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Religious Miscellany.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. JAMES WATTERS.

IN MEMORIAM.

The young man came to the river of Death. The river of Death was cold and dark; The touch of its waters check'd his breath. And the deluge was there without the ark.

The young man looked on the river of Death. Whose waves were heaving and rolling high. As the billows curl'd from its depths beneath. "Alas!" he exclaimed, "it is hard to die."

The young man entered the river of Death. His lovers and friends look'd on from the shore. And he bows his head as he enters. To his Saviour who lives for evermore.

Forth broke the sun on the river of Death. And the voice is heard rebuking its strife. Amid the illum'd waters, "I give unto my beloved, life."

An angel has cross'd the river of Death. And we hold him no longer a mortal here; For the smile on his brow never withers. That we saw as he pass'd to his heavenly sphere.

OXENBORO.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN.

BY A PROBATIONER.

"What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" Psalm viii.

The portion of scripture from which our text is selected presents us with the sublime contemplation of the psalmist David. The manifestation of God's glory in the wonders of creation, and in the dominion and dignity of man form the subject of his devout meditations. By some the text before us has been regarded as descriptive of man's insignificance when compared with the grandeur and sublimity of the midnights. We cannot, however, think that to be the sense in which this passage should be understood. A meaning just opposite, appears to be intended by the psalmist. We think it is clear if we mark the verses following the text, which may be regarded as a reply to his own enquiry. Scenes of grandeur and of glory were passing before the psalmist's mind, and he was well nigh overwhelmed; the chief figure however, which draws and absorbs his attention is man. When he thinks of man's origin, nature and destiny. When he beholds his distinguished position in creation, placed as it were on the very throne of nature's vast empire, with the crown of glory and honor on his brow. Then he pours forth his lofty sentiments in language most sublime. Thus from the depths and fullness of his soul he exclaims, "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, (or a little less than Divine,) and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." We regard therefore, the entire psalm as descriptive of man's dignity and importance, which is at once seen in the exalted position he occupies in the realm of nature, and in the divine system of revelation which God has given to him.

Man's dignity and superiority are ever recognized and taught in the Bible; it gives to him a nobler origin—a nobler nature and a sublimer destiny than all the philosophical theories and scientific systems in the world. Amidst the ten thousand wonders in the physical world, man is the grand central figure, he stands alone unapproached and unapproachable, retaining many evidences of his primitive dignity and glory. Some one has well said that man is God's creation and everything else but the centre of the world; he is the grand centre of the world, and everything else is but the grand circumference. The distinguished poet who said that the proper study of mankind is man, was in perfect harmony with the moral system which it utters its most sublime precept, "Know thyself."

Many and conflicting have been the theories propounded respecting man's origin, nature, and destiny. With reference to the origin, some have foolishly traced his origin to the scale of a being from the very foot to the very summit of organic life; they wildly teach that by some law in the physical world, purely material and mechanical in its character, he has elevated himself through the thousand gradations of animated nature to the princely position he now occupies in the realm of animated existence. A more absurd notion of animated existence. A more absurd notion of animated existence. A more absurd notion of animated existence.

With reference to his nature and destiny, some wild and silly dreamers look upon man as a kind of intellectual animal or machine made up of flesh and blood and bones and breath. A marvellous organization and wonderful combination this! They point him to the grave only as his final destiny, thus destroying the dearest hopes of humanity. A theory like this may do for those who would annihilate all moral government, and banish all hope from the human mind.

It may suit those who wish to plunge into the abyss of sensual gratification, and die on a level with the brute; to every thinking mind, however, this is hideous in the extreme, and we shrink from it with the utmost horror. We pass at once from the silly speculations of idle brains to the Divine Revelation which God has given to man. At the very commencement of this great system of truth, we read in lines of light that, in the beginning, "God created man in His own image—the image of God created He him." This sublime declaration at once stamps man's origin and destiny, and shivers to atoms every system of evolution and development which has been moulded by human theorists. The dignity and importance of man is the subject under consideration.

