

Poetry.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

There was a voice of wailing
In Bethany, that day;
And, darkly on that mournful home,
The cloud of sorrow lay;
And deeply was the fount of grief
In woman's bosom stirred;
And thickly fell its bitter drops,
In each low murmured word.

For never, from that blessed source
Of perfectness above,
Was shed on earth, a purer joy,
Than in a sister's love;
And never pours the bursting heart
A deeper, darker flow,
Than, o'er a brother's wasted form,
A sister's sacred wo.

There was a voice of joyfulness
In Bethany that day,
And brightly, on that happy home,
The sun of gladness lay;
And deeply was the fount of joy
In woman's bosom stirred,
And fervent rose its grateful praise
In each exulting word.

For purer, fuller, holier stream,
Than, in a sister's love,
Flowed never from that blessed fount
Of perfectness above;
And deeper, warmer, gushing tears,
On earth were never shed,
Than fell, that day, upon his neck,
The rescued from the dead.

Oh, ever thus on those who love,
And humbly serve the Lord,
His blessings, and his chastisements,
In mingled stream, are poured;
His chastisements, to bring to earth
Each thought and purpose high;
His blessings, to lift up our hearts,
To him above the sky.

Then who, whate'er betide, will doubt,
That all-disposing arm,
Which guides our feet to every good,
And guards from every harm?
Since sorrow, like that darkest hour,
That just precedes the day,
Is only sent, to fit our hearts
For joy's unclouded ray.

G. W. D.

LETTERS FROM THE HON. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS TO HIS SON, ON THE BIBLE AND ITS TEACHINGS.

LETTER VII.

The imperfections of the Mosaic institutions which it was the object of Christ's mission upon earth to remove, appear to me to have been these: 1st.—The want of a sufficient sanction. The rewards and penalties of the Levitical law had all a reference to the present life. There are many passages in the Old Testament which imply a state of existence after death, and some which directly assert a future state of retribution; but none of these were contained in the delivery of the law. At the time of Christ's advent it was so far from being a settled article of the Jewish faith, that it was a subject of bitter controversy between the two principal sects—of Pharisees who believed in, and Sadducees who denied it. It was the special purpose of Christ's appearance upon earth to bring immortality to light. He substituted the rewards and punishments of a future state of existence in the room of all others. The Jewish sanctions were exclusively temporal; those of Christ exclusively spiritual.

2d.—The want of universality. The Jewish dispensation was exclusively confined to a small and obscure nation. The purposes of the Supreme Creator, in restricting the knowledge of himself to one petty herd of Egyptian slaves, are as inaccessible to our intelligence as those of his having concealed from them, and from the rest of mankind, the certain knowledge of their immortality; yet the fact is unquestionable. The mission of Christ was intended to communicate to the whole human race all the permanent advantages of the Mosaic Law, super-adding to them—upon the condition of repentance—the kingdom of Heaven, the blessing of eternal life.

3d.—The complexity of the objects of legislation. I have observed in a former letter, that the law of Sinai comprised, not only all the ordinary subjects of regulation for human societies, but those which human legislators cannot reach. It was a civil law, a municipal law, an ecclesiastical law, a law of police, and a law of morality and religion: it prohibited murder, adultery, theft and perjury; prescribed rules for the thoughts as well as for the actions of men. The complexity, however practicable and even suit-

able for one small national society, could not have attained to all the families of the earth.

The parts of the Jewish law adapted to promote the happiness of mankind, under every variety of situation and government in which they can be placed, were all recognized and adopted by Christ; and He expressly separated them from the rest. He disclaimed all interference with the ordinary objects of human legislation: He declared that His "Kingdom was not of this world;" He acknowledged the authority of the Jewish magistrates; He paid for his own person the tribute to the Romans; he refused in more than one instance to assume the office of judge in matters of legal controversy: He strictly limited the object of His own precepts and authority to religion and morals; He denounced no temporal punishment; He promised no temporal rewards; He took up man as a governable being, where the human magistrate is compelled to leave him, and supplied both precept of virtue and motive for practicing it, such as no other moralist or legislator ever attempted to introduce.

4th.—The burdensome duties of positive rites, minute formalities and expensive sacrifices. All these had a tendency, not only to establish and maintain the separation of the Jews from all other nations, but in process of time had been mistaken by the Scribes and Pharisees and lawyers, and probably by the body of the people, for the substance of religion. All the rites were abolished by Christ, or (as Paul expresses it) "were nailed to His Cross." You will recollect that I am now speaking of Christianity, not as the scheme of redemption to mankind from the consequences of original sin, but as a system of morality for regulating the conduct of men while on earth; and the most striking and extraordinary feature of its character, in this respect, is its tendency and exhortations to absolute perfection. The language of Christ to His disciples is explicit: "Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect"—and this he enjoins at the conclusion of that precept, so expressly laid down, and so unanswerably argued, to "love their enemies, to bless those who cursed them, and pray for them who despitefully used and persecuted them."

