RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER,

And Bible Society, Missionary, and Sabbath School Advocate.

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That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.—Peter.

B. J. UNDERHILL, D. W. CLARK, WILLIAM PETERS, } Pub. Committee.

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Religious.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES.

The Bereans (Acts 17 : 11) are highly commended because when Paul preached "they searched the Scriptures whether these (the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel) were so." The substance of Paul's preaching was the Cross; or as stated in the same (17th) chapter of Acts, he "opened and alledged that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ." These were "the things" for which "they searched the Scriptures." That the Bereans who are said to have been "more noble" than others, did right, appears to be acknowledged on all hands. And if they are applauded by the Spirit of God because they "searched the Scriptures" whether the doctrines of the vicarious sufferings and the resurrection of Christ were true, no one need be afraid to copy so good an example in reference to the same, or any other equally important truth therein revealed.

"*Therefore many of them believed.*"—This was the blessed reward of their profound respect for the inspired word of God, and of their "noble" diligence in searching its divine records "whether these things (the vicarious sufferings and the resurrection of Christ) were so."—Such was the apostolic method of preaching the Gospel, and such the manner in which converts were multiplied, both Jews and Greeks.

And why should it not be so?—Has not the Divine Author of the Scriptures said—"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward?" Has he not said by the prophet Isaiah, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no truth in them?"—And in writing to Timothy, the same Paul who preached to the Bereans takes up the same testimony, commending his having "from infancy known the Holy Scriptures, which can instruct thee to salvation, by the faith which is in Christ. All Scripture inspired of God, he adds, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work."—*Douay Version.*

Such then being the testimony of God himself to the divine light, excellence and purity of His own word, well may the true Christian regard it as "a light to his feet, and a lamp to his path; as sweeter than honey and the honey comb;" for "in keeping of it, there is great reward." Hence David could say, "O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day." Such from the Scriptures themselves, appears to have been the common experience of the saints of old; and we may well regard as no better than infidelity, the spirit of these, whether professedly in the Church or out of it, who speak slightingly of God's word. True it may be perverted and abused; and so may all other good things in the hands of imperfect men. But it nevertheless remains on record, proceeding from the throne above, "If any man will do his will, *he shall know of the doctrine* whether it be of God." "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him." "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."—*Pres. Advocate.*

TO MOTHERS.

Very solemn are the duties which God has entrusted to every mother. It is no less than to train up the young, for an endless existence. The dear babe which you hold in your arms, and rock in the cradle, has begun an existence that will never end. When the sun has ceased to shine, and the moon no more gives her light, when the heavens and the earth shall pass away, that dear child will live on through countless ages. What a destiny then awaits that child, and how solemn the business of guiding that young mind in its first budbings. On you, mothers, it chiefly depends under God what your children shall be in both worlds.—Your influence on the salvation of your children, is doubtless greater than that of all other beings united. If you lose your authority over them, you lose of course the chief part of your influence, and then your children lose the choicest means which God has appointed for their happiness here and hereafter. If you once form such habits of management as to lose your authority, you never can regain it; for not only your own habits will stand in the way, but the confirmed habits of depraved and untamed children, who will no longer brook restraint. The present is your forming period, when you are to settle the question whether you are to have a government which will form your children to honor, and glory and immortality, or one which will leave their corruptions to take their natural course. God will certainly hold you answerable for those little ones, and for the distinguished talents which he has given you for their benefit. If you have any piety, let it be brought to this bearing. Make the management of your children the object of your most anxious exertions, and the subject of your unceasing prayers.

We have no time to go into a full treatise on family government, but will lay down the following rules for your daily and prayerful examinations.

1. Exercise your authority as seldom as possible, and instead of it, employ kind persuasions and deliberate reasoning; but when you exercise it, make it irresistible.

2. Be careful how you threaten, but never lie. Threaten seldom, but never fail to execute. The parents who is open-mouthed to threaten, and threatens hastily, but is irresolute to punish, and when the child is not subdued by the first threat, repeats it a dozen times with a voice of increasing violence, and with many shakes and twitches of the little culprit, will certainly possess no authority.

