

death came in by a tree, when the sacrifice was laid on the altar bearing the iniquity of, and suffering the death due to the sinner, did not this serve to put him in mind of the introduction of sin and death, as here he saw both still connected with a tree, the very name, as well as the use of which, was calculated to point out the divine hatred at sin, and the curse God has annexed to it? And when he saw the expiation of his sin issuing from the same tree, and the blood upon it, did he not see the greatest good educed from the greatest evil,—serving to explain the name of the original tree of which the shittim was the memorial,—the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

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THE NATIVITY.

We confess we have no sympathy with those who suffer the anniversary of this unspeakably glorious event to pass unnoticed, and consequently unimproved; merely because they are not quite satisfied that the 25th day of our month December was actually the day when the "greatest gift from heaven to men" appeared in our lower world, that he might, in his own sacred person, endure the punishment which must otherwise have fallen upon our guilty race.

Others, again, object to the religious observance of this day on the ground of its general abuse. We may just as well object to the observance of the "Holy Sabbath," because, in too many instances, its sacred hours are desecrated to the worst of purposes. The abuse of any thing on the part of some men cannot be regarded as an argument against the proper use of it.

It is enough for us to know that the great majority of Christians observe this day with devout and holy emotions of joy, and spend its sacred hours in the contemplation of the glorious Advent, work, and atonement of the "Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

In order to assist the meditations of our readers, we have condensed from the *Wesleyan Magazine* the following eloquent passages from Gregory Nazianzen's "Oration on the Nativity":—

Jesus is begotten!—laud and glorify. He descends from heaven!—go forth to meet him.—He stands upon the earth!—be ye exalted to the skies. Let the whole earth sing unto the Lord; or, that I may comprehend in a word all nature, let the heavens exult, and the earth rejoice, on account of Him who existed in the heavens, and then appeared upon the earth. Jesus is manifested in the flesh!—rejoice at once with joy and trembling: with trembling, by reason of thy transgression; with joy, by reason of thy hope. Who adores not Him, who existed from everlasting; or glorifies not Him, who through eternity shall endure?

Again darkness is dispersed; again is light created; Egypt again is visited with darkness, Israel is again enlightened by the fire-girt pillar. Let the people who sit in the gloom of ignorance behold the resplendent beam of knowledge.—The ancient things have passed away, and lo! all things are new. The latter recedes, the spirit abounds. The shadows flee away, and the substance enters. Clap your hands, ye nations! for "unto us a Son is born, and unto us a Child is given, whose government shall be upon his shoulder." Let John proclaim, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." I also will proclaim the potency of this wondrous day. The Incorporeal is invested with a form; the brightness of the World is veiled; the Invisible is beheld; the Intangible is felt; the Everdaring is born in time; the Son of God becometh the son of man. "Je-

sus Christ, to day and yesterday the same, and throughout eternity!"

We celebrate this day the sojourning of God with man, that man might dwell with, or rather return unto, his God; for it is more suitable thus to speak, that, having put off the old man, we may be clothed with the new; that, as we died in Adam, so we might live in Christ, having been buried with Him, and with Him arisen.

Wherefore let us rejoice, not as if we were celebrating a festival, but as if we were engaged in divine employments; not as if we were inhabitants of the earth, but as if we were raised above it; not according to our human inclinations, but according to the will of him, who is become our own, or rather whose servants we are become; not according to our native weakness, but to the divine remedy; not according to our natural birth, but to the spiritual renovation. And how shall this be done? Let us not institute festive dances, or enwreath the vestibules, nor decorate the streets with flowers; let us not prepare a banquet for the eye, nor delight the ear with melody, nor recreate the smell with fragrance, nor pamper luxuriously the appetite, nor gratify the touch in the ways that lead to sin, on the threshold of iniquity. Let us not render ourselves effeminate with the delicacy and costliness of apparel, whose chiefest beauty is in its inutility; nor with the gorgeousness of gems, the brilliancy of gold, the device of painting, which giveth the lie to natural beauty, and dishonoureth the image of the Creator. Let us not indulge in feasting and drunkenness, from which I am assured other immoralities result; for evil are the instructions of evil teachers, and the fruit of baneful seeds is baneful. Let us not recline on elevated couches, gratifying the appetite with things of luxury, nor be charmed with the delicious fragrant of wine, or a profusion of costly ointments. Let not the earth and the sea bring in the tribute of their dross; nor let us strive to surpass each other in intemperance: for whatever is superfluous I deem intemperance, especially when many of those who are formed of the same clay, and fashioned like ourselves, are hungering for what we waste.

God, having created man, placed him in paradise, [whatever that paradise may have been] and endowed him with liberty of will, that the practice of virtue might depend not less upon his choice than upon Him who had sown the seeds. But deceived through the envy of Satan, and the ruin of Eve, which she sustained as being of a more yielding nature, and imparted to Adam, as being more likely to persuade, he forgot the commandment which had been prescribed, and was overcome by that bitter taste. Then, by reason of his transgression, was he exiled from the tree of life, the bowers of paradise, the favour of God, and clothed in garments made of skins, perhaps a more gross and perishable form; and hence he discovered his nakedness, and fled from his Creator. He is doomed to death; yet even here he experiences a benefit, the cutting off of sin, lest sin should prove immortal.

