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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

The Christian and his Echo.

True faith, producing love to God and man;—
Say Echo, is not this the Gospel plan?
The Gospel plan.

Must I my faith and love to Jesus show,
By doing good to all, both friend and foe?
Both friend and foe.

But if a brother hates and treats me ill,
Must I return him good, and love him still?
Love him still.

If he my failings watches to reveal,
Must I his faults as carefully conceal?
As carefully conceal.

But if my name and character he blast,
And cruel malice, too, a long time last;
And if I sorrow and affliction know,
He loves to add unto my cup of woe;
In this uncommon, this peculiar case,
Sweet Echo, say, must I still love and bless?
Still love and bless.

Whatever usage ill I may receive,
Must I be patient still, and still forgive?
Be patient still, and still forgive.

Why, Echo, how is this? thou'rt sure a dove,
Thy voice shall teach me nothing else but love!
Nothing else but love.

Amen! with all my heart, then be it so,
'Tis all delightful, just, and good, I know;
And now to practise I'll directly go.
Directly go.

Things being so, whoever me reject,
My gracious God me surely will protect.
Surely will protect.

Henceforth I'll roll on Him my every care,
And then both friend and foe embrace in prayer.
Embrace in prayer.

But after all those duties I have done,
Must I, in point of merit them disown,
And trust for heaven through Jesus' blood alone?
Through Jesus' blood alone.

Echo, enough, thy counsels to mine ear
Are sweeter than to flowers the dew-drop tear;
Thy wise instructive lessons please me well:
I'll go and practise them. Farewell, farewell.
Practise them. Farewell, farewell.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Pen Sketches.—No. 10.

JEALOUS PERSONS

Possess several peculiarities which cannot all be presented in one short article, so the reader must be content with a rough sketch, a mere lining of the character of a few jealous persons.

They have a strong desire to monopolize all the love and favor of their friends. Is their friend a minister? he must be sure and pay the most attention to them, and in no way exhibit any favouritism to any others. Such persons are generally very suspicious of attentions being paid to others, being apprehensive of rivalry. There are those who are very jealous of their position. They wish to occupy a prominent place and be consulted on every matter.

Others are very jealous of their name, fearful of the least delation, and very soon angry if they are suspected of anything unworthy of a good name. Others are very jealous of the Lord's cause. They feel the least slight it receives, mourn over its hindrances, and labour for its extension in the earth. I judge that from the heart they can exclaim with reference to Zion, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."—A true minister of Jesus can employ the language of Paul as he considers his charge:—"I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ."

JOHN.

Spiritual comforts in times of trouble frequently come late; and often suddenly, when nature has given them up: "Though it tarry, wait for it; it will surely come."

Baptism for the Dead.

"Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then, baptized for the dead? (1 Cor. xv. 29.)"

This passage of Scripture has received several interpretations, and probably some of our readers would like to see a condensed statement of the attempted explanations which thoughtful commentators have put forth. The difficulty of the passage lies in the three words, "for the dead;" and the chief part of the difficulty centres in the word (*hyper*), which our translators have rendered by the word "for." To bring the matter clearly before those of our friends who cannot read the Greek Testament, we must pen a few words concerning the different meanings of this term (*hyper*). It is worth bearing in mind that all words, originally, had a physical or material meaning; and this word *hyper* first signified over or upon, exactly answering to the Latin word *super*; to the German word *über*, and to our English word over. One example of the use of the word in its first or physical sense will be sufficient. Xenophon, speaking of the sun, says, "It goes over (*hyper*) us and our dwellings." Branching out from this primary meaning, the word gets to mean, "in the place of," "instead of," "on account of," "for;" and it is this diversity of meaning which renders it difficult to understand in what exact sense the apostle uses the phrase, "baptized for the dead." These preliminary remarks will enable our readers to judge of the different interpretations which have been given of this difficult passage.

