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## "WOE BECAUSE OF OFFENCES."

BY J. S. HOWSON, D. D.

When the Bible was translated into English, the word "offence" had a different meaning from that which is commonly given to it now. If you see a blind man groping his way with timid and hesitating steps, and lead him into broken and dangerous ground, so that he falls and is hurt,—by so doing, according to the old English expression, you cause him to "offend." It is exactly what is forbidden in one of the provisions of the Law of Moses, where it is said: "Thou shalt not put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God." (Levit. xix. 14) Or if, when a young child is unsuspecting, you place something in his way which may throw him down and bruise him and fill him with fear, that stumbling-block, which you have cruelly placed there, is called, in the language of Scripture, an "offence."

Now apply this to spiritual things, and we see immediately the meaning of the word.—"Offences," in the spiritual sense, are the occasions of falling into sin—the stumbling-blocks of the soul. If any man misleads the ignorant into false doctrines or wicked practices,—whether it be done consciously and with deliberate intention as by the evil spirits and those who imitate them,—or whether it be "the blind leading the blind," so that they both "fall into the ditch,"—such conduct is an "offence." And if any man tempts a child into sin, or one who is like a child in simplicity or in weakness, it was of him that our Saviour spoke when He said (and the child whom He had called was standing there in the midst of the disciples). "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. xviii. 6.)

And then he proceeds to add, in reference to the whole world which He came to redeem:—"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe unto that man by whom they come." (ib. 7.)—a threefold sentence of warning and of prophecy, which brings three subjects before our attention. 1. The misery of the world because of the offences or stumbling-blocks of the soul; 2. The inevitable necessity of the prevalence of these offences, and the existence of this misery; and, 3. The certain judgment which fall on those who place these hindrances in the way of the soul's progress from earth to heaven.

The misery of the world arises entirely

from sin. Everything that makes sin easier and more prevalent, increases the misery.—And nothing makes sin so easy or so prevalent, as the mutual example we set to each other, and the mutual encouragement we derive from each other. It may truly be said, that a very large portion of the life of most men is spent in affording to others the occasions of falling, and in fulfilling the prophetic words. "Woe unto the world because of offences!" I do not speak of open persecution—of deliberate attempts to corrupt the principles of others, or of the effects produced by flagrant examples of notorious profligacy; but rather of what takes place in the ordinary course of the world's proceedings. Take the world as it is, and view some of its ordinary features. Consider, for instance, some of the common distinctions—as of rich and poor—of educated and ignorant—those, on the one hand, who exercise influence on others—and those, on the other, who are influenced by the former. How do men use their wealth, their power, their talents, their knowledge? The answer is very easy. For the most part, they use them for themselves, without thinking of God. They use them not according to the principles of faith, but of unbelief.—And unbelief is the parent of all sin. Their life is a testimony against the necessity of faith. And so far as their temporal advantages or mental superiority may give them influence over others, so far their influence tends in the direction of sin.

Now this principle is evidently applicable to all ranks and all ages of life. For no man is quite without influence. Most men have more than they imagine. Wherever a man is placed, his conduct is an example to those around him. He cannot be worldly and selfish without doing harm. An ungodly habit of mind is a perpetual "offence:" and most men are ungodly. This is true everywhere. Neighbours in a village, children at a school, servants in a household, not only by persecution, by ridicule, by profaneness, but by the silent effect of indifference to religion—is it not too true that they continually cause each other to stumble and to fall?

But to see the extent of this woe and misery, "because of offences," it is useful to consider this influence, where it is strongest and most marked, by looking at the broad distinctions between man and man, which were alluded to before.

If a man is eminent for his professions or his power, he is closely observed by his

neighbours; he is the subject of their conversation; too often the pattern of their life, and the excuse for their sins. And each of these observers and imitators exerts in turn an influence on others. Each observer is observed again. Each imitator is a pattern to somebody. Now let all these results be considered. Accurately calculated they cannot be; but let them be considered: and it will easily be seen how much harm one man may do, not only by open and shameless iniquity, but simply by a selfish, idle, and worthless life.

Or take another of the important differences between man and man—that which relates to intellectual eminence, natural or acquired.—What harm has been worked by individual men, who have sowed the seeds of error in their day, leaving whole harvests of superstition or profaneness to be reaped by subsequent generations! What power does the imagination possess to spread mischief and undermine all faith and principles, especially when it is found in those minds where a certain kind of natural beauty assumes the appearance of goodness, and when fine and delicate feeling can easily pass current for religion. The experience of the woe arising from this kind of offence, in its highest degree, has been reserved for modern centuries, in which so much of our education and so much of our employment are provided by Books. Who can calculate the mischief which can be done by the bad doctrines, or even by the ill-considered fancies, of one man, when they are multiplied by being printed, and circulated among thousands, and then copied into other books, and made the foundation of new structures of falsehood and folly?

By following such strains of thought as these, we come to take a very gloomy, but a very just, view, of the evil and the misery which pervade the whole of society. However widely we may wander among the tracks of human action and human thought, we find them everywhere strewn with stumbling-blocks. But I believe we might gain a still deeper impression of the woe which comes from offences, if we were to look closely into the best and most sacred portions of our natural human life. The Father, who sets an example of careless ungodliness to his family; the Mother, who by the evident wickedness of her own spirit, justifies all the wickedness of her children; the Brothers and Sisters, who imbue each other with a systematic disregard for what is sacred; the Familiar Friends, who learn and teach the habit of unbelief; the close Companions who come together for mutual encouragement in the forgetfulness of God—these it is that the worst occasions of

falling are to be found. I am content to glance at this part of the subject thus lightly in passing. But the writer on such a subject must ask his readers to look closely into their families and their friendships, and to see what is going on there—to watch carefully that you “walk in a way wherein you shall not stumble,” or rather (since our own unassisted watchfulness is nothing else but slumber and blindness) let us all pray to God that He would “hold up our goings, that our footsteps slip not,” and graciously in his mercy prevent us from endangering the footsteps of those whom we love.

It will naturally be felt, that the view we have just taken of human life is mournful and dreary. And it is good that we should feel this, if it helps us to appreciate the extent of human corruption, and really to desire that better life for which we profess to be preparing. It is good for us to feel keenly that we are in a fallen world—that no human power can save us—that our best affections may be made the channels of wickedness—that the natural ornaments of character are quite different from Christian holiness—that every man, however pleasing, is a sinner, and can only be withheld by God's grace from becoming the occasion of sin in others.

We must now go one step further, and having devoted some lines to the *fact* of that woe which offences bring, must now consider the *inevitable necessity* of their existence, and of the misery they produce.

“Offences must needs come” in a world of sinful men. The very constitution of the world makes it inevitable. The disparity which subsists between one man and another, is of necessity the occasion of offences. Sin in the higher classes, must act at a great advantage in its effects on the lower. Legitimate influence can never abdicate its throne. It must reign over its subjects, for good or for evil. Where there is a superior wealth or superior power, unless there is also superior holiness, the bad cause cannot but reap the benefit of the difference. Where there is a greater height of intellectual eminence, unless there is also a greater depth of Christian humility, our Enemy will always know how to pervert the best gifts for his own purposes.

There is no possibility of escaping this necessity. Suppose that we could, by some violent effort, alter the constitution of society—Suppose that the rights of property were abolished, and all ranks reduced to the same level. This state of things would not last a day. Industry would soon begin to gather its harvest. Prudence would secure what industry had gained. The quick would outstrip the slow. The strong would defeat the

weak. The energetic man would become powerful, and the indolent would sink into insignificance. All the old differences would reappear. And then would follow all that admiration of what is worthless, if it has a name to make it honourable—and all that imitation of what is bad, if it is sanctioned by the rich—and all those social hindrances to a good and holy life, which cause men, in the language of the prophet, "to stumble in their ways." (Jer. xviii. 15.)

And again, if education could be equalized, if all men could be suddenly made equally learned or equally ignorant, the old intellectual differences would immediately reappear. The man who acquires the most quickly, who retains the most exactly, who judges the most wisely, would again become eminent: and rising with his eminence, would be felt his influence. Nothing is more impossible than to push aside the influence of a superior mind. And since the gifts of the intellect have no necessary connection with moral goodness, you have here again Sin acting at an advantage. You see the man of practical wisdom giving his sanction to the lowest motives.—the man of imagination making the vilest doctrines decent and attractive:—the man of cunning argument entangling the unwary in the meshes of his subtlety; and the result is, in the words of another prophet, that men "grope like the blind and stumble at noon-day as in the night, erring in vision, and stumbling in judgment." (Isaiah xxviii. 7, lix. 10.)

And, just to say one word again of those relations which are still more essential parts of the framework of society,—can the Father divest his actions of that authority which God Himself has given to them—can the Brother or the Sister set a bad example and resolve that it shall not be followed—can the Friend and Companion deliberately lead a sinful life, and forbid its natural and inevitable consequences? No: they cannot. Unless we can dis sever those bonds which are nearly all that is valuable here, we cannot unbind that necessity which clasps this fallen world, "offences must needs come."

If such is the hopeless state of the world, if offences must needs come by reason of the very constitution of society, if the "woe because of offences" is inevitable, would it not be better to resign ourselves to that which we cannot avoid? Would it not be better to live easily and carelessly, to enjoy life while we can, though such a life should add a few more stumbling-blocks to those which are almost innumerable already?

Yes! such an argument might have some show of wisdom, if we could divest ourselves of personal responsibility. But the world is governed, not by Fate, but by God: and God

has given to every man his own conscience. Though individuals are forgotten in that which we call History, every man has his separate Biography. Though he associates others in his sin, he is alone in the account he must render. Though he is occupied all life long in the busy market of human affairs, the eye of God's observation is ever upon him, and the foot of God's justice follows him to the last. Our blessed Saviour, after He had said that "woe was unto the world because of offences," and that "it must needs be that offences come," added in the third place, "*woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh.*"

He who has thoughtlessly done harm—he who, by a selfish life, has brought others into sin—he who has been determined to pursue his profits, his amusements, his fancies and his follies, without any regard to the souls of his brethren, what will he say at the Great Judgment, when Christ reminds him of those words? None of those differences of condition which make in this world the sin of doing harm to others so easy, and its effects so extensive, will remain in the next world to shelter the guilty. All the glory which dazzled and blinded the eyes of men, will fade before the Judge's coming. Everything will be seen as it is. The power which fostered evil instead of good, the wealth which was made the encouragement of sin, the intellect which sowed the seeds of falsehood, the genius which made vice attractive, will be held responsible for the mischief they have caused. The differences of condition and capacity were ordained on earth to be the opportunities of good, and if they have been made the opportunities of evil, all that remains is a greater condemnation. To one is given ten talents, to another five, to another one. No one can be excused because his responsibilities are heavy, and no one can be excused because they are light. If any one is burdened with the thought of the effect his own miserable infirmities may have on the spiritual welfare of others, let him remember for his encouragement that he that was faithful and most highly honoured by his Lord, was he that had received ten talents. And if any thinks his own position in society is so small and insignificant that he cannot hope to do good and can hardly do harm, let him remember that he that was condemned, was he that received one.

And leaving now these general distinctions, which belong rather to the surface of society, let me glance, for the third time, at the closer and dearer relations of life. If on anyone the woe denounced on him who makes his brother to offend, if on anyone that woe will descend with terrible weight, it will be on him who, being linked to others by the ties of close Friendship, might employ his influence

for good, but really employs it for evil;—it will be upon those members of the same Family who live on for years together without ever remembering that they have souls to be saved;—it will be upon the heedless Parent, who, while he is following the dreams of earthly ambition, and occupied with the comforts and amusements of life, forgets that his children are copying his example, and preparing to reproduce or to exaggerate his sins.

