The Religious Intelligencer.

J Hazelton dec31 84

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

REV. J. McLEOD,] "THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."—Peter. [EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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CAPTAIN BALL'S EXPERIENCE;

OR THIEVES IN THE CHURCH.

"I have had a strange experience," said Captain Ball, speaking with much emotion, "it began about three weeks ago. I had lately been making some very good trades, and one night as I was riding home, reckoning up my gains, and feeling a pride and triumph in the start I had got in the world by my own exertions, it was starlight and very still; I could scarcely hear a noise but the field crickets and the tramp of my horse on the dark road, when suddenly a voice said, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'

"'Was it actually a voice?' I questioned, as I hesitated.

"No, I knew it wasn't all the time. But the impression was just as distinct and as unexpected as if it had been spoken by some person in my ear. I went to talk with my minister. I wanted to get into the church where I thought I would be safe. I had no conception of repentance and a change of heart. I supposed our pastor would commence questioning me about doctrines, and so forth, to let me know what I would have to believe before I could become a church member. But he didn't take any such course. He made me go into the house and sit down in his study where he talked about the blessedness of this world, independently of its rewards hereafter. Then he said:—

"'Captain Ball, do you know the first thing required to be done, if you would be a Christian?'

"I did not know.

"'The Christian life of a faithful follower of Jesus Christ,' said he, 'can be founded only upon repentance. Now it is easy to say we repent, but the only repentance that is worth anything is an active repentance, by which I mean not only sorrow for sin and an earnest desire to avoid it in the future, but one that goes to work, and seeks, so far as it is in his power, to make amends for everything wrong that we have done. Is there a person in the world, Captain Ball, who can look you in the face and say you have wronged him?'

"'He knew my weak point,' added the Captain. "Every one has his weak point, and I suppose the lancet must be applied there first. The question was like a sharp steel driven into my soul. I writhed and groaned inwardly, and struggled and perspired a long time before I could answer. I saw it was going to be dreadful hard for me to be a Christian. I meant, however, to get off as easy as I could. So I determined to confess something which I supposed was known to everybody who knows me—my horse trade with Peter Simmons last spring.

"'Did you wrong Peter?' said the minister.

"'I shaved a little,' said I.

"'How much?' said he. 'Tell me honestly what you think.'

"'I let him have a ringboned and windbroken nag that I had physicked up to look pretty gay, worth for actual use [illegible] and got in return a sound and steady beast worth sixty dollars and twenty-five dollars to boot. So I honestly think,' said I, 'that I shaved him out of about seventy-five dollars."

"'And with seventy-five dollars in your possession belonging to poor Peter Simmons, do you think you can commence a life of Christian purity? Do you think that Christ will hear your prayers for pardon, with stolen money in your pocket?' said the minister.

"'I said something about a trade, and men must look out for themselves when they swap horses; but he cut me short.

"'Your own soul,' said he, 'will not admit the excuses which your selfishness invents.'

"'But the rule you applied,' said I, 'will cut off the head of church members as well as mine. There's Deacon Rich, he trades horses, and shaves when he can.'

"'No matter,' said he, 'whose head it cuts off; no matter what Deacon Rich does. You have to deal with your own soul and with your Lord. And I tell you, whether you are out of the church or in it, a single dollar which you have unjustly and knowingly taken from any man without rendering him its full value of your ability,—a single dollar, I say, will be like a mill-stone hung upon your neck, to sink your soul into the sea of spiritual death.'

"I couldn't stand that. The Spirit of God used those words with terrible effect upon my heart. I was greatly agitated. The truth spoken by the pastor appealed to my understanding with irresistible power. I went away, but I couldn't rest. So I took seventy-five dollars and went to Peter and paid him, making him promise not to tell anybody; for I was ashamed to have it known that I was conscience-smitten, and paid back money. Then I went to the minister again, and told what I had done. He didn't praise me as I thought he would. He took it as a matter-of-course, and no more merit in it than to wash my hands before sitting down to supper. On the contrary, he suspected that my hands were not quite clear yet. He wanted to know if I had wronged anybody besides Peter. I tried to say no, but my conscience wouldn't let me. I could have told a plumper lie once without flinching,—yes, and flattered my own heart to believe the lie. I was discouraged; I felt bitterly disheartened. It was indeed so much harder to be a Christian than I supposed, that I regreted going to talk with the minister at all. Like the young man who had great possessions, I was on the eve of going away sorrowful. But my heart burned within me, and I was forced to speak.

