

MISCELLANY.

EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

By humble, believing, affectionate, persevering prayer, in the name of Christ, a person may do good at home and abroad—throughout the city in which he lives, throughout the country, and throughout the world; and he may continue to do good through all future ages. "Open your mouths wide," said God, "and I will fill them." In answer, to prayer, blind eyes may be opened, and deaf ears be unclogged; the lame man made to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing; in the wilderness, waters to break out, and streams in the desert; the highway to become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water, and through the habitations of dragons a highway may be opened on which the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads.

In answer, probably, to the prayers of Richard Baxter, his "Call to the Unconverted" is now awakening many sinners; and his "Saint's Rest" guiding multitudes of Christians to glory. In answer to the prayers of Paul, the Angel having the everlasting gospel to preach unto all nations may now be flying through the midst of heaven.

The prayers of David for Zion, the city of our God, as her watchmen stand on her walls, see eye to eye, and proclaim the glories of her King, may now be receiving their fulfilment.

And the prayers of Abraham for the multitude of nations promised to him, may now be receiving their fulfilment.

Let any man pray like Paul, like David and Abraham, and no tongue can tell the greatness or the extent of the blessings which, in answer, may descend. One blessing such a man will certainly secure—his own eternal life. Yes, "Whosoever thus calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved." And he may be the means of saving others, in greater and still greater numbers, from generation to generation, down to the end of the world. And as ages undimmed roll away, a revenue of ever increasing glory may, in answer to his prayers, rebound to the Lord Jesus Christ.—*Edwards.*

FRUIT IN OLD AGE.

"The name of George Burder," says the Boston Recorder, "is familiar to American Christians, as the writer of 'Village Sermons,' and an ardent friend of missions. He is now in the decline of life, and must soon 'put off his tabernacle' and terminate his labors for the church. We take pleasure in publishing the annexed short letter, lately received from him by a clergyman, in this vicinity. It is valuable as showing the continued efforts in the cause of truth of this eminent man, and the warmth of his heart in the cause of benevolence, even when the chills of age are upon him."

LONDON, July 14, 1829.

DEAR SIR—As a proof that I do not forget you, I send, and beg your acceptance of a copy of twelve plain and short sermons for poor aged people, which I was induced to compose for the religious Tract Society, there being nothing sufficiently plain and cheap for the poorer sort of people. It is probably my last effort of this kind, as I have entered upon my 78th year and am nearly blind. I am now "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," not expecting long continuance here, or ability to continue, as I now do, to preach once every Sabbath.

Let us do all the good we can—work while it is day—the night cometh. May your's be instant, and a long life of labor be crowned with abundant success.

I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend
GEORGE BURDER.

EXCELLENCE OF RELIGION.

In a column of "varieties" in a late Liverpool paper, is the following paragraph, credited to "Sir H. Davy's Salmoia." The author is one of the most celebrated of philosophers; and it must be gratifying to the humbler classes of Christians to perceive one so rich in talents, accomplishments, and the pride of learning, paying so eloquent a tribute to that religion which is their all:

I envy no quality of the mind or intellect in others, not genius, power, wit or fancy; but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing; for it makes life a discipline of goodness—creates new hopes, when all earthly hopes vanish; and throws over the decay, the destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights; awakens life in death, and from corruption and decay calls up beauty and divinity, makes an instrument of torture, and of shame, the ladder of ascent to paradise; and far above all combinations of earthly hopes, calls up the most delightful visions of palms and amaranths, the gardens of the blest, the security of everlasting joys, where the sensualist and skeptic only view gloom, decay, annihilation and despair!

A HOLY SABBATH.

It is as a kind of transfiguration day, shedding a mild glory upon every creature, and enabling us to view the concerns of time in connexion with those of eternity. Through all its happy hours we sit as on the holy mount, looking back with gratitude, and forward with confidence, taking sweet counsel together for the advancement of our highest interest, and scarcely considering ourselves as inhabitants of the lower world. Some interesting passage of the Scriptures, or some choice piece of divinity, generally furnished the matter of our discourse; and while we endeavoured to attain a clear and comprehensive view of the subject under consideration, a Divine light would sometimes break in upon us, satisfying our doubts, exalting our conceptions, and cheering our hearts.—Through these flowery paths we have continued to allure each other onward, (first one of us taking the lead and then another,) refreshing our spirits and feeding our immortal hopes, amid a thousand glorious appearances, till the new Jerusalem itself has burst upon our eyes, from whose holy walls we heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.—*Spirit and Manners of the Age.*

The Friendship of God.—"Friendship is a trite subject, both of conversation and composition; but this does not diminish its value when it exists untainted by self interests and founded on pure principles. But so various are the motives and dispositions which actuate mankind, that we rarely meet with one so generous and disinterested as to merit our confidence. But there is a friendship founded on a basis not to be shaken by the vicissitudes of time, nor interrupted when all sensible objects shall recede from our view; a friendship which will enable us to sustain the rude blasts of adversity and remain unmoved amidst the slanders and invectives of our enemies;—and this is the friendship of God. It can only bud in this uncongenial clime, but it will bloom with increasing and unfading splendour when transferred to its native soil."

