

The Berean.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—Acts xvii. 11.

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THE KEY OF THE COFFIN.
FROM THE GERMAN OF JEAN PAUL F. RICHTER.
A mother knelt o'er her loved one's tomb,
And her eyes were red with weeping;
For her cherished flower, in its morning bloom,
Was now in the cold earth sleeping.

The coffin's key was in her hand,
In her heart was deepest sadness;
And her spirit yearned for the better land,
Where grief would be turned into gladness.

"I will keep the key," she calmly said,
"Of thy dwelling, dark and lonely,
So that none shall ever thy rest invade,
But the mother who loves thee only."

She turned her eyes to heaven's bright dome,
Where the silent stars were beaming;
And her spirit caught, in childlike tone,
These words of holiest meaning—

"Throw away the key! O mother dear,
For the coffin holds not thy child,
He has risen from earth, and dwells here;
For the Saviour upon him smiled."

GLEANINGS FROM WM. WILBERFORCE.

Letter written on receiving an account of
Harriet Bird's happy death.
TO WILLIAM MANNING, ESQ.,
Palace Yard, 20th January, 1792.

My dear Manning,

My eyes are but indifferent to-day, and I have much work for them; yet I cannot forbear taking up my pen for a few moments, not from form, you will believe, but feeling, on the perusal of your kind letter. Such a crowd of ideas rush into my mind, that I scarce know how to discriminate or select them. I cannot help almost envying you the scene you have been witnessing. O my dear friend, never forget it; let it still be present to your mind and let it force all those concerns which are so apt to engross our imaginations, and interest our hearts to retire to their proper distance, or rather to shrink to their true point of insignificance. Never let me forget it. When I seem to you at any time to be intoxicated as it were by the hurry, the business, or the dissipation of life, spare not the best offices of friendship, recall me to that sobriety and seriousness of mind, which become those who know not when they may be called away; place before me the solemn triumphs of which you have been a spectator, and animate me to press forward in emulation of so glorious an example. To die the death, we must indeed live the life of Christians. We must fix our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. We must endeavor habitually to preserve that frame of mind, and that course of conduct, with which we may be justly said to be waiting for the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know not any description of a Christian which impresses itself so forcibly as this on my mind. Alas! when with this which I ought to be I compare myself as I am, I am lost in unutterable shame and self-abasement. But I throw myself on the mercies of God in Christ. I resolve to venture all on this foundation; and relying on that help which is promised to them that ask it, I determine to struggle with all my corruptions, and to employ what is left to me of life, and talents, and influence, in the way which shall appear to be most pleasing to my heavenly Father. Oh with what humiliation have I to look back on the years wherein all these were so grossly wasted; and what reason have I to rejoice that I was not then snatched away!

I will not apologize for giving you this picture of my mind; you will accept it (such indeed it is) as a proof of affection and confidence. In truth I often regret that we are so separated as not to afford us the opportunity of exhibiting proofs of this last to each other more frequently in personal communications. May the time at length come, when, through the goodness of God, we may indulge (with those friends we have before lost for this life) uninterrupted and ever-growing effusions of affection. I must lay aside my pen. Adieu. Remember me most kindly to Mary. I rejoice to hear she is so supported. Assure her of my constant prayers. Remember me also kindly to the Moyses and to Dr. Fraser, whose tender assidues I have heard of with sincere pleasure, and reflect on with real gratitude.

Believe me, my dear Manning, in great haste,
ever affectionately yours,
W. WILBERFORCE.

HIS POSITION AND INFLUENCE AT THE AGE OF THIRTY THREE.

