

Sunday Reading.

The Lord's Prayer.

There have been many versions of the Lord's Prayer in order to adapt it to music, but none, perhaps, better than that which the famous missionary, Adoniram Judson, composed when he was lying in the prison of a far-off land, suffering under the weight of heavy chains and countless tortures and deprivations.

A Reply.

You ask me, dare I dream a part of me Has right of converse with the Infinite Mind— I, a dull creature of dull flesh, confined In this mud cabin of mortality.

Doing greater works than Christ's,

By G. W. SAMSON, D. D., PRES. OF BIBLE WORKERS' COLLEGE (BAPTIST), NEW YORK.

Many readers have doubtless hesitated, as have commentators, in deciding as to the meaning of Christ, when, in His last address to His disciples before His death, He said, laying stress on His authoritative statement as when He first declared the need of the new birth: 'Verily, verily I say unto you He that believeth on Me, these works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.'

and cried: 'If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink,' and yet with all His winning persuasion, only 'one hundred and twenty' disciples were found at Jerusalem after His resurrection.

Assured that this must be the work referred to, the reason given for its accomplishment seems in harmony; 'because I go unto My Father.' He had said a little before: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me; and Peter preached for the first time the fact that the Son of God had been lifted up for the redemption of the world.

When Christ's followers of our day take to themselves His unqualified declaration: 'He that believeth' shall do greater works than this, the worldly are won as in the apostles' days. For it was not apostles that spread the knowledge of Christ and planted churches; for the apostles abode at Jerusalem, and only visited churches after they had been gathered and planted by private Christians, who, 'scattered abroad,' went every where preaching the word.

Delusions.

By T. L. CUTLER, D. D.

A friend with whom I was conversing in one of our inquiry meetings lately, said to me, 'I know that I ought to become a Christian; I fully intend to become one; but oh, how I wish it was over with! I said to her, 'My friend, suppose that you came into a dining-room very hungry, and when invited to sit down to a loaded table, would you say 'I feel half-starved, but I wish I was well through with this business of eating this dinner?'

The mighty bell which God rings over our heads sounds out only the single note 'Now' is the day of salvation; but against God's imperative 'Now,' thousands close their ears and allow the devil to whisper into them his delusive 'to-morrow.'

Another delusion is 'I am trying to do the best I can;' and these very words come from those who refuse to do anything for Christ, or let Him do anything for them. Still another pretext is, 'I do not feel, and how can I be

saved without feeling? If by the word 'feel' he means thinking, he is right for thought is indispensable. But if he means acute distress he is denying Christ point-blank, for the Saviour never said that feeling is the essential thing. To accept and obey Christ is vital; but these are acts of the conscience and the will, and not matters of emotion. My page is exhausted, but I have not begun to exhaust Satan's delusions. We who preach and teach God's glorious Gospel must constantly unmask them.

Can I learn to Preach extempore?

Yes, if you give the study, time, patience and practice necessary for the acquisition.

It will require study to master your subject, whatever it may be, to arrange the points you desire to make in their order and to get yourself perfectly sure of what the truth is on these points, and how far you should go in their enforcement and illustration.

It will require time, for there is nothing really valuable that has a gourd-like growth. The beautiful coral reefs the accumulation of ages. That polished shaft of granite is the result of ten thousand strokes of the stonemason's hammer, and the long smoothing, weary work with the pumice and the oil.

It will require practice. You have had to give this to the acquirement of every other good thing you possess. Exercise therefore, 'the gift that is in thee' whenever you get the opportunity; whenever at first you are least known, without speaking at all about yourself, and by saying whatever has possession of you for the time and that only, and having said that sit down.

While on your feet the less you think of yourself, and of the praise you may elicit and the more you think of your subject, and the purpose you have to carry, the more successful will be your effort.

If you are still disposed to say with Moses, 'I am of slow speech, and of a slow tongue,' remember God's reply to his despairing words, and go forward relying upon the aid of the same Master whom you serve.

Plymouth Church has abandoned the paid quartette choir plan, and has organized a choir whose duty it shall be to lead and not entertain the congregation. Mr. Beecher in addressing the new choir, which is composed of over 50 voices, at its first general practice said:— 'I do not regard singing as a mere musical utterance I regard singing as the wings of instruction. There are two means by which a congregation is lifted upward in devotion—by prayer lyrical and by prayer didactic. For one the congregation depends on me, and for the other on the choir in the form of music. You are as much a minister as I am and in some respects you are more so. I pray once at a service—you sing two or three times; and all the hymns are direct addresses to the throne of God. Singing ought to be the most devout and religious element in worship. The choir is set conspicuously in the congregation and the eyes of all are constantly seeing you. All I ask is that those who sit in the choir behave with the same decorum as though they sat in the congregation. I don't mean as stiff as wax candles, but with seeming propriety and solemnity. What is not proper in me is not to be permitted in the choir. I hope that, singing together, you will be knit together, and that this religion will become finally the joy of your life and your comfort in sickness and death.'

