

Sunday Reading.

Longings.

BY REV. THOMAS RAFFLES, D. D.

Oh, had I but wings like a dove!
I'd fly to the realms of the blest;
I'd soar to the mansions above,
And enter the heavenly rest;
I'd mingle with spirits no more
Entombed in this prison of clay—
With seraphim bow and adore,
As holy and happy as they!

Oh, had I but wings like a dove!
I'd fly from this sadness and care;
My spirit no longer should prove
Depression, allied to despair.
No longer with sickness of heart,
Would I see my hopes withered and torn,
Compelled from the flower to part,
But doomed still to cherish the thorn.

Oh, had I but wings like a dove!
I'd fly from this region of death;
No longer for friendship and love
I would twine the dark cypress wreath;
No longer I'd gaze on the gloom
Of the couch that diseases invade,
Nor weep at the brink of the tomb,
Where the friend of my bosom is laid.

Oh, had I but wings like a dove!
I'd fly from contention and strife;
I'd far from those quarrels remove
That ruffle the current of life.
I'd dwell in a peaceful abode,
To detraction and slander unknown,
Where envy no bread shall corrode,
But love reigns supreme on the throne.

Then, give me the wings of a dove!
My soul is in haste to be free!
I pant the salvation to prove,
Those mansions eternal to see!
Ye chains of mortality break!
And crumble thou prison of clay!
Then spread my glad pinions and take
My flight to the regions of day!

But stay—Not the wings of a dove
Till Jesus shall bid me arise;
I'll wait, till the voice from above
Shall call me to rise in the skies;
Till then, I will work, watch, and pray,
Each talent with pleasure employ,
Thus waiting, I'll welcome the day,
And hail the last summons with joy.

The Path of Purity.

A SERMON DELIVERED BY REV. A. W. SAWYER, D. D., IN ACADEMY HALL, WOLFFVILLE, FEB. 3, 1883.

[It is customary for the different departments in the Institutions at Wolffville to meet in classes on Sabbath afternoon for the study of the Bible. On the first Sabbath of every month all the classes assemble in Academy Hall to hear a discourse from some one selected for the occasion. A request was made that the following discourse, delivered on the third of the present month, should be published.]

"Wherever shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word."—PSALM CIX. 9.

The explanation of the terms in this passage need not detain us long. The word *way* evidently means one's conduct, or course of action. The term occurs frequently in the Scriptures with this signification, as "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him,"—"the way of righteousness," that is righteous conduct,—"the way of peace have they not known," that is a peaceable course of life,—"train up a child in the way he should go," that is train him to the actions, the conduct by which he should be marked, "and when he is old he will not depart from it," and in another place, "All the ways," i. e., the actions, the course of life, "of a man, are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits."

To cleanse one's ways, then, must be to purify his conduct, to make clean or right his acts. This form of expression implies that already some fault or blameworthy attaches to one's acts. This would be true of all. But some translators give the thought in a different form: "How shall a man keep his way pure? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." It will not make much difference which form we accept, as the lesson will be essentially the same for us with either.

The word here mentioned is evidently the word of truth spoken by holy men as they have been moved by the Holy Ghost. This meaning is conveyed by the same term in other verses in the same Psalm: "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee,"—"Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it,"—"Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word." Similar expressions are used by the Apostles, as when Peter speaks of Christians as born again by the word of God, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the word of God as quick and powerful, that is full of life and power, and when John says: "I have written unto you,

young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." It is true that by the term *word*, as used in the text, only that part of revealed truth could be referred to which had been made known before the time in which the Psalm was composed; but if such efficacy dwelt in the word before the full revelation had been made, how much more shall we expect to find life and safety in the fuller revelation that has been granted to us!

The words on which we are meditating present to us an *Object that ought to be desired by all the young, and the Method by which it may be reached.*

I. Note first what the object is. You will observe that the question is not, how shall the young be happy; how shall they succeed in life, according to the common idea of success; how shall they obtain a good name? These inquiries may all suggest objects that are desirable, but the precise object here presented is something different. The question is, how shall the young live as they ought, how shall they preserve themselves from evil and develop characters that can be approved by the good?

It is true that the question here proposed does not exclude regard to one's welfare. We should not forget that our best interests are promoted by virtue and piety. This is made abundantly clear by the precepts and examples of the Scriptures. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things," i. e., all needed earthly blessings, "shall be added unto you."

