

ESSAY ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.
PRIZE OF TWO HUNDRED GUINEAS, &c.

DURING the last forty years, many excellent Sermons, Tracts, and Pamphlets, have appeared on the subject of Missions to the Heathen; but the want of a comprehensive work, embracing all the topics directly and collaterally involved in the general theme, has long been felt and very generally acknowledged. It has occurred to a few friends of the Missionary enterprise in Scotland that this desideratum in our Christian literature might be supplied by means of friendly competition, were the theme of Missions proposed as the subject of a Prize Essay. Dispensing, for the present, with the consideration of the causes that may instrumentally have retarded the progress of Christianity throughout the world, and with the investigation of the most approved methods of practically conducting Missions abroad, a PRIZE OF TWO HUNDRED GUINEAS is hereby offered for the best Essay, and another PRIZE OF FIFTY GUINEAS for the second best Essay on "The Duty, Privilege, and Encouragement of Christians to send the Gospel of Salvation to the unenlightened Nations of the Earth." The grand object of Missions, viz., the regeneration of a lost world through the all-sufficient atonement of the Lord our Righteousness and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, must be distinctly unfolded and vindicated from the Sacred Scriptures. The Duty, Privilege, &c. must be illustrated as enjoined or sanctioned by Divine commands, Evangelical motives, and explicit prophecies, as well as recommended by a review of the beneficial effects of Christianity on the civilization of the world, and the reflex influence of the Missionary enterprise in improving the spiritual tone and condition of the Reformed Churches. Under the head of Duty, must be comprehended the obligation to advance the kingdom of the Redeemer by means of prayer, counsel, pecuniary contribution, and personal services. Answers must also be furnished to all the most plausible objections that have from time to time been urged against the cause of Missions.

In order at once to demonstrate the Catholicity of the present design, and inspire universal confidence in the rectitude of the decision, the following Gentlemen have been requested, and have kindly consented, to become adjudicators, viz.:

The Rev. David Welsh, D.D., Professor of Church History in the University of Edinburgh.

The Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, D.D., Glasgow.

The Rev. Henry Melville, B.D., Camberwall, late Fellow and Tutor of St. Peter's College, Cambridge.

The Rev. Jabez Bunting, D.D., President of the Wesleyan Conference, London.

The Rev. Thomas S. Crisp, President of the Baptist College, Bristol.

The Essays will be received on or before 1st June, 1839, by the Secretaries of the Church of England, London, Baptist, and Wesleyan Missionary Societies, at the respective Mission Houses in London, and by the Rev. Dr. Brunton, Convener, or Rev. Dr. Gordon, Secretary of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland's Committee for Foreign Missions, Edinburgh. Each must be accompanied with a sealed letter, enclosing the name and address of the author—the Letter and Essay bearing some motto or superscription common to both. No Essay need be forwarded which is not written or copied in a clear, distinct, legible hand. The Adjudicators are expected to make their decision known on or before 1st June, 1840, after which date the Essays will be returned, on proper application at the several Offices where they were originally left, with the Letters unopened except those accompanying the successful Treatises. Half of the profits arising from the sale of the Copyright of the Essay, to which the Prize of Two Hundred Guineas shall be awarded, to be given to the Author, the other half to be applied to such object, promotive of the great cause of Missions, as the Contributors to the present Prize may deem most expedient.

In the name of the Contributors,

STEVENSON M'GILL, D.D.,

Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow.

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D.,

Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh.

ALEXANDER DUFF, D.D.,

Church of Scotland Mission, Calcutta.

CHRISTIAN LIBRARY.

