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A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

(Reprinted from the "Tract Magazine.")

The Falls of Niagara are in the course of the river of that name, flowing from Lake Erie into Lake Ontario. The river above the falls is considerably wider than below. A large island (called Goat Island) divides the stream into two parts, which are called the American Fall and the Horse-shoe Fall. The former, from the water being more closed up by rocks, is six feet higher than the latter. A picturesque bridge connects Goat Island with the American shore. The space above the falls, for some distance, is called the Rapids—from the fearfully impetuous way in which the water rushes over its rocky bed.

How vast the volume of water is which flows downward in these cataracts may be supposed, when it is known that it forms the chief part of the stream of the mighty St. Lawrence before it is joined by the Ottawa. The water in the rapids—loudly roaring—leaps, bubbles, and hisses, as it rushes impetuously on with a power which no boat can stem, till it takes its final leap into the seething cauldron below. Above the rapids the river is navigable into Lake Erie.

Three men were employed in loading a small craft with sand, the youngest of whom, Joseph Ebert, was a tall, fine, active lad of eighteen. Towards evening, their task accomplished, they launched forth in their little boat to catch some fish for supper.—Seldom had they found better sport, and so engrossed did they become in it, that they did not discover that their boat was drifting down the stream. A sudden whirl of the punt, as she lifted to a wave, made them look up, when to their dismay, they discovered that they were within the power of the dreaded rapids. In vain, seizing their oars, they tugged and tugged to gain the shore—they shrieked in their despairing efforts—the waters seemed to answer mockingly. An oar broke, leaving them more helpless still. The boat striking a rock was dashed to pieces, and the next instant the waters closed over the

heads of two of the crew. One, young Ebert, yet floated—hurried rapidly along towards the falls, down which he well knew that no man had ever gone and lived. A few yards more only remained to be traversed before he must take that fearful plunge, and be no more seen; when before him appeared a log of timber firmly jammed between the rocks in the stream. By a desperate effort he grasped it, and drew himself out of the water. Night had come on; no one was likely to pass; his voice could not be heard amid the roar of the cataract. There he was discovered, still clinging, when morning dawned—about half way between the bridge leading to Goat Island and the American fall. The bridge and the neighbouring shores were soon crowded with anxious spectators. A fellow creature rejoicing in youth and strength was placed in a position of the most fearful peril. How can he be rescued? was the question.

He was so near, that it seemed almost as if a hand stretched out would save him. But the fierce rapids rushed between him and the shore, where alone safety could be found. Every one was eager to offer assistance; but among all that crowd there was no one with the practical knowledge which enabled him to render effectual aid in the emergency. Sometimes Ebert might be seen walking about on the rocks surrounding the log, as if contemplating the possibility of swimming on shore; but he was beckoned back by the spectators. A small strong raft was at length formed; and, by means of ropes, allowed to float down towards him. All anxiously watched its progress. It floated buoyantly—it was almost within his reach—in another minute he might be saved—when the rope became jammed in the rocks. A cry of regret escaped the crowd. Ebert after contemplating the raft for some time, slid down into the water, waded out until he could reach the rope, and after great labour succeeded in freeing it from the rocks. T

spectators shouted with satisfaction; and still more so, when they saw him manfully towing the raft out of the strength of the current towards his place of refuge. Having secured himself to the raft, by means of lashings fastened to it for the purpose, he made the signal that he was ready to commence his fearful voyage. Those who had charge of it hauled away, till, within a short distance of some small islands connected with Goat Island, the rope catching, the raft lay motionless in the fiercest part of the rapids. Now more than a cry—a long, loud groan of commiseration and despair escaped from the spectators. In vain they hauled on the rope, fearful, too, lest it should be cut by the rocks—neither dared Ebert move, dreading to be washed off the raft. But there were many brave hearts anxious to save him, though no one could devise the means.

A boat now brought overland was launched, with a strong hawser secured to her, and a volunteer bravely shoved off from the island as far as he could venture towards the young man. "Courage, Ebert! courage my lad!" he sang out; "we'll heave you a rope, and if you'll make yourself fast to it we'll haul you on shore." But Ebert shook his head, for he dreaded lest while securing the rope he might be washed off the raft. Various devices were suggested, but abandoned as impracticable.

At length it became known that a life-boat had been sent for from Buffalo; and it was perceived that, had Ebert remained on his first-resting-place, he might have avoided the great danger in which he was now placed. How frequently do injudicious, though well-meant endeavours defeat their purpose!

The life-boat appeared; it was launched amid the shouts of the multitude, and was lowered slowly by a hawser to where Ebert clung to the raft. Now is the time for the youth to summon all his energies. In another moment he expects to grasp the side of the life-boat and be saved. He casts on the lashings by which he is held to the raft. The spectators restrain their breath with the intensity of their anxiety. Will the boat reach him, or be dashed to pieces in those fiercely agitated waters? She floats! She floats! She touches the raft itself Ebert sees her—the courage for

which he has been so conspicuous throughout the terrible day revives within him. A shout of joy is heard—all think that he is in safety. He springs up, and leaps towards the boat. What means that cry of horror which escapes from the crowd? Alas! he has missed his aim—the boat sheers away from him, and he falls headlong into the current. Still he is not lost; he rises to the surface—he strikes out boldly—his foot touches a rock—he springs with the last efforts of despair towards the shore, making three or four almost superhuman leaps; as many more and he will be safe; but alas! the water deepens—again he swims—he swims strongly in spite of all his exertions.

Life is sweet, and Ebert has life, and youth, and strength. He seems even to make way against that headlong tide. It is but for a moment—the waters are too mighty for him—his strength begins to fail—his strokes grow feeble—slowly he recedes from the shore—his straining eyeballs fixed on those who would save him but cannot. Now he is borne backward into the fiercer part of the current. All hope has fled—swiftly and more swiftly he is dragged on towards the brink of that terrific precipice. His fellow-men standing around sicken at the sight. Still he struggles—still full of life and energy he reaches the very edge; and then, as if to gain one more look at the fair world he is about to leave, he springs almost out of the water—his arms raised frantically above his head; then, uttering one last fearful shriek, heard even above the ceaseless roar of the cataract, he falls backward, and the next instant is hidden for ever from human ken, amid those madly foaming waters rushing downwards with terrific force into an ever seething cauldron below. Slowly and sadly the spectators separated. A fellow-mortal had gone from among them.

Such was the account I heard from one who had witnessed the harrowing spectacle while I stood gazing on the spot where it had occurred; and so vividly did I picture it to myself, that I felt as if I had been among the crowd who watched young Ebert hurrying to destruction.

Sinner, have you ever been exposed to a danger as terrific as that which young Ebert did not escape? Have you ever,

like him and his companions, allowed yourself to become so absorbed in the pursuit of worldly projects that you have given no thought to the future? that you did not for a moment consider in what direction you were drifting? that you thought not of God? that you put no trust in him? that your salvation was a matter of indifference to you? that you had no love for Christ—no gratitude—no faith—no love—no desire to do his will—to be with him for ever and ever? How is it with you now? Are you trifling close to some rapids which may carry you away to destruction? If you are, awake ere it be too late.

Perhaps, as you read the above account, you have felt a thrilling interest in the fate of young Ebert. Surely you would have felt it had you witnessed the scene, and you would have used every exertion to save him; and yet, have you not often seen your fellow-creatures hurrying on to a destruction far more terrible—the destruction of their souls? What efforts have you made to save them? What efforts are you making? What, none? Is not the immortal soul of infinitely more value than the mortal body? "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Look around you—thousands upon thousands are drifting to destruction. Endeavour to arrest all you can in their course. You would risk your life to save that of a fellow-creature. Will you draw back when that fellow-creature's soul is in peril? As you hope to have peace at the last, use every exertion—employ all means public and private by which sinners may be turned from their evil ways, and be brought to trust in Christ.

If you have no desire to save the souls of others, tremble for the safety of your own. There is not a surer sign that a man is not right towards God than when he has no care for the souls of others. It is a right question to ask, Who among that vast crowd thought of young Ebert's soul? Interested by his youth, his strength, his courage, valuing their own lives, it was in the preservation of his mortal life alone that great mass were occupied. Strange, senseless being that man is! What a high

value does he place on the perishing body, and how utterly does he disregard the immortal soul!

HEAVEN AT LAST.

"Denique Cœlum."—Old Motto.

Angel-voices sweetly singing,
Echoes through the blue dome ringing,
News of wondrous gladness bringing;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

Now, beneath us all the grieving,
All the wounded spirit's heaving,
All the woe of hopes deceiving;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

Sin for ever left behind us,
Earthly visions cease to blind us,
Fleshly fetters cease to bind us;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

On the jasper threshold standing,
Like a pilgrim safely landing,
See, the strange bright scene expanding!
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

What a city! what a glory!
Far beyond the brightest story
Of the ages old and hoary;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

Softest voices, silver-pealing,
Freshest fragrance, spirit-healing,
Happy hymns around us stealing;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

Gone the vanity and folly,
Gone the dark and melancholy,
Come the joyous and the holy;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

Not a broken blossom yonder,
Not a link can snap asunder,
Stay'd the tempest, sheathed the thunder;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

Not a tear-drop ever falleth,
Not a pleasure ever palleth,
Song to song for ever calleth;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

Christ himself the living splendour,
Christ the sunlight mild and tender;
Praises to the Lamb we render;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

Now at length the veil is rended,
Now the pilgrimage is ended,
And the saints their thrones ascended;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

Broken death's dread bands that bound us,
Life and victory around us;
Christ, the King, himself hath crown'd us;
Ah, 'tis heaven at last!

—Bonar.

DIVINE DISCIPLINE.

God does not send grief to us for its own sake, or because He loves to wound and vex us. It is for the good that is to be brought out of it, both to ourselves and others. We need it, and could not do without it. He knows this, and therefore He does not spare us; He is too wise and good to keep the sorrow back from us, seeing, as He does, that that short sorrow here may be our joy for ever.

He smites the *sinner*, saying to him, 'Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?' He visits him in a hundred ways, and speaks to him in a hundred voices—all having the same end in view, to call him back from the far land into which he has gone, to the love and gladness of his Father's house. He crosses him, He wearies him, He tries him with sickness or want, or the loss of friends, all to stay his steps in the sad path of sin, and lead him in at the strait gate, along that way whose end is life. O sinner! hear the voice of thy God; seek Him, and live; for if thou seekest him not thou shalt surely die. O sinner! these last days are dark and sad. They are getting darker and sadder as time moves on. They are full of woe and wrath to this sinful world. God is pouring out the vials of His wrath; but He is full of love, and calls on thee to flee from the wrath to come. O hide thyself from the rising storm in the one hiding-place, Christ Jesus, in whom thou wilt find thyself truly safe, and whose free love will pour itself like balm into the wounds of thy vexed and weary spirit.

But God also smites His own sons and daughters. They have 'known and believed' His love; and they are loved of Him with a Father's truest love, yet they are not free from the smiting rod. Nay; their special training begins when they are called to soubship and 'made partakers of Christ.' They have 'tasted that the Lord is gracious,' and this puts an end to bondage and terror: but it begins those special and solemn dealings of God with 'their souls, of which their whole life is to be made tip. The gold is torn from its native mine, and straightway it is cast into the furnace. It is not at once made to grace the brow of kings; but, having passed

through the fire, is beaten and moulded in a thousand ways, till it is fashioned into a royal coronet. So is it with the sinner that has been 'delivered from a present evil world,' and separated unto God. He is rescued from Egypt, but he does not at once pass into Canaan; nay, it is into the desert that he is led, there to be tried in many ways, and trained for his inheritance.

