

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 SOUL, WRETCHED OR BLESSED.

Most wretched soul, that, here pursuing pleasure,
With all his heaven on earth; and, no' or distress'd,
Enjoys those fond delights without all measure,
And freely living thus, is thus deceas'd!
Ah, greatest curse, so to be ever bless'd!
For where to live is heaven, 'tis hell to die:
Ah, wretch! that here begins hell's misery!

Most blessed soul, that, lifted up with wings
Of faith and love, leaves this base habitation,
And scorning sluggish earth, to heaven upsprings;
On earth, yet still in heaven by meditation;
With the soul's eye foreseeing th' heavenly station,
Then 'gins his life, when he's of life bereaven,
'Ah! blessed soul' that here begins his heaven.
PHINEAS FLETCHER, DIED 1650.

THEY THAT HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS.

In most of the instructions of our Lord, you will find something which one can readily understand. By means of things easy, familiar, and intelligible, he leads to things more difficult, mysterious, and hidden from common observation. Even the bodily appetites of hunger and thirst, understood by every one in possession of a living body, are here summoned to aid the divine Teacher in explaining the spiritual hunger and thirst of the soul after righteousness and God. In our text, therefore, we all have common ground to start from. We have a point of commencement intelligible to every individual present. You all know what it is to hunger and to thirst. These are the natural appetites, the cravings of the body after suitable food. They are attended with a sense of faintness and desire, which nothing but food can remove. They are an evidence of life—the dead never hunger or thirst. And they are also characteristics of health—it being an alarming symptom when the natural appetite for food fails. Every one infers that there must be disease spreading ravages through the system, when a man turns with disgust from ordinary and wholesome food. Thus the appetites of hunger and thirst, though in their nature painful, yet through their important uses are welcome to all. They stimulate to effort, render food agreeable, keep the world in activity, and make even the slothful work. They are symptoms of health, evidences of life, and proofs of the wisdom and goodness of God in regard to our bodies, so fearfully and wonderfully made.

Thus far you all understand and follow me. But this account of hungering and thirsting would apply as well to that of the beasts which perish, as to our own. Natural hunger and thirst are felt as keenly by the lions roaring after their prey, as by man, the earthly lord of the creation. And if there are men, as I fear there are multitudes, who know no other hunger and thirst than that of the body after perishable food, and who live only to eat and to drink; it is plain that they have sunk themselves to the level of the brute creation. Their reason, their speech, their souls, are all degraded, while occupied exclusively with the food which satisfies the body. For it is very evident, that man was intended to seek and to aspire after something higher, and nobler, and more satisfying. Many are conscious of this, who yet know not what it is to hunger and to thirst after righteousness. There is a thirst after knowledge, which many feel, even an ardent desire and longing after intellectual gratifications: there is a thirst after fame, honour, and distinction: there is a thirst after pleasure, vanity and dissipation; there is a hungering and thirsting after gold, which numbers can understand as soon as mentioned. So that, beside the literal or natural sense of hungering and thirsting, you all, with little or no effort of mind or of memory, can comprehend a figurative or metaphorical sense. It is probably true—Scripture would allow me to say it is certainly true—that every one amongst us has hungered and thirsted after other things beside natural food. Therefore, you must not tell me, presently, when I come to speak of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that you cannot understand metaphors and figures. I have already shown that you can, and do, understand what it is to hunger and thirst in a metaphorical sense. Even those who now hunger and thirst only as the beasts after natural food, can remember the time when they had desires after something higher: and they who have these desires, and hunger and thirst after fame, or knowledge, or wealth, but not after righteousness, still all look down with pity on him who is the slave of his sensual appetites. You understand, then, the literal, and also the metaphorical sense of hungering and thirsting, though you may not yet know what it is to hunger and thirst after righteousness. This your other and inferior knowledge may, however, with the divine blessing, prepare you for the higher and superior. I summon your natural appetites, your hunger and thirst after meat and drink, I bid your thirst after knowledge, pleasure, wealth, sin, to come and aid in explaining this hard, though simple text, what it is to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Stop, I would say, all ye that hunger, but not after righteousness. Ho, every one that thirsteth, but not after righteousness, "wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" Here is better food, even food which never fails, never cloyeth, never poisons, never disappoints the expectation: and that food is righteousness. Now, what is righteousness? This we must in some measure understand, before we shall hunger and thirst after it. Righteousness, in its scriptural sense, is likeness to God in his holy perfections, conformity to his moral will, the full inclination, determination, and effort