3. Avoid tones and gestures expressive of agitation for trivial matters, indicative of no depravity, and indicating only the heedlessness or forgetfulness of children, or perhaps nothing more than is common to young animals, a love to use their limbs. In all such cases the tones should be kind and persuasive, rather than authoritative; and the severity, and even the gravity of authority, should be reserved exclusively for cases of disobedience or depravity, or for the prevention of serious evil. A perpetual fretting at children for little things, will inevitably harden their hearts, and totally destroy parental authority and influence. There never was a fretting parent, who often threatened and seldom performed, that had a particle of efficient government.

4. Establish the unchangeable habit of not commanding a child but once. Cost what it may, break the the child to obedience to the first command. And when this is once done, if you are careful never to let disobedience escape punishment of some kind or other, and punishment that shall be effectual and triumphant, you will find it not difficult to maintain your absolute authority.

SOLEMN INQUIRIES.

Remembering that I am one of the countless multitudes who, in the last day, will stand before the bar of God, I beg leave to make a few solemn inquiries. Am I prepared to die? Am I what the word of God requires me to be? Have I examined his word to know what it does require? Have I improved the privileges which God has given me? Have I neglected no opportunity of doing good? Have I never refused to stretch out my hand to relieve the sufferings of others? Am I as willing to relieve the sufferings of an enemy as of a friend? Have I done all I could for supporting the Gospel and for evangelizing the world? Have I made such sacrifices for this object as the Gospel requires? Or have I only contributed of my abundance so as not to interfere with my own ease and indulgence? Am I constantly looking abroad in the world, to see what good I can do, or do I confine my narrow views to beloved self? Do I exercise the same love towards others, that I would wish in return? When I am viewing the faults of others, do I at the same time remember that God is viewing my own? If I attempt to speak in the name of the Lord have I an eye single to his glory? If I have but one talent, do I improve that, or do I neglect it, and envy those who have more? Am I reproved when I see others active in the cause of Christ, or do I excuse myself by saying that they do it to be seen of men? Do I visit my closet daily for the purpose of pouring out my soul to God in fervent prayer? Do I examine my heart to see where I must point the sword to keep off the enemy? In fine, do I love the Lord Jesus Christ with a pure heart fervently? Have I ever been born of the Spirit of God? Or have I treated with neglect the blood of the Saviour?—*Cottagers Friend.*

DEPUTATION OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS TO THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

The above deputation left London on the 20th of the 1st month (January), and proceeded by way of Berlin, Konigsburg, and Riga to St. Petersburg, where they arrived on the 2nd of last month. As the mission was undertaken simply on religious grounds, and was wholly irrespective of political considerations, it was thought best not to communicate, before leaving England, either with the Russian Ambassador in London, or with any member of the British Government; and the like reason induced the deputation, on arriving in St. Petersburg, to make a direct application to Count Nesselrode, without the intervention of the British Ambassador, Sir Hamilton Seymour. Their motives were, however, subsequently stated, in personal interviews, both to the Government at home and to its representative in Russia.

Through the prompt courtesy of Count Nesselrode, an interview was arranged for the presentation of the address (of which the following is a copy) at the Winter Palace, on the 10th inst :—

(Copy.)

TO NICHOLAS, EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS.

May it please the Emperor,—We, the undersigned members of a meeting representing the Religious Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, in Great Britain, venture to approach the Imperial presence, under a deep conviction of religious duty, and in the constraining love of Christ our Saviour.

We are, moreover, encouraged so to do by the many proofs of condescension, and Christian kindness manifested by the late illustrious brother the Emperor Alexander, as well as by thy honoured mother, to some of our brethern in religious profession.

It is well known that, apart from all political considerations, we have, as a Christian Church, uniformly upheld a testimony against all war, on the simple ground that it is utterly condemned by the precepts of Christianity, as well as altogether incompatible with the spirit of its Divine Founder, who is emphatically styled the "Prince of Peace." This conviction we have repeatedly pressed upon our own rulers; and often, in the language of bold, but respectful remonstrance, have we urged upon them the maintenance of peace as the true policy, as well as the manifest duty of a Christian Government.

And now, O great Prince, permit us to express the sorrow which fills our hearts as Christians and as men, in contemplating the probability of war in any portion of the continent of Europe. Deeply to be deplored would it be were that peace (which, to a large extent, has happily prevailed for so many years) exchanged for the unspeakable horrors of war, with all its attendant moral and physical suffering.