It is evident that we have all much reason for serious thought and anxious prayer in the threefold warning and prophecy of our Saviour. And it is in the light of such responsibilities as these, that we see the value of the doctrines of Grace—of free pardon for the past—of Divine strength for the future. If all the harm we have done in the past could only be cancelled by some righteousness of our own—if all our hopes of doing good in the future rested on our sufficiency—we could not bear to look either backwards or forwards. In either direction the prospect would be intolerable. Here it is, between such responsibilities in the past, and such responsibilities in the future, that we learn to adorn that mercy which gives us in Jesus Christ a perfect Saviour, and in the Holy Spirit a sufficient Comforter.

And there is another thing which we see very plainly; and this is the last reflection I desire to leave with the reader.

It is very evident that we have all much to look to in our own conduct, without any need for judging our neighbours. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him to stand. . . . Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." (Rom. xiv. 4—13.) And then the Apostle goes on to say, in allusion to some of the scruples which were harassing the minds of the Christians of that age—"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or made weak."—(Ib. xiv. 21.) And again he says, in another place, "Meat commended us not to God: for neither if we eat are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours be made a stumbling-block to them that are weak. If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (1 Cor. viii. 8—13.) Here is the pattern of our conduct—watchful care of the consciences of others; self-denial for their sakes; abstinence from things lawful, if it is likely that our example may be perverted into the

occasion of sin. And will you say that such a life is mean, spiritless and contemptible—a life of miserable bondage, and full of unceasing anxiety?

No, my friends, it is not a mean and contemptible life thus to carry with us, in our daily conduct, the thought of our brethren's salvation. Rather it is a noble and honorable task: for however humble may be our own share in the work, we are helping out that which our Saviour came and died to accomplish. No man can propose to himself a higher honour—whether it be a man of wealth and distinction who devotes his life to the removal of the causes and occasions of moral disease—or a man of high intellectual gifts who spends his strength in refuting error and circulating truth—or a friend who gently softens the prejudices of his friend—or a poor man, who breaks up the stumbling-blocks which he sees around him, and mends the road of his neighbours to heaven.

Nor is it necessarily an anxious life (though anxiety for the salvation of others is never discreditably.) It would be an anxious life, if we were forced to calculate all the results of all our actions. But this must be left to God, who alone can follow the effect of what we do in the moments of our life, to all their remote and future consequences. The wise Christian seeks to maintain a conscience void of offence, and he leaves the result to God. He does not live on the ridiculous theory of doing right that he may set a good example. What is our example worth, unless God vouchsafe His blessing? But *He* will take care that those who serve *Him* shall not live in vain. The lamp that is trimmed *will* shine and give light. He whose face is set toward Jerusalem, shall not be alone in his difficult pilgrimage.

Need I add that such a life is a happy life—the only life that deserves to be called happy? To live for this world only—to set the example of unbelief—to sanction sin—to help no one to be holy—to discourage everybody—and then to find at the last that your life has been spent in doing harm, because you never honestly sought to do good: do you call this a life of happiness? Or is not happiness rather to be found in watching for the causes of evil, in removing prejudices—in supporting the weak, and comforting the feeble-minded—and then at last in taking others along with us to that world where all the pathways of our heavenly employments shall be free from the possibility of danger—for the angels shall have "gathered out of the kingdom of the Son of Man all things that offend," and "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matt. xiii. 41-43.)

## TESTS OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

It is only often by a careful application of delicate tests that the chemist discovers a deadly poison or a precious metal; but how easy is it by a few simple questions to bring out our real character!

Have you suffered a heavy wrong, for example, at the hands of another? You remember it. But where? Is it at the throne of grace: and to pray with him whose blood fell alike on the hand of foe and friend, Father, forgive them, they know not what they do?

Again, are you asked to contribute money to the cause of Christ? While some calculate how little they can give to satisfy their conscience and meet the expectations of society, do you calculate how much you can spare for that blessed Saviour who did not spare himself for you? Again, when tempted to sin, while some wish there were no hell to deter them from the unbridled enjoyment of its pleasures, do you rather long for that pure, blessed heaven, where there entereth nothing to hurt or to defile?

Again, when you see transgressors, is it with indifference, or with somewhat of the feelings of him who said, I saw transgressors and was grieved—rivers of waters ran down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law, O Lord?

Again, when you think of perishing souls, is yours the spirit of Cain or of Christ? can you no more stand by with folded hands to see sinners perishing than men drowning? are you moved by such generous impulse as draws the hurrying, crowd to the pool where one is sinking, and moves some brave man, at the jeopardy of life, to leap in and pluck him from the jaws of death? There is no better evidence that we have received the nature as well as the name of Christ, than an anxious wish to save lost souls, and a sympathy with the joy of angels over every sinner that is converted. Let me illustrate this by two examples—pictures drawn from life.

Years ago, and in a parish which I knew, there lived a woman notorious in the neighbourhood for profane swearing, habits of drunkenness, and manners rude; coarse as well as irreligious. She feared not God, neither regarded man; and trained up her

children for the devil. One evening she happened to be within ear-shot of a preacher; and as he was emptying his quiver among the crowd, an arrow from the bow drawn at a venture was lodged in her heart. Remarkable example of free, sovereign, subduing grace; she was converted! Her case, as much as that of the thief on the cross, of the jailor at Philippi, of Saul on his way to Damascus—was one of instant conversion—day burst on her soul without a dawn. She hastened home. She found her family asleep, and saw in each child a never-dying soul, that her own hand had rocked into deeper, fatal slumbers. Seized with an intense desire to have them saved, she could not delay the matter till to-morrow; and so, rushing on the sleepers as if the bed beneath them had been in flames, she shook them, woke them, crying, Arise, call upon thy God! And there at the midnight hour, with her children kneeling round her, her eyes streaming with tears, her voice trembling with emotion, did that poor mother cry to God, that he would have mercy also on them, and pluck these brands from the burning.

Near by the dwelling where a mother roused her children from their beds to flee not from a house on fire, but from the fire that is never quenched, stood the cottage of one whose joy over a converted sinner carried us away to the heavens, where angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. He had long been a Christian; not so his wife, from whose side he had often stolen in the dead of night to pray for her salvation. He continued instant in prayer. Mothers, sisters, all who carry others in their prayers to the throne of grace, pray on! God's time to answer—the time to favour her at length came. She was smitten; seized with anxiety; pierced with convictions; but she could find no peace. She walked in darkness and had no light; and giving herself up for lost, once said, for instance, when her husband and she had lain down for sleep, if you should die before to-morrow, it will be happy for you; if I should, farewell, an everlasting farewell—I shall open my eyes in torment! But the time of her redemption drew nigh. She had sown in tears, and was to reap in joy. A minister hearing of her distress went to visit her. She was in the garden. Her husband left the house to call her. Who seeks me? she

asked. Without forethought, as if the words had fallen from heaven on his lips, he replied, Jesus Christ seeks you! She started: an ashy paleness overspread her face: and, deeply affected, she followed him in silence to the house. There the man of God held up before her a bleeding, dying, loving Saviour. Prayer followed, and praise followed prayer; for while they entreated God with strong crying and tears, the grave opened, and she that was dead came forth—to say, I confess that Jesus is the Lord; and to sing with Mary, My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden—he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name. And what did you do? I asked the husband. Do, sir? he replied; I sprang to my feet; I clasped her in my arms; I exclaimed, This is our marriage day; and unable to restrain my joy, I cried Hosanna to the Son of David. Praise him, all ye his angels; praise him, sun, moon, and stars; praise him, all ye orbs of light!

By their fruits ye shall know them. Grapes do not grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles—nor such fruits in any but renewed hearts. So to feel proves what no profession can, that the same mind is in us that was in Jesus Christ: nor is there room to doubt that if you bear such saintly and heavenly fruit, you are one with him who, communicating the influences of the Spirit to his people, as the tree does its sap to the boughs, hath said, I am the vine; ye are the branches. Abide in me, and I in you.—*Rev. Dr. Guthrie.*

### REJOICING AT OTHERS MISFORTUNES.

I have never witnessed more manifest and disgusting indications of rancorous malignity and a thoroughly bad heart, than in people talking of the misfortunes and trials of their neighbors providential visitations and as likely to do their neighbors a great deal of good. I have remarked that people who never rejoice at the blessings of others when these blessings come in a pleasant shape, evince an immense delight at the blessings of others when these blessings come in a painful

guise of disappointments and trials. And I shall venture to believe that the real feeling of these people is one of pure malignity; and that what they rejoice at is not the ultimate good that trials and misfortunes may cause their neighbors, but the immediate pains that trials and mortifications are sure to cause. We have all known people who had no greater enjoyment than to see an acquaintance taken down; the misfortune of a neighbor was a real blessing to these miserable creatures; and I have not the least doubt but that among people who knew St. Paul, there would be a man here and there, envious of the great Apostle's gifts and usefulness, who would chuckle over the thorn in the flesh; who in his heart would rejoice at the suffering it caused the Apostle; yet who would not venture to express his secret exultation, but who would go about saying, "Ah, that Saul of Tarsus needs it all. Very conceited man; do him a great deal of good. It will take him down, teach him sense, and he needs very much to be taught that!" Can not you imagine, my friend, how the envious, malicious, tattling gossips at Corinth would go about from house to house, saying that kind of thing? Now, my readers, let none of us here give way to this wicked and contemptible fashion of thinking and talking. What we are to do is this: each of us to try to understand the lesson which God is addressing to his own self by the thorns and trials that come, and leave our neighbors to interpret their own thorns and trials.

### TRUE RICHES.

A rich gentleman once said to a day labourer, "Do you know to whom those estates belong, on the borders of the lake?" "No," replied the man. "They belong to me," said the rich man. "And the wood and the cattle, do you know whose they are?" "No." "They are mine also," continued the rich man. "Yes, all that you can see is mine." The peasant stood still a moment, then pointed to heaven, and in a solemn tone asked, "Is that also thine? If that be thine, though poor, thou art truly rich; if that be not thine, how ever rich, thou art poor indeed."

## OUR DEVOTIONAL WRITERS.

BY JAMES DOUGLASS, ESQ., OF CAVERS.

LEIGHTON.

There are some things that require explanation about Leighton, in order fully to harmonize his life, his mind, and his writings. His father stands in great opposition to both his sons; and this must be attributed partly to a principle of revulsion. After making every allowance, it seems strange and still unaccountable, that Leighton should join the party that so persecuted and savagely mutilated his father. The fierce dogmatism of his father may have inclined the son to mysticism; of which there are strong indications in a short paper, "Rules and Instructions for a Holy Life," (if it be Leighton's, for it is unworthy of him,) and but a slight tinge in his better writings. The first sentence of the Commentary on St Peter might throw some light upon the workings of Leighton's mind. "The grace of God in the heart of man is a tender plant in a strange unkindly soil," &c. Religion, with Leighton, as with others, was an exotic, and generally under glass. But we have a double task to perform; first to protect it from unkindly blasts; and, secondly, to acclimate it and give it a harder character, and an-out-of-door existence. It was in this part of religious culture that Leighton most failed. His piety seemed too much confined to his closet, and did not sufficiently encounter the ruder influence of the world.

Leighton beautifully points out the two opposing streams of the world; and of the word. The world knows not God; has no light of its own but wandering fires; is dark, and in love with darkness; seeks to shut out God, and to make itself its own centre and end. Its maxims, its course of life, are atheistic, not based upon God and immortality, and seeking to shape out for itself a rest and a paradise here below. One irreligious generation bequeaths its maxims and its example to the succeeding one. "The stream of sin," Leighton remarks, "runs from one age into another, and every age makes it greater, adding somewhat to what it receives, as rivers grow in their course by the accession of brooks that fall into them; and every man when he is born, falls like a drop into the main current of corruption, and so is carried down with it; and this by reason of its strength, and his own nature, which willingly dissolves into it and runs along with it." In opposition to this stream of corruption, ran a tide of the waters of life in the writings of inspired men. "This sweet stream of their doctrine," says Leighton, "did as the rivers, make its own banks, fertile and pleasant as it ran by, and flowed still forward to

after ages, and by the confluence of more such prophecies, grew greater as it went, till it fell in with the main current of the gospel in the New Testament, both acted and preached by the great prophet himself (whom they foretold to come,) and recorded by his apostles and evangelists, and thus united into one river, clear as crystal. This doctrine of salvation in the Scriptures hath still refreshed the city of God, his church under the gospel, and still shall do so, till it empty itself into the ocean of eternity." The above passage could scarcely be surpassed, either for its beauty of expression, or its deep insight into the structure of Scripture, and the ever-flowing enlargement of God's dispensation of mercy.