"What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The form of expression in this case suggests the corresponding thought, How great shall be the profit, if one does not lose his soul, if one seek first the kingdom of God? Our Heavenly Father does not cause us to rise to some transcendental virtue at once. He knows our infirmities. As an earthly parent, who seeks to develop in his child the formation of some habit because of its remote benefits, is nevertheless satisfied for the present if he call his attention to some nearer though inferior advantage; so the Heavenly Father deals with his children.

But while we are not to renounce all regard to our welfare, we are called to something more than a wise pursuit of our own interests. "He will not live rightly who lives only for himself. He will not have right ideas of God, who thinks of Him as existing merely for man's advantage. He will not have the reward of righteousness, who is righteous merely because he thinks it will pay to be righteous. If one is to seek ought to keep his way of life pure, he must love goodness because it is goodness. His inquiry must be, What is evil that I may avoid it; what is good that I may attain to it?"

II. We are thus brought to notice the method by which this object is to be reached. It is by *taking heed to one's way of life according to God's word*. There is needed then, first of all, a knowledge of this word. This knowledge is the light of the path. The knowledge, then, ought to be possessed, to a large extent at least, in advance of the occasions when it may be in demand. It will not do to wait till some event occurs which calls for consideration in respect to our duty. Generally in such a case there will be no opportunity for such examination, neither is there likely to be any disposition to consider. The current of events in that case is almost certain to make the unprepared youth its victim. If he has neglected to inquire for right principles of action before the time for action has arrived, it is not probable that he will pause in his course to inquire, when circumstances are pressing him to an immediate decision. The mind should be fortified for such crises by previous familiarity with sound principles of action. This makes evident to us the necessity of some plan or method for instructing the young from their earliest years in regard to the practical duties of life. If this can be done in the family and by the parents, it is best. If it cannot be accomplished in that way, as in many instances it cannot, then the purest benevolence can find no more worthy and useful manner in which to exert itself than some well-considered system for teaching the young the principles of the moral law, the application of these to the ordinary actions of life, and the method of God's government by which the transgressor is brought back into fellowship with Him. This is kindness to the young, the value of which can be measured by the difference between success and failure in the great purposes of life. But the child soon arrives at a time when he must bear some responsibility for his actions. The ability to note the difference between right and wrong is reached at a very early age. It may seem like bring-

ing an unnecessary shade on the life of the young, to urge the responsibilities growing out of this fact. But the conditions of existence here are such as to make these lessons necessary. We have to impress on their minds the facts, by the knowledge of which they will keep themselves from actions that will be injurious to health and life. The fear of consequences, of which they, with their limited experience, can not form any adequate conceptions, but which they have been taught to regard as fatal to health and happiness, becomes the great motive to prevent them from courses of action that will be injurious to their physical welfare. There is nothing degrading in this fear. On the contrary, it is wholesome and beneficial. Under its sway the young life passes through its stages of beautiful development more securely than if an erring kindness had hidden from the view all the dangers that lurk along the pathway. It will also be found to be true, that the fear of evil will bring no dismal shade over the true joys of youth. It will be found that the desire to know the right way and walk therein will harmonize with the best development of intellectual strength and moral healthfulness and peace. As the years increase, the sense of responsibility should deepen, and the habits of earlier years should be intentionally continued and strengthened, if they are found to be right, or deliberately and firmly corrected, if they prove to be wrong.

Let us consider for a few moments what is involved in this self-discipline and regulation of conduct by a right standard. We may remark in passing, that there is not involved in it a minute knowledge of the history of persons and events recorded in the Bible. The mature mind with its stores of practical experience will find in these historical narratives, powerful illustration of the principles of God's government. But possibly much that is in this form is better adapted to the conditions of riper years. The ability to walk safely amidst the evils of life will not depend so much on the quantity and variety of Biblical knowledge, as on acquaintance with particular principles for regulating moral conduct and the spirit with which this knowledge may be applied.

