

## GOOD COUNSEL.

BY THE REV. P. B. POWER, M.A.

Never have a hard thought of any teaching. Always meet such a temptation during the coming year by saying, "It is the Lord." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Never let us refuse a reiterated teaching. Though the Jews had of late sought to stone Jesus in Judea, to the great astonishment of His disciples, He says, "Let us go into Judea again." God always means fresh blessings by His "agains"—the old lesson has new teaching.

Never let us think that there can be anything without a teaching in it—that in any dealing whatever we can have to do with an aimless, a purposeless God.

Never let us think that we did not require a teaching. Let us leave the knowledge of our acquirements to the One who knows minutely all about us.

Let us always be sure that we shall be the better off—the richer for having each teaching—that if only we be willing to learn, we must come the better out of every dealing of God with us.

Let us believe that we shall be learners for ever. Hereafter I doubt not there will be blessed teachings. We shall have acquisitiveness in heaven. And so we must carry the teachable disposition there.

There we shall learn without having dulness to overcome; without having tears to shed; with a large memory, a clear eye, a bright understanding. Our intense teachableness will in itself make our learning to be no task. There will be fresh revelations poured through endless ages into teachable minds.

Be sure that it is for this you are now being taught; and whether the voice that teaches you this year thunder, or whisper, bend low your head and say: "Speak, Lord; Thy servant heareth."—From "*The Teacher and the Taught*," a *New Year's Address* for 1876. London: Hamilton, 2d.

## CROSSING THE JORDAN.

BY THE REV. J. HILES HITCHENS.

TO the believer in Jesus there is as clear a pathway made as there was for the Israelites in going over to Jericho, and for Elijah when crossing from Jericho to the scene of his translation. For us who believe—

Faith builds a bridge across the gulf of death.

He who loves Christ, and lives in Him and to Him, can think of the Jordan without distress. He is assured that the waters will not overwhelm him, and that he is safe in the hands of his Divine leader. This it was which enabled Hervey to die rejoicing in the "precious salvation." This it was that assisted Cruden to continue in prayer till his voice joined in the praises of the better land. This it was that gave Matthew Henry strength to depart testifying to the pleasures of a pious life. This it was that led the saintly Payson to exclaim, "I am swimming to God in a sea of glory." This it was that made death to Toplady, Watts, Wesley, and a galaxy of others just what Milton beautifully described,

A death-like sleep;  
A gentle wafting to eternal life.

Oh! depend on it, that Saviour who has ordered all things for us hitherto will provide for our passage of the dark river. Let us not fear it *now*; grace will be given when the hour arrives if our treasure, trust, and triumph be in Christ alone. Then, though grievously tortured by physical pains, we shall have strength to refuse the anodyne and say, with Maria Theresa of Austria in her last moments, "I would meet my Maker awake!" or, overpowered by the beatific visions bursting on our gaze, we may forget all pain and say with the dying Payson, "The celestial city is full in my view; its glories beam upon me: its breezes fan me; its odours are wafted to me; its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill that may be crossed at a single step, when God

shall give permission." Yes—to the believer in Jesus, the land of "promise," the land of "rest," the "holy land"—the "land of plenty," lies just the other side of Jordan, and all that is pure, honourable, and happy shall be his forever when the transit of the river has been accomplished.

But preparation for the passage of Jordan is absolutely necessary. When the Israelites were about to cross from the wilderness, Joshua said unto them—"Sanctify yourselves for to-morrow, the Lord will do wonders among you," and just prior to that he had directed them to "prepare," for, said he, "within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan to go in and possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you." Nor is preparation less needful for us. If the river of death is to be crossed triumphantly we must be fitted for the task. There are passions to be subdued—sins to be remitted—desires to be dislodged—graces to be attained—and duties to be performed before we can enter Canaan. Surely we have been long enough in this world to know that the monotonous round of desire and disappointment to which, Ixion-like, we are bound, cannot prepare for the other life. Something spiritual—something from above is needed. We must have Christ in our hearts the hope of glory. Let us not leave this preparation to an unknown future. For if now we find it hard, amid the minor cares of life to "sanctify" ourselves, what shall we do in the swellings of Jordan?

The great business of our life should be to realise the love and presence of Jesus. Then the soul, being in union and fellowship with her "Beloved," will ardently desire to be still nearer Him, and will welcome the messenger that effects her release from the earthly tabernacle. With the love of Christ flooding the spirit—with the joy of the dawning heaven filling the heart—with the eye of faith riveted upon the ineffable glories of the Holy Land—with God-given hope stretching her pinions to soar amid the sunny visions of the future, the soul, with ecstacy and triumph, crosses the little boundary between this world of shadows and that world of endless life, and is at home with her Lord.—From "*Bible Waters*." London: Elliot Stock.

## SAUL OF TARSUS.

BY RICHARD TREFFREY.

No trumpet was blown, as the gate they pass'd,  
Nor banner hung over their fierce array;  
But they rode like the breath of their desert blast,  
Fleetly and silently passing away;  
Yet many look'd on that haughty man,  
Whose eye was the star of the fiery van.

With frequent fasts his cheek was paled,  
And there sat a frown on his brow of pride;  
And scorn on his quiv'ring lip prevail'd  
As he thought on the name of the Crucified;  
And his heart was as hard as the steel of his spear,  
To the whispers of pity, or the murmurs of fear.

On—on!—the towers of Damascus are nigh,  
The accurs'd Nazarenes are giv'n to our hand;  
When, lo! an ineffable blaze from on high  
Burst, sudden as thought, on the hurrying band;  
And the glowing flood of that flashing light  
Dims the cloudless sun in his noonday height.

Vain is the speed of the startled horse,  
And vain is the force of the glittering spear;  
The scorner hath ended his ruthless course;  
The Victor of Galilee triumpheth here,  
And His words of mystic spirit appal  
The awe-stricken heart of the prostrate Saul.

There is night on his eye, and remorse on his brow,  
As he sits in his chamber, helpless, alone;  
For the deeds woke up in his memory now,  
Can riches, or blood, or sorrow atone?  
Yet hope in fair promise the future arrays,  
For the Crucified pleads, and the Pharisee prays.

From "*The Poets of Methodism*." London: Haughton and Co.