of the whole man to obey God's commandments in all their spiritual and extensive meaning. I know not if you understand this: I wish to make it intelligible to all. The righteous man is he who resembles God in his holy perfections, obeys His commandments fully, loves Him with all his heart, soul, mind, strength, and his neighbour as himself. He is not a Pharisee, who thinks himself righteous while he is far from righteousness. He is not a careless sinner living without God in the world. He is one who loves God perfectly, supremely, and unceasingly, who has never committed a sin against God or man, in word, thought, or deed, who has fulfilled all righteousness, and is without spot or taint of sin. That man is righteous; on him the righteous God can look with full complacency. But where will he find such? "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." And yet men must be righteous before God, or God and they cannot be at peace with each other. God may, for a season, pity and bear with the ungodly, but he cannot delight in any who are not righteous and holy in his sight. Here then is our difficulty and danger. None are righteous, no, not one; yet all, yea, each of us must be righteous, or God cannot, consistently with his divine perfections, delight in us, or admit us to his presence. If you understand that difficulty, you see it is no trilling question, "How should man be just with God?" You are not righteous in yourself, because you have not fulfilled all righteousness, you have left undone those things which you ought to have done, and you have done those things which you ought not to have done. And if, from this time, you never leave undone one thing which you ought to do, nor do one thing which you ought not, that will not make you righteous; it is simply your duty, it makes no satisfaction to the justice of God for even one of all your former deeds of unrighteousness.

There then is God's favour; there is heaven; there is eternal life and glory, with all that can give peace, joy, and satisfaction, to an immortal soul. You ask, for whom is it meant? You are answered, it is for the righteous. You are told, and you feel it to be true, that you are not righteous. You remember the apostle's words, and they fill you with concern: "Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" Now, what will content and satisfy a soul that feels this state of difficulty—I am not righteous, but very sinful, and yet I must be made righteous, or perish? Nothing will content and satisfy that soul, but that which will content and satisfy God. Other things will content man; other things may give a false and transient peace; but an enlightened soul perceives that nothing but what satisfies God, can give solid satisfaction to the soul of man. And what is that which satisfies God? Righteousness—the very thing his law required; perfect, spotless, sinless righteousness—the very thing demanded of us, but not found in us, and for want of which we lose all legal claim to the favour of God; that very thing, even righteousness, perfect, spotless, sinless righteousness, God offers for our acceptance, to be ours, and for our use, to be our new and evangelical title to his favour. You ask, how? where? in whom? I answer, in the righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ. "This is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness." Here is that which satisfies and pleases God. Here is the righteousness which he has himself provided, accepted, and approved. On your truly believing in Christ, this righteousness is accounted yours, so far as is needed for your justification, or being treated as righteous. This righteousness Christ wrought out in human nature, so that it is the righteousness of a man, the obedience which man owes to God; yet as He was originally God, one with the Father, and became man only for our sakes, and still continued truly, though mysteriously, One with the Father, therefore, there is divine and infinite worth, merit, sufficiency, and applicability, in this his righteousness. Let me treat you then—nay, one would think you would not need to be intreated—to hunger and to thirst after righteousness, even after a participation in the inestimable benefits offered you in Jesus Christ. The law requires of you perfect righteousness; you may have it in Christ. The law threatens you with death for your transgressions; Christ became obedient to the law, even unto death. "He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." You see there in Him, whose body was broken and whose blood was shed for sinners, real, solid, satisfying food for the soul. Well might he say, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world." And well also might he say—words which should make the ears of every man to tingle who despises this vital doctrine—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." It may, indeed, be very true, that they, who heard our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, might not understand this way of righteousness for their justification before God. The disciples were all slow in learning it. But the Saviour wished, I conceive; thus early to urge them to hunger and to thirst after

