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NO 35

POETRY

FOR THE FREE WILL BAPTIST.
COMFORT THE FEEBLE MINDED.

BY REV. A. R. BRADBURY, A. M.

The feeble minded help, O aid,
Upon your breast, let them be laid,
Care much for their immortal souls,
Let mercies o'er them richly roll.

Let every saint seek out the weak,
To them the kindest words oft speak,
Strengthen their love to Jesus Christ
And for his greatest sacrifice.

May all the saints do them much good,
Impart a feast of spiritual food;
Draw them in God, the Lord to trust,
Then they'll be numbered with the just.

The feeble minded keep in peace,
Enable all their griefs to cease,
Whisper the joys of pardoned sin,
Into their heart, and minds within.

Tell them to lay their sorrows by,
For they cannot, nor will they die,
Till they become God's holy saints
And leave behind their sad complaints.

O heaven their precious souls will gain,
And all its glories will obtain,
Will join in songs of sweetest praise,
With hosts, who will their anthems raise.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES.

BY REV. SMITH BAKER.
1 KINGS 21: 4-19.

1. Ahab grew worse and worse. Truth rejected hardens the heart. Our congregations are full of gospel-hardened people who once were tender, but now have no feeling upon religion.

2. Notice the meanness of sin. Ahab had enough, more than he needed; but he not only wanted more, but wanted that which was dearest to a poor man. The tendency of wealth and prosperity is to make men mean. There are noble exceptions, but the most of men as they increase in power grow small in heart. It is the natural law of selfishness. It forgets not only its own blessings, but forgets a poor man's joys.

3. Look at the discontent of selfishness. Ahab had an ivory palace furnished with gold and silk, but he was more discontent than Naboth, with his little land. As a rule the more, of this world's things men have, the more unhappy they are; at least, there is not enough in wealth or power to satisfy the soul, nor even of a wicked man, much less of a good man. There is doubtless the more joy in this world among common people.

4. Notice also the weakness of selfishness. First, because he was refused a little land, which he did not need, Ahab casts himself upon his bed, and turns away his face from all pleasure, as though some terrible calamity had taken place. A rich king all broken down over his failure to get a little land, like a child crying at the loss of a toy!

5. See the foolishness of the man, "would eat no bread." Poor fool! Thus men fuss and fret and punish themselves just because they cannot have some little thing they do not need. One-half the misery in this world is of that kind. We torture ourselves and then blame God.

6. Jezebel, in a certain sense, was a true wife. She sympathized with her husband. She did not neglect and aggravate him, so that he felt worse, and thus drive him away from home for sympathy. It is doubtless true that one-half the men who form evil habits after marriage, are driven to it by un sympathetic wives.

7. Ahab was fair with Naboth. Give him credit for that. He knew he had no claim upon Naboth's land; hence he offered him a good price or a good exchange. There are times when the most selfish men are most

magnanimous; that is, when they have their own selfish ends to secure. His generosity was not to bless Naboth, but to please himself. How benevolent many people are when it will advance their selfish plans. Politicians are very generous to good objects just before election, etc., etc.

8. Naboth had a right to refuse to sell. There are some things every man has a right to, no matter who wants them. The poor have rights. Might is not right in the sight of God. Naboth was a loyal man to his ancestry, and a brave man before his king. He was a kingly man, in a kingly place.

9. Jezebel was smart and bold. She saw that Ahab was in a difficult place, and she came to his rescue. She tried to comfort him with a false doctrine, that because he was king, therefore he had a right to do as he pleased. She had courage also. She was smart, wicked and brave.

10. She assumed responsibility.

11. She deceived and lied.

12. She pretended to be religious.

13. She found two cheap, wicked men, sons of Belial, to help her.

14. She forced the rulers of the city to her assistance.

15. She put to death an innocent man, contrary to law.

16. And all the while she made the people believe that Ahab was doing it.

17. Notice how ready the cowardly Ahab was to take the prize which his bold wife had secured for him. There are such mean souls, who are too cowardly to fight, but are ready to take the spoils.

18. Notice, though Jezebel seemed to do all this, Ahab was responsible for it. In fact, he did it. The guilt was his. He let Jezebel do what she had no right to do. He did not interfere, and because he had the power and did use it, God held him responsible. Consent to an evil deed makes us guilty of it. They who vote or license must answer for the work of rum. They who rent houses for evil purposes are responsible for the sin done in them. We cannot sin by proxy, but the guilt is ours. Power is as responsible for its neglect as for its use.

19. There is no hiding from or deceiving God.

20. God will sooner or later send some messenger to remind us of our sins. Judgment will come.

21. Naboth did what every man can do; he stood firm and died. Every one can say No to sin, and die. No one can compel us to sin.

22. Ahab paid dear for his land, the land he did not need. It cost him his soul.

23. Or, in other words, he sold himself cheap. Men are constantly doing that—paying dear for pleasure, and selling themselves cheap. The Devil always cheats a man, makes a fool of him, and then robs him and casts him into hell. Look out for him!

