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## WHAT IF CHRISTIANITY IS NOT TRUE?

BY REV. NORMAN MACLEOD, D.D.

Is the Christian religion true or false? In other words, is there really such a person as Jesus Christ, who righteously claims our whole heart, and who will assuredly, now and for ever, redeem from evil and bring to God all who cordially believe in Him and love Him? This is the grand question of fact we have to deal with. Christianity is Christ. As a revelation to us, it is a revelation of our Father through His eternal Son, our Brother and Lord. As a revelation *in* us, it is a revelation of the Son in our souls, through the Spirit; or, supreme love to God and man, in Jesus Christ.

But if there is no such person as Jesus Christ, "whom not having seen we love,"—if the faith of the Christian Church has been faith in a fancy; if our supposed personal knowledge of Jesus has been a delusion;—if the deep devoted love of eighteen centuries, which, from every portion of the Church catholic, has been poured forth like the precious ointment on Jesus Christ, the unseen yet ever-present Saviour, is a mere sentiment, without any real person to draw it forth, receive it, and return it; if all the life, strength, and joy which millions have derived, as they believed, from knowing Christ, has been the result of only a pious fraud practised on themselves—then, but not till then, is Christianity false! For Christianity, we repeat, is not a mere system of morals or of doctrines, apart from a living Person; but is Jesus for us, Jesus to us, Jesus in us, Jesus ours, and with Him all things, now and for ever!

Christianity is false if there is no such person; but to disprove the evidences of Christ's life and power, derived from history and from the experience of the universal Church, is by no means the easy task which some people appear to imagine. We will not presume to assert, that all who oppose what they call Christianity hate Christianity itself. They may be protesting only against a false representation of it; or against false arguments in support of what is true. Such persons may be actu-

ally nearer the kingdom of heaven than many who are too indifferent to doubt, and therefore really to believe. But without wishing to pass any judgment upon the motives or standing before God, who alone knows us, of those who, from whatever cause, seem resolved to destroy the only Christianity we know of, we may express our joy in knowing, that up till this moment their attempt has not succeeded! For, in whatever way we may account for it, the fact is undeniable, that Christianity not only survives, but that in no age of the world's history was it so strongly rooted in the convictions and affections of men, nor did it ever give such promise of filling the whole earth. Millions of Christians are ready solemnly to declare before God that they believe in Jesus Christ; that they trust their own souls to his keeping for time and eternity, and desire nothing better or more earnestly than that those they most dearly love should do the same; and they are willing at any moment to dispense with all they possess on earth, and risk life itself rather than part with Him!

Let us suppose, however, for the sake of argument, that by some process hitherto undiscovered, Christianity, as the religion of supreme love to this living Person, Jesus Christ, shall at last be proved a fiction; that the millennium of infidelity has come,—that the religion taught by Christ and his apostles has become as dead to the world as that of Buddha or Confucius is now to the mind of Europe; that our Christian churches, like the heathen temples of Greece or Rome, remain but as monuments of a superstition long ago exploded by the light of science and philosophy,—that all these supernatural Christian facts and truths, which, like a mighty firmament of stars, now cluster around the name of Jesus, shall have departed as lights from the visible universe,—that Jesus Christ is proclaimed as one who was dead, but is not alive; until even the wailing cry has ceased of the last despairing and disconsolate believer on earth,—“They have taken away my Lord

and I know not where to find him;" and that Christian truth is as silent before the world as Christ himself was when he stood before Herod, and answered him nothing! Well, then, the work is done! The energetic teachers of the propaganda of unbelief have accomplished their long-cherished purpose, and the professors of an earnest and devoted faith in Christ have departed, leaving no memorial behind them except their "curious books," or their hoary tombstones, which record the old faith in him as the resurrection and the life.

When such a crisis as this has at last arrived, the world will surely pause, and count the fruits of victory. Wise men will then doubtless consider, with an earnest spirit, what has been gained to humanity by this tremendous revolution, in all those opinions and ideas cherished during so many ages; and the well-wishers of mankind will examine the spoils which the conquerors have ready for enriching the poor and needy, as the result of this triumph over a religion that was clung to by the best and noblest men with a tenacity overcome only when earth was old, and time was well-nigh ending. But may we not now anticipate such a solemn review, by asking those who are wishful to destroy Christianity, what they intend to put in its place when it is gone? If they have anything to give us, let us know what it is. Let us know it, and see if it is better than the old religion: if it is better suited to meet the wants of man in every period and condition of his varied life; if it is likely to do better work on earth, and produce better fruit; if its truth rests on better evidence, and if, in short, it is such a gift from heaven that angels with songs of joy might announce this new peace on earth, and this new message of good will to man. Such questions, though often asked, have not hitherto received any reply. If there be a something better in store for us than Christianity, the blissful secret has not yet been revealed. Infidelity, often so loud in attacking Christianity, is silent as a god of iron or brass when we ask at its shrine, What wouldest thou have me to be and do, and how live and rejoice as an immortal being? What, then, we again ask, would be lost and gained on both sides after the war, in the event of Christianity being destroyed? We Christians know full well what we would

gain and lose! We would gain nothing, but lose everything;—we would lose all which we most love in the universe of God, —all which makes us rejoice in existence, —all which enables us to look at the past, present, and future with perfect peace! In simple and earnest truth we say it, that were it possible to disprove the existence of Jesus Christ as our life here and for ever, we would be, of all men, most miserable.

It is true that, in regard to many an object of affection, it may be said—

‘Better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all!’

But not so in regard to our love of Jesus Christ! Better never to have seen that glory filling the heavens and earth, and making life a constant thanksgiving and praise, than, after having seen it, to be persuaded by any witchery that it was all a dream—a fiction of the imagination—a ghostly superstition—and that, if we are wise men, we will seek for it no more, but contentedly fall back upon our own being, and live on “without Christ in the world.” And are we in those circumstances to be told that we may still have comfort in “religion without the supernatural,” and rejoice in “the eternal and essential verities of morality?” Only think of it, Christians! The living man, the light and hope of the family, is murdered; but a disciple of pure science and calm philosophy enters it, and tells its agonized members that he has, on conscientious principles, been compelled to help in committing the murder, but that it is folly and ignorance to indulge in such grief, for science has analysed their friends, and preserved in a series of neat phials, which they may easily carry about them, all his constituent elements, his “essentials,” his carbon, his silica, this and that gas—everything whatever which made up all they were accustomed to touch and handle; therefore they may “comfort one another with those words!” And thus would the enemy of Christianity presume to comfort us with his “essentials,” when he has slain our living Lord! Comfort indeed!

“Comfort? comfort scorn’d by devils! this is truth the poet sings,  
That a sorrow’s crown of sorrow, is remembering  
happier things!”

If Christianity then is false, we who believe it have gained nothing, but lost everything, and are “of all men most miserable.”

But what can the unbeliever himself expect to gain by its destruction? "I have nothing to do with consequences," may be his reply, "but with truth only; let every lie be tested and exposed, whatever may be the real or imaginary gain or loss to myself or others." Brave words! with which we have the deepest sympathy; for if they are the utterance of a truly sincere heart, they evidence belief and not unbelief; they assume that there is an order and government in the universe, which is on the side of truth, and that we may therefore, at all hazards, discover what is true, and cling to it in the full assurance of faith, that ultimately the right and true are in harmony with all that is worth loving and worth living for. Amen! we say from our heart. At the same time, it is well to look at some of the consequences which the destruction of Christianity would involve, even to him who destroys it. It is obvious, for example, that should it cease to exist to us as a reality, other realities would remain irrespective of our belief. Existence would remain, and it *may* be one as eternal as the life of God; sorrow and suffering would remain, in all their endless forms, to gnaw the heart, darken the world, and cast deep shadows over a life, which must end with that event death, and the passing away of ourselves and of all we have from the memories of mankind, as if we had never been; and whither? Worst of all, *sin* must remain—dark, mysterious, and terrible! And "obstinate questionings" must remain to disturb and perplex the mind in moments of earnest and silent thought. Men will still ask. What if we are responsible to God for this whole inner and outer life of ours, with its beliefs, purposes, and actions? What if sin and its consequences continue beyond the grave, with no remedy there unless found here? What if there is no possible happiness but in fellowship of spirit and character with God; and what if this is morally impossible for us to attain without a Saviour and Sanctifier? What, in short, if all the evils which Christianity professes to deliver us from remain as facts in our history, just as diseases remain, though the aid of the physician, who reveals their nature, and who offers to cure them, is rejected? or, as a vessel remains a wreck in the midst of the breakers after the life-boat which comes to save the crew is

dismissed? or, as the lion remains after the telescope is flung aside which revealed his coming, and revealed also the only place of safety from his attack? For let us but remember what is so obviously true, that Christianity does not create the evils and dangers from which it offers to deliver us, and that these must remain as facts should it be proved a fiction. So far, then, the infidel has gained nothing by the overthrow of our religion. "Except truth!" does he exclaim? Yet we again repeat it, truth in its negative form, only as destroying supposed falsehoods, but not in its positive form as establishing something to rest upon.

Is there any other conceivable gain then which would accrue to the unbeliever by his supposed success? Does he wish, for example, to relieve oppressed souls of some great burden which crushes them? But what alleged truths or doctrine of Christianity, if blotted out to-morrow from the circle of belief, would ease a single soul, while it would unquestionably be an irreparable loss to millions? Would a God be more acceptable, and appear with greater moral beauty, who was different from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Would he be more attractive to our hearts if he did not forgive our sins fully and freely, or if forgiveness was not offered through such divine self-sacrifice? Would it be a relief to our moral being to be freed from the privilege or duty of supremely loving Jesus Christ? Would it lighten our hearts to be freed from the burden of having communion with him in prayer? Would we have more security for light, life, strength, holiness, peace, or comfort, if there was no such Person revealed as the Spirit of God, who freely imparts his aid to all? Would it be glad tidings to hear that men were not to be born again, nor to repent, nor to deny themselves, nor to do God's will, but their own? What is there which a good man would gain by the destruction of the Christian religion?

We have one question more to suggest with reference to the duty of an unbeliever towards us as Christians, and it is this. Why should he disturb our faith, or as he might term it, our superstition? If he resorts by asking why we should disturb his unbelief, our answer is ready—because we wish, with our whole soul, to share with him the blessings which God our common

Father has for him as well as for us; because we truly lament the loss to our brother who refuses the eternal good which he may now enjoy with the whole family of God; because we love our God, and his God and Saviour, and desire our brother to know and to love them too; because it is so unjust, so selfish, so hateful, not to love and obey such a glorious person as Jesus Christ, who knows us, loves us, and has died to gain our hearts! These are some of the reasons, rudely and roughly stated, why we desire, with all our heart, that every man should believe in Jesus Christ. But if any man, for any reason which may be beyond our understanding or sympathy, desires to destroy this faith in all that is most precious to us, then we ask, not in Christ's name,—for it is unnecessary to appeal to him,—but in the name of common sense and common philanthropy, Why he should not only labour to do this, but to do it without apparently any apprehension of the untold misery which he must occasion if he succeed in his attempt? Do not tell us, with a boast, that “the truth must be spoken, come what may!” Be it so; but surely the *kind* of truth which must be spoken must ever regulate the manner in which it is spoken? Again, we bid you to picture to yourselves a person entering a family whose members were rejoicing in the thought of a father's return, and announcing the intelligence of that father's death, with a smile of pity or a sneer of contempt at their ignorant happiness! Imagine such an one professing to be actuated by a mere love of truth! O! if the terrible duty has been laid upon any one with a human heart, of announcing to others intelligence which, if true, must leave a blank to them in the world that can never be filled up, what tender sympathy, what genuine sorrow becomes him who breaks the heavy tidings! And such *ought* to be the feelings of every man who, from whatever cause, feels called upon to announce that the Christian religion is false. If he *must* make known that terrible fact to believers in Jesus; if he *must* tell them that the supposed source of all their life and joy has no existence, and that their faith in him is vain, then, we say, let this be done with the solemnity and the sorrow which a true brotherly sympathy would necessarily dictate. If the missionaries of Christianity

are warranted in preaching their gospel with joy, the missionaries of an infidelity which professes only to destroy and not build up, should go forth on their dreadful vocation with the feeling of martyrs, and with no other notes of triumph than sounds of lamentation and woe! For if Christianity were false, we would be yet in our sins, all who have fallen asleep in Christ must have perished, and therefore we would be of all men most miserable!

