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## Communications.

### For the Lutheran Visitor.

#### Woman's Position, as Taught in the Bible.

CHAP. IV.

"We have an interesting subject before us to-day," said Miss Verton. "What is it, aunt?" "Deborah and her wonderful achievements."

"Deborah made a wife." "I do not admire female warriors and heroes, such as Deborah, and others. They would have made far more of a name than women, and although not a matter of moral courage that would be commendable and unpolluted duties, and adhere to her own convictions of right in the face of all opposition, as well as even a degree of physical courage for emergencies in which it may be desirable, are very much to be admired and commended in a woman, yet that courage which causes her to view the bloody arena of a battle-field with masculine nerve, and to execute such deeds as those of Jael and Judith, is, in my opinion, a blemish, and a very undesirable gift. I greatly prefer the loving Ruth, the placid and courageous Shunammite, the devout Mary, and the benevolent and useful Dorcas, to these sanguinary heroines."

"That is true of women in general, but in the ordinary walks of life," said Miss Verton; "but the subject of inspiration are not to be judged by the usual standard. These women are eminent exemplifications of the fact that, in the selection of persons to accomplish His purposes--be those purposes great or small, punitive or beneficent, far-reaching in their effects or confined to one spot and generation--God is not respecter of persons or sexes. He will have all the glory Himself. He does not choose to confer it upon the unworthy, indeed, when the instrument is an able and efficient one, men are only too prone to bestow upon their homage and admiration."

"I have always shuddered when reading the history of Jael's valorous deed," said Jessie; "and could not help sympathizing with Sisera as the subject of such treachery. Although I know he only received well-merited punishment, still I would have preferred not being the instrument of inflicting it; but I suppose it does not always consult our consciences about such things."

"His instruments are not always chosen for his purposes," said Mrs. Hart; "as in the cases of Moses and Jonah--when it conflicts with their tastes, feelings, or passions; or when they, in their own weakness, anticipate disaster and defeat, yet I do not believe that He selects one that is entirely inferior to His glory. I mean among His own children. There are persons who are unconscious instruments, and imagine they are working for their own designs, when all the time God is the propelling force. A true children burn with a desire to shine for His glory, and when He projects before them, it is so different from their own ideal plan that they think such an insignificant part can not secure so great a reward. It is of such a revolting character that every feeling shrinks from the performance of it. But He desires to teach us the lesson that we must follow where He leads, without question, or doubt, or fear, and commend the issue to Him. We are not to choose what we will or will not do, but simply to be passive in His hands--to do or to suffer--to work or to be idle--as He sees fit. And who attains to that state is happy indeed. He can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him."

"Deborah certainly was a woman of great vigor of mind and character," said Mr. Ellison. "Her husband occupied a very subordinate position; and Barak--no inconsiderable personage--paid the highest tribute to her genius. And she does not seem to be wanting in the gentle meekness of female character; for her touching allusion to the sorrowful mother, in her sublime words, show that she well understood the feelings, and could sympathize with them, too--although her intense love for God and Israel's glory caused her to exult so sternly in her triumph over the defeat of her foe. She was a noble poet, too, as well as warrior and judge; so I suppose we can not withhold the medal of admiration from Deborah."

M. E. S.

## Selections.

### Dr. Franklin on Prayer.

There is in man a universal sense of the need of looking to a Higher Power. No people or tribe has been found destitute of it. The philosopher is not without this sense of need. No one will accuse Dr. Franklin of not without this sense of regard for the supernatural. All will admit that few ever surpassed him as a shrewd observer of life and of human affairs, or as a profound inquirer after the causes and principles that lie at the bases of great events. Let us observe his language in the Convention that sat in Philadelphia in 1787, to frame our Federal Constitution, when he rose to support his motion for daily prayers in that body. It must be remembered that weeks had elapsed and the Convention had not accomplished any part of its all-important work, and that irreconcilable difference seemed likely to defeat its purposes altogether. It was in this state of things that Dr. Franklin introduced his resolution, and made the following remarks:

"In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in the room for the Divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten this powerful Friend? Or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time (eighty-one years), and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow can not fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings, that 'except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it.'

"I firmly believe this, and I also believe that without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel. We shall be divided by our little partial local interests, our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a by-word down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter, form this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war, or conquest. I therefore beg leave to move, that henceforth prayers, imploring assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service."

