

Youth's Department.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS.

XV. MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS IN A.—CONTINUED.

106. Who was *Abiram*? with what two individuals was he sinfully associated? and what was the occasion of this association?—(Numbers.)
107. In what manner did *Abiram* die?—(Num. Psalms.)
108. Whose son was *Abishai*? and who were his two brothers?—(2 Sam.)
109. On what secret service was *Abishai* engaged, in conjunction with David, while in the wilderness?—(1 Sam.)
110. On what occasion did *Abishai* save the life of David?—(2 Sam.)
111. How many thousands of the Edomites did *Abishai* slay in the Valley of Salt?—(1 Chron.)
112. What was the sin of *Achan*? and what was his punishment?—(Joshua.)

CHURCH CALENDAR.

- Nov. 5.—24th Sunday after Trinity.
- 12.—Collect, Epistle and Gospel for the third or fourth Sunday after the Epiphany will be used.
- 19.—Do. do. for the fifth or sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.
- 26.—Do. do. for the 25th Sunday after Trinity.
- 30.—St. Andrew's day.

THE DRUNKARD.

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."—ROMANS v. 20.

In the town of — there resided twelve young men, who were accustomed, early in life, to meet together for the indulgence of their appetites, by drinking and other excesses. In the course of time, some of them engaged in business, but their evil habits of intemperance were so entwined, so interwoven with their very existence, that, as might naturally have been expected, they became bankrupts or insolvents. Eight of them died under the age of forty, the victims of intemperance—without a single hope beyond the grave of finding pardon from an offended God. Three others are still living in the most abject poverty; two of these had formerly moved in very respectable circumstances of life; but now they are in the most degraded state of poverty and disgrace. One man, the last of the twelve, and the worst of all remains to be accounted for. He was a sort of ringleader—the life of the company, as it is termed—and, being engaged in the wine and spirit trade, his business was to take the head of the table at convivial parties, and to sit up whole nights, drinking to excess himself, and inducing others to do the same. He was a confirmed infidel, and a blasphemer. He had imbibed the principles of Tom Paine. He derided every thing that referred to religion; and his moral conduct, as a natural consequence, was depraved in the extreme. And yet, he was, at the same time, ready to perform acts of kindness; he was generally regarded as good natured—what the world would probably esteem a jolly and merry fellow—the enemy of nobody but himself. The world, it is to be feared, abounds with such characters; and none are more dangerous; for they too often gain an influence over the young and inexperienced. Their natural kindness tends to increase this influence. They are, in fact, the moral pests of the neighbourhood in which they dwell; and to the unhappy influence gained over his mind by persons of this description, many a wretched and ruined profligate may trace his rapid progress along the downward path of vice.

This man quitted the town, and went to reside at a distance, where, for a season, he relinquished his depraved habits. He married, and, for a time, all went on prosperously; but instead of being thankful to God for his present deliverance, and praying and watching against his besetting sin, he gave way to his former propensity, and plunged his family and friends into the deepest distress. One dark night, being in the neighbourhood of Dudley, he had been drinking to excess, and in a state of intoxication he wandered out of the house, and staggered amongst the coal-pits, which are in many places left open and exposed—These he passed in safety; but the road he took went over a canal: he missed the bridge, and rolled over the bank to the edge of the water. God, who was rich in mercy, spared him in this the, apparently, last hour of his mortal existence; one turn more and he would have plunged into the water, and his disembodied spirit been ushered into the presence of the Judge of all. The arm of mercy, however, interposed: his senses returned for a moment; he saw the water beneath him; he crawled back again into the road; there he was picked up and lodged in a public house for the night.

This miraculous escape, it might have been thought, would have made a deep and lasting impression upon his mind; but no,—it was viewed simply as a lucky escape; and he continued to pursue his career of sin as ardently as before. After an indulgence in drinking for some days, having come to his senses, he began to reason with himself upon his guilt and folly. His abuse of the many unmerited blessings which God had bestowed upon him, and his ingratitude for his deliverance from the jaws of death, affected his mind; but he only gave utterance to the language of despondency—"Oh, it's no use for me to repent; my sins are too great to be forgiven." He had no sooner uttered these words, however, than a voice seemed to say most audibly, and with strong emphasis, "If thou wilt forsake thy sins, thou shalt be forgiven." He started at what he believed to be a real sound; but seeing no one, he exclaimed—"Surely I am going mad; I have been drinking till I am going mad; but that I heard that voice, no man shall ever dissuade me." Amazed and paralyzed, not knowing what to think, he was relieved by a flood of tears; and then cried out, "This is the voice of mercy once more calling me to repentance." He fell on his knees, and exclaimed, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