### “DON'T WASTE THAT PAPER.”

“Don't waste that paper,” said a boy to his sister; “it makes me think of poor Judge Edwards in India.”

“What of him?” asked his sister.

Judge Edwards was an Englishman, who for months lived only by hairbreadth escapes, dodging the rebels at one place and another, until he made his way to Calcutta. He wished one time to send a note to his wife, who was in some place of safety. A native took pity on him, and promised, at the risk of his life, to carry it.

“I want to write, too,” said Mr. Edwards, “but had only a small scrap of paper, half the fly-leaf of ‘Bridges on the One Hundred Seventeenth Psalm.’ Pen and ink I had none, and only the stump of a lead pencil, of which an atom of the lead was left. I began to write, when the lead fell out. I was in despair. But after a great deal of searching in the dust of a mud floor, I found it, put it back, and wrote two notes about an inch square, which was all the man could hide about his person, for the rebels had already killed several men for having English letters found on them. When the notes were ready, I got a little milk and steeped them in it, to make the writing indelible, and then put them out to dry on a wall in the sun. In an instant a crow pounced upon one and carried it off; it was that for my wife. I of course thought it was gone forever, and felt almost broken-hearted, for I had no more paper, and no hopes or means of getting any more. Singh, a faithful native, had, unknown to me, seen the crow, followed it, and after a long chase of an hour, saw the bird drop it, and picking it up, brought it to me unhurt.”

“I wonder if she ever received the letter,” said the boy's sister, who always liked to know how things came out.

“Yes,” answered the boy, “and the man fetched him an answer back. When the messenger saw Mrs. Edwards, she was dressed in black, for I suppose she thought her husband had been murdered by the horrid Sepoys; but after she got the letter she went away and put on a white dress.”

## THE SAINT'S HOPE.

Lord, I am thine, but thou wilt prove  
My faith, my patience, and my love:  
When men of spite against me join,  
They are the sword the hand is thine.

Their hope and portion lie below;  
'Tis all the happiness they know;  
'Tis all they seek; they take their shares,  
And leave the rest among their heirs.

What sinners value, I resign;  
Lord, 'tis enough that thou art mine:  
I shall behold thy blissful face,  
And stand complete in righteousness.

This life's a dream, an empty show;  
But the bright world to which I go  
Hath joys substantial and sincere;  
When shall I wake and find me there?

O glorious hour! O blest abode!  
I shall be near, and like my God!  
And flesh and sin no more control  
The sacred pleasures of the soul.

My flesh shall slumber in the ground,  
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound;  
Then burst the chains with sweet surprise,  
And in my Saviour's image rise,

WATTS.

YE WHO ARE AGED, COME TO  
JESUS.

With you the morning of life is over.—  
You have reached the mountain top, or  
are travelling down the valley on the other  
side. You are rapidly drawing nearer to  
the tomb. Perhaps you are still busily  
occupied in the necessary labours of life;  
or inclination and the love of gain may in-  
volve you in many engrossing cares. But  
forget not the "one thing needful." We  
can do without anything else, even life it-  
self; but we cannot do without Jesus.—  
The salvation of the soul is the one thing  
needful. You have been busy for many  
years in the concerns of this life, but as yet  
have found no time for religion. Your  
chief business is not even begun. But  
what trifles are all things else in comparison.  
In a few years it will be of no consequence  
whether we were rich or poor; but it will  
be of infinite consequence whether we  
come to Jesus or not. Multitudes have  
died around you. Neighbours and friends,  
many with whom you were at school, or  
started in life, are in their graves. You  
have been spared. But you might have  
been cut down as a barren tree—unpre-

pared. God's forbearance may be almost  
spent. Soon the sentence may be pro-  
nounced, "Cut it down; why cumbereth  
it the ground?" Perhaps you are advanced  
in years. My aged friend, how many  
solemn warnings bid you prepare. Your  
wrinkled features, whitening hair, decaying  
strength, loudly tell you that the end is  
near. You are tottering on the edge of  
the grave. The young *may* live many  
years, but you *cannot*. Soon, very soon,  
you *must* die. Oh, how dreadful to stand  
before the Judgment-seat of Christ, and  
give an account of a long life spent in re-  
jecting him—of thousands of Sabbaths and  
sermons and privileges neglected. O then  
come to Jesus now. Lose not a moment.  
You have not one to spare. You have in-  
deed hardened your heart, and made re-  
pentance more difficult by neglecting reli-  
gion so long; but if you earnestly implore  
the help of God's Holy Spirit, he will  
grant your petition even now. It is not  
too late. Though you have so long refused  
to listen to him, Jesus has not ceased to  
speak to you. Still he says, "Come unto  
me." He loves you still. He is waiting  
to save you still. Oh, trifle with him no  
longer. Look back. Death comes striding  
after you with rapid steps; he is very near.  
Judgment is close behind, and hell follows.  
They are on the point of seizing you—  
Flee this moment to Christ. Come to  
Jesus. He alone can save.

See Matt. vi. 19-24; Luke x. 40-42;  
xiii. 6-9.

## FIRST LOVE.

Little Johanna used to read a chapter of  
the Bible to her mother every morning.—  
What a kind mother she had to make  
her acquainted so early with the Word of  
God!

One morning she read the fourth chap-  
ter of the First Epistle to John. When  
she arrived at the nineteenth verse, she  
read—

"We love Him, because He first loved  
us."

"Whom do we love?" asked her mother.

"God, the Lord," answered Johanna.

"And who loved us first?" asked her  
mother.

"God, the Lord," answered Johanna.—  
"But," added she, "what does it mean,  
*He loved us first?*"

"It means," said her mother, "that God loved us long before we loved Him. When you were born, you could not love God.— You were a little baby, and you knew nothing of God. Still God loved you, for He gave you your parents, and a cradle to sleep in, and clothes to put on. And when you grew up you were often a naughty girl, cross and disobedient, and sinning against the Lord, yet God loved you, though you did not love Him. He gave you bread and meat, health and strength; He caused the sun to rise on you; He gave you toys and playthings; He caused you to be told of the Lord Jesus, who came to earth a long time ago to make you happy and prepare you for heaven. All this God did before you loved him. Who loved first, God or you?"

"I see, I see," answered Johanna; "God loved first."

"Now, don't forget it," said the mother. "Remember that you now ought to love and serve God in return."

That same afternoon little Mary, Johanna's cousin, paid her a visit. Mary was not a very nice girl; she always liked to take everything to herself. When other children had anything nice, she always quarrelled till they gave it to her. Now, Johanna had a fine doll, which she liked very much. But Mary liked it too, and wanted to play with it. Johanna refused to give it up; she was afraid that Mary might not give it back. Mary began weeping and fretting and crying. She seated herself on a chair, covered her eyes with her little apron, and refused to play any more.

Johanna went to her mother, who was sitting in another room.

"Mary is a naughty girl," she said; "she won't play any more. She doesn't love me."

"Do you wish her to love you?" asked her mother.

"Yes, I do," answered Johanna.

"Then you ought to deal with her as God dealt with you. You ought to love her first."

Johanna was silent. She perceived that her mother was right. She returned to

her little cousin, and, giving her her doll, said—

"There, Mary dear, take it, and let us play together."

Mary at once looked kind and cheerful. Johanna assisted her in undressing and dressing the doll, and contrived everything to please her. Mary was delighted; she enjoyed that afternoon beyond description.

When Mary returned home she said to her mother—

"What a nice girl Johanna is; I am very fond of her indeed. Will you allow me to present her with that fine picture which I bought with my saving-money the other day?"

The mother gladly gave her permission, and wondered that Mary could so easily part with her treasure. She thought, "It seems that Johanna makes a very good impression upon my little daughter. I never saw her so liberal and kind-hearted."

The next day Mary gave the picture to Johanna.

Johanna went to her mother and showed her the beautiful engraving.

"Could you ever dream," said she, "that Mary would give such a thing to me?"

"Oh, yes," answered her mother, with a smile. "There is nothing too much to expect if we begin loving first."—*The Postman's Bag, and other Stories, by J. De Liefde.*

### Wilt thou be made Clean?

Come to Calvary's holy mountain,  
Sinners ruined by the fall:

Here a pure and healing fountain  
Flows to you, to me, to all,

In a full, perpetual tide,  
Opened when our Saviour died.

Come in poverty and meanness,  
Come defiled, without, within;

From infection and uncleanness,  
From the leprosy of sin,

Wash your robes, and make them white;  
Ye shall walk with God in light.

Come, in sorrow and contrition,  
Wounded, impotent, and blind;

Here the guilty, free remission,  
Here the troubled, peace may find;

Health this fountain will restore,  
He that drinks shall thirst no more.

He that drinks shall live forever;  
'Tis a soul-renewing flood:

God is faithful—God will never  
Break his covenant in blood;

Signed when our Redeemer died;  
Sealed when he was glorified.

—*Montgomery.*

**THE EARTH,  
FRAMED AND FURNISHED AS A  
HABITATION FOR MAN.**

BY REV. W. ARNOT, M.A., GLASGOW.

**I. WATER.**—Here, taking everything in due order, we must survey the Reservoir before we examine the method of distributing the supply; we must consider the Sea before we touch the rain or the rivers.

Two seas, one above another, are wrapped round the globe like an upper and an under garment. The idea is not new; it is borrowed from a very ancient Book. The Hebrews under David the king were wont to sing in the Creator's praise,—“Who laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed for ever: Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment.”—Paal. civ. In the arrangement of the clothing, the practice which prevails among smaller bodies has been adopted also for the larger: while the under garment covers only a portion of the person, the upper robe envelopes all. The upper cloak covers the wearer's body and its garments too. The water-ocean is the earth's under and partial covering; the air-ocean is its upper and all-encompassing robe. The sea covers large portions of the earth, and the atmosphere covers both the earth and its water-sea.

The coast lines of these two seas are dissimilar, in that the one is horizontal and the other vertical; but they are alike in the rich variety of their configuration. There are not many straight lines either on the sea-shore or on the earth's surface. The line along the shore which divides the land from the water, and the line along the surface which divides the earth from the atmosphere, are both in the highest degree picturesquely irregular: of the one you may see specimens everywhere on the winding coast, and of the other specimens in the rugged outline of every hill-top which props the sky.

The upper garment is the thicker although the lighter of the two. The atmosphere, even though the soundings were taken over the summits of the Himalayas, is thought to be little short of forty miles in depth; whereas no depth of water has anywhere yet been found much greater than five miles.

Some kinds of creatures live in the water-sea, and would die if they were placed in lighter element: they would be “fish out of water.” Other kinds, ourselves among the number, prefer the sea of air, and thrive best somewhere near its bottom. If it were possible to jerk a man out of the atmosphere and lay him down above it, as anglers treat a trout, he would gasp once or twice and die. Whether there are any creatures who sail on the top of the sea air, as we sail on the top of the sea of water, it would be unprofitable to inquire, and presumptuous to decide; but if any such there be, they must be very light characters. Hitherto, we who live on the bottom of that sea, as our fellow-creatures the molluscs live on the bottom of the other, have never observed any anchors cast down from super-aerial ships, nor any electric cables submerged by super-aerial men and dangling over our heads,

It would be unprofitable to institute an inquiry regarding the comparative value of the two seas, in the process of watering the world; for both are necessary and both alike. Without the sea there would be no water; and without the atmosphere the earth would get none to drink. We turn our attention in the first instance to the great reservoir of water in its direct relation to the dry land, and without reference to the intervention of the atmosphere. The figure of the coast line is evidently one of the determining elements in moulding the condition of continents and the character of their inhabitants. Due prominence has been given in our day to the fact, that Europe and Africa lie at the opposite extremes of the scale, both in the degrees of civilization which they have attained, and the indentations of the coast-line which they exhibit. One fact is, at least in part, the cause of the other. The solid lumpish form of the African continent has something to do with the degeneracy of the African race. The map of Europe is rugged like a piece of ginger; the map of Africa is round and smooth like a prize beet-root. Land and water seem to be, in their original constitution, the necessary complements of each other; and either remains barren until the access of its mate. The continent from which the sea is excluded remains a desert from generation: the continent which opens its bosom for the ingress

of the ocean is fertilized and civilized through all its borders.