### Positive Theology.

The *Morning Star* is to be credited with this sound speech: "The common outcry against creeds is quite as often foolish as wise, as weak as it is unwise, having often more cowardice than catholicity, and more laziness than love. It is no time to sneer at or disparage systematic theology. The pulpit has too little rather than too much of it. The reaction from the old Puritan spirit and methods is extreme. A religious character that has no basis in intelligent convictions is always full of flaws, and it may go crashing down under almost any great strain or pressure. A creedless church may be sentimental and pleasantly sympathetic, but it will add very little to the abiding might of that army of the Lord that is set to wrestle down principalities and powers, and plant Christ's standard where Satan's seat is. A ministry that does its real work to-day must have the tough muscle and the red blood which come of digesting the strong meat of sound christian doctrine. A denomination that apologizes for its existence, and fritters away its principles, and pushes the special truths out of sight which it is charged to proclaim, will find its own self-respect departing, its tumultuous words dropping at its own feet, the public ear turning away from it in indifference or pity or disgust, its arms falling palsied at its side, and its own organization dropping to its own organization dropping to pieces for want of moral cohesion. To have, to hold, and to utter, strong and positive christian convictions are the things that give it life and assure it victory."

### Safety of God's People.

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper."--Isa. lvi: 17.

"If we are 'servants of the Lord,' serving the Lord from the bottom of the heart, 'with good will, doing service,' this promise belongs to us, individually, as much as ever it did to Israel of old, for this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and when we consider the open and direct attacks that are made upon our faith; the insidious and undermining suggestions to which our attention is called, the various ways in which our peace of mind is attempted to be disturbed, the arrows of the ungodly against us, 'even bitter words,' but more than all the 'sly darts of the wicked one,' by which the evil of our own corrupt nature is set on fire, the value of the promise is understood and felt. It is not the weapon shall not wound, shall not hurt, disturb, distress or annoy; it may do all this as in the case of Joseph: 'The anchors sorely grieved him,' (Gen. xlix: 23) but their end was not gained; so, child of God, be assured whatever weapon be leveled against thee it shall only grieve, it shall not destroy. Nay, if it send thee crying to thy Father's feet, weeping to thy Saviour's bosom, it shall be to thee another testimony that 'all things work together for good to them that love God, the called according to His purpose.'

### Fetich Worship Among the Freedmen.

Rev. J. S. K. Legare, a native of South Carolina, a graduate of Yale College (1831), and always a resident of the South, now a missionary of the Sunday-school Union, writes: "I have been working for a month past among the freedmen in a malarial region in Georgia, where there are great numbers in which ignorance and destitution of true religious instruction. They now carry on their religious worship by themselves, aloof from the white people, and the greatest part of their services consists in singing and sometimes in running round in a kind of dance, with clapping of hands and loud exclamations. They are exceedingly fond of staging, and all kinds of music, and they do indeed sing very feelingly, and sometimes very thrillingly. But they are really in need of plain and sensible teaching in the simple truths and principles of our blessed gospel."

"Let me tell you what I witnessed on Sunday afternoon, at a place where I had heard that great numbers of them were accustomed to collect for religious exercises, and where I called to arrange if practicable for organizing a Sunday-school among them. Coming suddenly upon them I witnessed a scene that grieved me to my heart. A large crowd of them were dancing in a circle round a young woman, dressed in the oddest and most glaring colors, in the most fantastic style, having on her head a red striped bandana handkerchief set up like a turban, only the four corners stood out like towers or horns. As they danced round her, an old man, who seemed to be their leader, and who, I afterward learned, claimed to be a conjurer, would step up behind and touch the statutory maid, and then start back with a mournful lament, when the crowd would clap their hands and cry aloud. During this excitement the woman would whoop and yell, jumping and running round, until exhausted and falling down in a state of torpor."

"I stopped them and told them that God was not honored by such worship. I learn that this fetich worship is quite common among some of them." Religion is not a mere debt we owe to God; it is a spirit of fellowship and sympathy with Him; it is the highest proof that God has made us for Himself, and redeemed us to Himself, and called us to be as He is in His image once more, and to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. It is the power of God put forth upon the soul, through the agency of His own word, and may be possessed by all who seek. Our deeds are like children that are born to us; they live and act apart from our will. Nay, children may be strangled, but deeds never; they have an indestructible life both in and out of our consciousness.