righteousness, as a thing essential to their peace and comfort with God; and then, the way of righteousness, the righteousness which is of God by faith, as well as the righteousness of sanctification, would afterwards beautifully open upon their prepared minds. But to us, with the whole plan of salvation fully revealed, to us of the reformed church, in which the great doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ is so fundamental a point, it would be almost unpardonable to exclude all mention of the righteousness of Christ from our interpretation of the righteousness, after which it is so blessed to hunger and thirst. But though justification by faith in the righteousness and death of Christ is so vital a doctrine, that I hope ever to preach it as long as I am permitted to preach at all, yet it is not the only grand doctrine of the gospel which it behoves us to preach, and you to understand. The righteousness, which justifies the sinner, is not, I conceive, the only righteousness after which the Saviour here bade us to hunger and thirst; probably it is not that which he chiefly had in mind. There is, as you surely have heard, a righteousness of sanctification, a new and holy nature, imparted by the Holy Spirit, the first beginning and communication of which, the Saviour himself speaks of as a new or spiritual birth, and the continuance and progress of which is sanctification. This righteousness, also, no one who knows the Scriptures can despise. They uniformly describe it as essentially important. "Without holiness no man can see the Lord." "Ye must be born again." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." Let not the young Christian be confused between the righteousness of justification, and the righteousness of sanctification. Both are necessary to be understood, and more than understood, to be received and possessed. But there are clear distinctions. The righteousness of justification is to be perfect and complete—that of sanctification, though extending to all the faculties of the soul, is, at any given time on this side the grave, imperfect and gradual. The righteousness of justification is to be found in another, even in Christ; that of sanctification is to be found in yourself, produced by the doctrine of Christ, and the grace of His Spirit. The righteousness of justification is to be your title for heaven, while that of sanctification is to be your meekness. I will not burden you with more distinctions. Remember these, and you will not mistake, as some continually do, between justification and sanctification.—Rev. John Humberston, M. A., Bingley.

SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

A day or two ago, when thinking of the task I had to perform, I accidentally glanced upon a book, recently published, called *The Churchman's Theological Dictionary*, and my attention was directed to the words "British and Foreign Bible Society." I was much pleased to find a Society to which I had been attached for so many years in such good company, and taking its place alphabetically between the words "Bible" and "Bidding Prayer." The version given of it was in these words—"The British and Foreign Bible Society—an association of persons formed in the year 1804 for the object of printing and circulating the Bible in all languages. As persons of all creeds are admissible, no tests are required." Here, at once, I thought, was food for reflection. Here was an association of persons not met for private purposes, totally free from all party interests, associated together for the purpose of printing and circulating the Bible without note or comment. This book of God has been granted to me, but there are multitudes of my fellow-creatures for whom it is equally needed, but who are not by it equally blessed, and it must be the will of him who has revealed this book, that it should be made known as wide as the bounds of man's habitation are extended; for He has told us in that holy Word that He wills that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; and if he wills that they should come to the knowledge of the truth, he must surely will that the truth should come within their knowledge. This Society, therefore, does the will of God in a point of the highest consideration. This Society has now become almost a part, I might say, of the constitution of our country. I can scarcely look into a family of wealth or distinction but we find some or other of its branches engaged in this work; and I believe it to be not only the glory, but the security of our country, that so many persons are found associated in this blessed cause. In all its varied Associations, amounting to 2,991, in some offices, as patrons, presidents or members of committees, it embraces the names of all the most honoured in the land. The book I allude to goes on to say, "It was founded in 1804." If it has been founded so long, the question arises, How has it answered the expectations formed of it? The answer is to be found in the effects of the great circulation of the Bible which you have heard described in the Report, many of them not communicable to the eye or ear, but still some of them capable of being so communicated, manifest and visible to all men. It would be to go over the Report, if I attempted to show you the results I speak of. In 1804, the word of God was accessible to, one-fifth of the great family of mankind through the medium of about forty translations. It is now accessible to three-fifths, through the medium of 160 translations. Judging from the Reports, the demand for the Scriptures forty years ago amounted to \$1,000