Until recent times the Mediterranean and its surrounding coasts exhibited the grandest example of the earth opening to receive the ocean, and the ocean entering to fertilize the land. Those who speak of the Mediterranean as a French lake, speak in the future tense; the Emperor has no such spacious sheet of water in the heart of his pleasure grounds. Gibraltar, the porter's lodge at the entrance of the demesne, shakes out the British flag still from its hoary ramparts. In ancient times, however, that grand inland sea was, without a figure, a Roman lake; and the empire was little more than the fertile belt which fringed it. Phœnicia, Egypt, Carthage, Italy and Greece, with the less celebrated lands which fill the interstices between them, constitute the main circle of the ancient world. For that favoured region an helpmeet was early found, and the result was a numerous family of thriving nations; while interior Africa, with at least equal capabilities of soil and climate, sentenced from the first to a single life, has no such progeny to brighten her early history or sooth her latter days.

The Mediterranean between Europe and Africa was the most important inland sea of the ancient world. It has enjoyed its day of glory as chief; but it must now retire into a secondary station, and make way for its betters. The modern Mediterranean is an Atlantic. It lies between the Old and New World, precisely as the old Mediterranean lies between Europe and Africa, dividing yet uniting them. Although unequal in size, their proportions are similar; and the larger lies at right angles to the less. The old great Eastern continent had room enough to afford a berth athwart-ships for its Mediterranean; but ours is so large that when laid lengthwise it stretches from pole to pole. Such is our superiority in the structure and management of ships that we cross our sea as frequently and as safely as the ancients crossed theirs, notwithstanding the disparity of breadth.

The coasts of Spain, France, and the British Isles, occupy in some respects towards the Atlantic the position which Palestine occupied towards the Mediterranean in ancient times. The advantages of position for obtaining and keeping the supre-

macy are nearly equally divided among these three countries. About the time when they were discovering America and doubling the Cape, Spain and Portugal had the ball at their foot; but now the twin nations of the Peninsula are nowhere, while France and Britain maintain a neck or nothing race for the championship of the world. The result does not depend on a single cause. The two simple determining elements are the moral qualities of the several races, and the physical features of the territories which they possess: it is only the latter of these two that comes directly and legitimately within the scope of our observation here. Logic if not charity, forbids any self-laudatory comparison between the French and ourselves as to personal characteristics. We may think them smaller men than ourselves, but at present we have no business to say it. Our place as to influence on the world is fixed, in part at least, by that which is no disgrace to our neighbours and no credit to us,—the moderate size and insulated position of our territory. They may occupy their own soil, or even make aggression on conterminous states, without asking our opinion or dreading our interference: but we have something to say when the question relates to the wide world where the sea is the common highway for our neighbours and ourselves. By the position which God has given us, and the energy to occupy it, we have acquired a right to be consulted on all great questions connected with water. Besides its chief use in watering a whole world, the sea is precious to us as a means of defending our own bit of it. It is good for us and our families—good for the liberty and progress of the race, that the sea encircles this portion of the land all round. By aid of that circling sea, and by the blessing of Him who holds it in the hollow of his hand, we intend to keep this portion of the dry land for our own use, and for the benefit of all the oppressed who seek here an asylum from cruel power. Our neighbors need not exhaust themselves in beating their sides against the ribs of their cage: nature is against them. In the last resort the question will be determined not so much by docks as by ships; and not so much by ships as by shipmen. In spite of all her efforts we shall have more seamen than France, for this plain reason, that we have more

sea. The shore-line of Great Britain and Ireland would, I suppose, go nearly three times round the shore-line of France. No whipping and spurring can ever surmount that inequality. England has no Cherbourg, it is true; but she need not break her heart about it, for France has no Liverpool. Not stationary stone walls, but living sailors in well-built ships, will in the last resort, determine the dominion of the world, whether in peace or war. Considering all the circumstances, we should trust in Providence and keep our temper: no crowing among our neighbors can dry up the Channel. When you become too much excited by reading the newspapers, fold up the broad sheet, and look to the map of Europe. The sight of the sea is the best prescription for cooling the fevered brow. Let all the lovers of freedom study the Bible and the map; while they study, let them give fervent thanks to the God of the whole earth for pouring the green sea round all the circumference of this land, and scattering the seed of his word over all its breadth. In these two our great strength lies: the one is Providence; the other, Grace.

It is interesting in this connexion to see a complete hemisphere map, constructed with London, instead of a point on the Equator, as its centre. There to the eye as well as to the understanding, the Atlantic and these island seem designated by the Creator's hand as at once the asylum of liberty, the emporium of commerce, and the fulcrum of moral and political power for the whole world.

But patriotism, like iron in a ship's hold, has been tampering with our logical compass, and seriously diverting us from our course. We must not allow Frenchmen any more to draw our attention away from the sea.

As a feature in the furniture of the world the Tide occupies a distinguished place; we do not refer to the well-known cosmical powers and laws which cause and regulate the phenomenon; we speak here only of a providential fact and its economic uses. An analogous fact is familiar to mercantile and manufacturing circles. A stout yeoman with a whip in his hand, a brown wide-awake on his head, and a leathern pouch belted and buckled round his waste, calls at your counter, and politely inquires if

there are any parcels to-day:—his tame, contented, glossy-hided horse, standing with the waggon in the street meanwhile. You give him some bales to be conveyed to their destination; or you say, "Nothing to-day," as the case may be; but in either event the same man politely taps at your door on the morrow with the same offer to carry any parcel to any place; and he is honoured when he gets an order. This process goes on all the year round.

It is Art imitating Nature: a carrier, a strong, steady, willing worker, comes twice a-day up every creek and estuary, quietly tapping on the shore, and in dumb signs begging to know if there is anything to be carried to-day to America or the Mediterranean—to San Francisco by the Horn, or to India by Good Hope. This mighty burden-bearer never misses his call. Although he come to one place twice every day for a thousand years, without being once honoured with an order, he continues to come as steadily as if he had been loaded at every trip. How many times did that patient porter ascend the Thames ere he obtained a single freight! And how many more spacious harbours is he canvassing to-day where his diligence has not yet been rewarded by a bale! At the approach of Christmas a modest request is sometimes passed into the head of the house to remember the carrier or the postman: if I were commissioned to speak for the dumb burden-bearer, I would say;—England enriched by the sea, should gratefully remember its Maker.

[To be Continued.]

“OH, INNOCENT LAMB OF GOD.”

In the year 1717, there was a great war between the Germans and the Turks. The good and brave Marshal, Prince Eugene, won many glorious victories over the infidels, and so great was the patriotic spirit excited all over Germany, that nearly every village sent a contingent to aid the Emperor's army against the unbelieving foe.—From the village of Hermannsburg rode forth the brave knight, Staffhorst with his two squires, Peter Paasch and Hans Puffel. In the great battle near Belgrade, in which the Germans were victorious, Puffel was killed, as he was rescuing his hardly-pressed

master from the hands of the Turks.—Staffhorst fell at the subsequent storming of Belgrade, after he had forced his way into the city. Peter Paasch, full of grief at the death of his beloved master, pursued the flying Turks so rashly, that he was surrounded by the fugitives outside the walls and taken prisoner. They tied him to his horse's tail, a Turk mounted the horse, and Paasch was obliged to run by the side, naked and barefoot, for the Turks had robbed him of everything. Late in the evening they halted in the wood where they thought they were safe from the Christians, and now they determined to take their long desired revenge on the Christian prisoner, for they had remarked how many Turks Paasch had slain in the battle. So first they placed two sticks in the form of a cross, one over the other; they spat on this cross, and endeavoured, by blows and tortures, to force Paasch to do the same. But Paasch, who was now unbound from the horse, and from whom no resistance was expected, struck the Turk who had spitten on the cross, so violently about the ears, that they again bound his hands and feet together. Then they cut him with knives and daggers to force him to spit on the cross, and as all this was of no avail, they nailed both his hands over his head to the trunk of a tree, and tried, by horse-whippings, and the wounds caused thereby, to make him pronounce the name of Mohammed. But as often as they repeated this name, he said, "Jesus Christ." Then the enemies of the Lord determined to kindle a fire at his feet, and thus to make him deny Christ, or kill him by the tortures of a fiery death. When Paasch saw that his end was so near at hand, he prayed, with earnest and devout voice, the Lord's Prayer, and repeated the Creed; and the Lord gave the brave warrior such peace in his heart, that he even prayed for his murderers, as our Saviour did, and the holy Stephen. And he was now filled with such lofty, celestial joy, that he could not refrain from singing, with strong, deep voice, the grand old Passion chant, "Oh, innocent Lamb of God, slain on the cross for us," &c. When he had sung to the end of the third verse, and ended with the words, "Grant us thy peace, O Jesus, Amen," the clang of trumpets was heard from without the forest.—German horsemen rode in, the Turks fled,

and the horsemen beheld, with astonishment, Paasch nailed to the tree, and the fire at his feet. They at once unbound him, and he fell fainting in their arms.—After they had bound up his many wounds, washed him, and provided him with clothes, he came to himself again, and his first question was, how God had sent them to him just at the right moment. They replied, "We were sent out in pursuit of the Turks, when we heard from the forest the song, 'Oh, innocent Lamb of God.'—That is a Christian, said we, and rode into the wood; the Lamb of God, whom thou trustedst, has saved thee." They then brought Paasch to Belgrade. The story came to the ears of the good Prince Eugene, who ordered him to be well cared for, visited him himself, and rejoiced in his simple, child-like faith, and, as he was no longer fit for service, sent him back to his country. He lived ten years afterwards, and died, in 1728, in faith, after he had sung for the last time, "Oh, innocent Lamb of God."

#### Consistency Under Persecution.

The daughter of an English nobleman was providentially brought under the influence of the followers of Jesus, and thus came to the knowledge of the truth concerning him. The father was almost distracted at the event, and by threats, temptations to extravagance in dress, by reading, and travelling in foreign countries, and to fashionable places of resort, took every means to divert her mind from things "unseen and eternal!" But her "heart was fixed."

The God of Abraham had become "her shield and her exceeding great reward;" and she was determined that nothing finite should deprive her of her infinite and eternal portion in Him, or displace Him from the centre of her heart.

At last the father resolved upon a final and desperate expedient, by which his end should be gained, or his daughter ruined, so far as her prospects in this life were concerned. A large company of the nobility were invited to his house. It was so arranged that during the festivities, the daughters of different noblemen, and among others this one, were to be called to entertain the company with singing and music

on the piano. If she complied, she parted with heaven, and returned to the world. If she refused compliance, she would be publicly disgraced, and lose, past the possibility of recovery, her place in society. It was a dreadful crisis, but with peaceful confidence did she await it. As this crisis approached, different individuals, at the call of the company, performed their parts with the greatest applause. At last the name of this daughter was announced. In a moment all were in a fixed and silent suspense to see how the scale of destiny would turn. Without hesitation she rose and with a calm and dignified composure, took her place at the instrument. After a moment spent in silent prayer, she ran her fingers along the keys, and then, with an unearthly sweetness, elevation, and solemnity, sang—accompanying her voice with the notes of the following stanzas:—

"No more for mirth or trifling here,  
For worldly hope, or worldly fear,  
If life so soon is gone;  
If now the Judge is at the door,  
And all mankind must stand before  
Th' inexorable throne.

No matter which my thoughts employ,  
A moment's misery or joy—  
But oh! when both shall end,  
Where shall I find my destined place?  
Shall I my everlasting days  
With friends or angels spend?

Nothing is worth a thought beneath,  
But how I may escape the death  
That never, never dies!  
How make mine own election sure,  
And when I fail on earth, secure  
A mansion in the skies!