## The Sinfulness of Sin.

When one of the most brilliant of the leaders of "Broad church" latitudinarianism in England was talking with an earnest "Evangelical," he said to him, "My friend, you and I differ in our ideas about sin. I can not look at it as you do." That was the point at which they parted company. And at that precise fork of the road the advocates of sound, saving truth, and the advocates of loose and dangerous error are constantly separating.

This is the spot where the specialism branches off. It denotes that sin is an infinitely wicked thing, and thence concludes that God can never visit it with the penalty of hell. It is at this point that Unitarians leave us, and I am afraid leave their Bibles too. They assume that sin is not so "exceeding sinful that the atonement of a Divine Redeemer is indispensable to the sinner's salvation." Even Dr. Channing, with all his beautiful portrayments of Christ's benevolence, and of christian graces, recoiled from presenting the Bible portrait of sin. Hence his sermons were not calculated to awaken sinners. But when a man is deeply convicted of his enormous guilt before a holy God, he is seldom disturbed with any doubts about the necessity of Christ's atonement, or about the necessity of His grasping hold of Christ as his only Saviour. Sin appears to him so abominable that he understands why it was indispensable that the Son of God should bear its penalty in order that God could forgive and accept a single penitent sinner. Sin appears so abominable that he repents of it in dust and ashes, and gladly lays hold of the Saviour whose blood cleanseth from all sin. That preaching which leads guilty men to the worst opinion of themselves is the best preaching after all. The secret of the converting power of such preachers as Payson, and William Burns, and Skinner, and Himes, and Spurgeon, lies in the fact that they never blinked the exceeding sinfulness of sin. They knew well that no soul will ever see to Christ until he feels that he needs Christ, and that he deserves to perish if he refuses Christ.

Just look a moment at what sin really is. It is not a mere misfortune, or a blunder, or a constitutional infirmity, as smooth-tongued errorists teach; it is a crime against the best being in the universe. It consists not only in the evil performance, but in the evil purpose. It arises from the heart's enmity to God. The heart closes to please itself, even though it displeases God. If any being in the world knows what sin is, God is that being, and he pronounces it to be the abominable thing which he hates. He declares that the wages of sin is death. It is the stupendous crime against his government. Sin is at the bottom of all the mischief and all the misery that stain and darken human history from Eden to this hour. Sin gives birth to the sorest sorrows that break human hearts. The burial of a dead child does not cut the parental heart so keenly as the flagrant wickedness of a living child. Sin has mingled every cup of temptation. Sin has bred every war. Sin has hatched every persecution of the right. Sin has opened every dram-shop and brothel, mannaed every slave ship, built every prison, and reared every gallows. Sin digs every grave, and has wove every shroud, for death came by sin. All the woe and the wretchedness of the ages past, and all the woe and the wretchedness of the ages to come, unite in re-echoing God's tremendous declaration that "death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

The crowning evidence of the enormity of sin is seen on Calvary. What reared the cross? What mingled the bitter cup which the dying Jesus prayed "might pass from Him?" What slew the Lamb of God? Heaven, earth and hell all answer SIX. No where does sin stand out with such a horror of blackness, as against the background of Calvary's overpowering love! If any one of our readers is yet impenitent, if he makes a light thing of his own sinfulness, we ask him to go up to Calvary, and see himself there. Go and see what sin is, what it is doing there, what your sin did there, and what the Son of God bore there to save you from the hell that sin deserves. Confess there that you had a part in crucifying Jesus. His blood is on your fingers. You have a partnership in that crime; every sinner has. Confess there that you

have been rejecting the very Saviour that has shed His blood in your stead. Confess that you are making a mock at sin, and treating as a trifle what cost your Lord His unutterable agony. Stand up there, and look that dying Saviour in the face, and then claim, if you dare, that you are not guilty. Of how much sorer punishment will you be thought worthy, if you thus tread under foot the Son of God, and count His blood a worthless thing!

One word more. To see sin rightly, and to abhor it, is not enough. Sorrow for sin does not save. It never changes the heart. It never justifies before God. Hell is full of those who weep for sin. To repent of sin is not enough. God never has consented to accept you, and give you eternal life, except on the single and simple condition of your giving your heart to the Saviour whom you "have pierced." Your pardon is only to be found at the Cross. If you ever get to heaven, you will find many "wonders" there; but no greater wonder than that you are there, a forgiven sinner.--Rev. T. L. Cuyler.

