

Youth's Department

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, December 17th, 1865.

JOHN VI. 1-21: Christ feeds five thousand. 1 KINGS III. 1-16: Solomon's choice of wisdom. RECITE—JOB XXVIII. 12-20.

Sunday, December 24th, 1865.

JOHN VI. 22-42: Christ reasons with the multitude. 1 KINGS III. 16-28: Solomon judgeth between the two harlots. RECITE—LUKE II. 10-14.

Early life of John Vine Hall.

AUTHOR OF "THE SINNER'S FRIEND."

Written by himself.

(Continued.)

In early life I made several attempts to quit this house, but God overruled all my endeavors. At the age of seventeen, I fancied that the situation of a writer to an attorney would suit my purpose, and therefore I waited on Mr. B— of Wrotham, but without success. I next turned my attention to the navy, and was on the point of engaging myself as clerk to Captain W— of the Majestic, then fitting out as part of the Channel-fleet, under Lord Howe. But duty interposed. I found my mother had been pacing the room all night in distraction. She wept bitterly, and implored me not to leave her, for then all her comfort would be gone. My heart was melted, and the command, "Honor thy father and thy mother," rushed upon my mind. My resolution was immediately changed; for although I was indifferent about religion, or, rather, hated it, yet this commandment had long been impressed upon my mind so strongly, that I used to take hold of it as a kind of anchor, and say to myself, "If I honor my poor mother, I shall be sure to do well." Thus I gave up all my airy schemes of becoming a pursuer of a man-of-war, and acquiring wealth to support my mother in her old age. But a gracious God had appointed other means by which I should perform that pleasing duty till her eyes were closed in death.

Soon after, an anxious affair had very nearly determined my fate: My mind had been so much harassed, that in an hour of phrensy I determined to enlist as a soldier. I packed up a small change of linen in a bundle, and putting a flute in my pocket, actually quitted the house without taking leave of any person, intending to go to Gravesend, where troops were embarking for India. Fully bent on my mad-brained scheme, I walked very rapidly till I began to ascend Boxley hill, when, becoming fatigued, I stopped to rest. I considered that I was flying from every prospect of doing well, and I was also deserting my poor mother, whose grey hairs would probably be brought with sorrow to the grave. While thus musing, the lines, "Turn again, Whittington," rushed forcibly on my mind, and although I thought it very foolish, yet I could not get rid of the impression. Blessed be God, I did turn again, and retracing my steps, reached home before my absence had been discovered. Thus was I again saved from inevitable ruin.

My restless spirit, however, soon broke forth again, and my next effort was to obtain the situation of quartermaster in the Fourteenth regiment of Dragoons. I qualified this attempt by thinking that I should be enabled to allow my mother something comfortable out of my pay; but my designs were frustrated by a new regulation, that the situation should be filled by old sergeants only. From the respectability of my application, I was almost certain of being appointed, and some stress was laid upon my belonging to the Coxheath troop of yeomanry cavalry, in which corps I had acquired a very expert use of the sword, so much so, that I frequently officiated as fustigian.

It appeared unaccountable that I should be so restless, when I had every thing comfortable around me and was highly respected. My employer kept a horse on purpose for my use in the cavalry, of which he himself was also a member; and so master and servant frequently rode together through the street armed at all points. He also felt pleasure in taking me with him to the weekly concerts, where I played principal flute, and sometimes exhibited my talents in performing a solo. But this talent was mischievous, as it filled me with pride, and also drew me into evil company. Indeed at this time I was living in all kinds of wickedness—a deist in principle and practice. Volney's "Law of Nature" and Paine's "Age of Reason" were my favorite pocket companions, and I followed their pernicious precepts most faithfully. I was a truly jolly fellow, sitting up late at nights, either at cards or dancing. I had not then become intemperate in drinking, but in every thing else I was sensual and devilish.

At this time I belonged to a spouting society, and we became so pleased with our own performances, that it was determined to fit up an old warehouse as a theatre, where it fell to my lot to perform the part of Robin in "No Song, No Supper," and of Justice Mitten in "The Village Lawyer." All things being prepared, a representation was announced, and tickets issued gratis, which brought a crowded audience, and we received great applause, particularly the female performers, who consisted of mantua-makers and milliners. On this occasion I began the folly by strutting through the prologue. There being a company of comedians in the town, performing at the public theatre, I was tempted by my own vanity, of which I had a large stock, and the entreaties of some of the

performers, for his benefit, to undertake the part of Henry Woodville, in the "Wheel of Fortune," upon which occasion the house was completely filled, and the applause awarded me induced me to repeat the same folly. Most fortunately my theatrical mania now subsided, but not so my disposition to wander.

