

Family Reading.

Serial resumed next week

Giving.

The sun gives ever; so the earth—
What it can give so much 'tis worth;
The ocean gives in many ways—
Gives paths, gives fishes, rivers, bays;
So, too, the air, it gives us breath—
When it stops giving comes in death.
Give, give, be always giving;
Who gives not is not living.
Give strength, give thought, give deeds,
Give love, give tears, and give thyself;
Who gives not is not living.
The more we give,
The more we live.

JOCK AND HIS MITHER.

AN EVENING WITH ROBERT HALL AT BRISTOL.

In a deeply interesting work by the late Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, entitled, 'Reminiscences of College Life in Bristol,' we have a very affecting relation by the Rev. John Mack of passages of great interest in his own life.

It was the custom of Mr. Hall, it appears, to show great kindness in many ways to the students, especially to such as for any reason commended themselves to his judgment as worthy the honor of his friendship. Mr. Trestail was one of these favoured ones, and was sometimes invited to spend an evening with the great preacher and his family, when some particular friend or distinguished preacher was also his guest. It was on one of these evenings that Mr. Mack gave the following recital, which cannot be read without deep feeling, and some admiration of the man whose filial affection was so sweetly displayed, and of his 'mither,' whose ardent love for her 'Jock' all parents will appreciate.

It hardly need be said that Mr. Mack was a Scotchman, having been born, according to papers furnished by his son, Mr. William Mack, of Bristol, in 1788, at Glasgow. Mr. Mack was pastor of the church at Clipstone, Northamptonshire, from the time he left college, in 1813, to the time of his death in 1831. He was a man of considerable parts, or such a sometimes-rather-severe judge of ministerial abilities as Mr. Hall would not have spoken so strongly.

'Mr. Mack is a remarkable man, sir, and of superior ability; but he has never done justice to his great talents.' Perhaps this was partly owing to weakness and ill-health. 'No one could see Mr. Mack,' writes Mr. Trestail, 'without being struck with his appearance and manner. He was, however, at this time, little more than a wreck of a man. He was much emaciated, and looked exceedingly ill; but there was a fire in his bright, sparkling eye, and an animation in his style of expression, mingled with wit, humour, and pathos, which made one long to have known him when he was in robust health.'

This was only a few months before his lamented death, when, as to age, he was in the prime of life, though so smitten by long-continued illness, which had made such serious inroads upon him, that he had the appearance of one of far more advanced age.

After spending some time at Cheltenham, in hope of obtaining benefit by its mild air, he came on to Bristol on a visit to Mr. Hall. There in one of those pleasant social evenings, Mr. Hall introduced his young friend, Mr. Trestail, who still lives to recount his 'Reminiscences,' and though not far from fourscore years of age, is still active, useful, and honoured in his denomination, and by numerous other Christian friends far and near.

'He has heard of Mr. Mack,' said Mr. Hall, 'even so far away as Cornwall, and I have promised him that he shall hear from your own lips the story of your life. I hope you will forgive me the liberty I have taken, and gratify us both.'

'Mr. Hall, just think; I have told it to you many times, and you could repeat it yourself.'

'Yes, Mr. Mack, I know it; but I could not repeat it as you can. No man living could, sir. Besides, my young friend has never heard it. So pray begin.'

After describing in a few words his early days, when he was a weaver lad, living at home with his parents, who were devout and consistent Christian people, and himself cultivating a passionate fondness for books and reading, he went on to say that—

'Meeting one day in Glasgow with a recruiting sergeant, I was induced by him to believe that if I joined the army I should have plenty of time to read. And so, sir, when he had fired my imagination with descriptions of sieges, battles and the glories of war, I soon fancied myself a soldier, and by successful service rising from rank to rank, until I became a commander and a conqueror. Under the influence of this excitement, I was persuaded to accept the fatal shilling, and was henceforth enlisted in His Majesty's army. The excitement having subsided, I fell asleep, and did not wake until it was very late, and suffering acutely, scarcely knowing where I was, and plunged into grief and shame when I thought of my poor parents at home. Having been told by the sergeant that I must appear at Dumbarton that day month, or if I did not I should be taken up as a deserter, and severely punished, I went home with a heavy heart.'