It is not our business, nor do we presume to offer any opinion upon the questions now at issue between the Imperial Government of Russia and that of any other country, but, estimating the exalted position in which Divine Providence has placed thee, and the solemn responsibilities devolving upon thee, not only as an earthly potentate, but also a believer in that Gospel which proclaims "peace on earth and good-will towards men;" we implore Him, by whom "Kings reign and princes decree justice," so to influence thy heart, and to direct thy counsels, at this momentous crises, that thou mayest practically exhibit to the nations, and even to those who do not profess the "like precious faith," the efficacy of the Gospel of Christ, and the universal application of His command, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven."

The more fully the Christian is persuaded of the justice of his own cause, the greater his magnanimity in the exercise of forbearance. May the Lord make thee the honoured instrument of exemplifying this true nobility, thereby securing to thyself and to thy vast dominions that true glory and those rich blessings which could never result from the most successful appeal to arms.

Thus, O mighty Prince, may the miseries and devastation of war be averted; and in that solemn day, when "every one of us shall give account of himself to God," may the benediction of the Redeemer apply to thee: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God;" and mayest thou be permitted, through a Saviour's love, to exchange an earthly for a heavenly crown, "a crown of glory which fadeth not away."

London, 11th of 1st Month, 1854.

The Emperor, after listening with kind attention to the address, said he wished to offer some explanation of his views as to the causes of the present unhappy differences. His observations in the course of the conversation were nearly as follows :—

We received the blessings of Christianty from the Greek empire; and this has established and maintained ever since a link of connexion, both moral and religious, between Russia and that power. The ties that have thus united the two countries have subsisted for 900 years, and were not severed by the conquest of Russia by the Tartars; and when at a later period our country succeeded in shaking off that yoke, and the Greek empire, in its turn, fell under the sway of the Turks, we still continued to take a lively interest in the welfare of our co-religionists there; and when Russia became powerful enough to resist the Turks, and to dictate the terms of peace, we paid particular attention to the well-being of the Greek Church, and procured the insertion in successive treaties of most important articles in her favour. I have myself acted as my predecessors had done, and the treaty of Adrianople, in 1829, was as explicit as the former ones in this respect. Turkey, on her part, recognised this right of religious interference, and fulfilled her engagement until within the last year or two, when, for the first time, she gave me reason to complain. I will not now advert to the parties who were her principal instigators on that occasion. Suffice it to say, that it became my duty to interfere, and to claim from Turkey the fulfilment of her engagements. My representations were pressing but friendly, and I have every reason to believe that matters would soon have been settled if Turkey had not been induced by other parties to believe that I had ulterior objects in view—that I was aiming at conquest, aggrandisement, and the ruin of Turkey. I have solemnly disclaimed, and do now as solemnly disclaim, every such motive. . . I do not desire war—I abhor it as sincerely as you do; and am ready to forget the past, if only the opportunity be afforded me. . . . I have great esteem for your country, and a sincere affection for your Queen, whom I admire, not only as a sovereign, but as a lady, a wife, and a mother. I have placed full confidence in her, and have acted towards her in a frank and friendly spirit. I felt it my duty to call her attention to future dangers, which I considered sooner or later likely to arise in the East, in consequence of the existing state of things. What on my part was prudent foresight has been unfairly construed in your country into a designing policy, and an ambitious desire of conquest. This has deeply wounded my feelings, and afflicted my heart. Personal insults and invectives I regard with indifference. It is beneath my dignity to notice them, and I am ready to forgive all that is personal to me, and to hold out my hand to my enemies in the true Christian spirit. I cannot understand what cause of complaint your nation has against Russia. I am anxious to avoid war by all possible means. I will not attack, and shall only act in self-defence. I cannot be indifferent to what concerns the honour of my country. I have a duty to perform as a Sovereign. As a Christian I am ready to comply with the precepts of religion. On the present occasion my great duty is to attend the interests and honour of my county.

The Emperor, before quitting the apartment, informed the deputation that the Empress was desirous of seeing them. They were accordingly at once introduced to her, and to the Grand Duchess Olga, with whom they had an agreeable interview.

The deputation were subsequently informed through Baron Nicolay, that the Emperor desired to transmit to the Society of Friends a written reply to their address, which was accordingly forwarded to them previously to their departure from St. Petersburg.

[The document referred to above is signed by Count Nesselrode, and is the same in substance as the answer given by the Czar in person.]