Leighton gives a beautiful and complete summary of the answer to the question, 'What shall I do to be saved?' Only this. First receive so great a salvation, then love so great a Saviour. And for advice—Remember, this world is but a passing pageant; a procession passing through the street, and then vanishing away for ever. This thought is often recurring to Leighton; and always, no doubt, he found it useful. The more we consider the things of time as shadows, the less we shall be disquieted by them. They are vain shadows in every point of view. Live without care, and care only to please God; he himself will take care of other things. Thus shall thy life become every day less earthly and more heavenly, till heaven itself becomes thy home.

HOWE.

When we imbibe the spirit of Howe, we seem to stand on the confines of either world; the earth is fast receding, and eternity, in all its immensity, is opening before us. The earth seems as vain and unsubstantial as it appears to dying eyes, and the all importance of living near to God, and wholly to God, is forced upon the conviction. As in the Bible, so in the writings of Howe; all things seem hastening to their proper end, and the rudiments both of happiness and misery are fast tending to their full development.

How august in Howe's writings, appear the Living Temple of God in the renewed soul of man, with the cloud of God's presence resting upon it, with its blending of gloom and glory! A residence, preparing for the inhabitation of the Spirit through eternity, and where even the first dim-preparations are full of hope and brightness! How deeply does Howe feel the worse than trifling of religious controversy! and how quickly does he perceive the decline of real religion, amid the noisy war of words and pretended zeal for peculiar doctrines! None have felt more deeply the necessity of perpetual revivals. For the inheri-

tance of the Lord like some of the fairest portions of the East, would soon be turned into a barren wilderness, were it not for the ever-recurring returns of the evening and morning dew.

BOSTON.

Boston, perhaps, has produced the deepest effect upon the religious mind of Scotland in former generations. It is a solemn consideration how the religious preacher or writer imprints on his hearers or readers his own devotional likeness, in its excellencies, and, alas! in its defects. When crystalization is about to take place, it is of great importance that a perfect crystal should be inserted. It is of still greater importance that a perfect and freely-developed character of the truth should be exhibited to the disciples, otherwise the image and superscription will be only half represented. Boston's views are most powerful, and his expressions, like the nails that were fastened in the ancient walls, built into them, become part of them so as not to be removed.

No merely human writers seem able to state the whole truth in its complete fullness and exact proportions; and the deficiencies of one must be supplied out of the abundance of another. It is thus that the Spirit is divided in order that all the members may be united, each requiring the aid of others to form one perfect whole. In every masterly picture, light and shade must have their due place, the manner in which they are blended is characteristic of the art of the master. In Boston there is much of the brightness of the gospel, but still more of the stern severity of divine justice. His dark and Rembrandt-like shades have a solemn effect; but the impression upon the mind is scarcely in complete accordance with the bright rising of the Sun of righteousness, and the calm and serene fullness of the gospel day. The effect of this was still more strongly marked in some of the aged disciples, who had imbibed the distinctive character of Boston's writings; and who, as they approached the verge of eternity, were more marked by seriousness and solemnity than by the bright and cheering dawn of future glory. To take in the full impression of his writings, we must take into account his strong national as well as individual character, the scattered and sequestered population among whom he lived, and the lonely pastoral solitudes, so favorable to the musings and melancholy, with which he was surrounded.

Ages may roll on, and nations pass away, but one little work of Boston's will still hold its place in religious estimation. "The crook in the Lot" will be remembered while the believer remembers and feels that few and evil are his days upon earth, though he may be

looking forward in exulting hope to the ages of happiness in heaven. Nothing, we think, can be finer than the contrast which he draws between pride and lowly-mindedness: "Humility is a piece of the image of God; pride is the master-piece of the devil. Let us view Him who is the express image of the Father's person, and we shall behold him meek and lowly in heart. None more afflicted, yet his spirit perfectly brought down to his lot.— That is a shining piece of the divine image; for though God cannot be low in respect of his state and condition, yet he is of infinite condescension. None bears as he, nor suffers patiently so much contradiction to his will, which is proposed to us for our encouragement in affliction as it shone in Christ.

"Pride, on the other hand, is the very image of the devil. Will we value ourselves on the height of our spirits? Satan will vie with the highest of us in that point; for though he is the most miserable, yet he is the proudest in the whole creation. There is the greatest distance between the spirit and his lot. The former is as high as the throne of God, the latter as low as hell. And as it is impossible that ever his lot should be brought up to his spirit, so his spirit will never come down to his lot; and therefore he will be eternally at war with his lot."

We have drunk of those clear waters; and, refreshed by those cooling draughts in the midst of a burning wilderness, we have lifted up the head. The praise which Wordsworth bestows upon the poets, justly belongs to the devotional writers, "On earth they have made us heirs of truth and pure delights." In the highest sense they have administered their bread to the hungry; they have revived the soul that was ready to perish; they have comforted the mourners, and wiped the tears from many eyes. The peace they felt themselves, they have communicated to many others, and brightened the hopes of eternal glory to many sufferers.

Yet they are but men, and it is but right to point out their failings. They were but members of one great body, and deficiencies of one must be supplied out of the fullness of another. They have also the disadvantage of being highly professional. We know what a strong current in one particular direction the mind of each of the learned professions takes, and what an advantage it would be if a non-professional mind was more frequently introduced into the pursuits of either medicine or law; a fresh eye at once dissolving some prejudices, and being apt to perceive some things that had escaped the notice of others. We should greatly desire, therefore, to see more frequent additions to the devotional writers from the ranks of other professions;

not only from physicians and lawyers, but from officers of the army and navy, from philosophers, and from statesmen. The best commentary upon the Bible is the practical commentary it receives from the lives of its disciples. The greater the variety of circumstances in which these disciples are placed, the greater is the evidence for the infinite resources and variety of wisdom with which the Bible is stored. Every new position will present a new point of view; and a divine experience will be educed, that the Bible is both all-sufficient in itself as a rule, and inexhaustible in its applications to all the eventualities of life.

### PAST FEELING.

The following narrative from one of the recent issues of the London Tract Society, convey a solemn warning:

'Please sir, George Lewis is dangerously ill.'

This was a first intimation I had received of the illness of one who but a few weeks before, seemed to bid fair to live twenty years or more.

In a few minutes I stood near the dying man. His strong constitution and robust appearance had yielded marvelously soon to the ravages of disease.—The shadow of his lately fine and manly form lay in a condition of infant helplessness upon his death-bed.

'I am surprised,' I observed, 'to see you so ill. What ails you?'

'A fatal disease, sir.'

'I hope not, as you say, *fatal*.'

'There is no doubt about it sir,' he replied. 'The doctor has only just left.—Before he did so, he frankly told me I must name what preparations were necessary, as I could not live more than forty-eight hours.'

'My dear brother,' I exclaimed, 'this is very painful information. Are you prepared for the great change?'

'As much prepared as I shall ever be,' was his reply.'

There was a cold calmness about him as he spoke, that appeared strange under the circumstances. With the knowledge I possessed of his outward life, this tranquillity might mean total indifference, or it might indicate settled confidence in God.

'Safe, then, in Christ,' I remarked.

'Christ? Christ is nothing to me.'  
'What preparation was it you referred to, then?'

'I said, sir, as prepared as I should ever be.'

'What do you mean?'

'Why, that I am lost and that without a hope.'

I caught at the word 'lost,' which he had just used in respect of himself, and said, 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save you then, according to your own showing, if you will but turn to him for salvation. You know you are 'lost.' You also know that Christ came to rescue the 'lost.' Ask him to save you as a poor, helpless, and 'lost' sinner, and he will do so to the uttermost.'

'I thank you sir,' he replied, 'for the interest you take in me; but your words are useless. I am eternally lost. There is no such thing as salvation for me. There the matter must rest.'

There was not an emotion perceptible. All this was said with an apparently utter absence of feeling.

'Will you not,' I continued, 'pray for salvation, using as your plea, God's mercy in Christ?'

'I have no wish to pray. I feel no concern at all about the matter. I know I must perish; but I feel no alarm, nor shall I, here.'

'Do you believe there is such a being as God, and that he will shortly be your Judge?'

'Yes, I know there is a God; and I believe he is great, and good, and just, and that he will punish the ungodly.'

'Then, you have no fear?'

'None.'

'Do you think of the fact that you must so quickly meet your Maker face to face?'

'I know this will be the case, but I cannot say I think much about it.'

'Shall I pray for you? and will you try and lift up your heart to God with me?'

'Let me explain, sir I did not send for you; the people down stairs did so without my wish. I entertain much respect toward you, and if I wished any one to do as you propose, I should like no one better, but to pray for me is simply useless. If

to pray, will gratify you, do so; I am indifferent.'

We talked for a time. His attention was directed to the fearfulness of his condition, the necessity of repentance, and the possibility of it, even in the last hour; to the infinite compassion of God, and his readiness to pardon whosoever may come to him, through Jesus. After while conversation ceased, and he simply listened to what I said. There was more placidity in his face than I ever witnessed in any one after so much talk, even when the subject of conversation had been the most common place.

When I paused, he talked for some minutes. The following are, as nearly as my memory retains them, his words:

'You are very kind, and I thank you for your good wishes and your endeavors on my behalf; but you must not conclude that I am at all altered by anything you have said. As I told you before, so I say again (for I wish to go out of the world honestly in this respect,) I have no desire at all to converse on matters of religion.—Do not suppose your talking further would offend me; it is not that. I am so totally indifferent in respect to personal religion, that to allow you to spend more of your valuable time, would be inconsiderate in me. If, however, you can remain, and would like to hear my own account of myself, I will give it you.'

I expressed my readiness to listen.

'My father and mother,' he continued, were, according to the best of my judgment, good people; by which I mean, people who feared and served God. They did much to bring me up religiously.—The Scriptures I have known from my youth up. I attended the Sunday school, and took considerable interest in it after I had reached manhood. The Gospel was interesting to me, and I listened to it attentively, and with feeling. I can remember some sermons under which I even wept; but it appears to me now very strange how so much feeling could ever have been excited by what, for many years, has not affected me in the least degree.

'I once thought a good deal about making a profession of religion. The subject came and went for some time, but at last was

banished altogether; and neither the purpose or desire ever returned. Before this, I was tempted to spend a Sunday 'out,' with a pleasure party. That act seems to have been the pivot on which my destiny turned. I was a ruined man. Conscience was not dead. Convictions loaded me severely for a time. I repeated the transgression. Again conscience smote me, but I now argued with it. By-and-by, I habitually absented myself from the house of God once a day. But this singular Sabbath attendance did not long continue. For some years, except when a celebrated preacher came, I gave up attending a place of worship altogether.

'In the course of time, something—I do not exactly know what unless it was through being induced to attend a singing meeting, or what was called "practice night,"—led me again to attend a place of worship. It certainly was not any interest I felt in my personal salvation; for let me tell you sir for more than twenty years I have been past feeling. I have read a good many books upon religious subjects, and debated about the doctrines of religion; but I do not remember that over that space of time I have once felt. I know that before this week is over, I shall be gone. There is a God, and there is a day of retribution; and I shall perish. All this I believe; but I should not speak the truth if I said I either felt, or that I had a wish to feel. I repeat, it I am past feeling.'

Reader, do you wonder at my trembling as he spoke? Again I brought before him those truths of the Gospel, which seemed most suitable to his case. Every thought likely to break through that awful indifference to his condition and prospect was—according to the best of my ability—pressed upon him. I knelt at his bedside, and, as I could command utterance, prayed for him. All was unavailing. When I looked again at his face, there was the tranquility of infancy. He interrupted my thought, and quietly remarked, 'It is past; I remember when I could weep under the truth, but here I shall feel no more.'