'And how did you face your father and mother? They must have had a sad time of it.'

'Yes, indeed, Mr. Hall, they had. Neither of them had gone to bed, and as I was not in the habit of staying out late, they were greatly alarmed. My father had searched for me all over Glasgow, and my mother passed the time in weeping and praying, often—as I learnt afterwards,—exclaiming, 'My bairn, Jock; my puir bairn, what would your mither gie if she only kenned whar ye are the noo!'

'It is impossible,' writes Mr. Trestail, 'to give any idea in words of the pathos pervading his description. Mr. Mack's voice was like music, and his illness instilled into it exquisite tenderness. We were all moved to tears, and Mr. Hall, to whom the story was by no means new, was much touched.'

'Well, Mr. Mack,' said Mr. Hall, after a pause, 'go on, sir. Pray excuse our feeling; we could not help it.'

'I passed a wretched month,' he proceeded to say, 'as you may suppose, vainly lamenting over my own folly, and looking forward with sincere sorrow to my separation from my parents; for I dearly loved them. Indeed, when I saw my puir auld mither's grief, though she made the strongest efforts to suppress it, it almost broke my heart. My father, unable to bear the parting, went quietly out, and my mother was alone with me and my brother. We bade farewell to each other: she, amidst choking sobs, commended me to the blessing of God; and so with a sorrowful heart I took my way to Dumbarton.' Hitherto, though religiously brought up, he had remained a stranger to the grace of God and faith in Christ. The great change, however, was soon to take place, when he should be found at the feet of Jesus in his right mind.

'The next summer found me,' he continues, 'in the neighbourhood of Newcastle-on-Tyne, where we remained for a considerable time. The regiment was ordered from place to place down South, and by-and-by we reached Ramsgate. Hitherto the subject of religion had never seriously occupied my thoughts, but painful reflections on my past folly and sin would trouble me in spite of my efforts to suppress them. Happily, I had not plunged into the vices which nearly all soldiers indulged in, and one Sabbath evening I entered—I knew not why, the hand of God was surely directing me—the Baptist Chapel, and heard words which entered my soul. Brought to see my lost estate, I gave myself unto prayer, and by repentance towards God, and faith in Christ, I found pardon and peace. I soon began to talk to my comrades, and the officers seeing how much my conduct was changed, and knowing that I could read and write, thanks to my Scotch education,—promoted me to the orderly-room. Here I had more leisure, and relieved from the daily drudgery of a private soldier's life, I found time to read and study the scriptures.'

'Moved from place to place, we came at last to Leicester, and as soon as I

found out where you lived, I called. I thought your reception was somewhat odd; for a few minutes you looked at me, but spoke not a word. Seeing you were smoking, I took out my pipe, lit it, and began to smoke, too.'

'I remember it well, sir; as well as if it occurred only yesterday. In fact Mack, I was quite astonished to see a soldier in my study. What a handsome fellow you were! I was quite overpowered, sir.'

'When you did speak, Mr. Hall, you were all kindness. After you had listened to an outline of my history, my conversion, and my work among my comrades, you pressed me to dine with you, and, as it was your usual week-night service, you insisted on my giving the address. As I could not resist your importunity, I consented, though with fear and trembling. I got through, however, better than I expected.'

'Yes, sir, you interested us all amazingly, and spoke remarkably well.'

'Friends came round me after the service, and you introduced me to one and another, and very soon I felt quite at home. But I did not then know that you were the Mr. Hall, the author of the sermon on 'Modern Infidelity,' for if I had, I should never have summoned up courage to call on you.'

'Why not, sir? You can do anything as good as that if you will only exert yourself in a manner equal to your talents. But that, Mack, you have never done, and I fear you never will.'

'The next Lord's-day you announced, after the service, that a soldier would preach, and in his uniform, adding, 'He is not only a soldier in His Majesty's army, but a soldier of the Prince of peace!' Having taken part in several subsequent services, you, sir, and your friends resolved to purchase my discharge, which was effected, and you sent me to the Academy at Bristol here.'