1. An ancient commentator, called Epiphanius, who lived in the fourth century supposes that St Paul was thinking of converts who were baptized when not very far from the time of their death. "What shall they do who are baptized when death is close at hand?" This interpretation is favoured by Bengel among the moderns, who therefore gives to the above term the sense of *near, close upon*.

2. As in the third and fourth centuries the practice was sometimes adopted of baptizing persons near to the tombs of those who had suffered death for the sake of Christ, the words have been translated, "What shall they do who are baptized over the graves of the martyred dead?" But as it is very unlikely that any such practice existed so early as the apostle's time, this interpretation is not of much worth.

3. Some understand the plural number "the dead" to be used rhetorically for the singular, "the dead one," and apply the words to Jesus Christ—"What shall they do who are baptized on account of a once dead Saviour."

4. Olshausen translates the words thus—"What shall they gain who are baptized for the sake of the dead in Christ?" That is, the "fulness" of believers may be made up; or, as the English Prayer Book expresses it, "that God may complete the number of His elect and hasten His kingdom." It is thought by those who give this interpretation that Hebrew xi. 40 throws some amount of light upon it: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

5. The generally received opinion of the passage is the one adopted by the judicious Dr. Doddridge—"What shall they do who are baptized instead of the dead?" That is, who as the ranks of Christians are thinned by death, come forward to be baptized in order to take the place of departed believers. This meaning is paraphrased by the Doctor: "Such are our views and hopes as Christians; else, if it were not so, what should they do who are baptized in token of their embracing the Christian faith in the room of the dead, who are just fallen in the cause of Christ, but are yet supported by a succession of new converts, who immediately offer themselves to fill up their places, as ranks of soldiers that advance to the combat in the room of their companions who have just been slain in their sight? If the doctrine I oppose be true, and the dead are not raised at all, why are they nevertheless, thus baptized in the room of the dead, as cheerfully ready, at the peril of their lives, to keep up the cause of Jesus in the world?"

6. It is curious that Dr. Alford, in his Commentary, leans to the idea that the apostle is referring to what has been termed vicarious baptism—the baptism of a living person

for the spiritual benefit of one who has died unbaptized. Several of the Fathers of the Church mention the existence of this strange custom. Tertullian refers to it as existing among the Marcionites, and St. Chrysostom relates of the same sect that, "when one of their catechumens died without baptism, they used to put a living person under the dead man's bed, and asked whether he desired to be baptized. The living man answering that he did, they then baptized him in place of the departed." This curious custom seems to have originated in the idea that baptism was absolutely essential to salvation—or, at least, that those would suffer punishment of some kind at the time of the resurrection who had neglected to be baptized. It was thought by some of the so-called Fathers of the Church—St. Ambrose among the number—that this vicarious baptism existed from the earliest times, and that St. Paul refers to it in the passage which we are now considering. If St. Paul did use the words in that sense, he, of course refers to the practice as an *argumentum ad hominem*; and St. Ambrose thus explains the argument:—"The apostle adduces the example of those who were so secure of the future resurrection that they even baptized for the dead, when by accident death had come unexpectedly, fearing that the unbaptized might not rise, or rise to evil." But it seems much more likely that the words of St. Paul gave rise to the strange practice of vicarious baptism, than that the inspired apostle should refer, with even partial approval, to a practice for which there is no Scripture warrant. We conclude with the remark that the almost obvious meaning of the passage is the correct one—namely, "What shall they do who are baptized instead of the dead, if the dead do not rise?" As each new convert enters the baptismal waters, he thereby takes his place in the rank which has been thinned by death, that he, like the departed crowned warrior, may be "a good soldier of Jesus Christ," may "fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life."—*Baptist Magazine*.

Argument in Prayer.

"Oh," exclaims Job, "that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat. I would order my speech before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." Prayer is petition; and petition is always backed up by arguments expressed or implied. Thus a child asks for bread; his implied argument is hunger. The Christian asks for "the bread that cometh down from heaven;" his argument is spiritual hunger.