OPINIONS AND SOCIAL STATE OF THE CHINESE INSURGENTS.

The *North China Herald* has published a very interesting letter from the Rev. Mr. Medhurst, in reference to the condition of the insurgents.—The doctor had fallen in with a Canton man, who was for some time a follower of Tae-ping-Wang, and who left Nanking in August last. When questioned as to the religion of the insurgents, he answered with an air of reverence that they worshipped God (Shang-te.) When asked when they did it, he replied, "Every day, and previous to every meal." He was then requested to repeat something of what they said, when he chanted the doxology, as it is found in the Book of Religious Precepts of Tae-ping-Wang, in such a tone and manner that showed he was familiar with it. As he had referred to their daily meals, he was asked whether they had sufficient to eat. Abundance, he replied. And whether they had enough to wear. To which he answered, they had plenty of clothing. He was asked, whether he got any pay; to which he replied not a *cash*: no pay being dealt out to the troops from one month's end to the other. He was also asked whether he was allowed to enjoy the society of his wife; to which he replied in the negative, adding that the women of Nanking were all kept in a particular quarter of the city, where there were whole streets of them, but that no men were allowed to approach, under pain of death. On a subsequent occasion he was asked whether Tae-ping-Wang actually existed, or whether he was dead, and his image carried about, as some had reported. He had no doubt that Tae-ping-Wang was a living man; that he frequently went about in a chair, but so shrouded in deep folds of silk, that the common people could not get a glance at him. The highest officers, however, saw him every night, when they went to consult about affairs of state, and to receive his orders.—He was asked whether he had ever heard that Tae-ping-Wang had been up to heaven; to which he replied, certainly. It was commonly reported, and fully believed, among his followers. Recurring to the subject of the soldiers receiving no pay, he was asked whether any of them possessed any property of their own; to which he replied, none whatever, and if more than five dollars are found in the possession of any man, he is immediately bambooed for not having given it up previously.—He was then asked why the men were separated from the women, and when such separation took place? He said, that during all their progress from Kwansgi, the women fought by the side of the men, and conducted themselves as bravely; but when they arrived at Nanking they were separated, because there was no more need for them to engage in warfare. They were, therefore, kept apart, had their various duties to perform, and were engaged for a great part of the time in learning, every band of twenty-five women having an instructress over them. As for the men, they were told it was their business to fight and to work for the present, and when the empire was gained they might enjoy their wives. But how, it was asked, is each one to find his own, when the war is over, among such a multitude? He replied, every man and woman is regularly registered, and there will not be the slightest difficulty in restoring to every man his rightful partner. He was asked whether there were any secret-society men among Tae-ping-Wang's followers, specifying that Teen-te-Hwuy, Sanhoh Hwuy, Scaou-taou Hwuy, and others; when he immediately and distinctly replied that there were none, for Tae-ping-Wang put them to death. Speaking of learning, he was asked what books they learned, to which he replied, none other than the book published by Tae-ping-Wang; all others were burnt. He was then asked whether the books of Confucius were burnt likewise. Being no scholar, he said he could not give a definite answer. He was then asked whether he had ever been to school, and what books he had then learned. He said he had only been to school for about a year, when a boy, and the schoolmaster flogged him so greviously that he ran away. During that year what books did he learn? He said the Ta-hioh and the Clung-yung. Had he ever seen these books at Nanking? Yes, he said, he had seen them, but they were altered. Were books on history permitted? He did not know.—What about the books of Buddha? Oh, everything belonging to Buddha and Taou were indiscriminately destroyed; the temples and images smashed all to pieces. As for the priests, they dared not show their faces, and together with gamblers, opium-smokers, and whore-mongers, were scattered to the four winds. He was then asked whether they kept the Sabbath, to which he replied that it was regularly observed; that no work was done on that day except what was necessary. That they all assemble for public worship in large halls, when they knelt down to prayers, and that the chiefs exhorted them. On being asked who the exhorters were, he mentioned, among others, Lai, at Nanking. He knew nothing about baptism or the Lord's supper. He was asked if he had heard much of Jesus; he replied that he had heard his name frequently, but he was not competent to detail what he had heard. He was then asked what was now his settled opinion; he had been for several months with Tae-ping-Wang, and for several months with the Imperialists,--which now, honestly speaking, did he prefer? He looked round, and asked if any one was near, and whether we would accuse him. We replied there was no danger; upon which he exclaimed, with emphasis, I am for Tae-ping-Wang. Why, then, it was asked, did he leave him? "Because," he said, "I had a brother among the Imperialists, and I wanted to see him. In order to accomplish this, I went out secretly; my brother then had my head shaved, and reported that I was a distressed subject of the emperor, who had been deceived into following the insurgents. I was then taken into the pay of the Imperialists, and was afraid to go back, lest I should lose my head." What an extraordinary view does the above present of the insurgent army! What a moral revolution? To induce 100,000 Chinese, for months and years together, to give up opium, lust, and covetousness; to deny themselves in lawful gratifications; and, what is dearer to a Chinaman's heart than life itself, to consent to live without dollars, and all share and share alike, braving death in its worst form, and persevering therein without flinching. There may be defective teaching among them, there may be errors of a greater or less magnitude; but if what is above detailed be true, or the half of it, it is confessedly a moral revolution; it is the wonder of the age.

