

EXTRACTS

TUPPER'S 'PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY.'

OF HIDDEN USES.

The sea-wort (*) floating on the waves, or rolled up high along the shore,
Ye counted useless and vile, heaping on it names of contempt:
Yet hath it gloriously triumphed, and man been humbled in his ignorance,
For health is in the freshness of its savour, and it cumbereth the bench with wealth;
Combating the tossings of pain with its violet-tinctured essence,
And by its humbler ashes enriching many proud.
Be this, then, a lesson to thy soul, that thou reckon nothing worthless,
Before thou heedest not its use, nor knowest the virtues thereof.
And herein, as thou walkest by the sea, shall weeds be a type and an earnest
Of the stored and uncounted riches lying hid in all creatures of God:
*There be flowers making glad the desert, and roots fattening the soil,
And jewels in the secret deep, scattered in groves of coral,
And comforts to crown all wishes, and aids unto every need,
Influences yet unthought, and virtues, and many inventions,
And uses above and around, which man hath not yet regarded.

(*) The common sea-weeds on the shores of Europe, the algae and fuci, after having for ages, been considered as synonymous with every thing vile and worthless, have, in modern times, been found to be abundant in iodine, the only cure for scrofula; and kelp, so useful in many manufactures.

OF COMPENSATION.

Equal is the government of Heaven in allotting pleasure, among men,
And just the everlasting law, that hath wedded happiness to virtue;
For verily on all things else broodeth disappointment with care,
That childish man may be taught the shallowness of earthly enjoyment,
Wherefore, ye that have enough, envy ye the rich man his abundance?
Wherefore, daughters of affluence, covet ye the cottager's content?
Take the good with the evil, for ye are all pensioners of God,
And none may choose or refuse the cup His wisdom mixeth.
The poor man rejoiceth at his toil, and his daily bread is sweet to him:
Content with present good he looketh not for evil to the future:
The rich man languisheth with sloth, and findeth pleasure in nothing,
He locketh up care with his gold, and feareth the sickness of fortune.
Can a cup contain within itself the measure of a bucket?
Or the straited appetites of man drink more than their fill of luxury?
There is a limit to enjoyment, though the sources of wealth be boundless:
And the choicest pleasures of life lie within the ring of moderation.

OF THINKING.

Reflection is a flower of the mind, giving out wholesome fragrance,
But its reverie is the same flower, when rank and running to seed.
Better to read a little with thought, than much with levity and quickness;
For mind is not as merchandise, which decreaseth in the using,
But liker to the passions of man which rejoice and expand in exertion:
Yet live not wholly on thine own ideas, lest they lead thee astray;
For in spirit, as in substance, thou art a social creature;
And if thou leanest on thyself, thou rejectest the guidance of thy betters,
Yea, thou contemnest all men.—Am I not wiser than they?
Foolish vanity hath blinded thee, and warped thy weak judgment.
For, though new ideas flow from new springs, and enrich the treasury of knowledge,
Yet listen often, ere thou think much, and look around thee ere thou judgest.
Memory, the daughter of Attention, is the teeming mother of Wisdom,
And snarer is he that storoth knowledge, than he that would make it for himself.

UNITARIANISM MOST FAVOURABLE TO PIETY.

Unitarianism is a system most favourable piety, because it presents to the mind One, and only one, Infinite Person, to whom supreme homage is to be paid. It does not weaken the energy of religious sentiment by dividing it among various objects. It collects and concentrates the soul on One Father, of unbounded, undivided, unrivalled glory. To Him it teaches the mind to rise through all beings. Around Him it gathers all the splendours of the universe. To Him it teaches us to ascribe whatever good we receive or behold, the beauty and magnificence of nature, the liberal gifts of Providence, the capacities of the soul, the bonds of society, and especially the riches of grace and redemption, the mission, and powers, and beneficent influences of Jesus Christ. All happiness it traces up to the Father, as the sole source; and the mind which these views have penetrated, through

