

## Youth's Department.

## SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS.

XX. BARAK.

190. Who was Barak? and where did he reside?—(*Judges*)  
 191. What was the name of the prophetess associated with Barak when the Lord discomfited the Canaanites before them?—(*Judges*)  
 192. Who was the king of Canaan at that time? and who was the captain of his host?—(*Judges*)  
 193. By whose hands did the captain of the Canaanitish army die?—(*Judges*)  
 194. Is there any reason for hoping that Barak was a good man as well as a successful warrior?—(*Hebrews*)

XXI. BARNABAS.

195. What is the meaning of the term Barnabas? and can you remember the former name of this excellent man?—(*Acts*)  
 196. Of what country and religion was the Apostle Barnabas? and what are the reasons for concluding that in his former station in life he was a man possessed of property?—(*Acts*)

## CHURCH CALENDAR.

March 4.—First Sunday in Lent.  
 11.—Second do. do.  
 18.—Third do. do.  
 25.—Fourth do. do.  
 "—Annunciation of Virgin Mary.

## PASSING THOUGHTS.

BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

No. X.

## THE SNARE.

It is a fearful thing to contemplate the power of Satan, and his skill in making our bodily senses the means of leading our souls away from God. Of all traitors, he is rightly considered the worst, who lifts against his lawful king the arms that king has given him to employ in his service. And surely, of all criminals he is the most guilty, who makes the good gifts of God the actual instruments of rebellion against the giver. I was led to these reflections a short time since, when, in passing a Roman Catholic chapel, on my return from worshipping in a parish church, I saw at the gate a string of carriages belonging to Protestant families; and learnt that, in consequence of some fine professional singers having been engaged to perform there, these people were induced to sanction, by their presence, the idolatrous service of the mass.

Does any reader question the justice of the charge of idolatry, thus brought against the Romish Church? Surely the act of falling prostrate in adoration before the little cake which the priest elevates, and which the Roman Catholic Church avers to be changed, by the utterance of certain words, into the body, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ, is at least as flagrant an act of idolatry as that of the Israelites of old, who made a molten calf, and professed to worship Jehovah under the symbol. Their sin was visited by an immediate and extensive judgment, marking the Lord's abhorrence of what he has so strictly forbidden. Nor is the consecrated wafer the only object of such prohibited adoration: the Virgin Mary, the saints and angels, are addressed in language of prayer and praise, such as it is clearly idolatrous to use to any created being. No one can turn over the leaves of a popish prayer book without seeing that it was for no imaginary or trivial cause our blessed reformers laid down their lives. They contended for the faith once delivered to the saints; and were content to die, rather than to dishonour their God by doing the abominable thing which he hates. The very name of Protestant originated in a solemn protest made by the first reformers against these deadly errors of an apostate Church: and it would be difficult to shew its applicability to any who, by their conduct, renounce such protest.

But the Church of Rome, deeply versed in unholy arts, has ever adorned herself with such things as fall in with the course of man's corrupt affections. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, there find abundant gratification. In the present instance, the charm of a little fine music was tried as a snare; and it was, alas! found effectual in drawing several away from that solemn and scriptural service, in which the open doors of their own Church invited them to join on the Lord's day. It induced them to look on, and thereby seemingly to approve, while the Holy Spirit was grieved, and Christ dishonoured, by the delusive mockeries of a worship openly addressed far more to the creature than the Creator? Was this "having compassion" on the deluded souls of their fellow-creatures? Was this exposure of their own souls to the influence of the same delusion, a fit sequel to their morning prayer—"Lead us not into temptation"? Or supposing them sufficiently guarded by their better knowledge from the danger of being led astray, was the example thus set to their servants and ignorant neighbours consistent with the prohibition against putting a stumbling-block in another's way? These questions passed in solemn thought through my mind as I walked on, reflecting how many have recently been called away even in the prime of life, from this uncertain world; and how very few Sabbaths might remain to some of those who were thus defrauding God of the honour due unto his name, and wantonly mis-spending the sacred hours; gratifying their senses by hearing hymns melodiously sung to the praise of those who would indignantly rebuke such worshippers with—"See thou do it not."

The Holy Ghost, speaking by St. Paul, has given a short, simple, perfect rule to guide us. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This appears a hard saying to some; but it is a sweet saying to those who have tasted and seen how gracious the Lord is. Such will desire to wear it as a frontlet between their eyes—yea, to have it so written on their hearts, that not all the cravings of unhallowed curiosity, stimulated by the crafty devices of the god of this world, shall prevail to turn their steps aside from the path of consistent obedience to their Father's loving commands.

THE APOSTLE ST. JOHN AND THE ROBBER.

When, after the death of the tyrant Domitian, the Apostle John had returned from the isle of Patmos to Ephesus, at the solicitation of the brethren, he undertook a tour through the provinces adjacent to that city. His objects in this journey were the ordination of bishops, the personal superintendence of the Churches, and the separation of such persons as were indicated to him by the Spirit to the exercise of the clerical office. On his arrival at a city not far from Ephesus (the very name of which is mentioned by some writers), after he had consoled the brethren by exhortations, he beheld among his audience a certain youth, whose commanding stature and engaging aspect bespoke a corresponding nobility of mind. Turning to the bishop, whom he had just ordained, he exclaimed, "In the presence of the Church, and in the sight of Christ, I commit this youth to your utmost diligence." He having received this young man, and given the required promise, the Apostle, having solemnly reiterated his charge, returned to Ephesus.

