

THE PRESBYTERIAN CASKET.

VOL. III.

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NO. I.

CITY MISSIONS:

IN VIEW OF

Our Emigrant Population.

A DISCOURSE on the *Seventy-Second Psalm*,
Delivered in the Presbyterian Church on
Lafayette Square, in behalf of DOMESTIC
MISSIONS.

BY THE REV. DR. SCOTT.

[Published by Request.]

THIS psalm, my brethren, is a metrical prayer. It seems to have been composed by David just before his death, when he settled his own son Solomon's succession to his throne. It is the prayer of a father for his child—the dying blessing of a patriarch upon his son. It is the prayer of a king for his successor, and of a patriot for his country. It is also the prayer of the people for their sovereign. One reason why the aged king clothed this prayer of his affections and of his faith in verse, no doubt, was his desire, that while the people were praising God in holy song, they might, at the same time, be praying for his son. This psalm, considered in its literal application to Solomon teaches:

First, That parents feel a deep concern for the welfare of their children. This is natural and proper. The best thing parents can give their children is the knowledge of God. This is better than gold. Although it is true that parents cannot impart saving grace to their children, yet they can teach them the Holy Scriptures, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Catechism. They can set them an example of faith and godliness. They can use, with unwearied pains, the means of education and of grace. They can pray to God to give their children wisdom and grace to know and do their duty. They can bring them to Jesus by

prayers, precept and example, and Jesus can give them a new heart.

Secondly, David's example teaches us that we should feel a degree of anxiety for the prosperity of our country after we fall asleep with our fathers. It is natural for a pious man to desire that those who come after him on the stage of life, should be more useful and serve God better than he has done. It is a mean, narrow, little, selfish spirit, that cares nothing about the church and the country, when we ourselves are gone to the grave:

"The generous mind is not confined at home;
It spreads itself abroad through all the public,
And feels for every member of the land."

He that is unwilling to do anything for posterity, because posterity has done nothing for him, shows conclusively that his own father has acted on his own principles, and that neither the past, present nor future will feel his loss.

Thirdly, The royal psalmist penned these lines for the use of the people—not only for their enjoyment in singing, but that in their singing they might also pray for his son Solomon, their King. It is an apostolical injunction to fear God and honor the King. We are to pray for all that are in authority that we may lead godly and peaceable lives.

Another, a higher, and a far more important view of this psalm is to consider it as a prophecy of the prosperity and perpetuity of the kingdom of Christ, under the type of Solomon. Even Jewish expositors allow that this psalm refers to the Messiah. There are many passages in it which cannot be applied to Solomon. The pious old king having set his beloved son on the throne, seems to have become transported with joy and gratitude to God, and then to have given utterance to the thoughts that were within him by the spirit of God. In pouring out from the fullness of his pious heart his blessings on the young king, and upon the people, the coming of the great Messiah that was to spring from

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No. V.

A SERMON:

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE REV.
WILLIAM S. POTTS, D. D.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL B. MCPHEETERS,
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“I would not live away.”—*Job* vii. 16.

LOVE of life is one of the strongest instincts of sentient beings. God has placed this strong desire of life in all living beings for the wisest and most benevolent purposes. If life, and the means of preserving it, were matters of total indifference—if death, and the avenues leading to it, were neither painful nor abhorrent, the most disastrous results might follow, not only to society, but to the world.

But, in addition to the instinctive love of life, common to brutes as well as men, there are other and strong cords which bind nearly all mankind to the present state of existence. The tender ties which grow out of the various relations of life, the objects which we desire to accomplish, and the duties which religion or humanity enjoin, together with a multitude of other motives which influence human beings, make us love life and seek for its preservation. In addition to the natural fear of the king of terrors, the mother dreads the fatal dart which would leave her helpless infant destitute of the tender care which a mother only can give. The man of ambition desires his delay until his schemes have been consummated, and the Christian may wish for his forbearance until some work of mercy or labor of love is accomplished.

Thus, both nature and the circumstances that surround us, make nearly all mankind willing, and the majority anxious to live.

