

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

REV. E. McLEOD.

"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."

Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.]

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(From the Morning Star.)

CAPTURE OF ALBERT W. BACHELER AND HIS ESCAPE FROM LIBBEY PRISON.

[Many of our readers remember the Rev. O. R. Bachelier, who visited these Provinces a few years ago, and lectured on Indian Missions; and who is now a Missionary in India from the Free Will Baptist Denomination. We insert the following thrilling sketch of his son's escape from a rebel prison, from the Morning Star. It illustrates some of the dangers and chances of war.]—Ed. Int.

Sergeant Bachelier is a young man twenty years of age, from New Hampton, a member of the 12th N. H. regiment. He is the oldest son of Rev. O. R. Bachelier, missionary in India, and has been in the service over two years, having passed safely through the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Coal Harbor and Petersburg, besides twice that number of severe skirmishes.

His regiment was between the James and Appomattox rivers, six miles from Bermuda Hundred; the rebel intrenchments being some 300 yards distant, and their pickets not more than 300 yards. On the 17th of November all was quiet, and had been for a long time. About one-half of the regiment was in the front, with new recruits on either side. At eight o'clock in the evening a brisk firing commenced in their immediate front, the rebels intending it as a surprise. The Federal pickets were captured, the new recruits driven in, followed by the enemy on both flanks of the old regiment, who came together in the rear; and coming up behind them, thirty-five of the New Hampshire regiment were captured. Soon as the firing commenced, the commander sent Bachelier to the front to see what was the matter. He went forward to the pickets, whom he had left not half an hour before, and, instead of meeting them as he expected, he found himself in the darkness of night in the very midst of the rebel lines, now occupying the ground of our pickets. Surrender or death was his only alternative.

He was conducted to the rebel rear, and the soldier guarding him, observing that he had a good hat and overcoat, ordered him to give up his coat and exchange hats. The prisoner declined, appealing to the humanity of his guard. "Our government," said the rebel, "is not able to clothe its comfortably, and I cannot do duty all winter with no overcoat without suffering terribly."

"And think you I shall not suffer where I am going?" said Bachelier.

"I can't help it," was the reply; "off with your coat, or I shall take it off."

The exchange of hats was scarcely more equitable. For a good one he received a small form of braided rags, a foot and a half in diameter, with strings at each side to tie it under his chin.

"This little hat," said the soldier, "is all the hat I have had for a year and a half, and I am sorry to take the things from you, but I can't stand it without them." Other soldiers were worse off than he.

At two o'clock the next day, the train from Petersburg came along, the prisoners were put aboard, and in two hours they were at the depot in Richmond, a distance of 14 miles. Their great wonder was that they arrived so early, the engine being one of the old style, and so out of repair that some of the worn parts were supplied with wood.

Libbey prison is situated in the northern part of the city, and consists of four large brick buildings, three stories high, and each of them about 100 feet long. They are all separate buildings, each standing in one of the four corners where Carey and Dock streets cross each other. They were formerly used as tobacco houses, one of them being the office, still bears the sign, "Libbey & Son, Ship Chandlers and Groceries." In this building is the reception room, to which all prisoners are first brought, and there they are carefully searched, names recorded, &c. The next day Bachelier was taken across the street to Pemberton building, and stationed on the third floor, though he was permitted to have free access over the entire building, save the attic where the negro prisoners were confined. Each storey comprises but one spacious room, the windows are all taken out, a few of them are boarded up, but through most of them the wind and storm have full play.

Not a solitary bed, mat or chair is found in the whole building, and the running water that is brought into the house is the only redeeming thing about the prison. The filth is sickening, and the lice, large as kernels of wheat, may be seen crawling on the floors, and no one can be there half a day without finding them on his person. Prisoners in health clean themselves as best they can every day, but the feeble and emaciated have not energy enough to do it. The number in this building in November was about 700, 150 of whom were negroes.

A guard of four soldiers was in the building through the day, two others guarded the door, and several others walked their beats outside, immediately under the windows. No citizens ever visited the prison. At 9 o'clock every morning the prison was called, and at 10 they received their breakfast. It consisted of a piece of corn-bread two inches square, and sometimes a bit of refuse meat, pork, or beef. At 4 in the afternoon, they received the same amount of bread, and a few beans, or a little rice boiled in the water used for boiling the meat in the morning constituted a full meal, and of this each prisoner had about a gill. It was not only poor food, but always came to them with more or less of bugs and maggots cooked with it and swimming on the top. Some would skin them off, but the most hungry could not stop for that. These two meals, and this regular amount, constituted their only rations. If prisoners have any conveniences for eating, they have to buy them; a tin cup, or a wooden spoon is sometimes purchased, but not unfrequently prisoners receive their soup on the top of their hat, and drink it therefrom.