I. His dignity appears first from the home in which he dwells.

As we look upon this great world of material in which we live, upon the earth clothed with its countless forms of beauty, upon the heavens robed in majesty and glory—arrayed

in their garments of surpassing loveliness, and all resplendent with countless jewels of light, we cannot fail to recognize man's superior excellence and importance. We may well say, Whence all this magnificence? This perfect arrangement and adaptation? whence this teeming fullness of provision and this unbounded wealth of blessing and of beauty? As we look at the grandeur of this lower world we are ready to exclaim, surely this temple of light must have been prepared for some extraordinary and kingly being, for its palace home so grand and beautiful was specially designed by the Divine Architect for the temporal residence of man. We look for a moment at the stupendous preparations made for him, all the previous preparations made for him, matter how many intervened, "but pared the way to man's throne." "Pre-existent nature was but a prophecy of his coming. The material creation rose step by step, platform upon platform, like some grand pyramid whose apex is man, the gorgeous fabric of the universe which was made for moral ends went up like some tall tree—

"Noisily as the spring time her crown of verdant leaves, and all the trees on all the hills open their thousand leaves. Noisily as the daylight comes back when night is done, And the crimson streaks on the ocean's cheek grow into the great sun—

When the great plan of man's home was executed, when the heavens were garnished with beauty and the earth was girdled with blessing, when all the splendours in the physical creation were blended into one glorious temple of light, then man, the child of God, man the crowning excellence was placed in his house. When the temple was completed, then his appointed priest appeared. When the palace was finished, then man was placed on the throne with the diadem of glory on his brow, and the golden sceptre of dominion in his hand, with countess inferior creatures for his servants, the sun for his light, the earth for his floor, the heavens for his roof. God for his Father, heaven for his final home, and eternity for his lifetime."

II. It is further manifest from a survey of his physical nature.

As we glance at the construction of the human frame we cannot fail to notice the amazing wisdom and power therein displayed. It teems with marks of purpose and intelligent design. There is nothing like it in the world of material—the master-piece of Divine wisdom and skill. If we look at the make up of the human body we cannot but be struck with astonishment. In the human frame there is something like 240 bones, 600 muscles, 100,000 glands, 10,000,000 nerves, 170,000,000 fibers or air-cells, and 200,000,000 pores. We look further and find that the human voice is capable of producing over 17 trillions, 592 billions, and 186 millions of different sounds. The heart is contracting 4000 times every hour, and about 37,000,000 times every year. The bones and muscles of man's body are capable of fourteen thousand different adaptations. Every year about nine million gallons of air are received into the lungs and again discharged, and during the same period something like 2,500 tons of blood are presented to the heart, and are sent in refreshing and life-giving streams through the entire system. When we look at this wonderful combination in his physical nature, the blending of so many parts into one organism, the whole, making it the most beautiful figure in creation. We cannot fail to recognize man's superior excellence and dignity.

III. We pass from man's physical nature to his intellectual, and here his dignity is more fully seen. Between the animal part of man and his mental constitution, there is a chasm which no finite mind can bridge. The difference between the physical and intellectual is as great as that which exists between the instinct of the brute and the human mind. Man is distinguished in the scale of being by thought. It is this which lifts him above the brute creation, and constitutes him an active, intelligent and responsible agent. It is the possession of this power to think, that places him on the very throne of material beings, in his hand the sceptre of dominion, and on his brow the crown of a glorious destiny. By man's mental constitution we mean his perception, his memory, his reason, and understanding; when these princely faculties are properly exercised, wonderful indeed are the consequences. Man can comprehend many of the kingly laws ever operating in the vast realms of matter and of mind, principles that are binding atom to atom, system to system, and uniting those ponderous worlds sweeping through immensity into the mighty gorgeous fabric of the universe.

