

ORIGINAL POETRY.

LINES

SUGGESTED BY A VIEW OF THE OLD ENGLISH BURIAL GROUND FROM A NEIGHBORING WINDOW, AFTER A SEVERE SNOW STORM.

How calmly sleep,
Beneath those marble urns, the quiet dead!
Around each sculptured stone the stainless snow
Hangs gracefully its soft and feathery wreaths,
And with light tracery marks the narrow bounds
Of every humble grave. Voiceless is all
Within those circling walls, where silent lies
'The City of the Dead.' Sadly the breeze
Sighs through the leafless boughs of yon old elm,
Or, with its chilling breath, the long array
Of funeral poplars stirs, scattering the ice
That with a diadem crowns their tall crests.
Come, let us look on Death's full granary.
Solemn it is, but yet methinks not sad:
There countless hundreds have lain down to rest,
Casting aside the burden of life's cares,
To sleep in peace, forgotten and alone,—
Ashes to ashes, dust again to dust,
The earthy mingling with its mother earth.
Is this then all—all that we claim of life?
Quenched is the spirit that divinely stirred
Those quiet breasts? or hath it soared again
Rejoicing in its freedom, unto Him
Whose breath first kindled its undying flame?
No sound gives answer from those snow-clad
groves;
But a clear voice,—clear as an angel's trump,—
The doubt resolved, when the cold bonds of Death
Our Master burst, and to eternal life
Triumphant rose!

And they who moulder here,—
They who have left their places desolate
At board and hearth, have risen with him to life,
Have cast aside humanity's frail coil
For immortality's unchanging robe.
Nor have they lived their earthly span in vain—
Not e'en the humblest one who slumbers there
Hath passed away, his mission unfulfilled;
For as on each Knowledge her light hath poured,
Or Truth hath shone, or Virtue they have loved,
Or Vice embraced, so have they left on those
With whom they shared life's brief and chequered
lot,
An impress of themselves,—an influence deep,—
Which will be felt when Time's destroying hand
Shall from these marble urns efface the lines
Affection hath engraved.

H. V. C.

Montreal, 16th February, 1845.

SECTARIANISM.

Christian liberty is restrained by the bonds of sectarianism. This is a more prevalent and a more direful vassalage than that of political control. The yoke which a government puts on religionists is light to that which they too commonly themselves fix on their own necks. Sectarian fetters eat deeply into the mind and conscience. Party may be a voluntary connexion, but when it implies personal compromise, and gives individual bias, it becomes a slavery, and one of the worst of slaveries. How many Christians are mere partisans; partisans for a faith, partisans for forms, partisans for a church! Look at religious bodies. There are laws and submissions, creeds and tests, the leaders and the led, a system of co-operation and of hostility. This is not the way for individuals to know the mind of Christ, exhibit the spirit of Christ, and maintain that equality and brotherhood which he declared to be the common and essential relation of his disciples. It was from nothing of his institution that Christianity itself ever wore the aspect of a sect. His gospel was the communication of truth, not the organization of a party. When he unfolded his divine mission, the world became dowered with discoveries, and feelings, and principles, and hopes, for its common good. They were God's gift in freedom, for mankind in freedom to enjoy. The modern plan of selecting a set of opinions, and banding men together for their defence, and making them the criterion of a Christian, and the foundation of religious fellowship, and a watchword and a Shibboleth; and thus establishing the reign of verbal uniformity, and unmeaning repetition, and exclusion, and narrowness of heart, and vexatious interferences with convic-

tion and conscience; and bringing intellect to a halt, and corrupting the language of piety into cant and embittering bigotry, had not then commenced; or if there were indications of such a spirit in other forms, they only encountered the Saviour's reprobation. On those who avowed themselves the disciples of Christ, the first preachers of the gospel imposed no creed; of course they could not make a creed the main-spring of sectarian machinery. Where is the use of freedom from political restrictions if religionists are to forge restrictions for one another?—if they are so to constitute churches, that individual minds act at the peril of social comforts, though not of civil rights? It is quite as bad for a man that his neighbors should hate and shun him as immoral and dangerous on account of his supposed heresy, as it is that the laws should degrade him on account of his dissent. It is quite as much an invasion of his Christian liberty. He may rise above it, he may despise and resist it, but the other may be despised and resisted too—perhaps has been more frequently. O that the insurrection of a determined individuality of thought could but shake down the despotism of the sectarian spirit!—that the affections and the fears, and the combinations, and all the influences of social life, would but leave men, in religion, fairly and freely, of themselves, and for themselves, to judge that which is right! The second great stage of the ascent would then be gained. Men would be mounting towards the topmost pinnacle, with all its boundless prospects, of Christian liberty. For its loftiest throne, and noblest seat of power, is not in royal palace, nor in church, national or voluntary, but in the inmost soul of man. There it is that the Son of God makes us free, so that we are free indeed. There is the accomplishment and enjoyment of that spiritual emancipation which is the work of God, the glory of the gospel, the reward of Christ, and the dignity and blessedness of humanity.

TOLERATION.

