

at hand, and generally declined any thing like liberality in the cause of Christ. At length the Lord began to take away his property and his health, at one time a cow would die, then a horse, and such losses followed in quick succession.

Next his own body was afflicted. He suffered a scrofulous disease in one of his limbs, which resulted in its amputation. But all these things neither softened nor opened his heart, but seemed to furnish additional excuse for his covetousness. He was then taken sick with the typhus fever, and his two daughters were soon prostrated with the same disease. One of them died, and the other, with himself, scarcely survived. At this last affliction his pastor visited him again, and enquired if this chastisement had not served to wean him from the world? The reply was unsatisfactory. He believed he had a reasonable excuse for his course. He was cautioned to beware of his worldly spirit, and, as a Christian, to apprehend further chastenings. Soon they came upon him. A beloved son nearly out of his minority was laid low in death, and then the distracted man cried out, "it is enough." At the next meeting for missionary purposes he came forward, and, to the astonishment of his friends, exceeded the combined liberality of them all, and then remarked, "the Lord has taught me, in a way I deserved, to serve him with my person and my property." The remainder of his life he was a most active, consistent, devoted and liberal Christian, always regretting that so much of his life had been so useless. Surely we are not our own.

Miscellaneous.

THE BIBLE.

From the Introduction to "The Bards of the Bible," by the Rev. GEORGE GILFILL.

It has substantially but one declaration to make, but it utters it in the voices of the creation. Shining forth from the excellent glory, its lights has been reflected on a myriad intervening objects, till it has been at length attempored for our earthly vision. It now beams upon us at once from the heart of man and from the countenance of nature. It has arrayed itself in the charms of fiction. It has gathered new beauty from the works of creation, and new warmth and new power from the very passions of clay. It has pressed into its service the animals of the forest, the flowers of the field, the stars of heaven, all the elements of nature. The lion spurning the sands of the desert, the wild roe leaping over the mountains, the lamb led in silence to the slaughter, the goat speeding to the wilderness, the rose blossoming in Sharon, the lily drooping in the valley, the apple tree bowing under its fruit, the great rock shadowing a weary land, the river gladdening the dry place, the moon and the morning star, Carmel by the sea, and Tabor among the mountains, the dew from the womb of the morning, the rain upon the mown grass, the rainbow encompassing the landscape, the light God's shadow, the thunder His voice, the wind and the earthquake His footsteps,—all such varied objects are made as if naturally designed from their creation to represent Him to whom the Book and all its emblems point. Thus the quick spirit of the Book has ransacked creation to lay its treasures on Jehovah's altar—united the innumerable rays of a far-streaming glory on the little hill, Calvary—and woven a garland for the bleeding brow of Immanuel, the flowers of which have been culled from the gardens of a universe.

RELATIONS OF THE BIBLE TO MAN.

In its relation to man, the Bible therefore stands thus:—It is the authority for the main principles of his belief; it is the manual of the leading rites and practices of his worship; as the manifold echo of the voice of his conscience, it constitutes the grand

standard of his morality; it is his fullest and most authentic missive from his Maker; it is his sole torch into the darkness of the unseen world; all his science, his art, and his philosophy, it aims at, and, at last, (in the course of its own development, for it is "a fire unfolding itself"), shall succeed in drawing into harmony with its principles; and of his poetry, it is the loftiest reach. Thus it is designed at once to command and to claim, to subdue and to sublimiate, the mind of man; to command his belief into obedience—to claim his heart and his imagination;—to subdue his moral nature,—and to sublimiate the springs of his hope and joy; predestined, too, to move along with his progress, but to move as did the fiery pillar with the armies of Israel above and before him—his guide as well as companion, directing his motions, while attending his march. Its power over man has, need we say? been obstinately and long resisted—but resisted in vain. For ages has this artless, loosely-piled, little book being exposed to the fire of the keenest investigation—a fire which meanwhile has consumed, contemptuously the mythology of the Iliad, the husbandry of the Georgics, the historical truth of Livy, the fables of the Shaster, the Talmud, and the Koran, the artistic merit of many a popular poem, the authority of many a work of philosophy and science. And yet there the Bible lies, unhurt, untouched, with not one of its pages singed—with not even the smell of fire having passed upon it. Many an attempt has been made to scare away this "Fiery Pillar" of our wanderings, or to prove it a mere natural product of the wilderness; but still, night after night, rises—like one of the sure and ever-shining stars—in the vanguard of the great march of man, the old column, gliding slow, but guiding certainly, to future lands of promise, both in the life thus is, and in that which cometh hereafter.

THE BIBLE SUPERIOR TO ALL BOOKS.