"'In the way of business,' said I, 'no doubt I have taken advantage here and there, as everybody does; as church members themselves do when they can.'

"'What everybody does is no rule for you and me, Captain Ball,' said the minister. 'It is to be a Christian in the fullest sense—not simply to be church members—that we must strive for with all our hearts. The fact of being in the fold does not make the lamb: there are wolves in the fold also! but we are by no means justified in doing as the wolves do, even when they appear in sheep's clothing.'

"'I felt the rebuke. 'Well,' said I, 'there is Deacon Rich, I think he paid me a note twice. The first time he paid it we were transacting some other business, and by some mistake the note was n't destroyed. I found it among my papers afterward. I was a good deal excited, and lay awake more than one night thinking what I ought to do about it. The deacon was a hard man I considered, and took advantage of a man when he could. He had driven more than one hard bargain with me.'"

The deacon who was present, and heard these allusions made to himself, winced, and coughed uneasily. Captain Ball went on without appearing to mind him.

"'So,' said I to the minister, 'I concluded I would serve the deacon as he would serve me under similar circumstances. I kept the note by me for a good while, and when I thought the particulars of our settlement had slipped his mind, I said to him one day, "May be you would like to take up that note," which had been due then a considerable time. He was surprised, looked excited and angry, said he had paid it and held out stoutly for awhile; but there was the note. There was no proof that it had been paid, and finally he took out his pocketbook, and with some pretty hard words paid it over again with interest.'

"'And now,' said the minister, 'what are you going to do about it?'

"'I suppose,' said I, 'the money must be paid back.'

"So I went to the deacon the next day, and told him that on reflection I was convinced that he was right and I was wrong about the first payment of the note, and returned the money—one hundred and thirteen dollars—a good deal to his astonishment."

The deacon coughed and wiped his forehead. "I hoped then all was right," continued Captain Ball. "I tried to satisfy my conscience that it was; but I was afraid to go back to the minister, he had such a way of stirring up the conscience and finding mud at the bottom, when we flatter ourselves that because it is out of sight there is no impurity there.

"And I knew that as long as I dreaded to see the minister, something must be wrong; and on looking into my heart I found the matter of a mortgage which I had foreclosed on a poor man and got away his farm, when he had no suspicion but that I would give him time to redeem it. By that means I had got into my possession property worth two thousand dollars, for which I did not actually pay, and for which Isaac Dorr never actually realized more than half that amount. But the proceedings were entirely legal, so I tried to excuse myself. But my awakened conscience kept saying, 'You have taken a poor man's land without giving him a just return. The Law of God condemns you, although the law of man sanctions the wrong. You shall have no peace of soul, your heart will burn you until, with justice, you wipe out your injustice to him and to all others whom you have wronged.'

"Against the decree of my conscience I rebelled a long time. It was hard for me to raise a thousand dollars, together with the interest due from the time the mortgage was foreclosed; it was like taking my life to be obliged to subtract so much from my gains, and give it to a man who had no legal claim upon me. I groaned and mourned over it in secret, and tried to pray; but the mortgage came right up between my prayer and God, and heaven looked frowning through it. At last I could not resist the appeals of my conscience any longer, and I went again to the minister, told him my trouble, and asked what I should do.

"'There is a simple test,' said he. 'Do you love your neighbor as yourself? If you do, you will be just to him, if it takes from you the last dollar you have in the world.'

"That was a terrible sentence. I went out staggering from it as if I had received a blow. 'O God,' I said, 'how can I be a Christian?' But I had help beyond myself, otherwise I could never have endured that struggle. I knelt before God and solemnly vowed for his sake, for the sake of his pardon and love, I would not only do justice to the poor man I had wronged, but would give up all if need be, all I had in the world so that I might find peace in him. A strange soothing influence came over my soul, and a voice seemed to say, 'Though you lose all you have, God, Christ, and the blessing of a heart pure and peaceful shall be left,—the best and only true source of happiness and life." And in the solemn night time, after I gave up the struggle, that comfort seemed to me so great and precious that I felt willing, if it would only stay with me, to accept poverty, and to go into the world poor and despised, hugging that priceless blessing in my heart. The next day I was as light as if I had wings. Nothing could keep me from going to see Isaac Dorr, with a couple of hundred dollars in my pocket, and a note for the remainder of what I owed him.