There is a stove on every floor, except in the negro quarters, and one awful of wood is allowed for twenty-four hours, during the coldest days. But in a room 50 feet by 100, with open windows on every side, such a fire was of little use for 175 men. During the coldest nights, they walk those dark halls till morning, to keep warm, and in the warmest part of the day they lie and sleep in the sun by the open windows, sometimes two or three deep. One cold morning the guard brought down the bodies of three negroes from the room above,

all of them wounded and unable to walk, admitting that they had frozen or chilled to death.

The sick are taken to the hospital, and the guard inside are generally well disposed, but cannot relieve their wants. Free conversation is everywhere allowed, save with the negroes, but prisoners have little inclination to be very social, and silence reigns through those dreary apartments, save a few friends converse in groups, in an under tone. Whatever may have been the previous habits of the men, profanity is never heard there.

A few feet from the Pemberton building stands another, nearly equal in size, and formerly used as a prison. In the third story is a small closet room in one corner, where an old man is allowed to keep a very few articles, such as bread, apples, potatoes, turnips, &c., to sell to the prisoners. A few at a time, not exceeding half a dozen, are allowed to pass through a walk from the lower floor to this building, and up through the unoccupied rooms to this closet store. Bread is one dollar a loaf, which is twice the size of a common biscuit; apples from one to two dollars, potatoes are one dollar apiece, turnips two dollars, and the cheapest of all is beef's head, which was five dollars. Six soldiers, at one time, being faint and hungry, notwithstanding their daily rations, bought a few articles and made a soup, which cost them \$20. The cooking, by the way, is all done by the prisoners detailed for that purpose, and all extra meals are cooked by them. Thus do you get a faint idea of Libbey prison, and the condition of its inmates.

In the same regiment with Bachelier was a young man from Woburn, by the name of Thompson, also a prisoner. He had been in a store in Boston, previous to the war, and once went to Richmond on business, where he made a few acquaintances, and one of whom he recognized in the guard. This rebel soldier was usually about the prison, and he was to be a true union man, but having a family and property in the city he could not well leave for the North. He showed his kindness, however, by giving Thompson a hundred dollars, which he generously shared among his comrades.

The idea of escaping from a doom so sad must suggest itself to every one, but the prospect of success is so dark that few ever cherish the hope. Every prisoner is gratuitously informed on his entrance that a mine of powder is placed under the prison, ready to be fired any moment, should the prisoners attempt to overpower the guard. And the horrors of Castle Thunder are painted in awful contrast with the scenes of Libbey prison, and if caught in any attempt to escape, prisoners had good reasons to believe that no mercy would be shown them. Indeed, friendly guards told them they would be put into Castle Thunder, tied up by the thumbs, with a gag in their mouth, and compelled to stand for forty-eight hours without food or drink, and then be remanded to solitary confinement with still more limited rations than in the prison, and there wait till the close of the war.

In spite of these obstacles in their way of escape, Bachelier and Thompson found each other premeditating some plan, with a purpose to try their luck. "Nothing risked, nothing gained," was the thought that kept their daring spirits in a constant state.

The first plan on which they agreed was to bribe one of the guard that travelled his nightly walk under the windows. They found him kindly disposed, and soon agreed to accompany them himself, having a brother already in the Union army. The next night another of the guard came into the arrangement, which was that all would go into the Federal lines, and the guard should receive ten dollars each, and a place to work in the commissary department. Everything was ready, the night of their departure was fixed, they had been up to the old man's store and eaten a hearty supper, and bought a little for the journey. With anxious hearts they stood by the window, waiting the change of the guard, when, to their utter amazement, instead of their pledged men came a couple of strangers. Suspicion of foul play filled their hearts, and the fear that they were betrayed, caused them to pass a long and anxious night. They soon learned that these men had that day been detailed to do guard duty in another part of the city, and their escape in this way was a foregone conclusion. They now look upon this disappointment as all Providential, feeling confident, with their present experience, they would all have been captured, had they started with these rebel deserters with them.