One of the greatest and highest of all virtues, the last to which humanity attains, seems to be a disposition to "forbear with our brethren in love." This virtue seems to be the crowning virtue; the virtue which comes to complete and perfect the Christian character. In order to be tolerant, it seems necessary that a man should have both an enlightened understanding and a truly loving and disinterested soul. It seems almost impossible for ignorance or selfishness to be tolerant. There seems to be no cure for intolerance therefore, but the spread of the pure, bright light of Gospel truth, and the diffusion throughout society, of the spirit of Christian love. We can never put down intolerance by speaking against it; we can never establish toleration by preaching in its favour. If we wish to break down the spirit of intolerance, and to bring people to forbear one another in love, we must pour forth light unceasingly and unsparingly, and we must labour for the spread of Christian love with all our powers. I know that by freely pouring forth light upon our fellow men, we shall rouse their intolerance, and bring forth their lurking fury with greater violence against ourselves; but this should not discourage us. It is by bringing men's intolerance out, that it is to be destroyed; it is by bringing down their wrath and fury on ourselves that those fierce fires are to be quenched. As the lightnings are rendered harmless, by being disengaged from the clouds by the skill of the philosopher, and brought down to earth and lodged therein, by proper substances, so must it be with the lightnings of intolerance and priestly rage. We must disengage those frightful fires by the application of truth to the black and full charged souls of ignorant and selfish men; and we must then receive the fiery streams upon ourselves, and be content, though at the risk of being scathed and blasted, to be the conductors of this moral lightning to its grave.—*The Christian.*

CHANNING.

Extract from a Letter by Joseph Barker, the Christian Preacher, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England.

Channing was an American, a minister, and his works are chiefly religious. He was not what is called orthodox. His views on the Trinity, on Satisfaction to Justice, on Natural Depravity, and on the Way of Salvation, were the same as my own, or nearly so. He was called a Unitarian, and he took the name himself. He was led to identify himself with the Unitarians, if I remember right, in consequence of the fierceness and malignity with which the Unitarians were persecuted by the pretenders to orthodoxy, and the dreadful efforts which were made by those pretenders, to crush the spirit of religious freedom, and bring the world into subjection to the authority of Protestant Popes and Dissenting creed-makers. He was resolved, that if people were to suffer persecution for their attachment to religious freedom, he would share their persecutions. Accordingly he counted the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of orthodoxy, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the lovers of truth and the followers of Jesus, than to enjoy the reputation and worldly profits of error and intolerance. And he clung to the reviled and persecuted Unitarians as long as he lived.

I commend his motives, though I cannot approve of his conduct, in this matter. It would have been better, in my judgment, if he had clung to the simple name of his master, and fought the great battle of freedom and truth under the name of Christian only. He would have done honour to the Christian name, and the Christian name might have done some justice to him. The name of Unitarian does not do him justice; it no more conveys an idea of his character and writings, than it reveals the hidden mysteries of nature. At best it conveys no further information respecting him, than that he did not believe in the Trinity; while on the majority of men, it is calculated to make the impression, that he was a loose ungodly kind of thinker, a cold and careless moralist, and altogether a profane, an earthly-minded, sceptical, or unbelieving kind of man. The name of Unitarian has been converted, by orthodox usurpers of Christ's prerogatives, and the foes of Christian liberty and simplicity, into a proverb for all that is hateful, and fearful, and wicked. And there are millions of poor deluded creatures,—there are millions of poor blind followers of the blind, who when they hear a man called a Unitarian, conclude at once that he is accursed of God, and should be dreaded and shunned as a pestilence by men.

In consequence of Channing being called a Unitarian, there are many who imagine that his writings must be full of profanity and ungodliness, and that the man who can think of publishing and circulating them must be an infidel, and be aiming at the overthrow of religion. Yet the truth is, that there are no works, that I have ever met with, more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christ, or better adapted to give clear, correct, and worthy views of the Christian religion. I have read some thousands of volumes, but I never, in all my life, read works so full of God, so rich in holy inspiration, or so perfectly adapted to illumine, to purify, to expand, to elevate, and in every respect to perfect and to bless the souls of men, as the writings of William Ellery Channing. I have read several of the works of the early Christian writers, and I have read many of the writings of the English and German reformers. I have read many of the writings of the Puritans, the Non-conformists, and the Quakers. I have perused the works of the principal writers in the Establishment, from the days of Hooker to the present times, and I have read the principal part of what has been written by the abler authors among the Baptists and independent Calvinists, and among the different denominations of Methodists. I have read the works of Tillotson and Barrow, of Hooker and Wilkins, of Jeremy Taylor and Hoadley,—I have read the works of Baxter, and Howe, and Henry; of Wesley and Whitfield, and William Law,—I have read Penn and Barclay, and Dymond, and Watson, and Clarke, and Robert Hall, and more than I can either name or call to mind; but I never in any of them, met with such glorious revelations of the eternal light, such true and tender and touching exhibitions of the character of our Heavenly Father, such bright and beautiful, such consistent and benevolent representations of his providence, such cheering views of man, such quickening and exhilarating views of immortality,—it short, in no works which I have ever read, have I ever found God and Christ, man and providence, sin and duty, life and immortality, presented to the mind in such clear, such bright, and such affecting forms, as in the works of Channing. Never in my judgment, did God speak more powerfully through any man. His works are full of light, and they are full of love; and they breathe both the purity and the bliss of heaven.