this intimate association of everything exciting and exalting in the universe, with One Infinite Parent, can and does offer itself up to him with the intensest and profoundest love of which human nature is susceptible. The Trinitarian indeed professes to believe in one God, and means to hold fast this truth. But three persons, having distinctive qualities and relations, of whom one is sent and another the sender, one is given and another the giver, of whom one intercedes another hears the intercession, of whom one takes flesh and another never becomes incarnate—three persons, thus discriminated, are as truly three objects of the mind, as if they were acknowledged to be separate divinities; and from the principles of our nature, they cannot act on the mind as deeply and powerfully as One Infinite Person, to whose sole goodness all happiness is ascribed. To multiply infinite objects for the heart, is to distract it. To scatter the attention among three equal persons, is to impair the power of each. The more strict and absolute the unity of God, the more easily and intimately all the impressions and emotions of piety flow together, and are condensed into one glowing thought, one thrilling love. No language can express the absorbing energy of the thought of one Infinite Father. When vitally implanted in the soul, it grows and gains strength for ever. It enriches itself by every new view of God's word and works; gathers tribute from all regions and all ages; and attracts into itself all the rays of beauty, glory, and joy, in the material and spiritual creation.

My hearers, as you would feel the full influence of God upon your souls, guard sacredly, keep unobscured and unsullied, that fundamental and glorious truth, that there is One, and only One Almighty Agent in the universe, One Infinite Father. Let this truth dwell in me in its uncorrupted simplicity, and I have the spring and nutriment of an ever-growing piety. I have an object for my mind towards which all things bear me. I know whither to go in all trial, whom to bless in all joy, whom to adore in all I behold. But let three persons claim from me supreme homage, and claim it on different grounds, one for sending and another for coming to my relief, and I am divided, distracted, perplexed. My frail intellect is overborne. Instead of One Father, on whose arm I can rest, my mind is torn from object to object, and I tremble, lest, amongst so many claimants of supreme love, I should withhold from one or another his due.

Unitarianism is the system most favourable to piety, because it presents a distinct and intelligible object of worship, a being whose nature, whilst inexpressibly sublime, is yet simple and suited to human apprehension. An infinite Father is the most exalted of all conceptions, and yet the least perplexing. It involves no incongruous ideas. It is illustrated by analogies from our own nature. It coincides with that fundamental law of the intellect, through which we demand a cause proportioned to effects. It is also as interesting as it is rational; so that it is peculiarly congenial with the improved mind. The sublime simplicity of God, as he is taught in Unitarianism, by relieving the understanding from perplexity, and by placing him within the reach of thought and affection, gives him peculiar power over the soul. Trinitarianism, on the other hand, is a riddle. Men call it a mystery; but it is mysterious, not like the great truths of religion, by its vastness and grandeur, but by the irreconcilable idea which it involves. One God, consisting of three persons or agents, is so strange a being, so unlike our own minds, and all others with which we hold intercourse; is so misty, so incongruous, so contradictory; that he cannot be apprehended with that distinctness and that feeling of reality, which belong to the opposite system. Such a heterogeneous being, who is at the same moment one and many; who includes in his own person the relations of Father and Son, or, in other words, is Father and Son to himself; who, in one of his persons, is at the same moment the Supreme God and a mortal man, omniscient and ignorant, almighty and impotent; such a being is certainly the most puzzling and distracting object ever presented to human thought. Trinitarianism, instead of teaching an intelligible God, offers to the mind a strange compound of hostile attributes, bearing plain marks of those ages of darkness, when Christianity shed but a faint ray, and the diseased fancy teemed with prodigies and unnatural creations. In contemplating a being, who presents such different and inconsistent aspects, the mind finds nothing to rest upon; and instead of receiving distinct and harmonious impressions, is disturbed by shifting, unsettled images. To commune with such a being must be as hard as to converse with a man of three different countenances, speaking with three different tongues. The believer in this system must forget it, when he prays, or he could find no repose in devotion. Who can compare it in distinctness, reality, and power, with the simple doctrine of One Infinite Father?—*Channing.*

VICARIOUS REDEMPTION.