During the next four days no feasible way of escape suggested itself to either of them, and the prisoners were generally averse to any effort looking to that result. At last Bachelier remembered that he had seen some old canvases in the room of the other building where the stone was, and he suggested the possibility of their making a rope of it, and letting themselves out of the window. The suggestion was favorably received, and again a ray of hope dawned upon them. But how could they get the canvas into the Pemberton building? And if they could do it, the guard would certainly shoot them before they reached the ground. And how to escape from the other building was a question not easily solved. After mature deliberation that day they agreed upon a plan that seemed feasible, and they resolved to put it into execution and risk their all, even their lives. The plan was revealed to four others, who chose not to risk it, but they would help them if they would venture it.

This second plan and its successful execution were as follows: On the 7th of Dec, Bachelier and Thompson, with these four fellow prisoners, went up to the store about sunset, and bought two loaves of bread and a few apples each, when the other four stepped into the closet room, and began to trade; but they were difficult, and could not be suited. They bargained the old man, and detained him in the closet till it was dusk. In the room. During this time Bachelier and Thompson concealed themselves under the canvases, and when the prisoners were ordered to their quarters, the old man was seen by eyes unobserved, to lock his closet door, look around the room, and go below. At the foot of the stairs they heard him close the door and hasten it, and do some at the lower flight. This first step was a success, and they felt encouraged; but they scarcely moved till 9 o'clock, when they took off their shoes and crawled out.

Taking pieces of the canvases towards the window, where the pale beams of moonlight afforded them aid, they at once began to cut it into strips about six inches wide, to roll and braid it into a three stranded rope. On working the canvases they found it older than was expected, and dared

not let themselves down from the fourth storey window. But their purpose was not frustrated by these fears, for, as good luck would have it, a hatchway was discovered in the floor, and through that they resolved to try and descend. At 11 o'clock everything was ready for the trial on their part, but the moon was still an hour or more above the western horizon, and her bright beams every now and then shone through the parting clouds with what seemed to be more than lunar light; so they set themselves down and waited; but those waiting moments seemed hours. They thought of the dangers before them, of a watchful enemy and of Castle Thunder. They thought also of home, of country and of God. And there, at the still hour of midnight, before embarking in the hazardous enterprise, they lifted their hearts to God in prayer. Bachelier is a Christian soldier, and in an hour like that every heart must feel more than human help was needed. In whispers, scarcely audible to each other, they both committed themselves into the hands of the Lord, and earnestly besought him to give them success.

About 1 o'clock in the morning, they silently raised the hatchway, and Bachelier was lowered to the floor below. He went immediately to the stairway, unopened the door, and Thompson came down, bringing with him their shoes and two large pieces of the canvases. They descended to the next floor in the same way. There was still another storey to the ground on the back side, and finding an old table there, they placed it against the window, fastened their rope to one leg, threw the other end out at the window, and let themselves down. They were now out of the building, and fortunately for them, the thickening clouds had gathered over the city, and just then it began to rain, and continued for fifteen minutes, a violent shower. They silently congratulated each other on their good luck, thus far acknowledged the hand of the Lord in their success, and the opportune shower so graciously sent.

Just then, for the last time, did they hear what they had been accustomed to hear in the prison, every half hour, the response of the guard. A few words from them they shouted, "Post number one, half past one, and all's well." The next on the guard took it up and sang out, "Post number two, half past one, and all's well." They did not stop to listen to those responses around the prison, for their own business was urgent, and they only said in their hearts, "Out of Libbey prison, half past one, and all's well."

At each end of this building could be heard the measured steps of the guard, as they walked to and fro, but they were nearly silenced by the beating of the rain. A few feet from the side where they stood was a new, close board fence, and they were greatly disconcerted in finding that its height greatly exceeded their expectations, as they had looked down upon it from the windows above. But not a moment was to be lost. Feeling about they found some pieces of joists, boards, &c., remnants of the lumber with which the fence was built, and piling them up cob-fashion, and putting an old barrel they had fortunately found upon the top, Bachelier mounted the barrel, and Thompson mounted Bachelier; and standing upon his shoulders, he could easily reach the top, some fifteen feet high. He immediately drew himself up, and standing on the upper rail on the opposite side, he let down his canvas and drew Bachelier after him. They descended on the rails of the other side without difficulty. But here they encountered a new and most threatening difficulty. They found themselves in the back yard of a private residence, and most furiously assailed by a large white dog. They kept him at bay, but actually cared less for his attempts to bite, than his voiceless barking. Their worst fears were beginning to be realized, as a light soon appeared in the chamber, and persons were seen moving past the windows. The alarm was given to that family of something wrong in the rear of the prison, but before they were ready to come forth and ascertain the cause, the secrete Barker was silenced in this wise: Thompson used tobacco, and gathering his mouth full of spittle, he opened fire at the dog, and they left him rubbing his face in the dirt.