1. Following then the suggestion of our text, we observe in the first place that if the young are to walk safely, they must cultivate thoughtfulness in respect to the way,—they must *take heed to the way*. It may be said that this is expecting something contrary to the nature of youth,—that they should be permitted to live unconcerned and thoughtless. Let life for them, it may be urged, take its course, do not attempt to change its current—do not afflict those in the morning of their days with a sobriety and anxiety that do not become them. But shall we conclude that to be careless about one's highest interests is the best state? Shall we admit that the wise man drifts on the current, accepts what happens to him as best and never feels concern about his course or its end? This would be to admit that the man destitute of reason and foresight is the ideal man. But when shall one begin to be solicitous about his conduct? After his habits have been formed and he has become accustomed to evil? No one would advise this. When one's power of thought has been developed, it is time to use that power in guiding his conduct aright. When one is old enough to understand the ordinary communications between one mind and another, he is old enough to consider the obligations of truth and honesty. When the young, who are ripening into the early stages of manhood, exhibit a controlling thoughtfulness on these points, it would be a serious mistake to represent them as prematurely old and concerned with matters beyond their years. No one would like to see the young destitute of the grace and beauty that belong to a proper deportment. The manifestation of sincere respect for older persons, genuine kindness and courtesy towards those who are of the same age with themselves, a thoughtful regard for the unfortunate and the sorrowful,—such restraints as these, if restraints they may be called, do not seem to us unsuited to the nature and condition of the young. Indeed, the absence of these restraints on their actions and manners is marked as a misfortune, lessening the true enjoyment of their lives, as well as the enjoyment of all with whom they may be connected. Freedom from these restraints on the young could awaken no sympathy or kindly regard for them in the present, and it certainly would be no good ground of hope that they would be agreeable companions or useful members of society in the future. On the contrary, patient and considerate subjection to such requirements of good conduct on the part of the young, is the promise and pledge of wholesome

and honorable sentiments and conduct in future years. If thoughtful conformity to the obligations of these "minor morals," as they have been styled, is regarded by us as a becoming ornament to the young, let us not allow ourselves to think that, if the sphere of duty is enlarged so as to take in regard to God and his law, the thoughtfulness which was a grace and ornament when manifested in the smaller sphere, has become a badge of servitude, when it is exhibited in connection with our conduct as seen and judged by our Heavenly Father.

Let it be noticed that this thoughtfulness will not come upon one, without some degree of effort on his part. Outward influences may favor or hinder its cultivation, and hence we see the importance that attaches to one's companionships and the circumstances in which one is educated. But the lesson must be brought home to us, that what is external is of small value to us, if there is no sincere and fixed purpose on our part to make a right use of the helps to right-living that are placed within our reach. Every one must take heed to his way for himself. This is the condition to right-living. Each one of you must reap the fruit of the seed which you sow; it becomes you then to be careful in respect to the seed sown. This thoughtfulness must not be exercised only on what may be called the great questions of life. Character is shown in small matters quite as well as in large, and the cultivation of character is effected quite as successfully in connection with the ordinary and unobtrusive affairs of life as in connection with marked events that attract the notice of the multitude. The excellence that commands respect and admiration in public, has grown under assiduous culture in private. The real worth of your lives is not to be measured so much by the manifestations of character on extraordinary occasions as by the fixed purpose to be faithful in what may be called the small duties of every day life. If one is thoughtful and true in respect to these, there will be small room to question his fidelity in regard to the duties and service of more public positions. Here it will be made evident, that he who is faithful in the least, is faithful also in much.

2. But it will not be enough that one be thoughtful in regard to his way, he must, also, exercise this thoughtfulness in a right spirit. It would be unbecoming in the young, and a presage of evil to them, if they should be characterized by self-confidence and an assurance of the soundness of their own judgments in opposition to the opinions of their older friends—if they should display a confidence in their ability to apply by their own wisdom the principles of right conduct, which they may have learned from some higher source. In the development of his physical nature, the child needs for years the foresight, experience and watchfulness of older persons to protect him and secure for him a sound and healthful bodily development, and thus prepare him for the duties and enjoyments of mature life. Moral development is analogous. A sense of this need of aid and instruction is befitting the condition of the young, and its manifestation gives promise of safety and success in later years. We may not be able exactly to define the area that is bounded on the one hand by a dependence that indicates helplessness and forebodes permanent weakness and passivity, and on the other hand by that self-confidence and assertion of ability to care for one's self independently of all others, which we call folly. And yet we all admit that humility becomes the young better than arrogance, that it is proper that they should be learners before they are teachers,—that when they have the rules of right-living embedded in the memory, they should cultivate respect for the judgment of persons of riper age and experience in the application of these principles, modified, as it ought to be, by the shifting circumstances and conditions of life. This humility has in it nothing degrading. It is not a confession of such weakness as should awaken shame. On the contrary the desire to appear to possess extraordinary strength of judgment, has been the source of disaster to many a young man. If the young could properly conceive the conditions in the midst of which they live, if they could see how many are the dangers which lurk on every side, how watchful powerful enemies are to draw them from the right way, how often evil examples counteract the lessons of good examples, how easy it is by the bias of strong feelings to call evil good and good evil, how narrow is the range of their vision, how momentous even for this life are the consequences that hang on their hourly decisions,—surely if they could see all this, they would no longer be inclined to lean to their own understandings, they would choose to