From Teston he returned to Theobald's, and in the course of the succeeding week went on to Yoxhall Lodge, where, with the exception of a short visit to Rothley Temple, he remained until he was called to London by the business of the session. Here he resumed the diligent employments of the preceding summer, giving however more time than formerly to studies of a directly religious character. "I have been employing," he says, "most of this morning" in reading St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. It was by this careful study, which no press of business ever interrupted, and which continued daily through his life, that he obtained an acquaintance with holy Scripture unusual even in professed theologians. A marked advance in his character during the course of this year may be traced in the altered tone of his most private entries. Still indeed they abounded in that deep humiliation with which they who have looked closely into the perfect law of liberty must ever contemplate their own fulfillment of its demands; yet they bear already more of that calm and peaceful character which cast so warm a light upon his later days. "Though utterly unworthy," he says, "I thank God for having enabled me to pray with earnestness. Oh that this may not be as the morning cloud and as the early dew! By His grace I will persevere with more earnestness than ever, labouring to work out my own salvation in an entire and habitual dependence upon Him." "If you have truly learned to feel the insufficiency of your own powers," says the Dean of Carlisle, to whom he had poured forth his earnest desires after a more rapid growth in holiness, "you have made more progress than you think of; and if you can support that feeling and act upon it for any time together,

your advance is very considerable." He judged indeed himself to be "in a more pleasing state." "I have been praying," he says, "earnestly to God for His Spirit through Christ to renew my corrupt nature and make me spiritually-minded; what folly is all else! Let me take courage, relying on the sure promises of God in Christ and the powerful operations of the Spirit of grace. Though I am weak He is strong, I must more cherish this heavenly inhabitant."

This tranquil state of feeling was henceforth fostered by a system of greater domestic intercourse with the friends whose principles he valued, and by mingling consequently less frequently than of old in the turbulent currents of life. Some such attention in his plan was rendered necessary by the loss of the opportunity of retirement which had been afforded him, since he ceased to own a house at Winkleson, by the enlightened hospitality of his relative John Thornton. "Young men and old have different habits," said his kinsman when he offered him a room in his house and the command of his spacious garden, "and I shall leave you therefore to keep your own hours, and take care that you are not interrupted."

Of this offer he availed himself until the death of Mr. Thornton in 1790, and in the course of 1792 he agreed to share a house on Clapham Common with Mr. Henry Thornton, the youngest son of his deceased relative. "Henry Thornton," he says, "has bought Labdock's house at Battersea Rise, and I am to share it with him, and pay so much per annum towards expenses. Last night I went over the house and grounds with Grant and Henry Thornton. How thankful I should be, to whom it is the only question, which of many things, all comfortable, I shall choose?" Whilst his general influence was silently extending, there grew up around him here a chosen circle of penitential friends. Amongst these must especially be noticed the Hon. E. J. Elliot, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Henry Thornton. Mr. Elliot, his early friend and fellow-traveler, was now settled, for the sake of his society, in the immediate neighbourhood of Battersea Rise. The loss of a wife to whom he was ardently attached, (the favorite sister of Mr. Pitt) had given a tone of earnest piety to the whole character of Mr. Elliot, and taught him to cooperate in every useful scheme suggested by his friend; whilst at the same time there had been inflicted on his spirit a wound from which he never rallied. His death, in 1797, was attributed by those who knew his inmost feelings, to the lingering sorrow of a broken heart. Of Mr. Grant and Mr. Henry Thornton it is needless here to speak. "Few men," says the latter, referring to this period, "have been blessed with wealth or better friends than have fallen to my lot. Mr. Wilberforce stands at the head of these, for he was the friend of my youth. I owed much to him in every sense soon after I came out in life; for his enlarged mind, his affectionate and condescending manners, and his very superior piety, were exactly calculated to supply what was wanting to my improvement and my establishment in a right course. It is chiefly through him that I have been introduced to a variety of other most valuable associates." "When I entered life, I saw a great deal of dishonourable conduct among people who made great profession of religion. In my father's house I met with persons of this sort. This so disgusted me that, had it not been for the admirable pattern of consistency and disinterestedness which I saw in Mr. Wilberforce, I should have been in danger of a sort of indolence." Such was at this time his position; high in public estimation, and rich in private friends; engaged in the conduct of a most important cause; with his mind now disciplined by culture, and enriched by study; whilst the unseen life of his spirit, escaping from its early struggles, was strengthening upon tranquil vigour, as religion took a firmer hold upon his character, and leavened more thoroughly the whole man. By this early self-discipline he had purchased the calm and peaceful obedience of the remainder of his course. He was now about to be tried in his political life with far more searching difficulties than any which he had yet encountered. Like that holy man of old to whom a severe observer has beautifully compared him, he was prepared by humility and self-denial for the arduous trials of a public life; and like him he supported them with uncorrupted faith. "From a careful scrutiny," says Mr. Matthias, "I am inclined to think that his enemies would be forced into an acknowledgment that they can find no occasion against this man, except they find it against him concerning the law of his God."