The next morning I called early. The last enemy had laid his victim low sooner than was expected. Before me lay a breathless form, with scarcely a change in

the features. There were no bands in his death. I could not help recalling his words, 'Here I shall feel no more,' and then exclaiming, 'But now—!'

Reader! let me entreat you to attend to a few solemn thoughts, suggested by this narrative. Trifle no longer with time and opportunities. Hesitate no more between the world and Christ. Stifle no longer your convictions. Debate no more with conscience. At once go to Christ, and close with his offers of mercy. Repent, and believe in him. Do not talk of 'to-morrow,' for you may not count on it; you know not what a day may bring forth.

—*Family Treasury.*

### "TELL THEM MY SOUL IS IN HELL!"

A merchant once went to the Eastham camp-meeting with his pious wife, who was very anxious for his conversion. The spirit of the meeting troubled him, and, after one day, he resolved to leave his wife on the ground and return home.

"Do stay, my dear husband," entreated his wife; "you will be better pleased to-day maybe, than you were yesterday."

"No, my partner may need me in his business. I shall go," he replied.

"But you made arrangements to be away a week: do stay, husband, and may be you will find salvation," rejoined his wife.

"No, I must go. I will go. Indeed, I hate the place so much that if I knew my soul would be eternally damned for going home I wouldn't stay here," was his awful answer.

His horror-struck wife stood silent.— Then turning on his heel, he hurried to the shore and sailed away from the camp-ground.

On his arrival home he entered his store tired and hungry. Seeing a piece of bread and butter on the counter, he ate it.— Fifteen minutes later his partner came in, and, after the usual salutation, looked round, and with a perturbed manner asked:

"What has become of the piece of bread and butter I left here?"

"I ate it," replied the merchant.

"Ate it! Dear me! It was poisoned

for the rats. You are a dead man.— Hurry home in yonder hack while I go for the doctor."

The alarmed merchant was borne to his home. The doctor was soon with him.— Antidotes were administered, but they were powerless to save. The poison was fiercely assailing the seat of life. The pains of death soon got hold upon him. He was in agony of mind and body.

"Have you any message for you wife?" inquired his distressed partner.

This question recalled the camp-ground and the awful words he had spoken when leaving his wife. Gathering his remaining strength as for a last effort, he fixed his glaring eyes upon his friend and said in piercing tones:

"Carry my dead body to the camp-ground and tell them my soul is in hell!"

He sunk back exhausted. The struggle was over. His life in the body had ended, His life in hell had begun!

Reader, are you in the habit of trifling with eternal things? If so, let the horrible end of this merchant teach you that it is a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Remember "GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE." It is not safe to mock at him, or at his truth.— Beware!

### "BUSY HERE AND THERE."

Absorbed in inferior matters, the confession has fallen from many lips, "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." 1 Kings xx. 40.

The Holy Spirit, kind and gracious, powerful to change the inner man and impart a meetness for heaven, has gone.— The day in which to secure the great end of life has gone. The period of youth when the heart, though depraved, is not yet hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and the conscience, though defiled is not seared as with a hot iron, has gone.— That sermon adapted to my case, worthy of being remembered and reduced to practice, has gone. Those serious impressions, pungent convictions, often the precursors of hope, have gone.

Sad has been the acknowledgment from many a disciple, "As thy servant was busy here and there," engrossed with topic re-

mote from present duty, losing sight of covenant engagements, he was gone.— That neighbour, acquaintance, unbelieving friend, for whose eternal welfare I ought to have made direct exertions, has passed forever beyond my reach. That opportunity of benefiting such a family or neighbourhood, of prevailing on such a neglecter of the public ordinances to frequent the sanctuary, has glided away unimproved. That season of hopeful indication for Zion betokening the dawn of a better day has disappeared, and no mercy drops descended.

Nor has this confession been a stranger to the *Christian parent*. "As thy servant was busy here and there," not duly mindful of the home vineyard, the work there required, my child has gone perhaps to the grave and to the world of retribution, no more to hear the teaching of maternal affection, nor those lessons which a father's position and experience qualify him to give.

Or if living, he has gone from the atmosphere, the example, the influence of home. Not as I might, and should, have I taken advantage of that forming season when the heart is most susceptible, and the voice of God is heard, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." My child has gone, passed through the different stages of early life—gone not fortified to meet the temptations of an ensnaring world. Owing to my neglect, he may become a victim of vice, a wretched wanderer in some of the avenues of crime.

And so the child, favoured with a pious parentage, taught betimes by a *devoted mother* to rest his hope on the blessed Saviour. Wrung with anguish, not a few have confessed, "As thy servant was busy here and there," little appreciating a mother's advice, with the pencil of the imagination drawing delusive pictures of the future, sketching scenes and paths of earthly bliss, she has gone. Her lovely form has receded from my view. Those lips, accustomed with all gentleness to give line upon line, and precept upon precept, will do so no more. Henceforth, near the throne they will be occupied in praising redeeming love.

Many a *Sabbath school teacher*, entrusted with a bright, active class, has been obliged to exclaim, "As thy servant was

busy here and there," explaining the truths of the Bible from Sabbath to Sabbath, conversing of Christ and religion, anticipating many similar opportunities, not dreaming about the arrows of disease, the coming of the pale, silent messenger, he or she, a promising lad, an amiable girl, has gone. Their seat is vacant. Whether faithful or unfaithful, my work for that scholar's good is ended.

Many a *young man*, having left the beaten track, the great byway of truth for one of the by-paths of error, has said when too late, "As thy servant was busy here and there," now devouring the contents of this pamphlet, or newspaper; now mingling in circles which calumniate the gospel, its ministers, and disciples; thus "busy here and there," the principles of youth, early and faithfully inculcated, are gone; gone from my bosom is that hallowed influence which leads the soul earnestly to inquire and seek after salvation.

Surprised by their last sickness, without adequate preparation, many a wasted, emaciated one, hardly able to speak, is saying at this moment, "As thy servant was busy here and there," intent on pleasure, honour, wealth, life, with its opportunities has vanished, probation with its means and influences has terminated. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved."

"The night is coming, in which no man can work." Work while it is called to-day.

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#### MORAL DISCIPLINE OF GIVING.

Giving is one of the means of grace; one of the best means of spiritual growth.— If no good externally is done by the gifts, the charities, still a vital and immeasurable good is done to the giving soul; enough, and vastly more than enough, to justify the deed. The *sordid* taunt so often thrown, "Why this waste?" comes of *sordidness* that is equal to the sale of the Lord himself; the thirty pieces of the pocket better than he.

I repeat, if no good is done, there is no waste; no matter what the amount given, be it only enough; if done with the Christian motive, then the character is set forward, and the church is brought up higher

and nearer to the millennial state. The church must pass through the work and the sacrifice of establishing the millenium abroad, in order to make one in her own pale. These final words of her Lord, then, which lay upon her this amazing responsibility, "Go preach the Gospel"—evangelize all nations—are to her an untold heritage of blessings and blessedness. They embody the corrective and expulsion of the deadliest foes; they are to her the necessary means of the victory, and the kingdom, and the crown; I mean on the ground of attainment; personal, separate fitness, reached by the culture and through the conflict of beneficent giving and doing.—The question before us is, will we meet these conditions, and have the millennium at home, the kingdom within us? not forgetting the one condition, our Lord so significantly marks, the giving alms of such things as we have.

To very many this—as a means of grace, of spiritual advance—stands in the first place, and is indispensable, stands in a sense even before prayer; they being ahead in prayer, behind in giving. To all those, then, who have given leanly and grudgingly, we say: Arise and give; give bountifully; give heartily; give willingly; just because something within resists and says, I won't. Give the more and still more, from the very teeth and grip of the old retaining passion. Give with measure and intent to crucify it; that hundred, the nail, that thousand, the spike, that ten thousand, the spear, and so proceed and persist till the base and slimy thing is wholly dead.—*Dr. Geo. Sheppard.*

### "WHAT COULD HE DO IN HEAVEN?"

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."—Rev. 21. 27.

It was about thirty years ago or more, when stage coaches still ran, that an excellent old clergyman, who had a keen observation of the world, was travelling on the top of the coach. It was cold, wintry weather, and the coachman, as he drove his horses rapidly, poured forth such a vol-

ley of oaths and foul language as to shock all the passengers. The old clergyman, who was sitting close to him, said nothing, but fixed his piercing blue eyes upon him with a look of extreme wonder and astonishment. At last, the coachman became uneasy, and turning round to him, said, "What makes you look at me, sir, in that way?"

The clergyman said with his eyes fixed upon him, "I cannot imagine what you will do in heaven! There are no horses, or coaches, or saddles, or bridles, or public-houses, in heaven. There will be no one to swear at, or to whom you can use bad language. I cannot think what you will do when you get to heaven!"

Do not the words apply to every human being, whose chief interest lies in other things than doing good and being good, and who delights in saying and doing what is evil? There is no making money in heaven, there is no promotion, there is no gossip, there is no idleness, there is no controversy, there is no detraction in heaven. *I cannot think what you will do when you get to heaven.*

### TEXTS AND HYMNS.

It was the custom of a dear child to walk up and down the room while learning, and repeating her hymns and Scripture texts. Her grandfather was an old man, but alas! he did not believe in Jesus. He loved, nevertheless, to hear the child's cheerful voice, and to have her continually with him. After a time, he grew so feeble that he was obliged to take to his bed; and would often ask Clara, for that was the little girl's name, to come and tell him something about the Saviour, of whom she was always talking and singing, and thus he was gradually brought, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to the knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and place his whole trust and confidence in the merits of his Divine Redeemer. So dear little Clara was the instrument used in bringing her aged grandfathers to Jesus. How much influence, then, has every little child! All may do something for Jesus.

# THE GOOD NEWS.

AUGUST 1st, 1863.

## GOD'S SALVATION.

All men are sinners. The history of the world shows this ; for from Adam and Eve till to-day, there is no instance of a mere man "doing good and sinning not." As such, all are under God's wrath and curse, are held in bondage by Satan, and, if not redeemed before they die, will go to a place where all happiness is ended, and where all hope is lost. This is an old truth. A truth, reader, which you have often read and heard before, and one to which you may readily assent. In the meantime, however, we have nothing to say to *all* men ; we write to but one man, and that man is *you* reader. We mean *you*, and we are anxious that you should realize that *you* are a sinner. We know that the Holy Spirit alone can convince you of sin, and we trust that He is employing us as an instrument to awaken your recollection and point you to the actions which you have done. We point you to those actions that brought on you scorn and contempt from your fellow-men, and ask ARE NOT YOU A SINNER ? We point you to those of darkness done under cover of the shades of night, which no human eye saw you do, or human mind ever conceived of you, deeds that are known to God and recorded in his book, and ask ARE NOT YOU A SINNER ?—We point you to the occasional thoughts and imaginations of your heart, so horrid and devilish, that if they were clothed in human shape, and represented in human form, you would flee from them as you would from devils ; and ask, are not you a sinner ? Be honest with yourself. Do not cloak over your transgressions. Endeavour to realize that you are a sinner. That, as such, UNFORGIVEN you cannot enter heaven. That, as such, you are walking on the very brink of eternity, as it were on the mouth of hell. That, as such, there is no security for you ; for at any moment the brittle thread of life might snap, and you be launched into a

world of woe. A lad once remarked, when speaking of the vastness and awfulness of eternity, and of the position in which sinners are placed, "I wonder, I wonder, I wonder, that they can think at all !" We say the same to you, unreconciled sinner !—We wonder that you can live as you do and think at all. If you would but think of age upon age upon age of misery. If you would think of woe upon woe, upon woe for ever. If you would think of the risk upon risk upon risk which you are running, you surely would not rest for a single hour, but would seek out HOW YOU MIGHT BE SAVED.