He seems to consider the temper of benevolence in return for injury, as constituting of itself a perfection similar to that of the divine nature. It is undoubtedly the greatest contest which the spirit of man can achieve over its infirmities; and to him who can attain that elevation of virtue which it requires, all other victories over the evil passions must be comparatively easy. Nor was the absolute perfection merely preached by Christ as a doctrine; it was practiced by himself throughout His life; practiced to the last instant of His agony on the Cross; practiced under circumstances of trial, such as no other human being was ever exposed to. He proved by his own example the possibility of that virtue which He taught; and although possessed of miraculous powers sufficient to control all the laws of nature, He expressly and repeatedly declined the use of them to save himself from any part of the sufferings which He was able to endure.

The sum of Christian morality, then, consists in piety to God and benevolence to man; piety, manifested not by formal solemn rites and sacrifices of burnt-offerings, but by repentance, by obedience, by submission, by humility, by the worship of the heart, and by benevolence; not founded upon selfish motives but superior even to a sense of wrong, or the resentment of injuries. Worldly prudence is scarcely noticed among all the institutions of Christ; the pursuit of honors and riches, the objects of ambition and avarice, are strongly discountenanced in many places; and an undue solicitude about the ordinary cares of life is occasionally reprov'd. Of worldly prudence, there are rules enough in the Proverbs of Solomon, and in the compilations of the son of Sirach; Christ passes no censure upon them, but He left what I call the selfish virtues where He found them. It was not to proclaim common-place morality that he came down from Heaven; His commands were new; that His disciples should "love one another," that they should love even strangers, that they should "love their enemies." He prescribed barriers against all the maleficent passions; He gave us a law, the utmost point of perfection of which human powers are susceptible, and at the same time allowed degrees of indulgence and relaxation to human frailty, proportioned to the power of any individual.

An eminent writer in support of Christianity, (Dr. Paley) expresses the opinion that the direct object of the Christian revelation was to supply motives and not rules—sanctions and not precepts; and he strongly intimates that, independent of the purpose of Christ's atonement and propitiation for the sins of the world, the only object of His mission upon earth was to reveal a future state, "to bring life and immortality to light."

He does not appear to think that Christ promulgated any new principle of morality; and he positively asserts that "morality, neither in the Gospel nor in any other book can be a subject of discovery; because qualities of actions depend entirely on their effects, which effects, must all along have been the subjects of human experience." To this I reply in the express words of Jesus: "A new commandment I give you that ye love one another;" and I add, that this command explained, illustrated and dilated, as it was by the whole tenor of His discourses, and especially by the parable of the good Samaritan, appears to me to be not only entirely new, but, in the most rigorous sense of the word, a discovery in morals; and a discovery, the importance of which to the happiness of the human race as far exceeds any discovery in the physical laws of nature, as the soul is superior to the body.

If it be objected that the principles of benevolence toward enemies, and the forgiveness of injuries, may be found not only in the Old Testament but even in some of the heathen writers, particularly the discourses of Socrates. I answer that the same may be said of the immortality of the soul, and of the rewards and punishments of a future state. The doctrine is not more a discovery than the precept; but their connexion with each other, the authority with which they were enforced, and the miracles by which they were enforced belong exclusively to the mission of Christ. Attend particularly to the miracle recorded in the second chapter of Luke, as having taken place at the birth of Jesus; when the angel of the Lord said to the shepherds; "Fear not, for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

In these words the character of Jesus, as a Redeemer, was announced; but the historian adds—"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and singing, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." These words, as I understand them, announced the moral precept of benevolence as explicitly for the object of Christ's appearance, as the preceding words had declared the purpose of redemption. It is related in the life of the Roman dramatic poet, Terence, that when one of the personages of his comedy, the 'Self Tormentor,' the first time uttered on the stage the line "Homo sum, humani nil alienum puto," (I am a man, nothing human is uninteresting to me,) a universal shout of applause burst forth from the whole audience, and that in so great a multitude of Romans and deputies from the nations, their subjects and allies, their was not one individual but felt in his heart this noble sentiment.

Yet how feeble and defective it is, in comparison with the Christian command of charity as unfolded in the discoveries of Christ and enlarged upon in the writings of His apostles. The heart of man will always respond with rapture to this sentiment, when there is no selfish or unsocial passion to oppose it; but the command to lay it down as the great and fundamental rule of conduct for human life, and to subdue and sacrifice all the tyrannical and selfish passions to preserve it, this is the peculiar and unfading glory of Christianity; this is the conquest over ourselves, which, without the aid of a merciful God, none of us can achieve, and which it was worthy of His special interposition to enable us to accomplish.

