

# Christian Mirror.

NEW SERIES.

WEEKLY.]

"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL xii. 4.

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## POETRY.

### MARY MAGDALENE.

To the hall of that feast came the sinful and fair;  
She heard in the city that Jesus was there:  
Upheeding the splendour that blazed on the board,  
She silently knelt at the feet of her lord.

The hair on her forehead, so sad and so meek,  
Hung dark on the blushes that crimsoned her cheek,  
And so sad and so lowly she knelt in her shame,  
It seemed that her spirit had fled from her frame.

The crown and the murmur went round thro' them all,  
That one so unhallowed should tread in that hall;  
And some said the poor would be objects more meet,  
For the wealth of the perfume she showered on his feet.

She heard but her Saviour, she spoke but with sighs,  
She dared not look up to the heaven of his eyes;  
And the hot tears gushed forth at each heave of her breast,  
As her lips to his sandals were throbbingly press'd.

In the sky after tempest, as shineth the bow,  
In the glance of the sunbeam, as melteth the snow,  
He looked on the lost one, her sins were forgiven,  
And Mary went forth in the beauty of Heaven.

## CHOICE EXTRACTS.

### EXCITEMENT.

EXCITEMENT does not constitute the Christian. Christianity is not mere excitability. In my humble opinion, it is no less dangerous to resolve it into a peculiar feeling, than it is to make it mere speculation, a cold abstraction. But how many do it! When highly excited, they seem to think they have much religion, and are quite flaming Christians; but as the excitement dies away, they suppose they have lost their religion. And in order to find it again, or raise it from the grave, they call into requisition a system of powerful stimulants; without these, they are as the inebriate without his glass, or as the fish out of water.

Such Christians are not like the evergreen, or the tree planted by the river of waters, which bringeth forth fruit in due season, and its leaves never wither: but are plants which only grow in the "hot-bed," mere summer sprouts, withered by the vertical beams of the sun, or nipped by the first autumnal frosts. They have neither root nor sap in themselves. Their religion has no internal basis. They live as the drone. They produce nothing in the hive; they only consume. They are excited, when others are. They float on the undulations of the wave of social emotion. As the cork floats in the stream, so they drift on the current of popular feeling. Being mere sail vessels, they can make no headway without wind and current. Theirs is a mere Herodian religion, shaped according to the times. Now they are quite religious, and anon, they are very wicked. When the times are good, they are good; and when the times are bad, then they are bad. When the south winds blow, they are in the church; but when the north wind blows forth, it drives them back to the world, as the sow to the mire, or the dog to his vomit. Their religion is contracted; a sickly excitement; they love it, as the tippler the intoxicating bowl, for the sensation it produces; a mere element of selfishness, which evaporates in mere sing-song. It is a liquid poured into a bowl, which may all run out again if the vessel be turned over. Is this Christianity? Rather, is it not adulteration? Such Christians are like a sponge saturated with water—under the least pressure it all spouts away.

It is not in them as a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. Mere excitement does not constitute the Christian. But enough of this. Man is an extravagant creature; the tendency of his nature is to run from one extreme to its opposite. The medium point is where the truth dwells, and there is safety.

On this rock the Christian stands. Is he the subject of feeling? Yea: the most intense and thrilling; every pure emotion of which the immortal mind is susceptible, is excited in his breast. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost; he does, he must feel; his feelings are such as are excited by divine love, by the knowledge and love of truth. He is not a Stoic; insensibility makes no part of his religion, nor does it exclusively consist in excitement. It is not stove heat, but the fire of the solar ray. His religion is not a sickly sentimentalism, as evanescent as the bubble; nor is it a cold abstraction, as destitute of warmth as Greenland ice or Alpine snow. It includes both light and heat, but does not consist exclusively in either.

### READING THE SCRIPTURES.

If it be asked, May I not fall into error in reading the Scriptures, though sincerely desirous to know the truth? We answer, We do not believe any who search the Scriptures with unmix'd, right motives, ever fall into fatal error; for our Lord says, "If any man will do the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine"—that is the doctrine he made known through his only-begotten Son, "whether it be of God." And again: "Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know." By which we understand, if we improve what we already understand, more will be made known to us, until we "comprehend the length, and breadth, and depth, and height" of the scheme of salvation. But allowing the possibility of such a one making great mistakes as to the teachings of the Scripture, and even falling into heretical opinions, he is to be judged by one who "knows him altogether"—by Him who gave the rule of life, by which he will judge the world; but who also gave to every one the degree of ability he individually enjoys to understand the rule, and who will decide according to the rule as applied to the degree or amount of ability he has given to comprehend the duties required. "For it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what a man hath not." To ascertain duty by reading the Scriptures is, to those who can read, and who can procure the precious word of God, a part of our probation—and in this God requires SINCERITY—nothing more, but nothing less. And in this, as in all other circumstances of the probation or discipline assigned us, "where much is given, much shall be required." This is all plain. We be to them, therefore, who forbid men to read the Scriptures, lest they should misunderstand their import; and also to those who through the pride of their hearts, pervert their meaning and mislead the simple. Let us rejoice that "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."—N. Y. Christian Advocate.