'Yes, Mr. Mack, we did it, but it was done with great difficulty. Your colonel knew the value of your services, and how hard it would be to obtain a suitable substitute. He, therefore, threw every obstacle in the way. But we beat him, sir, we beat him, and carried off our prize.'

'The difficulty of getting his discharge was not only the raising of the money required, that was easily done, but the finding of two substitutes such as the colonel would accept. His discharge testifies to the excellence of his character:—

'This is to certify that John Mack, private in Captain Douglas's Company, has served honestly and faithfully for the space of five years; but having found two substitutes is hereby discharged.'

Mr. Mack then gave an account of the journey to Bristol, and his experiences at college, as also of his settlement at Clipstone, whence, after an interval of a few years, he paid a visit to Pentland and to his 'dear auld mither.'

'After the lapse of three or four years,' he continued, 'I was requested by the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society to accompany another minister as a deputation to Scotland. I cannot better express my feelings than by saying, 'I jumped at the proposal, for I should once more see my dear auld mither. My father, alas! was dead.'

'It was agreed between my colleague and myself that we should take the services alternately in the towns we were appointed to visit. On our arrival at Airdrie, where it was my turn to preach, I said to my colleague, 'Now, if you will preach here, I will take your turn at the next place, and then I can go at once to Glasgow, and shall have two or three more days to spend with my mother.' He was surprised at my request, and with great seriousness and some severity quoted our Lord's words, 'If a man love father or mother more than me he cannot be my disciple.'

This was too much for Mr. Hall. The want of filial affection betrayed by the censure quite excited him. He rose from the chairs on which he had been reclining, went across the room, and, in one of those subdued whispers, audible to the smallest syllable, and almost startling from the intense feeling concentrated in them, thus addressed Mr. Mack:—

'What is that he said, sir?'

'Mr. Mack, much surprised, as indeed we all were, at Mr. Hall's earnestness, repeated the sentence.

'Did he say that, sir?'

'Of course he did, Mr. Hall, or I should not have asserted it.'

'Is that man living or dead, sir?'

'I believe he is dead.'

'Do you know whether he repented before he died? I hope he did, sir; for else I could not meet him in heaven, sir; for think how he dishonoured his Lord, and trampled under foot the noblest and purest instinct of humanity! But I hope you didn't listen to him, sir, and that you went to your mother.'

'Yes, Mr. Hall, I did indeed.'

'I am glad to hear that, Mr. Mack; for if you had not gone I should have lost all respect for you. Honour thy father and thy mother, is the first commandment with promise.' May the Lord restore your health, and raise you up again, sir, and reward you for your piety. I beg pardon for interrupting you, sir; but I could not repress my indignation at such an inhuman speech.'

After a brief interval Mr. Mack resumed his narrative.

'On arriving in Glasgow I sought out my mother. She was living in a very humble abode, but it looked comfortable and clean. She answered my knock, and on opening the door curseyed to me—to me, her own son! She did not know me, and evidently took me for some city clergyman. I thought Mr. Hall, she would at once have rushed into my arms, and clasped me to her bosom! I cannot describe the bitterness of my disappointment; so I said, 'Mither, dinna ye ken your ain bairn, Jock?' I had forgotten the difference in my appearance and garb. How was she to recognise her bairn, whom she had last seen as a young soldier, in the somewhat portly figure before her, who looked like one of the 'placed ministers of Glasgow?'

How affecting was the reply of the saintly old woman! 'I ken vera weel that my bairn Jock will be here in twa or three days; but it's nae richt in sic a gentleman as you to be trifling with the feelings of a puir auld widow.'

Mr. Hall and his young friend were fairly overcome, and the narrative was interrupted by their tears and hearty sobs. At length Mr. Hall exclaimed, 'Mack, Mack, whatever did you do?'

