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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Religious.

### The Prey taken from the Mighty.

"Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?"—Isa. xlix. 24.

"Satan what dost thou say?" said a Welsh minister, the Rev. John Elias, at the close of a sermon preached by him before an association of brother ministers; "shall the prey be taken from the mighty?" "No! never; I will increase the darkness of their mind, the hardness of their hearts, the desire of their lusts, the strength of their fetters; and I will fortify my strongholds. The lawful captives shall never be delivered, nor shall the prey be taken from me. I despise and look with contempt upon the feeble efforts of these ministers."

"Gabriel, Gabriel, messenger of the Most High, what do you think?" said the preacher in a different tone, looking reverently up to heaven; "shall the prey be taken from the mighty?" "Ah I am afraid they shall not be taken. I have now been two days hovering over this vast assembly, which listens to the words of eternal life, expecting to see the chains broken asunder, and the captives liberated; but now the sermons are nearly over, and the multitudes on the point of separating; yet there is no sign that any have been saved; and I shall not have the pleasure of carrying to the heaven of heavens the news that one sinner has repented of his sins."

Then the servant of God turned to his fellow preachers asking them, "Ye ministers of the living God! what do you think? 'Shall the prey be taken from the mighty?' 'Alas! who hath believed our report? to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? we have labored in vain, and we have spent our strength for naught and in vain. It seems as if the Lord hides His face from us. He has not made bare His arm to save. Ah! we fear that there is but little hope that any of these captives shall be set free, or that the prey shall be taken from the mighty."

"Zion what dost thou say? shall the prey be taken from the mighty?" But Zion said "the Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me. I have lost my children and am desolate and alone; and my enemies say concerning me, This is Zion which no one seeks. Alas! I fear none shall be saved."

"Ye that call on the name of the Lord, what do you think? 'Shall the prey be taken from the mighty?' 'Lord God Thou knowest. High is Thy hand, glorious in power is Thy right hand. O! send forth Thy power, and by Thy marvellous strength, conquer. Let the groaning of the prisoners come before Thee, and according to the excellency of Thy power, save the children of death. Though I am nearly weary crying, yet I have taint hope that the year of jubilee is nigh.'"

Then thoughtfully he looked up, as if he was going to speak with the Lord Omnipotent, modestly beseeching Him: "What is thy thought, Lord! concerning these prisoners?" "Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.—Blessed be God! There is no doubt nor anxiety about the deliverance of these captives; for it is absolutely declared. They shall be liberated, they shall be saved.—Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing to Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head."

The foregoing passage formed the conclusion of a sermon preached at an Association of ministers, by John Elias, who died in Anglesey, in the year 1841, with the reputation of being the greatest preacher in Wales,—the Welsh Whitfield. His name is held in great honour in the Principality. In the church meetings, the old brethren repeat passages of his sermons, and quote his sayings on every subject. The effect of the delivery of the sermon quoted from was extraordinary.—Many dated their saving conversion from it; and even during the delivery, not a few were unable to restrain their shouts of joy.—*Bristol Messenger.*

### Bible-classes for the Rich.

During the last eighteen months, classes have been established by some Christian friends in Notting-hill one of the most aristocratic parts of the suburbs of London for the Bible instruction of children of the higher classes. The following portions of a highly interesting letter, signed "J. H. Gladstone," will give an idea of the character of the classes and the results which have followed their establishment:—

When at your suggestion I began a twelve-month ago, I knew well enough the great need of religious instruction among young people in our own class of society, and I had some experience in Bible readings, and knew that excellent results have often flowed from them, but it was a matter of doubt whether sufficient young gentlemen could be got together to make the meetings interesting. Well, I started with two; but as you induced seven to come, and I found about as many more among my personal friends, the attendance soon became twelve or fourteen. There it remained nearly stationary for some time. Since Easter has grown more rapidly, so that on each of the last two Sundays I have had thirty-eight boys and young men in my dining room. Altogether upwards of sixty have attended the meetings but some of them have removed from the neighbourhood, and several are at public schools, or elsewhere, and only make their appearance during the holidays. This reinforcement of our numbers takes place principally through the young fellows telling their friends, and bringing them; and that is the way which I consider the most satisfactory.