Passing round this building, three or four rods, they came to another close board fence, some eight feet high, but one lifted the other till he could reach the top, and pulling the first up after him, they proceeded, scaling another six feet high, in the same manner. Jumping down from the last fence they found themselves on the sidewalk in Carey street, just where they desired to be. Again did they congratulate themselves on their good luck, and take courage.

HOW SOME PEOPLE DIE.

All death beds resemble each other in suffering, in seriousness, in solitude. One look of death makes everybody in earnest. Every death-bed is hung round with photographs of sin, of hell, of eternity. There is something ghastly in watching a young man moving up reluctantly to the sword of the King of Terrors. Old age waiting for the final stroke moves on pity. We were not wicked in heart, no preaching on earth would impress us like death.

Having one day accidentally met a doctor, I was requested by him to visit one of his patients who was near her end. It was not difficult to see "death's pale enigm" over her face. Having set the Lord Jesus before her as tenderly as I could, and having endeavored to suit the message of mercy, by varieties of simple language, to her condition, I wished to know the workings of her mind, and asked her—Will you come to Jesus for pardon and redemption? Once and again she answered me—it was the only answer I could get—Yes, when I am better. A few hours later, when I again called, she was dead.

The conduct of the dying woman impressed me much. She spoke out fearfully what many other people feel, but do not say. She was unwilling and unfit to die. She had no debt about her. She had years to live yet; and, when health would come back, she would lead a virtuous life. O fearful delusion—deep as hell.

This is the way souls have sinned and perished from the beginning of the world. Sinner, pause and pray. You have a soul to be saved. You are under sentence of death—a sentence that may be executed any moment. To perish in your sins, to perish eternally. God is just, and will by no means clear you. Beware of that life of placid ease which irreligious men generally lead. Through the faith of the name of the Lord Jesus, you may

have the remission of sins. By the grace of the Holy Ghost you may enter the straight gate. O think of eternal life, and serve Him who bestows it. There is nothing on earth so awful as an impenitent death-bed.—Family Treasury.

THE SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM.

Morn breaketh in the east. The purple clouds are putting on their gold and violet. To look the meteor for the sun's bright coming. Sleep is upon the waters and the wind; And nature, from the wavy forest leaf To her majestic master, sleeps. As yet There is no mist upon the deep blue sky, And the clear dew in the blushing bosoms Of crimson roses in a holy rest. How hallow'd is the hour of morning! meet Aye, beautifully meet—for the pure prayer, The patriarch standeth at his tented door, With his white locks uncover'd. 'Tis his wont To gaze upon that gorgeous Orient; Of man who talketh often with his God, As at his fourfold strength. But now, he seemeth To be forgetful of his vigorous frame, And boweth to his staff as at the hour Of noontide slumber. And that bright sun—He looketh at its pencil'd messengers, Coming in golden raiment, as if all Were but a graven scroll of fearfulness. Ah, he is waiting till it herald In The hour to sacrifice his much-loved son!

"Light poureth on the world. And Sarah stands Watching the steps of Abraham and her child Along the dewy sides of the far hills, And praying that her sunny boy faint not, Would she have watch'd their boy faint not, If she had known that he was going up, Even in his fair-haired beauty, to be slain As a white lamb for sacrifice? They trod Together onward, patriarch and child—The bright sun throwing back the old man's shade In straight and fair proportions as of one Whose years were freshly number'd. He stood up, Tall in his vigorous strength; and, like a tree Rooted in Lebanon, his frame bent not, His thin white hairs had yielded to the wind, And left his brow uncover'd; and his face, Impress'd with the stern majesty of grief Nerved to a solemn duty, now stood forth Like a rent rock, submissive, yet sublime. But the young boy—the pride of life was on him. He seem'd to drink the morning. Sun and dew, And the aroma of the spicy trees, And all that giveth the delicious east Its fitness for an Eden, stole like light Into his spirit, ravishing his thoughts With love and beauty. Everything he met, Buoyant or beautiful, the lightest wing Of bird or insect, or the palest dye Of the fresh flowers, won him from his path; And joyously broke forth his tiny shout, As he hung back his sicken hair, and sprung Away to some green spot or clustering vine, To pluck his infant trophies. Every tree And fragrant shrub was a new hiding place; And he would crouch till the old man came by, Then bend before him with his childish laugh, Stealing a look behind him playfully, To see if he had made his father smile.