"Well," said the narrator, with tears running down his cheeks, "I only wish that every person could have seen the Dorr family, when I visited them and made known my errand. Poor Isaac had grown discouraged, and had just made up his mind to quit his wife and children, and go to California. His children were crying, and his wife in an extremity of distress and despair. She received me a great deal better than I anticipated; I had acted according to law, she said, and Isaac, careless and improvident, was greatly to blame.

"'Yes,' said Isaac, with the firmness of a desperate man, 'it was a savage game you played on me, but I was a fool ever to get in debt as I did, and then fancy that any man would not take advantage when the law permits it. I am ruined in consequence, and here you see this woman and these babies—'

"The poor fellow broke down as he looked at them, and cried like a child.

"'Isaac,' said I, as soon as I could, 'I have come to show you that a man can be honest even when the law does not compel him to be. I want to do right, Isaac, because God commands it, and I have come to tell you that you needn't leave your wife and babies yet, unless you prefer to.'

"'Prefer to—go off to a strange country and leave them to suffer?' he cried, as he caught the children in his arms, and wrung his wife's hand, and sobbed as if his heart would break.

"Then I counted the money I had brought, and explained what I intended to do, and gave him the note, and such surprise and happiness I never saw. They would have kissed my feet if I had let them. It seemed to me as if heaven were opened then and there; and it was opened in my heart with such a flood of light and joy as I had never experienced or thought possible before.

"My friends," added the Captain, his once hard voice now almost as mellow as a woman's, his cheek still moist with tears, "I have been constrained to make this confession; I thank you for listening to it. The minister tells me a man may be a church member without being a Christian. I mean to be a Christian first, and if I fail—"

He could proceed no further, but sat down with an emotion more effective than any words.

I have nothing to add to this narrative except that he became a Church member, and that the example of thorough repentance, of child-like faith in Christ, and of religious, practical, every-day righteousness elevated many degrees the standard of Christianity among my people.—*Watchman and Reflector.*

WORK vs. GRUMBLE.

Mr. Work and Mr. Grumble met at the line fence. Both were preparing the ground to plant corn, and both lived on some of the finest land in the Country of Plenty in the state of Prosperity. Mr. Work is a man who from the earliest period of his life was industrious and patient. He was always busy taking good care of his means yet withal quite liberal. Mr. Work commenced quite young on but a small fortune. By the strictest application to business and by his industrious habits he was enabled to amass quite a fortune. But Mr. Work was one of those men who never worried about the weather or the failure of crops, or the loss of earthly means. When misfortune would come, as come it will to every one, he would bear it in the most submissive manner. He felt that he could not change the course of events which Providence directed and regarded it very wrong in any one finding fault with the rulings of Providence.

Mr. Work was always highly respected by all his friends and neighbors of his spirit of humble submission. No one would fault him because they felt that he had the spirit of Christ. They respected him for his industry, honesty and integrity. He was a man of influence in society. He was a patriot. He fought for his country and his rights. In the busy world men would honor his opinion, would respect his judgment. Mr. Work was truly a benefactor, willing to serve his fellow-men to the best of his ability. No task was too arduous or difficult for him. No sacrifice was too great, and because so benevolent he was so highly esteemed. Mr. Work was a faithful member of the church. He was consistent and his religion was genuine. No one doubted his sincerity, for the life of Christ was manifest in his walk and conversation.

