

THE SABBATH PRIZE ESSAYS.

A public meeting took place in the City Hall, Glasgow, on Monday, the 4th of June, for the purpose of distributing thirty supplemental prizes, of £5 each, to successful competitors for the Sabbath Prize Essays. Though the time allowed for giving in these essays was very short, no fewer than 1,045 essays were received. This led to a list of supplementary prizes, three being thought far too few for 1,045 competitors. About seventy additional prizes were given. Her Majesty gave her patronage, and Prince Albert put down his name for ten prizes. Subsequently, further prizes were added, till the number was raised to nearly 100.

Mr. Oakey, one of the adjudicators, gave some account of the movement. The "Pearl of Days" had already reached a sale of 30,000 copies, and had been translated into French. An American edition of 5,000 copies had been circulated: it was also being translated into Spanish and Welsh. He believed they owed it to the Sunday-school system, that so many essays were given in. Nineteen out of every twenty made mention more or less of the Sabbath-school; and at least five out of six mentioned that the writer had been benefited by Sabbath-school instruction. When in London, dining with twenty of the competitors, he put a question to each as to the benefit they derived, directly or indirectly, from Sabbath-schools. The answer given by nineteen out of the twenty persons was, that they owed their conversion, directly or indirectly, to Sabbath-school instruction. Since the London meeting for the first distribution of prizes, the competitors had been visited, and had formed themselves into committees. Two visitors had been going from town to town in Scotland, forming the working-men into Sabbath Protection Committees. In London they had formed four districts—east, west, north, and south. Each member subscribed one penny per week, to form half-yearly prizes for essays on the Sabbath. It was the purpose of the association to issue tracts, and establish lectures on Sabbath afternoons. The Chairman, in whom the whole matter had its origin (cheers) had sent up to the London City Mission, 2,000 copies of Quinton's essay which gained the first prize, to be lent by the City Missionaries among the population of London. He had also given 1,000 copies of the same to the Christian Instruction Society; 1,000 copies had been given to the Irish Evangelical Society, to be lent to the population of Ireland; 1,000 to the Colonial Missionary Society, to be distributed by the agents in the rising colonies; and another 1,000 to the Home Missionary Society. Mr. Quinton, the principal prizeman, had been engaged by the Religious Tract Society as one of their editors, they rightly judging that he was such a person as they wanted (cheers.) Another competitor, Mr. Foxon, of Hinckley—a man who, when he wrote his essay, was in the receipt of only 7s. per week, with which he had to support a family of four children—was also an excellent Sabbath-school teacher, and some of his friends suggested that he should become a schoolmaster altogether. And, since writing his essay, he had become a schoolmaster in connexion with the British and Foreign School Society. Another competitor had become a City Missionary.

Mr. Kettle, another of the adjudicators, said: They had a small beginning. Their capital was only the small sum of £50, now it was £500. Their anticipations reached not beyond having three prize essays, and now they had 103. After the proposal went forth, in the beginning of March, there were nearly 200 essays came in; in a few days they amounted to 300; then they came to 500 or 600; and by the 31st of the same month the postman despaired of his ability to carry them, and was obliged to get a sack to convey them in. Out of the 1,045 that came, he read about 1,000 at least, arranging them as he went along. That the meeting might have some idea how he gave his opinion, he would mention that he put them into a kind of train of railway carriages, having their different classes according to their merits. Those which he wished or wanted to read again, with a view of forming a judgment as to which he should take a prize essay from, he put in what he would call the *coupe*; the next in order of merit he handed to the first-class carriage; the third best he put into the second-class; and the fourth he put into the third-class (hear and laughter.) But, then, there was another class which had a sort of weakness, that they could be scarcely said to be worthy

of a place in the carriages, and these he put into a kind of baggage-truck (laughter.) The relation they bore to each other was this—75 were put into the *coupe*, that he might read them for the purpose of selecting the three prizes, 210 were put into the first-class carriage, 210 into the second-class, 290 into the third-class, and 290 got into the truck.—Of those in the carriages, three-fourths were really respectable essays. In reading them, he limited himself to 5 in the day, noting their characteristics as he proceeded, and it took him about nine months to get through the whole of them. It was with grief they were obliged to leave out of their list many essays characterized by sound sense, but which, from want of style, could not be put before the public.

THEY WERE LEAVING ME.

Of many a young inquirer after salvation, it has been asked, "And what has disturbed the sinful peace of your mind?" The reply has been, "I saw my young friends and associates going to Christ and leaving me. They could not be left."

