

THE BIBLE

CHRISTIAN.



Truth, Holiness,

Liberty, Love.

VOL. II.

MONTREAL, JANUARY, 1845.

No. 1.

EMBLEMS OF DEITY.

The Sun is a fine emblem of Deity. The heavens are his tabernacle; earth and sea the regions over which he reigns, rejoicing in his light, and vivifying in the warmth of his influence. When he withdraws, creation mourns and droops; when he rises, the flowers expand, the air is vocal with the songs of his welcoming, and man beholds, delights in, and joins in the thousand sighs and sounds of gratulation.

The mountain typifies Deity. There is no city, though vainly called eternal, whose duration is like that of the everlasting hills. The dust at its base is that of crumbled and forgotten walls and palaces. Their inhabitants had passed more rapidly into non-existence and oblivion. It is seen afar, and the traveller on the plain, and the mariner on the wave, guides by it his distant course. The gradations of its ascent are marked with the productions of earth's varied climates, as if there in representative homage from their several regions. It looks down on clouds and lightnings. To the rude plains around, it is as the mighty bulwark of their protection; and it flings over them its gentle, softening, beautifying shade; as if in promise of its shelter and its blessing. Or, not to notice other single objects, such an emblem is the whole material universe. Each separate planet seems but a grain of sand to its unmeasured magnitude. The force of its movements, were worlds opposed to it, would crush them to dust, and scatter them like chaff. The complicated motions of the stars are as the workings of an omniscient brain, an universal intellect. They measure ages, but feel them not. Unchanged by time, they seem as they had existed from a past eternity, and had nought to fear from all the storms of a coming eternity.

But humanity is a nobler emblem yet. Man sees what all this means. Its perception is in his sight; its interpretation is in his soul. Were there not the rational beings to see and hear, no heavens could declare the glory of God, nor firmament show forth his handy work. Their beauty is felt by him, not by themselves. Their laws are investigated by him, not by themselves. In knowing them he is their superior, and a better image of God than they are. That knowledge gives him power, another feature of the image in which he was created. Of the laws which he knows he avails himself, and to that extent becomes the master of the elements. The grant of his sovereignty extends over the animal creation. He tames their fierceness, and tasks their strength; and they minister to his wants, and do his bidding, and he is as a god unto them, for their eyes wait upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due season. He rises into a yet higher emblem when vested with intellectual, political, moral power. When men by millions, receive his commands; when he sways bodies, minds and hearts; when his words are law and destiny—suffering to some, enjoyment to others,—life to some, death to others; when his presence seems, by his influence, extended over regions and ages, and he is to mankind a blessing or a curse.

But not the most highly gifted in mind, nor the most despotic in power, nor the most influential in goodness, of all the sons of men, can furnish out a picture of the Deity-like Christ. At best they are but beams of that glory of

which he was the brightness. Look at his miracles. In raising the dead there is an indication of divine power which nature never supplied. Look at his knowledge of the human heart and future events. That emanated from a higher wisdom than what designed the orbits of the planets, or combined the elements of material existence. In the dignity in which the Galilean peasant walked the earth, and looked down upon its rulers, and rebuked its lords, and raised its slaves, and legislated for human hearts, and promised eternal life, and established the kingdom of heaven, learn the moral grandeur of God. That unsullied purity on which the keenest malice and the vilest falsehood could fix no stain, portrays the Divine holiness. That untiring patience which no stupidity or perversity could baffle; that lowliness which disdained not the child, the slave, the sinner, the outcast; that kindness to all, which consorted with the Samaritan, and was gracious to the Gentile; do they not preach to our inmost hearts of God's forbearance, condescension, and impartiality? That mercy which so promptly welcomed back the erring follower, and so generously prayed even for his murderers, is it not an impressive lesson on the fathomless mercy and free forgiveness of our God and Father? And that benevolence which prompted him to incessant exertion; which supported him through unparalleled suffering; which was alike the soul of his discourses, his actions, his miracles; which shone through his life and his death; whose splendors were around his brow when he expired on the cross, and when he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; what is it but a glorious revelation of the glorious truth, that God is love?

THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF CHRIST.

(2 Cor. iv. 6.)

Theologians say, that the very infant comes into the world under the wrath and curse of the Deity. They never learned that by observing the glory of God in the face of Christ. No such withering frown ever sat on his benignant countenance. Think of Christ wroth with a child! Think of Christ cursing a child! I must read in the gospel that he did so, before I believe that God does so, and that the Calvinistic doctrine of original sin is true. In the strong horror of the human heart at the monstrous combinations of such a person with such an action I read the condemnation of that gloomiest article of a gloomy creed; and if it be a foul calumny on Christ, it must, exalted as he was, be a yet fouler calumny on God. I would sooner believe the one than the other. I would sooner imagine Jesus of Nazareth encountering some fond father and fond mother, in the first freshness of their parental feelings, as they pass beneath the gate which is called Beautiful,—less beautiful in the sculptured forms of marble on which its gorgeous architecture rested, than in the living human group which were there, bearing the babe to the altar to dedicate it to the God of its fathers,—and encountering them with that solemn malediction which would sink into their souls and corrode their lives; than I would imagine the Omniscience which witnesses each man's birth, life, and death; to be in all earth's scenes of parental anxiousness and fondness over helpless infancy, the all-pervading presence of an almighty curse. Yet