But Mr. Grumble is quite a different man. It seems to be natural for him to be dissatisfied with every thing. He was borne of wealthy parents and inherited a large fortune. He was never satisfied with what he had. He always wanted more. He worked but he grumbled at everything he did. He was prospered but he did not think so. The weather was always wrong, either to cool, too hot, too wet, not wet enough, too dry, or not warm enough. It never suited him, but he was forever complaining. He never finds a day that suits. Now he meets Mr. Work. He has a great load of complaining. He is noted for grumbling. His neighbors and friends never put any confidence in him. He is a chronic fault-finder. These two men have met and enter into a discussion of the weather upon which they naturally disagree. Of course the conversation turns on religion and the church as well. Mr. Grumble is a church member and so you might expect Mr. Work to be. He is as good a church member as he is a citizen. He never misses but always finds it convenient to go to church. He works there to. He is elder. He does an elders work. He never wearies in well doing. Mr. Grumble is a member of the same church. Now as the line fence he wants to vent his spleen on the preacher, the church and everybody else. He says he don't like the preacher. He preaches too much, he is forever telling people their duty. Now I consider it my right to live such a Christian life as I think best, and if I want a little whiff of old rye when I go to town I simply want him and you officers to let me alone. Now he has been preaching temperance for a long while and I consider that I am as temperate as he is. And there is elder True I am shure if he would express himself the preacher would have to go. It costs too much. They want everything so stylish now-a-days that a common man can't sit in the cushioned pews. And Sunday-school is all a mistake, we never went to Sunday-school when I was young. The prayer-meeting! well that I think is very unnecessary anyway for I pay $3,000 a year to the salary and that pays the preacher for praying." This was the manner of his talk. Mr. Work took a decidedly opposite view of [illegible] and against everything and said, "As for me I love the preacher. He is sincere, honest and very industrious. He is building up the church, and people like him because he shoots right at the mark and gives it a centre shot every time. He spares neither saint nor sinner and I am persuaded that if we all do as he tells us that it will be no disgrace, but our present and future happiness will be enhanced by heeding his admonition. As for all the other things about the church I am satisfied that is due to the fact that you do not appreciate your privileges and hence you grumble at everything. You will no doubt find fault with the Lord on the day of Judgment for not giving you the brightest crown and the finest mansion in the Father's house, so good day I am done listening to you grumble."

Thus endeth the interview.—*Ch. World.*

FAR-FAMED HERAT.

It may not be uninteresting to take a glance at famous Herat, which has once again loomed up before the sight of the world as the bone over which the lion and the bear are growling. Herri, as it was anciently called from its contiguity to the Herri Rood River, has a story beyond the pen of accurate history, and, according to heathen traditions, had an existence close to the time when the world was miraculously evolved from chaos.

While Herat possesses immense interest historically, it occupies a geographical importance of such a nature as has for many centuries made it the central point for furious fighting among tribesmen and nations. Again and again it has been made the focus for Persian fury and ambition, and it is only by continual hard fighting that it now remains in the hands of the Ameer of Afghanistan. When England obtained, by intrigue, chicanery, and hard fighting, the dominat control of Hindostan she fully recognized Herat as one of the points d'appui from which an enemy might threaten that dominance, and hence it became the fashion to name the city "The gate of India." Situated picturesquely upon a spur of the Hindoo Koosh range, and surrounded by a bewildering network of deeply irrigated rice-fields—so bewildering that cavalry operations are made impossible with any freedom of action—Herat is at the same time powerfully fortified artificially. Recent Russian travellers have averred that nowhere in the East is the art of canalization carried so thoroughly or on so vast a scale as it has been in the valley of Herat, where the waters of the Herri Rood are utilized to the utmost extent. This state of circumstances naturally makes Herat a valuable basis of supplies for any army that may be fortunate enough to obtain possession of it. It is, therefore, no wonder that Herat has become a singularly important point of Central Asian commerce, roads forking from it into Persia, to Kabool, to Kandahar, to Beloochistan, and northwards through the Merve oasis and the Turkestan, more especially that part of Turkestan which is known as Bokhara. The city is nearly quadrangular, with faces about a mile long, and the high inner wall of defence is pierced by four gates pointing towards the different great cities with which it has communication. Thus, for instance, the great gates in the celebrated walls of Delhi were known as the Lahore Gate, the Cashmere Gate, and so on. The stupendous earth-work upon which Herat is built has been the wonder of modern times, being, according to Sir Henry Rawlinson, 550 feet in width at the base, fifty feet high, crowned by a wall twenty-five feet high and fourteen wide at the base, and supported by no fewer than 150 circular towers, which again are protected by a ditch forty-five feet wide and fifteen in depth. There have been disputes about the true strength of the fortress. In 1845 Gen. Ferries of the British army gave it as his opinion that the place was only an immense redoubt which an European army could reduce in twenty days, but it is significant that in 1837, with the assistance of two English Engineer lieutenants, the Heratees successfully held at bay for ten months a Persian army of 35,000 men supported by fifty pieces of artillery, which were in many cases directed by expert Russian officers.