copies; now it has reached 900,000; the demand, therefore, has increased eleven-fold, and where there was one person anxious to receive or purchase the Bible, there are now eleven such scattered through the world; therefore the expectations of the Society have not been disappointed, and her labours so widely ramified are seen in their results. I then come to the concluding part of this description, which I think may require some correction, for it is said that, "being open to all sects and denominations, no tests are required." This may be literally true, but, in my opinion, one of the strongest tests that can be given is required of every member of this Society. It is required that he shall be willing to circulate the Bible without note or comment. It is asked of him, Have you so much of confidence in the word of God that you can trust it to all who will receive it, believing that it conveys those truths through the power and Spirit of God which accompanies its faithful reading, which shew the way of salvation? And again, have you so much desire for the salvation of man, that you are willing he shall find that salvation in the Bible within or without that particular branch of a Christian Church to which you individually belong? This test I conceive to be applied to every one who becomes a member of this Society, and I know not that a stronger or more scriptural test could possibly be applied. It certainly will not be supposed that I, to whom there has been appointed, in the providence of God, the important office of ordaining those who shall interpret Scripture and enforce it, should undervalue human teaching. Neither would I speak slightly of creeds or articles. I believe them, in their proper place, to be highly useful, and to have the sanction of antiquity; but, at the same time, I think it very important that there should be a Society which should both maintain the sufficiency and declare the supremacy of the Bible itself. We know well that there are countries in which those who should interpret the Scripture, do in truth pervert them for their own purposes; that those priestly lips which ought to keep knowledge for the benefit of the people, keep it back for their own interests. We know that there are countries where even the creeds and articles, instead of being safe-guards of truth, are the vehicles of error, and, consequently, we are glad to think that this Society should be constantly furnishing proofs of that which it is most strange men should have ever doubted or denied,—but which, nevertheless, in these strange days, has been both disputed or denied,—that the word of God is able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.—The Right Rev. J. B. Sumner, D. D., Lord Bishop of Chester, at the Anniversary of the Bible Society, 7th of May last.

THE CHRISTIAN PHYSICIAN.

Extracts from the address of the Professor of Medicine, [A. F. Holmes, Esquire, M. D.] in McGill College, Montreal, after the ceremony of conferring the Degree of Doctor of Medicine and Surgery, on the 26th of May last.

The profession you have chosen is one of the most honourable that can be selected, leading not only to competence and respectability as respects self, but to usefulness as regards others. I would fain hope, though many enter the profession for a mere livelihood, that not a few generous youths have hearts warmed by the prospect of doing good, look at the opportunities they may have of alleviating the pains and distresses of their fellow creatures, and, in romantic expectation, almost overlook self-advancement in the prospect of being useful.

If we regard our profession abstractly as a merely scientific pursuit, it has high claims to consideration. What profession gives greater opportunities of studying the wonders of creation? Where shall we find an object more wonderful in structure than the human body? Every part, with the nicest precision, adapted to the operation it has to perform, and not only perfect in itself, but conducing to the perfection of the whole.

Who can be so foolish as to imagine this the work of chance or of the fortuitous concurrence of atoms? Yet it has been said that Anatomists are generally skeptics: accustomed to contemplate the human body in its inert, often disgusting condition, susceptibility is lost and they become unconscious of the bearing of their studies on the proofs of the existence of a great first cause. But depend upon it, whoever is at the same time an Anatomist and a skeptic, his skepticism does not depend on his investigation of the human body. Can any one look on the Eye and doubt its being a work of Design? or if with Bell we investigate the mechanism of the Hand, to what other conclusion can we come than that it is the work of a "Cunning Workman?"

But it has always struck me that the nervous system affords most direct evidence of a great Contriver. This is less obvious to ordinary persons, and hence Paley did well to choose the Eye, and Bell the Hand, to illustrate the existence of contrivance in the human frame divine. But the Anatomist who overlooks the proofs of contrivance, and hence of a Contriver, so visible in the nervous system of the human body, seems to me to lack the power of judgment; and I refer now not to the more obscure and intricate central portions of that system, but to the more simple, the exterior nerves, the conveyers merely of the influences of the parts within. In every part of our body we see numerous cords, distinguished from other matter by their silky whiteness; frequently so small as to require great care to discover them; so tender that the utmost delicacy is required not to destroy

them; and so apparently unimportant that we might feel disposed to pass them by as undeserving of notice. Yet looked into, they are found to exist with unerring regularity in the same numbers, in the same places, and with the same relations, fulfilling, though so small and delicate, the most important functions. Modern Anatomy has thrown great light on the operations of the nervous system, by the discovery of several Ganglions. These little objects which, from their minuteness, escaped the researches of the older Anatomists, (often scarcely larger than large pins' heads) appear to exert the most important influence, by connecting distant portions of the body so as to form one system; and by them sympathies are established, and different organs united in the exercise of one function.