There is great awakening power in the fact here announced. We wonder not that it penetrates the heart with a loud and startling voice. For:

1st. By *conversion* the Christian leaves sinners. He leaves the spot he himself once occupied. He has abandoned the principles which governed him—has given up the pleasures that once captivated him. He renounces the sins that once had dominion over him. And, leaving all these, he leaves all who occupy such ground. He no longer has harmony of spirit with them. He has begun to serve a different master. The parties—once in such communion of character and spirit—are now, in their respective moral tastes and feelings, totally unlike. The sinner is left.

2nd. By *every step in growth in grace* does the Christian leave the sinner. There is a growth in sin as really as in grace. And that process goes on in every impenitent man. He treads, with a firmer step and a stronger will, the path of disobedience. Earth has more and more power, and the great concerns of religion less and less. He is receding farther and farther from all prospects of reconciliation to God, and descending into a state of more fixed and decided alienation from God.

But the young convert is making progress in precisely the opposite direction. He is advancing farther and farther into that goodly land, the spiritual kingdom of God. The flowers become more and more beautiful and fragrant, and the fruits more refreshing and nourishing. Religious principle grows stronger. Remaining sinful corruptions are losing their power. He is receding farther and farther from the kingdom of darkness, and knowing more and more of the power and glory of the kingdom of God. And he is thus leaving farther and farther behind him all who have not been willing to enter with him into the service of God. And the separation is the more rapid and decisive; because neither saint nor sinner hold the same moral position, but are making progress in opposite directions.—The history of each is the history, in moral character, of a greater and greater alienation from each other.

3rd. By a most solemn and decisive act of the divine government will Christians take their leave of sinners. Though separate now heaven-wide in their moral tastes and feelings, yet *personal* separation has not yet occurred. "They grow together until the harvest." But at the great separation day, which the judgment will bring, what numbers will use, with terrible anguish, the language of the young inquirer, "My friends are leaving me!"—Every Christian will leave—must leave. The utter contrast of moral character compels the separation as much as the adorable and awful justice of God.

"My Christian friends are leaving me." They leave me to what? to the kind of life I *love*—not what I *approve*; for keenly, at times, does conscience condemn my course—yet to the kind of life I *love*. I love no higher life. I am being left—not to the kind of life which all holy beings in the universe love—all the pure, and the good, and the happy; but to the kind of life that I, in spite of my own better judgment, love.

They are leaving me to myself. They would have me break away from my miserable selfishness, and love the glorious Saviour they love, and interest myself in the infinitely glorious realities of eternity. They have taken that course, but as my soul has no relish for

it, they are leaving me to be wrapped up in my own selfishness, and to the dominion of these passions whose indulgence shuts out all that is good and glorious in the universe.

They are leaving me—to *what companions*? Those, who like me have no God—no sympathy in the employments or enjoyments of the holy universe—those who offer no prayer and give no praise, who neither love, honor, nor obey the Author of all their mercies, who are, therefore, essentially like to God's great enemy Satan, and who, by that likeness, compel Eternal Justice to bind them together in the same everlasting doom. And I unchanged, must go with them.—N. Y. Evangelist.

Valuable Suggestions.

The Rev. James Parsons of York, who presided at the late annual meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, said in his opening address:

"Beyond what some may be disposed, though unjustly, to rank only as 'denominational peculiarities,' I may venture to suggest, further, in consequence of various indications, the importance to be attached to steadfastness in the belief, and earnestness in the promulgation of what we recognize under the appellation of evangelical doctrinal Truth. It would be presumption in me to enumerate the errors in circulation, both recently imported and long naturalized, which are causing not a few to be 'turned away from the faith.' Danger exists, lest there should be the intrusion of such fearful influences into our own sphere. We ought all to be prayerfully vigilant against their distant approach, 'standing in the ways, and seeing and asking for the old paths, where is the good way, and walking therein.' The ministers of the Gospel are under a weighty responsibility, in this matter, to their Master and to the souls of men; and their failure would, undoubtedly, inflict deep injury on the well-being of ages to come. Let us maintain untainted and uncompromised, the doctrinal theology which was deduced from the holy record by our glorified fathers, and which has been so nobly illustrated and defended in their immortal works; and let us announce it, amidst the shiftings and conflicts of opinion around us, as being what we identify inseparably with the genius of our religion, and with the acceptance and salvation of mankind. Let us preach it with clearness and with fervour, so that our meaning may be understood and felt by those to whom our message is delivered,—not being ashamed of simplicity, and not being ashamed of the manifestations of anxious emotion, but regarding these as the elements of address which are demanded by our high mission, which in past times have been eminently honoured by God, and in which our own success is largely involved. Those of us who have reached, or passed the maturity of our career, and have possessed opportunities of judging as to the order of ministry most adapted to the human character, and to the claims of the existing age, have, I believe, without exception, arrived at one conclusion; and it is our hope with regard to those rising as our successors,—that, while using the lights of science, they will render their exclusive homage at the altar of Truth,—will there resolve, in the manner of apostles, martyrs, and reformers, to 'know nothing but Christ and him crucified,' and will consecrate themselves to that one theme, as alone sufficient and all sufficient to subdue and to redeem."