BE YE ALSO READY!
LINCOLN, TUESDAY, AUGUST 31.—An event of the most appalling character happened in this neighbourhood on Sunday. Soon after two o'clock a dense mass of black clouds to the southward of the city indicated a storm, and at three o'clock the peals of thunder were deafening. It occasioned no material injury in Lincoln, but shortly after four o'clock a messenger arrived, and stated that the electric fluid had struck the parish church at Welton during Divine service, and had killed and severely injured several of the congregation. Medical assistance and the fire-engines were instantly despatched to the spot, and many persons repaired to the scene of the calamity. What had been reported was found to be too true. One person had lost his life, and eight others, five of whom were women, were shockingly hurt. The church, which has sustained considerable damage, is adjacent to the village of Welton, to the eastward of the north road between Carleton and Scampton, and about five miles distant from this city. It appears that while the congregation were engaged in singing the hymn previous to the sermon, the Rev. Mr. Williamson, the Curate, having ascended the pulpit, the lightning was seen to enter the church from the tower, or belfry, and instantly an explosion occurred in the centre of the edifice. All that could move made for the door; the Rev.

Mr. Williamson immediately descended from the pulpit and implored them to calm themselves, and endeavoured to allay their fears. Attention was directed to those of the congregation who were lying in different parts of the church, apparently dead, some of whom had their clothing on fire. Five women were found injured. Their names are Mary Baldwin, Eliza Baldwin (sister); Mary Abraham, Sarah Taylor, and Ann Broughall. Their faces were blackened and burnt. A boy, of the name of Oglesby, living in the neighbouring village of Southey, was discovered in another part of the building with his clothes on fire and nearly consumed. Several others suffered similar injury. A respected old parishioner, Mr. J. Bowdler, a wheelwright, aged sixty-eight, was discovered lying at the bottom of his pew, immediately beneath one of the chandeliers, quite dead. There were no marks of wounds or abrasion about the body. The buttons of his waistcoat were melted; the right leg of his trousers was torn down, and his coat literally burnt off. His wife was in the same pew with him, but escaped injury. A gentleman named Pith, who occupied the next pew, was knocked down by the shock, and seriously hurt. All the unfortunate sufferers were, as soon as possible, removed to their respective dwellings, and every attention paid to them. For some time the church was filled with a sulphurous smoke, which led many to believe that it was on fire. Such, however, fortunately proved not to be the case, the effluvia merely arising from the explosion of the electric fluid.

On the church being surveyed, it appeared that the lightning first struck the south-eastern pinnacle of the tower, and threw down a portion of the battlement. It then passed into the tower, and melted an iron rod connected with the clock. Here the current of electricity was divided, one portion having descended on the exterior, and entered the earth, while another portion descended inside and having perforated the stone-work of the door into the interior of the church, and thence down the clock dial inside, passed along the north aisle. In this part of the church were suspended three small brass chandeliers, which served as conductors for the electric fluid downwards, as all the persons standing underneath them were injured. On the door of the tower being inspected, it was found to be perforated with thirty or forty small holes immediately beneath where Mr. Bowdler stood; the current of electricity having passed through his body to the earth. In passing from the north aisle into the chancel, it went out by five different holes in the east window, and perforated the stone wall, upwards of two and a half feet in thickness, in two different places.

In the course of yesterday (Monday) afternoon, a coroner's inquest was held on the remains of the deceased, before Mr. Hitchens, the County Coroner, and a verdict in accordance with the nature of his death was returned. The other parties who were injured are said to be progressing favourably.