Jesus, vouchsafe a pitying ray,  
Be Thou my guide, be thou my way  
To glorious happiness!  
Ah! write my pardon on my heart,  
And whensoever I hence depart,  
Let me depart in peace!"

The minstrel ceased. The solemnity of eternity was upon that assembly. Without speaking they dispersed. The father wept aloud, and when left alone, sought the counsel and prayers of his daughter, for the salvation of his soul. His soul was saved and his great estate consecrated to the Saviour.—*Baptist Magazine*, 1848.

## REMARKABLE DREAM OF DR. DODDRIDGE.

It is, I think, no longer a matter of doubt, that although the soul, or thinking part of man, is intimately connected with the material part, or body, yet they are not *inseparably* connected; but that the soul is often awake, and actively employed, or wandering into regions which the body has never entered, while the latter is in a state of perfect quiescence and unconsciousness. The proofs of this are indeed various and numerous, but perhaps there is not a stronger or more striking evidence than that of dreams. The following singular dream of the celebrated Dr. Doddridge was related to me a short time since by a much esteemed Clergyman of our Church, who informed me that it was found among the Doctor's papers after his decease; and as I thought it deserving a place in the "Echo," I will endeavour to set it down in the words in which I received it from the lips of the above mentioned friend.

It was the custom of Dr. Doddridge and his friend, Dr. Samuel Clark, to meet very frequently together for the purpose of christian intercourse; and on one evening they were conversing among other topics, on the probable nature and *degree* of the happiness that would be enjoyed by the Redeemed *immediately* on their removal from this world. Dr. Doddridge gave it as his opinion that the transition at *once* from earth to the glories of Paradise would be too great for the soul to bear, and that we should need to be in a manner *prepared* for the glories to be hereafter revealed.

On Dr. Doddridge retiring to rest, he soon, after fell asleep, and dreamt as follows: "I fancied myself in the midst of the bustle of the City of London, where I resided, and that I died there. Immediately after my death, I felt my soul raised from the earth, and borne along upwards to a considerable distance. After some time I stopped, and looked down upon the miniature world I had left, and beheld crowds of people hurrying to and fro, and all eagerly engaged, like a colony of Ants. This spectacle impressed me so strongly with the littleness of all earthly things, that I prayed fervently that all the busy multitude I then beheld, might be brought to see the vanity and inefficiency of all sub-

lunary pursuits in the same light as I did in that moment. On continuing my course, I was met by what appeared to be an angelic being, who told me he was sent to conduct me to the *mansion that had been prepared for me*. After pursuing our course for some time, we stopped, and my guide pointed out at a short distance, a very magnificent dwelling, and to which, when we entered, he welcomed me as my own home. Though it was far more splendid than anything I had ever happened to see on earth, yet it did not altogether surpass what might have been seen in this world; and when my guide informed me that this mansion, beautiful as it was, was yet very inferior to that more glorious one which was to be revealed to me hereafter, I thought of the words of Scripture, 'Eye hath not seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the good things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' He observed that 'I should not be able to bear such resplendant glory all at once.' On entering the mansion, I was conducted into a spacious and elegantly furnished room, but which, though surpassing in magnificence anything it had been my lot to behold on earth; yet, was not more so than might have been produced there. My guide left me in this apartment, observing that I should find ample occupation there for some time. In addition to other splendid furniture, and decorations, the walls were hung round with beautiful paintings; and on examining them, I perceived, to my utter astonishment, that they described the history of my life, from my birth to my death. In each of these pictures there was the representation of a *Hand*, which, though invisible when on earth, I could now clearly discern to be the Hand of God. In the painting representing my infancy, this Hand was spread out over me, and in every subsequent period of my life, the Hand appeared, leading, guiding, restraining, impelling or encouraging me. In every period, and in every event of my life, illustrated in these pictures, *the Hand was always there*. While I was ruminating on this extraordinary representation, and lost in wonder and admiration, my guide re-entered, and told me to follow him, and that I must now prepare to see the Saviour. We entered another apartment, equally spacious and elegant, in the centre of which,

stood a large and massive table. On this table was placed a golden cup, richly chased, and embossed with a beautiful device of a vine, with its branches, and clusters of grapes. I asked the meaning of this, and my guide told me that this was the cup in which the Redeemer drank new wine with His Disciples in His Kingdom, and that the device on the cup represented the necessity of an intimate union with the Saviour and His people portrayed by the vine and its branches, and the grapes represented the fruits of righteousness, produced only by the union. The Saviour Himself now appeared, and advancing to the table, and taking the golden cup in His Hand, He tasted the wine and then offered it to me. But this action of my Redeemer so completely over-awed me that I involuntarily shrunk back. The Saviour then again tasted the wine, and again presented it to me, at the same time rebuking me in words similar to those He addressed to St. Peter. 'He that drinketh not with me, hath no part in me.' I then took the cup, and tasted the wine, but the thought of having drunk wine from the same cup as my blessed Lord, all unworthy as I was so completely overwhelmed me with awe and confusion, that I sank down at His feet quite insensible; and thus I awoke,—and behold it was a dream.'

Dr. Doddridge remained for some days, according to his own account, perfectly absorbed in the recollection of this remarkable dream, and never entirely lost the impression of it to the day of his death, which occurred about three years after.

#### A GOSPEL PARABLE.

Let me give you a parable. There was a certain man that had committed treason against his king, but forasmuch as the king had compassion on him, he sent him, by the hand of a faithful messenger, a pardon under his own hand and seal. But in the country where this poor man dwelt, there were also many that sought to trouble him by putting him in mind of his treason, and the law that was to be executed on the offender. Now which way should this man so honour his king as by believing his hand-writing, which was the pardon? Certainly he would honour him more by so

doing, than to regard all the clamours of his enemies continually against him.

Just thus it is here, thou having committed sin against the King of heaven, He, through compassion for Christ's sake, hath sent thee a pardon; but the devil, the law, and thy conscience, do continually seek to disturb thee, by bringing thy sins afresh into thy remembrance. But now, wouldst thou honour thy King? Why, then, he that believeth the record that God hath given of His Son, hath set to his seal that God is true. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son, (1 John v. 11, 12.) And therefore, seeing God our Father hath sent us condemned traitors a pardon from heaven, (even all the promises of the gospel,) and hath also sealed to the certainty of it with the heart's blood of His dear Son, let us not be daunted, though our enemies, with terrible voices, do bring our former life ever so often into our remembrance. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things," (Acts xiii, 38, 39.)—*John Bunyan*

### ARE YOU SAFE FOR ETERNITY?

How important and necessary to our happiness that we are safe for eternity. Look at that man whom we meet in a hurry. He is going to an office to insure his goods or his house. Does he expect that his house will be burned or his goods lost? No, he does not expect either, yet he thinks it desirable to be safe. See that man about to take a long or dangerous voyage. Observe how he examines the vessel, and makes enquiries about its sea-worthiness, and why? Because he wishes to be safe. Look at that vessel that is shipwrecked. See the crew and passengers. They are making for the life-boat, or they are seizing on rafts or spars, or making use of their life-preservers, or they are shrieking for aid—and why? Because they are in imminent danger—and they want to be safe.

And, O my reader, is there not a greater necessity for eternity? Safe from the penalty of a broken law, safe from the polluting influences of sin? "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" "What

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

Now, if you would be safe, you must come to Christ; you must trust in his "obedience unto death" as the alone ground of your acceptance with an infinitely holy God. The word of God declares, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The manslayer was not safe till he reached the city of refuge. The families in Egypt were not safe from the ingress of the destroying angel till the blood of the pascal lamb was sprinkled on the lintels and door-posts of their dwelling. The serpent-bitten Israelite was not safe till he looked to the uplifted serpent of brass. The poor, wandering sheep was not safe till it was restored to the good shepherd and the sheep-fold. Noah and his family would not have been safe from the destroying deluge unless they had been shut in the ark. Lot and his sons-in-law would not have been safe from the fiery tempest by continuing in the city of destruction: they had to escape for their lives. So in a higher and more awfully important sense you are not safe from the curse of a broken law; not safe from Satan's thralldom and grasp until you are "found in Christ, not having your own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ."

### ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

A debtor to mercy alone,  
Of covenant mercy I sing;  
Nor fear, with thy righteousness on,  
My person and offerings to bring:  
The terrors of law and of God  
With me can have nothing to do;  
My Saviour's obedience and blood,  
Hide all my transgressions from view.

The work which his goodness began,  
The arm of his strength will complete;  
His promise is yea and amen,  
And never was forfeited yet:  
Things future, nor things that are now,  
Not all things below nor above,  
Can make him his purpose forego,  
Or sever my soul from his love.

My name from the palms of his hands,  
Eternity will not erase:  
Imprest on his heart it remains,  
In marks of indelible grace:  
Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given;  
More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in heaven.

# THE GOOD NEWS.

April 15th, 1862.

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE BIOGRAPHY OF SAMSON.\*

BY REV. THOMAS SHARP, ASHBURN, C.W.

JUDGES XVI. 28.—“ And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God.”

Such is the remarkable prayer of one who combined the greatest natural and moral strength with the greatest natural and moral weakness; and but for the prominence assigned in Scripture to his character and feats of strength, might almost be passed by. When, however, you consider him as a child of promise and the son of many prayers—as one who grievously departed from the Lord and occupied the high position of a judge over Israel, you have materials important in their bearing to encourage parents in the godly training of their children, and youth to flee from the very appearance of evil. The character of Samson, like his own memorable riddle, seems to be a puzzle to divines rightly to estimate it, and give a true solution of all its salient points; yet to the extent that it has been discovered as to its failings and their cure, there is perhaps no subject more appropriate to be expounded in the pulpit, and pressed home to the hearts and consciences of the assembled congregation. Of Saul you read that he was taller than the rest of the people, but he was the very same flesh and blood, only far larger in bone and muscle than they; so the character of Samson is the same with other men, only theirs is, so to speak, cast in a much smaller mould than his, their feats of strength being of an ordinary kind, and seldom mentioned beyond the circle of society wherein they move: and yet like

\* The Biography of Sampson, by J. Bruce, D. D., Edinburgh.

him the children of prayers and of the greatest promise, they may like him turn out a heavy burden to the father that begat them and the mother that bare them. The sky overcast at dawn, the sun going down in darkness while it is yet day; their name and sad remembrance, if any, they shall leave behind them, will serve but, like Samson's, to show where lie the shifting sands and eddying whirlpools and sunken rocks, on which so many adventurers have actually been seen to perish, and have suffered shipwreck so dreadful and disastrous, that not until you have died and risen again, shall you ever know whether or not they ever effected a landing. Samson, like David, made saddest shipwreck of the faith, and from the very same blinding, beguiling, and brutalizing lust, yet like David he escaped at last as by a very hairbreadth, the Lord answering his very latest prayer, and to use the language of David, “forgiving his iniquity whilst he took vengeance on his inventions;” and as the apostle Paul has exhibited the same awfully alarming view of the Divine chastisements, “Delivering his body unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

Our belief of Samson's salvation is founded not only on the fact of his being a child of promise and a son of many prayers, like John the Baptist, and a subject of the Spirit's teaching, but his prayer at last not only heard and answered, which could not have been the case unless offered in faith and accompanied with repentance, but also in the catalogue of Old Testament worthies, in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, there is mention of his faith, and in this Samson and David are placed almost side by side. But Samson was always immeasurably inferior to David as a saint, but he was like him in this, that both his relapses into sin and his recoveries out of it were due to the same cause which drove both to the very verge of destruction.

These two were saved as by the very rarest miracle of grace, and the evidence of this is from revelation alone; for without this you could never have been satisfied that any, after having sinned as they did, could ever have been saved, and in the absence of such a revelation respecting any in the present day whosin as they did, even if they are saints in the sight of God, they will die under a cloud in the sight of men. The only thing which, in point of evidence, amounts to the force of revelation, is your knowledge of their having lived consistently as believers in Jesus, and that being withheld or the reverse being true, what can you say, though ever desirous of hoping the best, until the mystery of God shall be finished, and he glorified everlastingly, both in them that perish and in them that are saved.