The presbyter, admitting into his own family the youth who had thus been consigned to his care, after having instructed, strengthened, and cherished him, administered to him the ordinance of baptism. After this, however, he relaxed his former vigilance and caution, imagining that he had secured him by the most effectual restraint, the seal of the Lord. But certain of his former companions, dissolute, debauched, and abandoned to every species of vice, endeavour to corrupt the youth, who had been too early released from restraint. And first, they entice him by magnificent banquets; afterwards, stealing out by night for purposes of robbery, they persuade him to accompany them; and, in a short time, excite him to attempt some action of greater atrocity.

But he, becoming gradually inured to vice, like a spirited and unbridled charger galloping from his right path and champing his bridle, is hurried by the very nobility of his soul more deeply into the abyss. Having renounced all hope of salvation in his Redeemer, he meditated no trivial action; but, as one reduced to utter desperation, determined to perpetrate some great exploit, disdainful, even in guilt, to be on an equality with the rest.—Having therefore collected his associates into a band, and procured himself to be appointed their leader, he surpassed all others in violence, slaughter, and atrocity.

In the course of time, some exigence requiring his presence, John is once more summoned to the same city. Having arranged all the circumstances on account of which he came, "Now," said he, "O bishop, restore to me the deposit which Christ and I committed to your custody in presence of the Church over which you preside." He at first stood mute with astonishment, imagining that money, which he had not received, was required from him through some calumny; he could neither believe that what had never been entrusted to his care was demanded from him, nor could he impeach the veracity of the apostle. But when John exclaimed, "I demand the young man, even the soul of my brother;" the old man, groaning deeply, and bursting into tears, replied, "He is dead." "And in what manner did he die?"—"He is dead to God," rejoined the bishop; "he hath departed, being impious, and abandoned, and a most desperate robber. And he now occupies a mountain opposite the Church, with his equally lawless associates."

At these words the apostle rent his garments; and, with a bitter groan, striking his forehead, exclaimed, "To what an excellent guardian did I entrust the soul of my brother! But procure me instantly a horse and a guide." He hastened, even as he was, directly from the Church; and having arrived at the place of his destination, is captured by the advanced guard of the robbers, neither endeavouring to fly, nor imploring life, but exclaiming, "For this very purpose I came! conduct me to your chief."

The leader, armed as he was, awaited his arrival. And when he recognized John advancing towards him, overpowered with shame, he betook himself to flight. But the apostle, forgetful of his age, eagerly pursued him, exclaiming, "Wherefore do you fly from me, O my son! from your father, aged and unarmed? Pity me, O my child, and fear me not; you still possess a hope of salvation! I will render account of you to Christ. Willingly would I endure death on your behalf, even as the Lord died for me. I will give my own life as a ransom for you: stop, and believe; Christ hath sent me." The youth, hearing these words, at first stood still, with his eyes fixed upon the ground; next he threw off his arms, and trembling, burst into a flood of tears.—He then met the old man advancing, and, with bitter sighs and lamentations, implored his pardon, being, as it were, baptized a second time in his tears, only concealing his right hand. Then the apostle, pledging his faith and vowing that he would obtain pardon for him from his Redeemer, having fallen on his knees and prayed, kissed the right hand of the young man as if it had been purified by repentance, and led him back to the Church.—Having besought God on his behalf with many prayers, and striving together by frequent fastings and soothing his soul by many scriptural exhortations, the apostle, as they say, did not depart till he had restored him to the Church, having afforded a signal example of sincere penitence, an illustrious instance of regeneration, and a trophy of a conspicuous resurrection.

[Translated from the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius by the Rev. Thomas Dale.]

## PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION.

It is not with the trees of righteousness, as it was with the trees of Paradise, which were created all perfect, and full of fruit the first day. But in nature there is first a seed, then a plant, then a tree, then fruit (as a mighty oak riseth of a small acorn); so in grace. We are conceived of immortal seeds, borne of the Spirit, bring forth buds and blossoms of grace; and so go on to perfection, yearly increasing in the fruits of obedience. We get not at one jump into heaven, nor at one stroke kill we the enemy.—(*The Cure of Misprision*, 1646.)

## EXCERPTA.

For the Church.

Little attentions, trifling, but perpetual acts of self-denial; a minute consultation of the wants and wishes, tastes and tempers

of others; these are the small things that outweigh a thousand acts of showy heroism.

What if the little rain should say,  
 So small a drop as I  
 Can ne'er refresh those thirsty fields—  
 I'll tarry in the sky?

What if a shining beam of noon  
 Should in its fountain stay,  
 Because its feeble light alone  
 Cannot create a day?

Doth not each rain-drop help to form  
 The cool refreshing shower,  
 And every ray of light to warm  
 And beautify the flower?

Anonymous.

There is one sin that destroys its millions, namely, *levity*—  
 Those who were invited to the marriage supper "made light of it."

It is Satan's greatest artifice to make a man think lightly of sin, while the very first work of the Holy Spirit is to make him see it in its true colours.

All my salvation depends upon the nativity, the crucifixion, the resurrection of our Lord, and the descent of His spirit upon my heart.

Children of God, like lilies of the valley, flourish best in lowly situations.

The present world is called *night*, because it is full of darkness and dreaming.

I cannot doubt that the bible is right, if it has set me right.

The instant a man longs for mercy, he may find it.

I heard of a very old man, who was asked what his age was; he answered, "the *right side* of eighty." "I thought you were *more than eighty*," said the inquirer. "Yes, I am beyond it," he replied, "and that is the *right side*, for I am nearer to my eternal rest."  
 J. P. H.

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## The Church

Will for the present be published at the Star Office, Cobourg every Saturday.

## TERMS.

To Subscribers resident in the immediate neighborhood of the place of publication, TEN SHILLINGS per annum. To Subscribers receiving their papers by mail, FIFTEEN SHILLINGS per annum, postage included. Payment is expected yearly, or at least half-yearly in advance.

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[R. D. CHATTERTON, PRINTER.]