By the exercise of his thought, man is able to think for a moment of the rapidity of thought—time and space are both annihilated by it. In less than an instant man can fling back his contemplation to creations remote, and quicker than the lightning's flash looks forward through the coming ages, sweeps away from the shores of time, and wanders through the immeasurable periods of eternity. At one moment his thoughts rest upon earth, the next they fly to the farthest corners of the universe, passing by star and sun and distant worlds, to the amazing power of thought. Man by the exercise of his thinking faculty is transforming the entire face of nature, and emancipating her mighty secrets. He is charming the wild furious elements and bringing them into lamb-like subjection. He is bridging the mighty ocean with steamships, and converting them into crystal pathways for commerce to travel on. Deep down on the ocean's floor he has laid the fiery arteries of thought, and the living line of thought. Ever pulsating and throbbing with words that breathe and thoughts that burn. With this same fiery element he is circling the globe, linking nation to nation, and binding the great family of man into one grand brotherhood. The amazing power of man. He opens the grand volume of nature, and from her secret yet eloquent pages reads off the world's life and history. He impresses the bowels of the earth, and descends into the bowels of the earth, and from the rocks of the everlasting hills spells out the awful truth of a world's doom and destruction. Man can navigate the trackless ocean. Can Count the almost endless stars—measure the

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IV. It is however in his moral and spiritual nature that his importance is most fully seen. It was in this respect chiefly that man was created in the image of his Maker. It is the soul that makes man the most precious being in this lower world. He is capable of understanding the will of God—of knowing, loving and serving Him. He possesses the power of choice, and it is this moral capacity which invests him with his infinite responsibility, and renders the issues of world-changing so tremendous in their character. Man has that within him, which unites him to another sphere, and links him on to the chain of being. Immortality is stamped on every capacity. Eternal realities are before him, he is capable of endless enjoyment or undying misery.

"I feel my immortality o'erwhelms all hope, all tears, all time, all fears. And feels like eternal thunders of the deep into my soul. This truth, this solemn truth—Thou livest in me!"

The soul must live. "When every fire and every star, Shall vanish and expire." The body must die and the "Satan shall sink with age, And nature sink in years."

But the soul of man "Shall flourish in immortal youth. Upright shall the war of elements. The wreck of ages, and the crash of worlds."

Must live on and throughout the nameless spaces of an undying future.

Summary.—We look then at man in his threefold nature, physical, mental and moral, and we find as one has well said, "that heaven and earth are both represented in his nature, he is the connecting link between the material and angelic intelligences. In his nature is a strange commingling of the temporal and eternal—the finite and the infinite, of dust and of glory." He is the distinguished link

"In beings endless chain Midway from nothing to the Deity."

V. The dignity and importance of man transcends human comprehension, when we think of what God has done for him. Why, when we look at this we feel as if our former remarks have only led us to the threshold of this important subject. Man's dignity then is further manifest in the supplemental revelation which God has given to him, and more especially in the great redemption scheme—Jesus Christ, God's Everlasting Son has become our Almighty Redeemer and Mediator. The Holy Spirit the third person in the glorious Trinity our sanctifier and guide. He as it were incarnates Himself day by day in human temples. The heart of a believing man becomes the Shechinah of the Spirit's presence—the shrine of Deity. And oh! when we think of the divine and glorious destiny to which God is leading His own people we are lost in wonder, love and praise. What means eternal fellowship with God, and the blending of so many parts into one organism, the whole, making it the most beautiful figure in creation. We cannot fail to recognize man's superior excellence and dignity.

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V. The dignity and importance of man transcends human comprehension, when we think of what God has done for him. Why, when we look at this we feel as if our former remarks have only led us to the threshold of this important subject. Man's dignity then is further manifest in the supplemental revelation which God has given to him, and more especially in the great redemption scheme—Jesus Christ, God's Everlasting Son has become our Almighty Redeemer and Mediator. The Holy Spirit the third person in the glorious Trinity our sanctifier and guide. He as it were incarnates Himself day by day in human temples. The heart of a believing man becomes the Shechinah of the Spirit's presence—the shrine of Deity. And oh! when we think of the divine and glorious destiny to which God is leading His own people we are lost in wonder, love and praise. What means eternal fellowship with God, and the blending of so many parts into one organism, the whole, making it the most beautiful figure in creation. We cannot fail to recognize man's superior excellence and dignity.

