to his fellow-seamen the star of Bethlehem—to direct them to the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Who can conceive the feelings of the happy parents on this occasion? The language of the Psalmist seemed an echo to the emotions that glowed in their bosoms. "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." The only alloy to their present happiness was the recollection that all their children had not submitted to the same regenerating influence, which had impressed such altered and heavenly features upon the whole character of G.—He was now about to leave home on a long voyage. It had been so arranged, that N. and J., his two brothers, next younger than himself, were to accompany him aboard the same vessel. They went to New York with this intention. Their plan, however, was afterwards altered, and each of the brothers went on different voyages in separate vessels.

Mr. R., however, before being apprized of this, addressed to J., the youngest of the three brothers, the following letter:—

"MY DEAR SON,—
"No circumstance has ever occurred since we have had a family, so interesting as that under which we now part from our three eldest children. When we look back, and consider the danger and the hardships that G. has undergone, and that the kind Providence of God has always watched over him, and at last brought him home in safety, and so 'shed abroad his love in his heart' as to make him 'a new creature in Christ Jesus,' we are astonished at the mercy that has done such great things for us, who are so undeserving.

"The same Providence is guiding and directing you now. It is under His protecting care you will sail. If you confide in Him, He will preserve you. And I hope that this event will result in the conversion of both you and N.—It certainly will, unless you wilfully reject the grace of God. God has so ordered this event, that your brother may be a minister to you. And surely when you look back and think how he felt when he came home, and see how he is now, you can have no doubt of the reality of religion. But I feel assured that you do not doubt this—I fully believe that the Spirit of God has enlightened your mind. It is only necessary that you be willing to devote yourself to God. It must be an act of your will. Your mind is not darkened, nor your heart harder than that of every unconverted person. But the will must be bowed in submission to God. He says, 'My son, give me thy heart—seek ye my face.' It is necessary that you should respond—

"Here, Lord, I give myself away.—
"Tis all that I can do."

"This must be an act of your will. You see, if you neglect it, it will be from choice. Ask your brother what it was that determined him to give himself up to God—ask if it was not the act of his will. His mind was as much opposed as yours. He had as strong a will to bend into submission to God, as you have. What he has done, through the help of God, you can do. And Oh! what rejoicing will it cause in our hearts,—what happiness to yourself, and what joy in heaven, should you, three brothers, be all united, on board one ship, in singing praises to God from your hearts, as well as

with your voices, while you are sailing on the broad ocean. And how much good may you do among the seamen,—how much good to the other ship's officers—and how much would God be honoured by such an event, wherever the ship goes, under such circumstances.

"If you can realize the importance of these things, as they appear to me, and I am sure they must appear to you at some future day, you will resolve without delay to give yourself to God. This is what God requires of every creature. And what is the import of this gift? We are his already—His by creation—His by preservation, amidst all the snares and deaths, to which we have been exposed—His by the redeeming blood of his dear Son—His by dedication in Holy baptism. By each of these several claims, his right to us has ever been beyond any ground of controversy on our part.—But by our practice we have denied his claims. We have set up for ourselves; we have felt as though we could do without God. In our hearts we have said, we will not have God to reign over us. God requires that we should submit to his claim—that we should yield this controversy—and peaceably submit to His authority. This is what is meant by giving ourselves up to God. If you see that his claim is just, you must see that to oppose it, is wrong. If you are willing then to do what you must see to be right, you will say,—'henceforth the Lord shall be my God.' If you do this, the truth of God is pledged for your salvation. If you find it hard, remember that the hardness consists merely in the strength of your opposition to God. The harder it is to submit, the more is the need of submission—for the more aggravated is the sin of opposition.

"These truths I doubt not will appear plain to your mind. But be warned of the subtlety of the great adversary. In a thousand ways, he continues to delude the soul that is convinced, and resolved on turning to God—and in thousands of instances his wiles are successful. 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' And he goes on the sea as well as on the land.—May God sanctify these thoughts to the salvation of your soul, is the prayer of

"Your affectionate Father,
"S. R.—"

(To be concluded in our next.)

DEATH OF LUTHER.

On that day, February 17, 1546, his friends, perceiving more repose to be desirable for him, persuaded him to keep quiet in his study; which he did, frequently walking up and down, in an undress, but conversing with animation. "From time to time," says Justus Jonas, "he would stop, and looking out at the window, in that attitude (as his custom was) address fervent prayers to God, so that I and Cadius, who were in the room with him, could not but perceive it: and then he would say, 'I was born and baptized here at Eisleben; what if I should remain or even die here.'" Another of his friends, Razeberg, the elector's physician, has preserved one of the prayers, as it would seem, which he thus offered while walking up and down in his study. It is in the following terms, principally referring to the religious interests of his native country: "O Lord God, heavenly Father, I call upon thee in the name of thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, imploring that, according to thy promise, and for the glory of thy name, thou wouldst graciously hear the prayers which I offer up unto thee, beseeching thee that as thou hast, of thy mercy and boundless goodness, discovered to me the great apostacy and blindness of the pope before the day of thy last advent, which is at hand, and is to succeed that diffusion of the light of the Gospel which now dawns upon the world; so thou wouldst graciously preserve the Church of my beloved country in the acknowledgment of the truth, and the unwavering confession of thy uncorrupted word, without failing, even unto the end; that the whole world may know that thou hast sent me for this very purpose. Even so, O most blessed Lord God! Amen and Amen!"