Of course, I must not mention names but you know that these sixty include some youth of high social position, and some of men who have won for themselves a reputation in scientific circles, or in the State, or in the Church of Christ. Some of the youths also are intended for the highly important office of the Christian ministry.

Ecclesiastically we are very various. About half our number are attached to the Church of England, while the other half consist of Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Wesleyans and Plymouth Brethren. But this has never interfered with our harmony.

At the beginning I chose for our consideration the Life of Our Saviour. The incidents which the Evangelists record, and His gracious words afford us varied and delightful subjects for conversation. As we proceed to study His marvellous character and history, our hearts often glow within us, and I trust our admiration and love are greatly increased.

Those who have hitherto gathered around me are, for the most part, sons of pious parents; so, while I have rejoiced to see several of them turn to the Lord, I have felt "Other men have laboured, and I have entered into their labours." Yet in such cases our meetings have probably helped the right decision, and in others I am sure that, through God's Holy Spirit, there has been a gain that has not stopped short at the intellect. And while "my boys" have been benefited, I have not been left without my reward. Many pleasant hours of study and of friendly intercourse have been spent in their service; and the prayers of many loving hearts is of itself, no small inheritance. I could say much more but you want to print it, and that stops my pen.

Several other letters have been published bearing similar testimony. It is found that the real difficulty is the first starting; after that, with care and judgement, the success is pretty certain.

### A curious Trial.

The Melbourne correspondent of the *Times* reports a new kind of trial before a new sort of tribunal. The cause has attracted much public attention; rather more perhaps, than its intrinsic importance would seem to warrant. A Rev. Mr. Booth a clergyman of the Church of England, has been a defendant before an ecclesiastical court here—constituted of course, under our Church Assembly Act—charged with the offence of brawling and

crudelty in church. The leading facts which occurred some months back at Wangaratta, are as follow:—During morning service one Sunday, a dog, which had strayed into the church, was making himself obnoxious, and a movement was made towards putting him out. The dog objected, and retreated into the pew in which the clergyman's wife was seated, and it is said snapped at and bit her. The clergyman joining the other casual ejectors, made a first capture of the animal, which, after biting his captor, was some way handed to or recaptured by one of the congregation. The latter was hearing away the cur from the church when the clergyman seized the dog and suddenly broke one of its legs. This, some of the witnesses stated, was a wilful act on the part of the clergyman, although done under the influence of passion. Cries of "Shame!" came from the on-lookers, several of whom left the church. Immense excitement was got up in Wangaratta, some few persons striving to excuse the clergyman but the greater majority siding with the dog. Our Bishop, Dr. Perry, was memorialized to remove Mr. Booth from his incumbency, but as he had a wife and two children, and had for many years preserved an irreproachable character, the Bishop expressed his reluctance to take so extreme a course for one transitory fit of passion. The malcontent portion of the congregation were disgusted, and remonstrances appeared in the columns of the newspapers, as the subject is one on which every correspondent can be edifying, on cruelty and on what is becoming or unbecoming in Christian ministers. The excitement was kept up, the subject was even discussed at a meeting of the Church Assembly; and in the Legislative Assembly itself, and at last the Bishop authorized the trial of Mr. Booth before a court consisting of Mr. James Wilberforce Stephen (a leading equity counsel, and Chancellor of the Diocese) and four assessors. The trial came off in Melbourne; the prosecutors and the clergyman were respectively represented by counsel, and had the dog been represented by counsel, too, his interests and position could not have been more conscientiously consulted. The facts as above narrated were fully proved and the defendant was honest enough to admit that the act was wilful—a dishonest man might, with some plausibility, have contended that the leg was broken by accident, which would, of course, have altered the whole aspect of the case—and he thought to extenuate his conduct by pleading the transport of passion into which for the moment he was betrayed. He hoped for a lenient view of his position, and expressly quoted and relied on the leading case of David, a great sinner in various very unpleasant ways, but who was yet forgiven. Notwithstanding this mode of defence, the assessors brought in a finding of guilty both of brawling and cruelty, and the sentence was six months' suspension from duty. But here arose a renewal of the agitation out of doors. More letters appeared in the newspapers, more newspaper articles complaining of the inadequacy of the punishment. The Bishop replied by only one letter which seems to have operated on the assailants like a chilled shot. Without attempting to justify the offender, his lordship, among other embarrassing arguments, submits that those who are so severe on the man who in the heat of passion breaks a dog's leg take no account of the persons who in mere sport and without the excuse of passion, think nothing of breaking a bird's wing. The Bishop here brings us *inter apices juris*, and that we should so warmly condemn the breaking of a dog's leg, and think so lightly, or not at all, of the many thousands of broken wings, is, I suppose, to be set down to mere habit and education. Be this as it may, the Bishop's letter seems to have closed the controversy, and not prematurely; for, of all the dogs I have ever met with, this particular Wangaratta dog has certainly had his day.