The prayers of the Bible are characteristically argumentative. Such were the prayers of Abraham; of Jacob, of Joshua, of Daniel; "And Abraham drew near and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city, wilt thou also destroy, and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked that be far from thee, Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The prayer of Jacob, when he wrestled with the angel of the covenant and prevailed, rested on the Divine faithfulness: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me!" that is, with the blessing thou hast promised Abraham and his seed after him; for thou hast said, All the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. Joshua rested his prayer on the Divine honor and glory: "O Lord God, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies; for the Canaanites and the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" And so Daniel; "O Lord hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do; for thy people and thy city are called by thy name."

The efficacy of prayer has been represented by some as consisting in its effect upon the suppliant, preparing him to receive gratefully blessings from God. No doubt prayer has this influence upon us; but so might this preparation be made by meditation, by musing on the greatness and goodness of God, his condescension and compassion to sinners—indeed some have made their musings, especially their

pillow musings, a substitute for prayer—but apart from and above all this influence upon the suppliant, prayer has "power with God." God does that upon our asking which he would not do without our asking. When we pray, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," we read with a spiritual discernment which we should not enjoy but for our prayer. When the people of God go to the sanctuary praying, "If thy presence go not with us carry us not up hence," the presence of God goes with them as it would not but for their prayer.

"And this is the confidence we have in him that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that he have the petitions we desired of him." And here we see the reason why we sometimes have so little power in prayer. Prayer is want seeking relief from God." If we have no wants, no arguments, we have no power in prayer; coming to the throne of grace without a burden, we go away without a blessing.

Size of the Stars.

How large are the stars, and are they alike, or do they differ in size? It used to be conjectured that they are of somewhat similar magnitude, presumably about as great as our sun, and that the differences of apparent size are due to differences of distance; but when astronomers came to discover that some of the smaller stars are the nearest to our system, this idea fell to the ground. A German computer has now, however, calculated the actual dimensions of one particular star, and finds that its mass is rather more than three times that of the sun. The star in question is less than the fourth magnitude—a comparatively small one. What, then, must be the size of the Sirius and Aldebaran class? The reason of its selection for this determination was that it is one of the components of what is called a binary system—two stars revolving about each other like the sun and planet—and the motions of the members of such a system afford data for the computation. The star's distance from us is a million and a quarter times that of the earth from the sun; so that light takes twenty years to travel hither from it.—*Once a Week*.

A very natural Mistake.

Not long since at a public dinner in one of our large midland towns, a Roman Catholic priest who was sitting not very far from a Protestant clergyman, told the latter an amusing but significant incident, which occurred to one of his (the priest's) flock: A poor Irish Roman Catholic woman happened to enter a Ritualistic Church, naturally mistaking it for a Popish place of worship. Puzzled and perplexed by what she saw and what she did not see, she came breathless and went in haste to the priest, exclaiming, "Oh yer Riverence, I'm fairly bothered!" "Why, what's the matter?" "Why, yer Riverence, I've just been into a church and saw there the illigant altar, and the candles, and priests saying mass but sorrow a drop of holy wather could I find, and when I asked for it, 'Oh,' said one, 'we have no holy wather here!' 'No holy wather!' says I, 'ah, then, what is it ye are? ye spalpeens, ye'r decaven intirely!'"—*English Paper*.

Gentle utterance

When a boy of fourteen, following a plow drawn by oxen, our father said the first day of work: "Let us see who can talk lowest to Buck and Bright; it isn't sound that makes the team go, but the understanding that springs up between driver and team."—The thing was new to our ears. We had always heard the "Woa, haw, Buck," or the "Woa, haw, Bright," given in tones of bawling only, and had grown to the belief that bawling was the only way of driving. But a little experience on the low keys showed that an ox dumb and slow as some call him, had not only a show of intellect, but also of the proprieties of his position. Buck and Bright answered as readily at a few words quietly spoken as to the many vociferated.

The above short lesson contains a moral which many parents and teachers would do well to consider and practice.