The mosques of Herat are made exceedingly picturesque by bluish tessellated tiles, the bazaars are rich, and swarm day and night with motley groups of men drawn from every part of Central Asia, Afghanistan, and India; and bearing in mind all these facts, together with the fortuitous geographical position of Herat, it is no wonder that the famous city is coveted both by Russia and England. It possesses the unenviable reputation of being one of those cities so happily situated by nature that it must become perpetually the object of every powerful nation placed in its vicinity.—*Chicago Tribune.*

"MY GOD WILL HEAR ME."

What a charming sentence! Can you say it? Only five words, but what meaning? Huge volumes of poetry have appeared from Chaucer even to Tennyson; but it seems to me that the essence of poetry lies hid in a marvellously condensed form within these few words (Micah vii. 7) . . . "My God will hear me." This means, first, literally that he will hear me as listener. A good brother of my acquaintance, a minister of the Gospel, going to preach from the text that God will hear prayer, called upon one of his poor people, who said when the visit was over, that she had greatly enjoyed his call. He thought to himself, "I have scarcely said a word, and yet she says that I have done her good." Turning to her he inquired, "Sister, how can I have done you good? for I have hardly spoken with you." "Ah, sir," she replied, "you have listened so kindly; you have heard all I had to say, and there are very few who will do that." Just so. People in deep trouble like somebody to hear them all through; even little children are comforted by telling mother all about it.

And then the Lord will hearken as a friend full of sympathy. Some people listen but do not hear. You tell them your story, but it does not help you a bit, because their minds are no more moved by your case than if you were far away. They are just saying to themselves, "We will hear this poor lady's story; it will please her." But it does not please her, because she perceives that they have no sympathy, no fellow-feeling. The kind of person you like to tell your story to is one who weeps with you—who is really afflicted with affliction. It is greatly comforting to have a person with you who feels just as you feel; who when you are very stupid, seems to be stupid, too; who frets as you fret, and groans in your groaning. "Mother," said a little girl once, "I cannot make it out; Mrs. Smith says I do her so much good. Poor Mrs. Smith has lost her husband, mother, and she is very sad. She sits and cries, and I get up and lay my cheek on her cheek, and I cry and say that I love her, and then she says that she loves me and that I comfort her." Just so. That is the truest form of consolation; is it not? "Weep with them that weep." That is how God, my God, will hear me, feeling with me, sympathizing with me.

Now, child of God, go away with this promise in your hand, and in your heart—"My God will hear me." Whatever may [illegible] will clear your path. You are going to preach the Gospel in a distant country, perhaps; and your spirit sinks as you sigh, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Lift up your heart to God, and his grace shall be sufficient for you, and his strength shall be made perfect in your weakness, for your God will bear you. Or you have to go home to-night to a sick house, and to lose one that is dear to you. You shall be sustained, for in your ear is this word, "My God will hear me." Or, perhaps you yourself have to sicken and die. Do you inquire—What shall I do in the swellings of Jordan? Here is your happy, "My God will hear me." I shall cry to him, and he will answer me. He will have a desire to the work of his hands. Yea, though I go down into the valley of the shadow of death my God will hear me; and when I lie in the tomb my God will remember me, and he will call me up with the sound of the trumpet, and my body shall live again.—*Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.*

MEMORABLE WORDS OF THE DYING.

Adelaide Anne Proctor laid down at midnight the book she had been reading to while away the painful hours, saying, "O, mother! the death angel is here.

'Say not good-night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me good-morning!"

and smilingly breathed out her life.

"Poor child!" said a mother to a dying boy. "Say blessed child, say redeemed child, mother; for Jesus has found me, and it is sweet to die!"

President Blanchard's daughter, with extended hand, cried, "Give me the harp I hear!"

"We shall meet in the morning!" was uttered by a young husband to the anguished wife bending above him. O blessed vision of that perfect morn!