If you would not then leave your parents in doubt regarding your salvation, by piecing together slight and superficial symptoms of your having turned to God, trying to keep themselves from despair, and yet your relapses into sin so frequently repeated, and it may be as frequently repented of and abhorred, that with all their zeal and effort to make out a case, have been so baffled as to have no comfort but in striving to forget you altogether—I say, if you would not leave anxiety and doubt behind you as a doleful legacy that you, who had bidden fair at one time of the highest assurance of God's love, and that one day you might fall asleep in Jesus with the light of his countenance shining upon you—if you would not die in doubt and fear and darkness, as a dog dies—be entreated to lay to heart this melancholy example. Watch, pray, and strive rightly to resist and overcome the sin that doth most easily beset you, fleeing those youthful and fleshly lusts which war against the soul, and drown men in destruction and perdition, and see that you follow righteousness, faith, charity,

and peace, with them that call on the name of the Lord, out of a pure heart.

Let us view Samson's character—1. As a fallen son. 2. As a fallen husband. 3. As a fallen judge.

As in the garden of an earthly paradise, hedged about and with the light of a bright morning's sun, when the dew is lying fresh upon the opening flowers, and all the fruit-bearing trees are rich in bloom, here this plant grew and sprung up like the believing, loving, gentle and dutiful Abel, worshipping and walking before God, delighting his pious parents with the fulfilment in him of all their prayers, and hopes, and desires: or in virtue of the Nazarithish vow, like another Samuel who grew and the Lord was with him. In his boyhood, the period of his comparative innocence, holiness and peace, he grew and the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times within the camp of Dan, in the district where he lived. The account of his proposed marriage with the Philistian maiden, to the eye of a superficial reader, might appear to be in accordance with revealed truth and the teaching of God's Spirit; for it is said his father and mother knew not that it was of the Lord that he sought an occasion against the Philistines. It might appear at first sight as if it meant to imply that his father and mother erred in objecting to the marriage, not being aware that the Lord prompted him to it, even though such a marriage was contrary both to the express law of the Lord, and the whole design of his ordinances. But surely the Lord could not instigate Samson to transgress the law, although it is certain that Satan could. And if it should be replied that the law was in this case repealed, even this appears very unlikely; for had it been so, Samson would at once have told his parents, the better to secure their concurrence and his own vindication. It is true that the Lord incited him to seek a

righteous ground of quarrel with the Philistines, but this was a thing that could have been done in a thousand ways. As a Nazarite under solemn vows to God, he ought to have enquired of the Lord in what manner he might provoke that quarrel, so as best to succeed. But being a man of war, constitutionally framed for a special purpose, there was a power and force in all his passions, as they grew and gathered strength, which even faith itself, without much prayer and much fasting, could not possibly have restrained. He who had been once, and but recently, so teachable and devout, is now altogether of another spirit. It seems as if the devil here entered into him, for he stops to take counsel in this matter neither of God nor man. Of his own accord, at his own risk, and eventually to his own ruin, he took that woman to wife in the face of the law and the remonstrances of his parents. Why did he not consult the Lord? Because the Lord would have laid an instant interdict on that which he was resolved to gratify. He asks nothing from the Lord at all, where he feared that instead of encouragement he would get denial and perhaps rebuke. He adopts the counsel of the Lord when it concurs with his own likings; but when it would thwart these he takes his own wilful way. It is fearful to think that any creature should be capable of acting thus towards the gracious Being who created and sustains him; and yet such is naturally and constitutionally the ungodliness of man. Even after you have been regenerated, temptations will recur by which, if you strive not, watching unto prayer, you will certainly be led away, and it may be ruined for ever. The devices of the devil are subtle and many, the deceitfulness of the human heart inconceivably great, and therefore close habitual communion with Christ and his Spirit is so essential to a creature like man, who sins and is so prone to sin,

needing forgiveness and renewal in order to salvation, as is certified by the precious assurance that Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give them both repentance and the remission of their sins.

You may have been accustomed to read about Samson with the same sort of interest in the wonderful and the hazardous, as though he had been nothing different from the Ishmaelite, ever restless and rushing into broils and mortal combats as a game; or in his feats of matchless strength and intrepidity, as if his marvellous daring were the fierce and fiery descent of an outlawed and irresistible mountaineer; but closer inspection and investigation discover him to be a very Israelite indeed, a most erring and therefore a most sorely chastened servant of the Saviour, who lived and died a martyr of that church, which is Christ's body, being evidently raised up by God for our learning, that in him, as in a looking-glass, every one might see the leading features of his own character pourtrayed on a larger scale, and therefore more easily seen than in the case of ordinary men. That one step—his marriage—the first he took in departing from the Lord, sent him forward upon a course where the further he travelled the more he was embroiled, and he even treated his parents after that with but little reverence, and seems to have felt himself far more at home amid the godless friendships and festivities of the heathen, till he had fallen headlong on that frightful ruin which he felt to be complete, grinding without his eyes in the Gaza prison. Be admonished then, if any of you are turned or but turning to be more reserved to your parents, and taken up more readily with other friends and counsellors out of doors, whose society may be more pleasing, because concurring with the evil desires and devices of your own heart. Flee such youthful self-pleasing, because it grieves your earthly and your heavenly Father;

and if you go on, it may be necessary for God to cast your soul into prison, and there feed you, Samson-like, with the bread and water of affliction, mingling every morsel of your bread with weeping, and giving you a cup of trembling and of tears to drink. And do not speak or act in an unkind or irreverent manner to your parents, but cultivate filial love and piety towards them as you would to God. Never let the love and respect for your parents be extinguished by whatever connections you may form, or whatever changes, prosperous or adverse, may take place in your circumstances; for otherwise you would resemble the beasts that perish; for of them alone it is naturally and constitutionally true, that love disappears when they reach their maturity, and feel that they are independent and can shift for themselves. But if you hold it as part of your religion, next to the love of God, you will cultivate filial affection as well-pleasing to Christ, honouring thy father and mother, and even denying yourself to keep this first commandment with promise, and most assuredly your recompence will be manifold, more in this present life, and in the world to come life everlasting.

(To be continued.)

### TEMPTATION.

The billows swell, the winds are high,  
 Clouds overcast my wintry sky;  
 Out of the depths to thee I call,  
 My fears are great, my strength is small.  
 O Lord, the pilot's part perform,  
 And guide and guard me through the storm;  
 Defend me from each threatening ill,  
 Control the waves, say, "Peace, be still!"  
 Amidst the roaring of the sea,  
 My soul still hangs her hopes on thee;  
 Thy constant love, thy faithful care,  
 Is all that saves me from despair.  
 Dangers of every shape and name  
 Attend the followers of the Lamb,  
 Who leave the world's deceitful shore,  
 And leave it to return no more.  
 Though tempest-tossed, and half a wreck,  
 My Saviour through the floods I seek  
 Let neither winds nor stormy main  
 Force back my shattered bark again.

—Cowper.

### WHY I GAVE UP SMOKING.

BY A MISSIONARY.

I was a smoker, and the son of a smoker. I began to smoke when I began to preach; that is, when about twenty years of age. Most of the preachers of my acquaintance did the same: I thought it preacherly to imitate them. I smoked during the time I was at college: that was contrary to the rule of the institution; but then the president was a smoker too. In after years, however, when we were having a friendly chat over our pipes, he positively and solemnly assured me that, if he had found me out, he would have expelled me from the college *instantly*. When about to sail as a missionary to a distant land, I recollect having the honour and felicity of having, in a little room, not three miles from Paternoster Row, in London, a pipe with a veteran in the service, whose praise was and is in all the churches. "A fine thing," said he, with a little Scotch accent, "is a pipe of tobacco in a hot climate. Let me recommend you, my young brother, to take with you a good stock of pipes and tobacco." You need not ask me whether I did so. In the course of time, however, when labouring as a missionary, I felt compelled, for the sake of example, to become a teetotaller, and to throw myself heart and soul into the total abstinence movement; but still adhering to the beloved pipe.

In a parcel of temperance tracts, which I obtained from England, was one headed, "DOST THOU SMOKE, BILL?" I read it, and it made me feel uncomfortable. Some copies of it had got into circulation among my people before I was aware of it. A fine black young man came to me one day, and, after bowing and scraping, and bidding me "good morning," asked, "Will massa please gie me one lectle tract?"

"Yes, Quamina, and welcome; which will you have?"

"Dat tract called 'Does you smoke, William?'"

(He thought it would be too vulgar, in my presence, to say "Bill;" politeness led him to say "William.") I gave him the tract; but I felt I would rather he had asked for any other than that, and my uneasiness was increased. The tract was evidently attracting some attention. It was condemning, amongst the people, their pastor's habit.

One night soon after Quamina's visit, having knocked out the ashes of my last pipe, before retiring to rest, a colloquy took place between my conscience and myself, of which the following is a faithful report:

*Conscience*.—You have given up all intoxicating drinks, and you have done well. Why not give up that smoking too?"

*Myself*.—I cannot. It is a pleasant habit, to which I have been addicted for fifteen years.

*Conscience.*—Does it do you any real good?

*Myself.*—I must confess that it does not.

*Conscience.*—Is it not in a variety of ways positively injurious to you?

*Myself.*—It is; both my judgment and experience are against it.

*Conscience.*—Do you not, at temperance meetings, feel that many of the arguments you urge against alcoholic drinks tell with almost equal power against the use of tobacco?

*Myself.*—I cannot deny that I do.

*Conscience.*—How much have you spent on tobacco during the fifteen years that you have been a smoker?

*Myself.*—O, not much; I never smoke cigars, except when some ship captain makes me a present of a few; they are otherwise too expensive; the pipe is much more economical.

*Conscience.*—But how much has the pipe cost you since you became a preacher? Try to form an estimate.

*Myself* (after a long pause). The amount, I find, is larger than I thought it was; I cannot, however, exactly say how much it is.

*Conscience.*—But I insist upon knowing. Honestly, now, can it have been less, on an average, than two pounds a year, or thirty pounds in the fifteen years?

*Myself.*—I believe that will be somewhere about it.

*Conscience.*—And how much, during the same period, did you contribute directly towards the spread of the Gospel?

*Myself.*—I really cannot tell; for I try not to let my left hand know what my right hand doeth.

*Conscience.*—Come, come; none of that cant and nonsense. I insist upon knowing. Call to mind your contributions, and give me some approximate idea.

*Myself* (after another long pause). I believe about ten pounds.

*Conscience* (in a thundering voice). What! only one-third of what you have spent upon tobacco?

*Myself.*—Only one-third!

*Conscience.*—And yet you are a minister of the Gospel?

*Myself.*—Yes, I am.

*Conscience.*—A missionary sent out to this distant land?

*Myself.*—Yes.

*Conscience.*—Supposed, of course, to be a very good man?

*Myself.*—Yes.

*Conscience.*—And your business, as a missionary, is to try to make those black and coloured people around you good?

*Myself.*—Yes.

*Conscience.*—You tell them that their money is not their own; and you urge them to deny themselves, and to make sacrifices, in order that they may be able to contribute towards the support and spread of the institutions of Christianity?

*Myself.*—I do.

*Conscience.*—A pretty fellow, then, you are! During the time you have had the honour of being a minister of the Gospel, you confess that you have yourself spent three times as much of God's money on that worthless weed; or, rather, that injurious poison tobacco, as you have given for the spread of that glorious Gospel, which you call "HEAVEN'S BEST BOOK TO MAN!" And yet you have the face to call upon others to deny themselves for that purpose! Shame, shame upon you.

*Myself.*—I am ashamed and confounded. I scarcely ever felt more despicable in my own eyes than I do at this moment. FROM THIS NIGHT FORTH, I VOW THAT I WILL NEVER SPEND ANOTHER PENNY IN TOBACCO.

*Conscience.*—Good, good! stick to that, and you will be more worthy of your position and office.

So ended the colloquy. Having asked God to forgive me the great sin of which I had been guilty, and to grant me grace and strength to carry out the resolve I had just made, I went to bed. The next day was the commencement of a great conflict. At the usual times for taking the pipe, the craving for it was very strong. I managed to resist it, however, by putting to myself a few plain questions, such as, "What is the matter with you? Why are you restless and unhappy? Have you a headache?" "No." "A toothache?" "No." "Have you pain in any part of your body?" "No." "Are you cold?" "No." "Hot?" "No." "Are you hungry?" "No." "Thirsty?" "No." "Then why, in the name of all that is rational, are you not contented; and even thankful to God, for the exemption from pain which you enjoy?"