A short time afterwards a new temptation assailed me, arising from a correspondence between myself and the daughter of a clergyman at E—, where my uncle resided as an apothecary. Nothing could serve my turn but to become a surgeon; and for this purpose I furnished myself with a set of instruments, being resolved to reside with my uncle, so that I might be constantly near the object of my attentions. I now made sure of quitting a house, where I had been fostered for eight years; yet my attempts were again frustrated by the lady herself giving me a formal notice to retreat, and make way for a gentleman who would be more attentive than I had latterly been.

My ardor had already been a little damped from the following circumstance: A poor cottager, residing about two miles from E—, had, through sickness, been unable to make his payments in proper time; so his only bed had been taken from him by his creditors, and deposited for security in a farmhouse. His wife and children had no other place for repose than a cold brick floor. I happened at this time to be on a visit to my uncle, and the story having reached my ears, and my heart also, I was on the tip-toe to render assistance. I remonstrated with the creditor, and obtained his consent that the bed should be restored, which gave me so much delight, that my feet were instantly directed towards the farm-house where the bed was deposited. So great was my eagerness, that I quite overlooked an engagement to meet the lady at noon, and instead of spending two or three hours in an unprofitable manner, I trudged away to be a messenger of comfort. The farmer had no servants at home to convey the bed to the poor family; therefore, full of youthful ardor, I took it on my back, and after toiling with great pleasure upwards of a mile and a half, along a dirty road and under a pleasant perspiration, I found the cottager's abode. It was a miserable hotel indeed. I did not stay to knock, but opened the door without ceremony, and found a poor sickly woman, with two small children, sitting before a few embers, in a state of wretchedness. The poor woman was speechless with surprise as I dragged the bed through the narrow doorway; but a grateful smile illuminated her haggard countenance when I told her that the creditor had relented, and would not trouble her husband again. Having endeavored to cheer her spirits, I threw five shillings into the poor creature's lap and took my leave, not a little pleased with my adventure. I now hastened to the waiting lady to account for my breach of promise. I was so well pleased with my own conduct that I thought every person would be the same, and particularly the lady in question; but to my great mortification, she did not approve of my having forfeited my word, even upon such an interesting occasion. From that moment I began to cool, and at length I received a point-blank discharge for neglect—a happy discharge for me. The new lover soon became cool also, and left the lady in the lurch; but she was afterwards married to a respectable surveyor in London. I now gave up all thoughts of physic, and returned once more to business.

My next attempt to quit the counter seemed to promise a greater prospect of success than any previous effort. I had imbibed a strong desire to become a clerk in the Bank of England. I waited on Mr. B—, a director, and was received with special kindness, but gladly returned to the work which I had so proudly sneered at, for I considered the salary of £50 to be very inadequate to the security required. This was £2,000; and though I had no relatives to help me, my character stood so high in the estimation of Mr. S— of Maidstone, that he nobly came forward as my bondsman for the whole amount. I returned to my old quarters with a new resolution to be contented; and when my employer inquired if I was going to the Bank of England, I replied that I had been to London to find out that I was better off in the country.

I went on in a most dangerous course for the next seven years, not having the fear of God before my eyes, and spending the Sunday with other riotous young men who, like myself, with good characters for integrity, were in the constant practice of immorality. Frequently I did not enter a place of worship for months. Instead of looking into any religious book on Sunday, I amused myself with Paine's "Age of Reason," or Macleod's "Answer to the Apology for the Bible." I felt great pleasure in these dreadful publications, therefore treated the Bible as a "curiously devised fable." I not only read these books myself, but preached them to others. Oh what an astonishing wonder that a holy God did not consign me to perdition!

During all these seven years I was a member of the Coxheath yeomanry cavalry, and was not a little proud of being a soldier. I took great pains in being well versed in the use of sword; and having cherished Lord Chesterfield's maxim, that "if it is worth while to do any thing, it is worth while to do it as it should be," I was punctual in my attention to duty and cleanliness, and was often complimented on being one of the best soldiers in the troop.