THE SCHEME OF VICARIOUS REDEMPTION DEGRADING TO THE CHARACTER OF GOD, AND INCONSISTENT WITH ITSELF.

It is assumed that, at the era of creation, the Maker of man had announced the infinite penalties, which must follow the violation of his law; and that their amount did not exceed the measure which his abhorrence of wrong required. "And that which he saith, he would not be God if he did not perform; that which he perceived right, he would be unworthy of our trust did he not fulfil. His veracity and justice, therefore, were pledged to adhere to the word that had gone forth; and excluded the possibility of any free and unconditional forgiveness." Now I would note in passing, that this announcement to Adam of an eternal punishment impending over his first sin, is simply a fiction; for the warning to him is stated thus, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"; from which our progenitor must have been ingenious as a theologian, to extract the idea of endless life in Hell. But to say no more of this, what notions of veracity have we here? When a sentence is proclaimed against crime, it is indifferent to judicial truth upon whom it falls? Personally addressed to the guilty, may it descend without a lie upon the guiltless? Provided there is the suffering, is it no matter where? Is this the sense in which God is no respecter of persons? Oh! what a deplorable reflection of human artifice is this, that Heaven is too reverent to abandon its proclamation of menace against transgressors; yet is content to vend it on goodness the most perfect. No darker deed can be imagined, than is thus ascribed to the Source of all perfection, under the insulted names of truth and holiness. What reliance could we have on the faithfulness of such a Being? If it be consistent with his nature to punish by substitution, what security is there that he will not reward vicariously? All must be loose and unsettled, the sentiments of reverence confused, the perceptions of conscience indistinct, where the terms expressive of those great moral qualities which render God himself most venerable, are thus sported with and profaned.

The same departure from all intelligible meaning of words is apparent, when our charge of vindictiveness against the doctrine of sacrifice is repelled as a slander. If the rigorous refusal of pardon, till the whole penalty has been inflicted (when, indeed, it is no pardon at all) be not vindictive, we may ask to be furnished with some better definition. And though it is said that God's love was manifested to us by the gift of his Son, this does but change the object on which this quality is exercised, without removing the quality itself; putting us indeed into the sunshine of his grace, but the Saviour into the tempest of his wrath. Did we desire to sketch the most dreadful form of character, what more emphatic combination could we invent than this; rigour in the exaction of penal suffering; and indifference as to the person on whom it falls?

But in truth this system, in its delineations of the Great Ruler of creation, bids defiance to all the analogies by which Christ and the Christian heart have delighted to illustrate his nature. A God who could accept the spontaneously returning sinner, and restore him by corrective discipline, is pronounced by our opponents "not worth serving," and an object of contempt. If so, Jesus sketched an object of contempt when he drew the father of the prodigal son, opening his arms to the poor penitent, and needing only the sight of his misery to fall on his neck with the kiss of welcome home. Let the assertions be true, that sacrifice and satisfaction are needful preliminaries to pardon, that to pay any attention to repentance without these is mere weakness, and that it is a perilous deception to teach the doctrine of mercy apart from the atonement; and this parable of our Saviour's becomes the most pernicious instrument of delusion; a statement, absolute and unqualified, of a feeble and sentimental heresy. Who does not see what follows from this scornful exclusion of corrective punishment? Suppose the infliction not to be corrective, that is, not to be designed for any good, what then remains as to the cause of the Divine retribution? The sense of insult offered to a law. And thus we are virtually told, that God must be regarded with a mixture of contempt, unless he be susceptible of personal affront.

The last inconsistency with itself, which I shall point out in this doctrine, will be found in the view which it gives of the work of Christ. Sin, we are assured, is necessarily infinite. Its infinitude arises from its reference to an Infinite Being; and involves as a consequence the necessity of redemption by Deity himself.

