

THE VISITOR'S PULPIT.

The Weeping Saviour.

AN ARGUMENT FOR MISSIONS AND A PATTERN FOR THE MISSIONARY.

BY REV. DR. LANDELS.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.—Luke xix. 41.

To a cursory observer there was no time during our Saviour's earthly life when he seemed to have so little cause for weeping.

The popular feeling, influenced by his teaching and his miracles, was more favorable than it had ever been, and was being expressed in the most demonstrative manner. Beholding Him as he rode into Jerusalem on an ass's colt, the people recognised the fulfilment of an ancient prediction, and hailed Him as their King. "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed after, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest." From the brow of the Mount of Olives, to which He had now come, the scene which presented itself was as pleasing to the eye as the hosannas of the multitude were grateful to the ear. With the city before Him, so beautiful for situation; the mountains surrounding her like a girdle of strength; her towers and walls of defence adding to her security; the Temple turrets glistening in the sunshine; the olive crowning the hill where he stood, and lower down the vine and the fig-tree covering the slopes, there could be few spectacles more gratifying to the patriotic eye. But His omniscient mind looked beyond that fair scene to the events which were to follow in such quick succession, and far beyond that to the fearful retribution which would overtake those who were about to become the perpetrators of a most gigantic crime. The cross He saw, and the multitude surrounding it. The cry He heard, so fiendish in its malice, "Away with Him, crucify Him," so reckless in its infatuation, "His blood be on us and on our children." He foresaw the consequences to which all this must lead, and though they were His murderers, the prospect of their suffering moved Him to tears. "And when—" We cannot profess to explain the pathology of His tears, but their practical lessons are obvious enough, and we call your attention to this touching incident in His life for two reasons, bearing on the work we have in hand. First, because His tears attest the reality of the sinner's danger; and, secondly, because they show us how we ought to feel and act towards perishing men.

REALITY OF THE SINNER'S DANGER.

1.—The Saviour's tears attesting the reality of the sinner's danger.—The clear recognition of this is the mainspring of such evangelistic efforts as this society contemplates, and there is all the more reason for our dwelling on it from the fact that a spirit is now abroad—a charitable or catholic spirit it claims to be—which is fitted to repress the revival of evangelistic zeal, which we now happily witness, and to take all pith and heart out of the Church's efforts for the conversion of the world, and, in fact, to dry up entirely those feelings by which, throughout all ages, such efforts have been sustained. This catholic, or charitable spirit, so called, being a not unnatural reaction from the intolerance evinced by different sections of the Church towards each other, and towards all beyond their own pale, an intolerance which presumed to shut out from salvation all who failed to pronounce their theological shibboleth, is not to be very harshly or indiscriminately censured. To some extent it unquestionably merits our approval. It is only when it runs to excess, and sweeps away not only the narrowing peculiarities of party, but the great landmarks of evangelical truth, as it does, or threatens to do, now, that we feel called upon to enter our demurrer to its conclusions. We can go with it when it recognises the existence of spiritual life in circles where we have not been accustomed to look for it, and where perhaps we may have been too ready to affirm that no such thing could be found—that is, among those whose creed or whose interpretation of Scripture differs from our own; but we must demur to its conclusions when it assumes its existence where God's Word plainly tells us it is not, and cannot be—among those, to wit, who abjure revelation entirely, or to whom the truths it reveals are entirely unknown.

UNSCIENTIFIC VAGARIES AND OVER-WISE RELIGIONISTS.

Scientific men, we think, erred greatly,

recklessly violating their own principles, and leaping to a conclusion in the most unscientific manner, when, having found the beginning of life in the protoplasm, or primordial cell, they attributed to matter the power of spontaneous generation, or as one of them announced from the seat of authority, "all the possibilities and potentialities of life." This conclusion, as the result of subsequent investigations, they are already compelled to abandon, the authority referred to having recently declared "that no shred of trustworthy experimental testimony exists to prove that life in our day has ever appeared independently of antecedent life." This confession, after the declaration as to the potency of matter, which so startled the religious world, must be somewhat mortifying, one would say, to him who makes it, and may convince religious people who are apt to be thrown into a flutter by every unscientific vagary which scientists may choose to propound, that true science is much less hostile to religion than they are apt to suppose, and that creation contains footprints of her Creator which science with all its atheistic leanings, is unable to obliterate. But this error of scientific men is trivial as compared with that of religious teachers, who, because they are constrained to recognise the existence of spiritual life beyond the limits of their own party, assume its existence where men are either of necessity or choice ignorant of the great truths of revelation. It were an assumption of infallibility to say that it cannot be found in those who differ from us in their interpretations of the Word of God. But it is going in the teeth of our only infallible guide, and claiming to be wiser than the Book which it is our office to expound, when we ignore the fact so plainly revealed that "where no vision is, the people perish"; that "this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus whom thou has sent"; that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." It is a fine thing to be charitable, and to make all men, however unscriptural their belief, praise our liberality. But for all that our charity becomes a foolish and a dangerous thing when it presumes to be wise above that which is written.