The Book, we thus are justified in proclaiming to be superior to all other books that have been, or are, or shall ever be on earth. And this, not that it forestalls coming books, or includes all their essential truth within it; not that, in polish, art, or instant effect, it can be exalted above the written masterpieces of human genius;—what comparison in elaboration, any more than what comparison in girth and greatness, between the cabinet and the oak; but it is, that the Bible, while bearing on its summit the hues of a higher heaven, overstepping with ease all human structure and aspirations—in earth, but not of it—communicating with the omniscience, and recording the acts of the omnipotence, of God—sits at the same time the Bible of the poor and lowly, the crutch of the aged, the pillow of the widow, the eye of the blind, the "boy's own book," the solace of the sick, the light of the dying, the grand hope and refuge of simple, sincere, and sorrowing spirits; it is this which at once proclaims its unearthly origin, and so clasps it to the great common heart of humanity, that the extinction of the sun were not more mourned than the extinction of the Bible, or than even its receding from its present pride of place. For, while other books are planets shining with reflected radiance, this book, like the sun, shines with ancient and unborrowed ray. Other books have, to their loftiest altitudes, sprung from earth; this book looks down from heaven high. Other books appeal to understanding or fancy; this book to conscience and to faith. Other books seek our attention; this book demands it—it speaks with authority, and not as the Scribes. Other books guide gracefully along the earth, or onwards to the mountain-summits of the ideal; this, and this alone, conducts up the awful abyss which leads to heaven. Other books, after shining their little season, may perish in flames, fiercer than those which destroyed the Alexandrian Library; this must, in essence, remain pure as gold, but unconsumable as asbestos, in the general conflagration. Other book may be forgotten in a universe where suns go down and disappear, like bubbles in the stream; the memory of this book shall shine as the brightness of that eternal firmament, and as those higher stars, which are for ever and ever.

STOP THAT THOUGHT.

From the New York Observer.

A wicked thought! Call it a drop if you please, so minute a portion is it a man's history. But it has the fearful power of attracting to itself other drops, till all admonitions human and divine are swept away by the flood.

Call it a particle, as of the small dust of the balance, yet it can attract other particles till an overwhelming mass shall bury the soul in perdition.

An indulged wicked thought; how long before it excites other wicked thoughts; and they set on fire the hateful passion of the soul. Each one of those thoughts is fuel to the flame.

We would stop the thief in his assault on the happiness of the community. We could stay disease, as we saw it widening the sphere of its ravages. We would stop the flame we saw kindling upon a neighbor's roof. But how many elements of evil are wrapped up in a wicked thought! What havoc, unrestrained, it will make among all the forms of human happiness! It is among its minor evils that it can waste property, and generate vices that will fiercely torment the human body. It looks for noble game, and never fails to find it. It strikes at that most magnificent of Jehovah's works, the immortal soul. It aims at laying it in utter and everlasting ruin. Therefore,

1. It is wisdom to stop that wicked thought. All true philosophy directs us to the fountain for the power we would have over the stream. Take care of the spark if you would not have the flame and the conflagration. When we stop the wicked thought we lay our hand on the starting point of action. We stand by the fountain and the polluted stream shall not issue from it. Human wisdom loses off the branches when it assaults only outward evil habit. But Divine wisdom lays the axe at the root of the tree when it bids us stop the wicked thought.

2. And is there less of kindness than of wisdom when we cry to the sinning, "Stop that wicked thought!" Do we not kill in the bud a most terrible agent of mental suffering? Does not a spark die when that wicked thought dies, that might have kindled the flames of everlasting remorse in that bosom?

Suppose that, with effectual power, that rebuke "stop that thought," had fallen on David's ear, when the first impulse was given to that career of guilt that made him an adulterer and murderer, what shame and remorse, how many tears and agonies would have been prevented!

Had Judas stopped that thought which fired the train of covetous emotion in his heart, and which ended in the betrayal of his Lord, what a mercy he had done his soul!

Had the timid Peter repelled that unbelieving thought which laid open his heart to the tempter and caused the countless tears of remorse, what suffering he had saved his soul!

Christian kindness never does a nobler office than when it seeks to wither in its bud an unholy thought. It gives a death-blow to a most terrific agent of evil.

That thought of malice—stop it. Else it will gather other elements of flame, and burning more and more fiercely as kindred thoughts and emotions contribute to its power, and some dreadful deed of blood proclaims how great a matter a little fire kindleth.

That thought of lust—let it die as soon as born. It can live only to pollute. It can live only to gather other vile thoughts into its company, and to kindle, by accumulation, such a passion as shall clothe you with shame as with a mantle, and set the undying worm to work in your bosom.

That thought of pride—stop it. It has fired a train that has sent millions to perdition. Stop it now. To-morrow it may escape your grasp. To-day it is perishable. To-morrow it will defy you.