I cannot describe to you the pleasure with which I have read them, or the influence which they have exerted on my mind. The light which they have thrown around me has quite enraptured me, and the spirit of love and liberty, of hope and confidence, of peace and joy which they have inspired, has made my heart a heaven:

LIBERAL SENTIMENTS OF BISHOP WATSON.

* * * Some one will think that I speak too freely, and accuse me, probably, as an encourager of sceptical and latitudinarian principles. What! Shall the church of Christ never be freed from the narrow-minded contentions of bigots; from the insults of men who know not what spirit they are of, when they would stint the Omnipotent in the exercise of his mercy, and bar the doors of heaven against every sect but their own? Shall we never learn to think more humbly of ourselves, and less despicably of others, to believe that the Father of the universe accommodates not his judgments to the wretched wranglings of pedantic theologues; but that every one, who with an honest intention, and to the best of his ability seeketh the truth, whether he findeth it or not, and worketh righteousness, will be accepted of him?

I have no regard for latitudinarian principles, nor for any principles, but the principles of truth; and truth every man must endeavour to investigate for himself; and, ordinarily speaking, he will be most successful in his endeavours, who examines, with candour and care, what can be urged on each side of a greatly controverted question. This sort of examination may, in some instances, produce a doubt, a hesitation, a diffident suspension of judgment; but it will at the same time produce mutual forbearance and good temper towards those who differ from us; our charity will be enlarged, as our understanding is improved. Partial examination is the parent of pertinacity of opinion; and a forward propensity to be angry with those who question the validity of our principles, or deny the justness of our conclusions, in any matter respecting philosophy, policy, or religion, is an infallible mark of prejudice; of our having grounded our opinions on fashion, fancy, interest; or the unexamined tenets of our family, sect, or party; on any thing rather than on the solid foundation of cool and dispassionate reasoning. Churchmen as well as dissenters, and dissenters as well as churchmen, are apt to give a degree of assent to opinions beyond what they can give a reason for; this is the very essence of prejudice; it is difficult for any man entirely to divest himself of all prejudice, but he may surely take care that it be not accompanied with an uncharitable propensity to stigmatize with reproachful appellations, those who cannot measure the rectitude of the Divine dispensations by his rule, nor seek their way to heaven, by insisting on the path which he, in his overweening wisdom, has arrogantly prescribed as the only one which can lead men thither.

This intolerant spirit has abated much of its violence in the course of this century amongst ourselves; we pray to God that it may be utterly extinguished in every part of Christendom, and that the true spirit of Christianity, which is the spirit of meekness, peace, and love, may be introduced in its stead. If different men, in carefully and conscientiously examining the Scriptures, should arrive at different conclusions, even on points of the last importance; we trust that God, who alone knows what every man is capable of, will be merciful to him that is in error. We trust that he will pardon the Unitarian, if he be in error, because he has fallen into it from the dread of becoming an idolater, of giving that glory to another which he conceives to be due to God alone. If the worshipper of Jesus Christ be in an error, we trust that God will pardon his mistake, because he has fallen into it from a dread of disobeying what he conceives to be revealed concerning the nature of the Son, or commanded concerning the honour to be given him. Both are actuated by the same principle,—the fear of God; and, though that principle impels them into different roads, it is our hope and belief, that, if they add to their faith, charity, they will meet in heaven. If any one thinks differently on the subject, I will have no contention with him; for I feel no disposition to proselyte others to any opinion of mine; esteeming it a duty to speak what I think, I have no scruple in doing that; but to do more is to affect a tyranny over other men's minds; it is to encounter not only the reason, but the passions, prejudices, and interests of mankind; it is to engage in a conflict, in which Christian charity seldom escapes unhurt on either side.

IMMORTALITY AND RETRIBUTION.

Miss Sedgewick, in her "Home," represents a little boy dictating a sermon for his mother to write down, in the following words. "My peoples, if you are good, you'll go to heaven, and if you a't you won't." This seems to us the substance of all preaching and the chief support of goodness. The belief in immortality and future retribution is the great source of hope and fear, and the only solution of the enigma of our present condition. It illumines what is dark in us and raises and supports what is low. It is the chief foundation of self-respect and of respect for others, the great motive for self culture, the great stimulus of virtue. The philanthropist labours for beings, the philosopher for wisdom, that shall endure for ever. Without this belief, the motives to goodness would diminish with increasing years. The strong sense of religious obligation grows out of the strong sense of immortality. Our duty is commensurate with our destiny.—*Christian Examiner.*

NOTICE.

Persons desirous of taking REVIEWS or SITTINGS in the UNITARIAN CHURCH, will please apply to the Treasurer, JAMES DOUGALL, Esq., William Street.