'What could I do, sir? My heart leaped to my mouth! But I remembered once, when a boy, teasing my mother by eating up the potatoes as fast as she peeled them, when she gave me a tap, and, unintentionally, wounded my wrist with the knife she was using. Whenever she afterwards saw the scar she used to stroke my hair, and in very tender tones say to me, 'Never mind, my bonnie bairn, your mither will ken ye by that when ye are a man.' I now turned back the sleeve of my coat, and looking earnestly in her face, and pointing to the mark, said, 'Mither, mither! dinna ye ken that?'

She looked at me for a moment, and exclaiming, 'My bairn, my bairn,' rushed into my arms.'

Mr. Hall and his friend could not restrain their emotion, and the former presently asked, 'What followed that, sir?'

'What followed, Mr. Hall, may best be described in the beautiful words of Scripture, 'We lifted up our voice and wept.'

'On the morning of the Sabbath I had to preach in the kirk which my mother attended. She chose a seat where she could best see and hear her son Jock. She could, however, hardly realize the change in my condition from a private soldier to a preacher on behalf of the Baptist Mission. The beadle, an important personage in Scottish kirks, intimated that another pew, more retired, would be more suitable. I can imagine how she looked and spoke.'

'Mon! dinna ye ken that I am the preacher's mither? How was I to ken that? But if ye are the preacher's mither, the best seat in the kirk is none too good for ye.'

'It was a trying time for you, Mack. Did you preach comfortably, and how did your dear mother feel? She must have rejoiced greatly.'

'It was a trying time, certainly; for not only was the congregation very large, but the Lord Provost, and many of Glasgow's chief citizens were there.

As to my mother! her countenance was radiant with joy, and smiles and tears rapidly succeeded each other during the service. After the service several gentlemen came to express their interest in the sermon, and in the mission for which I had been pleading. They most kindly proffered me their hospitalities; but being the guest of Mr. Deakin I respectfully declined them, anxious to spend every hour at my disposal with my dear mother.'

'Quite right, Mr. Mack. May God bless you, and richly reward you, sir, for your love to your mother. But tell us what she said about the service.'

'We were scarcely out of the kirk before she began: 'Jock, my bairn, whar ha'e ye been, and what ha'e ye done sin' I saw you last? Why, ye must have been to Brummagem and had yer face rubbed wi' a brass candlestick, or ye couldna ha'e done it, and think that my old een have seen ye wag yer pow in Mr. McLeod's pulpit, and the Provost and the Bailies to the fore! Tears streamed from her eyes, and sobs broke from her lips, while she blessed God for his great mercy, and told me her heart was well-nigh bursting wi' joy.'

'During the few days that were left our talk was much about the past, often prolonged to a late hour, recounting the trials through which we had passed, but more of the goodness and mercy which had followed us all our days. Sometimes our mouths were filled with laughter, at others with lamentations, often with praise for the hope and joy which shone over all. We knew whom we had believed, and that he was able to keep that which we had committed to him until that day. While she lived I was able to add to her comforts, and to brighten her declining days. We parted with feelings I cannot attempt even to describe, sorrowing most of all that we should see each other's face no more.'

The affecting story may be supplemented by a few words about Mr. Mack's last days. He held but one pastorate, and died, after eighteen years of faithful and successful labour, in the high esteem of his own flock, and of all who knew him, leaving a wife and family whose temporal needs were amply provided for by the munificence of his numerous friends.

More than a year before his death his health became more seriously impaired, and entire rest from active life brought no relief. His sufferings were very acute, but he displayed remarkable courage and patience, and his faith in the Lord was unshaken. 'I am looking to Jesus Christ,' he said to some friends one day, 'other refuge have I none. I feel satisfied that the doctrines I have preached are the only foundation of a sinner's hope. May you live in peace when I am gone. My sufferings are great. Lord, give me patience! But why should a living man complain?'

The prospect of his wife and children being left in dependent circumstances sometimes occasioned him deep concern. 'I had hoped,' he said, 'to see my children brought up; but we must part. Poor dears! they will soon have no father to take their part.'