BELIEFS THAT WEAKEN AND THE ZEAL THAT WEARS.

Such disregard to the teaching of Scripture on this matter is most inimical to evangelistic zeal. The Church must recognise the ruined state of men without the Gospel, before she will bestir herself to make the Gospel known to them. When our preaching degenerates into a mere attempt to propagate a belief, and has not the salvation of men for its motive, the zeal which sustains it will soon flag. There may be spurts of excitement now and again—spasmodic and transient efforts put forth when circumstances seem specially favorable for the object contemplated; but they will gradually and speedily languish when disappointments and discouragements abound. The history of missions shows that in order to the sustained effort which toils on through weary years without sign of success, there must be the recognition of the great danger to which the souls of men are exposed, and of a possible glorious deliverance through the means employed for that end. Still more unfavorable to evangelistic effort, and fitted to unstring the sinews of those who are engaged in it, is the now prevalent, soft-hearted sentimentalism which assumes that because they are repugnant to itself the threatenings of Scripture cannot be true. The misery they describe, it is thought, is too awful to be endured, and the most solemn warnings, are, in consequence, as little regarded by many, as if there were no such thing as suffering in the universe. To a large extent even Christian men, who believe in the Lord's goodness, are apt to leap to the conclusion that the future condition of the lost will be less awful—I do not say than the representations of orthodoxy, but less awful than the Scriptures legitimately interpreted would lead them to conclude. Now, far be it from me to deaden the repugnance with which any one regards pain. Still further be it from me to weaken your conceptions as to the greatness of God's love. Pain in itself can never be contemplated without repugnance by any truly benevolent mind, nor can anyone form a too exalted conception of the love of God, although, with the Apostle, he believes that it passeth knowledge. But, nevertheless, we cannot regard this feeling as one which may be safely relied on, or as guiding to right conclusions in reference to this awful matter. It would be well for those who make their own feelings

the standards of judgment to remember that the strongest language which describes the punishment of the ungodly came from the very lips of Incarnate love. It is our Saviour Himself who speaks of the unprofitable servant being cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. It is He who tells us that it is better to enter into life maimed, than, having all our members, to be cast into the Gehenna fire, "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." It is He, as He forewarns, who will say to the wicked, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." It was He who declared that it would have been good for the traitor that he had not been born. And it was no want of tenderness which led Him to speak in such manner, nor any want of acquaintance with the Divine love. He knew that better than any one; and knew also what the threatenings of Scripture mean. In no reckless or flippant manner did He utter His words of doom. He wept over the sufferings which He foresaw and described. And while His tears testify that He had a clear apprehension of what they were, they also show that His threatenings were traceable to no harshness or want of sympathy. Suffering was no less repugnant to Him than it is to you. His nature was more refined and susceptible than yours, and more sensitive, therefore, to the joys and sorrows of men. His tears attest the tenderness of His heart—His tremulous human sympathy as well as His Divine compassion. Oh, it was not because the suffering of others was not repugnant to Him, that He spake of it in such decided manner, but because, existing as a fact, it could not be ignored. And it may well rebuke the indifference of those who forget, and the presumption of those who deny, the future sufferings of the ungodly, that He wept over them who could judge of them so well.

SOME RECENT CRITICISM CRITICISED.