### A Living God.

The *Christian Era* has an article which supplies the following: "Science, when it speaks of law, ought always to imply the existence of a personal God, of whose will law is the expression. But while science may admit the creative power of God, it often denies his providential government. It does not adore him as a living God, pervading the universe he has made, and controlling its forces. It sees no end of government, for the laws do their work effectually. It denies the possibility of providence, for the laws once established can never be changed or suspended. Prayer is useless, save for its reflex power on the supplicant. Sickness can not be healed, nor peril averted, nor deliverance wrought from any calamity. God is separated from his creatures by a vast domain of law, which is an impassable gulf even for divine sympathy and power. Such a God is not the God of the Bible whom the christian adores. His God is omnipotent to save, a present help in every hour of need. His presence pervades the universe. His power underlies all forces. His will gives energy to all law. He hears his people when they cry, and he knows how to help. The christian may find it impossible to harmonize reason and faith, or to explain the methods by which providence rules. But he rests in a living God, for in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, he recognizes God incarnate among men. In the miracles of healing he discovers that established law is no hindrance to divine energy. In his experience of answers to prayer, many and varied, he knows that God is present to guide, to comfort, to deliver. He can, without hesitation, commit his way unto the Lord, assured that he will bring it to pass. In the minutest affairs of life he can trust to divine guidance, and in the greatest perils cry for deliverance. It is well that struggling and desponding men have a living God--that the universe is not greater than the Creator, or law mightier than the law-giver. It is well that men are not shut up to science, but have the Bible to shed light into realms where science can not reach."

### Remarkable Examples of Bible Reading.

Many of the anecdotes compressed within the following paragraph it is easy to verify, and every reader will acknowledge the lesson which they are intended to teach. Remarkable as some of them are, not one approaches what is related, and earnestly believed in the East, of a famous Mohammedan; namely, that during his confinement in the prison of Bagdad, where he died, he read over the Koran seven thousand times: "That we may see," says Dr. Plummer, "what can be done in becoming acquainted with the Bible, let us look at a few facts. Eusebius tells us of one who had his eyes burned out in the Diocletian persecution, and who repeated in a public assembly the very words of Scripture with as much accuracy as if he had been reading them. Jerome says of Nepotian, that by reading and meditation he had made his soul a library of Christ. Theodosius the younger was so familiar with the word of God that he made it a subject of conversation with the old bishops as if he had been one of them. Augustine says that after his conversion he ceased to relish even Cicero, his former favorite author, and that the Scriptures were his pure delight. Tertullian spent a greater part of his time in reading the Scriptures, and committed large portions of them to memory. In his youth, Beza learned all Paul's Epistles in Greek so thoroughly, that when he was eight years old he could repeat them in that language. Cranmer is said to have been able to repeat the New Testament from memory. Luther was one of the most indefatigable students of the Bible that the world has ever seen. Ridley said: 'The walls and trees of my orchard, could they speak, would bear witness that there I learned by heart almost all the epistles; of which study, although in time a great part was lost, yet the sweet savor thereof, I trust, I shall carry with me to heaven.' Sir John Hariot, a man of many cares, made the book of God so much his study that it lay before him night and day. A French nobleman used to read three chapters of the Bible every day on his bended knees, with his head uncovered. Joshua Barnes is said to have read a small pocket Bible a hundred and twenty times over. Roger Cotton read the whole Bible through twelve times a year. William Romanie studied nothing but the Bible for the last thirty or forty years of his life. John Boyse, one of the translators of our Bible, had read all the Scriptures before he was five years old; his mother read them through twelve times. I have read of more than one of whom it was said, that if the Bible had been lost the whole might have been recovered from their memories. In short, was there ever an eminent christian who was not remarkable for his study of scripture as he had opportunity?"

### Boys Will be Boys.

Never lose heart or stop praying because your boys are a little wild. While you sadly call to mind the things they have forgotten, you are ignorant of the things they remember. It is the fashion for boys to appear indifferent to the counsels of parents. They have an idea that it is rather the handsome thing to take good advice in a dogged sort of way, just as they take medicine, and a very brave thing to dare your threat. All this is written in the code of boyhood. We can't quite say with Emerson, that it is the bad boy that makes the good man, and yet we have a great deal of sympathy with that overflowing spirit of youth which is sometimes a little reckless, and which very frequently leads into mischief. Just sit down, if you have such a son, and recall your own early days. It may be different for you, just now, when you are in middle life, to see the fun which the boy finds in what appears to you to be utterly foolish, or perhaps wantonly evil; but if you will turn to the early chapters of your own biography, you will find yourself stopping up the spouts of the old country house, just