With many pauses, from great weakness, Dr. Bushnell said: "Well, now, we are all going home together; and I say, the Lord be with you; and in grace, and peace, and love, and that is the way I have come along home."

In mortal agony, the exquisitely strong soul of Frederick W. Robertson cried: "My God! my Father! My God! my Father! I cannot bear it! Let me rest! I must die! Let God do his work!

Bishop Abbott, in reply to the query if he was not fearful of the judgment day, uttered the triumphed words: "*In te speravi; non confoundebor in eterno.* In thee have I hoped; I will never be confounded."

In the south of England a manufactory was blown up, and caught fire immediately. Above the roar of flames and crash of falling timbers, and surging of the excited, anguished populace, children's voices were heard singing:

"We're going home, to die no more!"

Listen to the soft pleadings of the late Judge Black, so pathetic in tenderness and trust: "O, thou beloved and most merciful Father, from whom I had my being, and in whom I ever trusted, grant, if it will be thy will, that I no longer suffer this agony, and that I be speedily called home to thee. My God, bless and comfort this my Mary."

Here, again, the old Scotch marquis as he whispers: "Now have I taken my staff to be gone, like a peasant who has visited his friends, and will now return, and they will see him as far upon the road as they may. Hark! I hear Molly! O, Lord, what shall I do? for I am heavy, and my body keepeth down my soul! Hark! who calleth me! It is Molly! No, no! It is the Master. Lord, I cannot rise and come to thee. Here have I been for ages, and my spirit groaneth. Reach forth thy hand, Lord, and rise me. Thanks, Lord!"

Far out at sea a ship lies at anchor, becalmed, on a soft, still eve. The sailors hear music, floated to them over the waves, and, lowering a boat, row towards the sound. They find a woman lashed to a spar, singing:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the billows near me roll—
When the tempest still is nigh."

O, blessed faith, that could thus triumph in an hour like that! Surely "this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith."—*Selected.*

THE CHURCH FOR THE AGE.

We live in a time when all worldly callings bear testimony to the emptiness of mere wealth. The millionaire of to-day may be in absolute poverty to-morrow. Stocks and bonds are subject to the fluctuations of a fickle market. Permanent values are unknown, strictly speaking, on this globe.

The present is the time to consider higher themes than those of earth. Truth is imperishable. Many a man, deceived by luring wealth, is now ready to listen, as we declare to him that word which "abideth forever." The world needs now, if ever, a strong church—a believing church, an energetic church. That is, the world needs a church of positive force in the midst of decay and uncertainty everywhere visible. Negative goodness is not enough. The church must have vitality—the vitality of conscious experience.

The church for the age, therefore, is not an antiquated form; nor is it an undisciplined host, eager for battle array; nor is it a company who re-examine every doctrine with a view to test its soundness, unwilling to accept anything as proven before it has passed a human ordeal. The church must be in sympathy with the age; it must be organized for service; it must accept with unquestioning readiness the divine oracles. God calls this church to a forward movement against sin, worldliness, and entrenched social evils. He commands the church to offer peace where there is discord, hope where there has been disaster, bread for souls impoverished by the husks of this world.

Such a church is possible only when the individuals composing it are pure in heart and life, genuine in their intercourse, strong in their integrity, advancing daily in likeness to him, "proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

How much depends upon right principles inculcated in the church! Admit false statements or subtle errors, and the church will be unable to stand against assaults. Let the membership rest satisfied with a mere nominal relationship, destitute of a sense of adoption, indifferent as to their obligations toward God and man, and the church will give but little promise. Here is the weighty responsibility of the minister, the parent, and the Christian teacher.

DEMOLISHING THE BIBLE.