DEERUN, N. C.,
Nov. 8th, 1885.

DEAR BRO. HEARN:—As you requested me to let you hear from me soon, I thought I would write to-day, as it is raining. I left Conference just after the rain, and was so anxious to hear from my wife that I came home Saturday night getting there about 2 o'clock; and, I am happy to say that I found her much better than I expected.

Elder, I desire to extend to the Preachers and Brethren, for excusing me from duty at Conference my thanks, my heartfelt thanks and I also want to tender to my much esteemed Brother J. J. Harrison and his Christian lady, my kindest regards for their kindness to me while with them during the sitting of Conference, and to others for offers to take care of me. Please dear Brothers and Sisters, pray for me.

Yours in Christ,
H. CUNNINGHAM.

Those who live in the Lord never see each other for the last time.—German Motto.

NIGHT AND DAY.

The sinking sun, or the decline of day, represents in a figure, the closing scenes of life. As we look back and think what was done in the morning; so when we look back upon the morning of life, duty performed will give pleasure while neglected opportunities and duty slighted will bite like a serpent and sting as an adder. Let it be borne in mind that as the darkness of the night surrounds us, even so must the light of this wasted existence be shut out by the clouds of the grave. Though you may be proud and almost held in a spirit of disgust the idea of walking on the ground, and though you may live in some fine mansion, and hold in contempt the poor that are around you, yet, six feet of damp earth must mark your resting place, while your body makes us lucious a feast for the worm of the carnal as the poor who you despised. Though your resting place may be marked by tombs and forms of angels, marked out by man's device, yet your sleep will be no more sweet, than the nameless one that lies near your resting place. Being marked, will not make you marking in the resurrection morn any more blest, for the soul of the poor is just as precious in the sight of God as that of the rich. God will not judge us in the resurrection morn by the paltry dust of earth, but the great theme that fixes our eternal destiny;—has that heart been stayed on God through Christ as a Redeemer; if not, the resurrection will only be an awaking to a deeper gloom at God's left hand, where no grace or pardon can come. The resurrection morn will awake many, of which we have no idea, and whose resting place is unknown. Over one hundred and fifty millions people are now upon the stage of action; but think of it, in a hundred years they will be in the narrow confinement of the grave and their spirits trying the realities of eternity. Think again, what a vast concourse of people stand before the great judge, for they have been gathering into the eternal sphere for over five thousand years. As dark as the shades of midnight will the darkness of guilt fall upon the sinner at the last day, while the righteous will shine forth with more brilliancy than ten thousand suns. While the wicked are crying for rocks and mountains to fall upon them and hide them, the righteous will shout victory. During the night an occasional member of the family may awake. This in a figure, represents those who Christ resurrected, and his miracles are recorded in order that our doubts may be removed, our fears dispelled and our hopes brightened for heaven and immortal glory. With a longing desire, the sick man looks for the morning; but what must be the awful condition of that poor soul whose longing cannot be satisfied and whose hopes are eternally blighted? In the evening, we contemplate on what will be to-morrow morning; even so, the resurrection is the to-morrow morning of death. When the sun is setting in the Christian's life and when he is tempest tossed and careworn, when all earthly hopes seem to be gone, these words give him comfort and consolation: "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also." O blessed thought, to be where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

Judson Vernon.

Every man has some peculiar train of thought which he falls back upon when alone. This, to a great degree molds the man.—Dugald Stewart.

DOUBLIN GROVE.

DEAR BRO. HEARN:—If it is not out of place I will give you and your many readers, a few dots of my travels to Conference. I left home Tuesday the 3rd of Nov., stopped at friend Baker's at Washington X Road that night, where I was kindly entertained by him and his Christian wife. Wednesday morning I went to Brother E. S. Dixon's in Pitt county, and in company with him again started on my journey, and got to Brother W. Barfield's Wednesday night—where I was kindly cared for by him and his Christian wife. There I met with Brother A. Smith and on Thursday morning in company with him we reached the church at Howel Swamp, Thursday night. After Conference adjourned I went over in Pitt county, to R. J. Lang's where I was kindly entertained. Saturday after Conference adjourned, in company with Brother A. Smith, I started for home and stopped with Brother W. Barfield again that night. May the Lord bless him and his good wife for their kind treatment to me. Next morning I resumed my journey in Company with Brother A. Smith. We traveled in the rain, down to Hardies X Road, where Brother Smith left me. I reached friend Baker's at 3 o'clock, spent the night pleasantly with him. May the Lord bless him and his good wife for their kindness to me. I resumed my journey the next morning for home and reached home at three o'clock, and found one of my children very sick. This ended my journey to the General Conference.

R. P. JOHNSON.

HOW TO READ THE PAPER.