The wretched man now became broken-hearted. The malignity of sin now appeared before him in its true colours. That sin which had so long beset, nay, conquered him, and reduced

him lower than the beasts that perish, must in turn be conquered, or he felt that his soul would be lost for ever. The alternative was tremendous. He began to search the Bible; that book which had so often formed the subject of his profane raillery—Here he saw that a way of escape was opened for guilty man; that a plan of mercy was accomplished, when by a holy and just God might retain his justice unimpaired, and yet be the justifier of the sinner that believeth in Jesus. He beheld the rich display of grace and compassion which shines in every page of the word of life; and he read with feelings of transport that blessed promise, "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin."—He refrained from his intemperance; he commenced family prayer. For a season all went on well; hope of ultimate recovery revived; but the enemy, tho' scared, was not vanquished. The adversary was not to be overcome by one prosperous attack; he again prevailed; and the wretched individual once more became the prey of this foul fiend.

And now his feelings were dreadful in the extreme. His sin rose up before him more hideous than ever. He regarded himself as beyond the reach of mercy; as doomed to everlasting woe; as a wretch to whom the Almighty could not show compassion; and in a moment of agony, when about to shave himself, he meditated the act of self destruction—that very act by which the sensualist and the drunkard have often rushed into the presence of God. Again the mercy of God interposed, and the razor fell from his hand. Still the enemy pursued him, and too often gained the victory. He gave way at different times to intemperance: his constitution was undermined; his health was rapidly giving way; he was reduced to a state of great weakness, and death appeared to be very near. Not a moment was to be lost; he again cast himself at the foot of his offended Creator, and with the most intense agony, cried out "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me; Lord, be thou my helper." That prayer was heard; and a voice from heaven seemed to reply, "I will help thee; I have seen thy struggles; and I will now say to thine enemy, 'Hitherto thou hast come, but no further.'" A physician was consulted as to the probability or possibility of medicine being rendered effectual to stop the disposition to intemperance. The poor man would have suffered the amputation of all his limbs, could so severe a method have freed him from his deadly habit, which, like a vulture, had fastened upon his very vitals.—The physician boldly declared, that if he would strictly adhere to his prescription, not only the practice, but the very inclination for strong drink would subside in a few months. At this declaration of the physician, the countenance of the poor man was visibly affected; and, grasping his adviser by the arm, he exclaimed, "O, sir, be careful how you open that door of hope; for if it should be closed upon me, I am lost for ever!" The physician pledged his credit, that if his prescription were punctually followed, the happiest results would follow also. The remedy was a preparation of steel; and eagerly was the antidote to misery swallowed, while earnest prayer was offered up to the Almighty for his blessing on the means employed. He commenced taking this medicine in the first week of March 1816 and continued till the latter end of September following; and to the honour and glory of the Lord God Almighty, who sent his angel to whisper in the poor man's ear, "I will help thee;" for the glory of God be it spoken, that from the latter end of September 1816, to the present hour, not so much as a spoonful of spirituous liquor, or wine of any description, has ever passed the surface of that once wretched man's tongue.

The life once dedicated to the indulgence of depraved appetites, is now spent in seeking to further the glory of God, and the temporal and eternal welfare of man. The individual has written a tract, of which upwards of one hundred thousand copies have been sold, the design of which is to call sinners to repentance; and while he adores that unmerited grace which pitied him in his low and lost estate, he seeks to warn his fellow-sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and, in this day of grace and merciful visitation, to turn to that God who will have mercy upon them, and, notwithstanding their manifold transgressions, will, through the merits of the Lord Jesus, "abundantly pardon."