In this manner I lectured myself against the unnatural craving. Every time I resisted the appetite, I felt that I had achieved a victory; that I was rising higher in the scale of being; that my moral strength was augmented; that I was getting more into harmony with God's laws and my own conscience; and that my example, in regard to the youths of my congregation, was becoming more worthy of me as a Christian missionary and pastor. Ere long the craving ceased; the appetite died away; I was emancipated! And now I would not be again enslaved for "all the world calls good or great." Most devoutly do I thank God for my deliverance both from alcoholic drinks and from tobacco. Against them both I am determined to battle till I die.—*Canadian Independent.*

•••••  
We may mingle many a cup for ourselves, we may seek for blessing in this thing or in that, but all will fail to promote our comfort and joy, we shall never find a full portion of blessing, unless the Lord himself be "the portion of our cup." Nothing but God can satisfy the soul.

## SECRET PRAYER.

Prayer is the first of *Duties*. It is the creature's homage to the Creator, man's acknowledgment of his Maker. The Saviour teaches us that men "ought always to pray, and not to faint." Mark the word *ought*. Thus to pray is not left as a matter of option with any man, but is laid as an obligation on all. The obligation imposed is supreme, personal, universal, and abiding. "I will that *men* pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." And who shall question or gainsay what the Lord wills? "Who hath resisted his will?" None with impunity. For his will is the highest of all laws, and the highest of all reasons. It is the rule to direct men in prayer, and the reason to account for, and enforce the direction.— "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us."

Prayer is also the first of *Privileges*.— It is the subject's audience of his Sovereign, the people's approach to their God, the children's access to their Father. Such freedom of access is prized as a high privilege by the people of God, by all the people of God, and by none but the people of God. It is their delight as well as their duty, their pleasure as well as their practice. "It is good for them to draw near to God." It honours God by their confidence, and is good for their own souls. It is their refuge in danger, their relief in trouble, and their resource at all times. "Prayer opens the heart, and lets out grief; and opens heaven, and lets down grace. It succours not only by its exercise, but by its success." By it they "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need." And whenever "the spirit of true grace" is poured upon any person, house or people, it is always shown and seen as a "spirit of supplication."— The want of a spirit of prayer, is a certain evidence of a want of a gracious spirit. To be prayerless is to be graceless. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." And nowhere do they cry with more freedom, confidence, and earnestness, than when they "pray to their Father who is in secret."

*The closet is the place, and the chosen place, for secret prayer.* In the closet the

children of God are most at home, most confident, and have most communing with their Father. In secret they can all speak, can all pray to their Father, and can all plead with their Father in heaven. For *there* their mouth is opened; their heart is enlarged; their spirit is elevated; their tongue is unloosed; and words flow apace "while they pour out their hearts before Him." The fear of man does not prevent, while the fear of God prompts and persuades to prayer in secret. Accordingly secret prayer is a much more certain and infallible mark of "the Spirit of adoption," than prayer in the family, the social company, or the great congregation. The presence of the household, of neighbours, and a regard of reputation, may help to keep up family prayer. To be "seen of men," and the example of others, may bring to the prayer meeting. The pride of gifts and the power of utterance may influence public prayer. But none of all these influences can operate in praying in secret, where no eyes sees but the eye of God, and no ear hears but the ear of God.

Have you a closet of your own to enter? If you have, be thankful for this privilege. Prize it, improve it, make it a Bethel. Be sure to convert it into "a place where prayer is wont to be made." Enter thy closet alone, that you may be in secret; reverently, that you may pray; with a "free spirit, that you may pray to your Father;" regularly, that you may "cry unto Him daily;" and composedly, that you may wait on Him without distraction.

A readiness to enter thy closet for secret prayer, and a reluctance to leave it, is a good sign, whereas an aversion to enter and haste to leave it, is a bad sign, of your spiritual state and frame. Should you at any time feel such a spirit of aversion coming on, and creeping over you, strive to shake it off. Beware, be alarmed. "Examine yourselves." Be sure there is something morally wrong with you. For "backsliding commences at the closet door."

But if you have not a closet of your own, you may make, or you can find one. Yea, you *must* have a place "for praying to your Father in secret, if your soul would live and prosper." Any place of retirement may bear the name that will serve the purpose. If you cannot be as retired as you would, be as retired as you *can*. There is no place

too secret for your Father to see, or to distant for Him to hear. You may pray to Him in secret from any place "out of the depths of hell." "And a praying heart never wants a praying part." Isaac found one in the field; Jacob and Luz; Ezekiel in the plain by the river of Chebar; Christ on a mountain; Nathanael under the fig tree; and Peter on the housetop.

How often, and at what times, you are to enter "thy closet for secret prayer," the Saviour says not; nor do the Scriptures anywhere plainly declare or positively determine. Why? Three reasons may be assigned for this seeming silence: (1.) Because a fixed and positive rule would have tended to repress the spirit and restrain the exercise of prayer to these times, which God wishes to be cherished and exercised at all times. (2.) Because such a rule could not apply equally to all men in all the conditions and callings of life: And, (3.) because such a rule is "as unnecessary as a fixed and determinate rule to direct us when we are to eat and when we are to drink." Our natural wants and appetites are sufficient to regulate the one, and our spiritual needs and desires are sufficient to regulate the other.

But as the health of the body requires stated seasons for food, so the health of the soul requires stated seasons for secret prayer. Nor is the anxious inquirer left without pretty clear and certain indications of the mind of the Spirit as to what these seasons ought to be. Reason itself would say to every one, that "the first fruits" of every morning should be presented as a thank-offering to the God of our life, for preserving us during the dangers, the darkness, and slumbers of the night; for raising us up, so to speak, from a grave of forgetfulness, refreshed with sleep, and fitted for the callings, the duties, and trials of the day; and, that every evening, prayer should be made to God for the pardon of our daily sins, and thanks rendered to God for our daily mercies. O how careful should every one be that the guilt of a single day's sins should not rest on his soul, to blind his mind, burden his conscience, harden his heart, and offend his God. The dictates of reason accord with the appointment of "the morning and evening sacrifice" under the Law. This legal appointment is countenanced and recommended by the language

of the Psalmist. "It is a good thing to shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."—Now if this is a good thing—good in its nature, in its tendency, exercise and effects, prayer every morning and night is surely a dutiful thing, and incumbent on all who would not "restrain prayer before God." Is this duty performed by you?

David exemplified in his own person, and exceeded in his own practice, what he recommended others to observe and do.—"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice. Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments." Yea, in another place he says, "I give myself unto prayer"—as if prayer were his chief, his only exercise all the day long. And what was the practice of David's Lord in this matter? "In the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. And when the evening was come, he was there alone,"—alone "in a mountain apart," and alone in prayer. And has not "Christ left us an example that ye should follow his steps," in praying, as well as in doing and suffering? Can you be his disciples if you do not imitate his example in observing these stated seasons of daily prayer? Let conscience answer. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Sin not thus wilfully. But let your daily prayer be, "O Lord be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee; be thou our arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble."

Let secret prayer be your *first* exercise every morning, and your *last* every night. The God of your life has a right to the first and the last, and the best of your services. Give Him this right in your morning and evening prayers, and you will find it beneficial to your souls. It will prevent the omission of your prayer from forgetfulness, and preserve a habit of order in your devotions. "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, but order your cause before Him, and let your words be few. Think not you will be heard for your much speaking, but for

your effectual fervent praying. Pray with the Spirit, and pray with the understanding also." Be careful to guard against all irreverence and levity of mind, all wandering and worldly thoughts. Avoid coldness of affection which freezes, and formality which starves prayer. Think what you want before you make known your requests. A little reflection on some part or verse of God's Word is an excellent preparation for prayer. "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation." "David's prayers," says Henry, "were not his words only, but his meditations: as meditation is the best preparation for prayer, so prayer is the best issue of meditation. Meditation and prayer should go together." Be more anxious about "the supply of all your need," than about telling God all you know; in pleading with Him, than in talking about him. And let your prayers for yourself, your relatives, friends, and neighbours, be direct and not circuitous, distinct and not vague, particular and not general. "Direct your prayer unto Him," as David did. "Lift up your soul unto Him. Pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us."

If you would prove yourselves to be "Israelites indeed, who have power with God and prevail in the closet, and thus obtain the promised recompense of reward openly," yours must be the prayer of faith, of importunity, and perseverance. You must pray.

(1.) *In faith.* "The prayer of faith," means not merely faith in God, the only hearer of prayer; and faith in Christ, the only medium of prayer; and faith in his word generally, as the rule of, and reason for, prayer; but it means, specifically and specially, faith in the promises of God as the great encouragements and incentives to prayer. Why are all the promises of God given to us, but that we may embrace them, convert them into petitions, and present and plead them at a throne of grace, in the firm and full assurance, that faithful is He who hath promised, and will also do it. "His exceeding great and precious promises" are God's bond for faith's acceptance and pleading; and it is answerable at the first sight of faith's presentation in prayer. By pleading in faith these promises given to us, you sue God on his own bond.— And you know that "He abideth faithful:

He cannot deny Himself." He can no more deny Himself than He can destroy Himself. He can no more falsify his promise than He can forfeit his throne. It is as impossible for the true God to lie, as it is impossible for the living God to die.— "The prayer of faith," says Hall, "is the only power in the universe to which the great Jehovah yields; He looks upon every other power as more or less opposed to Him; but He looks upon this as a confession of man's dependance, as an appropriate homage to his greatness, as an attraction which brings down his divine agency to the earth." "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

(2.) *With importunity.* Earnestness gives energy and efficacy to prayer. This you are taught by scriptural exhortations. By the three-fold repetition and emphatic gradation, "Ask—seek—knock." By the explicit injunction, "continuing instant in prayer." And by scriptural examples.— The wrestling of Jacob; the crying of David; of blind Bartimeus; of all the children of God; the importunity of the friend in the parable of the gospel; and Christ's "offering up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, in the days of his flesh;" are all examples of importunity in prayer recorded for our encouragement and imitation. Such importunity cannot be discouraged by obstacles, stifled by repulses, or silenced by rebukes. It only derives additional energy from the exercise, and pleads the more fervently from the delay. And it is "the effectual fervent—the energizing—prayer of a righteous man that availeth much."

(3.) *With perseverance.* "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?" The hypocrite does call upon God, as a cloak to his hypocrisy: he may call upon God for a time, and even for a considerable time; but he will not *always* call upon God. Why? Just because he delighteth not in the Almighty. The Almighty is his dread, not his delight. But the generation of the upright seek Him; they seek His face and His favour. Delighting in God, they delight in His presence; and they delight in prayer continually. They "pray always, and do not faint. They continue instant in prayer. They pray without ceasing."

They never cease to cherish the spirit, to maintain the habit, observe the seasons, continue the exercise, and improve the opportunities of prayer. "They watch unto prayer." Accordingly, the apostle sums and shuts up "the whole armour of God in praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." "All prayer" brightens and sharpens, binds together and keeps together, "the whole armour of God;" while it obtains for all those who put it on, wisdom to use it with skill, and power to use it with energy and effect.

"Long as they live should Christians pray,  
For only while they pray they live."

Such prayer will always be of much avail with God, in obtaining blessings for the suppliant, and for all those for whom it is offered up. Is your prayer of this character? Has it been of much avail to you? Has it availed in obtaining for you tokens of God's favour, a sweet sense of forgiveness, "assurance of His love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and increase of grace," for duty and for difficulty, for work and for warfare? Can you, from your own experience, "bless God for not having turned away your prayer, nor His mercy from you?" If you cannot—why not? There is, there must be, a cause. The cause is with you, and in you. It is an evil, a *sinful* cause. "Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss." There is something amiss in the spirit, the manner, the motive, or the end of your asking. "That ye may consume it upon your lusts." There is some secret duty neglected, some secret sin cherished, some secret lust indulged, or some secret idol adored. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. We know that God heareth not sinners,—who yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, and are the servants of sin." Sinning prevents prayer from being heard, and will soon prevent prayer from being offered. For "sinning will either make a man leave off praying, or praying will make a man leave off sinning." And the sooner the separation takes place between sinning and praying, so much the better. It cannot take place too soon.