A MIGHTY LEVER TO RAISE THE NATIONAL CHARACTER.
When the philosophic De Tocqueville visited our country a few years since, he once, on his own request, entered a Sunday school, and examined its exercises, and particularly the books in use. To his surprise he found, in the hands of every child, a New Testament without note or comment, and all eager in its perusal. He inquired at once of the superintendent, whether this practice with children was common through the country. When answered in the affirmative, he exclaimed with emotion, "what a mighty effect it must have on the character of a nation!"

It is even so. It is this book more than all things else which has made us what we are, and which has lighted up by us the few bright spots on our earth's otherwise dark and dreary surface. It is this which is as an instrument not only to improve the condition of all here, but to work out the fulfilment of those glowing spiritual promises to the Jew and the Gentile, to the bond and the free, to Ethiopia and the far off Isles of the ocean. There is no solid hope for the race, as to permanent happiness here or hereafter, from any book or policy or volume of man, but in close alliance with this Sacred Volume. One who was divinely taught could say, "I have seen an end of all perfection here, but thy commandment is exceeding broad; as all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever."—*Southern Churchman, 13 August.*

HINTS FOR BIBLE-TEACHERS.
From Report on the Training Establishment of the Home and Colonial Infant and Juvenile School Society; by E. C. Tafall, Esq., one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

An important part of the instruction in the art of teaching is given by what may be denominated lessons for criticism. These consist of lessons given to a class of children assembled in a gallery by teachers in training, in presence of the other students. At the conclusion, the children being dismissed, the sketch of the lesson previously prepared by the teacher is read, and each student is required to give an opinion on the merits or demerits of the sketch, as well as of the lesson founded on it. The treatment of the subject chosen, the language and manner of the teacher, the character of the questions asked, the extent to which the minds of the children have been brought into a state of activity, the educational principles illustrated or violated, and when the lesson is from Scripture, the moral deduced or the impression made, are all the subjects of critical remarks.

The head-master or one of his assistants is always present on these occasions, and by his questions, remarks, and a general summing up, aids the students in forming a just estimate of the sketch, and of the lesson. But the best way to give an idea of the manner in which these lessons are conducted, and the advantages to be derived from them, will be to describe minutely one at which I was present.

The subject chosen was the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea; and the application intended to be deduced, was the goodness of God towards those who, like his chosen people, obeyed him, and the severity of his judgments against those who, as in the instance of the Egyptians, opposed his will.

The class consisted of about thirty infants from about five to seven years of age. The teacher, one of these in training, was provided with a print, which represented the Israelites after they had safely passed over, and the Egyptians drowning in the midst of the Red Sea. This print was made the ground-work of the lesson, in the course of which the teacher brought out, by questioning the children on the print, and partly by telling them, where the incidents were not represented, that the Israelites had been in Egypt many years, where they were ill-treated by Pharaoh; that they cried unto God, who ordered Pharaoh by the mouth of his servant Moses to let them depart; that Pharaoh was unwilling to permit their departure, but at last consented, though, when they were gone, he immediately repented and pursued them to him; then back: that the Israelites having been overtaken near the Red Sea, were alarmed at the sight of the pursuing Egyptians, upon which Moses prayed to God for help. This gave the teacher an occasion incidentally to refer to the duty of prayer in affliction. The waters of the sea having been divided by the power of God, the Israelites passed safely through, but on Pharaoh attempting to follow, the returning waves overwhelmed him and his army. By pointing to the two parties represented in the print, and dwelling on the condition and character of each, the conclusion was drawn, in the language of the text, Hebrews xi. 23, that God will show his goodness to all that love him, and his severity to those who are wicked.

The most important part is the subsequent criticism on the lesson, in which each of the assembled teachers is expected to take a part. One student declared that the teacher ought to have dwelt at greater length on the circumstances of the Israelites in Egypt. This criticism, was, however, overruled by the master, who observed that nothing should be more cautiously avoided than rambling, desultory teaching; that every lesson should have a specific point, to which the questions of the teacher should have reference, without deviating from it under ordinary circumstances; and as in the present case, the point was to be found in the latter part of the subject, the teacher was right in rapidly passing over the introductory matter.