As these things needed a greater remedy, they obtained a greater. This was He, the Word of God; He the Everlasting, the Invisible, the Uncircumscribable, the Incorporeal, the Light outbeaming from the Light, the Beginning proceeding from the Beginning, the Fountain of life and immortality, the Impress of the all-beauteous Archetype, the indelible Character, the unvarying Image, the Word of the Father, commensurate to his illimitable nature. He approaches unto his own image; to redeem our bodies, he is invested with a body; and to redeem our souls, he unites himself to a rational soul, that, by human nature, human nature may be purified. In every respect, save only in respect of sin, he becomes a man, and is born of a virgin who had previously been purified in soul and body. As God assumes this nature in the moment of its creation, and thereby prevents its individual subsistence, from two contrarious natures one Christ is formed; of these, the one was stamped with divinity, and the other impressed that divinity upon it. O unprecedented union! O ineffable conjunction! The Ever-Living begins to be, the Uncreate is formed, the Infinite is circumscribed, he is circumscribed by a rational soul, the intermediate link which connects the incorporeal nature of material beings. He who possesses the riches of the universe is rendered poor; he is clothed with the garment of my

poverty, that I may be enriched with the treasures of his Godhead. He who is full of blessedness is emptied; yea, for a little season, he is emptied of his glory, that I may participate for ever in his fulness. O what an exuberance of the riches of his goodness!

He was sent forth; but as a man; for he possessed a two-fold nature. So also, he was wearied; he hungered and was athirst; he was agonised; and he wept: but it was in his earthly form. Yet, supposing he was sent forth in his divine nature also; what then? Considering that this was the "good pleasure" of his Father, to which he referred his every action; honouring him as the eternal Fountain of Deity, and combining in unity of purpose. So also, he is said to have been betrayed; but it is likewise written, that he rendered up himself. It is said, that he was raised by his Father, and was carried up to heaven; but it is likewise written, that he raised himself, and returned thither. That evinces the "good pleasure" of his Father; this demonstrates his inherent power.

But now receive, with gratitude, this gift of the conception. Honour lowly Bethlehem, for it hath restored thee unto Paradise: revere that manger, through which, when devoid of knowledge, thou wert nourished by the Word. Whether thou be one of the poor, and subject to the law, and meet for sacrifice; or whether thou hast hitherto been impure, unfit to be offered, and of the portion of the Gentiles; move on in concert with the star; and with the Magi present thine offerings,—gold, and myrrh, and frankincense; as unto a king, as unto God, as unto him who died for thee. Glorify with the shepherds; join the dance of angels, and swell the chorus of archangels! Let there be an harmonious concelebration of the earthly and supramundane powers! For I am persuaded that they also rejoice this day with us, and celebrate with us the festival; if, indeed, they be lovers of man, and lovers of their God; like those whom David introduceth, ascending with Christ after his passion, and coming forth to meet him, and prescribing to one another the elevation of the gates. Let one circumstance connected with his birth excite thy loathing and exprobration,—the murder of the infants by command of Herod: and yet, thou shouldst reverence this also; regarding it as an oblation of those whose age was the age of Jesus; the forerunner of that novel sacrifice—Does he flee into Egypt? Eagerly participate his flight: it is an ennobling thing to flee with Jesus in his persecution. Does he linger in Egypt? Summon him from thence, by adoring him even there. Pass blamelessly through every age of Christ, and through all his virtues. Be purified as becometh his disciple; be circumcised in heart; rend the veil of thine earthly generation. Teach in the temple, and drive from thence the traffickers in sacred things. Consent to be stoned, if it be needful: thou shalt escape thy persecutors, and shalt pass securely through the midst, as did the Saviour; for the Word was not stoned. If thou should be brought before Herod, answer not. He will respect thy silence more than the protracted speech of others. If, like Christ, thou should be scourged, be emulous of the sufferings which yet remained. Since thou hast tasted of sin, thou must taste the gall and must drink the vinegar. Seek to be spit upon, to be stricken, to be buffeted; submit to be crowned with thorns,—the sharp trials attendant on a life of holiness. Be invested with the scarlet robe; receive the reed in thy hand; and be scoffingly adored by those who deride the truth.

O! may he now illuminate your minds, as far as in this earthly prison ye can endure his radiance; through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom be ascribed everlasting glory. Amen!

We have just received a communication, in which the following question is asked,—“Ought Protestants to provide for the temporal necessities of poor famishing Roman Catholics, and to what extent are they to relieve them?” We unhesitatingly answer the first part of the question in the affirmative. We do contend that, generally speaking, the subjects of suffering and hunger should be instantly relieved, “without (to use the language of the Strangers’ Friend Society Report,