This desert training is most needful.—Without it these delivered ones would be quite unfit for their future standing in the kingdom. They would know but little of sin, little of their own hearts, little of God and His love, little of Christ and His fulness. They would be but half-educated for heaven, half-prepared for the glory to be revealed. Now, seeing that this would not be for the glory of him who called them, nor for their good who are called, and seeing that God will not have any of this half-education, this defective training in His own chosen ones, it behoves them to pass through the discipline by means of which their education is to be perfected. Their great Leader was made 'perfect through suffering;' and so must they.

It is to this discipline that one in old time refers when he writes thus—'O the great pains the Lord hath taken, and the cost He hath been at with me! What pains in my first education, what pains in conversion, what pains after conversion, what pains in recovering out of backsliding! what pains by afflictions, temptations, convictions, mercies of all sorts, waterings, public and private! what a constant sutor hath He been for my heart! what day in which these hath not been some message or other! Surely He is in good earnest with me, He has so constantly followed me!'

What a wondrous power trial has in drawing the soul to God! One can hardly conceive of it till they have been made to know it. It breaks so many of our idols; it cuts so many of our foolish bonds; it so opens our eyes to the vanity of a vain world; it so makes us feel that there is nothing real, or true, or good, but God, and Christ, and heaven! These are the things it does for us. Ease, and comfort, and prosperity, and the good things of

this life, are all so many veils between us and God. Nay; not only are they veils, but they are *broidered* veils, which not only keep God out of sight, but draw our eye to their own beauty. It is not till these are torn away that we fix our undivided gaze on God. So long as anything thus occupies the place of God, we shall never fully give Him our loving trust, nor prize His fellowship. But when the things of earth, which we used as God's and in which so often both our love and worship rested, are broken in pieces, then there remains but the one refuge—Jehovah Himself.

What *skill* is there in the treatment of the soul by God under tribulation! It is no unpractised physician that has been called in to deal with us. It is one who knows our case, whose wisdom errs not, and whose remedies cannot fail. Every part of the process is *sure*. It goes on in spite of ourselves. It shows its efficacy even when most disliked and feared.—None of its appliances have ever been known to fail. An almighty Jehovah superintends them all. A sovereign Jehovah has planned them all, in His counsels from eternity, so that we are sure that all things *must* 'work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to His purpose' (Rom. viii. 28).

If any trial could fail in its object, there might be a reflection both on the skill and the love of the physician. For it would be hard that we should be made to suffer through his *mistake*. But we know this cannot be. The very things we dreaded most are the things out of which come to us the richest blessings. We have not merely His promise that we shall not be allowed to thirst whilst led through the desert, but also that the very *rocks* shall yield us water. The unlikely thing in all the wilderness shall be the very thing out of which our refreshment shall most largely come. The very sorrow that stuns us most, that pierces us deepest, that we shrink from above all others, is the very sorrow which God, in His sovereign will, has chosen out of which to bring forth in largest measure our truest refreshments, our most abiding joys.

Let us learn, then, to be 'careful for

nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, to make our requests known unto God' (Phil. iv. 6). Let us learn to commit ourselves, for good or for evil, for health or for sickness, for joy or for sorrow, into His wise and gracious hands. He doeth all things well. He cannot do otherwise. Both His wisdom and His love are pledges to us of this. Let us employ affliction for sounding the depths of both of these, especially the latter, for it is this that is to be found pervading everything. 'I am learning,' says an old divine, 'to read *love* in the greatest of evils—sin, desertions, afflictions, plagues of heart, and disappointments; and to put good constructions on all God's dealings; and when anything comes (though never so cross), I first inquire, "what *love* can I see in this?"'

Let us further learn how to live by faith. We naturally walk more by sense and sight, than by faith and hope. We live more upon the visible than the invisible. What is seen absorbs us; what is unseen affects us but little. For the remedying of this, God has appointed our days of trial.—During them we get glimpses of the unseen and the eternal, such as we never had before. Faith comes into play for the things which so often hindered it have been removed; and hope is now in full exercise, for, save the things which hope lays hold of, there is nothing left to rejoice in. Thus faith becomes to us 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' (Heb. xi. 1).

Israel was warned of the danger which prosperous days bring with them. Their heart would be lifted up, and they would forget the Lord their God (Deut. viii. 14). Therefore God led them through the wilderness, fed them with manna, and made them to drink water from the rock, that 'He might humble them, and prove them, to do them good at their latter end' (Deut. viii. 16). And so is it with the Israel of God. They are led, and kept, and provided for, by Jehovah Himself, in a special manner; nay, they are smitten, and tried, and disciplined, that they may be proved and humbled. This special dependence on Jehovah which trial teaches—this proving and humbling in their desert-state—brings about the same blessing

issue as in the case of Israel—"good in their latter end," so that they can say, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory' (2 Cor. iv. 17).

In learning these lessons of tribulation, we are constrained to be much alone with God. Worldly company loses its relish. The society of friends is not so sweet as before. Nay, even the fellowship of the godly is found to be insufficient. Our sorrow lies 'too deep for human ministry.' It can tell itself to none but God. At such a time God is felt to be the only companion to whom we can fully unbosom ourselves. We learn to prize our quiet hours of communion with the Lord. The closet becomes dearer to us, and is oftener visited than before. We linger in it, almost unwilling to come forth from it, as if the air of earth had become oppressive and uncongenial. Thus we learn the life of prayer. 'Trials give new life to prayer.' Trials make us feel our need of prayer. Trials give large opportunities to God of answering our prayers. They make us open our mouth wide, and He fills it.

'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all' (Ps. xxxiv. 19). Thus we are made to know that while trial is to be our lot, deliverance by God's own right hand will be its blessed end. Thus has God often spoken to us; and His words are as solemn as they are loving. They are words fitted to cheer and sustain, yet also to cast a deep solemnity over life, making us 'walk softly' all our days, and measure everything here, both the sorrow and the joy, by the eternity that is to come. For all present things are fading; and all our concern with them is how to make them tell upon the eternal future that stretches out before us. All here is *useless*, however glad in itself, that does not add to our everlasting treasures. All here is truly blessed and profitable, however sad and dark, that contributes to the weight of our eternal crown.—*Christian Treasury*.

Laws and institutions are constantly tending to gravitate. Like clocks, they must be occasionally cleansed, and wound up, and set to true time.—*Beecher*.

"LOVE DID IT."

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us" (1 John iii. 1).

'Twas love, abounding love, that won
The Father to bestow the Son,
To bear his people's shame!
The guiltless one, by fools reviled,
The Servant meek—the holy Child
Jesus! O welcome name!

'Twas love that drew the Saviour down
From angels' songs and heavenly throne,
Upon the cross to die!
Love bore the taunt, the scourge, the woe!
That hour of darkness none may know—
And all for such as I!

What brought thee from thy rest above,
Thou holy One, thou spotless Dove!
On man's hard heart to fall?
Witness of three in one to bless,
Of wisdom, power, and faithfulness,
'Twas love that did it all!

Love did it all! undying love,
Nor sin, nor time, nor change can move—
Tender, enduring, strong.
The love that hath my sins forgiven,
That makes my portion, and my heaven,
Shall swell my happy song.

I'll tell it in the sinner's ear,
I'll sing it to the worldlings near,
And ask no other theme.
'Twill flow to soothe the mourner's wail,
And children hold the oft-told tale
Dearer than fiction's dream.

So lead me, holy Dove, to rest,
And ever on my Saviour's breast
With God eternal dwell;
And there each cross and cloud recall,
And praise the love that did it all,
And love doth all things well!

—From *Precious Gems*, by Anna Shipton.

"NOT YET."

"Not yet," said the little boy, as he was busy with his trap and ball. "When I grow older I will think about religion."

The little boy grew to be a young man. "Not yet," said the young man. I am about to enter into trade. When I see my business prosper, then I shall have more time than now."

Business did prosper. "Not yet," said the man of business. "My children must have my care. When they are settled in life, I shall be better able to attend to religion."

He lived to be a grey-headed old man. "Not yet," still he cried, "I shall soon retire from trade, and then I shall have nothing else to do but to read and pray."

And so he died. He put off to another time what should have been done when a child. He lived without God and died without hope.—*Band of Hope Review*.

"PRAYING JACK;"

OR, WHERE MAY OUR INFLUENCE END?

"Don't fight, boys," said a kind, grey-headed gentleman to a couple of ragged little fellows, who were surrounded by a dozen or more companions at the entrance to a dirty, miserable court.

"He wants to cheat me of a penny, and I won't stand it," said the more furious of the two, whose name was Jack. "We tossed fair for it—I said 'head, and it was head—and I'll have it, too."

"That's right, Jack," shouted several voices, among which men's tones were heard: "make him give it up."

"Jack," said the old gentleman, stepping between the two young quarrellers, "my hair's grey, you see, and you're a strong little fellow; and there's something about the look of your face, my boy, that I like. No doubt you ought to have the penny; but I don't think it's worth fighting for. Beside, I want to have a word with you; so here's a penny, and come along with me for a minute."

The power of kindness seemed magical; for while the pleasant manner of the old gentleman silenced the noisy group, it so cooled Jack's heated blood, that he readily obeyed orders, and moved forward with the hand of the old gentleman keeping hold of what might once have been the collar of a jacket. After getting some distance from the scene of confusion they stopped at a respectable house, into which the gentleman took Jack, to the no small amazement of the young thief.

"Can you read, my boy?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever go to school?"

"Never."

"Where do you live?"

"Not always the same place."

"Have you ever been in prison?"

"Once."

"Are you happy in this sort of living, my boy?" asked the old gentleman, looking earnestly into his face.

There was something in that look of love that held the boy speechless. It was something new to him. It struck a chord in his heart, hard as it was, that gave back a response, and a rush of strange feelings made the tears almost start to his eyes;

but Jack was proud, and the tears were rolled back. Still a part of his nature which had never been touched before was awakened; and from that day the grey-headed old gentleman was ever his friend. By his persuasion Jack went to the ragged school that afternoon, and under the same kind influence he remained there for three years, during which time means were provided for his eating honest bread, learning something of reading, writing, and ciphering, acquiring many useful habits, and, above all, becoming acquainted with the religion of Jesus, to whom all sinners are welcome. These privileges were not lost upon Jack. The Holy Spirit truly converted him; and the old gentleman, who was a ship-broker, added to all his former kindnesses by placing Jack as a cabin-boy in a fine vessel bound to Calcutta.

Jack being fond of the sea, and rather clever, his prospects of one day having a command of his own were not bad; but from the first day he entered the ship, his religious character gained for him among the godless sailors the name of "Praying Jack." He who will live godly must suffer persecution, so long as the unconverted heart is enmity against God. Jack found this on board ship, just as he had found it on land previously. Jack couldn't swear like the rest, nor take pleasure in their card-playing nor immoral song-singing. The ragged school had made him hate drink, and on this account, too, Jack had to put up with many a sneer.

After reaching India, the vessel made several trips to and from China and Australia; so that before our cabin-boy again set foot on the shores of old England more than three years had passed away. But what a testing time were these three years to Jack! What opportunities had he for stealing, and returning to other evil practices in which his childhood had been trained! But his character stood the test; and these three years developed in the outcast ragged boy great bodily power, generous sentiment, and noble Christian principle.

It was during the last trip from Hong-Kong to Calcutta that a very bad fever broke out on board. Among the sufferers was a sailor named Thomas West, who was one of the most wicked men on board,

and who had constantly striven to make Jack's life during the voyage as miserable as possible. Among the passengers there was a Hindoo woman, whose kindness to the sick at this time was most praiseworthy; she was, however, a heathen, and not knowing the gospel, how could she comfort and awaken conscience?

"Shall poor Tom Welsh," said Jack to himself, "die without any one speaking to him of the love of Christ? Doesn't it say, 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you?' God be praised, I can read my Bible: I'll read it to Tom—at least I'll try, if he'll let me."

And so Jack did; and there, far away on the ocean, as the sun went down, was the little cabin-boy seen reading to the dying sailor some of Christ's comfortable words, to which he now seemed anxious to listen.