The Bible is a book which has been refuted, demolished, overthrown, and exploded more times than any other book you ever heard of. Every little while somebody starts up and upsets this book; and it is like upsetting a solid cube of granite. It is just as big one way as the other, and when you have upset it, it is right side up still. Every little while somebody blows up the Bible; but when it comes down it always lights on its feet, and runs faster than ever through the world. They overthrew the Bible monthly the whole thing. [illegible] hundred years," said Voltaire, "Christianity will have been swept from existence, and will have passed into history." Infidelity ran riot through France, red-handed and impious. A century has passed away. Voltaire has "passed into history," and not respectable history either; but his old printing press, it is said, has been used to print the Word of God; and the very house where he lived is packed with Bibles, a depot for the Geneva Bible Society. Thomas Paine demolished the Bible, and finished it off finally; but after he had crawled despairingly into a drunkard's grave in 1809, the book took such a leap that since that date more than twenty times as many Bibles have been made and scattered through the world as ever were made before since the creation of man. Up to the year 1800, from four to six million copies of the Scriptures, in some thirty different languages, comprising all that had been produced since the world began. Eighty years later, in 1880, the statistics of eighty different Bible societies which are now in existence with their unnumbered agencies and auxiliaries, report more than 165,000,000 Bibles, Testaments, and portions of Scripture with two hundred and six new translations distributed by Bible societies alone since 1804; to say nothing of the unknown millions of Bibles and Testaments which have been issued and circulated by private publishers throughout the world. For a book that has been exploded so many times it still shows signs of considerable life. I have heard of a man travelling around the country exploding this book, and showing up "the mistakes of Moses," at fifty shillings a-night. It is easy work to abuse Moses at fifty shillings a-night, especially as Moses is dead and cannot talk back. It would be worth something after hearing the infidel on "the mistakes of Moses," to hear Moses on "the mistakes of the infidel." When Moses could talk back, he was rather a difficult man to deal with. Pharaoh tried it and met with poor success. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and, it is said, found a grave in the red sea. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram tried it, and went down so deep that they have not yet got back. But now Moses is dead, and it is easy to abuse him. It does not take a very brave beast to kick a dead lion.—*Hastings.*

KEEP NEAR UNTO GOD.

Would you be quiet and have peace within in troublous times? Keep near unto God; beware of anything that may interpose between you and your confidence. *It is good for me,* says the Psalmist, *to be near God;* not only to draw near, but to keep near, to cleave to him and dwell in him; so the word imports. Oh, the sweet calm of such a soul amidst all storms! Thus, once trusting and fixed, then no more fear; *he is not afraid of evil tidings,* nor of any *ill-hearing.* whatsoever sound is, terrible in the ears of men, the noise of war, the news of death, or even the sound of the trumpet in the last judgment, he hears all this and is quieted. Nothing is unexpected. Being once fixed on God, then the heart may put cases to itself and suppose all things imaginable the most terrible, and look for them; not trouble before trouble comes, with dark and dismal apprehensions, but satisfied in a quiet, unmoved expectation of the hardest things. Whatsoever it is, though not particularly thought on before, yet the heart is not afraid of the news of it, because it is *fixed trusting in the Lord.* Nothing can shake that foundation, nor dissolve that union, therefore, no fear. Yea, this assurance stays the heart in all things, how strange and unforseen soever to it. All are foreseen to my God on whom I trust, yea, are forecontrived and ordered by him. This is the impregnable fortress of a soul. All is at the disposal and command of my God; my Father rules all; what need I fear?....This is the blessed and safe estate of believers. Who can think they have a sad heavy life? Oh, it is the only lightsome, sweet cheerful condition in the world....My brethren, my desire is to stir up in your hearts an ambition after this blessed estate of the godly who fear the Lord and trust in him, and so fear no other thing—a heart-ache of to-day.

The common revolutions and changes of the world, and those which in these late times we ourselves have seen, and the likelihood of more and greater coming, seem dreadful to weak minds. But these persuade us the more to prize and seek this fixed and unaffrighted station.—*Robert Leighton.*

THE GRACE OF "GIVING."

Yes, it is a grace. Well, perhaps it ought rather to be called an exercise—a spiritual gymnastic exercise. See how it works:

1. *Scriptural giving is paying the Lord interest on borrowed capital.* "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." "We are not our own." Face that lesson every week for awhile, and see if you don't learn it.

2. *Scriptural giving is identifying our work with the Lord's.* We are co-workers with God. He is the head, we are the members. Will not the co-worker soon feel the inspiration of this fellowship? Will not all his work be thereby glorified?

3. *Scriptural giving is recognizing the Lord's blessing upon us.* "As the Lord hath prospered us." Calculating every little while, "The Lord hath prospered me so much," is a kind of book-keeping that does us good.