[This John, Newman Hall, relates the following in reference to this accomplishment of his father:—] When the first Napoleon was threatening to invade this country my father joined the Yeomanry Cavalry, and was a grand review before George III. was selected as the best man in his regiment, so he strove through the exercise before his Majesty, he fell to his duty as a volunteer to form one of the support who guarded the conspirators; tried at Maid-

stone to Sheerness. A celebrated German swordsmen was at that time employed by government at the Maidstone military depot to instruct the soldiers, and gave an exhibition in the Town-hall before a large company of the aristocracy and military. My father was urged to accept his challenge with naked swords. Using great caution, he parried all the cuts and thrusts of his adversary, and then seizing his opportunity, ripped up the embroidered sleeve of the German from wrist to elbow amid the plaudits of the assembly.

I was very regular at the business all the day, so that my employer left it entirely to my care; but my evenings were always spent in the company of careless young men like myself. If we sometimes went to church, it was more to see and be seen than from any sense of religious duty. I well remember it once came into my head while at church, that I would endeavor to suppose myself in the immediate presence of God, and try to worship him for once in sincerity, just to see how I should feel. I shut my eyes and went through part of the Litany in this manner, fancying that God stood before my face. It was too much for me; I could not endure it. Thoughts of being holy and giving up my reigning lusts, or sink into hell, operated so powerfully upon my imagination, that I opened my eyes to get rid of the impression, and resolved never to try the same scheme again, but to go on as carelessly as before. Thus I completely turned my back on this ray of conviction.

I was blessed with a disposition to do good to any person in distress, and also to forgive any one who had offended me. Indeed I was all on fire to do anybody service, no matter who. I thought that thus I should rub out bad practices, and make a kind of balance between good and evil. I totally discarded the idea that a merciful God would ever punish the frailties of human nature. Oh the deceitfulness of the heart!

Thus I murdered away seven years of my time in all manner of sin, and yet preserved a fair character with the people of the world. Sitting one evening chatting with Mr. P—, a wine-merchant, he unexpectedly said to me, "I wish you would come and live with me as my clerk," and named his salary, which was more than I had ever received. I now proposed to quit the scene of my boyish days; and although I had many times before endeavored to change my situation, yet now that I was on the point of doing so, my feelings were so much excited that I was very very unwell for several days. But the pleasing hope of being enabled to render more assistance to my impoverished mother operated as a powerful stimulus; and following the impulse of nature, aided by a sense of duty, I tore myself away from the place in which I had remained from twelve years of age until I had nearly completed my twenty-seventh year.

Now commenced a course of life worse than ever. Public-houses of all descriptions were to be visited for my new employer at all hours, and where all sorts of vile and low company resorted. I blushed and shuddered at first; but the recollection that this was now my path of duty soon reconciled me. And yet I did not think so much of the evil connected with my situation as I did of my wounded pride in being obliged to enter the lowest kind of gin-shops to ask for orders. To commit sin in a cleanly manner was not in the least unpleasant to my feelings; but to be seen doing a dirty action was rather more than my pride could endure. But Oh what filthiness did I wallow in when the shades of night prevented the deeds of darkness being witnessed by my fellow sinners. Had not the Almighty God promised to turn the scarlet into snow and the crimson into wool, the very remembrance of the depravity in which I then encouraged myself would annihilate every hope of mercy. But, blessed be His name, with him there is plenteous redemption.

(To be continued.)

The Human Sacrifice.

Mr. Barton, a missionary in West Africa was walking very early one morning on the beach at Edina, once the seat of the mission to the Bassas, supported by the American Baptist Missionary Union, for air and exercise, when he saw a company of natives approaching. They were armed, and one held something which they seemed desirous to conceal from the "white man." Barton was determined to examine what it was, and commanded them to halt and explain. A christian missionary must be a man of much physical as well as moral courage. They quailed before him, unarmed and single-handed as he was. One could speak English enough to tell the story. And what was the object to be concealed? Reader, your heart will ache to know. It was a little girl, poor and emaciated, her body lacerated and wounded. They had obtained her from her willing parents as a sacrifice to the angry god who, they verily believed, lived in the waters of the St. John's river, and who had been the cause of several deaths by drowning; for they too had lost a friend. This "unknown god" dwelt at the "Bar Mouth," and must be appeased. No palm oil, or wine, or camwood, or ivory, would purchase his favor. Blood, human blood must be offered. A council of chiefs had determined it, and they were taking the child, tied and lashed in a king jar or basket made of palm leaves, to the Bar, there to be sunk as an offering to the water demon. The missionary rescued her, but too late to save her. She died on the soft bed, and under the care of Christians, and found a grave in a Christian burying-ground, while the man of God continued to preach to these idolaters "the only true and wise God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent."—African Repository.