"The sun rode on in heaven. The dew stole up From the fresh daughters of the earth, and heat Came like a sleep upon the delicate leaves, And bent them with the lightest breeze to their dreams. Still trod the patriarch on, with that same step, Firm and unflinching; turning not aside To seek the piteous shades, or love their lips In the sweet waters of the Syrian wells. Whose gush has so much music. Weariness Stole on the gentle boy, and he forgot To toss his sunny hair from off his brow, And spring for the fresh flowers and light wings As in the early morning; but he kept Close by his father's side, and bent his head Upon his bosom like a drooping bud, Lifting it not, save now and then to steal A look up to the face whose sternness awed His childishness to silence.

"It was noon—And Abraham on Moriah bow'd himself, And buried up his face, and pray'd for strength. He could not look upon his son, and pray; But, with his hand upon the clustering curls Of the fair, kneeling boy, he prayed that God Would nerve him for that hour."

"He rose up, and laid The wood upon the altar. All was done, He stood a moment—and a deep, quick flush Pass'd o'er his countenance; and then he nerved His spirit with a bitter strength, and spoke—'Isaac! my only son!'—The boy look'd up; 'Where is the lamb, my father?' On the tones, The sweet, familiar voice of a loved child!—What would its music seem at such an hour!—It was the last deep struggle. Abraham held His loved, his beautiful, his only son, And lift up his arm, and call'd on God—And lo! God's angel stay'd him—and he fell Upon his face and wept."

"I MEAN TO TAKE LIFE EASY."

Dr.—In his morning room, came upon a thirty farmer giving the last touch to his new house, picking up the broken shingles and scattered nails left by the carpenter. The doctor stopped and congratulated him upon his final completion.

"Thank you, sir," said the farmer; "it is a good house, and all I want. I have worked hard all my life for it, and now I mean to take life easy, and enjoy it." "And I hope you will live long to enjoy it," cried the friendly doctor, making his parting bow and jogging on. "Thank you, sir," replied the man.

Nor was the doctor out of sight before the alarmed cry of "Doctor, doctor!" caught his ear. Raining in his horse and looking round, he beheld a messenger from the farm house flying after him. "Doctor, doctor, Mr. Winslow has just fallen from the roof, and we are afraid he is dead." He hurried back, but to find fears merged into certainty. No skill of doctor, or power of medicine could restore him. He was dead and gone. A moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to render up his final account. Scarcely had he said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take these ease, eat drink and be merry," before the soul was stripped of its possessions, and all that had been provided for it to delight in

wrung from its embrace. How was it left? Destitute! and soul-destination who can adequately describe? It is the not having, not having the "one thing needful," which constitutes the sinner's doom in the great hereafter. O, what a place has that one word, not in the final inventory—"not having on the wedding garment!" "Sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not."

Everything here, and eternal beggary! Can we ponder too seriously upon such an issue?—Christian Almanac for 1865.

SHOWING HIM A MIRACLE.

[Earnest Renan having said, in his Life of Jesus, that the proper way of proving the reality of a miracle is to show one, a pamphleteer "shows" him one in a letter "Upon the Establishment of the Christian Religion," which we here translate.] Sir—Permit me to-day to draw your attention again to the establishment of the Christian religion, a fact upon which we naturally differ in opinion. Like you, when I have striven to identify its causes with the mere forces of man, I have failed in my endeavor. The supernatural then has been the only conducting thread which has helped me to escape from the labyrinth where I see you continually seeking to rectify yourself, without ever doing it, and condemned to escape therefrom only when you shall have proved that there is nothing miraculous in the establishment of Christianity. Upon this little digression, I go straight to the work. There is a religion called the Christian, whose founder was Jesus, named the Christ. This religion, which has lasted eighteen centuries, and which calls itself the natural development of that Judaism which ascends near to the cradle of the world, had the apostles for its first propagators. When these men wished to establish it they had for adversaries:

The national pride of the Jews; The implacable hatred of the Sanhedrim; The brutal despotism of the Roman emperors; The rabble and attacks of the philosophers; The libertinism and caste-spirit of the pagan priests;

The savage and cruel ignorance of the masses. The faggots and bloody games of the circus; They had an enemy in Every miser; Every debauched man; Every drunkard; Every thief; Every murderer; Every proud man; Every slanderer; Every liar.

