

ocean can live in it; but it is very attractive to the eye on a hot noonday. A scorching ride we had across the barren plain to the sacred Jordan—which disappointed me sadly. At the places where the Israelites crossed and our Lord was baptized it is about 120 feet wide: it flows rapidly and in a turbid current of light stone colour. In size and appearance it is the perfect counterpart of the Muskingum a few miles above Zanesville. Its useless waters ought to be turned off to irrigate its barren valley, which might be changed into a garden. For beauty the Jordan will not compare with Elijah's Brook Cherith, whose bright, sparkling stream went floating past our lodging-place at Jericho. We lodged over night in a Greek convent (very small), and rode next morning to see the ruins of the town made famous by Joshua, Elijah, Zaccheus, and the restoration of Bartimeus to sight. Squalid Arabs haunt the sacred spot.

Our climb from Jericho to Jerusalem was hot and toilsome—past the wild gorge of the Brook Cherith, and up the rocky ravines, till we reached the fountain of En Shemesh. There we halted at a ruined khan, and I was glad to throw myself on the ground, utterly tired out. While we rested and lunched on eggs and oranges, the Sheikh Resheid amused himself playing cards with a brother Arab. Our last march brought us up to the olives and fig trees of dear, blessed Bethany! I could have kissed the very ground. Its soil is hallowed with the footsteps and tears of the Man of Sorrows. So ended our wonderful journey.—*Rev. T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*

#### CHRISTIAN LIFE A STRUGGLE.

Artificial piety, like flowers in wax, droops not in the hour of drought, but the fair lily of true grace hangs its head if the rain of heaven be denied. True faith, like fire, has its attendant smoke of unbelief, but presumption, like a painted flame, is all brightness. Like ships at sea, true Christians have their storms, but mere professors, like pictured galleys on the canvas, ride on an unruffled ocean. Life has its changes; only death that abideth the same. Life has its muscle, sinew, brain, spirit, and these vary in physical condition, but the petrified limbs of death lie still until the worm has devoured the carcass. Life weeps as well as smiles, but the ghastly grin of death relaxes not with anxiety or fear. Moab has no changes; he is "settled upon his lees; he has not been emptied from vessel to vessel." "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men." As no weather can give ague to marble, and no variation of temperature can bring fever to iron, so to some men the events of life, the temptations of prosperity, or the trials of adversity, bring little change. Yet it were better to ebb and flow forever, like the sea, than to rot in endless stagnation of false peace. Better to be hunted by the hounds of hell, and so driven to the shelter of the cross, than to dwell at ease, and be fattening for the devil's shambles.

#### THE FIJI ISLANDS.

Miss Gordon Cumming, the sister of the man who was in the habit of bagging six or seven lions or an elephant or two every day, in South Africa, has written a book on the Fiji Islands. It is most interesting. As regards the cannibalism, that is all over; but now and then, a lingering regret for the human fleshpots is shewn; as where we are told how "a

horrible old ex-cannibal crept close to Mr. Langham, and then, as if he could not refrain, put out his hand and stroked him down the thigh, licking his lips and exclaiming with delight, "Oh, but you are nice and fat." They always ate human flesh with a sort of tomato sauce. One chief had eaten forty-eight; but becoming a Christian, was compelled to change his diet. Miss Cumming says: "Think of the sick buried alive; the array of widows who were deliberately strangled on the death of any great man; the living victims who were buried beside every post of a chief's new house, and must stand clasping it, while the earth was gradually heaped up over their devoted heads; or those who were bound hand and foot, and laid on the ground to act as rollers, when a chief launched a new canoe, and thus doomed to a death of excruciating agony; a time when there was not the slightest security for life or property, and no man knew how quickly his hour of doom might come; when whole villages were depopulated simply to supply their neighbors with fresh meat! Just think of all this, and of the change that has been wrought, and then just imagine white men who can sneer at missionary work in the way they do. Now, you may pass from isle to isle, certain everywhere to find the same cordial reception by kindly men and women. Every village on the eighty inhabited isles has built for itself a tidy church, and a good house for its teacher or native minister, for whom the village provides food and clothing. Can you realize that there are nine hundred Wesleyan churches in Fiji, at every one of which the frequent services are crowded by devout congregations; that the schools are well attended; and the first sound that greets your ear at dawn, and the last at night, is that of hymn singing and most fervent worship, rising from each dwelling at the hour of family prayer."

#### CLOSE COMMUNION.

There is considerable force and logic in the following little story, recently related with much relish by Mr. Spurgeon. He said: "Dr. Stedman, of Brantford College, was a very strict Baptist. One day he preached for some Independents, and there was to be the Communion. He prayed earnestly that the Lord would vouchsafe His presence to the brethren at His table. As he was putting on his great coat to go home, one of the deacons said: 'Doctor, you will stop with us, will you not, to the Communion?' 'Well, my dear brother,' he said, 'it is no want of love, but, you see, it would compromise my principles. I am a strict Baptist, and I could not commune with you who have not been baptized. Do not think it is any want of love, but it is only out of respect for my principles.' 'Oh,' said the deacon, 'it is not your principles; because what did you pray for, Doctor? You prayed your Master, the Lord Jesus, to come to our table; and if, according to your principles, it is wrong for you to go there, you should not ask your Master to come where you must not go yourself; but if you believe that your Lord and Master will come to the table, surely where the Master is it cannot be wrong for the servant to be.' 'The deacon's reasoning appears to me very sound,' added Mr. Spurgeon."

