

Christian Mirror

AND GENERAL MISSIONARY REGISTER.

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

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POETRY.

THE INFIDEL'S TEST.

BY MRS. EDWARD THOMAS.

"Father," said the expiring daughter of the infidel Colonel Allen, "I feel that my end is drawing near. Tell me, I entreat you, see I to believe what you have taught me, or what I have learnt from my mother?" "Believe, my child," he replied, after a severe struggle with his feelings, "what your mother taught you."—*Saturday Magazine* vol. 3. p. 233. (London.)

Stretched on the bed of death his darling lay,
Her hours are told—she cannot rise the day.
She knew his voice, unclosed her quivering eyes,
And gazed upon him with a dread surprise.
Her looks expressed perplexity and fear—
"Father," she cried, "he instantly drew near,
Laid tenderly her head upon his breast,
Kiss'd her wan eyelids, and his daughter blest.
"Father!" she cried, once more, "Death draweth
nigh!

Is there a God? Is there futurity?
My mother taught there was; but thou—oh, thou!
Declar'st it folly at his crisis to say.
At such an awful hour do not deceive—
Is there a God? What must thy child believe?
Speak, I adjure thee, ere it be too late!
When taken hence, what is to be my fate?
I feel there is (when this worn spirit's fled)
A God to judge—eternity to dread.
Oh! did my mother teach the truth?" "She did!"
Trembled his lips, and quail'd his quiv'ring lid.
Mighty the struggle in the scorner's heart;
Yet could he let his cherished one depart
Oppress'd with doubt;—the doubt that made him
too,

Question if what he had instill'd were true?
No, no! he dares not! demons prompt in vain—
Oh! his humiliation, anguish, pain,
As he confess'd to that expiring child,
"When he disowned his God he basely lied."
He felt her shudder, for he clasp'd her yet;
And her last look he never can forget.
Oh! it is easy round the festive board,
With boon companions to deny the Lord,
Turning his threaten'd judgment to a jest,
(Blasphemy lending wit a keener zest);
Holding eternity a thing of nought,
Nor sick'ning at annihilation's thought.
But when the lips of death make the appeal,
How awful the conviction we then feel!
"Is there a God?" The soul appall'd replies,
There is a God—a God who never dies.
Who, save a God, created all we see?
Who gave existence, thankless man, to thee?
Oh! turn to him, with penitence, in time;
Implore his pardon for each wilful crime.
Lo! he invites thee to partake his love!
Lo! he invites thee to the bliss above.
Scorn not the offer—"Oh! repent and live;"
He as a father panteth to forgive;
They who die in their sins no joy afford
To the most merciful, most gracious Lord.

GENERAL LITERATURE.

THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY IN CHINA.

EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL OF REV. MR. ABEL.

Introductory Remarks—Indifference to Religion—Chinese Proverb—Attendance on the Sabbath.

THE departure of Mr. Abel from Macao, and his arrival at Kolongsoo, an island near Amoy, have been mentioned in preceding numbers of the Herald. The following extracts from his journal—a continuation of that which was published in the December number—will be read with peculiar interest at the present time. The recent changes in the external relations of China, the partial opening of its immense territory to the blessings of civilization and Christianity, have arrested the attention of the friends of missions in all parts of the world. But how will the gospel be received by that vast population? How much time must be allowed for the removal of prejudices, and for a cautious examination of an untried religion? How will the missionary be treated by the common people, and how will men in office—mandarins, viceroys, magistrates, &c.—look upon the unpretending preacher of Christ, and him crucified?

It is evident that upon the answers which these inquiries shall receive, must depend, in no small degree, the expectations and responsibilities of the Church, in relation to a very large portion of the human family. If God in his providence, has opened no avenue to this singular people, if he offers no inducement to missionary effort, Christians can and must turn away, and devote all their energies to tribes and tongues which are accessible to the gospel. But if, on the other hand, the barriers which have hitherto kept out the truth are soon to be prostrated, if important and effective breaches have already been made, the hopes of believers in all lands will brighten, and their obligations will become more weighty and imperative than ever.

The statements of Mr. Abel have a direct bearing upon this whole subject. The time has not yet arrived for a final decision of the question, how far China is accessible to Christian effort. Additional facts must be collected, further experiments must be made. Still there is every reason to believe that all the missionaries who shall be sent thither, will find a great and effectual door already opened.

May 15, 1842.—The people at large are extremely indifferent in respect to their religious sentiments. Indeed they appear to have no systematic creed, but they hold a confused jumble of opinions, often contradictory to each other. I asked the boy who has been living with us since our arrival, and whom we have endeavoured to teach the unity of the God-head, and the wickedness of idol worship, what God he worshiped now. He replied, "O I am not at all particular; any one whose birth-day happens to come along. An abandoned, desperate person had been speaking of murdering men with fiendish pleasure. I told him if he pursued such a life his soul would sink to hell after death. With a broad

laugh, he answered, "That is a matter of the least consequence," meaning that if he did not suffer in this life, he had no solicitude about the sufferings of the next. The future is too indistinct and uncertain to arouse their fears.

"17. To-day we were reading about the poor widow whose small offerings were cast into the treasury. My teacher attempted to illustrate the text by an anecdote. He said there was an old woman who lived in a part of this province, and who requested the privilege of putting down her name to a subscription for a bell. It was an offering to Budh, and the rich were giving of their abundance. When the old woman made the request they looked with astonishment, and asked her what she had to give. She took a cash—less than the thousandth part of a dollar—and handed it to the collector. He threw it with disdain into a pond of water, adding, that he supposed from her request that she had more than that to give. She replied, and her reply has been a proverb since, "one cash cheerfully bestowed (from penury) is as meritorious as tens of thousands (from abundance)." The bell was cast, but its tones were most defective. It was re-cast, but with no better effect. At last, after many unsuccessful efforts, Budh appeared to the collector in a dream, and informed him that the bell would never give forth a good sound until the identical cash of the old woman was added to its materials. The pond was dried, the rejected cash found, the bell once more cast, and the tones were rich and clear. Thus the deceiver sustains his cause, by associating with a proverb which is in the mouths of many, gross and fatal falsehood which they equally believe."

On the 8th of May, Mr. Abel wrote in his journal, that from twenty-five to thirty attended the service of the Sabbath.

"22. To-day our congregation was less than a dozen. A mountebank was showing his tricks in the market, and the majority of those who have lately met with us, preferred witnessing his feats to worshipping the Lord. There are a few however who always attend, which is more to be wondered at than that the others should have been drawn away."

Under date of May 27, Mr. Abel says, that seven French Catholic priests had recently passed through Kolongsoo on their way to Chusan.

Excursion to the Interior—Appearance of the Country—Arrival of other Missionaries—Attendance on the Sabbath.

"June 1. Yesterday, at the invitation of the senior naval officer, I embarked with him and others on board the iron steamer Medusa, in the direction of Tang Wa, the capital of the district in which Amoy is situated. Our course lay east of north. We had the island of Amoy on our right the greater part of the distance. For the first few miles the hills wore the same rugged, barren aspect, which is characteristic of the coast of China. Fertility and cultivation grew upon us as we advanced. The mountains on the Amoy side