

**The Cure of Sorrow.**

Silence is no certain token  
That no secret grief is there;  
Sorrow which is never spoken  
Is the heaviest load to bear.

Seldom can the heart be lonely  
If it seek a lonelier still,  
Self-forgetting, weeping only  
Brighter cups of love to fill.

'Twill not be a fruitless labor,  
Overcome this ill with good;  
Try to understand your neighbor,  
And you will be understood.

—Frances Ridley Havergal.

**WORDS versus DEEDS.**

BY W. C.

NUMBERS, xxiii, 10.—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

The long and dreary march of the Exodus has all but been completed, and Israel are encamped on the Plains of Moab, on the eastern bank of the Jordan, over against the renowned city of Jericho. Sihon King of Heshbon, and Og King of Bashan, who had offered resistance to the invading hosts of Israel, had been conquered, and their countries taken possession of by Israel.

Moab, with that eastern hate and treachery in his heart, desired the utter destruction of the mighty hosts of Jacob, but judging by what he saw of their great numbers, and the mighty deeds wrought in connection with this people in their wonderful delivery from slavery in Egypt, and their march thro' the wilderness—he hesitated to make an attack upon them, which he had wisdom enough to foresee would be entirely abortive. There was to his mind a supernatural agency at work in their behalf, and to checkmate that, supernatural means must be used. Of this power he had none in his own dominions. Under the circumstances, he felt weak and powerless.

But he sent messengers therefore to Balaam, the poet seer, to Aram on the mountains of the East, and over looking Pethor, which is by the great river Euphrates, to entreat him to come to his assistance, for "Behold there is a people come from Egypt, behold they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now therefore I pray thee and curse this people, for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom thou blessed is blessed, and he whom thou cursed is cursed." In this manner did Balaam the King of Moab purpose waging war—the supernatural with the supernatural—the mysterious spiritual with the agency of the same spirit.

The details of the negotiations between the King and the prophet are so familiar to all readers of the Bible that it is unnecessary to dwell on the particulars. Suffice it to say, that thro' the cupidity of Balaam, we find him in company with the King on the summit of Abarim, the sacred high place for the worship of Baal, in the kingdom of Moab.

In speaking of this circumstance, Dr Hackett observes: "The sin of Balaam was one of peculiar aggravation, and is characterized as such in the epistles of Peter and Jude. To see his conduct in its true light, we must call to mind the geography of the scene. This professed servant and prophet of Jehovah was standing at the time on one of the summits of the Abarim beyond Jordan, from which Moses was permitted to behold the land of Promise, just before his death. (For the range of view under the eye of the spectator from that position, we are not left to imagination.) Standing there, Balaam was on a mount consecrated to pagan worship and thronged with idolaters. On his left hand, he sees the dark waters of the Dead Sea, with its black and desolate shores, which were recognized among all the Eastern tribes as a monument of God's wrath against the impious and ungodly. On the right, he sees the land of the Amorites, whom Jehovah had just overthrown as proof of his power and purpose to destroy the wicked, and to give the victory to His people. In the valley of the Jordan lies spread out before him the camp of Israel, divided according to their tribes, in the midst of which is seen the tabernacle of God, above which, hangs the pillar of cloud, while in the distance beyond the camp, his eyes rest upon the land which he knew to be promised to the people of Israel. Yet even in this situation, amid so much to show him how fearful a thing it is to sin against the Infinite One, he dared, for the reward which Balak tempted his avarice, to abuse his office as a holy prophet, and to attempt, once and again, to call down curses on those whom God had blessed. How much more vivid is our conception of Balaam's apostasy and guilt, when we thus place ourselves in imagination where he stood in that critical hour of his moral history."

Balaam is one of the strange actors in Bible history. He dwelt among a heathen people, yet he had a knowledge of the Great God of the Universe. By what process, or means, he obtained this knowledge, we know not, but the power with which he seems to have been inspired was not always turned to its honest and legitimate purpose. His character had its light and dark side—its good and its evil. Heavenly words were on his tongue, that kindle a thrill of emotion on the heart, while hellish thoughts were ranking in his heart. He was willing for filthy lucre's sake to use his heaven-born powers to the most diabolical purposes, and in the face of the God of heaven, he is ready to engage in the idolatrous worship of Baal.