to see the rain pour over like a waterfall, and you will recall the fun of the old gentleman's embarrassment, as he rushes out into the rain, bareheaded, to find the cause of the trouble, and thereby got an attack of the rheumatism which laid him up for a couple of weeks. Well, your boy is going through the same experience, and by-and-by he will regard it as you do now, as an utterly foolish thing, and wonder where in the world the fun was. The truth is that these pranks are as necessary to boyhood as the measles. They are the result of natural animal spirits, which can no more be repressed than can the waters that come bubbling up out of the sand. We remember that when we were very young, a wild colt presented his heels to us in such a forcible manner, that before our surprise had vanished, we found ourselves in a little, disgusted heap on the other side of a five-rail fence. At the time, we thought it an unheroic thing to do, and felt exceedingly like pelting the creature with stones. But he came up to the fence with such a demure and abashed look, and put his head between the rails, and snuffed at us in such repentant mood, that we concluded it was part of the necessary experience of the animal, and cheerfully forgave him. Now, boys are colts. They never think of consequences. They only have the fun of the thing in view.

Don't stop praying, and praying hopefully for your children, at such times. By keeping close to the boy's heart, and trying to appreciate his side of the matter as well as your own, you will keep control of him.--Working Church.

### God Our Shield.

In ancient times no warrior's equipment was complete without a shield; it was his principal means of defence. With it he turned aside the swift arrows and fiery darts of his enemies, warded off the sharp sword-thrust or protected himself from the shower of stones or other missiles. It was worn upon the left arm and proved a most effectual defence while the wearer faced the foe, but formed not the least covering for a coward's back. It was considered such a disgrace for one to lose his shield, or be wounded in the back, that the patriotic Spartan matrons ended their parting salutations to their sons, "Return with your shields or upon them."

As shields were a necessity in ancient warfare, they varied in size, shape, or material, according to the notions or resources of the people. In the earliest ages they were made of the bark of trees, osier willows, and the skins of animals; but as nations advanced in wealth and civilization, shields were made of brass, steel and other metals, and often of great beauty of finish, though none the less a means of defence. They might almost be looked upon as exponents of the degree of refinement to which a nation had attained.

As weapons of offence changed, those of defence changed, and shields gradually diminished in size, but gained in beauty and adornment, until, at last, they became merely armorial bearings, to display heraldic designs.

Shields are no longer used in modern warfare, and as we have no practical illustration of the protection afforded by them, we lose much of the force of the Psalmist's exclamation, "Thou, O Lord, art our shield."

Many passages in the Bible that make mention of the goodness or greatness of God are beautifully illustrated by the modes of agriculture, or warfare, or the peculiar customs of the times in which they were written, and we need fully to understand these in order to appreciate the beauty or force of such passages. When Abraham was sojourning in a land whose inhabitants were continually at war, God spoke unto him, "Fear not, I am thy shield." And so, all down through the ages, he was the shield of all that put their trust in him.

He led Israel from bondage, often delivered them from their foes when every help of man was vain; sustained David, when hunted as a partridge on the mountains, or hidden in the dens from the relentless Saul; protected the timorous Elijah from the persecutions of Jezebel. Indeed, the Holy Book is full of confirmation that God has ever been a sun and shield to his chosen people.

Paul, amid all his hardships by sea and land, his "fightings without and fears within," ever found God his "shield and exceeding great reward," and after his varied experience exhorts us to put on the whole armor of God, "above all taking the shield of faith."

This shield does not promise immunity from bodily hurt, but it protects that which is of infinitely more value--the soul. So long as with our face to the foe we follow the Captain of our salvation he will lead us on to victory, and nothing shall be able to hurt or destroy the soul that is protected by the "shield of faith" in him. No subtle, sin-poisoned arrow of unholy desire, no sword-thrust of worldly policy, no shower of thick-rushing temptations shall be able to overcome its power, for "God is our strength and shield, and nothing shall prevail against him."--*Am. Messenger.*

### Christian Toilet.

Wash--"Fountain filled with blood." Garment--Praise--"What you win by prayer, wear by praise." Sandals--Peace--"And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." Mantle--Love--"For charity shall cover the multitude of sins." Brooch--"Pearl of great price." Ring--Faith--"The trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth." Bracelets--Bonds of love--"And I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck." Perfume--Benevolence--"An odor of a sweet smell--a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." O, how sweet to work all day for God, and then to lie down at night beneath His smile!