this is the doctrine into which thousands upon thousands of children are catechised. Why will not parents and teachers lead them, not to Calvin, but to Christ? So should they receive a blessing, even as did those children which were led to him, notwithstanding that there were not wanting, even then, erring disciples to intercept their approach and forbid their coming. As his blessing was on them, so is that of his and our God. His doctrine illustrates his conduct. 'Their angels,' he says, 'do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven'; they are peculiar objects of the providential care which, by the number, swiftness, and power of those supposed winged messengers, was so pictorially typified: and again, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

Theologians say that God avenged the honor of his broken laws, and satisfied the claims of his justice, and made a needful opening for the exercise of his mercy to the repentant sinner, by imputing the sins of mankind to Christ, and visiting their punishment on his head. They never learned that either, by observing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. His heart and life neither exhibited nor recognized any such moral principle as this sort of vindictive justice. It was not thus that he dealt with those who offended against him. Nothing could be so prompt, rich, and free, as his forgiveness, unless that of God, as he taught, and we believe it to be exercised in the parable of the prodigal son. Had the principle, ascribed by this faith to God, been that of Christ, how would he have acted, for instance, when Peter denied him? Think of the enormous discrepancy which his then adopting it would have introduced into the gospel. Suppose him forgiving Peter, notwithstanding those tears of bitterness, and that subsequent life of devotion to his cause, only on condition that John, the beloved disciple, should, in his own mind and body, endure some penalty of heavy anguish, the outpouring of the vials of Jesus' wrath for the apostasy of Peter, imputed to him; would this have strengthened the precept to love Christ? Would this have been a scene for us to admire and venerate? Yet if God be the God of vindictive justice, thus should his glory have shone in the face of Jesus Christ. It was a purer light that beamed from his eye, when in the midst of his false asseverations, 'the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.' That glance of affectionate upbraiding, of reproachful tenderness, of frank forgiveness, shone into his heart, as it does still into ours; 'that is the true light.' When the yet unconverted Paul was rushing on in his career, it is true the glorified appearance of Jesus struck him to the earth. But it was no blow of vengeance. Though he had aided in the infliction of death on Christians, there was no demand of blood for blood, his own or that of a substitute; it was the blaze of mercy which blinded his eyes to irradiate his mind; it was the voice of godlike compassion which said, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' And then with godlike generosity, came his apostolic commission and his Master's promise. Now, I say, that if we are to see as this same Paul tells us in the text, 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'; if the moral character of Jesus be really a picturing forth to the world of the moral attributes of the Deity, then the common doctrines of atonement and satisfaction

are utterly inconsistent with that character and those attributes, and have nothing to do with that eternal life which is in the knowledge of the Father, the only God, and Jesus Christ whom he sent.—*W. J. Fox.*

MENTAL FREEDOM.

It has pleased the All-wise Disposer to encompass us from our birth by difficulty and allurements, to place us in a world where wrong-doing is often gainful and duty rough and perilous, where many vices oppose the dictates of the inward monitor. where the body presses as a weight on the mind, and matter, by its perpetual agency on the senses, becomes a barrier between us and the spiritual world. We are in the midst of influences which menace the intellect and heart; and to be free is to withstand and conquer these.

I call that mind free, which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which contemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognizes its own reality and greatness, which passes life, not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting, and seeking after righteousness.

I call that mind free, which escapes the bondage of matter, which instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison-wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit, helps to its own spiritual enlargement.

I call that mind free, which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers which calls no man master, which does not content itself with a passive hereditary faith, which opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, which, whilst consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself, and uses instructions from abroad, not to supersede but to quicken and exalt its own energies.

I call that mind free, which sets no bounds to its love, which is not imprisoned in itself, or in a sect, which recognizes in all human beings the image of God and the rights of his children, which delights in virtue and sympathizes with suffering wherever they are seen, which conquers pride, anger, and sloth, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind.

I call that mind free, which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the torrent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement, and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles, which it has deliberately espoused.

I call that mind free, which protects itself against the usurpations of society, which does not cover to human opinion, which feels itself accountable to a higher tribunal than man's, which respects a higher law than fashion, which respects itself too much to be the slave or tool of the many or the few.

I call that mind free, which, through confidence in God and in the power of virtue, has cast off all fear but that of wrong-doing, which no menace or peril can enthral, which is calm in the midst of tumults, and possesses itself though all else be lost.

I call that mind free, which resists the bondage of habit, which does not me-