Several students affirmed that some of the questions were leading and too easy; the answer required being simply, yes, or no, or suggested by the question itself. The master concurred in these objections, and observed that as the object of giving instruction in the catechetical mode, was to keep the minds of the children active and at work; to observe facts, to investigate the subjects brought before them, and to enable them to draw inferences, and prepare them for receiving impressions, all questions which the children could answer with little or no exercise of mind, wasted the time of the teacher and children.

Some students thought that the information directly given to the children, might have been drawn from them by more judicious questions. The master sustained this objection also, and pointed out as a general rule the impropriety of telling children what by a proper exercise of their own faculties they might discover, dwelling upon it as an important principle in teaching; observing, however, that in a Scripture lesson, telling or using the ellipsis, which is considered nearly the same, was sometimes to be preferred to direct questioning, as it enabled the children better to receive the incidents as a whole, and thus assisted in producing an impression—the ultimate design of such a lesson. Another student objected to a question relating to the sea, as it could only be answered by guessing, and the master decided that it was a bad question, there being no data on which the minds of the children could be exercised, and chance, not thought, determining the answer.

Another remarked that the teacher was wrong to use the word "severity" in the application of the lesson, without ascertaining that the children understood the word. The master admitted that if the children did not understand the word the criticism was just, and dwelt on the importance of not using words without ascertaining that they conveyed the desired idea to the children's minds, observing that as a general rule children should first have the idea itself given them, and be made sensible of the want of the word before it was actually supplied. He added, that if the teacher had well worked out the incidents of the narrative, the children would have had the idea of the goodness and severity of God in this case thoroughly fixed in their minds, and thus have been prepared to pass from the perception of a truth presented in a picture or an incident, to the conception of the same truth expressed in a precept or general text of Scripture.

The head-master, during the progress of the criticism, repeatedly required the students to be more specific in their objections; for example, when a student said some of the questions were too leading, he required the questions themselves to be repeated, observing that it was in this manner only that the criticisms could be made useful.

In his general summing up he remarked that the print had not been made sufficient use of; that the awful condition of the Egyptians, and the deliverance of the Israelites as the result of their respective disobedience and obedience to the commands of God, ought to have been more dwelt upon, the impression to be produced mainly depending on their rightly understanding those facts; that the teacher went too rapidly over the subject, not giving the children sufficient time to think of their answers, or to digest the information imparted to them, thus violating the well-known educational maxim, that a teacher in giving a lesson is not to be guided by what she can give, but by what the children can receive. That she also erred in allowing the children in their replies to repeat parts of sentences instead of the whole, and consequently they often failed to get the complete idea in their minds. He further observed, that the sketch was well written, evincing thought and ingenuity, the matter judiciously selected for the class of children before the teacher, that the manner was good and impressive; that the children were orderly, though not so much interested as they would have been, had some of the faults above described been avoided.

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.
From "The Church."
In regard to the RACE-COURSE, the unanswerable objections alleged by serious Christians against this

most productive nursery of dissipation, intrigue, and vice, have been so often and powerfully stated, that they are quite familiar to the minds of all who choose to trouble themselves in any degree about them. We need not repeat them here. Let it be sufficient to say, that, whilst the moral evils attendant upon this amusement are in every country the same, even the poor utilitarian plea, that the effect of such exercise and training is to give spirit and speed to the horse—however applicable it may be to the condition of an old country—has no point at all that we can see when transferred to the totally different circumstances of a new country like our own, much of which remains in its natural wildness, rough and stubborn; and requires, therefore, for its improvement, a race of animals not swift and eager, but possessed of patience, strength, and endurance. But perhaps it is almost beside the question to notice this excuse at all; since no usefulness or profit can be sufficient warrant for the continuance of that which is morally wrong.

PARVATE THEATRICALS have been a long time in vogue; and truth compels us to acknowledge, that there prevails in this city a passionate fondness for this species of amusement. From an advertisement which we have seen in one of the city papers, we are apprised that renewed attempts are being made to re-establish a Society of Amateurs. Every encouragement, we believe, is held out to "junior performers" to appear on the stage; if they are possessed of natural taste and talent for scenic representations, they are doubtless strongly tempted to display their powers in this way; and we must beg leave to express our firm persuasion, that a more effectual method could scarcely be found out for alienating the minds of young people, not merely from devotional exercises, but from the necessary duties of life.