### Case of Demoniacal possession.

An extraordinary "case of demoniacal possession" in a Free Church is reported by the *Scotsman*. Dr. Bonar, the minister of the Chalmers Memorial Church, Grange, on a recent Sunday, took for the subject of his discourse the unclean spirits described in the 12th chapter of St. Matthew. The afternoon was very warm, and in the course of the ser-

vice a number of people became sick and fainted. One girl in attempting to leave the church while the chapter was being read, fell in a fainting fit and was carried to the vestry. The occurrence caused some hubbub among the congregation, and several of the members, including Dr. Duncan, Professor of Hebrew, left their seats to wait upon the poor girl. In a little while, Dr. Duncan stepped up to the pulpit and had some private conversation with Dr. Bonar, who after a few moments' pause, closed the book before him, and addressing the congregation, said it would perhaps be better to say nothing more, but simply engage in prayer. "It was perhaps quite true," he continued, as Dr. Duncan suggested, that Satan was there tempting them with these interruptions, and that he was angry at being spoken against. The rev. gentleman then engaged in prayer, and, after he had finished, a hymn was given out and sung, after which Dr. Duncan rose and ejaculated a few thoughts on the passage of Scripture respecting the security with which a strong man armed can keep his house in peace. In the middle of his oration the learned professor had a thought about Satan—or "Sattan," as he called his Satanic Majesty, exclaiming with great vehemence, in reference to what had taken place among the congregation, that "it was Sattan, brethren. Sattan—Sattan." He also wished to take notice of something said by the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles; but failing to remember the particular passage, he had to announce that his memory did not serve him to tell what the Apostle said to the Gentiles. The benediction was then pronounced and the congregation dismissed. As the people were about to leave the church, Dr. Duncan again rose in the pulpit, and briefly repeated his former assurance, that "it was Sattan, brethren. Sattan—Sattan." A suggestion was made that the enemy should be fought out, in the belief that if resisted he would flee; but the terror caused by his warm and unprecedented "manifestation" was too great to be hurriedly shaken off, and the congregation dispersed with bewilderment expressed in their countenance—doubtful whether they should feel solemnized or amused.

### For Sunday School Teachers.

DIFFERENCE IN THE MATERIAL.—There are unlikely, unpromising scholars in all our Sabbath schools—some whom it may even be unwise to retain, fearing the influence and remembering the Scripture declaration that "one sinner destroyeth much good." And yet special labor and special pains and special prayer should be put forth in behalf of such a case, so long as he remains in the school. You should as teacher, feel with respect to that child as a soldier feels with respect to a difficult mountain fortress which has to be assaulted. If he carries that fortress there will be all the more honour and glory on account of its difficult position. So you must look on unpromising children as material that you are called to work upon. God has not left you to choose the material; he has given you the material and he calls upon you to work honestly and faithfully for him. Then again you have plodding scholars in your class, and some who are far from being bright, or plodding and persevering. And yet Dr. Arnold said with regard to Spencer Thornton, "I would take off my hat any day to that young man, because although he has not great mental powers he has indomitable perseverance." So you may have some plodding children who seem scarcely to repay the time and toil which you bestow upon them; but if they are plodding, and you hold on, by the power of the Holy Spirit you may find in the teaching of these children a large and ample reward.—Then again you will find some bright scholars. To teach them will be a most interesting part of your work; but there may be danger in giving too much time and attention to them, and one caution at all events should be given to children of that class. They will soon find out their superiority over the other children and become proud and elated. Remind them that "a good man is a much nobler creation than a great man;" and that with all talents the noblest thing after all, is to be good.—Such a remark is just the kind of corrective influence which they need amid the strenuous intellectual activity in which they, and you, take so much pleasure.