From your affectionate Father,
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

MORAL INFLUENCE OF VISITING THE POOR.

I can imagine hardly anything more useful to a young man of an active and powerful mind, advancing rapidly in knowledge, and with high distinction either actually obtained, or close in prospect, than to take him,—or, much better, that he should go of himself, to the abodes of poverty, and sickness, and old age. Everything there, is a lesson; in everything Christ speaks, and the spirit of Christ is ready to convey to his heart all that he witnesses. Accustomed to all the comforts of life, and hardly ever thinking what it would be to want them, he sees poverty and all its evils; scanty rooms, and, too often, scanty fuel, scanty clothing, and scanty food. Instead of the quiet and neatness of his own chamber, he finds, very often, a noise and a confusion which would render deep thought impossible; instead of the stores of knowledge with which his own study is filled, he finds, perhaps, only a Prayer-book and a Bible.—Then let him see,—and it is no fancied picture, for he will see it often if he looks for it,—how Christ is to them that serve him, wisdom at once, and sanctification, and blessing. He will find, amidst all this poverty, in those narrow, close, and crowded rooms,—amidst noise and disorder, and, sometimes, want of

cleanliness also,—he will see old age, and sickness, and labor, borne not only with patience, but with thankfulness, through the aid of that Bible, and the grace of that Holy Spirit who is its author. He will find that while his language and studies would be utterly unintelligible to the ears of those whom he is visiting, yet that they, in their turn, have a language and feeling to which he is no less a stranger. And he may think too,—and, if he does, he may for ever bless the hour that took him there,—that, in fifty years or less, his studies and all concerned with them will have perished for ever, whilst their language and their feelings, only perfected in the putting off their mortal bodies, will be those of all glorified and all wise spirits, in the presence of God and of Christ.—Dr. Arnold.

MENTAL EXERCISE.

All the beautiful orders of architecture and creations of the pencil; all the conceptions of the beautiful in nature and art, and humanity, are inventions extorted, as it were, from the mind, to extend and increase the pleasures of sense. All the institutions of human government, the principles of political economy, the aspirations of patriotism and the efforts of philanthropy, have been called forth by the necessities of our physical nature, which divine wisdom ordained should never be supplied without the busy occupation of the mind. Our moral faculties and nature are developed by the same medium and impulse. Divine revelation has studied the whole vista of eternity with prospects, objects, rewards, and motives, which appeal to our physical nature, and incite even in our senses an aspiration to the more refined pleasures of another existence. The whole triune being of man is brought into activity in the duties of religion. Here is the concentrating point of all action and labour. Here the whole philosophy of the system is developed. In every acceptable act of religious devotion, faith, and duty, is involved the combined action of all our moral, intellectual, and physical faculties. Therefore of all the conditions of humanity, religion is necessarily and philosophically a state of the most eminent action; a state of doing as well as feeling, of feeling as well as thinking. It is for this reason that "faith without works is dead," philosophically, mathematically, unconditionally dead. If works, then, are so necessary to the vitality of faith, we are authorized to add, that the intellect without works, without the organic necessity of activity and physical labour, is dead, philosophically, mathematically, unconditionally dead.—E. Burrill.

A GOOD MAN'S LIFE.

The beauty of a holy life constitutes the most eloquent and effective persuasive to religion, which one human being can address to another. We have many ways of doing good to our fellow-creatures; but none so efficacious as leading a virtuous, upright, and well-ordered life. There is an energy of moral suasion in a good man's life, passing the highest efforts of the orator's genius. The seen but silent beauty of holiness speaks more eloquently of God and duty than the tongues of men and angels. Let parents remember this. The best inheritance a parent can bequeath to a child is a virtuous example, legacy of hallowed remembrances and associations. The beauty of holiness beaming through the life of a loved relative or friend, is more effectual to strengthen such as do stand in virtue's ways, and raise up those that are bowed down, than precept, command, entreaty or warning. Christianity itself, I believe, owes by far the greater part of its moral power, not to the precepts or parables of Christ, but to his own character. The beauty of that holiness which is enshrined in the four brief biographies of the Man of Nazareth, has done more, and will do more, to regenerate the world, and bring in an everlasting righteousness, than all the other agencies put together. It has done more to spread his religion in the world than all that has ever been preached or written on the evidences of Christianity.—Chalmers.

LAMARTINE'S CREED.—This is matter of interest at the present moment to every friend of liberty in general, and of France in particular. He says—

"I believe in Christ, because he has introduced on earth the most holy, the most fruitful, and the most divine doctrine that ever shed its beams on human intelligence. Christ has spoken as reason speaks. The doctrine is known by its morality, in the same manner as a tree is known by its fruits; the fruits of Christianity are indefinite, perfect, and divine, the author of which is the Divine Word, as he so styled himself."

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