Having pointed out evidence that you are a sinner, we now point you to

## GOD'S SALVATION.

Salvation is a serious matter for you, sinner, for you are LOST, LOST, LOST. You have not a soul to lose, for it is already lost. How then can you be saved ? Ask some and they will say to you, you have never been a bad character ; you have never done any great sin, and you have *done so much that is good*. That is not, however, God's SALVATION. Ask others, and they will say to you, God is very merciful ; God will have mercy. That is not, however, God's way. Ask others, and they will tell you that all will be saved. That is not, however, God's truth. Ask us, and we will say, "There is no other name given among men by whom we can be saved, than that of Christ Jesus." "Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved."

## THE SALVATION PROMISED.

This is God's Salvation, inasmuch, as it is His Salvation promised. It is the salvation referred to by God when Satan had succeeded in tempting Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." It is the salvation pointed to by Jacob, when he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come and unto him will the gathering of the people be." It is the salvation typified by the sacrifice of the Mosaic economy, to which the saints in Old Testament times looked forward.

## THE SALVATION PROVIDED.

This salvation is God's salvation, inasmuch as he provided it. It is God-like in its conception ; it is God-like in its execution. In all ages men have felt the need of a salvation. Various have been the plans that have been tried, but they have all been inadequate. God saw that man had undone himself ; that he was unable and unwilling to save himself—and He said deliver from going down into the pit. I have found a ransom. This ransom was not found in millions of bulls or goats. It was not found among men ; nor among the angels above. It was found in His own well beloved Son ; His co-equal.—“ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And Christ, ready to do His father's will, and work out salvation for His people, left for a season His father's mansions in glory, where every movement was harmony, came to this earth, took upon him the form of a man, tabernacled here for upwards of thirty years and laid down His life upon the cross. His last words “ It is finished,” “ It is finished,” proclaiming that salvation had been wrought out for sinners.

## THE FITNESS OF THIS SALVATION.

This Salvation is the very thing you need. You have sinned against an infinite God ; your sins therefore become infinite sins, that cannot be expiated but with infinite punishment, and how can you endure everlasting burning. Now, herein is the fitness of this salvation seen ; for Christ died on the Cross as an atonement for the guilt of all who should believe in Him. He died for you ; He suffered for you if you believe in Him, and not only is the atonement of His death imputed to you as if you had suffered, but the very holiness of His life is also imputed to you as a righteousness in which to appear at the bar of God. Was there ever such a salvation as this ? such a glorious exchange as Christ the Son of God, to take the credit and consequence of your sinfulness, and give to you in exchange the credit and consequence of His righteousness and death.

But not only does the salvation provide for

the consequences of your past sins, it also provides for sins in time to come. At the same time that your sins are pardoned through the blood of Christ, and you accepted before God, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to you, the spirit of God enters into your heart, subduing the power of sin, and implanting his graces there.—Graces which continue to grow from that time till at death ye are transplanted from an earthly to a heavenly clime. Reader, unto you is the word of this

## SALVATION SENT.

Thousands, yea millions, are living in the world, to whom the word of this salvation has not been sent ; they are perishing for lack of knowledge. It is not so with you.—This word may have often been sent to you before : unto you it is sent again, and what will become of you if you neglect so great a salvation.

Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation. 2 Cor. 6, 2.

Whosoever shall on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Acts 2, 21.—EDITOR.

## THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

We often to our minds recall,

The hours of childhood gay,  
When we had naught to do at all,  
But run about and play.

These were the sunny hours of life,  
We had no thought nor care ;  
The world was free from grief and strife,  
And all was bright and fair.

As lambs, upon the mountain-side,  
Are seen to frisk in fun,  
Or as the gnats at eventide  
Dance in the setting sun.

We played away that golden age,  
As sweet as it was short,  
We turned o'er that flowery page,  
In pleasing childish sport.

Had we that race again to run,  
Our childhood to begin,  
We think 'twould not be spent in fun,  
In folly, or in sin.

But ah ! alas ! these childish days,  
 Are now forever gone ;  
 Ne'er shall again those promise rays,  
 Shine on us as they've shone.

What we have done we can't undo,  
 We can't lead back the past,  
 Nor bribe the present, passing too,  
 To make it longer last.

Time flies, its flight we cannot stay  
 Nor check its swift career ;  
 But yet the hours redeem, we may,  
 For mercy lingers near.

If we have acted ill as yet,  
 Misspent our precious time,  
 Let us no longer listless sit,  
 And waste life's short decline.

For what, though we may now regale  
 Around youth's loaded board ?  
 Its delicacies soon will fail,  
 Their sweetness to afford.

But if instead of folly's way—  
 The path of vice and sin—  
 We choose the course that leads to day,  
 And persevere therein.

The future to us will be bright,  
 Because we've nought to fear.  
 Thick tempests may arise in sight,  
 But none for us are near.

The storm may blow with furious blast,  
 Our refuge is secure,  
 Our anchor ever holdeth fast  
 The Rock of Ages sure.

And should we ever reach old age,  
 When memory fades away,  
 With Jesus for our heritage,  
 There can be no dismay.

For though the silver cord be snapt,  
 Our bosoms cease to beat,  
 And mourners go in mournings wrapt,  
 For us about the street.

Our dust shall slumber with the dead,  
 Entombed in death's dark night ;  
 Our spirits to their fountain-head  
 Shall wing their happy flight.

The wealthy place for them's in store,  
 The hallelujah land,  
 Where pleasure's sweet for ever more,  
 They'll drink at God's right hand.

X.Y.Z.

#### A STORY OF HEAVEN.

Before a lowland cottage,  
 With climbing roses gay,  
 I stood one summer's eve to watch  
 Two children at their play.

All round the garden walks they ran,  
 Filling the air with glee,  
 Till they were tired, and sat them down,  
 Beneath an old oak tree.

They were silent for a little space,  
 And then the boy began :  
 " I wonder sister dear, if I  
 Shall ever be a man.

" I almost think I never shall,  
 For often in my sleep  
 I dream that I am dying :  
 Nay, sister, do not weep !

" It is a joyful thing to die,  
 For though this world is fair,  
 I see a lovelier in my dreams,  
 And I fancy I am there.

" I fancy I am taken there  
 As soon as I have died !  
 And I roam through all the pleasing place  
 With an angel by my side.

" To that bright world I long to go,  
 I would not linger here,  
 But for my gentle mother's sake  
 And yours, my sister dear !

" And when I read my book to her,  
 Or when I play with you,  
 I quite forget that glorious land,  
 And the blessed angel too.

" But oft when I am weary  
 Of my books and of my play,  
 Those pleasant dreams come back again  
 And steal my heart away.

" And I wish that you, dear sister,  
 And my mother dear, and I,  
 Could shut our eyes upon this world,  
 And all together die."

Then spake his fair-haired sister,  
 In tones serene and low :

" Oh, if heaven is such a pleasant place  
 Dear brother, let us go !

" Our mother wept when father died,  
 Till her bright eyes were dim,  
 And I know she longs to go to heaven  
 That she may be with him."

" So let us all together go !"  
 The thoughtful boy replied ;

" Ah no ! we cannot go to heaven  
Until that we have died.

And sister we must be content  
Upon this earth to stay,  
Till the blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ,  
Shall call our souls away !"

Before the next year's roses came,  
That gentle call was given,  
And the mother and her two sweet babes,  
Were all of them in heaven.

### WHERE ART THOU ?

" And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou ?"—Did not God know, then, where Adam was ? If so, why did he ask ? Was it not to show the man his folly, in thinking that he could hide himself from God ?—What a wreck was here ! Come and behold what evil one sin hath wrought already in this fair world. A man, but lately created in the very image of the living God, goes to hide himself from his presence behind the trees of the garden ! Men talk of the foolish ostrich hiding its head in the sand when danger is near ; but come here and look at this—" Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden !" This is one of the things that sin can do : it can bring down man, made in the image of God, to this point of wretched folly. Is there in this world a lower depth of degradation which thou canst reach ? To desire to be out of the sight of thy best, thy only friend ! and to have thy reason so shattered and broken as to think that there can be any covering from the Omniscient Eye ; and that trees can be that covering ! Thou thoughtest to become like God by eating of the fruit of the tree : now thou thinkest that God is become altogether such a one as thou ! Thus hast thou deceived thyself and been deceived.

And where art *thou*, O reader ! Behind what tree hast thou skulked, in thy vain attempt to hide thee from God ? Art thou, too, behind, among the trees of the garden ? Dost thou use that which God made as blessings, and gave thee as mercies, to hide him from thee, or thyself from him ? Dost thou hide thyself behind that formal prayer, that praise out of the mouth

when thy heart is dumb and still, that hasty skimming over the page of thy Bible at times few and far between ? Are you behind that ceremonious worship,—that whited outside which men see and bow to ! Or are you behind your doled-out charity, tossed carelessly forth of your abundance,—carefully giving nothing but what you can spare and never miss ?—With what fig-leaves have you covered *your* nakedness ? Are you beneath your own filthy rags ;—filthy, unclean, because from an unclean heart : rags, rent and tattered and torn,—obedience not continuous, but riven and split up in all directions ?—Is this all that you have and is it all used to hide you from the presence of the Lord God ! Does your religion bring you to God, or hide you from God ?

Where art thou ? It is God that asks. You should not be out of his presence at any moment of time. Have you been all your life-long hiding with Adam, and never taken hold of the hand of the second Adam, to be by him again led back into the presence of His Father and your Father ? It is God that asks, that always asks, that in his love will never cease asking till even his patience is worn out, and he sends for Death to smite thee down, and bring you up before his presence on the judgment-seat.

Where art thou ? Art thou in Christ, or art thou only in the Church ? All who are in Christ are in the Church, but all who are in the Church are not in Christ. Or, worse still, art thou in the world—in the Church and in the world,—and in the Church that thou mayest be all the more easily in the world ? Art thou in a state of sin, and so in a state of death,—dead in trespasses and sins ?

Where art *thou* ? Ten thousand eyes may read these words, but the question comes to each of them as perfectly as if addressed to him alone. By no effort can you hide yourself, at any moment, from God. All things, and all persons, are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. You are as perfectly known to him as if he held you in his hand, scanning you with his eye.—In the dark night, when thou goest forth on thy errands of sin—on thy bed, when thou art still—in thy solitary musings—in all the wiles and doublings of thy evil

heart of unbelief, thou art under the eye of God, seen and known to the farthest corner and very innermost centre of thy being: for "I, the Lord, search the heart—I try the reins of the sons of men."

And where *art* thou? But a little while ago, Adam, and thou wert in a state of holy, happy innocence; but where *art* thou now? What you were, dear reader, is not the question, but what you are; what you have been, though it had been altogether good, can be of no service to you, if now you are out of the way. That struggling swimmer, just going down, has the agony of his last bubbling cry increased to the bitterness of death by the distant sight of the full white sail of the gallant ship, whose deck he but lately trod in the pride of life and strength. It is thy present position to which thou must give heed.—Where *art* thou?

Finally, there is not a tree in all the garden behind which thou mayest hide thyself, saying one—"the tree of life."—There is but one refuge for a sinful soul, but one covering for sinful nakedness. In the very presence of God must thou hide thee from God. In God himself—in God-man, the Word made flesh, must thou hide thee, if thou wouldest be safe from the wrath to come. Dead in him, thou livest: hidden in this cleft of the Rock, thou mayest behold with open face the glory of the Lord. No way near him, no way about him, no way connected with him, other than being wholly in him, canst thou be all safe. Noah must enter the ark, and the Lord must shut him in ere he can be safe from the waters of the flood. Amidst no trees of the garden art thou hidden from the eye of the All-seeing. Thou must be rooted on, and growing up in, the tree of life. From this Root, out of the ground which is everywhere else dry, thou must derive all thy life-sap and soul-sustenance. Thou art only accepted and acceptable when thou art accepted in the Beloved. Then, when the inquest goes forth, Where art thou? you may answer in the words of the apostle,—I am "found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth.