Another reason why prayer is not answered is,—*It is not looked after.* You ask, but you do not look for an answer; you seek, but are not careful whether the object of your seeking be found; you knock, but you do not wait to see whether the door of mercy is opened. And if you are so careless about your asking, is it wonderful if God should not be forward to answer prayers you have so speedily lost sight of and forgotten? Surely not. So acted not David toward his prayers. He not only "directed his prayer unto God, but he looked up." He looked up to see whether God's ear was open unto the voice of his cry,—whether He inclined his ear,—gave ear, and hearkened to the words of his mouth. He looked up for an answer to the prayer directed unto God. And he looked up for an answer with a hope as lively and an expectation as eager, as his eye was single, his faith was firm, and his cry fervent in directing his prayer unto God. "I will hear what God will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly." No wonder his expectations of an answer to his prayers were not disappointed. "Verily God hath heard me: He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me." Go thou and do likewise, and thou shalt have like success in prayer to God.

Remember that the law of the kingdom of grace is—*Everything by prayer—nothing without prayer.* According to this law, two alternatives are set before you. The one alternative is; "Pray without ceasing;" and ceaseless praise for answers returned and blessings received. For "prayer is the service of time, and praise the employment of eternity." The other alternative is: A prayerless life here; and endless crying hereafter, where no hope ever comes, where no mercy is ever shown, and no cry is ever heard, or ever answered. See Prov. i. 24–31. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it."

Throw all the miserable comforts of the world out of doors for rubbish, and cast yourself upon the strength of God, and upon that alone.

## Sabbath School Lessons.

April 27th, 1862.

## JOSEPH DISCOVERS HIMSELF.

GEN. XLV. 1-28.

1. *Joseph Reveals himself to his brethren.*

He could no longer refrain himself, v. 1. His feelings which he had long pent up, after that most touching appeal of Judah could no longer be restrained. But just as the stream when it overflows the barriers by which it has been confined rushes onward with all the greater impetuosity, so did Joseph's feelings now manifest themselves the more strongly. He cried "Cause every man to go out from me." He desired that the presence of strangers might not act as a check upon the exhibition of his fraternal love. Having obtained the wished-for privacy, the emotions of his heart relieved themselves in tears. "He wept aloud." We read that Peter, on the denial of his Lord went out and wept bitterly, but Joseph's tears were caused by feelings quite different from those of the Apostle. Peter's tears were those of repentance and bitter sorrow, Joseph's those of tenderness and joy. To put his brethren at once at their ease, and to dispel their fears, he tells them, "I am Joseph." v. 3. This disclosure, however, only troubled them the more. Associating his present position and power with their bad treatment of him, they would probably rather have stood in the presence of any one else. Thus is the sinner often troubled when Jesus first draws nigh him. Overwhelmed with the burden and guilt of sin, he cries like Peter, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." At Joseph's bidding, his brethren came near to him. They doubtless read in his manner his kind intentions. To comfort them he shows them, how in selling him into Egypt, they had only been working out the designs of an infinitely wise and merciful God. The consideration that the Almighty Governor of all things over-rules every event, for his own glory and the good of his people, should not only be matter of strong consolation to the believer, but it should also make him kind and forgiving towards those who may have in any way injured him. But let us take heed that we seek not to palliate our sins with the reflection that God makes them conducive to his own gracious ends. On the contrary, it should render us the more deeply humble and penitent, and should cause us to seek that our will should be conformable, not contrary to His to whom we owe our all; for not according to the good which God, in his providence, brings out of our evil shall we be judged, but according to our own conduct and heart-motives.

2. *He commissions them to invite his*

*father to come with themselves and their families, and settle in Egypt.*

He assigns to them the land of Goshen as being the best adopted to their pastoral life, and to keep them apart from the Egyptians, who regarded them as an abomination. As to the locality of Goshen the Bible does not present any definite information, and the statements of later writers can only be regarded as conjectural. Jacob is not said to have crossed the Nile in his passage to Egypt, nor are the Israelites reported to have done so in their subsequent flight from that country; and from these circumstances it has been inferred that it was situated on the eastern bank of the Nile. From Ex. xiii. 17, compared with 1 Chron. vii. 21, it is probable that Goshen bordered on Arabia as well as Palestine, and that it was not far distant from the Red Sea, we may conclude from the passage of the Israelites out of Egypt. It was exceedingly fertile, being the "best of the land," Chap. xlvii. 6. "Ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt," v. 13. Jesus wills that his beloved may be with him that they may behold his glory; Jno. xvii. 24. Pharaoh's confirming this invitation by his own authority, would induce us to believe that, in this particular, as well as in his previous treatment of his brethren to bring them to repentance, Joseph was guided by special revelation from on high.

3. *He dismisses them with liberal presents.*

We should be generous and kind to all according to the means which God has seen meet to bestow on us, but especially towards our own connexions; if one does not show kindness to his own household it is not likely that he will do so to strangers. Jesus dismisses poor penitents from his throne of grace laden with benefits, even in this life, as a small earnest and foretaste of the full inheritance, which they shall afterwards enjoy in that happy land, into which he, as their forerunner, has already entered.

4. *The effect of the intelligence of Joseph's being still alive, and in a prosperous condition upon Jacob.*

His heart fainted, v. 26. The words of his sons seemed to him but as idle tales, as did the news of the women to the disciples on the resurrection morn. The Psalmist tells us that he would have fainted "if he had not believed," Ps. xxvii. 13. When, however, Jacob witnessed the waggon, the proofs of his son's existence and of his love, "his spirit revived." So may we also not doubt our Saviour's love, when we consider the many testimonies of it he has already given us.

Learn—1st. That it is our duty, and should be our delight to return good for evil; Matt. v. 44. Rom. xii. 21.

2d. That God's providence is universal; Dan. iv. 35. Matt. x. 29.

3d. The goodness and faithfulness of God in providing for his people in a time of want. 1 Kings xvii. 14. Ps. xxxvii. 25.

May 4th.

WOE! WOE! WOE! LUKE xi. 37-54.

1. *Jesus is entertained in the house of a Pharisee.*

The Pharisees were one of the three great sects into which the Jews were divided in the time of our Lord. They believed in the immortality of the soul, in good and evil spirits, and in the resurrection of the dead. Josephus who was himself a Pharisee, informs us that "they ascribed all things to Fate (or Providence) and to God, and yet allow that to act what is right or the contrary, is for the most part in the power of man." (*Joseph. De Bell. Jud.*) They also believed that virtue would be rewarded and vice punished in the future state. To the word of God they had added the vain and endless traditions of the elders, so that they had "made the word of God in vain through their tradition;" Mark vii. 13. They affected great regard for outward ordinances, claimed extraordinary piety and lived austere; these circumstances gave them great influence, especially with the common people. Pluming himself on his habitual regard to externals the Pharisee marvelled that our Lord had not first washed before dinner, v. 38.

2. *Our Saviour's solemn and emphatic denunciation of the Pharisees, and description of their character.*

1st. Their heart-wickedness.

They made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, v. 39. They paid scrupulous attention to personal cleanliness, and sought much that their conduct should appear fair in the sight of others, but entirely neglected the inner man—the soul; their inward part was full of ravening and wickedness. They forgot that God is a spirit who "trieth the hearts and veins," Ps. vii. 9, and that therefore his law must be spiritual also; that the body is but the servant of the soul, and that the servant's master, God will judge. *Ravening*, is an old English word for destroying; with all their pains taking, then, the Pharisees were not always successful in concealing their internal pollution, for despite of the fair covering with which they endeavoured to conceal it, it would sometimes manifest itself; they destroyed widows' houses, and for pretence made long prayers, Matt. xxiii. 14. "But rather give alms of such things as ye have," v. 14. Having their hearts cleansed, and their minds renewed, the internal change would manifest itself in external works of love, one important branch of which would be alms-giving.

2d. the undue importance which they attached to the outward ceremonies of religion.

The Pharisees tithed mint and rue, v. 42. They attended to the small things but neglected the great things of religion. Their religion resembled the dead corpse, all the parts of the man indeed are there, but the spirit is wanting. Judgment and the love of God, with these de-luded Pharisees, were but trival and unimportant matters in comparison with the tithing of garden herbs, as to many they are alas! at the present day in comparison with a bell, a candle, a surplice, or an altar. Our Saviour while he would not abrogate the decent and lawful ceremonies of religion, would have them kept in their proper place. We must not place first that which should be last.

3d. Their ostentation.

They "loved the uppermost seats in the synagogue, and greetings in the markets." They sought their own glory, not the glory of God. Their hearts being perverted, their affections ran in the wrong channel: they sought the praise of man rather than the praise of God.

4th. Their hypocrisy.

"They were as graves which appeared not," v. 44. They wished to appear quite the reverse of what they really were. There are cemeteries in the outskirts of our great modern cities ornamented with walks and avenues, and gaily bedecked with beautiful shrubs and flowers, but could we see through this fair exterior, but a few feet down what a shocking spectacle would meet our gaze, unsightly skeletons, and worms reveling on lifeless human forms in every stage of putrefaction. So do all hypocrites appear to the all-penetrating eye of Christ.

3d. *The Jewish lawyers denounced and their true character exposed.*

The lawyers professed great knowledge of the Divine law which they read and expounded both in public and private to the people. One of these lawyers, who heard our Saviour's exposure of the Pharisees, felt that it applied with equal force to himself and the class to which he belonged; his remark to Jesus, v. 45, drew upon them the "quick and powerful" word.

1st. The lawyers' injustice.

Whilst they required a strict observance of the moral and ceremonial law of others, they kept it not themselves. They were guilty of the very sins they denounced, and performed not the duties they enjoined.

2d. Their self-righteousness.

They affected great grief for the crimes of their teachers, and great respect to the memory of the prophets, whom they had persecuted and slain. They thought with

all the confidence of self-ignorance, that they themselves could never be guilty of such crimes. But they trusted in their own strength, not in the aid of Divine grace, of which they saw not their need, and the event showed how miserably they were deceived. Their sin reached a height infinitely beyond the most heinous offences of their ancestors; they persecuted and put to death the Lord of Glory.

3d. They kept men away from Christ.

By teaching men that salvation was to be attained by their own legal righteousness, they kept them in ignorance of the gospel. Christ the beginning and the ending, the alpha and omega of salvation was not in all their preaching. They sought not the spirit of God to enlighten their minds in the things of God and to enable them to explain these things to others. The scriptures which were able to make men wise unto salvation they had obscured by their glosses and additions. Thus had they taken the key of knowledge from the people whom they professed to teach.

*4th. The manner in which the Scribes and Pharisees were affected by this exposure of their true character.*

A solemn denunciation was pronounced by our Lord upon all such characters. Instead of submitting themselves to Jesus as God, when they felt that he was a 'discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,' they were lacerated by his words to fury. They did not, like the Samaritan woman say to others, "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did;" but eagerly sought to find something in his words for which they might accuse him, and put him to death, v. 54.

Learn—1st. The Divinity of Christ: none but God knows the thoughts of the heart, I Chr. 28, 9. Psal. 7, 9.

2d. That we may appear fair to men, but be abominable in the sight of God; Luke 16, 15.

3d. The great danger of self-deception in spiritual things; Jno. 9, 41. Tim. 3, 13.

### WHAT IS INVOLVED IN A JEW CONFESSING CHRIST ?

"Whatever displeasure," (says a converted Jew,) "may arise in the minds of nominal Christians, when their relations are in earnest about the salvation of their souls, and give up all for Christ, it falls far short of what the poor converted Jew has to encounter, when about to publish in the world, and confess in the Church, that the Lord Jesus Christ is his Redeemer. No one can adequately describe the sufferings, persecutions, and deprivations of the Jew, when he enlists under the banner of the Lord. Every endearing tie is torn asun-

der; he is spurned from the parental roof, detested, shunned, and excommunicated by every individual of his nation; his business, too, is quite ruined in consequence of his former friends abstaining from all intercourse with him, in secular concerns."