"Build me here seven altars and prepare me seven oxen and seven rams." Could there be anything more presumptuous! In the immediate foreground were the altars of Baal smoking with an idolatrous offering around and beyond this prescribed mountain top, was much to inspire awe and reverence for the true God. Nature was there in its grandeur of mountain range, wide plain, lake, and river, and on the plain in shining tents were the thousands of Israel, the people against whom there is no enchantment, for the spirit that wrought mightily in him was the same spirit that hovered over that encampment in a pillar of either fire or cloud. Ah, Balaam, what a strange position for a prophet of the Lord! And into what strange company hast thou come!

But with this we have little to do, for as the victims burn upon the altars, the spirit came upon him, and wondrous words sweet and inspiring came from his lips.

"From Aram hath Balak brought me, The King of Moab from the mountains of the East:

Come curse me Jacob,  
And come, defy Israel,  
How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?

And how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?  
For from the top of the rocks I see him,  
And from the hills I behold him:

Lo, it is a people that dwell alone,  
And shall not be reckoned among the nations,

Who can count the dust of Jacob,  
Or number the fourth part of Israel?

Let me die the death of the righteous,  
And let my last end be like his!"

Balaam, no doubt, expressed more than his intellect was capable of grasping. The message, or utterance of the Spirit did not so much concern him or Balak, as it did all coming inquirers after truth among the nations of the earth. Israel was the central thought of the Providential dealings of God with men. They were God's people, and were to be representative people while earth endures. Jacob might decrease and be lost to sight, but Israel the Prince that prevailed with the Angel of the Covenant, shall increase more and more.

The Plains of Moab at this date contained the armies of Jacob, but the time will come when no man can count the dust of Jacob, and number the fourth part of Israel, for it shall be as the sand of the sea shore. That day is speeding onward, and Israel has largely increased her borders. The Israel of God is now spread out in many lands, and the islands of the sea rejoice under the banner which he hails as his standard. This prophecy is an unending prophecy. It is as fresh, and more real to-day, than when uttered on the high plateau of Nebo.

But the climax is reached and contained in the concluding clause which I have chosen as my text. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

This was a remarkable wish for a man like Balaam to make. But the fact is, that with such erratic characters as he, you can make no calculation. Nor can you say that in the present case, he was responsible for the words which he uttered. But there is no denying the fact, also, that he might and ought to have profited by the truths put into his mind by God, and which he was made the mouthpiece to the world.

In considering this passage, and that very briefly, we notice that Balaam expressed the fact that there is such a thing in the world as death. Nothing could be more self-evident. Young are we when we learn the sad story of death, and to the child there is nothing that meets him with such discouragement as the fact that he must die—it is the most unwelcome of all truths, and many are the youthful speculations made in regard to death—why the God whom they have been taught as the best and wisest, and most powerful of all beings, whom we all should love and obey, why he that loves man so much should have permitted sin and death to afflict man all the days of his life.

And it is not until in Christ he is made to see that the sting has been taken away from death, and death ceases to be really death, but only a change of scene and condition—from a lower to a higher, and ever advancing state of life and happiness and glory. Balaam acknowledges his own mortality: Let me die. It is well to have the idea of death well settled in our minds, as something which is the ultimate result of every earthly life. Mutation, death, and decay, are written on the face of all things on this side of the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem. But death comes but once, but it is the end as regards probation. The present is the preparatory state of life, it is the initiative as well as the index of that purer life to come.

Death to the Christian is the happiest day of his history, for then he exchanges the earthly with all its cares for the heavenly with all its enjoyments. The former state we know and experience now—the latter we have a foretaste only, for it does not yet appear what we shall be, but when He shall come, we shall be like Him, and then comes that fullness of joy which the bodily senses in our present state cannot conceive or comprehend.

To the wicked death is the most sad and solemn of all realities—it involves the giving up all that might have been pleasant in life on earth for the stern and unchangeable decrees that a broken law, a despised gospel, and a rejected Saviour, measures out to them. It is the result of neglected opportunities, a wasted life. It involves a dwelling place with incarnate demons in an everlasting punishment, ever deepening in its degree of guilt, from age to endless age.

Balaam, in the ecstatic trance, wishes to die the death of the righteous. What could be more natural for a man whose eyes had been opened to see the future glories of Israel as consummated in the joys of heaven.

The death of the righteous is the grandest ending of any earthly career. It is the most stupendous victory over the external obstacles devised by the world, the flesh and the devil, for man's destruction. To accomplish this, it cost heaven the brightest jewel in the treasure-house of God. The unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ as, the Saviour of the world.