But if Anatomy be highly interesting as a study, we shall find Physiology still more so. Take any function, and you will find it a wonderful exemplification of the existence of contrivance. Examine the Circulation of the blood and see how each part is adapted to aid the general effect—the Muscle to propel—the Arteries and Veins to convey—the Valves to prevent regurgitation—the Capillaries to strain;—or Respiration, and examine the mechanism of the expansion and contraction of the Chest—the passive yielding of the Lungs to the pressure of the atmosphere—the essential duty of the Air admitted, and the change in the blood consequent thereon. But, moreover, these functions are not isolated, but mutually dependent; and not only so, but assisting also in the perfection of others, the whole bound together by an indissoluble tie.

Hence we see, how interesting our profession may be in its merely elementary departments: can it, we may ask, be interesting as a subject of scientific research, when in a state of Disease? Are we to look upon it in this state as a mere matter of trade? or, to take higher ground, can any pleasure be found in investigating Disease, farther than that of alleviating the distress of our fellow-beings? I answer, Yes—the pleasure of relieving anguish and suffering is doubtless great—the pleasure of reaping reputation and profit from our attendance is, it must be confessed, not small; but there is a pleasure independent of both these—a purely scientific pleasure—that of increasing knowledge; and as this is indissolubly connected with the benefit of suffering mortals, it is hallowed by the association.

But if our profession be not only capable of affording the means of livelihood—of competence—but also the gratification of doing good and the enjoyment of scientific discovery, does it bring with it no Responsibilities? no duties which it becomes us to keep constantly before us? It does: and of a varied and important nature. What are these duties?

[Here the Professor spoke of the obligations which the Physician is under in relation to his Patients—then of his duty to himself—then of his duty to his professional Brethren individually and as a distinct portion of the Community—and thus continued.]

There is one thing more in our duty towards our patients to which I feel disposed to call your attention, though it is one which many consider beyond our sphere, but which I am clearly of opinion comes within it as a duty, and that is, whenever we fear the Death of our patient, not to conceal the apprehended result. When we consider the evils that may arise to survivors from the want of the proper settlement of the affairs of the deceased, our duty to them would seem to suggest the propriety of advising them of the dangerous condition of their relative, in time to allow of arrangements being made. It is true that, to communicate the fact to a dying man, is not only unpleasant to the person doing it, but may be injurious to the patient himself—discretion is therefore to be observed in such communications: but as far as worldly arrangements go, our Responsibility goes not beyond the communication of our fears to the friends of the sick. They will judge how far it may be important for their future welfare that their relative should settle his affairs before his departure;—but there is another aspect in which to regard the dying man, and another species of Responsibility which it may be right to contemplate.

In the commencement of these remarks, I alluded to the evidences afforded by the structure and functions of the body, of the existence of a Supreme Being. The existence of a soul within that body cannot be so clearly shewn, but there are none here, I presume, who are inclined to doubt it. Taking for granted, then, that the Soul is, as represented to us by the word of God, an accountable Agent, what is the duty of the Physician in regard to a patient whose soul is hovering between the bounds of Time and a limitless Eternity?

I shall not answer this question, but merely indicate the probability of a Responsibility resting upon a medical man; though he may not be able to appreciate or willing to allow it. The degree of weight that this suggestion will have, must necessarily vary with the degree of importance that is attached to eternal things. The Christian Physician will admit—the Infidel will scoff at it—but it must be borne in mind that it will not serve us at the last, to ask "Was I my brother's keeper?"

I am far, however, from recommending an indiscreet zeal in this matter; but must consider it a duty on a medical man not to suffer a soul to go to its eternal reckoning without discharging his own conscience either by communicating the approach of the king of terrors to the patient himself, or by recommending to the friends that they should do it. In recommending this, I am aware I shall be told of the probability of injury to the patient—and very probably, of injury to ourselves:—the

* Psa. xiv. 2, 3. † Job. ix. 2.
1 Cor. vi. 9. ‡ Jer. xxiii. 6.
1 Pet. iii. 18. § John vi. 51.