CHINESE NEWSPAPER.—At Peking, the capital of China, a newspaper of extraordinary size, is published weekly; it is printed upon silk stuff. It contains no foreign news, whatever, but dwells entirely upon domestic occurrences. The Gazette claims, it is said, to have been in existence for about one thousand years past, and enjoys an incontestable reputation for veracity. In the year 1727, a public functionary dared to cause some false intelligence to be inserted, and was punished with death, since which time no similar instance has occurred. Divers sheets of some of the numbers of this Gazette, bearing date the 18th and 26th Feb. 1793, are preserved in the Royal Library of Paris, which are ten yards and a quarter in length.

Jewish Scripture MSS.—In transcribing the Sacred Writings, it has been a constant rule with the Jews, that whatever is considered as corrupt shall never be used, but shall be burnt, or otherwise destroyed. A book of the law, wanting but one letter, with one letter too much, or with an error in one single letter, written with any thing but ink, or written on parchment made of the hide of an unclean animal, or on parchment not purposely prepared for that use, or prepared by any but Israelites, or on skins of parchment tied together by unclean strings,

shall be holden to be corrupt; that no word shall be written without a line first drawn on the parchment, no word written by heart, or without having been pronounced orally by the writer; that before he writes the name of God, he shall wash his pen; that no letter shall be joined to another, and that if the blank parchment cannot be seen all around the letter, the roll shall be corrupt. There are certain rules for the length and breadth of each sheet, and for the space to be left between each letter, each word, and each section. These Maimonides mentions as some of the principal rules to be observed in copying the sacred rolls. Even to this day it is an obligation on the persons who copy the sacred writings for the use of the synagogue to observe them. Those who have not seen the rolls used in the synagogues, can have no conception of the exquisite beauty, correctness, and equality of the writing.

Elisir of Health and Longevity.—In 1728 a person of the name of Villars, in Paris, gave out that his uncle, who, it was well known, had attained very nearly to his hundredth year, and died then only in consequence of an accident, had left him a certain preparation, which possessed the power of prolonging a man's life to upwards of a century, provided he lived with sobriety and exercised daily in the open air. When this individual happened to observe a funeral, he would shrug up his shoulders in pity: "If the deceased," said he, "had followed my advice, he would not be where he now is." His friends, among whom he distributed his medicine gratuitously, observing the conditions required, experienced its utility and praised it incessantly. He was thence encouraged to sell it at a crown a bottle; and the sale was prodigious. Now the remedy was in fact, nothing more than the water of the river Seine slightly acidulated. Those who made use of it, and were attentive at the same time to regimen and exercise, soon found their health greatly improved. To others, who were neglectful, he would observe, "It is your own fault if you are not perfectly cured; you have been intemperate and indolent; renounce these vices, and you will live at least a hundred years. Some took his advice; and the very decided advantage which the latter derived from Monsieur Villars's drops, caused him to increase rapidly in reputation and wealth. The Abbe Pons extolled our quack, and gave him the preference to the celebrated Mareschal de Villars; "The latter," said he, "kills men; the former prolongs their existence."

At length, however, it was unfortunately discovered that Villars's remedy was composed almost entirely of pure water. His practice was now at an end. Men had recourse to other empirics of a far more dangerous character—and to specifics and advice much less efficacious and rational in their nature.

CHARITY.—We may see mountains removed, and miracles wrought; but there is nothing in the compass, either of human or divine action, that is so sublime and beautiful as CHARITY—as giving alms to the poor, and pouring oil into the wounds of distress.

INTREPIDITY.—The wise and prudent conquer difficulties by daring to attempt them. Sloth and folly shiver and shrink at the sight of toil and danger, and make the impossibility they fear.

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.—Past experience and former manifestations of divine love should be as carefully kept in recollection as old receipts: they will afford satisfaction in review, and hope in prospect.

In countries enlightened by the gospel the most formidable and (it is to be feared) the most frequent impediment to men's turning the mind inward upon themselves, is, that they are afraid of what they shall find there! There is an aching hollowness in the bosom, a dark cold speck at the heart, an obscure and hoding sense of somewhat that must be kept out of sight of the conscience—some secreted ger, whom they can neither resolve to eject or retain.

"Those who outlive their incomes, and splendour in dress or equipage are well said to be like a town on fire, which shines by that which consumes it."