'How is your mind, Mr. Mack?'

asked a friend shortly before his decease. 'Calm,' was his reply, relying on the great propitiation. His last words were, 'Blessed Saviour! and with these sweet accents on his lips he fell asleep. May our last end be like his!'

—Sword and Trowel.

Praying and Doing.

'Bless the poor children who haven't got any beds to-night, prayed a little boy just before he lay down on his nice warm cot on a cold winter night.'

As he rose from his knees, his mother said:

'You have just asked God to bless the poor children, what will you do to bless them?'

The boy thought for a moment. 'Why, if I had a hundred cakes, enough for all the family, I would give them some.'

'But you have no cakes, what, then, are you willing to do?'

'When I get money enough to buy all the things I want, and have some over, I'll give them some.'

'But you haven't money enough to buy all you want, and perhaps never will have, what will you do to bless the poor now?'

'I'll give them some bread.'

'You have no bread—the bread is mine.'

'Then I could earn money and buy a loaf myself.'

'Take things as they are now—you know you have what is your own; what are you willing to give to help the poor?'

The boy thought again. 'I'll give half my money; I have seven pennies; I'll give them four. Wouldn't that be right?'

Give us a man, young or old, high or low, on whom we can thoroughly depend who will stand firm when others fall—the friend faithful and true, the adviser, honest and fearless, the adversary just and chivalrous; in such an one there is a fragment of the Rock of Ages.

We should do nothing inconsistent with the spirit and genius of our institutions. We should do nothing for revenge, but everything for security; nothing for the past, everything for the present and future.—James A. Garfield.

Bouths' Department.

Scripture Enigma. No. 157.

Find the answers to the following and place them in order, and you will have in the initials an injunction of the Apostle Paul, beginning with the first two letters of the alphabet:

- 1. The king who reigned in Judea when Joseph and Mary with the infant Jesus were returning from Egypt.
2. The birthplace of Jesus.
3. The king's father.
4-5. Two Moabitish women who married sons of Naomi.
6. The birthplace of the apostle Paul.
7. A nationality Paul proudly claimed.
8. The tribunal before which he was brought when in Athens.
9. One who acted as prosecutor in the case of Paul before Felix.
10. A desert portion of Judea where John proclaimed the coming of Christ.
11. The name of the kingdom which he declares at hand.
12. The name given to Edom by Isaiah.
13. The land of promise, or the holy land.
14. The city in which David dwelt before Jerusalem was made the capital of Judea.
15. A son of one of the patriarchs, whose name signifies laughter.
16. His mother.
17-18. Two wives of King Ahasuerus.
19-20. Two of the sons of Jacob.
—Watchman.

CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

300. Transpositions of the same letters to form three different words:

- 1. First, I pertain to kingly race, With crown and sceptre is my place.
2. Transpose me and my dazzling light Will make you shut your eyes up tight.
3. Now change once more, and freely own That I'm a beverage best—let alone.

301. What did David greatly desire while in the cave of Adullam?

302. Who granted his desire, and brought him what he wished for?

303. What did David do with what they brought him?

304. Change of letters to form other words:

I am a word of four letters, change my first, and I am a tree; restore and change my second and I am a road; restore and change my third I am used in building; restore and change my fourth I am a fish.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

- No. 156. 1. Cornelius. 2. Lydia. 3. Eunice. 4. Anna. 5. Vashiti. 6. Eden. 7. Tabor. 8. Olive. 9. Terah. 10. Haran. 11. Abalom. 12. Thomas. 13. Word. 14. Hannah. 15. Ishobeth. 16. Caleb. 17. Heber. 18. Ithaman. 19. Simeon. 20. Gamsaliel. 21. Onesiphorus. 22. Onesimus. 23. Dorcas.
CLEAVE TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD. Rom. xii. 9.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

297. The Reading lesson turned round: They who would this lesson comprehend, Must take the beginning for the end. Then, if from right to left they read, And thus proceed with moderate speed, When the ending they have discerned, Their lesson they'll have surely learned.

298. Madam.

299. A half square of words:

L O B E L I A
O L I V E T
B I P E D
E V E N
L E D
I T
A