Another letter from Dr. Medhurst, dated as late as Dec. 14, 1853, has been published, containing further interesting particulars. He states that, on the afternoon of that day, he was preaching in one of the chapels of the London Missionary Society to a large congregation, descanting on the folly of idolatry, and urging the necessity of worshipping the one true God, on the ground that he alone could protect his servants, while idols were things of nought, destined soon to perish out of the land:—when suddenly a man stood up in the midst of the congregation and exclaimed, That is true—that is true—the idols must perish, and shall perish. I am a Kwangse man, a follower of Tae-Ping-Wang; we all of us worship one God (Shang-te) and believe in Jesus, while we do our utmost to put down idolatry; everywhere demolishing the temples, and destroying the idols, and exhorting the people to forsake these superstitions. When we commenced, two years ago, we were only 3,000 in number, and we have marched from one end of the empire to the other, putting to flight whole armies of the mandarin troops that were sent against us. If it had not been that God was on our side, we could not have thus prevailed against such overwhelming numbers; but now our troops have arrived at Teen-tsin, and we expect soon to be victorious over the whole empire. He then proceeded to exhort the people, in a most lively and earnest strain, to abandon idolatry, which was only worship of devils, and the perseverance in which would involve them in the misery of hell; while by giving it up, and believing in Jesus, they would obtain the salvation of their souls. As for us, he said, we feel quite happy in the profession of our religion, and look on the day of our death as the happiest period of our existence. When any of our number die, we never weep, but congratulate each other on the joyful occasion, because a brother is gone to glory, to enjoy all the magnificence and splendour of the heavenly world. While continuing here, we make it our business to keep the commandments, to worship God, and to exhort each other to do good; for which end we have frequent meetings for preaching and prayer. He went on to inveigh against the prevailing vices of his countrymen, particularly opium-smoking. But you must be quick, he adds, for Tae-Ping-Wang is coming, and he will not allow the least infringements of his rules—no opium, no tobacco, no snuff, no wine, and no vicious indulgence of any kind. All offences against the commandments of God are punished by him with the severest rigour, while the incorrigible are beheaded—therefore, repent in time. Dr. Medhurst says he was struck with the appearance of the man, as he went on in his earnest strain, bold and fearless as he stood, openly denouncing the vices of the people, his countenance beaming with intelligence, his upright and manly form the very picture of health, while his voice thrilled through the crowd. They seemed petrified with amazement; their natural conscience assured them that his testimony was true, while the conviction seemed to be strong among them that the two great objects of his denunciation, opium and idolatry, were both bad things, and must be given up.

UPON MY SOUL.

Among many objectionable expressions in common use, it is much to be lamented that the above expression is exceedingly prevalent; and especially that it sometimes escapes the lips even of Christian professors. The plain meaning of it is, "*I pawn my soul.*" And thus the precious and immortal soul and the undying interest of eternity are thoughtlessly placed at the stake; perhaps for that which is of the most trifling value. And besides the absurdity and folly of such conduct, we have no right to pawn or pledge that which in reality is not our own, and which we may be required in an instant to render up to him who gave it. O let me guard against the very "appearance of evil," and let my "communications be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

A Christian is always either on the perch, or on the wing; he is always reposing on God, or in flight after him.—*Henry.*

Mercies that are won with prayer are worn with thankfulness.—*T. Goodwin.*