The position, that guilt is to be estimated not by its amount or its motive, but by the dignity of the being against whom it is directed, is illustrated by the case of an insubordinate soldier, whose punishment is increased, according as his rebellion assails an

equal, or any of the many grades amongst his superiors. It is evident, however, that it is not the dignity of the person, but the magnitude of the effect, which determines the severity of the sanction by which, in such an instance, law enforces order. Insult to a monarch is more sternly treated than injury to a subject, because it incurs the risk of wider and more disastrous consequences, and superadds to the personal injury a peril to an official power which, not resting on individual superiority, but on conventional arrangement, is always precarious. It is not indeed easy to form a distinct notion of an infinite act in a finite agent; and still less is it easy to evade the inference, that if an immoral deed against God be an infinite demerit, a moral deed towards him must be an infinite merit.

Passing by an assertion so unmeaning, and conceding it for the sake of progress in our argument, I would inquire what is intended by that other statement, that only Deity can redeem, and that by Deity the sacrifice was made? The union of the divine and human natures in Christ is said to have made his sufferings meritorious in an infinite degree. Yet we are repeatedly assured, that it was in his manhood only that he endured and died. If the divine nature in our Lord had a joint consciousness with the human, then did God suffer and perish; if not, then did the man only die, Deity being no more affected by his anguish, than by that of the malefactors on either side. In the one case, the perfections of God, in the other the reality of the atonement, must be relinquished. No doubt, the popular belief is, that the Creator literally expired; the hymns in common use declare it; the language of pulpits sanctions it; the consistency of creeds require it; but professed theologians repudiate the idea with indignation. Yet by silence or ambiguous speech, they encourage, in those whom they are bound to enlighten, this degrading humanization of Deity; which renders it impossible for common minds to avoid ascribing to him emotions and infirmities, totally irreconcilable with the serene perfections of the Universal Mind. In this influence on the worshipper, He is no Spirit who can be invoked by his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion. And the piety that is thus taught to bring its incense, however sincere, before the mental image of a being with convulsed features and expiring cry, has little left of that which makes Christian devotion characteristically venerable.

IGNORANCE AND KNOWLEDGE.

There are two kinds of reverence in the world, that of ignorance, and that of knowledge; the one can never be outgrown, the other is rapidly passing away. In real reverence, for estimable and grand qualities, the more a man knows the more he feels the disposition, the higher is his view of those towards whom his feelings are directed, and by whom his own mind is raised from its inferior position. If you want to have a great poet estimated rightly, let another great poet sit in judgment upon him. Who has given us a more glowing eulogy on Shakespeare than Milton? Who, in the present day, more highly appreciates Milton than Wordsworth? And thus it ever is; largeness of view in the intellectual world is like largeness of view in the material world. The more the individual is raised the further he sees; and the more he knows of the purity, the beauty, and the grandeur, of the objects he contemplates, he is the more reverential in proportion to his greatness. But there is another sort of reverence, that is solely the result of ignorance, of unknown powers and slavish apprehensions—the sort of reverence that makes the savage, Friday, lay his head under the foot of Robinson Crusoe, and worship the gun as a god—the reverence that made savages in the South Sea Islands ready to offer sacrifice to Capt. Cook because he had foretold an eclipse—the reverence that gave such advantages to the founders of states in ancient times, and of which they availed themselves, in order to claim divine authority, and even, in many instances, the actual offering of divine honours—the reverence that looks not so much to what constitutes the real worth of man, as to the extent of his power and to his appearance and influence—the reverence that worships shreds and trappings, anything that glitters, taking it for gold, and bowing down in the dust before it. That is the sort of reverence which professor Sewall would direct to the Church, through the Church to the Athanasian creed, and through the Athanasian creed to the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, as the great duty of a people and a nation. I say, this has passed away, and for ever.—*Lectures to the Working Classes.*

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