1. Read it with prayer. Pray for the editors and for all who assist them in making up the weekly issues, that they may have the guidance and blessing of God upon their labors. Pray that each copy may be made a means of grace to all who see it, turning their hearts to Christ, and instructing them in holy things. Pray that you yourself may rise from its perusal a better man than when you sat down.

2. Read it with care. It has been prepared with great care, sense of deep responsibility to God, and a strong desire to promote his cause. It deserves close attention. Give the writers a fair chance to convey to you their exact meaning. A hasty reading will be sure to lead to misapprehension. It may also cause you to miss something that God meant especially for your good. It is far better to read a little well than to read much without thought.

3. Read it with patience. You will, of course, find some things you do not like, things that you wish had not been said, or had been said in a different way. No two minds that are at all independent in their thinking will arrive at precisely the same conclusions. That is impossible. Recognize it, and adjust yourself to it. Do not get out of temper when you come to a paragraph that jars a little with your taste or runs counter to your opinion. It is a valuable part of education to see how a matter seems to an honest man who differs from you, and to look his ideas fairly in the face. Answer his arguments if you can. It will be a good mental exercise. Find the fallacy in his syllogisms. Account for the mental bias or prejudice that he appears to you to have. To read always and only that with which one perfectly agrees is demoralizing and enervating.

4. Read it with kindly charity. The editor is human, and sometimes makes a mistake. He is liable to err in what he puts in and what he leaves out, in what he says and the way he says it, in the things he clips from other papers and in the things he fondly calls "original," in his "spicy paragraphs"

and in his more labored editorials. No one knows it better than he. He continually laments his deficiencies. But after all he does the best he can, and he tries to learn to do still better. So be kind to him and make some allowance. Possibly you might do no better if you were in his difficult place. Give him the benefit of the doubt. Though an editor, he is still a human being and a Christian brother, and ought to have Christian treatment. Put a charitable construction on what he writes. Do not set him down as quite a fool or absolutely a knave until you are really driven so to do.

5. Read it with others. If you find a good thing, do not keep it to yourself. Make haste to tell it to somebody. Talk it over at the table or in the social circle. Your own ideas will gather clearness and force as you try to express them. You remember a fact or a thought that you have mentioned to others twice as long as if you had not. Be a distributor. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." Do not tear up a good paper that has been a blessing to you. When you are through with it send it to others, and if possible induce them to subscribe.

6. Read it for yourself. Do not give it all away to other people. There is many a practical lesson or suggestion in every number just adapted to your good. It means you. Take it home. Think it over seriously, and ask yourself before God if you ought not to do something about it. Perhaps the evils of some bad habit are set forth. If you are addicted to it, should you not, and can you not, and will you not leave off? Perhaps some high attainment in Christian experience is explained. Is it not your duty and privilege to claim it? This is the way to read a paper practically and with the greatest personal profit.

7. Read it for God. He should be the first and last in all. Whether we eat or drink, or work or play, or sing, or read, it should be to his glory. We are the better or the worse for every book or paper we look through. There is responsibility before heaven about it. The reader as well as the writer needs to remember this. If there were not such readiness to read improper things, they would not be written and printed. Every Christian should see to it that there is on his table a good, earnest, religious paper. And he should read it with prayer, with care, with patience, with kindly charity, read it for others, for himself and for God.—Rev. James Mudge.

RETURNING TO GOD.

Some people wonder why their prayers receive no answers and bring no blessings. Probably in many cases the reason is that they render it impossible for God to grant their requests. They have put themselves in a place where his blessings no more descend than sunlight descends upon those who are immured in a dark cellar. Such people do not comply with the conditions on which God bestows his blessings for there is scarcely an uncondition promise to be found in the Bible.

"Return unto me," is the one condition on which our heavenly Father promises to return unto us. While in the "far country" of riot and of wretchedness, the forlorn Prodigal was entitled to no robe and no ring and no fatherly embrace. But when he starts homeward, broken down and penitent, the father hastens forth to welcome and embrace him; he has made it possible for his long-neglected parent to give the kiss of acceptance.

We do not believe that any sincere penitent—whether in the church or out of the church—ever returned to God and sought forgiveness and grace, and was turned off without a blessing. When God sends out his love-call, "Return unto me," he always has some precious gift wait-

ing inside the door of mercy.

The repentant Christian who returns to his allegiance and his duty is sure of an open door to welcome him. Nay, more, if he "brings in the tithes" of faithful obedience to God's will, and conscientious devotion to God's commands, he will find an "open window" above him in the heavens, from which blessings will pour down on him abundantly. A repentant church returning to practical godliness and holy living has the most genuine and enduring revival. Such a church will impress the world, and make converts to Christ. May not the spiritual barrenness of many an individual, and even of some churches, arise from this fact that they have put themselves so far from God that it is impossible for him to bless them? "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.—Rev. T. L. Cuyler in New York Evangelist.



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