"All we like sheep have gone astray," added Jack; "but the Lord has had on Christ the iniquity of us all. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The Lord is ready to forgive."

But there in his berth lay the sailor, with a body consumed well-nigh with fever, and a spirit distracted with despair. Will that cabin-boy ever forget the glare of those eyes that were fixed wildly upon him, as he paused for a moment or two after these statements?

"O Welsh, believe this good news," said Jack affectionately.

But the dying man moved not a muscle of his face.

"O Lord, open his heart to receive the love of Christ!" prayed Jack fervently.

"O God, save Tom Welsh!"

There was another pause, while the cabin-boy waited for the sailor to speak; but no words came.

"O Lord, he cannot hope in Thy mercy!"

"No!" exclaimed the dying man; "there can be no mercy for me."

"He says, O God, there is no mercy for him; but is there not with Thee plenteous redemption, if he will but ask for it?"

"I can't ask," groaned out the sailor. "I never prayed."

"Wilt thou not teach him, O God, to pray? Hear his groan—'tis the groan of the helpless!"

"Yes," repeated Welsh, "helpless—I am helpless!"

"O Jesus, art not Thou a helper of the helpless? Tell him Thou didst die for the ungodly."

"O no!" exclaimed Tom, in bitterest agony, as he clasped his hands more tightly, "he couldn't have died for me—for drunken, swearing, profligate Tom Welsh."

"Show him, O Lord, that whosoever cometh unto thee thou wilt in nowise cast out. Make him come—make him pray," added Jack, with increased earnestness, as he took the dying man's hands in his, and lifted them heavenward. "O, draw him by thy mighty power! Who can save him?—we can't. Lord, do save Tom Welsh!"

Close to the cabin-door had been standing the poor heathen Hindoo woman, who, unknown to Jack, had listened to his earnest prayers, and whose heart was strangely affected by the gospel she then heard. Nor was this effort for the salvation of Tom Welsh without the blessing of God. Light dawned upon the midnight of his soul—his eyes were opened, he saw his sins, he saw the blood of Christ, and he saw there was mercy for him.

"Jack," said Welsh, a few hours before he breathed his last, "give us your hand. Can you forgive me, Jack?"

The cabin-boy pressed the sailor's hand. He couldn't speak; but there was no need for it. Welsh understood the meaning of that pressure.

"I've been a bad fellow to you, Jack. I've tried to make you as wicked as myself. I've sometimes felt I should have liked to pitch you overboard. O, what a change there is in my heart now!—and all this is owing to you."

"No, not to me!" exclaimed Jack warmly; "to Christ."

"Yes, yes, I know all that; but still, Jack, 'twas you that read to me, and talked to me, and prayed for me. Good-bye, Jack. My poor body is a wreck down to the very keel; but my soul, through the mercy of God, is going into port in full sail. I shall soon drop anchor, and then—O the leap on shore!"

For a few minutes death and life seemed struggling for the mastery, and then there

was another interval of quiet, till he said,

"In this book, Jack, you'll find where my old mother lives. I've been a wretched son. She's like you about religion; but I wouldn't take it from her, poor old thing! I wish, Jack, she was here now! She wouldn't mind seeing me die, nor buried in the sea, if she could only see what Jesus has done for my sinful soul. But, Jack, when you get to England, tell her all: 'twill make the old woman's heart glad; and tell her her prayers for her runaway Tom have been heard at last."

A few incoherent words followed at intervals, and then the spirit e tared into port. Soon the body was committed to the sailor's grave, until the day that the sea shall give up her dead.

Do you ask what became of the Hindoo woman? Awakened through Jack's instrumentality, she learnt all she could of Christ, and went among her heathen friends to carry the light of a new religious life among those who were sitting in darkness. And who shall tell where her influence may end?

Do you ask about Jack? He reached England, gladdened the heart of Welsh's old mother by what he told her, and took a number of curiosities to his grey-headed benefactor, whose kindness on the first Sunday afternoon they met was the means of preserving poor Jack perhaps from the prison, the penal settlement, or the gallows, for an upward career of honesty, respectability, and Christian life and influence.—*Sunday at Home.*

CUPS OF COLD WATER.

There is a pleasant story told of a man living on the borders of an African desert, who carried daily a pitcher of cold water to the dusty thoroughfare, and left it for any thirsty traveller who might pass that way. And our Saviour said, 'Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' But cups of cold water are not given in African deserts alone. A spiritual Sahara spreads over the whole earth, and to its fainting travellers many a ready hand holds forth the grateful 'cup.'

A lady, whose homelooks out upon our beautiful common, called to ask me if I would tell her of some poor and sick persons to whom she could be of service in furnishing good books. The names of two were given; and the Testament, in large type, which shortly found its way to the old man's abode, also the green tea and white sugar—rare luxuries—for the feeble woman in the cellar-kitchen, and the dollar bill, slipped into her hand at parting,—were they not 'cups of cold water?'

A poor Scotch combmaker's wife, whose generous heart is larger than her purse, gave me fifteen combs, asking, in a half-doubting way, if I thought some poor children, who had none, would not like them. And so fifteen young hearts were made glad! By what? Surely by 'cups of cold water,' in no wise to lose their reward.

Several young misses met in our pastor's parlour, in the early part of the season, to sew for poor children. From time to time they have come together, plying busy fingers with happy hearts. And we have sixty-two garments as a result. Sixty-two 'cups of cold water!' How the heavenly inventory runs up!

A pious German woman, herself an invalid, heard that her neighbour in the yard below was yet more feeble. The bottle of wine, provided for her at the doctor's suggestion, would surely do that neighbour good. And so nimble little feet are soon at the widow's door, a bright face looks in, and with a 'Mother sent you this,' the little flask stands upon the table. Wine to the sick woman it may be; but the divine chemistry, which years ago changed water into wine, can show this also to be a 'cup of cold water.'

Late one Saturday evening a pious widow, in humble circumstances, who had not walked, save from one chamber to another, for years, sent me a loaf of bread, with the message, 'The Lord sent it to me for some poor woman.' The lateness of the hour, and our Lord's saying, that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath-day, determined me to leave it until the morning, when I took it where I thought it would be welcome. 'The Lord has sent you a loaf of bread, Mrs. S——,' I remarked as I went in. Lifting up her hands towards

heaven, her eyes filling with tears, she exclaimed, 'The Lord be praised!' Then pointing to the neatly-spread table, with its scanty breakfast, she said, 'There is all we had for to-day.' Was it strange that the ringing of the church bells made glad music in my ear that morning? And may we not believe notes of joy were heard above, as the heavenly chronicler noted down, in that wondrous book, another 'cup of cold water in the name of a disciple?'

And so streams of refreshing flow through the parched desert. So to fainting lips is pressed, by loving hands, the overflowing 'cup.'—*Life of Susan M. Underwood.*

ANECDOTE OF DR. CONYERS.

DR. CONYERS, Rector of Helmsley, Yorkshire, in the early years of his ministry, was tainted with socinianism, and destitute of saving grace. When reading the lesson for the day, in the ordinary course of church service, the words of the apostle Paul: "The unsearchable riches of Christ," (Eph. iii. 8,) made a deep impression on his mind. He reflected—"The unsearchable richness of Christ; I never found, I never knew there were unsearchable riches of Him."

His anxiety became intense, and was greatly increased by the consideration that if he was wrong on these fundamental points, he must have misguided his flock. While walking in his room with pensive feelings, he was led to contemplate these two passages, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) The mists of ignorance were instantaneously dispersed, and centering his faith in the atoning blood of Christ, he immediately experienced real and unspeakable joy.

To use his own words, "I went up stairs and down again, backwards and forwards in my room, clapping my hands for joy, and crying out, 'I have found Him—I have found Him—I have found Him whom my soul loveth;' and for a little time as the apostle said, whether in the body or out of it, I could hardly tell."—*Gospel Trumpet.*

THE PREACHING THAT CONVERTS.

'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.' John xii. 32. Other preaching may please, amuse, and entertain; but the love of Christ attracts, astonishes, draws, breaks, melts, subdues, and changes the heart. St. Paul knew this, and determined to preach 'Jesus Christ and him crucified.'

In the light of his dying Saviour's cross the sinner sees and feels 'the exceeding sinfulness of sin,' the height and depth of the love of Christ. There and only there, he beholds his sin atoned for, his guilt cancelled, the law magnified, justice satisfied, God glorified—'just in justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus. There he is conquered, disarmed, won by the love of Christ. In a moment the prayer of faith ascends, the tears of penitence fall, regeneration of heart is effected, consecration of himself to God is made: 'I am the Lord's'—he becomes 'a new creature in Christ Jesus.'

What made the preaching of Berridge, and Hill, and Whitefield, and Wesley so efficient to the conversion of souls, but that the love of Christ was the burden of their theme? They glorified Christ in their preaching, and the Holy Spirit glorified their preaching in the conversion of multitudes now with them 'before the throne of God and the Lamb.'

Never shall I forget seeing the late great and good Rowland Hill of London, now in the city of God, preaching in a market-town in England on its market day. Like the Apostle Paul, standing on the steps at Athens, Mr. Hill was mounted, in the midst of the market-place, in a lumber-waggon of a farmer from the country, a man standing at his back holding up an umbrella to protect his head from the rays of the summer sun. I can yet see him as he then and there stood and preached, for upwards of an hour, the love of Christ to the thousands gathered around him.—What volume of voice, what vehemence, what emotion of heart, what earnestness, what tears were his! Not an inch of the high-born gentleman, his ripe scholarship, his far-spread fame, or any one thing that was Rowland Hill's, could be seen, but only the 'radiant glories of the Crucified One,' in the 'greatness of His love to man.'

To see such another sight and hear such another sermon I would go far. O that our pulpits all may be filled by men possessing the spirit of Hill, and his mantle fall on the ministry of the Gospel throughout the land and world.—*Christian Treasury.*

CHRIST KNOCKING AT THE SINNER'S HEART.

He knocks. This implies that the door is shut; but though He finds it shut, and none ready to open to Him, yet He knocks. Though He many a time sees the sinner bolting the door firmer and faster against Him, sometimes taking no notice of Him, sometimes stopping his ears that he may not hear, sometimes rushing into an inner apartment to escape the troublesomeness of the blessed voice of mercy outside the door, yet notwithstanding all this Christ knocks. Now, is it not a wonder that Christ does not depart in indignation, and swear in His wrath that He will never enter under the roof of such a wretch. If Christ expected any advantage, then there might be less wonder in his continuing to knock. But He desires to enter that He may make happy the sinner that shuts Him out. He expects no costly entertainment. He brings His entertainment with Him. He gives the sinner notice of it. 'Behold I come shortly, and my reward is with Me.' He comes not empty-handed. Length of days is in His right hand, and in His left hand riches and honour. He asks admission only that He may pour out His treasures into the sinner's bosom, and yet He is shut out. And though shut out, still He knocks as if glad to ask admission. He knocks in the preaching of the word, knocks by the law, knocks by the gospel, knocks by affliction, knocks by conscience, knocks in a thousand ways, and how often all in vain! Is not His patience most marvellous? . . . He stands! He continues in a posture not easy to us, and far from besitting the majesty of a monarch. He waits on sinners. He is not weary in waiting. He stands. Though the sinner plainly refuses to admit Him, sometimes puts him off with frivolous excuses,—though he tells Christ he is not at leisure, and has something else to do than

be continually running to the door,—though he says, Come at another time, when I am disengaged,—though he says, I have other guests, whose company I prefer; yet in spite of all these insults, Christ says, Behold I stand! Behold I stand! I, whose seat is the throne at the right hand of the Majesty on high—I, at whose name every knee shall bow, both of things in heaven and things on the earth,—I, before whom all the angels of heaven fall down and worship,—I, at whose feet the glorified and triumphant hosts of the redeemed cast their crowns,—I, before whom the legions of heaven fall down in deepest humility,—Behold I stand! I stand waiting upon worms. I stand while they sit in the seat of the scorner. I stand at the door while Satan is seated on the throne; and though I see all this, and feel all this, yet behold I stand. . . . What a fearful thing for you, if, while you on the inside shut the door, Christ did the same, fastening it so as never to be opened again. What if that which is said in this book of God concerning Noah be said in God's book of remembrance concerning you,—the Lord shut him in—in to final and utter impenitence. Just remember and recount the numberless knockings made by Christ, at your heart, and the equally numerous slights, refusals, insults you have given Him, and say if you have no ground, if you have not too good ground to fear, lest He have said of you, My Spirit shall not always strive with that man, for he also is but flesh. No doubt you have had your excuses, and plenty of them, for refusing to admit Him. Let me ask you to think of the aggravated guilt your conduct has been accumulating upon your head. You have sinned against means, against mercy, against knowledge. If you deny it, your conscience would condemn you. God's bounties would condemn you. His afflictions would condemn you. His law would condemn you. His gospel would condemn you. His good Spirit would condemn you. Thousands of witnesses sent from God to you, have gone back to Him.—They stand near His throne of judgment to give evidence against you. That evidence is already taken. It is written as with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond. It is written that you said, Depart

from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thea. Yet to you Christ once more says, Behold I stand.—'A Pastor's Legacy'; by Rev. R. B. Nichol, Galashiels.

