

# Church Observer

G M Evans

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"ONE FAITH,—ONE LORD,—ONE BAPTISM."

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## Poetry.

### LEAF-DRIFFTS

Turning over papers,  
Yellow now with age,  
Looking at Time's foot-prints,  
On each folded page.

Scraps of foreign paper,  
Scrabbling o'er and o'er;  
Gleanings by the wayside,  
Gathered bits of lore.

Pencilled thoughts and rhymings  
Of the lonely hours,  
Lying old and faded  
Like forgotten flowers.

Hasty memorandums,  
Bringing back the chimes  
Of pleasure-bells long silent,  
Dates of happy times:

Here and there a billet  
Folded with great care,  
With its pencilled address  
Bold, or quaint, or fair:

Telling each a story,  
Bringing smile or sigh,  
As we slowly turn them,  
Gently put them by.

Torn and scattered fragments,  
Letters never sent,  
Parts of printed poems,  
All together blent.

Like a clashing medley  
Made of many rhymes;  
Like the gathered sea-drift,  
Out of native climes.

Little bits of life-leaves  
From the far-off Past;  
Down the fitful river,  
They are floating fast.

Little bits of life-leaves—  
"Worthless all to-day—"  
With a sigh we lay them,  
Tenderly away.

MARIAN ROSS.

### ONLY A BOY.

Only a boy, with his noise and fun  
The veriest mystery under the sun;  
As brimful of mischief and wit and glee  
As ever a human frame can be,  
And as hard to manage as—what? ah! me  
'Tis hard to tell,  
Yet we love him well.

Only a boy, with his fearful tread,  
Who cannot be driven, but must be led;  
Who troubles the neighbors' dogs and cats,  
And tears more clothes, and spoils more hats,  
Loses more tops and kites and bats,  
Than would stock a store  
For a year or more.

Only a boy, with his wild, strange ways,  
With his idle hours on his busy days;  
With his queer remarks and his odd replies,  
Sometimes foolish, sometimes wise,  
Often brilliant for one of his size,  
As a meteor hurled  
From the planet world.

Only a boy, who will be a man,  
If nature goes on with her first great plan—  
If water or fire, or some fatal snare,  
Conspire not to rob us of this our heir,  
Our blessing, our trouble, our rest, our care,  
Our torment, our joy!  
"Only a boy!"

## Family Circle

### HOW JOHN BERRIDGE DISCOVERED HIS GRAND MISTAKE.

A NARRATIVE FURNISHED BY HIMSELF.

[Mr. Berridge was an eminently useful minister of the Church of England, who laboured successfully in preaching the Gospel from 1758 to 1793. He was an evangelist, carrying the glad tidings of salvation into the numerous villages around him. Many souls were awakened and converted through his instrumentality, and his name is revered by numbers in the counties of Bedford and Cambridge, whose fathers and grandfathers were blessed under his ministry. By his publications, Mr. Berridge, "being dead, yet speaketh."] He writes thus—

EVERTON, July 3, 1758.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—My desire and intention, in this letter, is to inform you what the Lord has lately done for my soul. In order to do this, it may be needful to

give a little previous information of my manner of life, from my youth up to the present time. When I was about the age of fourteen, God was pleased to show me that I was a sinner, and that I must be born again before I could enter into His kingdom. Accordingly, I betook myself to reading, praying, and watching, and was enabled thereby to make some progress in sanctification (as I flattered myself). In this manner I went on, though not always with the same diligence, till about a year ago. I thought myself in the right way to heaven, though as yet I was wholly out of the way, and imagined I was travelling towards Zion, though I had never set my face thitherward. Indeed, God would have shown me that I was wrong by not owning my ministry; but I paid no regard to this for a long time, imputing my want of success to the naughty hearts of my hearers, and not to my own naughty doctrine. You may ask perhaps, "What was my doctrine?" Why, dear Sir, it was the doctrine that every man will naturally hold whilst he continues in an ungenerate state, that we are to be justified partly by our faith and partly by our works. This doctrine I preached for six years at a curacy which I served from college, and though I took some extraordinary pains, and pressed sanctification upon them very earnestly, yet they continued un sanctified as before, and not one soul was brought to Christ. There was, indeed, a little more of the form of religion in the parish, but not anything of the power.