Much excitement has been caused in Dundee by the erection of a large cross 20ft. in height, alongside the public thoroughfare adjoining the Roman Catholic chapel. The cross was at first surmounted by a figure of Christ, almost life-size, from the hands, side, and feet of which blood was represented as flowing. The figure was removed from the cross, but the latter still remains.

Correspondence.

[The following was intended by the writer to precede the article "Paul Vindicated." We regret that we did not observe this when it came to hand, but that two portions of the article have already appeared. This may even now help to give weight to the article.—Ed. C. M.]

Did Christianity supersede and abolish Judaism?

It may seem strange that such a question as the above should be asked, for it is universally assumed that when Christ died and rose, and the "day of Pentecost had fully come," that then the "types and shadows fled away," and that as soon as the Jews became Christians the Jewish ritual was abolished, priesthood, sacrifices, circumcision, and all, never to be restored: Is this true? This is the question discussed in the following paper. The writer is not aware of any denomination or commentator of note, who holds the view he entertains on the subject. But the article has been written with great care, and with a simple desire to know what the word of the Lord really is on the subject. It has been prepared for the "Bible Treasury," a periodical published in England, and with the hope that it should be calmly reviewed, and if there are any errors in the facts stated, or in the conclusions drawn from them, that they will be clearly and calmly pointed out. But we surely have able men among us in Nova Scotia, and men who will esteem it a privilege as well as a Christian duty to aid in investigating the Word. I have, therefore, concluded to send it to the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER, before sending it to England, and my prayer is that should the editor think proper to insert it, and any of the readers of the MESSENGER think proper to examine it—which I earnestly desire—that the discussion may be conducted in a friendly spirit, so that God may be glorified, and his people edified and saved.

I may add that I am well aware of the arguments and the passages of Scripture that are urged to maintain the opposite of what is here contended for, and I am positive they do not prove that for which they are urged. But I would prefer to see them placed in the strongest light possible, so I will pass them over here, and wait for some one else, lest I should not seem to do them justice.

SIGMA YAU. Nova Scotia, Jan. 20, 1883.

Paul Vindicated.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON ACTS XXI. 17-26. (Concluded.)

I must not, however, close without touching upon another point connected with the foregoing, remotely if not directly. In Acts xxi. 4 we read: "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days; who said to Paul through the Spirit that he should not go to Jerusalem." This passage certainly contains a difficulty. To were idle to deny this. It certainly looks as though Paul was expressly forbidden by the Holy Ghost to go up to Jerusalem, and that he flatly refused to obey, and persisted in going. How can we explain this? I can see but three methods. First, either that he did not understand the true import of the oracle, and so violated it unwittingly; or, secondly, that he did understand it, and violated it deliberately; or, thirdly, that he understood the whole matter perfectly, much better than we can, and so did not violate it at all. I prefer the last method of cutting the knot, if we cannot untie it. But can we not untie it?

Let us compare it with a similar case. In Acts xvi. 6 we are informed that Paul was "forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia." Then we turn to chap. xix. 10, and we read of his labors at Ephesus for two years or more, and the result was "that all they that dwell in Asia heard the word, both Jews and Greeks." Now how comes it that our heroic apostle—(now would the reader be shocked were I to say, our blundering apostle?)—has never been taken to task for his disobedience in this case? Is there not on the face of the story as apparent an act of disobedience as in the other case? He was forbidden to preach the word in Asia, and he goes thither some time after notwithstanding, and labours for two years, and is so wonderfully diligent, and so blessed in his labours that the good news spreads over the whole region. There is no hint that the prohibition was conditional or limited to any particular time. No recorded statement occurs to the effect that it was ever rescinded. But we must believe that this was the case. What hinders us

from applying the same mode of explanation to the case in Acts xxi. 4? May not that also have been conditional, or limited to a certain time? In every city through which he passed he would seem to have received similar intimations, the Holy Ghost witnessing that bonds and afflictions awaited him at Jerusalem; but none of these things moved him, neither did he count his own life dear unto him, so that he might—noble, whole-souled man that he was—finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Agabus does not say that the Holy Ghost forbade him to go to Jerusalem, but in substance repeats the admonitions which Paul had so often already received: "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle."

It is quite possible that the admonition of the disciples at Tyre may have been to the effect that, as in the case mentioned in Acts xvi. 6, he should not proceed to Jerusalem at that time, but lay by for a few weeks or months. And this we are informed he did do. For they came to Caesarea, to the home of Philip the evangelist, and the same man had four daughters, virgins, that did prophesy, and they tarried there many days. How long that means, whether thirty, sixty, or ninety, "more or less," we are left to conjecture. But it was evidently long enough for the circumstances to transpire, and the train of events to be arranged, which led to the apostle's subsequent glorious and triumphant career, for such it truly was.