Lamentation over Perishing Souls.

When I think of unconverted persons dropping into hell from time to time; and others following fast, if infinite mercy prevent not, this makes me forget censures. I rather find myself disposed to weep and cry out with the prophet, "Oh that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

Miserable souls that are out of Christ, let me lament over you a little. If you die in this state, there will be no further lamentation made for you through eternity.

Poor aged sinners, your grey hairs are going down with sorrow to the bottomless pit. And so hard are your hearts, you have little or no concern about it. Your thoughts are fixed on a present world, where you are not to live any long time; and you have no concern that your souls are to burn forever in hell. My heart bleeds for you. O that the Lord would pull you back from the brink of that fiery furnace on which you are tottering!

And you, young men and young women, alas! in spite of your beauty, and spirit, and gaiety, if death seizes upon you while unconverted, you also must be cast into the lake of fire. All the lovely qualities your Creator has bestowed upon you, if you want grace, will not save you.

I cannot look upon you without tenderness. The thought of your damnation is intolerable; yet if you die unconverted, it must be, though all the world should cry out against it. Woe is me that I can think of this without tears. Dear young souls, cry to Jesus Christ to save you. He is a merciful Saviour. O look to him and say, Son of God, save my precious soul from hell. If you cannot pray, will you weep to him? It may be he will hear you. Let me lead you to Christ. If he take you in his arms and bless you, you shall never go to hell. Lord Jesus receive them graciously. Behold them, thou good Shepherd. I cannot bring them back. Stretched out thy Almighty hand

and do it, and there shall be joy in heaven, Amen. Lord hear their request, for thou hast said, "It is not the will of thy Father that one of thy little ones should perish."

And if you who are their parents will not join with me in prayers and endeavours to keep these out of hell, you are cruel, cruel. The Lord forgive you and open your eyes!

When I look back on what I have written, 'tis poor and meaningless, on such a subject. If I should go away into some wilderness, and weep till death put an end to it, it would be more suitable. Such multitudes of my own kind, my brothers and my sisters going into hell, never to get out again! Break, break, hard heart!—Do not think my words strange, you who read these lines, but weep with me if you are men and not stones. Let all the creatures of God who may have any compassion, mourn for the irrecoverable ruin of such multitudes of poor mankind.

O thou who didst weep over Jerusalem, thou alone canst give us comfort in this overwhelming calamity. We have none to save us but thee. Blessings and praises be multiplied upon our glorious, dear, dear Deliverer, without end!

Heavenly Father, for thy Son's sake, be pleased to stir up many diligently to preach thy kingdom, when such multitudes of souls are in danger of perishing. O pour out thy Spirit on all flesh, that our sons and daughters may prophesy. Let the days come, when upon the servants and handmaids thou wilt pour out thy Spirit. Say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back. Bring in all thy elect. And then that song shall be sung in Zion, "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: Shout, ye lower parts of the earth: Break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel!"—*Dr. Gillies.*

Remember it is dangerous to yield to the least sin in order to be rid of the greatest temptation. The least sin set home upon the conscience, will more wound, vex, and oppress the soul, than all the temptations in the world can do.—*Brooks.*

THE POWER OF GOODNESS.

JOHN KANT (not the German philosopher of that name) was professor and Doctor of Divinity at Cracow. He was a pious, holy man, with a spirit peculiarly gentle and guileless, and he at all times would have preferred to suffer injustice rather than to exercise it. For many years he had conscientiously followed his duties as spiritual teacher of the place to which he had been appointed by God. His head was covered with the snows of age, when he was seized with an ardent desire to revisit the scenes of his youth in his native country, Silesia. The journey appeared fraught with peril to one at his advanced age; but he set his affairs in order, and started on the way, commending himself to the care of God. He rode slowly along, attired in his black robe, with long beard and hair, according to the fashion of the time. Thus he pursued his way through the gloomy woods of Poland, which scarcely a sunbeam could pierce; but there was a light in his soul, for God's Holy Spirit irradiated it.

One evening as he thus journeyed along holding communion with God, and taking no heed of objects beside him, on reaching an opening in the thick forest, a trampling noise was suddenly heard, and he was instantly surrounded by figures, some on horseback and some on foot. Knives and swords glittered in the moonlight, and the pious man saw that he was at the mercy of a band of robbers. Scarcely conscious of what passed, he alighted from his horse, and offered his property to the gang. He gave them a purse filled with silver coins, unclasped the gold chain from his neck, took the gold lace from his cap, drew a ring from his finger, and took from his pocket his book of prayer, which was clasped with silver. Not till he had yielded all he possessed, and seen his horse led away, did Kant intercede for his life.

"Have you given us all?" cried the robber chief, threateningly. "Have you no more money?"

In his alarm and terror, the trembling doctor answered that he had given them every coin in his possession; and on receiving this assurance he was allowed to proceed on his journey.

Quickly he hastened onward, rejoicing

at his escape, when suddenly his hand felt something hard in the hem of his robe.—It was his gold, which having been stitched within the lining of his dress, had thus escaped discovery. The good man, in his alarm, had forgotten this secret store. His heart, therefore, again beat with joy, for the money would bear him home to his friends and kindred, and he saw rest and shelter in prospect, instead of a long and painful wandering, with the necessity of begging his way. But his conscience was a peculiarly tender one, and he suddenly stopped to listen to its voice. It cried in disturbing tones, "Tell not a lie! Tell not a lie!" These words burned in his heart. Joy, kindred, home, all were forgotten.—Some writers on moral philosophy have held that promises made under such circumstances are not binding, and few men certainly would have been troubled with scruples on the occasion. But Kant did not stop to reason. He hastily retraced his steps and entering into the midst of the robbers, who were still in the same place, said meekly: "I have told you what is not true, but it was unintentionally; fear and anxiety confused me; therefore pardon me."

With these words he held forth the glittering gold; but to his surprise, not one of the robbers would take it. A strange feeling was at work in their hearts. They could not laugh at the pious man. "*Thou shalt not steal*," said a voice within them. All were deeply moved. Then, as if seized by a sudden impulse, one went and brought him back his purse; another restored the book of prayer, while still another led his horse towards him and helped him to remount it. They then unitedly entreated his blessing; and solemnly giving it, the good old man continued his way, lifting up his heart in gratitude to God, who brought him in safety to the end of his journey.

Avoid those things in thyself which in others do most displease thee; and remember that as thine eye observeth others, so thou art observed by God, by angels, and by men.—*Jeremy Taylor*.

Do not forget that while you fold your hands, Time folds not up his wings.—*Fawcett*.

ARE THE SCRIPTURES DIVINELY INSPIRED?

If to this enquiry a simple negative or affirmative answer be required, it must be given in an emphatic *yea*. But, in order to show this clearly to those who still doubt their inspiration, let us take up the Book and examine it for a little. Every one who lives in a Christian land is aware of the existence of a book called the *Holy Bible*—a book which has been translated into more different languages than any other which has ever been written. But let the case be supposed, that we never had before heard of a written revelation having been given by God to man, and some one were to inform us of the existence of such a book. Our first thought would be a wish to see it and to examine it, so as to find out for ourselves if it bore upon it the impress of divinity. He would expect it to differ materially from all other books—to treat of matters which man left to himself could never have attained unto. And in the loftiest conceivable style let the Bible be subjected to this test. Any one who peruses it carefully must admit that it is a book altogether unique, there being no such other in the whole compass of literature. It never deals with trifles. It leads not the reader through the mazes of philosophic speculations, nor does it introduce him to some sentimental, love-sick story. It never speaks with diffidence, but declares truths the most important without stooping to prove them, carrying all along with it with a dignified and irresistible sweep. In short, eternal truths beam through it everywhere, like so many diamond points, each one arrayed in royal apparel. What adulation said concerning Herod's oration at Cæsarea, every unprejudiced reader will declare concerning the Bible: "It is the voice of a God, and not of a man." It ever speaks like a God. In its opening sentence it at once ignores and oversteps all

heathen mythologies. It recognizes only one God, who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. It proclaims God to be the perfection of unity, and it tells of a mysterious trinity in that unity—a truth which the wisest reason or the most fertile imagination of man would never have even dreamt of. It lifts the screen from the past and unveils the future. It speaks of an eternity gone, and of an eternity to come. It begins with a "paradise lost," and it ends with a "paradise regained." It clears up the problem of human life, which the world's sages could not solve. It tells us how we came into existence, for what we came into existence, why we go out of existence, and whither. It gives us the key for opening up the inscrutable transactions that are ever happening around us. When man suffers it points to sin as the cause. Its two great topics are sin and salvation from sin. It reveals a wondrous plan entered into from eternity by a three-one God for the redemption of man, so that by means of it an infinitely holy God can pass by sin, and yet be inflexibly just. It shows how the most depraved may become partakers of this offered pardon, and what will be the awful consequences of their rejection of it.

"In it the hidden stone, the manna lies;
It is the great Elixir rare and choice;
The key that opens to all mysteries,
The Word in characters, God in the voice."

Now, surely, such a book, that tells us all this and a thousand things more, which are all equally beyond the range of unaided reason, cannot have come from man.

But some may say, high and sublime as its diction and its truths are, still there is a probability that it is only a human fiction, for "who hath ascended to the heavens and descended" with such intelligence? To this it may be answered, that if its weighty truths are far above and beyond human reason, it is a conclusive proof that they are not the offspring of it. In what-

ever manner they may have reached us, one thing is certain, man is not the author of them. Whence, then, did they come? They surpass everything that earth could produce, therefore earth did not produce them. They are unlike anything that hell would produce, therefore hell did not produce them. There is only another source whence they could come, and whence they did come, viz., heaven. And the Scriptures claim for themselves this high authority: they tell us that it was from heaven they came. Turning to them, we find that all those who made such wonderful discoveries about God and man as they contain, ever declare that it was God who authorized them. They spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God to speak, and when they reveal what man could not have known of himself, surely he ought to believe them.

But it may be objected again, perhaps these several authors were themselves deceived, or perchance they have knowingly attempted to deceive others, upon whom they palmed off their forgeries. How do we know that they were not impostors, for in a matter so important we require something more than their bare word. If God sent them he would certainly give them satisfactory evidence to show to the world that they were heaven-sent. This is just what God did. He gave to these professed messengers of his most abundant proofs to show to those to whom they were sent, that their words were really from God. They did amongst them the works which none other men did. They wrought many and diverse miracles, and they foretold events with the most minute certainty hundreds of years before they took place. In the face of such accumulated evidence, no one in his senses can deny that a revelation from God has been given to man.