### "LOOKING UNTO JESUS."

Such is the title of an old book written by Isaac Ambrose, almost two hundred years ago. It abounds in rich instructions and devout meditations. In glancing over the address to the reader, we were particularly interested in the account the author gives of the *occasion* of his writing the book. He says—

"In the spring of 1653, I was visited with a sore sickness, and as the Lord began to restore my health, it came into my thoughts what Jesus had done for my soul, and what he was doing, and what he would do for it, till he saved to the uttermost.—In my conceptions of these things, I could find no beginning of his acting, but in that eternity before the world was made; nor could I find any end of his acting but in that eternity after the world should be unmade. Only betwixt these two extremities I apprehended various transactions of Jesus Christ, both past, present, and to come. In the multitude of these thoughts within me, my soul delighted itself, and that delight stirred up in me other affections, for one affection cannot be alone. I began to consider of those texts in Scripture which seemed at first to impose the working of my affections on so blessed an object as a gospel duty. Then I resolved, if the Lord Jesus would but restore my health, and prolong my life, I would endeavour to discover more of this gospel duty than ever yet I knew; and that my pains therein might not hinder my other necessary labours, my purpose was to fall on this subject in my ordinary preaching, wherein I might have occasion both to search into the Scriptures, several authors, and my own heart. In process of time, I began this work, begging of God that he would help me to finish, as he inclined me to begin, and that all might tend to his glory and the church's good. In the progress of my labours, I found a world of spiritual comfort, both in respect of the object that I handled, Jesus Christ, and in respect of the act wherein consisted my duty to him, in looking unto Jesus."

After insisting upon it as the special work of the ministry to *preach Christ*, the author says:—

"I may feelingly say, it is the sweetest

subject that ever was preached on. Is it not 'as an ointment poured forth,' whose smell is so fragrant, and whose savour is so sweet, that 'therefore all the virgins love him?' Is it not comprehensive of all glory, beauty, excellency, whether of things in heaven, or of things on earth? Is it a mystery, sweet and deep? Surely volumes are writ of Jesus Christ: there is line upon line, sermon upon sermon, book upon book, and tome upon tome, and yet such is the mystery (as one speaks plainly); that we are all but as yet at the first side of the single catechism of Jesus Christ; yea, Solomon was but at, What is his name?— And I fear many of us know neither name nor thing. It is a worthy study to make further and further discovery of this blessed mystery; and it were to be wished that all the ministers of Christ would spend themselves in the spelling, and reading, and understanding of it."

And of *the act* looking unto Jesus, comprehensive of knowing, desiring, hoping, believing, loving, and enjoying, our devout author says:—

"How then should I be but filled with joy unspeakable and glorious, whilst I was studying, writing, and especially acting my soul in the exercise of this looking? If there be any duty on earth, resembling the duty of the saints in heaven, I dare say this is it. Mr Rutherford, in his epistle to *Christ dying*, writeth thus: 'An act of living in Christ, and on Christ, in the acts of seeing, enjoying, embracing, loving, resting on him, is that noonday divinity and theology of beatifical vision. There is a General Assembly of immediately illuminated divines round about the throne, who study, lecture, preach, praise Christ night and day. Oh! what rays, what irradiations and dartings of intellectual fruition, beholding, enjoying, living in him, and fervour of loving, come from that face, that God-visage of the Lord God Almighty, and of the Lamb that is in the midst of them. And oh! what reflection and reaching forth of intellectual vision, embracing, loving, wondering, are returning back to him again, in a circle of glory.' Now, if this be the saints' duty, who are perfect in glory, do not we imitate them, and feel something of heaven in our imitation, in our looking unto Jesus? I write

what, in some measure, I have felt, and of which I hope to feel more."

These sentiments suggest several important practical remarks.

1. The cross of Christ should be the constant theme of every minister of Christ. As Dr Sibbs, an old writer, well remarks: "The special office of the ministry of Christ is to lay open Christ, to hold up the tapestry, and to unfold the hidden mysteries of Christ. We should labour to be always speaking somewhat about Christ, or tending that way. When we speak of the law, let it drive us to Christ; when of moral duties, let them teach us to walk worthy of Christ. Christ, or somewhat tending to Christ, should be our theme and mark to aim at." It is the preaching of the cross, not the speculations of men, nor mere moral essays, that is "the power of God to salvation."

2. The minister of Christ, if he would preach with power to the hearts and consciences of men, and would feed the flock of Christ, should be *rich in Christian experience*. His own soul must have been fed with the food he prepares for others. He must have seen the beauty and glory which he would cause others to admire, must have passed through the conflicts through which he would conduct them, and experienced the peace and joy to which he would lead them. That minister can scarcely fail to preach with power, both to saint and sinner, who can say with the pious Ambrose: "In the progress of my labour I found a world of spiritual comfort. He who preaches what he himself has felt and does feel, will preach with great earnestness, and will make effectual appeals to the hearts of his bearers."

3. The afflictions of the ministers of Christ often prove great blessings to the church as well as to themselves. Ambrose had been a length of time in the ministry, and had written some two or three books; but never, till the severe illness he mentions, did he see the glory and feel the preciousness of Christ, as he did afterwards.— Never before had he preached so much to the edification of Christians, and to the conviction of sinners. No theological school, however able and learned its professors, could have so increased his wisdom, or led him into stores so rich from which to draw divine knowledge, and heavenly

joys. The sore trials through which the apostles of Christ passed, qualified them the better to conduct others through their trials. Paul says: "God comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

4. To the Christian, Jesus should be "all and in all." Of his fulness he should receive, "and grace for grace." In him we may be "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." Let us run the race set before us, "*looking unto Jesus*, the author and finisher of our faith."

### DOING GOOD IN A PRISON.

A painter in Holland, having forgotten to answer a summons to be enrolled in the fire-brigade, was sentenced to pay a fine of five shillings or suffer a day's imprisonment. Being poor, he chose the latter for his wife and children's sake, and proceeding to the jail gave himself up on the Saturday evening preceding the Sunday appointed by the magistrate for his incarceration.

He was placed in a room with ten or twelve others who were there for the same cause. They were a frivolous, jovial set. Some were laughing and joking, others were playing cards, and all were trying to be as merry as possible, though their merriment was of that kind which is as the 'crackling of thorns under a pot.'

The painter was uneasy. His pious heart was chilled by the immoral atmosphere of the place. He shrunk from spending a Sabbath in such an evil company. He wished he had paid his five shillings, or could pay it now and go home. But such wishes were vain. He was a prisoner, and a prisoner he must remain until the close of the next day.

While brooding over these and kindred thoughts the words 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good,' flashed into his mind. 'I am alone and they are twelve,' said he, and then, turning his thoughts into prayer, he added, Lord, remember that I am alone but they are many; remember, also, that they are blind and lost, and perhaps thou wilt pluck some of them out of the mouth of the lion.—Help me, O Lord, to witness for thee!

Thus fortified by purpose and prayer he drew his rude bench to the window, took out his pocked Bible, and began reading.

'Hallo! what have you there?' asked one of the men, slapping him on the shoulder.

'You see it is a book,' replied the painter; 'if you have no objection I will read a few pages to you.'

'Are there nice stories in it?' rejoined the man.

'Plenty of stories and very nice too,' replied the painter.

'Well, let us hear,' cried the prisoner.—'Hush, you men! Listen, this fellow will read a story.'

The painter read the parable of the prodigal son. To his surprise he was not disturbed until he finished, when one of the men said:

'I know that story very well. It is from the Bible.'

Other remarks followed, and as it was now too dark to read any more, the painter proposed to read more on the morrow.

'Very well,' replied several of the men, 'it will help to shorten the day,' and then they all retired to an inner room to sleep.

The next morning, when breakfast was ready, the painter said:

'Permit me, friends, to say a word.—We have all slept soundly. God has graciously protected us through the night. Meat and drink are prepared for us. It is his gift. Ought we not to thank him for these mercies? If you have no objection let us thank God and seek his blessing.'

After breakfast one of the prisoners smiled and said:

'You might be our minister to-day.—You pray just like a parson.'

'Yes, be our minister!' cried several voices. 'Let us have a bit of a church this morning.'

To this several assented. Five laughed, and, going across the room, began playing cards. The painter read a passage of Scripture and then offered a solemn prayer, in which he did not fail to remember the card-players in the corner.

After prayer he proposed singing, and at once began a favorite Dutch psalm, which he sung to a well known tune. The effect was powerful. One by one they joined.

ed in, until even the card-players dropped their cards, doffed their caps, stood up, and sung with the rest. The jailer, hearing the unwonted sound, came to the door, and seeing them so devout and orderly, paused to listen, and then helped to swell the sacred chorus.

After the singing the jailer stepped inside, locked the door, and sitting beside the painter, remained while that faithful follower of his Lord proceeded to offer remarks on the Scriptures he had previously read and to exhort them to come to Christ.

The painter's words made a deep impression. No more cards appeared that day. After dinner he held another service, which was interrupted by the jailer's coming in to inform the painter that he had spoken to the magistrate about him and had received orders to release him.

With a good conscience and joyful spirit the painter hastened home. The entire results of that day's labor the painter will not know until the day of reward; but he did learn shortly after that one of his fellow-prisoners, at least, was led to embrace Christ by his faithful and timely-spoken words.

I give this fact to my Christian reader as an illustration of the manner in which they who are wise to win souls will turn even the most unpromising circumstances of life into opportunities to work for Christ. If that good painter could stand up amid twelve of his Master's enemies in a prison and win at least one of them over to the right what may not the reader accomplish in his wider and more hopeful sphere if he will but set his heart upon it?

#### A VERY COMMON EXCUSE.

There are thousands passing on to eternal death who urge as an excuse for their indifference, the vain one—"If I am elected to be saved I shall be saved, do what I will; and if not I cannot, do what I may."

It is an excuse that cannot stand, and not good for two reasons.

(1.) It involves an absurdity, for it amounts to this. What is to come to pass will come to pass, whether we have any agency in the matter or not. Now, the

absurdity lies here—it supposes the accomplishment of an event, without the very means by which the event is to be accomplished, as if I should say, "If I am to go to London, why, certainly, I shall go to London, whether I embark on board of a vessel, or take rail or not; or, if we are to have a pleasant day to-morrow, assuredly we shall, whether the sun rises or not."—Absurdity, you perceive, is stamped upon the face of the thing.

Those who reach London go by sea or rail, and if there be a pleasant day to-morrow the sun must rise. So those who are elected to everlasting salvation, as the end, must be prepared for it by the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, as the necessary means for the attainment of that end. God has connected the end and the means, and what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

(2.) The excuse urged is not a good one, because it is not acted upon in cases very similar. Does the farmer say, "If I am to have a crop this year, I shall have it whether I cultivate my grounds or not." I suspect he does not say this. Does this other man say—"If I am to be rich, I shall be rich whether I make any effort or not."—Certainly he does not say so. Does the sick man say—"If I am to get well, I shall get well whether I take any medicine or not." O no! he does not say so; and yet all these might say so, for I have heard of ground producing crops without any cultivation; and I have heard of persons becoming rich without any effort. Aye, and I have heard of sick persons getting well without any medicine; but never have I heard of a man or woman finding the strait gate without seeing it, or getting into the narrow way without effort.

Reader, the grand inquiry for you is, not whether you can understand all parts of the scheme of redemption, but whether there is such a scheme whereby you may be saved. Not whether two or three doctrines in the Bible are hard to be understood, but whether the Bible itself, which contains these doctrines, be the Word of God? Not whether you are of the elect, but whether you are a sinner and need the salvation of Christ. Prying into deep mysteries will do you no good. God has revealed to thee that "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief." You are invited to come to him. He promises to receive you, and if you perish it will be your own blame.

### "ONE WORD."

Have you ever been in a court of justice during some momentous trial? Have you watched the pale, haggard visage of the accused, and the eager, searching glances of his accusers? Have you seen the anxious faces of his friends, uncertain of the issue. How eagerly, after days and weeks of suspense and uncertainty, they long for the final summing-up of the evidence, and the acquittal of their friends. How intently the different sides, for and against the culprit, bandy words and squabble over unintelligible law terms.—How breathless the attention of all, as a man of powerful mind, with words of true eloquence, pleads for his client for the last time, and as he sits down exhausted, and wipes the feverish dew from his forehead, after his able and powerful defence, silence and stillness pervades the whole court.