It cannot, of course, be denied, that the admonitions Paul received at Tyre, (Acts xxi. 4), were "through the Spirit," whatever their import was, and whatever is meant by the phrase, "through the Spirit." And was there, think you, no action of the Holy Spirit in the earnest entreaties of his Christian friends, the disciples at Caesarea when, with streaming eyes and bursting hearts, they entreated him not to go up to Jerusalem? and which drew from him that touching and pathetic reply: "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus." Evidently this was not mere nature. Nor can we well suppose that the brotherly love, the deep and intense interest in the Lord's devoted servant, manifested by these dear friends of Jesus and of his servant, was a mere natural impulse, all apart from the blessed fruits of the Spirit, and his gracious promptings. What need is there for such a supposition? The apostle's faith needed to be tried, "that it might be found unto praise and honor and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." And it was tried every way.

I must add a word on the import and use of those Jewish ceremonies. Paul styles them "weak and beggarly elements," Gal. iv. 9, and proves by passages quoted from the Old Testament that they were of no avail in the justification of a sinner. But this had been always true of them, as the prophets in many places insist. They could NEVER take away sin, or be of any avail in justification. They were established for a very different purpose, and for a purpose that will be just as important as ever during the millennium, when the Jewish nation will be again taken up, the temple rebuilt, and the sacrifices reestablished. And they were equally so, so far as any evidence to the contrary appears, so long as the temple was standing, where alone the sacrifices could be lawfully offered.

* This is clear from the latter portions of Ezekiel's prophecy, a portion of Scripture that has sadly puzzled commentators in all ages. And no wonder. For if the Jewish ceremonial has been abolished, and is never to be restored, those chapters of Ezekiel cannot be explained in a satisfactory manner. (See from chap. xi. to the close.)

Not is there anything, so far as I can perceive, in the doctrine of the "one body," and the perfect equality of Jew and Gentile, circumcision and uncircumcision, and all other classes in the assembly of God, which at all implies that the rite of circumcision in the Jews was abolished. Rather do not Gal. v. 5 and chap. vi. 15 imply clearly that circumcision existed still? But "circumcision and uncircumcision," that is the distinctions of Jew and Gentile, "availed nothing," and "was nothing." Paul does not state that it was abolished. Had he done so the case would be decided. But what right have I or any one to be wise above what is written? We may not add to the word of God, nor make inferences which are not clearly warranted. Take Galatians iii. 23: "Therefore the law was our school-master, until Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a school-master. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." I have transcribed the whole passage, but the 28th verse affords the clue to the meaning of the whole. It surely does not mean that males cease to be males, and that females cease to be females when they became united to Christ and to the assembly. Men and women were still men and women, bondmen remained bondmen, and free men were still free men, exactly as they were before. But these distinctions had nothing whatever to do with their standing in the church. There all classes were on a level. The Jew lost nothing of his national peculiarities, nor the Gentile of his, except his idolatry. But it had not always been thus. In former days, before faith came, all parties were under the rule of this rigid "school-master." The Law, moral, civil, and ceremonial, and the Gentile, a man of any other nation, must first become to all intents and purposes a Jew, before he could enjoy the privileges of the people of God. The whole tenor of the apostle's argument, addressed as it was to Gentile believers, not to Jewish, was, so far as I can see, but the reiteration of the "decrees" which it had pleased the Holy Ghost and the apostles and elders at Jerusalem to ordain, and the carrying out of those decrees to their legitimate consequences; and bears upon the question under discussion only so far as it manifestly does not teach that the Jewish believers were obliged to abstain from "circumcision and the customs."

We must not be led astray by the term law as used in Paul's epistles. In Rom. iii. the moral law is certainly included, by the deeds of which no flesh can be justified." And so also in Gal. ii. 19 and Rom. vi. 14, "I by the law am dead to the law;" "Ye are not under the law but under grace." This is also true of Rom. viii. 3, 4, and many other places. To confine these passages to the Jewish ceremonial law would be absurd, and to infer that it would be sinful for Jew or Gentile to do what the moral law enjoins, and to abstain from what it forbids, would be more than absurd, it would be simply outrageous. Because my obedience is no longer legal but evangelical, no longer prompted by the fear of punishment or the hope of reward, the only motives law inspires, but produced by the "love of Christ sustaining me," it surely has not become less necessary or important. Just so with regard to the Jewish ceremonies. Believers had, after the death of Christ and the descent of the Holy Ghost, learned their true meaning. Could this lessen their significance or their value? Surely these ceremonies and sacrifices would be all the more precious and important when they saw the Lord Jesus Christ continually exhibited in them and by them. Because we have rejected the Popish errors connected with baptism and the Lord's Supper, have these precious ordinances lost any of their real value? Certainly not.

But I have done. If I have misunderstood the remarks of those whose opinions I have controverted, or in any degree misrepresented them; or if my views and reasonings on this question are incorrect, it is due to the cause of truth that this should be clearly pointed out. And, on the other hand, if my reasoning is sound and my conclusions Scriptural and just, it is still more important that what I feel strongly inclined to denounce as a false and slanderous imputation upon one of the finest and fairest characters ever exhibited among the children of men—save and except the ONE who was absolutely perfect—would at once and forever cease. And most earnestly do I pray that God may direct us in all things to the humbling of all our hearts, and to the praise and glory of His own most holy and blessed name.