Not one of the vices, in fact, which abuse our poor humanity, which did not constitute itself their adversary. To combat so many enemies and surmount so many obstacles they had only Their ignorance; Their poverty; Their obscurity; Their weakness; Their fewness; The Cross.

If you had been their contemporary at the moment when they began their work, and Peter had said to you: "Join with us, for we are going to the conquest of the world; before our work is done, pagan temples shall crumble and their idols shall fall upon their faces; the philosophers shall be convinced of folly; from the throne of Caesar we shall hurl the Roman eagle, and in its place we shall plant the cross; we shall be the teachers of the world; the ignorant and the learned will declare themselves our disciples!" Hearing him speak thus you would have said: "Be silent, imbecile!" And as you are tolerant from nature and principle, you would have defended him before the Sanhedrim, and have conspired it to shut up the fisherman of Bethsaida and his companions in a madhouse. And yet, sir, what you would have thought a notable madness is to-day a startling reality, with which I leave you face to face.—Zion's Herald.

ANCHORED OR AT SEA.

"I am feeble, discouraged, solitary in the midst of eight hundred thousand men. I feel little attachment to existence; my imagination has taken the color of old. I am satisfied with all, without having tasted anything. If you only knew how sad I am becoming. I love sorrow and live much with her. They speak to me of fame, and public employment. I have occasionally certain desires that way; but, frankly, I despise fame. Where is the soul that shall understand mine?"

These were the words of a brilliant young lawyer, before whom a career of distinction, honor and wealth seemed wide open. In public he won the highest encomiums, and seemed to enjoy the success which he attained; in private he was unhappy and unsatisfied. His future course gives the key to what would otherwise seem a mystery; and taken in connection with one other utterance, of nearly the same date as the one just quoted, will explain to every thinking mind, the cause of his unrest and dissatisfaction with life.

This young man was an infidel by open profession, though he had been trained in the doctrines of Christianity at his mother's knee. He could not, however, throw off all the teachings and reminiscences of childhood by a single effort. The mother's pure life dwelt in his memory, and her secret instructions clung like the ivy to his heart; so strong were these influences that he writes about this time, while openly assailing Christianity in debate, "I love the Gospel because its morality is indefeasible. I respect its ministers, because the influence they exercise is beneficial to society; but faith has not been given to me."

Two years after, he could write: "Will you believe that I am every day becoming a Christian?"

Nearly forty years from that time, in his dying hours, he exclaimed, "I have tried to serve God, the Church, and our Lord Jesus Christ." And these forty years were spent in the ministry of the Gospel. This does infidelity bring dissatisfaction with life, perpetual unrest, a weary longing after something which even the imagination cannot picture, and a sadness which is ominous of eternal sorrow. And how great is the contrast between its effects and those of Christian faith! In forty years of exhausting labor for Christ, there is no thought of uneasiness, no feeling of sadness, no consciousness of failure to enjoy the blessings of life, and a sweet assurance of hope in death.—M. Y. Observer.

WHOSE SERVANT?

"Whose I am, and whom I serve." These were the brave words that rang from the lips of Paul on that stormy daybreak in the Mediterranean Sea. It was a freeman who uttered them—one of Christ's freedmen. It was a servant, too, who spoke them—one of Christ's happy "bond labourers." Servant is a favourite title which Peter and Paul turn to themselves with as much imperial grandeur as the survivors of the old imperial power. "I Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ." The word is strong—far stronger than our use of the term warrants. It means a captive; it means a captivated follower who is in love with the happy service of his master. He is a thrall who obeys, not of constraint, but willingly. Whatever he doeth he doeth heartily as unto the King. The first question in time and in importance is, Lord! what wilt thou have me to do?