True, when the dark clouds of adversity begin to gather thick around the path; when misfortune and sorrow and disappointment

bring despair into the soul, men may be found who, in their frenzy, desire death. An individual who is all alive to the opinions and feelings of his fellow men, and ignorant of what death is, and what sin is, and what God is, may, from a sense of wounded pride or lost reputation, not only desire death, but rush unbidden into his arms. And even a Christian man may be so far given over to the influence of the Tempter and the corruption of his nature, as in moments of deep depression and sinful anger, to say with Jonah—“It is better for me to die than to live.” But these are exceptions, not the rule. Love of life is instinctive and universal.

As far as this desire of life is a part of the original constitution implanted by God, it is certainly not wrong. On the contrary, whatever be the situation of an individual, or the distressing circumstances in which he is placed, an impatient desire for death is, in a greater or less degree, sinful. It becomes all to endure with patience and resignation the will of God, and to say with Job, “All the days of my appointed time will I wait until my change come.”

But though the love of life be so natural, and though there be so many ties binding to it, still the declaration of my text contains a truth, which every Christian who seriously and dispassionately looks at this life, and who has a well-grounded hope of acceptance with God, must feel. Whatever be the happiness granted us here, who, that has a comfortable assurance of a blessed immortality, could desire that this life should be made perpetual. Whatever be the Christian's comforts and blessings, whatever his attainments and mercies, there is always enough in him and around him to make him say, in the sincerity and deep earnestness of his soul—“I would not live away; I would not dwell forever here, nor have an immortality on earth.”

That rebuke led to the young man's conversion, and he became Martyn's co-laborer as a missionary to India.

Martyn himself was once conversing with the good Dr. Simeon, who dropped a casual remark on the great good accomplished in India by that excellent Baptist missionary, Dr. Carey. That simple remark became the pivot on which turned the future conduct of Henry Martyn, sending him away from the joys of home and friendship, to lay his splendid attainments and his life on the altar of Christ, as a foreign missionary. And when the day of judgment shall have come, when the influence of Martyn's translations of the Bible shall be measured in the conversion of the myriads of Southern Asia, when a multitude of ministers and missionaries shall tell of the impulses received in the way of holiness from reading his life and writings, when an unnumbered multitude of private Christians shall repeat the story of new baptisms of the Holy Ghost from the same instrumentality — then shall we begin to see the importance of that single remark of Dr. Simeon. "The bow drawn at a venture," had done great execution.

This thought is commended to the Christian parent, the Sabbath-school teacher, the tract distributor, and to every Christian who is trying to do good. The true philosophy of each one is, "Cast thy bread on the waters," and then fall back on the appended promise, "for thou shalt find it after many days." Let all, in view of the importance of little things in producing great results, in faith and with prayer, often draw "a bow at a venture," in the belief that in another world we may find that the insignificant instrumentality has been honored of God.

For The Casket.

BAAL-PEOR; OR, WHAT IS SHAME?

BY THE REV. DR. SCOTT.

THE Baal-peor of the Hebrews is considered the same as the Roman Priapus, and was worshipped with the most impure rites. "Their abominations were according as they loved." That is, their idolatrous practices were in conformity with the worship of heathen idols, and they thereby made themselves as hateful to Jehovah as even the idols which they worshipped. Hosea ix. 10 The pro-

phet Jeremiah also speaks of the abominable crime committed by the Hebrews in worshipping idols — in joining themselves to the service of the filthy idol Baal-peor, that *shameful thing*. Jer. xi. 13. All idols were regarded by the pious Jews of old, as an abomination; and among them we find a proverb to this purport: *He that serveth an abomination is himself an abomination*. This is equivalent to the Grecian proverb, *that the perfection of a man's religion is to be like the God whom he serveth*.

There are those that cannot see why the ancient Jews were so severely punished for their sins. They do not think that idolatry is so awful a sin as to deserve the wrath of Heaven. If not, what sin does? The Bible always speaks of idolatry, not only as the "abominable thing" that Jehovah hates, but also as a thing most foolish, unreasonable and wicked; and always connects it with the most infamous passions and vices. And all history and missionary records, and the reports of travelers, attest the truth of the Bible representations of the worship of idols. "Idolatry is nothing better than evil personified, the devil deified, and hell formed into a religious establishment." It is cruelty, revenge, drunkenness and sensuality, not only exempt from punishment, but made acts of devotion, and considered as services acceptable to the deities. It is right, then — it is a Christian duty, to encourage the great work of Missions. All philanthropists will pray that the way of Truth may be known on earth, and God's saving health among all nations.