The death of the righteous involves a life of holiness. The Christian life is not an act, but a series of acts. We do not grow holy at once, it involves a work of time, just as fruit requires time to ripen. To die well, we must live well. It takes time to learn to live as becometh the gospel. Christian life is a development. It has its origin in God, the germ is His, the soil in which it is deposited is His, the mysterious growth is His, for it springeth up and groweth up we know not how. We can watch the manifestations of advancement: first the tender blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in ear. Then cometh the completeness, the maturity, the perfection of Christian character on earth, and the Lord of the Harvest seeth that the full time has come, puts in the sickle and the righteous are gathered amid songs of rejoicing into the garner of the Lord.

And there is a further step in the wishes of the seer: that his last end shall be like his. Jacob represents Israel, and Israel represents all the redeemed out of every nation and people and kindred and tongue. The onward march of the Kingdom of Christ is the one great and stupendous miracle of the Kingdom of grace. Small at its birth, it is designed to be great in its growth and development. We judge a work, not by its beginning but by its ending. The Christian religion has outlived its infancy, and it is tending towards its end. We live in the beginning of the end, but the end is not yet. The bye and bye is in the far future. If the beginning bids so fair and encouraging, what will the consummation be? There is much to cheer the inquirer after a life of holiness, much to stimulate the laborer in the Kingdom, the prospective harvest of souls is great, for there is a healthy growth in the gospel field. The Macedonian cry is heard from many lands for help, the isles are waiting for a message from God. The church of God is awakening up to its responsibilities, and missionary enterprise is stimulated. Bible study is engaging the attention of the learned to a degree never before known, and the Bible is being issued from the press, and published in larger numbers, and at a cheaper price than ever before accomplished. These, and a thousand other agencies, are at work to hasten the end. Much remains to be accomplished. Much people are yet to be disciplined, and baptized into the name of the Three One God. Many nations are yet to be born into the Kingdom. But all cometh in the order that God has appointed, and it will not be delayed one day beyond the appointed fullness of the time when

cometh the perfect fulfillment of the ending.

And while we take pleasure in meditating upon the words of inspiration as uttered in these beautiful prophetic passages from the heights of Abarim, and learn many lessons from them, we, at the same time with pain and regret, turn our thoughts to the silver-tongued seer, who sang so sweetly of coming events.

Balaam is a representative of a large class in the world who express a wish for the blessedness which Christ has promised to his people, but who are averse to imitating the mind that was in him. In scripture there is made a marked difference between saying and doing. Christ says: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." And Paul writes: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." There are many like this eastern seer whose words are very sweet and pleasant, who have large professions of love to the cause of Christ, who have even large acquaintance intellectually with the truths of the gospel, and who can talk and reason, and argue by the hour on religious matters; but who have no saving experimental acquaintance with Christ and the Kingdom of his grace. They profess great zeal for heavenly things, and employ a flippant eloquence in speaking of the most sacred things. They set great value on religion, mistaking it for piety—a holy life—a change of heart, affected by the new birth. These they have not, because they wish them not. They fail generally to find any place or any people just to their mind—mankind is corrupt—the church is corrupt—the worship is defective—the doctrines held by the church are not in accordance to their advanced opinions—in fact, the whole machinery of worship is out of gear, and all things are tending to destruction.

Such men, like Balaam, are ever ready to serve the master that offers the greater inducement. They are willing to prostitute their best gifts to the very worst ends. Simon Magus would buy the gift of the Holy Spirit for money that he might retail it at a profit. Balaam was willing for money to use the gift that God had so richly endowed him with, to curse his chosen people, and when he failed in that, he caused a stumbling-block to be put in the way of Israel, by which sin and reproach fell upon them, and thousands perished for their weakness and folly.

We learn from the history of this seer that men are liable to be led astray, even men whose eyes have been enlightened, by the light of a better life. The love of gain is said to be the root of all evil, and how many, even in our own day, are carried away by the sin of avarice, to do injustice to themselves, and discredit to the profession which they make. This can be traced to no defect in the gospel, or any of the appointed ordinances of grace, but rather to a turning away from these means, and refusing to use the strength and grace so freely bestowed upon all who are in need. It has been said that every man has his price, that he can be bought for so much. I cannot indorse such an idea. I consider it a libel on the human character. I believe that there are men and women who are far above any price, who cannot be bought with the most fine gold, who could not be tempted to do evil for reward. I have faith in a true and enlightened Christian manhood and womanhood. Such stability comes from the renewing and strengthening influence of the Holy Spirit. Paul says: I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.

