

# The Watchman.

"I HAVE SET WATCHMEN UPON THY WALLS O JERUSALEM THAT SHALL NEVER HOLD THEIR PEACE, DAY NOR NIGHT."

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## Poetry.

### AN ACROSTIC.

To the Editor of the Watchman.

BY REV. J. CASWELL.

Throw around us rays of light,  
Hell's foul deeds expose to sight,  
Everywhere with all thy might.  
Watch the wily "man of sin,"  
Alarm the church you find him in;  
Tell the world in tones of thunder,  
Church and state must part asunder.  
Herald forth the church's coldness,  
Meet each vice, with manly boldness,  
Awake the wicked,—cheer the pure;  
Never fear success is sure.

Whitchurch, March 2nd, 1850.

### SUDDEN DEATH.

The following remarkable circumstance occurred in a circle of friends who were debating—what might be considered the happiest departure. One of the party suddenly expired.

Which is the happiest death to die?  
Oh! says one, if I might choose,  
Long at the gate of bliss would I lie,  
And feast my spirit ere it fly,  
With bright celestial views.  
Mine were a lingering death without pain,  
A death which all might love to see,  
And mark how bright and sweet would be  
The victory I should gain.  
Fain would I catch a hymn of love  
From angels' harps that ring above,  
And sing it at my parting breath  
Quivered and expired in death;  
So that those on earth might hear  
The harp-notes of another sphere;  
And mark, when nature faints and dies,  
What springs of heavenly life arise;  
And gather from the death they view  
A ray of hope, to light them through,  
When they should be departing too.  
"No," said another, "so not I:  
Sudden as thought is the death I would die;  
I would suddenly throw my shackles by,  
Nor bear a single pang at parting,  
Nor see the tear of sorrow starting,  
Nor hear the quivering lips that bless me,  
Nor feel the hands of love that press me,  
Nor the frame with mortal terror shaking,  
Nor the heart where love's soft hands are breaking.

So would I die!  
All bliss without a pang to cloud it!  
All joy without a pain to shroud it,  
Not slain, but caught up as it were  
To meet my Saviour in the air.

So would I die.  
Oh, how bright were the realms of light  
Bursting at once upon the sight!  
Even so I long to go—  
These parting hours how sad and slow!"

His voice grew faint, and fixed was his eye—  
As if gazing on visions of ecstasy;  
The hue of his cheek and lips decay'd;  
Around his mouth a sweet smile play'd—  
They looked—he was dead?  
His spirit had fled,  
Painless and swift as his own desire:  
The soul undressed  
From her mortal vest,  
Had stepp'd in her car of heavenly fire,  
And proved how bright  
Were the realms of light,  
Bursting at once upon the sight!

## Miscellany.

### THE MOTHER AND CHILD; OR, THE FIRE-FLY.

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 57.

"Yes, dear child," said the mother, "it is true."  
"Well," said the boy, "why do you weep so long, then? Pray to God, and he will help you."  
"Good child, thou art right!" said his mother; and her tears flowed less bitterly, and comfort was mingled with her sorrow. She folded her arms, and raised her moist eyes towards heaven, and Ferdinand folded his hands also, and looked upwards, and the bright moon shone upon mother and child.  
And the mother began to pray, and the boy repeated every word after her.  
"Great Father in heaven," she said, "look down upon a poor mother and her child—a poor widow and an orphan raise their eyes to thee

We are in great need, and have no longer any refuge upon the earth. But thou art rich in mercy. Thou hast thyself said, 'Call upon me in the day of thy trouble, and I will deliver thee.' Oh, to thee we pray. Thrust us not forth from this dwelling—take not from a poor orphan his only little inheritance. Or, if in thy mysterious but still most wise and benevolent purposes, thou hast otherwise designed, prepare for us a resting-place upon the wide, vast earth. O, pour this consolation into our hearts, lest they break as we wander forth, and from yonder hill turn to look for the last time upon our house."

Sobs interrupted her; weeping, she gazed towards heaven, and was silent. The boy, who yet stood with folded hands, suddenly exclaimed, with outstretched finger,—

"Mother, look! what is that? Yonder flies a little star. Look, there it hurries by the window! O, see, now it comes in! How bright, how beautiful it shines! Look, only look! it it has a greenish light. It is almost as beautiful as the evening star. Now it moves along the ceiling. That is wonderful!"