What means this? What has caused this solemn silence, these compressed lips, these fevered brows, these anxious eyes, these throbbing hearts? Listen! They are bending forward with intense anxiety, with breathless suspense, to hear the final sentence. One word will settle it all.—One word will cause hearts to break or rejoice. One word will send comfort or despair to the heart of the accused. One word will bring the merry peal of life, or the solemn knell of death—"Guilty," or "Not Guilty!"

One word, alas! how often has it crushed bright hopes and dreams of joy. One word, how often it has severed the heart's affections. How often it has driven dear ones from us. How often it has lessened our faith, broken our trust, and wounded our spirits. How frequently has one angry, heedless, thoughtless word caused pain; and do we not often grieve to hear from lips which seemed formed for love and praise, accents of unholy and cruel censure?

But, on the other hand, how often has one word cheered the sorrowful and smit-

ten heart; how often has one word from the Book of Life whispered in the ear of some sad and afflicted one by a minister of Christ, or some Christian friend, been the means of shedding a ray of comfort, a smile of joy, a hope beyond earth to that crushed and bleeding heart! How often has the one word of some faithful physician cheered the heart of the sick one, when he had almost given way to despondency, and ceased to have any hope of recovery.

How often has a mother's last word to her son, as she, for the first time, has the pain of seeing him leave his home and launch upon a world of danger and temptation, been remembered? Perhaps long after, it may be, when far from his house, or when that mother's heart had ceased to beat, he remembers her parting word!

Oh, of what vast importance, sometimes, is one word. How often it has saved a man from rushing madly into temptation; how often it has caused the sinking heart to hope, and the pain-stricken to look forward to rest. And, there are not a few of us, who have looked upon the loved faces of our dear ones in their last, long silent sleep of death, and have longed with an unutterable longing, that their closed eyelids would once more open, and that we might once more, just once more! hear one word from their icy, closed, sealed lips.

But ah! there is a day coming, when one word shall be of vital, of eternal importance to all of us. When one word shall either separate us from Jesus Christ for ever, or shall give us a joyful welcome to the land of light. One word shall seal the destruction of the cursed and lost—DEPART! One word to the blessed and saved shall echo and re-echo through the courts of Heaven—"COME!"

Reader, which of these words shall sound in your ears at the great day of account? "Depart ye cursed," or "Come ye blessed."—*British Flag.*

### SCRIPTURE EMBLEMS.

Every "ant" reproves the sluggard. Every opening "lily" directs us to God. Every successive heave of the ocean wave has written upon it, "No peace for the wicked." Every pure, flowing "river" reminds him who stands on its banks that obedience to God will cause his "peace" to be like this.

## Sabbath School Lessons.

August, 2, 1863.

## THE SONG OF MOSES.

DEUT. 22 Chap.

The invocation of creation to attend to what was to be spoken, and to judge between the Lord and his worshippers, was intended to convey a strong idea of the vast importance of the subject.

As *Rain and Dew*, gently distilling, softens the earth and produce a beautiful verdure and fertility, so the Song tended to soften the Israelites into repentance.

To "publish the name of the Lord" is to delineate the glorious perfections and character of Jehovah. To ascribe "*greatness to our God*" is to acknowledge his self-existence eternally, &c.

*God is the Rock*, v. 4 This is the first time he is called a Rock in Scripture.—It indicates that he is an immovable foundation.

The *Eagle* (v. 11) is remarkable for her tender care of her young, and for the pains that she uses, and the method which she employs in teaching them to fly, stirring them up out of the nest, fluttering in the air over them to show them how to use their wings, and even carrying them upon her own wings; so that in order to destroy the young eagles, the body of the old one must first be pierced.

The use of *Butter*, (v. 14) was very ancient among the Hebrews: though but lately known to the Greeks.

The word "*Jeshurem*" seems to mean, *The upright one*; and Israel was such by profession, and comparatively so in reality, for some time: but when greatly preferred, the people degenerated, and grew untractable and rebellious.

The Israelites are called the sons and daughters of Jehovah—v. 19, 20—in respect of *privilege*. while because of their character, that relation is disowned.

Moses having delivered the prophetic song to Israel with earnest attestations, and exhortations, continuing in the labour of love to his latest breath, received the command from God to view the promised land, and then close his eyes in death.

August 9th, 1863.

## THE DISCIPLES WHO SHOULD BE GREATEST, &amp;c.—Matt. 18. 1-31.

1. In this chapter *Jesus teaches humility by the emblem of a little child*; vi. 4. In the parallel passages, (Mark 9. 33, 37, and Luke 9. 48-50.) it appears that the Lord first enquired of the disciples about what they had

disputed by the way. They contended about who should be the greatest. They doubtless supposed that the kingdom that our Lord intended to establish was a secular kingdom. He taught them that the principle on which elevation in the Kingdom of Heaven was made, was different from that which they had dreamt of. He set a little child in their midst. Told them that they must become like it in spirit before they could even enter into the kingdom at all, and in the degree in which they resembled children would be their elevation there.

2. *Jesus inculcates attention to his disciples and watchfulness against being stumbling-blocks to others or falling themselves*, v. 5. 10. The little ones includes the meanest of these who come to Christ, and especially such as are poor in spirit. Those who receive them kindly will be recognised as if they received Christ; but he who wilfully injures, deceives or ensnares one of them is guilty of so great a crime and subject to so great a punishment that he had better be cast into the depths of the sea. It was the custom sometimes in executing notorious criminals, to have a large millstone tied about their neck and to be cast into the sea.

Concerning the woe unto the world because of offences, see an article in the present number of the Good News on this subject, Page 393.

3. *Jesus illustrates His care of His people, by the parable of the lost sheep*; v. 11-14. In illustrating his care for the little ones of the flock, our Lord adds a parable, with an appeal to the understandings and hearts of his hearers. From this striking comparison our Lord shows the care which the Father takes of the weakest of His true people.—The weaker a man is, the greater care we ought to have of his salvation, as God teacheth us by His own example.

4. *Jesus shows how to act towards an offending brother*, &c., v. 15-20.

In case a man should be injured by a brother, a professed Christian; he ought not to go and complain of it to others, thus inflaming his own resentment and wounding his neighbours reputation; but he ought to go privately and show him the unreasonableness of his conduct. If this private application fail of success, he should go with one or two friends. If this fail it should be laid before the Church. If he neglects to hear the Church he should be treated as a heathen man.

The decision of the Church in such a case when in accordance with justice would be ratified in Heaven.

It is here supposed that all such actions would be ratified by prayer. v. 19-20.

5. *Jesus enforces the constant forgiveness of injuries*. v. 21-35.

As our Lord had intended that His disciples must bestow much pains to preserve or restore peace with their offending brethren;

Peter wanted to be informed how often they were required to renew their forgiveness of injuries, to such as repeated the offenses.—To this our Lord answered that they ought to forgive not only to the “seventh but to seventy times seven,” meaning an indefinite number. As often as men renew their offenses, God renews His pardons to believers.

LEARN.—1. To have the simplicity—unworldliness, and dependent spirit of a little child.

2. The necessity of conversion. Without it there is no salvation. We all need an entire change of nature if we would serve God here and be fitted for dwelling in His presence.

3. If we have been converted we will show it by a childlike humility.

4. The reality of future punishment, v. 8-9; Heb. 10. 27. The same sure word, who holds out a heaven to all who repent and are converted, declares plainly that there will be a hell for all the ungodly. No lips have ever spoken so clearly about hell, as those of Christ himself. Hardened sinners will find out to their cost that there is such a thing as the “wrath of the Lamb;” (Rev. 6. 17.)

5. The gracious encouragement Christ holds out to those who meet together in His name; v. 19-20. At every assembly for public worship, Christ himself attends.

6. We should exercise forgiving spirit. There are few duties so strongly enforced in the New Testament Scriptures as this duty is, and for the neglect of which so clearly shuts a man out of the Kingdom of God.—When we recollect that we all need forgiveness at God’s hands ourselves, this should lead us to the exercise of this duty. Another motive is, there will be no forgiveness in the day of judgment, for those people who are unforgiving.

August 16th, 1863.

#### THE BLESSINGS OF THE TWELVE TRIBES.—Deut. xxxiii.

The contents of the chapter may be regarded as the expression of Moses’ cordial good will to the people, and his fervent prayers for them, notwithstanding the severe rebukes and awful curses which he had uttered.

It is probable that the heads of the several tribes gathered around Moses after he received the summons recorded in the previous chapter, and that he delivered to them his dying words.

The order in which the tribes are here blessed, is different from all those elsewhere observed.

I. REUBEN the first born, though degraded by Jacob and superseded by Judah, as to the presidency in the encampment is here first mentioned. Though the tribe of Reuben

deserved to die through these disgraces, and the rebellion in the wilderness under Dathan, Abiram and Or, yet Moses prayed for them, that they might live.

II. JUDAH was the governing and conquering tribe; and Moses prayed that he might be protected and rendered victorious, when he went forth to battle, and be brought back triumphant to his people. This was evidently a prophecy, which was fulfilled to Judah till the days of Christ.

III. LEVI was the dying prophet’s own tribe; but he only mentioned it as the tribe which the Lord had chosen for himself. The URIM and THUMMIM or illuminations and perfections by which the high priest enquired of the Lord, formed one distinguishing token of his favour to the tribes, and Moses prophetically prayed for the continuance of these to the succeeding high priest, during many generations.

There were two *Meribahs*, one of which is also called *Massah*, where probably Aaron and the Levites remarkably distinguished themselves in opposing the murmurs of the people. At the other *Meribah* Aaron was found faulty, yet there is a tradition that the tribe of Levi approved themselves faithful.

IV. BENJAMIN. The tribe of Benjamin had their inheritance adjoining to Mount Zion, and part of Jerusalem, and as some suppose the temple itself was situated within it.—This was a distinguishing token of the Lord’s to them, for they were covered by the protection of the Lord continually, and had his power engaged in their behalf.

V. JOSEPH had been especially beloved by Jacob. He was renowned for piety, wisdom and usefulness. His memory was dear to Israel and to Moses. On these accounts Moses enlarged in blessing his posterity.

VI. ZEBULON and ISSACHAR, sons of Leah were united in this blessing: Their lots lay together. The Zebulunites were probably fishers on the sea of Tiberias. Of Issachar it was foretold that he should prosper and rejoice in his tent, as a shepherd tending his flock.

VII. GAD. The increase of Gad is predicted as the immediate work of the Lord, and to be acknowledged with adoring gratitude.

VIII. DAN. Jacob had compared Dan to a serpent, but Moses likened him to a young lion, when leaping from Bashan he irresistibly seized his prey. In Samson who was of this tribe, both these emblems were realised, and when the Danites suddenly seized the country at the northern extremity of Canaan, they were like the young lions leaping on the defenceless cattle.

IX. NAPHTALI. Great peace and prosperity from the special favours of the Lord were predicted to Naphtali. It is a tradition of the Jewish writers, that though the lot of this tribe lay in the northern part of the land, yet it was so remarkably fruitful, that they

generally brought the first fruits before the other tribes.

ASHER signifies blessed, and to this tribe Moses predicted a numerous increase, with much love and friendship from their brethren; and likewise most excellent olive oil in vast abundance.

Moses added to this prophetic blessing on each tribe in particular, a declaration of the glory of God and the happiness of Israel in general, and these are his last words which are recorded.

Obs. Blessed are all they whose God is the Lord, for in blessing God will bless them. The subsequent history of these tribes of Israel shows plainly how minutely God fulfilled the promises he made by his servant Moses. This is true of all his promises. All the promises made to us the spiritual Israel, are made through Christ and are all yea and Amen in Him.

### A TOUCHING SCENE.

Rev. Horace Bushnell, who is blind, a city missionary for twenty years in Cincinnati, in his last report relates the following:

"Leaving the omnibus one day, and feeling for the sidewalk with my staff, a woman's voice inquired;

"Are you blind, sir?"

"Quite blind."