### "THE GOLDEN CENSER."

DID Jesus pray? Oh, in a sense more than figurative, he saved the world by prayer. Portray a mountain-top, and Jesus on it, prostrate, alone, wet with the dews of night, praying to God with strong cries and tears. And next, a garden, Gethsemane; and Jesus there, praying in agony which baptizes him in his own blood. And next, the place called Calvary, for "there they crucified him;" and Jesus died, offering that great sacrificial prayer, which still pleads above—still fills the ear of God, and for the sake of which all other prayers are heard. Can the cloven tongues of fire be portrayed? Forget not to represent the apostles, on whom they rest, assembled in prayer. Elsewhere, let an angel be seen despatched from the divine presence to liberate Peter from prison; but forget not to represent the apostles in a neighbouring house, in prayer! But oh! there is a vision no human eye but one has seen, a heavenly scene which sums up all; an angel standing at the altar, having a golden censer: and there is given him much incense, that he may offer it with, mark, the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which is before the throne; and the smoke of the incense, blending with the prayers of the saints, ascends up before God out of the angel's hand. Yes, draw near—it is the summing up of man's instrumentality. Of all the various ways in which he employs himself here, look into that censer, and mark which one of them it is that reaches heaven. Only that which was sanctified by prayer. When the clamours of a turbulent zeal have subsided, and the undevout moans

which have dazzled and astonished men, have spent their force, mark what is left in the censer. Only that which partook of the nature of prayer. This is all that lives to reach the skies, all that Heaven receives from earth, all that is ever permitted to ascend before God. Nothing but prayer shall be in that censer; and nothing will ever find a place in that censer but that which ascends on the breath of prayer.

Again, here everything is to be done with the view of leading to prayer. As we have been proceeding with our remarks, the question may have arisen in some minds—What, is our piety to take no other form than that of prayer? Is it to shew itself in no other way but by prayer? Such a question could be entertained only where there existed a misapprehension of the nature of prayer or of the way in which prayer blends with all the acts of devotion and methods of instrumentality by which God works. Confine yourself to prayer? If you preach the gospel, for instance, you are to bear in mind that this is the most successful preaching which brings man prostrate before God for mercy. This is the very end of the gospel ministry; and the more vividly you can set forth Jesus Christ crucified among men, the more effectually this will be answered. Yes, let every place of prayer have a Calvary in the midst of it, and on that Calvary let there be a cross, and on that cross a bleeding Saviour; and on that sight, that spectacle of love, let the eyes of the people be perpetually fixed. As preachers of the gospel, our great distinction is, that we are the ministers of the cross; we have to wait on the cross, to walk around the cross, and to point to the people the wonders of the cross. Have we any pathos? It should be kept for telling them of the cross. Have we any affection for their souls? It should gush forth when we are pointing to the cross. Have we any tears for them? When shall we shed them, but when we have led our people to the cross—when we are there, saying to the sinner, Look upon him! He is wounded for your transgressions! He is bruised for your iniquities;—the chastisement of your peace is upon him, that with his stripes you might be healed. Draw nearer to it! it is of you he is thinking! That blood is to wash away your sins; that life which he is giving is for your souls. Draw nearer still—look into his heart—read the names which are written there—your name is among them. And while we are thus entreating the sinner, does he relent? Does he look upon him whom he has pierced, mourning? Does he smite upon his breast, crying "God be merciful to me a sinner?" Then the end of the ministry is answered. "Behold he prayeth."

DTING CONFESSION.—William the Conqueror, exceedingly alarmed on his death-bed, entreated the clergy to intercede for him. "Laden with many and grievous sins," he exclaims, "I tremble; and being ready to be taken soon into the terrible examination of God, I am ignorant what I should do. I have been brought up in feats of arms from my childhood; I am greatly polluted with the effusions of much blood; I can by no means number the evils I have done these sixty years, for which I am now constrained, without stay, to render an account to the just Judge."

THERE are some who affect a want of affliction, and flatter themselves that they are above flattery; they are proud of being thought extremely humble, and would go round the world to punish those who thought them capable of revenge; they are so satisfied with the suavity of their own temper, that they would quarrel with their dearest benefactor, only for doubting it. And yet so very blind are all their acquiescence to their numerous qualifications and merits that the possessors of them invariably discover, when it is too late, they have lived in the world without a single friend, and are about to leave it without a single mourner.

In pulpit eloquence, the grand difficulty lies here; to give the subject all the dignity it so fully deserves, without attaching any importance to ourselves. The Christian messenger cannot think too highly of his Prince or too humble of himself. This is that secret art which ennobles and improves an audience, and which all who see will fancy they could imitate, while most who try will fail.