VI. We pass from man's physical nature to his intellectual, and here his dignity is more fully seen. Between the animal part of man and his mental constitution, there is a chasm which no finite mind can bridge. The difference between the physical and intellectual is as great as that which exists between the instinct of the brute and the human mind. Man is distinguished in the scale of being by thought. It is this which lifts him above the brute creation, and constitutes him an active, intelligent and responsible agent. It is the possession of this power to think, that places him on the very throne of material beings, in his hand the sceptre of dominion, and on his brow the crown of a glorious destiny. By man's mental constitution we mean his perception, his memory, his reason, and understanding; when these princely faculties are properly exercised, wonderful indeed are the consequences. Man can comprehend many of the kingly laws ever operating in the vast realms of matter and of mind, principles that are binding atom to atom, system to system, and uniting those ponderous worlds sweeping through immensity into the mighty gorgeous fabric of the universe.

By the exercise of his thought, man is able to think for a moment of the rapidity of thought—time and space are both annihilated by it. In less than an instant man can fling back his contemplation to creations remote, and quicker than the lightning's flash looks forward through the coming ages, sweeps away from the shores of time, and wanders through the immeasurable periods of eternity. At one moment his thoughts rest upon earth, the next they fly to the farthest corners of the universe, passing by star and sun and distant worlds, to the amazing power of thought. Man by the exercise of his thinking faculty is transforming the entire face of nature, and emancipating her mighty secrets. He is charming the wild furious elements and bringing them into lamb-like subjection. He is bridging the mighty ocean with steamships, and converting them into crystal pathways for commerce to travel on. Deep down on the ocean's floor he has laid the fiery arteries of thought, and the living line of thought. Ever pulsating and throbbing with words that breathe and thoughts that burn. With this same fiery element he is circling the globe, linking nation to nation, and binding the great family of man into one grand brotherhood. The amazing power of man. He opens the grand volume of nature, and from her secret yet eloquent pages reads off the world's life and history. He impresses the bowels of the earth, and descends into the bowels of the earth, and from the rocks of the everlasting hills spells out the awful truth of a world's doom and destruction. Man can navigate the trackless ocean. Can Count the almost endless stars—measure the

wonderous heavens and weigh the ponderous distant worlds."

By the exercise of his thought man is becoming the perfect master of the world in which he lives. Never did mind wield such a kingly power over matter as at present. This great power of material, and the very universe is bending before his intellectual energies. Many and glorious are the conquests man has already won in the physical world, and he is still marching on in his grand triumphant career, with his brow testooned with the garlands of many victories. He is marching on from conquering to conquer, sweeping away every opponent, and exploring fresh wonders in creation's vast empire. And he shall march on—march on until he reaches the very pinnacle of his ambition, and then from the sublime summit of his intellectual ascendency shall look down upon a subdued and conquered world. Man's dignity is seen in his mental constitution.

IV. It is however in his moral and spiritual nature that his importance is most fully seen. It was in this respect chiefly that man was created in the image of his Maker. It is the soul that makes man the most precious being in this lower world. He is capable of understanding the will of God—of knowing, loving and serving Him. He possesses the power of choice, and it is this moral capacity which invests him with his infinite responsibility, and renders the issues of world-changing so tremendous in their character. Man has that within him, which unites him to another sphere, and links him on to the chain of being. Immortality is stamped on every capacity. Eternal realities are before him, he is capable of endless enjoyment or undying misery.

"I feel my immortality o'erwhelms all hope, all tears, all time, all fears. And feels like eternal thunders of the deep into my soul. This truth, this solemn truth—Thou livest in me!"

The soul must live. "When every fire and every star, Shall vanish and expire." The body must die and the "Satan shall sink with age, And nature sink in years."

But the soul of man "Shall flourish in immortal youth. Upright shall the war of elements. The wreck of ages, and the crash of worlds."

Must live on and throughout the nameless spaces of an undying future.

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