Herein lies a living Christian's religion; that he always gives Jesus the precedence in his affections, in his plans, in all his daily life-relationships. It is difficult to tell whom some church-professors are serving. When I see Mr. A—eying a shilling so sharply in his shop, or muttering excuses over a subscription book, I conclude that he is a slave of mammon. When I meet him sitting off on prayer-meeting night in full-dress to a fashionable party, his countenance seems to say, "I am now the votary of pleasure." But on Sabbath morning when he shuts his pew door so solemnly and smooths his visage down into so devout an aspect, he clearly wishes us to know that now, for this particular hour, he must be considered as serving the Lord. But why not a right-minded Christian serve his Redeemer in all these things? May he not conduct his business so that God is sure of a good dividend—and his recreations so that he is a better workman after his holiday—and his home-life so that even his domestics and the very dog on the hearth-rug are the better taught for his genial piety? This is the very marrow of practical religion. It is co-extensive with life. It is no more to be confined to an hour's devotion once a week in the sanctuary than honesty is to be restricted to paying a few pence. It is simply the doing everything to the glory of God.

Does the merchant so conduct his business and divide his profits that Christ is the gainer? Then is he God's servant. Does the patient mother train up her darling as if "lent unto the Lord"? Then is she serving whose she is, and whom she serves. Does an aged disciple honor his religion by cheerful serenity under the infirmities of fourscore? Then is he too serving God; for "they also serve who only seem."

I know a poor seamstress whose scanty purse serves Christ better than her rich neighbor's pocket-book stuffed with bank notes.

At I mention some are reading this homely paragraph whose fagged cranes and tear-swollen eyes tell of another kind of service still. They are engaged in the service of suffering. They are glorifying God in the fires. He whom you thus serve was once a Man of sorrows. These tears will all be wiped away when you pass the doorway of your Father's house.

In that heavenly house, "his servants shall serve him; and his name shall be in their foreheads," and will not be the brand of bondage, such as is burned into the brows of plantation slaves. Mammon thus brands his slaves with premature care-wrinkles. Sensual pleasure thus brands its devotees with "redness of eyes" and blinded vision. Renown brands the countenances of its victims with thin lines of error. But on the brows of those who "serve God day and night in his temple," beams the glorious signet of the Saviour; it is not the brand of bondage, but the seal of celestial liberty. Reader! are you the slave of sin, or the freedman of Jesus?—Evangelist.

THE HIGH PRIEST.

Christ is called not only a priest only, but the High Priest. For the high priest among the Jews was a very different personage from the other priests. He was of a distinct race from them, being confined to the line of Aaron, whereas the rest were from Levi or from Isaac; and thus Christ is of a different race by his divine nature than all Christians, who themselves are metaphorically called priests, but never any of them a high priest. Again, the high priest had richer garments than of the rest. He had two sets, which it was treason for any to usurp; one called the golden vestments, and in which he exercised his ordinary ministry; and the other his white vestments, when he went alone into the holiest of all, on the great day of atonement. So Christ's grace and innocence are peculiar to him, being perfect, which for any human saints, to pretend to were blasphemy. The high priest, at his consecration, was anointed with a rich and prescribed oil. It was poured out on his head in great profusion, running from the hair of his head to his beard, and to the lowest border of his garments, while the other priests with this oil mingled with the blood of their victims at the time of consecration (Lev. viii. 12-30). Thus Christ is anointed with divine influence above his fellows; he has a fulness of gifts and graces, out of which we all receive, and grace for grace. The other priests might marry widows, but the high priest was restricted from marrying a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman of ill repute; he could marry only a virgin (Lev. xxi. 7-14). In a union to her, he was to have the first love and a true love, and thus Christ must have of the Church, nor can any be of that Church who do not give it to him. "I have espoused you," says Paul to the Corinthians, "as a chaste virgin to Christ."

PURITY OF SERVANT.—The great excellency of the Christian religion is its power to purify the heart from sin. The types and emblems of the ceremonial dispensation shadowed forth in every particular the idea of purity. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation" was manifested to the world in the person of the Saviour, "who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people." His character while on earth, his actions, his precepts, his words, all were marked by spotless purity. If Christ is formed within us, he will be like him, for we shall see him as he is. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." Those who will give attention to the matter will be impressed with the number and clearness of the passages of Scripture that refer to the care we should exercise in regard to our words. There is no duty more plainly set forth, or more solemnly enjoined. We are convinced that there is among Christians at the present time too little of that purity of conversation enjoined by the Scriptures. They too often indulge in stories and jests that are much more befitting the circles of the ale-house and the gambling-saloon, than of those who profess to be striving through the grace of God to keep themselves unspotted from the world.

Strive to preserve a praying mind through the day, not only at the usual stated period, but everywhere, and at all times, and in all companies. This is your best preservative from error, weakness, and sin.