The above most affecting narrative is calculated to convey much most important instruction. It speaks in language of solemn warning; it depicts in the strongest colours the agonies of a wounded spirit; it testifies the truth of the declaration, that the way of transgressors is hard; but it holds forth most gracious encouragement to all who will betake themselves to God in the hour of calamity, and cast their care upon him—"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It will be said, perhaps, that the medicine prescribed by the physician produced the desired effect of restoring the tone of the invalid's system, and would have done so without the blessing of God being implored at all; but could any thing, we may ask, short of the grace of God, have wrought the change in the man's disposition, or enabled him to persevere in the course on which he had set out? It appears, in fact, to be an instance of the mighty efficacy of prayer. The cry for deliverance entered the ears of the Lord of Hosts, the hearer and the answerer of prayer. The wretched suppliant was brought out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay; his feet were set upon a rock, and his goings were established; and a new song was put into his mouth, even praise unto our God.

Let no man, therefore, despair of complete emancipation from the thralldom of besetting sins, and the wretched bondage of unhallowed passions, who employs all proper means for that emancipation, and earnestly supplicates the blessing of God upon those means. Let no man presume, indeed, to indulge in a vicious course of life, from the erroneous and delusive notion, that a similar deliverance will be wrought for him ere he closes his eyes in death; for, like the companions of the man referred to, he may be cut off in the prime of life, and in a state of alienation from God. But let no man despair: the same Almighty arm which wrought deliverance in one case, can and may in another. The voice of mercy now invites the wicked to forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thought: the blessed assurance is vouchsafed—"My grace is sufficient for thee."

But some one will perhaps say, my despair arises from my so frequently falling back to the commission of sins which I had renounced. I am a backslider, an apostate; I have prayed earnestly for deliverance; I have employed means; I have sought to resist temptation; and yet all has been of no avail! What am I to do?—Pray on. Recollect the case of the importunate widow, recorded for the very purpose of inducing men "always to pray, and not to faint." Rest assured you shall ultimately prevail.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ supplies a perfect remedy for all men's moral and spiritual diseases. It promises not only pardon for the guilt of sin, but deliverance from its power. Its language to true believers is, "Sin shall not have dominion over you;" and when groaning under the burden of a sense of accumulated transgression, the penitent exclaims, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" the Gospel will whisper peace, will inspire hope, will animate with courage; and the language of exultation will burst from the lips, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This narrative may meet the eye of some poor sinner, now, as the subject of it once was, living in the indulgence of lusts "which war against the soul," and careless as to the awful doom pronounced on the ungodly; or it may meet the eye of some one aroused to a sense of guilt, and yet hitherto unable to vanquish the enemies of his soul's peace. To either or to both may these few remarks be abundantly blessed of God the holy Saviour. May they act as warning to the former, as encouragement to the latter. They testify that there is mercy to be found with Him, who "willeth not the death of a sinner," by all who go to the throne of his heavenly grace in humility and in prayer; for "him that cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out."

ANECDOTE OF KIRCHER.

The famous astronomer, Athanasius Kircher, having an acquaintance who denied the existence of a Supreme Being, took the following method of convincing him of his error, upon his own principles. Expecting him upon a visit, he procured a very handsome celestial globe, which being placed in a corner of the room, in which it could not escape his friend's observation, the latter took occasion to ask who made it, and to whom it belonged. "Not to me," said Kircher, "nor was it ever made by any person, but came here by mere chance." "That," replied his sceptical friend, "is absolutely impossible; you surely jest." Kircher seriously persisted in his assertion. At length, however, he relaxed, and took occasion to reason with his friend on his atheistical principles.—"You will not believe," said he, "that this small body originated in mere chance, and yet you would contend, that those heavenly bodies of which it is but a faint and diminutive resemblance, came into existence without order and design." Pursuing this chain of reasoning, his friend was ultimately convinced; and joined in a cordial acknowledgement of the absurdity of denying the existence of a God.

SAYING OF BISHOP HALL.

Dr. Hall, sometime Bishop of Norwich, was as humble and courteous as he was learned and devout; and had all the qualifications of a good bishop in great perfection. The following sentiment, which he was in the habit of practically illustrating, deserves to be written in letters of gold. He was accustomed to say, that "he would suffer a thousand wrongs rather than be guilty of doing one: he would rather suffer a hundred than return one; and endure many rather than complain of one, or endeavour to right himself by contending; for he had always observed that to contend with one's superiors is foolish, with one's equals is dubious, and with one's inferiors is mean-spirited and sordid. Suits at law may be sometimes necessary, but he had need be more than a man who can manage them with justice and innocence."

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