There is another difficulty still, however, which naturally arises in the inquir-

ing mind. Granting that God gave a written revelation to man, how can we be certain that the Bible as we now have it is that revelation? "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times;" but how can it be shown that the Scriptures as we now have them are these pure words which were once delivered to the saints? Has no one added to or subtracted anything from them? Although there had been no direct evidence to satisfy us upon this point, there would have been the greatest probability in favour of their preservation, so that nothing of importance should be lost to us; for that God who raised up men in different ages to make known his truth, was as able in after times to raise up others to preserve it. The probability is that he would do so, and the truth is that he did do so. The evidence hinges not upon a conjecture, for the fact is that the Jews who were entrusted with the lively oracles of God, ever watched over their Old Testament Scriptures with a jealous eye. And this is a thing to be wondered at, for these very Scriptures contained many records and many prophecies humiliating to their national pride, yet they would allow no one with their consent to alter one jot or tittle. And what the Jewish nation did for the Old Testament the Roman Catholic church has done for the New. She may have deviated far from the truth, but she has preserved *the Truth*. Although she has endeavoured to give to the decisions of general councils an undue importance, God in his providence has held back her hands from the mutilation of Scripture. He said to her, "Do my prophets no harm," and she obeyed. One would have imagined that the easiest way for her to have established in early times many of her idiosyncrasies, would have been to have put them into the Bible, and then to have quoted from it in support of them; but this she

has never attempted to do. She has not even sought to cut out those passages which militate against her dogmas.

But it may be asked further, notwithstanding all the watchfulness of the Jews and of the Roman Catholic church, is it not possible that at least one book of Scripture may have been lost in some of the world's dark ages, and that book perhaps the most important? It is possible that such a thing might have happened, but it is not true that it has happened. Melito, who flourished in the second century, gives the oldest list of the books of the Jewish canon, and it is identical with that which we now have, with the exception of Nehemiah and Esther, both of which are thought to have been included under the title of Ezra. A remarkable fact going to prove with what fidelity the Jews pre-erved their Scriptures, came to light in the 17th century. A colony of Israelites settled near Pekin in China, which had been there from time immemorial, possessed the greater portion of the Old Testament, the rest having been destroyed by fire; the part that still remained corresponded exactly with our Hebrew Bible. And there have since been found amongst the Jews in Malabar, in antique form, entire manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures, corresponding to a letter with those which have come down to us. So much for the authenticity of the Old Testament.

With regard to the New Testament Scriptures, the inspiration of twenty of its books (the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the first thirteen Epistles of Paul, the first Epistle of Peter, and the first of John) was never controverted by the early church. The Epistle of James, the second of Peter, Jude, and the second and third of John were not received at first by some of the Christian churches as of Divine authority, but gradually came to

be recognised by all as such.* The Epistles to the Hebrews, the authority of which was disputed chiefly in the western churches; and the book of Revelation, which met with much opposition in the East, were longer than any others in being acknowledged as parts of the canon of Scripture. But although there was hesitancy in some cases concerning the authority of certain parts of Scripture, perfect harmony was what it all ended in. And even this early hesitancy shows that books were not blindly received into the sacred canon without their being thoroughly sifted. And, notwithstanding all the disputes of the first three centuries upon the point, as far back as the year 325 A.D., in which the famous council of Nice was held, we find all the churches agreeing that the only books of the New Testament Scripture are the *twenty-seven* which are now in our possession. And there are MSS. still existing nearly as old as this date. The Alexandrian MS. in the British Museum is about 1500 years old. And the Vatican MS. in the Pope's library at Rome is believed to have been written in the 5th century. And these documents, with very slight differences which are scarce worthy of notice, correspond with the New Testament as we now have it.*

Such statements are facts which cannot be gainsaid, and they prove beyond dispute that the Bible as it now exists is the inspired Word of God, which abideth for ever. History has been ransacked by the enemies of revelation, but instead of overthrowing it has only gone to substantiate the truth of the Bible. Criticism has also set its wits to work to prove it false, but like an old rock of the ocean against which the foaming billows have dashed for ages, the old Bible stands secure.

But methinks I hear some one asking, "Is it not true that criticism has discovered

* See Gausson on the Canon.

In the Scriptures come glaring inconsistencies and flat contradictions, and how can it be the Word of God if this be the case?" It is true that so long as man is an imperfect creature we may expect differences of opinion to exist, and it is impossible to put a stop to those apparent contradictions which spring from human weakness. The smallest of God's works is shrouded in mystery, and is it to be fancied that we can adequately grapple with that which is high "beyond a seraph's thought." There are, it must be confessed, some small seeming inaccuracies with respect to figures, e.g. the length of some of the king's reigns, but these can easily be ascribed to the carelessness of copyists in the ancient times. In Hebrew numbers are represented by letters of the alphabet, and many of these letters are so exceedingly alike, that one might readily be mistaken for another, especially if not well executed, which it is not to be expected they always were, when all copies of Scripture had to be made with the pen. It would have required a standing miracle, and the inspiration of every copyist guiding his eye, his hand, and his pen, to have avoided this. Even in our own day, with all the aids at our command for making books, errors will creep into them after they have left the author; but because of the omission of a word here, or the addition of a cipher there, are we to throw a book away as not being the production of the individual whose name it bears? If any one were to act upon this principle his library would soon be sadly reduced, for there are very few books that are altogether correct in their typography. Yet it is only such paltry errors as these which have been dragged up of late, and paraded before the world by those who ought to know better, as grave inconsistencies in the Bible, while the unity and grand scope of the whole has been overlooked.

But the inquiry may be here suggested: If it be admitted that there is even one error or mis-written word in the Bible, is this not letting in the wedge which virtually destroys our faith in revelation altogether; for if there be even one error or miswriting in the Bible, why not more, and where are we to stop? Why, we are just to stop where these errors stop, and they are scarcely worthy of notice. For the truth is, that there is not an ancient classic author which has come down to us from antiquity so pure and unadulterated as the Bible. Homer and Virgil, and even the mere modern Shakespeare, have such a variety of readings that the author's meaning has frequently to be guessed at. But all the various readings that have ever been found in the MSS. of the inspired volume, do not alter a single doctrine therein contained.

But there still remains another question. In what sense are we to regard the Bible as inspired? Does its inspiration extend merely to the sentiments expressed, or to the very words in which they are couched? In answering this question it is necessary to discriminate between the different parts of Scripture. The Bible contains a great deal of historical matter, much of which is professedly taken from the common sources of history, viz., from "personal knowledge, authentic information, private documents, genealogies, official lists, family traditions, and public records." The genealogies of Christ, as given by Matthew and Luke, would have been no argument to a Jew to prove the Messiahship of Jesus, unless they had been derived from the public recognized registers of the land.* Such historical passages as these, although not dictated by the Spirit of God, had that Spirit guiding their authors in their selection; and because of their incorporation with Scrip-

* See Pye Smith on the Messiahship of Christ

ture they have the Divine approbation stamped upon them.

The Scriptures also contain many speeches of uninspired men; for instance, the speeches of Job's comforters, of Benhadad, of Rabshakeh, of Tertullus, and even of Satan—in many cases containing unsound reasoning and false philosophy. All that can be said of these is, that it pleased God that they should be recorded and handed down to our times. Hence, because a sentiment is expressed in the Word of God we are not always to agree with it. We must discover by whom it was first uttered before we give it weight. But besides the sayings of uninspired men, and the records it has pleased God to preserve to us in His Word, all of which are for our learning, we have also God himself speaking to us through men who were inspired in the highest sense of the term, for "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Bible, then, as a whole, may be regarded as God's book—most of it coming directly from Himself, the rest gathered up from various sources under His direction. In a certain sense it is all inspired; that is, there is nothing in it but what God intended should be in it; yet it is not all equally inspired. It is the spiritual food which God has provided for his people, and like that food—the quails and the manna—with which he fed ancient Israel in the desert, part has been furnished by him from earth, and part has been sent direct from heaven. It is the great Book human and divine. It contains all that man in this world will ever know of the unseen and eternal state. It is the only lamp that has been given for our feet, and the only light that we will ever have for our path. And if we are wise for ourselves, we will take it as it is, and while we thank God for his gift, diligently lay up its pro-

cepts in our hearts and practice them in our lives. It is not only the best book in the day of health but it is the best in the hour of death, and the only one that affords consolation and comfort then. The weary and the heavy laden have ever found in it sweet consolation for their souls. It has been the guiding star of the world from the hoar antiquity, and long after ours and unborn generations shall have been forgotten, it will still be the Book of books. It originated away back on the dim horizon of time, and it shall see out the ages yet to come. When the trumpet sounds earth's funeral knell, the Bible shall in that hour be the great Book, and beyond that too. It is the oldest and it will be the best. All other books are but of yesterday compared with the age of the Bible. Other books have been written and forgotten, while the Bible lives on. Empires the mightiest have risen and passed away, but the Bible remains amongst those things which cannot be shaken. The production and preservation of the Bible is the greatest literary mystery that the world has ever seen, and there is only one solution to this mystery. It is no tissue of fables, but the Word of the Lord—the truth most sure—eternal as its God.

"Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!
Star of eternity; the only star
By which the bark of man could navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely; only star which rose on Time,
And, on its dark and troubled billows still,
As generation, drifting swiftly by,
Succeeded generation, threw a ray
Of heaven's own light; and to the hills of God,
The everlasting hills pointed the sinner's eye."

X. Y. Z.

The bee stores her hive out of all sorts of flowers for the common benefit; so a heavenly Christian sucks sweetness out of every mercy and every duty, out of every providence and every ordinance, out of every promise and every privilege, that he may give out the more sweetness to others.
—Brooks.

VISITING THE SICK.

BY THE EDITOR.

The practice of visiting the sick is not neglected in Canada, particularly in the country districts. If any one is reported to be seriously ill, battling with disease, and striving against the last enemy, immediately the neighbours of the country side call to inquire for them, and sit in the room around the invalid till the apartment is almost stifling, and the invalid can hardly draw a breath. Medical men often complain of the evils of the practice, and clergymen often find that they cannot have a spiritual conversation with the individual who is unwell, except in the presence of curious onlookers.

Our attention has been directed to this subject recently, and we give our readers the practical advice which results from observation and reflection:

(1.) Those who attend upon the sick ought to know by experience, or learn by enquiry, whether it is good for the sick one to be visited by all who choose to come, or only by those who have a right to come; and they should without fear or favour act out their duty in the matter.

(2.) Those who visit who are not relatives, nor very particular friends, should not take up the very absurd notion that because they have taken the trouble to call and enquire for the invalid, that therefore they should be admitted into the sick chamber and have a conversation with him. That should be determined by the guardian of the invalid, whose decision should be satisfactory. If you are allowed to see them and speak to them, do not weary them out, as if they had as much strength to answer questions as you have to ask. If you do make any observations, make them to some profitable point. If you cannot say anything appropriate, say nothing.

(3.) If you are a Christian friend, who are allowed to see them, do not occupy their time with an injudicious harangue on religion. A great deal of harm is done in this way by well-meaning people. If a dozen of them visit on the same day, they seem all to feel as if necessity was laid upon them to speak to the invalid, especially if the invalid be a Christian, on the gospel. Some favourite line of thought, on which they are prosy, they preach upon till even a healthy individual would get tired. Now this might be tolerated if only one such instance occurred in a day; but when these are numerous, to which are added the proper pastoral visitations, and the family worship, the matter becomes serious, and a sacrifice to the invalid. No harm is intended, but harm is done, and the invalid is the sufferer.

(3.) When your visit is made then leave. Do not sit around the room, looking and gaping and talking, unless you have some business. The invalid needs repose, needs fresh air, needs to be as much alone as possible.