In view of His tears we cannot but regret some recent utterances, which, because of the source from which they have come, have been received with a degree of approval to which their intrinsic importance does not entitle them. The utterances themselves may, indeed, be technically true, but the impression they have produced in some quarters is to our knowledge essentially false. When the statement is broadly and sweepingly made that there are no such words as *hell* and *damnation*, and *eternal*, as applied to punishment, in the New Testament, it can be argued in its favour that the word rendered *hell* is Tartarus, or Gehenna, or Hades, and that the word rendered *damnation* means sometimes judgement and sometimes condemnation, and that the word rendered *eternal* means age-long; and it may further be argued that because the words in question have come to bear a too harsh significance, they ought not to be used. But it cannot be denied after all that what they represent means something awful. And it ill behoves the Christian teacher to speak in such a manner as to leave the impression that there is nothing behind them, and to lead men to say exultingly, as we have heard them say, that it is something to know that there is no *hell*, or *damnation*, or *eternal suffering*. When it is said that there is no such word as *hell* in Scripture, it should also be said that it is difficult to find a word of milder meaning which will serve as an equivalent of the original, and as representative of the thing to which it is applied. Whether there be a *hell* or not, there is a place and state to which our translators have applied the word, because they could find no one more suitable. There is *Gehenna fire* into which the wicked are cast, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; there is "outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth," to which the wicked are consigned; there is "a lake burning with fire and brimstone;" there is a Hades where men are tormented in flames. On the wicked, God "rains snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, and that shall be the portion of their cup;" there is "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man that doeth evil." Whether there be *damnation* or not, there is certainly condemnation, and no one can say that that means anything less awful. It is associated with the wrath of God; for he "that believeth not is condemned already and the wrath of God abideth on him." And damnation cannot be anything worse than that may imply. And if it be that everlasting means *age-long*, no one can say what duration *age-long* may denote, whether it be not interminable—whether *age-long* punishment may not be as enduring as *age-long* life. Should we not be careful, then, not to deal with the words in such manner as to give men the impression that they have

little reason to dread the awful realities to which they have been applied?

AWFUL SIGNIFICANCE OF SCRIPTURE WARNING.

Let it be admitted that much of the language of Scripture is not to be literally interpreted—that admission does not divest it of its awful significance. The fire may not be literal, and the worm may not be literal, and other things may not be literal—we have no conception that they are. We do not suppose that literal fire or literal worms have any power to touch the spiritual part of our nature. But, whether literal or not, when so applied they mean something, and that must be a terrible something which such figures are employed to represent. Can it indeed be other than a terrible something which is involved in the soul being lost; disordered in itself and cut off from its proper relation to God and the universe; at enmity with Him and exposed to His righteous indignation? I am not speaking of any direct infliction as coming from the Divine hand. God has power to express his displeasure without that; and may do nothing more than leave the sinner to endure the penalty which attaches to the violation of His own law. I am not supposing, therefore, that there is any suffering apart from that. I say nothing of that which may be inflicted by a Being of almighty power and infinite resources; or of that which may come upon the sinner from anything beyond his own state. I say nothing of the possibility of his being crushed in the grasp of that Omnipotence in whose hand he lies; or of His power to punish who controls the forces of nature and all those unseen influences which touch the soul of man. I say not how He could avenge Himself on His adversaries, and recompense them for their rebellion by causing to shoot through every part of their sensitive being the most excruciating pangs. I speak only of the suffering which is inseparable from sin. For it should be remembered that to sin is to suffer, sooner or later. It is to plunge a poisoned dagger into one's own breast. It is to let loose a herd of unruly passions that they may riot in, and lay desolate, the fair garden of the soul. It is to kindle in one's own heart the very flames of hell. "It is not always" so, you say. Not, we admit, in the results which immediately appear. For in the present life, these results are in most cases greatly neutralised by the various objects which divert the attention of the soul from its own state, and the gratification which from various sources is ministered to different parts of our nature. But, even here and now, cases are met with in which the terrible effect of sin becomes manifest through the thin veil by which it is usually concealed, and glimpses are afforded us of what is the natural, and will sooner or later be the actual, condition of a guilty soul. Oh, if men could see what I have sometimes seen, they would not think lightly of the suffering which is the natural consequence of sin. Picture to yourselves a man with no bodily pain—with nothing in his circumstances to distress him—with no external cause whatever of mental depression or anxiety, and yet presenting a very personification of wretchedness—hanging the head in sullen, hopeless misery, despair depicted in every feature, thrilling the bystanders with his mournful shrieks and moans, declaring in tones which leave no doubt of his sincerity that hell would be a welcome refuge if it would only hide him from himself. To escape from himself, to blot out the remembrance of the past, to terminate his own existence, to bury himself, with all his thoughts and emotions, in oblivion for ever—that is the wish which with suicidal hand he seeks to realise. I have seen that in this beautiful world, where the fruits of God's bounty were strewn around, and God's sky was bending over the sufferer, and friends were waiting to perform their ministries of kindness, and a thousand witnesses bore testimony to the Divine goodness. And if sin will occasion such suffering here—if even here the soul may be so tortured as to wish itself out of existence, if it would forego all the delights which the earth can yield for the sake of escaping from its own torment—who can tell what the condition of the ungodly may be when cut off from every source of pleasure, and incapacitated for the pursuits which now minister to their gratification—when no less alienated from God, they are still more sensible of His displeasure—and when the consciousness that they lie helplessly under His frown, although producing despondency, does not necessarily lead to submission, but may only madden to more determined rebellion, rousing into tempestuous although impotent fury, those discordant passions which are now the bane, and will then be the unrestrained tormentors,