walk thoughtfully and humbly before the Lord. In this state of mind they would come to the written word daily and hourly, not to impress their own thoughts and feelings on it, but to find in it the guide for their own feelings and actions.

3. If the young come to the study of "the word" in this state of mind, it is to be expected that they will have an obedient spirit. The Bible is to many diligent readers of its pages a sealed book, because it is read with a heart unwilling to yield to the duties plainly declared. Christ taught the lesson that, if any man would do the will of God, he should know the doctrine. The condition of knowing more truth is that we walk by the truth already known. This single principle gives light and relief in respect to many difficulties. It is not necessary to wait till we can comprehend the whole way with all its varieties of experience, before we begin to walk in it. We have light enough for the next step. That is enough for the present need. When that step is taken we are in better condition to take the next one, and He who has given us light for this will not desert us in the next, if we trust Him. It is not necessary to wait to comprehend all the mysteries of the mightiest doctrines, before we yield obedience to the simpler truths which have been made known to us. It is possible that we may never be able to understand all the mysteries connected with God's character and government. The finite never can comprehend the infinite. But the way to understand more completely the great doctrines of God is to walk by the truth that calls for immediate obedience. When the message comes to the young, as it does to all to whom the gospel comes, "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand," it finds us all with some sense of sin, some consciousness of wrong. If this message is received with an obedient spirit, wrong is repented of and forsaken, and in these exercises of the penitent soul new views of God's love and of the way of life open in the mind. We are plainly taught that God hears prayer. If one waits till he can comprehend all the mysteries involved in prayer before he prays, he will never begin to pray. But if he studies the word in an obedient spirit he will seek God in prayer, because He has promised a blessing to all who truly seek Him in this manner. The most casual reading of "the word" will show that one is to trust God for life through Christ. This is the germinal spirit out of which all virtues and graces grow, and without which they cannot be possessed. To attempt to use the Bible as your guide in life and reject this portion of it, is to make another Bible for yourselves. If you honestly seek in it for guidance, this lesson will be accepted and in the exercise of this faith you become the children of God. Then all the precepts of this Book will stand out in wonderful clearness, and your way is made bright by a light that is not of this world.

It is to be feared that with reference to most of us the trouble is not so much that the precepts and doctrines by which we may walk safely are unknown to us, as that there is unwillingness to act according to the knowledge possessed. Not to attain to the blessedness of the man "that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly," but whose "delight is in the law of the Lord," is to lose the chief value of life,—it is to incur inconceivable loss. The way of life—the way of death,—the difference between them is involved in your choice, your act.

How applicable to us the admonitions of the wise man; *Enter not into the path of the wicked. Ponder the path of thy feet. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding. If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.*

The Baptists of England contributed last year over \$300,000 to the support of their foreign mission work. This is about \$1.50 for each member, the total membership being 203,304.—*San Francisco Bulletin*, 17th Jan.

The Baptists have built a steam launch of one hundred tons measurement for Mission work in Alaska, British Columbia and Washington Territory. The vessel is eighty-two feet long, with a cabin twenty-five by fifteen feet.—*Id.*

We are glad to hear that Miss Abby A. Judson, who went to Minneapolis a few years ago to open a school, and with but one personal friend in the city, has been admirably successful. She has now a school of sixty young women, with a full corps of competent teachers. She and her school command the respect and support of the best families in the place. Miss Judson is the only surviving daughter of the late Dr. Adoniram Judson.

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

FIRST QUARTER.

Lesson X.—MARCH 11, 1883.

THE SEVEN CHOSEN.