At length I removed to Everton. Here again I pressed sanctification and regeneration as vigorously as I could, but finding no success, after preaching two years in the parish, I began to be discouraged. Some secret misgivings arose in my mind, but I was not right myself. (This happened about Christmas last.) These misgivings grew strong, and at last very painful, being under great doubts, I cried out a feeble Lord very earnestly—Lord, if I am right, keep me so; if I am not right, make me so. Lead me to the knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus." After about ten days crying unto the Lord, He was pleased to send an answer to my prayer, and in the following wonderful manner:—As I was sitting in my house one morning, and musing on a text of Scripture, the following words were darted into my mind, and seemed, indeed, like a voice from heaven:—"Cease from thine own works." Before I heard these words my mind was in a very unusual calm; but as soon as I heard them, my soul was in a tempest directly, and tears flowed from my eyes like a torrent. These scales fell from my eyes immediately, and now I clearly saw the rock I had been splitting upon for nearly thirty years. Do you ask what this rock was? It was—some secret reliance on my own works for salvation.

I had hoped to be saved partly in my own name, and partly in Christ's name; though I am told there is salvation in no other name, except in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts iv. 12.) I had hoped to be saved partly through my own works, and partly through Christ's mercies; though I am told we are saved by grace through faith, and not of works (Eph. ii. 8, 9.) I hoped to make myself acceptable to God partly through my own good works; though we are told that we are accepted in the Beloved (Eph. i. 6.) I hoped to make my peace with God partly through my own obedience to the law; though I am told that peace is only to be had by faith (Rom. v. 1.) I hoped to make myself a child of God by sanctification; though we are told that we are made children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26.) I had thought that sanctification was the way to justification; but now I am assured that sanctification follows after justification; or, in other words, that we must first be justified by faith before we can have any true sanctification by the Spirit. When we are justified, it is done freely and graciously, without the least

merit of ours, and solely by the grace of God, by Jesus Christ (Rom. iii. 28.)

All that is previously needful to justification is this, that we are convinced by the spirit of God of our own sinfulness (Isaiah lxiv. 6); convinced that we are children of wrath, by nature, on account of our birth sin (Eph. ii. 3.) and that we are under the curse of God on account of our actual sin. (Gal. iii. 10.) And under these convictions, to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, renouncing all righteousness of our own, and relying solely on him who has appointed the Lord our righteousness. (John i. 5.) Again Christ says, "Come ye all ye that labour and are heavy laden with the burden of sin, and I will release you from the guilt of all your iniquities." (Matt. xi. 28.) You may observe that the only way to be released from this burden is to come to Christ, and sensible that we can remove this burden but Christ alone, Christ did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (Matt. ix. 13.) Hear how he cries out (Matt. ix. 13.) "Ho every one that thirst, come ye to the waters . . . yea come, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you milk [i.e. the blessings of the Gospel] without money and without price. For we are ordered to bring no merchandise, no merit of our own. We must come to make a purchase of these blessings in the deserts of ours. They are given freely; that is graciously, and must be received freely; nothing more is required of us but to thirst after them. (John i. 7.) The Pharisee rejected? (Luke x. 11.) Because he came pleading his own works before God. He was despising the grace of God, and trusting to his own merit to be saved. (Luke x. 12.) But then he had some reliance on these works, and therefore pleads the merits of them before God; which shows that he did not know what a sinner he was, and that he could only be saved by grace through faith. He opens his mouth before God, and pleads his own cause, though God declares that, every mouth shall be stopped before Him, and the whole world brought in guilty before God. (Rom. iii. 19.) And why was the publican justified? Not on account of his good works; but because he was sensible of his own evil ones, and accordingly self-accused, self-condemned, and crying out only for mercy. And now, dear sir, hear what is the rise and progress of true religion in the soul of men.