Such suffering this poor fellow was soon called upon to endure. His first troubles came upon him at the time of the Passover. "My wife," says he, "went to see my parents on the day preceding the festival. After the usual salutation, my mother said, 'I have been informed of something, which I hope is not true—that your husband has been baptized.' My poor wife, being quite unprepared for such an address, could only reply by saying, 'You will see your son, and he will answer any questions you may wish to put to him.' My mother continued, "Mrs. W. says that we shall be disappointed in our anticipated enjoyment of the holidays, for that our son Henry (meaning myself) has been baptized."—My mother added, 'If my son has been so mad as to act thus, I am confident that neither you nor your children will follow his example.' My poor wife returned home quite cast down; she was hardly able to utter a sentence, and I confess that I felt sorely grieved, not because it was discovered that I had openly confessed the Lord, but that it was such a blow to the feelings of my dear parents and friends, towards whom, as well as towards all my kinsmen according to the flesh, I entertained the sincerest affection.

"I understood that my mother intended to visit me. She, however, gave up her intention, and the elder of my two sisters came in her stead. After a little commonplace conversation, she said, 'Mrs. W. has informed me that you have been baptized, but I cannot believe it. Tell me if there is any foundation for such a scandalous report? I hope it is a false rumor, and I shall be greatly rejoiced to find it is so.' I was now put to the test, whether I would deny Christ, and subject myself to be denied before the Father of our Lord Jesus, or confess Christ, and be declared before His heavenly Father, to be one of the sheep of His fold. I was not a moment in deciding what to do. 'The truth is, dear sister,' I replied, 'that in the desire of doing all things to the glory of God, I have received the ordinance of baptism.'—

I had scarcely uttered the words, when my poor misguided sister, unable to restrain her indignation, at first gave vent to her feelings by a flood of tears, and then, as if reproaching herself for her weakness, she arose, and changing her countenance, (which before had been placid,) to an expression of scorn and hatred, she said, 'then, sir, we must have done with you for ever—you have made us all wretched—we shall be ashamed to see any of our friends; you have brought disgrace and scandal upon us, and will bring the grey hairs of your parents with sorrow to the grave. If your heart is not yet so hardened as to be incapable of being moved at the grief and anguish you have occasioned your aged parents; if you do not desire to be an outcast from your family, from your nation; if you will serve the God of your fathers, instead of being led astray by those Christian idolaters, I entreat you to turn away from them. You are but little acquainted with them as yet. They may appear favorably disposed towards you for a short space of time; but they will soon contemptuously leave you to deplore your consummate folly in giving your society to the heathens, in preference to that of God's chosen people, and the company of strangers, to those of your father's house.' I endeavored (by appealing to her better reason) to soothe her agonized feelings, and assured her, that I did not look to man, but only to God. I said, that the Shepherd of Israel was gathering his sheep into his fold. She would listen to no more, but turning away, instantly left the house.—After her departure, she gave vent to her outraged feelings in a flood of tears, and I was afterwards informed, that she was three several times attacked with violent fits.

"This was a season of great temptation to me; I loved my relations very dearly; for in addition to my having for them a natural affection, I now loved them for Christ's sake, and for their soul's sake.—But even had it been possible for me to have loved them better than I did, my love to Jesus was paramount to all, for the love of Christ constrained me to give up all for Him, whom my soul loved. I now prayed earnestly that I might be enabled in this time of sore temptation to stand my ground, and that the word of God sown in my heart might take deep root. My

family were determined to leave no means untried to win me back to them. Their mode of attack was cautiously planned; they did not offer any violent opposition to me at first, for they expected that *that* would at once have put an end to their hopes of regaining me. They knew how much I was attached to my youngest sister. We were nearly of the same age, and from our earliest infancy, our mutual affection attracted the attention of all who knew us. In our little joys and griefs, there was a genuine sympathy of kindly feeling, and this attachment did not only exist in our early days, but continued afterwards unalloyed by any misunderstanding, up to the time when I was called upon to decide between the love of my Redeemer and my relations. Therefore, this sister was deemed a most proper person to be the bearer of the wishes of my family regarding me; they thought that I could not refuse her any request, and that I should yield to her tears and entreaties. The morning following the day that my eldest sister came, I received a visit from the youngest. She came in and looked at us most piteously, then sinking down on a seat, covered her face with her hands and sobbed convulsively, in a manner that would have been distressing even to a stranger; what then must it have been to a brother who had always shared her sorrows? We sat like so many statues. I now needed as much as ever the strength of an Almighty arm to lean upon—my natural feelings were overcome, and had I conferred with flesh and blood, I should undoubtedly have yielded in this moment of trial, but God was my stay.

"Nearly an hour had elapsed before my poor sister could give utterance to a word. Vain would any attempt of mine be to describe her appeal to me. It was delivered in broken sentences, now gently reproving, now affectionately entreating; showers of tears continually preventing her speech. 'Oh, Henry,' she said, 'if any of that love remains which you have always shown to all your family, and particularly to me, you will now prove it by saving us from the disgrace and shame of *one* of our fathers; you will assuredly break our hearts if you do not relent.'

"I must here digress for a moment, to

observe, that if a Jew has renounced his religion, and embraced Christianity or any other religion, if he recant, he may again be admitted to the privileges of his nation, by performing some penitential act or acts, imposed on him by the chief Rabbi, who is commonly, but erroneously, termed the High Priest. To that personage my dear sister urged me to have recourse, that, being by him absolved from the reproach I had brought upon myself, I might be received with open arms by my friends, and be more endeared to them than ever. 'Consider,' she continued, 'that either your wife and children will share your disgrace, or, being restored to us, they will share in the joy your return will occasion to us all.' She proceeded for a length of time in the same strain, but how shall I describe the inward conflict in which I was now engaged, or the struggle I had with my natural feelings?

"My sister began to have hopes (judging by my silence) that she had gained her point, that her appeal to my affections had not been in vain: she was, however, greatly mistaken—I was silently praying to my God to give me the spirit of wisdom and of truth, as well as a door of utterance, that I might speak boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. The Lord was with me, and his grace enabled me to rouse myself from my apparent lethargy, and fearlessly and unshrinkingly to witness a good confession. I assured my dear sister that, however great my love might be to her, and to my parents, or to my wife and children, or any creature, the love I bore to my blessed Saviour was infinitely above all other considerations, and that all other love was as nothing, when we are assured of His love to us, His sovereign love, which is unmingled with human passions—in short, I told her that no earthly power or inducement could draw me away from God, my Saviour. Finding that her tears and entreaties had all been spent in vain, she arose to depart. 'Henceforth (said my sister) I shall abhor Christians, their very name will be odious to me.' With an aching heart, and swollen eyes, she returned home to bear the sad tidings of the failure of her mission to the other members of the family, who were waiting her return in deep anxiety.

"My two sisters next paid a visit to the

Rev. Mr. ——. They accused him of being the chief instrument in leading me to Christianity. He assured them that he was not instrumental in any way in bringing me to the knowledge of Christ. He said, 'When I first saw your brother, I found him a Christian already.' He then took the opportunity of briefly laying before them the truths of the gospel, and although they were not able to controvert the proofs he gave them, yet, being so tenacious of their own preconceived notions, they expressed strong disapprobation of the step I had taken. Mr. —— offered to go to my parents, and endeavor to soothe their agitated minds, and reconcile them to the will of Providence; but his kind and well meant offers were peremptorily refused. Mr. —— related to me the substance of his interview with my sisters, and told me how much pleased he was with their intelligent conversation, with the energetic manner with which they entreated him to restore me to them, and with their respectful behaviour to him, although they were laboring under excited feelings.

"Their next recourse was to try what my wife's family could do. Accordingly we received a visit from her brothers. My wife's family were always noted for the great unanimity existing amongst them.— Her eldest brother began by asking her if she could reconcile her mind to live with an apostate. She assured them, that from all she observed, she was satisfied that I was seeking to walk in the paths of truth, and holiness, and added, 'I cannot dissuade him.' I then thought it right to address a few words to him, in support of the choice I had made. He would not allow me to proceed, but continued addressing my wife. 'My purpose in coming to you is this, if you will take your children away, and leave your husband, I will settle a sufficient annuity upon you to support you comfortably.' Now as I have before stated, they always attacked me where they thought I was the weakest; and knowing my attachment to my wife and children, they flattered themselves that I would rather yield to anything, than to a separation from them. Here again they were foiled. My wife replied, 'I am ready to share with my husband in all circumstances, whether of reproach, contempt, adversity, sorrow or sickness, or in any

other way in which it may please God to visit us.' 'Then,' said he, 'you are as deep in guilt as he is, and perhaps you are the worst of the two, for had you disapproved of his conduct, he would not, probably, have persevered in opposing your wishes, and rendering you unhappy and miserable.' They went away dejected and sorrowful.—We were wonderfully supported in those struggles, for however willing the spirit may be, the flesh is weak, and we must have sunk under the weight of these efforts, had not the Lord held us up, proving the truth of His own promise, that His grace was sufficient for us.

(To be continued.)

### SPLINTERS IN THE WOUND.

Why is your wound never healed?—There must be some cause, and the cause is in you, not in God; you are to blame, it is not your God that is to blame.

Perhaps you are *giving way now and then to temper*. We have known anxious souls, who were to be found attending eagerly on ordinances, week-day and Sabbath, and yet were never nearer the point of rest, and it turned out that all the while, either at home or at their work, they were giving way to irritation, and ill humour, and sullen moods, and sometimes it was envy they indulged, and sometimes evil speaking. They *grieved the Spirit*, who at other times was shewing them the Lord Jesus.

Perhaps you are very anxious about finding Christ and grace in him, but whilst you are *indulging yourself* in something of the flesh, living for your own comfort, and not putting yourself to any inconvenience for the souls of others. Ah! this selfishness is a splinter in the wound. You *grieve the Spirit*, who shews Christ to the soul, by wishing peace just in order to spend it on yourself, and be more at ease. Go out of self, go and put to your hand, for your neighbour's comfort, for He will not give you the heavenly gift in circumstances that would foster selfishness.

Perhaps you have been long anxious, and more deeply awakened than most, and yet are not at rest even now, because you are a person of a narrow soul, stingy in your habits, miserly in your givings, keeping a fast grip of the world. You are

*grieving the Spirit*. How can you look upon our God who is altogether liberal, and open, and frank, and generous in his givings? The brightness of His grace and ample bounty dazzles you; you cannot believe that he is so free in his giving. *Just because you could never imagine yourself capable of getting delight in such giving.*

There were men of old who said, "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." (Deut. xxix, 19). They sought peace, but would retain those favourite sins. Against such the Lord said that his "jealousy would smite," and he would not spare them. (Matt. vi. 30).

Or, perhaps the splinter in the wound is something in *your business*. You carry on an unlawful trade, you indulge in sharp practice; you *do as others do, though the thing is not fair and upright*. By such things you *grieve the Spirit*, who shews Christ to souls that they may cease forever from all sin. Would the merchant in Birmingham who, a few years ago, manufactured idols, and sent them out to the heathen, be likely to find the Holy Spirit leading him to peace in Jesus? Will you, dealer seller of strong drink? Will that slave to opium? Do you not see that were the Spirit to lead those men to peace, it would be sealing them in their vice and corruption?

Once more, in some cases the splinter in the wound is the anxious soul's wrong use of Election. The anxious put this precious truth in a wrong place, and say, "O if I could find out whether or not God intended to save me from all eternity?" Now, you *grieve the Spirit* by such a state of mind; for he wishes you to know and believe, first of all, that Christ Jesus "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God." He wishes you to find out and be satisfied with His blessed plan of saving sinners. He wishes you, first of all, to be entirely pleased with His beloved Son; for then He is pleased with you, and you may know that He has chosen you.

Unhappy soul! Have you been one of those who have often felt very keenly, and have often wished to have Christ? What if you are one who has tried to look at the *Brazen Serpent with the splinter in your wound!*—Rev. A. A. Bonar.