Thank God for that assurance, for what Paul could do, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, can enable us to do, if we put our whole confidence in him.

**Paying for Money and Getting Cheated**

The love of money is said to be the root of all evil. So great is that love, in a majority of cases, that almost any price is paid for it. We propose briefly to discuss the matter, and show that money, like other things, is often bought too dearly.

When a man in pursuit of wealth sacrifices moral principle in order to insure success, he gets cheated.

When he pursues a business, however remunerative, which he knows is undermining his health, he gets cheated.

When he habitually devotes so many hours to labor that he has no time to give to his family and friends, to reading, mental and moral culture, he gets cheated.

When he makes money by rum-selling, or any other traffic which works mischief in the community, he gets cheated.

When he ignores "all outside matters," and is determined to make money anyhow, leaving religion, politics, friends, benevolent objects, and "everybody to take care of themselves," he gets cheated.

When he finds making money in his fashion excludes him from the society of all truly good men, he gets cheated.

When he is determined, in old age, to give himself no rest or relaxation, but work on, grasping for more, more, he gets cheated.

When he has money enough to satisfy any reasonable being, and should haul in sail and devote some of his best time and energies to doing good—but won't do it, and works on—he gets cheated.

When he finds his hard-earned wealth is injuring both himself and family, and his children are growing up in ignorance and idleness, and they are all "good-for-nothing" to the world, it is evident that he has got abominably cheated.

Don't, therefore, pay too much for money. It will not furnish you all you desire. It will not insure you good health. It will not enrich the heart. It will not deliver you from danger. It will not follow you beyond the grave. It will not save your soul.

Don't, therefore, we pray you, in getting gold, sacrifice your principles, your health, your friend, your good name, the best interests of your family, or your for if you do, you are cheated for time and for eternity. Don't get cheated.

**PERNICIOUS READING.**

The bad influence of pernicious books, especially on the young, is set forth in these anecdotes:

The boy David Hume was a believer in the Scriptures until he ransacked the works of infidels to prepare for a debate in which he was to take part.

It is said of Voltaire that when only five years of age, he committed to memory an infidel poem, and was never able after that to undo its pernicious influence upon his mind.

Thomas Chambers, an officer of the British Government, says that all the boys brought before the criminal courts can ascribe their downfall to impure reading.

Wilberforce, speaking of the works of Lindsey upon his own mind, thus wrote:

"It was a foolish curiosity, and I was obliged to stop when I had proceeded a little way in the second volume: for, though I was sensible of the sophistry and effrontery of many of his arguments and objections, yet, somehow, my mind was entangled and hurt, and after I had put the book away, it was two or three days before I was composed again."

Robert Hall tells us in one of his sermons, that after reading a certain work, he "could scarcely go through the usual devotional exercises of the sanctuary."

**Hardened.**

In the most powerful revivals there is generally found at least one spectator looking on in silent, mocking pride because he is untouched by the mighty power of the Spirit which is moving all other men to feeling. He is like a plant in a glass house,

"That spreads its leaves in unmolested peace,  
While every bush and tree the country  
Is shaking to its roots."

But that man, so enclosed in stubborn unbelief and self-satisfied pride, is the most pitiful object in the agitated congregation, because he is self-hardened against that divine love which is striving to melt his obstinacy and transform him into a happy saint. He is inviting that fatal stroke with which Heaven, when wearied with a sinner's persistent rebellion, strikes him down to that perdition from which he has refused to be saved. Against that stroke the pride which now covers his heart as with a coat of mail, from which the arrows of conviction fall blunted at his feet, affords no protection. It is only brittle glass, which God's judgments will break into small pieces, thus leaving him to weep and wail in the outer darkness from which he refused to be saved. How pitiful a thing is such a hardened sinner's pride!

**"EVIL COMMUNICATIONS."**

"During the summer a man hung his canary's cage outside the window. Every day a number of sparrows congregated near the cage. Before the summer had passed away the canary had lost all its sing, and would only chirp like the sparrows. The canary had got into bad company."

Beware of bad company. You may think you can have bad associates and not be like them, but you can't. Choose your friends with care. Good friends will help you to form good habits. With good playmates the hours of recreation will pass pleasantly, and will not be marred by quarrels or followed by the stings of a guilty conscience.

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