All sin is like *Baal-peor* — a shame. Every transgressor separates himself from virtue, and joins himself to shame. Sin is properly called shame, for it is the most scandalous business in the world, and, sooner or later, will cover a man with ignominy. It debases everything it touches. It is no shame to be obliged to work. It is, on the contrary, a shame to be idle. Seneca says, and very properly, "I would rather be sick than idle." And the Bible says, "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat." It is no shame to be poor, unless your poverty is the offspring of your indolence, or of your vices. It is no shame to suffer, even as a martyr, for righteousness. But it is a shame, a deep and burning shame, to be a sinner — an impenitent, ungodly sinner. Is it not a shame to go uncovered through the streets? Is it not a shame to possess reason, and yet play the part of an

idiot? Is it not a shame to be a coward and flee, and when no man pursueth? Is it not a shame to have liberty offered to us, and yet be so base, so depraved, as to submit to the vilest slavery, because we do not appreciate the offers of freedom? Is it not a shame to be a traitor to the best government in the world, or to be a betrayer of the kindest of friends—to be admitted by a most munificent benefactor to his table, and enjoy every comfort and luxury of his house, and then oppose all his wishes, and pour upon him the vilest abuse, and endeavor to stab him to the heart? And is it not thus that the sinner acts who sets at naught the laws of his Creator, and puts himself out of harmony with himself and the laws of all virtuous beings—who despises the goodness of God, and lives for himself, regardless of the claims of his fellow man?

Sin is shameful, in three ways. 1st. It is punished with a divine penalty. This penalty is begun even in this world; wicked and abandoned men are hateful in all well regulated communities. Multitudes come to shame by their wickedness. They are *disgraced*, even when the law does not punish them. The public sentiment is against them—their own hearts condemn them. The Bible also speaks of some who will rise at the last day, to “everlasting shame and contempt.”

2nd. Sin is a shameful thing, not only because it is subjected to the penalty of a righteous God, and of a virtuous universe, but is so pronounced by the *sinner's own natural emotions*. When our first parents transgressed, they hid themselves among the trees of the garden, for they were afraid—they were ashamed. Although shame is generally connected with sin, it is not always so, for there are some who become so hardened through “the deceitfulness of sin, that they hide not their sin as Sodom,”—nor are they ashamed when they commit abominations. The Bible tells us that some men's consciences may become seared as with a hot iron—that some men will glory in their shame. The general sentiment is, however, one of shame for wrong doing. The conviction of shame, in most cases, clings to evil-doers long after they acknowledge their guilt. Sometimes men profess not to be ashamed, when they are. Men are not always sincere and happy when they appear to be. The very attempts which wicked men make to conceal their evil deeds, or to excuse them, or to palliate them, and

their frequent habit of ascribing their sins to wrong causes, are proof that they are ashamed of them. When men say their sins were not of choice or of inclination, but of necessity or from weakness, it is perfectly clear that there is within them a lingering consciousness of shame on account of their sins—and, hence, in part, the aversion of the vicious to be alone in communion with their own hearts. They are restless. They cannot be happy, except when under excitement—and hence, also, the dislike of ungodly people for the Sabbath, and for the preaching of the Gospel, and for the society of the pious. This dislike is natural—it is according to common sense and philosophy—just as much so, as that drops of the same liquid will flow together, or that birds of a feather will flock together. The presence of the virtuous, the society of the prayerful, and the pressure of religious things, is a running commentary, condemning the vicious, prayerless and ungodly. The wicked love their own assemblies, for their mutual wickedness prevents mutual accusation, censure and scorn; and as gunpowder in the soldier's beverage raises his courage for the carnage, so the intoxicating cup, and the encouraging raillery of a companion, often overcomes the last stronghold of virtue. *Shame being lost, all virtue is lost.*