(4.) After you leave, meditate on the lessons of the sick chamber. If you are healthy and strong now, your time of trouble and sickness may come. If you are prepared to die you will be less afraid to face it. If you are not prepared to die, then do not wait for the sick bed. You may not have a sick bed; but if you have, you will find that it is a poor place to prepare to meet your God. The time is now. Prepare therefore for the worst without delay.

A sullen silence is both a sin and a punishment. There is a generation among us who, when they are under the afflicting hand of God, have no mouths to plead with God, no lips to praise God, no tongues to justify God; these are possessed with a dumb devil; they wrong many at once, God and Christ, bodies and souls.—*Brooks.*

A DEATH IN A HOSPITAL.

"Have not you got any of your friends coming to see you to-day, David?" I asked one Sunday afternoon of an old man who lay at the far-away end of a long surgical ward, and by whose side I still sat solitary, long after every other bed had its complement of outer-world faces gathered around it.

No churchgoing had there been for me that calm bright day of rest, for the wards were full of critical cases, not to be safely left, even for an hour. And yet, though I felt the deprivation with regret, I was not sad; for I too had had my holy work to do, and was satisfied. What better can any of us wish for. Sunday or weekday, than just the particular task to do that God gives us, each at its own particular hour? The old man whom I now spoke to was one of the critical cases. A very old man he was, over whose white head had passed the successes, the disappointments, the disasters of eighty-seven years,—doing their work, in that he was not dismayed at death, nor unprepared to meet it. He had been brought to us a few days since, suffering from a severe accident, one of the frequent mischances of infirm old age in the hurry of the crowded streets, and from the want of vitality in the patient's system, there had been from the first but little hope of his ultimate recovery. Secondary hæmorrhage had since come on, and it was now only a question of a day more or less as to the old man's life. A daughter, a son-in-law, and a couple of neighbours had been to see him several times since his admission, but to-day—just when he seemed most sinking—I waited for them in vain; and thus it was that I asked him:—

"Have not you got any of your friends coming to see you to-day, David?"

The old man turned his blue eyes upon me with a smile. Clear blue eyes they were, which seemed to fight off the dimness of approaching death to the last, with their frank, childlike brightness.

"Yes,—I've got a Friend,—has come to see me," he said, and his low, slow utterance betrayed his rapidly increasing feebleness;—"has come to see me—every day—this eighty years past and more—

The oldest Friend I've got, and the truest. Comes to me to-day, and says, 'Henceforth there is laid up for thee, a crown.' Thank the blessed God, I was never separated from Him one whole day, though I've often fallen away from Him for a bit,—never He from me."

He paused, while that same happy, confident smile again lit up his whole face.—Then his manner changed slightly, and took a benign, almost patriarchal, air as he turned to me. "And I pray that He may be your friend, lassie, too, as He has been mine. You've been very kind to me, my dear, an old man and a stranger. I pray that He may lay up a crown for you, and be your friend now and for ever. I can't wish you better. The best friend,—with us every day. Yes, yes, my dear, I've had my friend come to see me."

As I made some reply—I do not now remember what—his face took yet another change; he sank back exhausted with the effort he had made, and presently began in very, very feeble tones to talk in a wandering way of his Canadian experiences. For it seemed that he had lived during the greatest part of his life in Upper Canada, and had undertaken the voyage to England,—a long expedition for a man of his age,—to see once again his youngest and favourite child, Canadian-born, but now married and settled in London.

Later in the afternoon she came in, having been delayed by some trivial domestic accident, with her husband and child; superior people all of them, like the old man, and in speech and manner more refined and educated than most of my patients. But the old man, though he quite knew her, could not again gather up his failing powers for any connected effort of thought or speech.

And so we all sat, awed and quiet, through that long Sunday afternoon. The chaplain came, after he had concluded his usual ministrations in the wards to those unable to quit their beds, to see old David, to whom at his own request he had the previous day given the Holy Communion.—But the old man, unconscious of the realities immediately surrounding him, was absorbed in past recollections; lost in his own happy, childlike thoughts, and listening above all, through all his wandering,

and weakness, to the voice of his Friend. If any had wished to see how calm and glad a Sabbath ends a good man's life, how little death is terrible to a "faithful servant," they should have seen old David that bright summer Sunday in hospital, slipping away in his serene and childlike joy into the great Sabbath of Eternity.

We watched till evening. Then sweetly through the open windows came floating in with silvery sound the bells of St. Luke's Church hard by, ringing the first peal for evening service.

"Hark, children," said the old man, "the bells! We shall be late. We must make the mare step out." He gave a slight shiver. "Pull up the buffalo-cloak close, Nell, your mother feels the cold.—Faith, it'll be cold to-day across the river."

"He's thinking of our old farm at Tyendinaga," whispered the daughter, "where we had to go to church in the sleigh and by the ferry."

The old man shivered again, though he was protected from the mild summer evening air by quite a pile of soft blankets laid over him.

"Across the river, lass, only just across the river. We'll soon be there," he rambled on, as he turned his now dim eyes upon his weeping daughter, whose tears death's blindness kept from his sight.—"Across the river, Nell, dearie. Wrap yourself and the mother close."

"Across the river," yes, swiftly, swiftly; to a far grander church than ever old David's devout imaginings had pictured, To the church of the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the assembly of just men made perfect, which the prophet-Apostle even can but dimly foreshadow to our finite and half-taught minds by all the heaped-up mystic imagery he employs of this earth's richest and rarest. As the lust bells chimed in to the evening service at St. Luke's, he half-lifted his feeble hand with a kind of warning gesture.

"Just there," he said faintly, and smiled.

His voice faltered and failed, so that we only caught his words by snatches. "God's house," we heard him murmur, "abide in it forever more,—lifting up holy hands,—name of the holy child Jesus,—Jesus,—Jesus;"—he rested on the blessed Name,

repeating it, as so many of the one Flock have repeated it before and since,—their first, last thought, their stay, their hope, their life-boat through the flood. And even as he said it, he was with Him; he had passed within the heavenly gates; he had begun the eternal Sabbath where work and rest, sympathy and joy, knowledge and love, are perfected and combined in the unveiled presence of God.

And we, the watchers left outside yet for a little while, had surely had a service and a sermon that Sunday in hospital, well in harmony with, and equal in power to any which that day were heard within church walls; and one that should ever remind us to spend all future Sundays,—ay, and for the matter of that all week-days, too,—purely and gladly, and ever closely in the presence of that Divine "best Friend."
—*Sunday Magazine.*

BE LOOKING TO JESUS.

Though your troubles be as the waves of the sea,
Still look unto Jesus your head,
For He will save and redeem you from the grave,
When you come to lie with the dead.

O yes, my child, to God be reconciled,
You need not be afraid to die;
For when the Lord will call your body will fall,
But your soul will rise 'bove the sky.

Your trouble will be o'er and you'll sin no more,
But exempt from every care,
Singing the Lamb's praise through eternity of days;
I say there will be no night there.

You'll live for ever, walking by the river,
Drinking of the water of life;
You will have no fears, for God will wipe your tears,
In the eternal Paradise.

Be looking to Jesus—this is what pleases
Happy souls wherever they be;
Delighting in duties, beholding fresh beauties,
Throughout a long eternity.

So then praise your God and spread his name
abroad.

A world of glory is for you;
A mansion in the skies and no weeping eyes:
So carnal world I bid you adieu.

BOANQUERA

Mrs. F.

THE TWO SHOEMAKERS.

James and William lived next door to each other, and earned a livelihood by making shoes. Each of these men had in their cottage a small piece of furniture about twelve inches long and six broad.

With James it generally remained unused from Saturday to Saturday, when it was moved with the rest of the things, just to have the dust wiped off it, but by William there was hardly a piece of furniture in more constant request than this small one.

These two men were very unlike each other: poor James worked hard, sometimes harder than William, but it was by fits and starts, and then he worked just to keep want away, and all the time he looked unhappy and morose. William, on the contrary, worked steadily away, thanking God that he had work to do; often he whistled or sung a hymn, but oftener still he talked silently to his Almighty Friend. Children, passing, would peep in at the door, and sometimes he would ask them to stay a little, for they loved to watch the mysterious progress of boot and shoe, and while they watched, William would speak kind words to them about a greater mystery—the *soul* that each little child possessed—of the *glorious home* prepared for them—of the *evil one* who sought to hinder their entrance to glory, and the BLESSED ONE, who *died* that they might overcome all wickedness and *live* forever.

James and William's homes were as unlike as were the two men. James' had a poverty-stricken look, but William's an air of comfort. Now what made all this difference in these two neighbours and their homes? Why, the *neglect* on the part of James of this small piece of furniture, and the *prayerful use* of it by William. You guess what it was, I dare say!—the Bible—yes, *the Bible!* William could say, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; more to be desired are they than gold;" while poor James had not discovered any beauty in them.

Dear friends, what is your Bible to you? Is it a *mine of wealth*, ever yielding some fresh treasure; or is it a *neglected thing*, ready to rise as an accusing witness in that

awful day which you and I must see, and from all the terrors of which the Bible, prayerfully read and lived, would have rescued us?—*Merry's Museum.*

BORROWING TROUBLES.

That was sensible advice which was given to the young bear, puzzled to know how to walk.

"Shall I," said he, "move my right front paw first, or my left, or the two front paws first, or the two hind ones, or all four at once, and how?" The old she-bear came to his relief with the advice, "Leave off thinking and walk."

It is not uncommon for men to place themselves in the predicament of the young bear; to involve themselves in needless complexities, by trumping up imaginary difficulties, or by timorously looking forward to the future. There are some who appear to take pleasure in casting a dismal boroscope of their lot; and there is no one who does not suffer, more or less, from dangers and perplexities, from trials and sorrows, which have no real existence.

As a general thing, one who is over-anxious about doubtful duties, may be sure that he is shirking present and plain duties. It seldom happens that the duty of the present moment cannot be discerned. If that is done, it becomes a torch, throwing light on the duty next at hand. In every department of life, the habit of borrowing trouble is found, crippling action and sound thought. In religious experience it is often a hindrance. Its victim, while neglecting palpable duties, bemoans his present condition, and laments that he has not the emotion which he should like to have, and torments himself with doubts and fears. And more devout faith would lead him to walk, cheerfully and step by step, his appointed path, and to believe that the merciful power which had upheld him hitherto would shield him to the end.—*Examiner.*

After much praying, waiting and weeping, God usually comes with his hands and his heart full of mercy to his people. He loves not to come empty-handed to those who have sat long with tearful eyes at mercy's door.—*Brooks.*

What does the World owe to the Bible?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN SULLIVAN."

This is a question which, if properly and thoroughly discussed, would occupy volumes; hence, to treat of it in a couple of pages requires the utmost degree of condensation. Two branches of the inquiry naturally present themselves to the mind. The first, What the world was before it knew anything of the Bible? The second, What the world now is where the Bible is unknown? So, if we were speaking of the sun, and its value, we might treat the question positively, and show what the sun does for us; or we might treat it negatively, by observing how the world fares when the sun is not seen. In the present case, the negative argument will be the simplest, and will require the smallest amount of space.

I. What, then, was the condition of the world before, through the mission of the apostles, Christianity and the Old and New Testaments were offered to the whole human race?

It is described in Scripture, in various places, as a state of darkness; and the glory of Christianity is, that it brought light into the midst of all this gloom. "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people," when "the Lord," as the sun, "shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isa. lx. 2). "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isa. ix. 2). "God," says St. Peter, "hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9).

Now "the works of darkness" are well known. It is in the hours of gloom that the plunderer, the ravisher, the murderer, seeks his victim, roaming, like the beasts of prey, under cover of the night. And the whole state of the world before the rise of Christianity was one night of gloom. "Darkness covered the earth." Lust and cruelty were the presiding deities of the scene. We may not, with any regard to decency, treat with explicitness of these horrors; for, as St. Paul reminds us, "it is a shame even to speak of such things" (Eph. v. 12); but it is needful, if we would do justice to the subject, to point, in general terms, to the leading features of heathenism. Of these two characteristics, lust and cruelty, we will say a few words, describing each apart.