4. *Scriptural giving is sacrifice for Him who sacrificed for us.* "Freely ye have received, freely give." Not so much a sacrifice of things needful in this present time as of things unnecessary and hurtful. It is rather a crucifixion of the effections and lusts by the refusal to nourish them. Yet, withal, it includes the consecration of even that which is for comfort and convenience. If we, by giving, develop this gratitude and the holiness of life, is it not worth the life?

5. *Scriptural giving is working for the Lord's special objects of care.* "As unto the Lord and not unto men." The Lord's special beneficiaries are the poor, the helpless, the defenseless, the simple, his ministers, his consecrated servants. Yes, it is more blessed to give than to receive in such a case. So, serving these with gifts, we grow into the mind of Christ.

6. *Scriptural giving is with many the single way in which they are helped to pray, "Thy kingdom come."* "Faith without works is dead." To pray aright, therefore, is dependent for this much at least on this exercise. Brethren, this grace be in you! Amen.—*Southwestern Presbyterian.*

THE COST.

The following exhibits the costliness of the drinking habit:

A gentleman was walking in Regent Park in London, and he met a man whose only home was in the poor house. He had come out to take the air, and excited the gentleman's interested attention:

"Well my friend," said the gentleman getting into conversation, "it's a pity that a man like you should be situated where you are. Now may I ask how old you are?

The man said he was eighty years of age.

"Had you any trade before you became [illegible]

"Did you use intoxicating drink?"

"No; oh, no, I only took my beer; never anything stronger; nothing but beer."

"How much did your beer cost a day?"

"Oh, a sixpence a day, I suppose."

"For how long a time?"

"Well, I suppose for sixty years."

"The gentleman had taken out his note-book, and he continued figuring with his pencil while he went on talking with the man.

"Now let me tell you," said he, as he finished his calculations, "how much that beer cost you my man. You can go over the figures yourself."

And the gentleman demonstrated that the money, a sixpence a day for sixty years, expended in beer, would, if it had been saved and placed at interest, have yielded him nearly eight hundred dollars a year, or an income of fifteen dollars a week, for self-support.

GRACE SUFFICIENT.—I told my people the other morning, when preaching from the text, "My grace is sufficient for thee," that for the first time in my life I experienced what Abraham felt when he fell upon his face and laughed. I was riding home, very weary with a long week's work, when there come to my mind this text, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" but it came with the emphasis laid upon two words: "*My* grace is sufficient for *thee.*" My soul said: "Doubtless it is. Surely the grace of the infinite God is more than sufficient for such a mere insect as I am" and I laugh ed and laughed again to think how far the supply exceeded all my needs. It seemed to me as though I were a little fish in the sea, and in my thirst I said: "Alas, I shall drink up the ocean." Then the Father of the waters lifted up his head sublime and smilingly replied, "Little fish, the boundless main is sufficient for thee." The thought made unbelief appear supremely ridiculous, as indeed it is.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

RANDOM READINGS.

There is no rainbow without a cloud and a storm.

One of the sublimest things in this world is plain truth.

Everywhere a Christain should be a positive power, so that wherever he carries himself, he will carry the power of Christianity.

Alas! this time is never the time for self-denial; it is always the next time. Abstinence is so much more pleasant to contemplate upon the other side of indulgence.

The best thing to give your enemy is forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to your child, a good example; to a father deference; to your mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself, respect; to all men, charity.

To carry with us the thought of God in every employment and entertainment of the day—this is to walk with God. In reading, in studying, in working with the hands, in walks and drives, to keep fresh the presence of God is to bring the divine into our lives.

Lost opportunity is never to be recovered by the soul any more. To come before the opportunity, is to come before the bird is hatched; and to come after it is to come when the bird is flown. There is no calling back time when it is once past.

The self-seeker echoing popular opinion is speedily left behind in the world's progress, and soon despised and forgotten. The man of truth and integrity, though for a moment he forfeit popular applause, is sure to command universal respect and to win at last.

There are many ways in which it would be well for us to carry our childhood with us, even on into old age, if it were possible, in its tastefulness, not only to love, but to show that we love, as well. Why, that last alone would cure many a heart-ache of to-day.