By the warm-hearted and self-denying St. Paul, both the race and the theatre are employed to teach, in a familiar way, very important truth; the one being used to illustrate the competition for the mastery, (1 Cor. ix. 24.); and the other exhibiting the instability of earthly things (1 Cor. vii. 31). But this faithful apostle, we presume, was not in the habit of frequenting either; and the truth is, when Christians come to appreciate and to experience the feelings of St. Paul, they soon perceive that their spirits can be kept very cheerful, and their life made perfectly happy, without the aid of either theatres or races.

THE GAMES, by displaying its oft-repeated indelicate exhibitions, and carrying away to a foreign land a rich harvest of profits, tends at once to demoralize and to impoverish the Province. The recent wanderings of some of these equestrian companies through the country, have provoked, we are glad to see, a well-deserved expression of displeasure and condemnation from the most respectable papers in the Province. It is notorious that there is much in the feats of these strolling performers that offends modesty, and painfully conflicts with refined and virtuous feeling; but even if they were perfectly decent, pure, and irreproachable, it would still be both imprudent and unjust, to enrich foreigners with that money which is now so urgently needed for the relief of our sick and indigent brethren.

There is yet one more particular to which we must advert before we close our remarks on this head. In the cities of Quebec and Montreal, the VIXENESS OF CHARACTERS—the frail and interesting natives of a distant land—have been very lately entertaining delighted multitudes with the exquisite gracefulness and elegance of their stage-dancing. The exhibitions to which these little children have been so successfully trained, are attractive, we are told, beyond anything that can be imagined. But what are the true merits of this matter in a religious point of view? These young and helpless creatures have been separated from the endearments of home; debarred of a father's guardianship or a mother's love; exiled to a strange country far removed from the place of their birth; subject to the will of those who are not their kindred; and—what is worse than all this unkindness and injustice—exposed, at the most susceptible season of life, to the hardening influences and irreligious associations of the stage. Do the pleased spectators who contemplate with such unbounded delight the graceful movements of these poor children, ever ask themselves, what is to become of their neglected souls? Is it right to encourage such heartless trafficking? Is it humane to countenance this mercenary trifling with the immortal destiny of these defenceless lambs of the flock? We know not whether they will be brought to this city; but, as their appearance here seems probable, we cannot refrain from entreating every mother who may read these remarks, to consider very thoughtfully the effect which such an exhibition is likely to have upon the mind of a child, before she determines upon taking her own children to see it. Meanwhile, we commend to all kind and gentle hearts, the sweet accents of a mother's voice, in the following touching lines:—
(The lines are those in the Berean of August 25.)

THE PRESS IN ITALY.
From a British Traveller's letter, to the Editors of "Evangelical Christendom."

My last communication hinted at the retrograde policy of the Grand Duke of Tuscany; and deplored his having listened to illiberal counsels; but the scene has shifted once more, and this time it has taken a different direction; a new and brighter era has arisen for Tuscany, and Leopold II. seems like a child following the footsteps of his father, so closely has he imitated the Pope's liberal measures. Scarcely had Pius IX. issued his law on the press, than a similar edict was promulgated in this country. This gracious act has restored to the Grand Duke all his popularity, which he had good feeling enough to find necessary to his happiness. This crisis, it is said, hastened by a popular slight shown personally to His Royal Highness, at Grosseto, a town in the Maremma, which he had highly favoured, but whose people were so smitten with the love of liberty, that on a visit he paid to them, they called out, *Long live Pius IX.* instead of *Long live Leopold*, their liege Lord and Sovereign.

The Tuscan law of the press contained forty articles: these were said to be too closely fenced round with prohibitions and shackles, upon which a circular issued from Florence giving the largest interpretation possible of the most stringent articles,

* Dairy, May 16.
† For an interesting tribute to Mr. Elliot's memory, see Report of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the poor.
‡ Private and conversational memoranda of Mr. H. Thornton.
§ Pursuits of Literature.