Acts vi. 1-15.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 6-8.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom."—Acts vi. 3.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M. The Lesson, Acts vi. 1-15.
T. The Head of the Church, Matt. iii. 13-17.
W. Christ and his Apostles, Luke xxii. 19-30.
T. The Apostles, John xx. 19-23; xxi.
F. Ministers and Deacons, 1 Tim. iii. 1-13.
S. Gifts to be Used, Rom. xii. 1-8.
S. Destiny of the Church, Eph. v. 17-33.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN PROVIDING OFFICERS FOR THE CHURCH.

LESSON OUTLINE.—Deacons Needed, Vss. 1-4. II. Deacons Chosen and Ordained, Vss. 5-7. III. Stephen and his Persecutors, Vss. 8-15.

QUESTIONS.—Vss. 1-4.—What revealed the need of more officers in the church? Who had attended to the care of the poor? For what did the apostles now need all their time? What is the great work of ministers? What did the apostles do?

Vss. 5-7.—What are the names of those chosen? How were the deacons set apart? What is this rite called? What was the result? What kind of men ought deacons to be? What other office was afterward established in the church? Acts xi. 30. What does Paul teach of this office? Titus i. 5-9. What offices now in the church?

Vss. 8-15.—What was the first work of the deacons? Who was foremost among them? How was his work enlarged? What fanatical Jews disputed with him? With what result? What promise was fulfilled? What did his enemies do? What false charges made? What teaching of Stephen did his enemies probably pervert? Before what body was he brought? Of what crime accused? Whom had the Jews before treated in a similar manner? What token of God's approval was given to Stephen? What change in popular feeling was taking place?

Scripture Searchings.—When did the faces of Moses and Christ shine? Trace the parallel between the treatment of Jesus and of Stephen (as far as this Lesson goes.)

NOTES.—I. The First Murmuring (Vss. 1.)

In those days. Used indefinitely, as in i. 15. It may have been after the lapse of a year or two. According to Gamaliel's logic, (vs. 39), the church was of God; for, instead of coming to nought, it increased in members daily. The *was multiplied* is, literally, *was multiplying*; telling of continual and uninterrupted prosperity. But Satan, who failed to destroy the church by external persecutions, hopes to gain his end by internal dissensions. *Murmuring*, a whispered expression of discontent. *Grecians*. Hellenists. The Jews in Jerusalem, at that day, were of two classes: Those who had always dwelt in Judea, here called the *Hebrews*, and spoke the Hebrew language, or a modification of it, the Aramaean, and prided themselves upon their pure stock; and those of foreign birth, here styled Hellenists, who spoke the Greek language, which as a sort of universal language of that day, was used in the countries where they had lived. The Judæan Jews were wont to look down upon their foreign-born brethren. Hence, a sensitiveness on the part of the converted Hellenists. Their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. The beautiful action of love in the disciples in making a common fund, is the occasion of a danger. The apostles had superintended the distribution to the needy; but as the church rapidly increased, much of this work had to be delegated to others. The Palestine Jews, employed in it, were naturally better acquainted with their own people than with the "strangers at Jerusalem." Hence the native poor would be better provided for. It does not appear that this was intentional, though the Hellenists, probably, thought it was.

II. The Deacons, (Vss. 2-7).

Vs. 2-4.—The apostles were quick to discern the evil, and prompt to meet it. They acted with unanimity. Called the multitude; the general body of the disciples. It is not reason (fit) that we should leave the word, etc. They had neither the strength nor the time, and it was not wise for them to be doing what others could do as well. Look ye out. A division of labor recognizing the congregational form of government. The church is to choose; the apostles

confirming part, know Holy Ghost covetous reputation We will prayer. energies Va. 5, tude. T. averted a great m chosen grieved which are work of d the hand of faith, specially tions spo and Phil as deacoe no more selyte, on the Jewis them. " of the needed to Va. 7. The work healed d priests. cided acc of the ch III. 8 (Vs. 8-1 Va. 8. bier wor advanced the word of speech he had s full of f favor wit gifts. F wonders His duti bring his Christian evangelis Va. 9, in Jerus dialects, The Lib their ow nians, c children captive and had by their from C Alexand whom m as Tarsus Not ab dom was which he Va. 1 they res hand of men. course, tions by speak b men juo times, in general and ser fore the skillfull Vs. 1 as a m Councils prejudg law at places general ones. this pla etc. H lies. T pervers and Ste the Ma repeate the tem xxvii. 2 late (M words, spirit. Peter cleane end of face, a blas have h Moses shone might he pre Mos prevent salem Nob the ap the ne wisdom Step preach witness him in thoug