of the soul? What that condition will be one shudders to imagine. More awful than we can conceive. The prospect of its overtaking His countrymen was enough to make the Saviour weep, and ought not to be lightly regarded by any who are His. You may trifle with any temporal calamity; you may think little of the ravages of small-pox, or fever, or plague; you may smile at the storm which strews the shore with wrecks, or the earthquake which overthrows cities, burying the inhabitants in the ruins of their homes, husband and wife, parent and child going quick down to death; you may sport with war like infatuated statesmen whom God sets over nations in His anger, sooner than make light of the suffering which so moved the heart of Incarnate love when the fair external scene did not hide from the coming woe, "And when He was come near He beheld the city, and wept over it." For none of these things, awful as they are, will compare with the misery of a lost soul.

(Conclusion in our next.)

Krishnu Pal's Baptism.

REV. DR. A. S. PATTON.

Among a few cherished relics found in my study is an engraved likeness of William Carey, D. D., with his autograph, in an oaken frame, made of a piece of a post, from the old shop at Hackleton, on which Carey used to hang his wax ends. I have just been gazing on this memento of our noble Baptist pioneer missionary to India, and, while in a reverie, there has come before me the scene of the first baptism in the missionary life of that learned and lamented man.

The candidate was Krishnu Pal. Brought into daily intercourse with Carey, Ward and Thomas, he had received the truths of the gospel, and requested the privilege of confessing Christ in his ordinance. Having openly renounced caste by sitting down to the table of the missionaries, and eating with them, to the great surprise of the servants, the way was prepared for the next important step, and on the evening of the same day, accompanied by his wife and daughter, who had also embraced christianity, they came to the little missionary band and told the simple story of their conversion.

This season of delight, however, was not without its alloy. Mr. Thomas, who was present on the occasion, became frantic with joy. It was seventeen years since he had commenced his labors among the heathen; and the fruition of his hopes, after so many disappointments, destroyed the balance of his mind, and he began to exhibit symptoms of insanity. Within three days he became so violent, as to render it necessary to place him under restraint.

The next Sunday morning, the ordinance of baptism was performed under circumstances the most solemn and distressing. The missionaries assembled with the congregation in the chapel, and Mr. Carey walked down to the river with his eldest son, about to be baptised, and Krishnu, on either side of him. At the landing stairs the governor and several Europeans, and a large body of Portuguese, and a dense crowd of Hindus and Mohammedans, were waiting to witness this novel ceremony. To this assembly Mr. Carey explained that they did not believe there was any divine virtue in the river, but regarded it as the simple element of water; that Krishnu was formerly of their creed, but professed by the present act to renounce his belief in the gods, and to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. The most perfect silence and a feeling of deep solemnity pervaded the whole assembly, and brave old Governor Bie was melted to tears.

At that thrilling moment, full of gratitude and joy, one of the company was heard saying: "Ye gods of stone and clay, did ye not tremble, when in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one of your votaries shook you, as dust from his feet?" That evening the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the language of Bengal. The cup of the missionaries was full of joy and hope. Krishnu was but one, yet a continent was coming behind him. In India we have to-day the largest Christian church in all the world, that at Ongole. —Baptist Weekly.

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