When the Spirit of God hath convinced any person that he is a child of wrath, and under the curse of God, (in which state every one continues to be till he has received Jesus Christ into his heart by faith,) then the heart of such a one becomes broken for sin; then, too, he feels what he never knew before, that he has no faith, and accordingly laments his evil heart of unbelief. In this state some men continue, some a longer, some a shorter time, till God is pleased to work faith in them. Then they are justified, and are at peace with God. (Rom. v. 1.) They have their sins forgiven them; for this is the meaning of the word peace (See Luke vii. 48—50. When we have received faith from God, (for it is his gift—Eph. ii. 8.) to justify our persons, then we afterwards receive the Spirit to sanctify our hearts, and now the work of sanctification goes forward; now his fruit is more and more unto holiness; now the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit; (Rom. v. 5;) now he walks in the comfort of the Holy Ghost; (Acts ix. 13;) now he is filled with joy and peace in believing (Rom. xv. 13); now he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory; (1 Pet. i. 8;) and now he hath the Spirit of God, bearing witness with his own spirit that he is a child of God. (Rom. viii. 16; 1 John v. x.) These are things that I was an utter stranger to before, notwithstanding all my reading, watching and praying; and these are things, that every one must be a stranger to until he is made a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. But to proceed, though a believer be continually

more and more sanctified in body, soul, and spirit, yet his hopes of heaven are not built on his sanctification, but on Christ; he knows that he is only complete, in Christ. (Col. ii. 10.) Accordingly, though he labours to abound in all the fruits of righteousness, yet, like St. Paul, he desires to be found only in Christ, not having, that is not relying on his own righteousness, but on the righteousness of God. (Phil. iii. 8, 9.)

And now let me point out to you the grand delusion which had liked to have ruined my soul. I saw very early something of the unholiness of my nature, and the necessity of being born again. Accordingly, I watched, prayed and fasted too, thinking to purify my heart by these means, whereas it can only be purified by faith. (Acts xv. 9.) Watching, praying, and fasting, are necessary duties; but I, like many others, placed some secret reliances on them, thinking they were to do that for me, in part at least, which Christ only could. The truth is, though I saw myself to be a sinner, yet I did not see myself an utterly lost sinner, and therefore I could not come to Jesus alone to save me. I despised the doctrine of Justification by faith alone, looking on it as a foolish and dangerous doctrine. I was not yet stripped of all my righteousness—could not consider it as filthy rags, and therefore I went about to establish a righteousness of my own, and did not submit to the righteousness of God by faith; (Rom. x. 3;) I did not seek after righteousness through faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law. Thus I stumbled and fell. (Rom. ix. 31, 32.) In short, to use a homely similitude, I put the instans of God into one scale, and my own works into the other, when I found, as I always did, my own good works not being a balance to the Divine justice, I then threw in Christ as a make-weight. And this everyone really does who hopes for salvation, partly by doing what he can for himself, and relying on Christ for the rest.

But dear sir, Christ will either be a whole Saviour, or none at all. And if you think you have any good services of your own to recommend you unto God, you are certainly without any interest in Christ: be you ever so sober, serious, just, and devout, you are still under the curse of God, (as I was, and knew it not,) provided you have any allowed reliance on your own works, and think they are to do something for you, and Christ to do the rest. I now proceed to acquaint you with the success I have lately had in my ministry. As soon as God had opened my own eyes, and showed me the true way to salvation, I began immediately to preach it. And now I dealt with my hearers in a very different manner from what I had used to do. I told them very plainly that they were children of wrath, and under the curse of God, though they knew it not; and that none but Jesus Christ could deliver them from that curse. I asked them, if they had ever broken the law of God once, in thought, word, or deed? If they had, they were then under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." And again, "He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." If, indeed, we could keep the whole law, without offending in one point; if we had done and continued to do, all the things in God's law, then, indeed, we might lay claim to eternal life on the score of our own works. But who is sufficient for these things? If we break God's law, we immediately fall under the curse of it, and none can deliver us from this curse but Jesus Christ. There is an end for ever after, of any justification from our own works. No future good behaviour can make any atonement for past miscarriages. If I keep God's laws to-day this is no amends for breaking them yesterday. If I behave peaceably to my neighbour this day, it is no satisfaction for having broken his head yesterday.

(To be continued.)