"Well, here's the sidewalk; but can you guess where you are?"

"Yes, at the corner of—and—streets."

"Well, you are good at guessing; but can you tell why God has deprived you, a holy man, of sight, and left me, a drunken sinner, with my eyes?"

"Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

"Yes, he may be your Father, but he is not mine."

"Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us all?"

"One God created us, but I am now an enemy and not a child."

"It may be so, yet through the blood of Jesus they who were sometimes alienated and enemies by wicked works, became reconciled to God."

"It may be you would be offended if I offered to lead you over this rough place?"

Now Simon, the Pharisee, said silently in my heart, if this man were of God, he would know what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner;

but the scene of Bethany was present, and I said, "I will not be offended: take my arm."

She did so, saying, "Thank God! thank God!"

"For what?"

"That I may guide the feet of one of his servants, for I am not fit to touch the hem of his garment. I had a brother once, and he was a minister of God like you!"

She was weeping. The hearse passed before us. She said, "You can't see that?"

"No, what is it?"

"That is the pauper's carriage. Even we drunken paupers ride home in that when life ends."

"To what home?"

"The grave."

"Is the grave the sinner's home?"

"Would to God it were; then I could have a hope of rest at last."

"Have you no hope?"

"No hope! 'Their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched.'"

"But you *should* hope?"

"Why should I hope?"

"God is good!"

"But I have abused his goodness."

"God is merciful!"

"I have despised his mercy."

"But God is love!"

For a short time she was silent, and then resumed: "How can such a sinner as I have hope?"

"It is a faithful saying that Jesus Christ came to save sinners."

"But I am a *great sinner*."

"His blood cleaveth from all sin."

"I am a lost sinner!"

"But he can save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. Now go and put this trembling hand into the hands of Jesus. At his feet confess your sin and ask for mercy, and you shall obtain it."

She wept aloud, and with a voice of agony exclaimed, "Oh! that I knew where I could find him. I would kneel at his feet and wash them with my tears, and never leave the place till the pauper's carriage came to bear me to the grave."

Hear I parted with the departing stranger, whom I had never met before; but,

recently, when passing an unfrequented street, that same voice called, "God bless you sir! God bless you! Let me help you over this broken way, for I have found him!"

"Found whom?"

"He that can save to the uttermost; and blessed be his holy name, for his blood cleanseth us from all sins."—*Congregationalist*.

### THE READ AND THE UNREAD DISCOURSE.

THE North British Review for May concludes an article on Modern Preaching as follows:

Whether a discourse is best read, or freely delivered without the intervention of the manuscript, or if thus delivered, whether by a *memoriter* repetition of pre-composed words in whole or in part, or by the extemporaneous utterance of thought elaborated and arranged only in the mind? are questions which have long been discussed, and probably will always be so. Where so much confessedly depends on individual character and temperament, it seems hopeless to reach any absolute rule applicable to every case alike. As to the general principles on which the solution of those questions turn, there is probably not much difference of opinion among reasonable and thoughtful persons. That a read discourse and a freely-spoken discourse have each their special advantages, both to the congregations addressed and the preachers addressing them, will, we suppose, be generally, if not universally admitted. That, on the one hand, there is such a thing as oratory; that oratory is the most powerful instrument of popular interest and impression; that oratory in the full sense can not consist with the interposition of a written manuscript between the speaker and his audience—these are surely not thus to be discussed, but rather axioms to proceed upon. The reading of a written discourse may be instructive, may be impressive, but surely it is not in the full sense of the word oratorical. Of course there are higher things than oratory; but oratory is something. The Church, we are persuaded, can not afford yet to despise the grand art of Demosthenes, of Chrysostom, of Bourdaloue, of Hall. You may call

the preference of the people in this country and all the world over, for this style of pulpit address, a prejudice; be it so—they have a prejudice for free oratorical speech in contradistinction to a more quite didactic method. So have the House of Commons; so have juries and judges; so have all audiences of every kind gathered together any where almost but in church. A good sermon well read is unquestionably a very good thing; but a good sermon well delivered with free, commanding oratorical action, the people regard as something better. We can not see that they are wrong in this. For a certain class of hearers, again, it seems to us clear that the close use of the manuscript may be decidedly preferable. Where minute beauties of language, great precision of statement, close concatenation of argument, are the especial requisites; in other words, where the sermon approaches the character of a theological lecture or didactic essay, or generally where instruction and meditative thought, rather than incitement, are aimed at, the read discourse may be not only the most natural, but the most effective instrument; but surely in an ordinary popular sermon, a *concio ad plebem*, where the great point is to awake interest, sustain attention, and hold the listening multitude under the spell of the speaker's eye, and voice, and soul, it is not so. In short, in such a case, the words in which our thoughts are expressed are only a part, and often the least part, of language. The eye speaks, the hand speaks, the whole living, quivering body speaks, as well as the tongue.—It is not the words of an eloquent man alone, but the man himself, that is eloquent. It is not his sentences and periods that speak, but his soul, his living, burning self, that speaks through them, and through eye, and lips, and hand, and voice all together. A part of this—no doubt sometimes, in illustrious instance, a very large part—comes out in a read discourse, but surely in all reason it must be admitted not all. Oratory, indeed,—sacred oratory, like all other oratory—is no doubt in some sort an inspiration, but it is also an art, and an art too of priceless value, as an instrument of popular instruction and impression. Believing this, we can not but regard it as the crying shame of the universities and of the Christian Churches of this land,

that it should have been so long and so utterly neglected.

On the whole, we are inclined to think that the true solution of this question, so far as such a solution is attainable, will be found in the habitual practice of both methods by all preachers whose natural capacities at all qualify them for doing so. There will probably be found in almost every congregation, a part of the hearers who are most effectively addressed in the one way, and another in the other—the select few who enjoy and profit by the precision, the beauty, the measured and balanced thought, the terse, sententious force of a read discourse, and the promiscuous many who crave the incitement and kindling fire of a free and face-to-face address. Why should not both have their share? Why should not every earnest and painstaking pastor, as most wisely recommended of late by some of the bishops, speak freely to his flock, with all the spontaneous freshness and fervor, and heart-to-heart directness he can command on one part of the day, and discourse before them with his ripest thoughts and choicest diction on the other?

After all, however, it is the burning heart alone that can give the tongue of fire. Writing or not writing, reading or freely speaking, this is the grand matter, the one thing needful. Let our ministers preach as Goethe teaches his orator to speak, and the world will no longer lend them a listening ear:

"Unless you feel you ne'er will hit the mark,  
Unless right from the soul it comes,  
And with a native power and sweetness  
Subdue and win each listening heart,  
Go sit forever, gine together,  
Cook your poor hash from other's feast,  
Blow hard the puffy flame to kindle  
From out the ashy heap within;  
Children and apes may sure applaud you;  
If for such praise you stoic care;  
But never other hearts you'll waken  
Save by a spell drawn from your own."

### HOW TO DO GOOD.

Is any little girl who reads this wondering how a child can do good? I can tell you one way, which I learned from the story of one of the sweetest little girls I ever knew. A minister told me that when he was preaching to a new congregation, he was struck by the attention of a lovely child whose eye was fixed upon his lips,

except now and then only when she looked under her mother's bonnet with a smile, as if something pleased her. The next Sabbath he found her in the same spot, ready to catch every word of his sermon; and he was so delighted with her apparent desire to hear of heaven and learn the way, that he waited at the close of service to tell her mother how it gratified him to have such an interested listener. From the mother he learned that this little girl had no pleasure equal to that of going to church and treasuring up the sermon for an old and infirm grandmother, to whom every Sabbath she carried so much instruction, that the poor woman would say that it was almost as good as going to church herself.

Was not this a very pleasant and a very easy way of "doing good?" Is there any child who cannot do as much good, if she will? Have not each of you some sick friend, some infirm friend, or some old friend deprived of the privilege of going to the house of God, to whom you might carry the sermon you hear, if you would only take the pains to remember it? Will you not try, on the next Sabbath, and see how much you can remember? If you will hear all the minister says, you will find, as that good little girl did, a great deal to do the *you of good*, as well as an old grandmother. You will not only be in the way of doing good, but you will be getting good. You will not only be making others happy, but increasing your own happiness—for the way to be happy is to be good; and then you will be kept from the great sin of wasting in idle thoughts the precious hours you spend in the worship of God. Oh, my dear child, how you would shudder, did you realize your wickedness in thinking so much more of every thing else, when you are in God's house, than you do of him! It is because you are thoughtless, that you lost so many opportunities of growing wiser and better, and of knowing "how to do good." Only think for yourself, and you will soon possess the secret of "doing good."

A little Swedish girl, while walking with her father on a starry night, absorbed in contemplation of the skies, being asked of what she was thinking, replied, "I was thinking if the *wrong side* of heaven is so glorious, what must the right side be?"

## A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT.

How much better, even in temporal matters, quiet people get along, than those who are constantly fretting over, or resisting some fancied slight or grievance. "The meek shall inherit the earth." If a man proves himself to be dishonest in his dealings, a sure way of avoiding similar troubles in future, is not to deal with him any more. If a person is angry or violent in his manner, quit his company as far as possible; and when you must associate with him, learn to use that "soft answer" which works such wonders. If any one speaks evil of you, do not follow it up with heated refutations, but let an upright walk and conversation disprove the calumny. Commit your reputation to the Lord's keeping, and he will, in the end, bring forth your good name clear as the noon-day. Remember Him, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again;" and it will calm your spirit in its most turbulent moments.

An equable spirit tends much to promote that length of days which is a blessing of God, to be desired by every one who loves to labour for his Master. In a statistical report made in England, it was found that the Society of Friends were the longest lived of any in the nation: speaking well for their quiet, orderly, temperate habits of life. There is nothing that wears away a man's life like constant irritability or fretfulness. One addicted to this habit, unless some strong counteracting tendency exist, will die an old man in the prime of his years; and those who are compelled constantly to live in his society, will be very apt to feel that it was none too early. One can readily understand the feeling of the little child, who said "he did not wish to go to heaven if Grandpa did;" and when asked his reason, answered, "Because he would be all the time saying, 'Whew! whew! what are all these children doing here?'"

Such a spirit dishonors Christ, and grieves away the Holy Spirit; and no person is compelled, as too many think, to indulge such a disposition from their constitutional weakness. The grace of God has a thousand times subdued the most violent in temper, and made them gentle and loving. If you find no such sanctifying influence going on in your heart, "how dwell-

eth the love of God in you?" The only true ground on which you can rest your assurance that God has renewed your nature, is that you are "growing in grace."

## PASTORAL VISITS.

The ideas of the visitor and visited are perhaps very different: the former is anxious to do good; it is, perhaps, entirely in a ministerial point of view he pays his visit; but, in nine cases out of ten, he can soon see that this is not the idea of the person on whom he calls. If there be a sick person in the house then, so far as that individual is concerned, a religious aspect may be put upon the visit, but not so far as others are concerned. Inside the walls of a place of worship is, in their idea, the place where the minister ought to speak religion; but not in their houses, and not upon a week day. If the minister do not go, he is thought a man that neglects his duty; and many worldly people are piqued at not being paid the compliment of a call. If he do go, they are perhaps offended at his endeavours to do good; they have certainly done what in them lies to waste his time, if not to make him as great a trifle as themselves. This was sorely felt by the excellent James Harvey, who for some years before his death visited very few of the principal persons in the neighbourhood. Being once asked why he so seldom went to see the gentlemen, who yet showed him all possible esteem and respect, he answered, "I can hardly name a polite family where the conversation ever turns upon the things of God. I hear much frothy and worldly chit-chat, but not a word of Christ; and I am determined not to visit those companies where there is not room for my Master as well as for myself."

God is called a rock, to teach us that, as this continues steadfast and immovable, while the whole surrounding ocean is in a state of perpetual fluctuation; so, though all the creatures of God, from the lowest to the very highest of the intelligent kind, are subject to change; capable of new additions, with respect to their knowledge, their power or their blessedness: God alone is absolutely the yesterday, to-day, and forever.