Before supper he had complained of a pain in the chest, to which he was subject: it was, however, relieved by warm applications. After supper it returned; but he would not have medical aid called in; but about nine o'clock lay down on a couch and fell asleep. He awoke as the clock struck ten, and desired that those about him would retire to rest.—When led into his chamber, he said, "I go to rest with God;" and repeated the words of the Psalm, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," &c.: and, stretching out his hand to bid all good night, he added, "Pray for the cause of God." He then went to bed: but about one o'clock he awoke Jonas and another who slept in the room with him, desired that a fire might be made in his study, and exclaimed, "Oh God! how ill I am! I suffer dreadful oppression in my chest: I shall certainly die at Eisleben!" He then removed into his study without requiring assistance, and again repeating, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit!" He walked backwards and forwards, and desired to have warm clothes brought to him. In the mean time his physicians were sent for, as also Count Albat, who presently came with his Countess. All Luther's friends and his sons were now collected about him: medicines were given him, and he seemed somewhat relieved; and having lain down on a couch, he fell into a perspiration. This gave encouragement to some present: but he said, "It is a cold sweat, the forerunner of death: I shall yield up my spirit." He then began to pray, nearly in these words: "O eternal and merciful God, my heavenly Father, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God of all consolation! I thank thee that thou hast revealed to me thy Son Jesus Christ; in whom I have believed, whom I have preached, whom I have confessed, whom I love and worship as my dear Saviour and Redeemer, whom the pope and the multitude of the ungodly do persecute, revile and blaspheme. I beseech thee my Lord Jesus Christ, receive my soul! O, heavenly Father, though I be snatched out of this life, though I must now lay down this body, yet know I assuredly that I shall dwell with thee for ever, and that none can pluck me out of thy hands!" He then thrice again repeated the words, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit!" Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth!" Also these words, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:" and that verse of the sixty-eighth Psalm, "Our God is the God of whom cometh salvation: God is the Lord by whom we escape death." He then became silent, and his power began to fail him: but when several present addressed him, "Reverend father, you are in the constant confession of Christ and his doctrine, which you have preached?" he distinctly answered, "Yes," and spoke no more; but about a quarter of an hour afterwards, between two and three o'clock in the morning, with his hands clasped together, and without a finger or a feature being disturbed, gently breathed his last.—(Scott's History of the Church of Christ.)

CHRISTIAN POLICY.

If every one in this honourable assembly would join together, to promote Christian religion, in its true notion, that is, peace and holiness, the love of God, and the love of our brother, Christianity in all its proper usefulness, and would not endure in the nation any thing against the laws of the holy Jesus; if ye were all zealous for the doctrines of righteousness, and impatient of sin in yourselves, and in the people, it is not to be imagined what a happy nation we should be. But if ye divide into parties, and keep up useless differences of names or interests; if ye do not join the bands of peace, that is, the King and the Church, religion and the good of the nation, you can never hope to see a blessing to be the end of your labours. Remember the words of Solomon, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people:" but when righteousness is advanced in the hearts and lives of the nation, who shall dare to reprove your faith, who can find fault with your religion?

God of his mercy grant that in all your consultations, the Word of God may be your measure, the Spirit of God may be your guide, and the Glory of God may be your end. He, of his mercy, grant that moderation may be your limit, and peace may be within your walls, as long as you are there, and in all the land for ever after. But, remember, that since the honour and service of his Majesty, and the peace and prosperity of the Church, the perpetuity of our fundamental laws, public justice, and the honour of all legal authority, the advancement of trade, and the wealth of the nation, is your design; remember, I pray, what warranty you have to expect all this; no less than the words of our blessed Saviour, but it is on these terms, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added unto you." Amen.—(Bishop Taylor, Sermon before Parliament.)

HEARING SERMONS.

Beware of critical hearing of Sermons preached by good men. It is an awful thing to be occupied in balancing the merits of a preacher, instead of the demerits of yourself. Consider every opportunity of hearing as a message sent you from heaven. For all the Sermons you have heard, you will have to render an account at the last day.—Leigh Richland.

A lady who was present at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, where the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine was assisting, was much impressed by his discourse. Having been informed who he was, she went next Sabbath to his own place of worship to hear him. But she felt none of those strong impressions she experienced on the former occasion. Wondering at this, she called on Mr. E. and stating the case, asked what might be the reason of such a difference in her feelings. He replied, Madam, the reason is this, last Sabbath you went to hear Jesus Christ, but to day you have come to hear Ebenezer Erskine.

Recollect that whatever you take as your chief rule in life, and the leading governor and director of your conduct, that is your God;—it is to you what God should be, it is in God's place.—It is this you remember, when you should remember your Creator; in this you live, and upon this you must depend when you die!—Beware, then, that you thus commit yourself to nothing but God; to no rule but His rule.—Wolf's Sermons.

Men could never be so bad as they are, if they did but take a proper care and scope in this business of self-examination, if they did but look backwards to what they were, inwards to what they are, and forwards to what they shall be.—Mason.

When we have a mind to a thing, all reason seems strong to persuade us to it.—(Bishop Patrick.)

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