Lust, and that of the most abominable character, was taught in the religions of paganism. Thus Aristotle recommends, gravely, that "the statues and paintings of

the gods should exhibit no indecent scenes, except in the temples of those deities who preside over sensuality."* And Seneca, speaking of the character of their prayers, says, "What a man ought not even to hear, they do not blush to describe to the gods." Their religious ceremonies chiefly consisted of abominable rites. Herodotus, in his second book, and in other places; Plutarch, and various other writers, Greek and Roman, bear witness to this fact. Their worship was suited to the divinities they honoured. There is not a single odious vice for which the Canaanites were doomed to extirpation, which is not common in the histories of the greatest men of Greece and Rome. Can we find a higher model in all pagan antiquity than is given in Plato's dream of a "Republic," where all, he proposes, shall be regulated on the highest and noblest principles of philosophy and philosophic religion? Yet what do we find in that far-famed sketch of superhuman virtue and happiness, but a proposal that men and women shall be reared as beasts are reared, so that "no child shall know his father, nor any father his son," and in which all surplus or unpromising children shall be destroyed? Such is the fancy picture of a commonwealth, ruled by philosophy, which Plato has left us, and which embellishes, in the amplest manner, the apostle's charge against the greatest men that paganism can boast, that "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

But we must stop. It is impossible, in decent English society, even to name the enormities which were common among the sages and philosophers of paganism. A recent writer has truly said, "No one dares picture to himself, or to realise in his mind's eye, the awful state of *common social life* in the glorious periods of Greece and Rome. No one ever dares try to do so. The first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans is the nearest approach to such knowledge that can be endured."†

We turn to the other feature of the case—that cruelty, that hardness of heart, which everywhere prevailed. "Cruelty was as rampant as sensuality. Slavery was universal, and the power of life and death was no idle prerogative in the hands of masters who could gloat for days together over the dying agonies of the gladiators."

These combats of the amphitheatre were the delight, not only of the multitude, but of the polished and educated gentlemen—yes, and of the luxurious ladies of great Rome! Lipsius reckons that these sports of blood

* "Politics," vii., 17.

† Thring's "Education and Schools," pp. 74, 75.

cost from 20,000 to 30,000 lives per month; all sacrificed to "make sport!" What wonder, then, that in a population consisting largely of slaves (one senator, in the time of Augustus, owning 4,116), we hear of one great man ordering a slave to be killed for a little remissness in waiting at table? and of another, a friend of the emperor's, throwing slaves alive into a pond to feed his lampreys! A modern poet has reminded us that—

"Slaves, to be lashed and tortured, or resold;
Or maimed or murdered for a fine of gold;
Holots degraded, scarce esteemed as man,
Having no rights, for ever under ban,—
Were half the world when ancient Homer sung,
And wit and wisdom flowed from Plato's tongue."

Nor were children deemed of much more account than slaves. Lycurgus, Plato, and Aristotle, all favour the destruction of unpromising infants, or of those likely to prove "surplus." And, when allowed to live (as Gibbon reminds us), "in his father's house the son was a mere thing, confounded by the laws with the movables, cattle, and slaves, whom the capricious owner might alienate or destroy, without being responsible to any earthly tribunal." Infanticide was often authorised by law. "The exposure of children," says Gibbon, "was the stubborn and prevailing vice of antiquity."

From this to human sacrifices the step was but a short one. The Thessalians and Lacedæmonians yearly offered these. Old Rome used, at an early period, to sacrifice annually thirty men. Livy and Plutarch mention similar facts; and in the rival republic of Carthage the victims were reckoned by hundreds. Egypt, Persia, and many other countries, practised the same crime.

Nor, even after such men as Socrates and Plato, Cicero and Seneca, had appeared, was there any sign of improvement. On the contrary, despair seemed to settle down on the minds of the most thoughtful men. Thus Pliny remarked, that "nothing was to be found so miserable, yet so proud, as man." Tacitus thought that the end of the world must be near, "such was the corrupt state of mankind." But Seneca, with more feeling, says, "All is replete with crime, and vice everywhere abounds. The confusion becomes more desperate; shame is wearing out; veneration for what is pure and good is unknown; every one yields to lust. Vice no longer hides its head, but stalks along in public; depravity has so far advanced, that innocence becomes a thing unknown." In was in Seneca's time that we might have seen the great Coliseum, thronged with tens of thousands of the noblest of the men and women of earth's mightiest city gathered together to

enjoy the sight of men and beasts tearing and mangling each other. There we might have beheld delicate and high-bred ladies, nurtured in luxury, making it their choicest amusement to see an aged bishop, like Ignatius, torn to pieces by the lions; or to behold women, as well-born and fair as themselves, devoured, almost while living, by the hungry beasts! It was then, too, in the noontide of Rome's power, that we might have walked by Tiber's side, during some summer's evening, while throngs of nobles and noble ladies paraded through the palace gardens, chatting and laughing over the gossip of the day, while at every corner blazed a human torch—a poor Christian, tied to a stake, by the emperor's orders, smeared with pitch, and set up to burn alive—as a light to the sauntering crowd! Ever and anon, too, we might stop to witness the mimic chase of some detected follower of Christ, who, wrapped in a deerskin, had been turned out to be torn to death by savage and hungry hounds. These were the amusements, the luxuries, of imperial Rome; and their greatest historian can calmly describe them without any apparent consciousness of wrong. But "the main current of life, in the noblest days of polished Greece and Rome, was cruelty and lust, corrupt and mean."*

II. We pass from the classic days and scenes of Greece and Rome to the condition of barbarous or semi-civilized paganism, both in bygone times and in the present day. And here the like story awaits us on every side. Still, it is lust and cruelty, wheresoever we turn.

In former days the testimony of all extant geographers agreed, that licentious as were the habits and manners of Greece or Rome, they were equalled in wickedness and surpassed in coarseness by the customs of the barbarians. In modern times human nature remains the same. In semi-civilized India or China the religion of the people is one mass of obscenity. Their temples are filled with sculptured representations of filthy and horred crimes. In a single city, Peking, 9,500 murdered infants have been collected, from the kennels of the streets in a single year. Or, if we turn from these to simple barbarism, we find, in the islands of Polynesia, or in Madagascar, one all-pervading atmosphere of lasciviousness, which often corrupts and destroys whole nations.

Cruelty everywhere goes hand-in-hand with lust. In Mexico, before Europeans found their way thither, the blood of human victims flowed in torrents. No author computes the annual sacrifices at less than 20,000; and on one grand temple-dedication, in 1486, as many

* Mackay's "Hope of the World."

† Thuring, p. 80.

as 70,000 human beings were slaughtered. In smaller degrees, the same practice prevailed everywhere. Under the Druids, human victims were sacrificed in Britain and in Gaul. The Danes, the Scandinavians, the Slavonians, all followed the same custom. Among the Hindoos, between 1815 and 1824, as many as 5,997 widows were burnt alive in the single province of Bengal. In Africa, a single king of Ashantee directed the slaughter of 6,000 slaves at his funeral! while in Dahomey human blood is almost constantly flowing. In China, during the last ten years, the slaughter of prisoners taken in war has been almost beyond computation. On some occasions large ponds of human blood have been seen.

If we are asked, then, what the Bible has done for man, our first reply must be to point to this previous state of things, and to remark, that the light of heaven, shining through the pages of God's Word, has, wherever it has penetrated, scattered this fearful darkness. Together with lust and cruelty, there always dwelt, and still dwell, all the lesser vices of falsehood, dishonesty, envy, hatred, and their kindred evils. The morals of the Bible, wherever received, at once operate to check, extirpate, and destroy these sins. Pagan legislation, at its best, leaves morality almost disregarded. Christian legislation, even in its most imperfect aspect, protects human life and female chastity, and demands truth, and honesty, and faithfulness.

But it may be remarked, and with truth, that Christendom itself is defiled with many immoralities, and that licentiousness and cruelty are by no means banished from the lands which call themselves by the name of Christ. This is unquestionably true; but it is most important to distinguish between two things which are essentially different.

The lands called Christian are not by any means alike in their privileges. Some enjoy the sunshine of the Gospel; but the greater part have only a reflected light—a kind of moonshine. Justinian, under Church influence, established a code of laws founded upon Christian principles; and this code has formed the basis of European law ever since. This, which is not Christianity, but a fruit of Christianity, has been a prodigious boon to Europe for a thousand years. Again, the Greek and Roman Churches, while they thrust the Bible out of sight, preached a religion which, although largely corrupted, was still based upon Christianity; and was therefore far better than heathenism. This moonlight of Christianity was universal throughout Europe during all the mediæval age. The Reformation brought the Bible once more out of the recesses in which it had been buried, and again the "marvellous light" shone upon several

kingdoms of the earth. But we must not forget that, even up to our own time, God's Word has been a prohibited book in a large portion of Europe. Spain has never tolerated it; Italy, up to 1848, sternly forbade its use; and in Austria, Bavaria, and Belgium, the Romish priesthood kept the people from it; while in Northern Germany, philosophy and rationalism taught the masses to despise it. Thus, in four-fifths of Europe the Bible has had no fair trial as a medicine for men's souls.

And if we look at home, we ought in fairness to distinguish between those who receive God's message and those who reject it. We call England a Christian country, because the rulers and legislators, and the bulk of the people, profess to adhere to that faith. But it is quite obvious, and beyond all question, that a large section of the population cannot fairly be called even professors of Christianity; while a still larger proportion yield to it a mere lip-service, and nothing else. For all these, which unitedly form a majority of the nation, Christianity has done nothing beyond providing them with better laws and a purer state of society, than they could find in any heathen land. The real trophy of Christianity is found in that numerous body of real Christians who leave the whole state of society at home, and who make inroads into the kingdom of darkness which heathenism has established in so many of the kingdoms of the earth. It is by the life and conversation of Christians, and by these only, that the value of the Bible can fairly be tried. There are tens of thousands of households to be found, in these little islands of ours, in which God is "worshipped in spirit and in truth"—in which his blessed day of rest is observed—in which children honour their parents, and in which dishonesty, uncleanness, and cruelty are unknown. These are the legitimate fruits of the Bible. They form, as yet, only a minority of the population; but, by their influence and example, they so leaven the mass as to make England a favoured nation in the earth. Were the whole population like-minded, crime and punishment, prisons and criminal courts, would be unknown, and the island would be a paradise. When the whole human race shall have become earnest worshippers of God and students of his Word, then will be seen that "new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," which even heathen poets, handing down the traditions of the Nouchian days, have foretold as the consummation of all things.

Meanwhile, however, the Bible is doing its work in other lands besides England. A few hundreds of people, gathering themselves together in two or three associations, in England,

about fifty years ago, began to send Bibles and missionaries to heathen lands. "The labourers were few," and often feeble; but the results have been astonishing. In every quarter of the globe the sound of the Gospel is now heard. New Zealand, forty years ago the abode of bloodthirsty cannibals, has now its twenty Christian churches, and its tens of thousands of native worshippers. Africa, on its western coast and in its southern territory, has hundreds of communities of Christian men and women, living the lives of faithful followers of Christ. Burmah has more than a hundred native preachers of the Gospel; Madagascar more than half that number; while in India between 100,000 and 200,000 Protestant Christians already reward the labourer's toil.