A SMALL CHRISTIAN LIBRARY has been for a short time established, under the superintendence of members of the Church of England, with the design of promoting religious reading by providing the principal religious publications of the day, on as easy terms as possible. Since a recent importation, the number of Books on the Catalogue, amounts to about 250, among which are all the works of the Rev. H. Blunt, the Rev. Dr. Krummacher, author of "Elijah the Tishbite," the Rev. C. Bridges, author of "Exposition of 1199 Psalms," the Rev. R. Phillip, author of "Experimental Guides," "The Martyrs," &c. and those of Charlotte Elizabeth; and the Life Letters, and Journals, and Sermons of Henry Martyn, lives of Thomas, Brauerd, &c. The small subscription of 5s. a year, entitles the subscriber to receive a book a week. The Library is at present placed in the house of H. Pryor, Esq., Hells-street, where books can be had every Tuesday, from 2 to 4 o'clock—and by whom subscriptions and donations either of books or money will be thankfully received.

THE CHILD'S DEPARTMENT.

WATER.

"**SEE,**" said Robert to his father one day, "what a beautiful cloud yonder is in the sky! I wonder what it is made of?"

"My dear boy," replied his father, "it is nothing but water."

"Why, pa, you astonish me!" cried Robert. "What is that water which lies on a heap up high in the air, and has such beautiful colours and curious shapes?"

"It is even water, my son. Do you not know that rain is water, and that rain falls out of the clouds?"

"But, pa, if rain does fall out of the clouds, does that prove that clouds are water; I have seen rain fall out of the tree-tops; but that never led me to think that trees are water. Do explain this to me."

"It pleases me, Robert," said his father, "to see you so desirous of knowing the truth of things, as not to be satisfied with bare appearances. I will endeavour to clear up this difficulty to your satisfaction. You have seen water boil in a pot, and you have seen steam come out of it. Now the water will all boil away; and when it is gone, the steam will stop rising; so the water all goes out in steam, or very small particles of water raised by the heat, which float in the air and become invisible."

"Yes," said Robert, "I remember putting a piece of cold iron in the steam of a pot, and it was soon covered with large drops of water. I suppose that it was the steam settling on the iron."

"Yes, Robert; and now I will tell you more about the operations of water. You know that when things are wet, they will become dry, and you cannot see the water run out of them. The reason is, it goes off in steam or vapour, which is invisible to the eye. In this way water rises into the air continually, which is always full of it. Set a bottle of cold water in a warm room, and it will soon be covered with drops of water, which collect on it out of the air. The little invisible particles of steam are attracted by the cold glass—they touch one another till they become large enough to be seen, and by that means collect by degrees into drops. In this way the rain is formed. A cloud is nothing but fog or steam become visible in small drops of water, but not heavy enough to sink down in the air. By some means, which God has provided for that purpose, those little bits of water which float round in the air like dust, touch one another by the force of attraction, and when they become large enough they fall down. While they are falling, they continue to increase in size till they become a heavy rain."

"I thank you, pa," said Robert; "now I understand it. But what gives the clouds so many colours?"

"The colours, Robert, are the reflection of the light of the sun. There are colours in the sun's light; and the things on which he shines have the power of throwing back the light to our eyes, and showing colours. But let us return to the clouds and water. You see what a fine contrivance the clouds are for watering the fields when they become dry. The heat of the sun or air dries up the water from the sea; the air carries it over the land and throws it down on the fields to make the grass and other things grow. And then again the sun dries out the water after the grain grows, and causes it to ripen and become hard, fit to keep in the barn, and be made into bread; which water goes off again in the air, to fall in rain in another place. This is the way that all green things grow; by which it appears that steam supports the life of men, beasts, trees, and plants. Steam does more: it makes all rivers and streams of water, and springs. For these all are the offspring of vapour and rain, which falls on the land and runs off in rivers. Did you ever hear people complain of too much rain?"

"Yes, papa, I have often. I heard neighbour Brown say the other day, that he wished it would always stop raining when the ground became wet enough to make his crops grow. But now I see if the silly man could have his wish, we never should have rivers for steam-boats to run on; no, nor grist mills to grind our wheat. This makes me think of what you once told me, that God is a much better contriver than man, and knows best in every thing."

TERMS, &c.

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