#### ARE YOU NOT A CHRISTIAN?

Is it because you are afraid of ridicule?

"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed."

2. Is it because of the inconsistencies of professing Christians?

"Every man shall give an account of himself to God."

3. Are you not willing to give up all to Christ?

"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

4. Are you afraid that you will not be accepted?

"Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

5. Is it for fear that you are too great a sinner?

"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

6. Is it because you fear you will not "hold out?"

"He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Christ Jesus."

7. Are you thinking that you will do as well as you can, and that God ought to be satisfied with that?

"Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

8. Is it because you are postponing the matter, without any definite reason?

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."—*Anon.*

#### STORY OF THREE CHINESE BOYS.

BY JAS. L. MAXWELL, M.D. (OF FORMOSA).

I will tell you the story of three little children whom I knew in China. The first is little Tai-pit, or, as he would have been called in this country, David. In 1864 I was at a town called Chioh-bey, about twenty miles from Amoy. I did not then know how to speak Chinese; and I was staying there among the Chinese Christians, that I might be always hearing Chinese spoken, and learning little by little to speak it for myself. Tai-pit and his mother were amongst my earliest acquaintances at Chioh-bey. He was about five years old, a delicate little fellow, and very dear to his mother.

There were two reasons why Tai-pit and I became very friendly. The first was that he, being a little boy, could speak Chinese as prettily and as well as any of you speak English; whilst I, a big fellow, was floundering at every second or third word. I like to hear him talk, and was not ashamed to try and speak to him. Sometimes, you know, I was afraid to open my mouth before the big folks. Tai-pit would prattle away to me, and here and there I would catch a few of his words, and then I would say a word or two to him; and in this way Tai-pit was one of my little helpers towards increasing facility in speaking Chinese.

But there was another reason for our friendship. Tai-pit, though such a little boy, had a capital memory, and could repeat, unhelped, some six or seven of the hymns in our Chinese hymn-book. He was never weary of humming them over; and it seems as if I could hear him still at—

"Siong-té chhong tso thin kap te."

"God created heaven and earth."

&c., &c.

He certainly had peculiar delight in trying to sing his hymns. Tai-pit's mother, you must understand, was a Christian, and he himself, when an infant, had been baptized. This little boy was to me, therefore, in the very beginning of missionary work, both a proof of God's blessing on the past endeavours of his servants the missionaries, and a sign and pledge of a far happier day in the future, when, all over China, the little children in every city and village shall sing the praises of Jesus. By and by I went to Formosa. The district where Tai-pit lived was overrun with rebels; and, amid the severe troubles of that time, little Tai-pit sickened, and passed away to sing his hymns in the Lord's own presence.

My second little boy was in striking contrast with Tai-pit. At the close of 1865 I was at work in the village of Tak-é, in Formosa. Our mission-room

was at that time a very small place, able to contain about twenty or thirty persons, and opening on the narrow central street of the village. Right opposite was an opium den—that is, a shop where opium is sold, and where men lie down on couches to smoke it, and to make themselves drunk with it, as men in this country make themselves drunk with gin or brandy. I knew the master of the shop. He was a man like Ahab or Herod, with a mind sometimes to do right, but easily turned back into the ways of evil. His wife was a straightforward wicked woman, a Jezebel on a small scale, who bent everything to her own will.

They had one little boy, who was then just about three years old, and who, when old Bün or I was speaking, would come into the chapel and sit down among the bigger folks. He was an ill-tempered, passionate little fellow, and, in the mission-room, would appal me, when anyone teased or happened to displease him, with a succession of low, wicked oaths, such as Chinese swearers utter. We spoke to his parents about it. They only laughed, and seemed amused at his precocity in vile language. The fact was that the child was only revealing and repeating the common language of his father's house. Our mission work was shortly removed to another and a larger house, so that I saw no more of this little boy; but he always remains in my mind as the worst little boy I ever knew, and as a warning of what may be expected of the children of parents who delight in wickedness.

In 1870 I was in the hill-country of Formosa. At Baksa I met with a round-cheeked, bare-legged lad of seven years, by name Kiet. His happy face and merry ways were enough to win one's heart. He was the son of our landlord, and, with his little, black, long-eared doggie, he was so much about us that we saw a great deal of him. The Gospel took hold of his parents, and this fact opened up a new career to Kiet. He was absolutely without education before this; but the coming of the Gospel to his home brought also a beginning of school-life to him and to many other children. Kiet was put to school, and when, two years later, I left Formosa, he was already a good reader and writer, and able to stand a good examination on the various books of the New Testament then in print. He was giving promise of growing up, under this double influence of the Gospel and of mental training, to be a useful man.

I have put these three boys together that you may realize three forms of Chinese boy-life: the first, the education and influences of a Christian home; the second, the education and influences of a home not only heathen but intensely vicious; and the third, the influences of a respectable though poor heathen Chinese home, followed by the influences of Christian teaching. There are many varieties of boy-life in China as in England, and it is well to realize this.—*Children's Messenger (Presbyterian).*

—A marvellous awakening is noted in several Spanish villages near Villafraanca. In one place the entire community, numbering about one hundred families, is Protestant. In another the Romish church has been specially painted and decorated to attract the people, but the only attendants are one old man, two old women, and five boys. The Government school was closed for lack of pupils, while the one under the auspices of the Free Church of Scotland had sixty-five scholars. Over thirty men attend the night school, and some children travel a league daily in order to be present.