3d. *Sin is shameful*, according to the experience and testimony of the truly penitent and good. This experience is the result of a new heart and a right spirit. It is the fruit of grace. It regards not so much the opinion of our fellow-men, as the judgment of God—not so much our character, as our faith—not so much the punishment due to sin, as its pollution—not so much its consequences, as its odiousness. The experience of all the holy and the good of our race confirms the truth of our doctrine that all sin is shameful. Whenever a man is enlightened by the Holy Spirit to see sin in the glass of God's law, and in connection with the goodness of God, and in the light of the Cross of Christ, then he is ready to say with David—“Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, I cannot look up;” or with Ezra—“O my God, I am ashamed to lift up my face to thee, for our iniquities are over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the very heavens;” or with the publican smiting on his breast, and not even daring to lift his eyes to heaven, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” There is but one thing in the uni-

verse to fear, and that is sin; and there is but one thing in the universe that can save us from the guilt of sin — **THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.**

For The Casket.

A CHAPTER FROM MY NOTE BOOK.

IRELAND: — North Coast — Bushmills — the Grand Cavern — Giant's Causeway — Pleaskins, &c., &c.

I RETURNED from the sublime precipices of the "Fair Head," described in my last sketch, and made ready to continue my journey to the Giant's Causeway. As there was no public conveyance going in that direction, and as I had taken the precaution to leave my baggage at Belfast, I determined to walk the remainder of the way (eleven miles), and observe the condition of the peasantry as I went along. The peasants live in little rude villages, without streets, order, or regularity, in low stone or mud houses, covered with thatch — stables, cow-yards and pigsties all being under the same roof with the family.

Before night I reached the town of Bushmills, celebrated in Ireland, not only on account of its proximity to the Giant's Causeway, but for its good whisky. It is rather a snug village, having, aside from its "still-houses," a rather disproportionate number of churches, and is surrounded by a beautiful and highly-cultivated country. As I felt wearied from my walk, I resolved not to visit the Causeway until the next morning, when I should be rested. Early next morning I employed a guide — one Mathew King by name — not that I desired one, for I should much rather have been alone, but solely to keep from being annoyed to distraction by a host of other guides, who will follow in perfect troops, and harrass you into madness, unless you put yourself under the protect on of some one of their fraternity. Having taken this preliminary step, I started down in the direction of this far-famed wonder of the world, under a high state of excitement, finding myself walking faster, and leaning forward almost breathless with impatience, as I drew nearer to this great object of attraction. Old Mathew had hard work to keep up with me, which I was anxious he should do, as I was now beset very few yards by a gang of im-

perturbable guides offering their services, not knowing that I had already concluded a bargain with Mathew King! Mathew, however, apparently a little dubious that I might possibly "repudiate" in favor of a more advantageous offer, as there was no competition when the bargain was struck between us, was not slow by hallooing and gesticulation to warn all parties that he himself was the fortunate *employee*; which, however, it required no very acute discernment to discover by the airs and consequences that he assumed! Next, after the guides, I was beset with the traffickers in "Causeway Minerals" — *i. e.*, little boxes of pebbles, shells, fossils, &c., picked up in the region of the Causeway. But in this, too, old Mathew had been too fast for them; for he had, the evening previous, sold me a box of said minerals for double its market price!

I was now descending to the little bay, called Port-na-baugh, where lay a tiny fleet of yawls, skiffs and small craft, for the purpose of ferrying visitors to the Grand Cavern — to the Pleaskins — and to other points of view and objects of interest under the precipices. I found it impossible to get by this place, although the Causeway was just over the next rise, which a few steps farther would have brought full in view, without first engaging one of these boats to take me to the Grand Cavern. So I was almost compelled to suspend my curiosity, and comply with their solicitations. I selected a boat and moved off, gliding along under the precipices in the opposite direction from the Causeway. We first passed the mouth of the smaller cavern, called the "Cavern of Sighs and Groans," in consequence of noises similar to deep sighs, far within, caused by the ebb and flow of the surge upon the pebbles. This cavern can be entered from the land, through an aperture which opens into its farthest extremity. Next, as we glide along, comes the American Steeple — a sharp rock, in the shape somewhat of an Indian arrow-head, rising in a recess in the sea-wall, some thirty or forty feet high, and so called because an American gentleman, some time ago, determined to climb to the top, which glorious feat he actually accomplished, but at the expense of part of his clothing, which was riddled to atoms by the time he descended. We now approached the mouth of a dark, tunnel-shaped cavern, which opened into the side of the