Far Away from Heaven.

I know not what eternal death is. I can tell you some things. It is far away from heaven—those blissful plains where eternal joy dwells. It is far from hope—hope that here "comes to all." It is the abode of all the abandoned, and profane, and vile—the collected guilt and wretchedness of this world. It is a place where no sanctuary like this opens its doors and invites to heaven; where no Sabbath returns to bless the soul; where no message of mercy comes to the suffering and the sad. It is a world unblessed like this with the work of redemption. On no second Calvary is there a Redeemer offered for sin; and from no tomb there, does he rise to life to bless the sufferers with the offer, and to furnish the pledge of heaven. No Spirit strives there to reclaim the lost; and on no zephyr there is the message of mercy borne, whispering peace. No God meets the desponding there with promises and hopes; and from no eye there is the tear of sorrow ever wiped away. There is no such friend as Jesus; no voice of mercy; no day-star of hope; no father, mother, daughter, pastor, angel, to sym-

pathize; no one to breathe for the lost the prayer of pardon; no great Intercessor to bear the cry of mercy up to the throne of God. It is death—lingering, long, interminable death—the dying sorrow prolonged from age; onward—onward toward eternity—ever lingering, never ending. * * * I have no power—no heart to attempt to portray these scenes. They are not topics for declamation. For of whom are these things spoken? Of the dwellers in distant worlds? Of those whom we have not seen? Alas! of many, many of the wicked in this house. How many now in despair may have occupied the seats which you now occupy—not suffered now to go and tell their brethren, lest they also come into that place of torment! Oh, they are spoken of our kindred and friends—of wives, and husbands, and parents, and school-companions, and teachers, and pupils, who are out of Christ. They are spoken of those to whom we are bound by every tender tie, and to whom the heart is drawn by all the gushing sympathy of love; but are they less in danger on that account? Oh, is there no danger? Suppose a voice from heaven should be heard in this house, and saying to the living here, "The day is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth, they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation" "the wicked shall be turned into hell; "except ye repent, ye shall all perish;" is there a heart here that would not feel that there was danger? Should a hand be seen writing on these walls the names of *all* those here who are in danger of hell, how solemn would be this house! With what anxiety would you trace the record made! How anxiously would you look to see if *your* name was begun—was recorded—was fixed there! How deep the anguish of the soul! How deep, perhaps the groans that would be heard in every part of the house!—Barnes' Practical Sermons.

Conversion in South Africa.

Rev. Robert Moffat has been one of the most successful of modern missionaries. His history gives abundant proof of what the gospel, as faithfully taught and preached, can accomplish among a dark and degraded people.

Mr. M. says the British Banner is prosecuting, with his characteristic ardor, the translation of the Old Testament. He recently transmitted to England the subjoined interesting description of the character and sufferings of a Bechuana Christian, who died not long since in the triumphs of the gospel:

"The following sketch not only exhibits the power of the blessed gospel in the conversion of a sinner, but the soothing consolation it affords under circumstances the most afflictive. The untutored heathen dies as the beast dies, without those emotions of terror or remorse which not unfrequently mark the death bed scenes of those who have been brought up under the sound of the gospel.

"Being considered no longer good for anything, they seldom receive in old age those tender attentions which they so greatly need, and are even denied the tear of sympathy to alleviate the gloomy forebodings of annihilation that reigns within. But they are nurtured from early years to hate sorrow. The hoarse voice of the war song, and the sound of the dance, are the only soothing accents the dying chief requires. 'Why so merry?' I asked a dancing party, 'and your Chief so ill?' 'He likes it,' was the reply.

"Andria Seratse, whose brief history I now present, was the son of a chief man, who, when the gospel was first introduced in these regions, gave good promise of becoming one of its earliest converts. But time has not realized our hope, and he is a heathen to this day. The mother of Andria, a woman who always ridiculed the Word of God, and advocated heathen customs, also continues the dupe of ignorance and the slave of sin.

"When about to commence a course of instruction to prepare him for future usefulness, an affection of the spine commenced its slow, but fatal attacks. He died in April last, after having been a sufferer for three years, the greater part of which time he lay in infant helplessness.

"As he could read and understand English, he spent much of his time in perusing simple books in that language; but the English Bible was his daily companion. So long as he could use his fingers, he was in the habit of writing letters on a slate, first to one and then to another of the members of the mission families, and especially to Mrs. M., to whom he seemed to feel and affectionate obligation and esteem."