These are the fruits of a few feeble efforts, put forth only within the last fifty or sixty years, by some of the sincere followers of Christ in England and in America. Hundreds of peaceful and happy Christian villages are now dotted over the earth's surface, in lands where, at the opening of the present century, lust and cruelty, oppression and all manner of abominations, reigned alone. These hopes for the future the world owes to the Bible; but they are, as yet, only the first-fruits of a great and glorious harvest. But, in every one of these homes of Christian civilisation, whether in a peaceful English village, or in one equally happy in Burmah or in Sierra Leone, the father of a family who can look around on a loving wife and children, free, happy, intelligent, obedient, knowing neither crime nor fear, must, if he rightly appreciates these blessings, exclaim, with a grateful heart, "All this, under God's mercy, I owe to the Bible."—*The Quiver*.

DECISION AND DESTINY.

Indecision ruins souls by millions. Truth and conscience and the Spirit plead for duty and right; pleasure, and riches, and ambition tempt to sin and ruin. Thousands know the better path of happiness and peace, but follow the road that leads to death.

Prescott, the eminent historian, relates that Pizarro the conqueror of Peru, in one of his reverses, was cast upon the island of Gallo, with a few of his followers. When in a starving condition, two vessels arrived from Panama for his relief, and to induce him to abandon his object. Now came the test of his decision of character, and the determination of his earthly destiny. "Drawing his sword, he traced a line with it in the sand from east to west. Then turning towards the south, 'Friends and comrades,' he said, 'on that side

are toil, hunger, nakedness, the dreddening storm, desolation, and death; on this side, ease and pleasure. There lies Peru, with its riches; here, Panama and its poverty.—Choose, each man, what becomes a brave Castilian. For my part I go to the south.'—So saying, he stepped across the line. He was followed by eleven others," and Peru was conquered.

Could we encircle each impenitent reader with a line drawn by the sword of the Spirit, we would say, "Dying man, there are self-denial, and providential discipline, and fearful conflicts, and ceaseless toils, and ultimate victory and reward; here are present ease, and fleeting joys, and empty honours. There is heaven and its glories; here is earth, with its pleasures; and yonder, hell, with its destiny of misery. 'Choose you this day whom ye will serve,' and where you will go. Eternity hinges on your decision—an eternity of bliss or woe!"—*Herald of Mercy*.

PRAY MORE—TALK LESS.

A lady, who had been a sincere follower of Christ, but whose husband was still unconverted was much afflicted on his account, one day told a clergyman that she had done all in her power in persuading and beseeching him to turn from his evil practices, but to no effect. "Madam," said he, "Talk more to God about your husband, and less to your husband about God." A few weeks after, the lady called upon him, full of joy that her prayers to God had been heard, and that a change was wrought, by Divine grace, upon her husband's mind.—*Band of Hope Review*.

COMPOUND INTEREST GIVEN.

I knew a rich merchant in Petersburg, Russia, who, at his own cost, supported a number of native missionaries in India, and gave like a prince to the cause of God at home. I asked him, one day, how he could do it? He replied, "When I served the devil, I did it on a large scale, and at princely expense; and when, by his grace, God called me out of darkness, I resolved Christ should have more than the devil had had. But how I can give so much, you must ask God, who enables me to give it. At my conversion I told the Lord his cause should have a part of all that my business brought me; and every year since I made him that promise it has brought me in about double that it did the year before, so that I can and do double my gifts to his cause." How true what Bunyan said:

"A man there was, so me called him mad;
The more he cast away, the more he had."

"There is," saith God, "that giveth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than he meet, and it tendeth to poverty." God will be debtor to no one. He pays compound interest for all that by faith, is put into his hand.

PRAY FOR YOUR MINISTER.

EFFECT WISE TO OBTAIN A BLESSING FOR YOUR OWN SOUL.

1.—For Divine grace to renew, quicken, and preserve him as a vessel unto honour, sanctified and approved for his Master's use.

2.—That the Holy Spirit may so apply his studies, that he may ever be a learner, and always a teacher.

3.—That the Lord would so order and sanctify his experience, and direct and bless him in the use of his talents, as to prove that he was sent, and is owned of God.

4.—That he may always be faithful as a PREACHER; diligent as a PASTOR; and exemplary as a PATRIARCH.

5.—That he may never trifle with the word of God, the souls of men, or the delusions of Satan.

6.—That he may be preserved from diminishing his usefulness by a political, a worldly, or a careless spirit.

7.—That he may be watchful to discover, and labour to improve opportunities of usefulness.

8.—That his hands may be strengthened; by God's providence restraining the wicked—His grace renewing and comforting penitent believers—and His power preserving his spiritual children in truth, righteousness and peace.

9.—That his principles and conduct may invariably be regulated by the commands and example of Christ.

10.—That he may realize and diffuse such an unctional spirit, as may be most salutary to himself, and profitable to others.

11.—That God may dispose him to ascribe the success of his labours to the Divine purpose, mercy, and power.

12.—That he may be blessed with such encouragement in his work, as may prove a constant stimulus for renewed exertion.

The Preacher and the Flock either feed or starve one another: what they withhold from him in prayers, they lose in doctrine. Those who merely go to cavil or strive, come away empty of spiritual food.—Those who give liberally to their minister in secret prayer, have their own souls made fat by the very same doctrine that falls unblest upon others. Then let us hear more and more upon our hearts before our Father's Throne. 'Our Minister,' and we will assuredly feast more largely upon the banquet that he spreads: may we learn the secret of the profitable barter: instant, affectionate, individual intercession for the teacher, in the spirit of faith; then may we sit contented, and humbly confident to receive the assured answer in the portion which he is commissioned to divide.—*English Tract.*

WILL IT STAND PRAYER IN ITS BEHALF?

Romaine was one night invited to a female friend's house to tea, and, after the tea things were removed, she asked him to have a game at cards, to which he made no objection. The cards were produced, and, when everything was ready for play, "Let us," said Romaine, "ask the blessing of God." She was surprised. "Ask the blessing of God!" said she, with surprise, "I never heard of such a thing to game of cards." Romaine inquired, "Ought we to engage in anything on which we are ashamed to ask the blessing of God?" This gentle rebuke put an end to the card-playing for that evening.—*Land of Hope Review.*

Sabbath School Lessons.

November 13th, 1864.

A LAWYER QUESTIONS JESUS.

Mark xii. 28-34.

It is common for those who speak the truth plainly to meet with cavillers. Our Lord while on the earth was no exception. He was captiously interrogated by Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees. Having silenced the cavils of these he was again attacked by one of the Scribes.

The Jews doubted whether the moral law or the ceremonial rites of circumcision and sacrifices were the greater. Hence the Scribe asked the question. He receives the answer referred to in the lesson.

LOVE TO GOD is the first commandment.

(1.) *For antiquity.* It is older than the ten commandments. It was binding even upon Adam before he fell.

(2.) *For dignity.* Inasmuch as it deals with God Almighty, it must take precedence of every other. (Other commandments deal with man and his fellow; this with man and his God.

(3.) *For justice.* If man cannot understand how he is enjoined to love his neighbour who has injured him, he can easily understand how he is bound to love the God who created and sustains him.

Love to God is the great commandment. It is great, for it containeth within itself every other. Even the second commandment is comprehended in it. It comprehends all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. The keeping of it ensures happiness. The breaking of it ensures damnation.

The Scribe had sufficient discernment to discover the greatness of the command, for he said it was more than "all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Observe—(1.) This command man originally fulfilled; but ever since the fall no mere man has done it or can do it.

(2.) This duty is still binding, and by it we shall be judged. Our inability gives us no claim to exemption from the curse of breaking it.

(3.) The Lord Jesus hath fulfilled the whole of this command for us, and if we believe on Him He will bear our sins, and we shall receive the credit of Christ's action.

November 20th, 1864.

SAUL ANOINTED KING.

1 Sam. x. 1-27.

Ver. 1-6. David, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, and Solomon, were anointed in the same way, 1 Kings i. 39. Kissing was the act of a subject to a king, Psal. ii. 12. Saul was to remember, 1. He was the *Lord's* servant. The people would call him *king*, but God would treat him as His *servant*, and keep him on the throne only while he did his duty. None are so high as to be above serving God, Psal. ii. 10, 11. 2. He was *anointed* king. This would remind how solemnly he was set apart to God's work. 3. It was over *God's* inheritance; they were therefore to be governed after God's will.

Ver. 2-13. Mention separately the six signs given to Saul. These signs would convince Saul that Samuel was commissioned by God to anoint him king, and they would help to keep him obedient to Samuel's instructions. The prophecies which the Bible contains are great proofs of its being from God. Notice Samuel's tenderness of feeling. He had told him the previous day that the asses were found, but only now of his father's anxiety (ver. 2) when he was on his way home.— Cherish a tender spirit. There must have been good people in Israel then; see how many are referred to, ver. 3-5. Christ has more followers than we are apt to think, 1 Kings xix. 10-18. These men did not go to God empty-handed; when we go to worship, it is a good time to lay past our money as we have ability, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. The prophets were often called the sons of the prophets, 2 Kings ii. 3-5, and dwelt in societies, (ver. 5) cultivating learning, teaching music, &c. This is the meaning of their prophesying; see 1 Chron. xxv. 1; Rom. xii. 6. It is doubtful (ver. 6) if Saul was a pious man until now. It is not a good sign that, though he lived within twenty miles of Ramah, he was a stranger to Samuel, 1 Sam. ix. 19; and that it should be thought so astonishing he became a prophet. He was now changed, (ver. 11) but, from his future history being so inconsistent, we cannot tell how far the change went. Beware of grieving or quenching the Spirit of God, who speaks to you in this Bible. One man (ver. 12) seems to have known how Saul could become a prophet; he asked, But who is their father?—meaning, How did any of these men become prophets? Could not God make *Saul* a prophet as well as another. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? What changes did he work on another Saul! 1 Tim. i. 12-16 and

on the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 9-11. He can do the same for you.

Ver. 14-16. Saul shows his prudence here; it would have been dangerous to tell his uncle all. We are always bound to speak truth, but need not tell the whole truth. It would have been a lie to say that was all Samuel told him. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that speaketh truth in his heart. Psal. xv. 2.

Ver. 17-19. Mizpeh was a city of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 3-26, where the tribes had assembled to exterminate Benjamin, Jud. xx. 1; it was a fit place in which to honour Benjamin by taking a king from that tribe. The sin of Israel (ver. 18, 19) lay here. They thought their misfortunes arose from the want of a king, instead of being the fruit of their sins, Jud. ii. 16-19; and they imagined a king would be a better governor than God, 1 Sam. viii. 7. God had designed they should have a king of His choosing, Deut. xvii. 14, 15; but through their sin he gave them one in anger, Hos. xiii. 9-11. The benefits we receive from God are soon forgotten, Isa. i. 2, 3.

Ver. 19-24. Though Saul was anointed previously, the lot was taken to satisfy the people, otherwise they might have thought he was only Samuel's choice. The lot was resorted to on great occasions, Josh. vii. 17. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord," Prov. xvi. 33. This is a very different thing from gambling and wagering, which are sinful and dangerous. Observe Saul's modesty; (the stuff in which he was hid was the people's baggage.) This was a good beginning; some in his place would have put themselves in the most prominent place. See his faith: he knew on whom the lot would fall. All God's promises shall be fulfilled, Psal. cxi. 7, 8. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, Psal. xxv. 10. His appearance was in his favour, ver. 23, and 1 Sam. ix. 2 which, with God's choice, and Samuel's approbation, enlisted the feelings of the people on his behalf.

Ver. 25-27. The manner of the kingdom is the manner in which it was to be ruled, Deut. xvii. 14-20. In every company (ver. 27) there are some good and some bad. The good are so by God's grace, ver. 26; Eph. ii. 1, 3, 4, 5. Belial is a word meaning wickedness. Children of Belial are the same as wicked men. In despising him they despised God, for God had elected him. See Saur's self-command; he waited for a fit opportunity of approving himself to be worthy of the throne. "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof," Prov. xxv. 8. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, Col. iv. 5.—Edin. S. S. Lessons.