Expect answers while you are speaking in prayer. Sometimes the vapors that ascend in the morning come down in copious showers in the evening. So may it be with your prayers.

Correspondence.

The Case of the Mate, John C. Douglass.

CONDEMNED AS A PARTICIPATOR IN THE MURDER OF CAPT. BENSON, OF THE BRISTOL, "ZERO."

The following letter from Rev. Dr. Pryor, was published in the Express of Wednesday last, and from the different aspect it gives to the whole case of the late trial and conviction, and further from the remarkable testimony in favor of Douglass, will be deeply interesting to our readers. But for the removal of the Rev. A. H. Manro from Halifax, the testimonials would have reached the city before the trial, and might have had an important influence on the decision of the jury.—

MESSENGERS EDITORS,—

Had the case of the mate of the Zero been left as it should have been in the hands of the judges of the land, I would not have felt justified in writing a line to the public on the matter, however strong an opinion I might myself have formed "Lis est sub judice."—But as editorials and communications have appeared in our public prints, all having the tendency, to use the mildest term, to prejudice the case, and in flame public opinion against the unhappy man, I feel bound to state the matter from my standpoint, leaving it to the good sense, and calm afterthought of a discerning public to decide, whether there are not good grounds for a doubt, at least, of the guilty participation of the mate in the murder.

The statement of Douglas, as made to me, is as follows. (And I wish it to be remembered, that this statement was made previous to any confession, or statement of the boy, the cook, or the sailors. Douglas having been the first person to make the confession.) That they sailed from Cow Bay on Thursday. That after being out some time, the captain called the two Germans on deck to sign the articles. That when they were read to them, they refused to sign, asserting that the captain had engaged to give them \$25 for the run, while now he wanted them to agree to be paid at the rate of \$25 per month. That a great deal of ill-feeling was manifested on the part of the Germans, toward the captain, they declaring that he wished to cheat them out of their wages.

That after dinner on Friday the cook Doucey came up from the cabin and said to him, the mate, "the captain is a bad man, he wants to cheat these Germans." "No," replied the mate, "that cannot be, there must have been a misunderstanding; the captain could not have been so unwise as to offer them \$25 each for the run which might take only two or three days, he must have meant by the month." That Doucey then said, "He is a bad man, and deserves to be thrown overboard, and I have a great mind to do it." "Stop," said the mate, "you must not talk that way, it is wrong, you must never think even of taking what you cannot give." "Oh," said Doucey, going away with a laugh, "how religious you are." The mate said he should not have thought of this conversation again, had it not been for what afterwards happened, for this kind of boasting and threatening talk is not at all an uncommon thing with such men as the cook.

That on Saturday night or rather Sunday morning, it was the mate's and Charley's watch on deck, from 12 to 2. That at 4 o'clock, the captain having come on deck, the mate made some more sail, the wind having fallen. That the captain wished him good morning, made some remarks on the weather, and then said to him, go below and take your sleep. That he went to his cabin, undressed, and went to bed. That about daylight Bill the German knocked at his door, waked him, and said, "get up mate, cook has killed the captain." That he started up and said, "what have they been fighting," for that was his first thought, as the captain was constantly finding fault with the cook, that he never brought in a meal, but that he scolded him, and that he was a kind and temperate man, yet he was constantly annoyed at the cook, and often swore at him. That he, the mate, jumped out of his berth, and was hurrying on his clothes, in order to go on deck, and see what had occurred, for he supposed that the captain was on deck, as it was his watch there, when Bill came a second time saying, "come mate cook wants you in the cabin." He became quite alarmed, "what can he want of me, has he killed the captain, and now wishes to kill me." He said a great terror then came over him. It was still a death, not a sound on board, except a footstep running on deck. He trembled so he could scarcely put on his clothes. That he went into the cabin but could see no one there at first, but hearing a slight whistling noise from the captain's state room, he looked round and saw the cook in the captain's berth, bending over his body, which was stretched out like a corpse, his knees near the captain's shoulders, and his hands seemingly clasping the head, while his eyes were staring at him. That he was paralyzed at the sight, threw up his arms in terror, and not knowing rushed back into his state room, trembling with dread, threw himself upon his knees, when the cook came immediately to his door, and said to him, "come out, I want you to help throw the old man overboard." "Never," he answered, never.—How could you commit such a murder.—I was determined to do it, said the cook, and then putting his hand against his door, he tried to force it open, but the mate prevented him, by putting