"It is a fire-fly, dear Ferdinand," said his mother. "In the daytime it is a small unsightly insect, but in the night it gives out a most beautiful light."

"May I catch it?" said the boy. "Will it not hurt me, and will not the light burn me?"

"It will not burn thee," said the mother, and she laughed, while the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"Catch it and examine it closely; it is one of the wonders of God's almighty power."

The boy, entirely forgetful of his sorrow, at once tried to catch the sparkling fire-fly, now on the floor, now under the table, now under the chair.

"Ah me, what a pity!" said the boy; for as he stretched out his hand to catch the bright insect, it flew behind the great chest that stood against the wall. He looked under the chest.

"I see it plain enough," he said; "there it is, close against the wall; and the white wall and the floor, and every bit of the dust near it shines as if the moon shone upon it; but I cannot reach it; my arm is not long enough."

"Have patience," said the mother, "it will soon come out again."

The boy waited a little while, and then came to his mother and said, with a soft imploring voice,—

"Mother, do you get it out for me, or move that chest a little from the wall, and I can easily catch it."

The mother rose, moved the chest from the wall, and the boy took the quiet fire-fly, examined it in the hollow of his little hand, and was delighted with it.

But his mother's attention was attracted by a different object. As she moved the chest, something which had struck between it and the wall fell upon the floor. She uttered a loud cry as she picked it up.

"Ah," she exclaimed, "now all our trouble is over. That is last year's account-book, which I have so long looked for in vain. I thought it had been destroyed as of no value, by strangers perhaps, while I lay senseless during my illness."

—Now it can be shown that thy father paid the money that they demand of us. Who would have thought that the account-book was stuck between the great chest which we took with the cottage, and which has not been moved since we bought it?"

She at once lighted a lamp, and turned over the leaves of the account-book, while tears of joy sparkled in her eyes. Everything was correctly put down—the sum which her deceased husband had owed of 300 crowns at the beginning of the year, and what he had paid off in money and work. Below stood the following lines, written in old Meyer's own hand:

"I have settled accounts with James Bloom to-day, (St. Martin's day,) and he now owes me fifty crowns."

The mother struck her hands together with joy, embracing her child, and exclaimed with delight.

"O, Ferdinand, give thanks to God, for we now need not leave home; now we can remain in our cottage."

"And I was the cause, was I not, mother?" said the little fellow. "If I had not begged you to move the chest, you never would have found the book. It might have lain there a hundred years."

The mother stood for a while in silent astonishment, and then said—

"O! my child, it was God's doings. I feel a thrill of awe and reverence when I reflect upon it. Look! as we both prayed and wept, there came the sparkling fire-fly, and pointed out the spot where this book was concealed. Yes, truly! God's hand is in all things, however trifling. Nothing comes by chance. Even the

hairs of the head are numbered, not one of them falls to the ground without his knowledge. Remember this for thy life-long, and put thy trust in him, especially in time of need. It is easy for him to aid and to save. He does not need to send a shining angel to us.—He can send us help by a winged insect?"

The mother could not sleep that night for joy. Soon after break of day, she took her way to the judge; who at once sent for the heir. He came. He acknowledged the writing as genuine, and was much ashamed of having slandered the woman before the court, and having called her a liar. The judge declared he owed her some recompense for the shame and great sorrow which he had caused her. The man was unwilling to make atonement for his injustice.

But when the poor woman had related the whole account of her evening prayer, and the appearance of the fire-fly, the judge said—

"That is the finger of God; He has visibly helped you."

Young Meyer, however, was much moved, and said, with tears in his eyes,

"Yes, it is so. God is the Father of the widow and the fatherless; and thy avenger also. Pardon me for harshness towards you; I release you from the payment of the fifty crowns, and if you are at any time in need, come to me, and I will assist you. I now see clearly that those who trust in God, he will never forsake; and that confidence in him is safer dependence than great riches. And if I ever come to want, or if my wife should be a widow, and my children orphans, may He help us also as he has helped you."

Trust always thus in him, and be as upright as this poor widow, and help will not be wanting to you in time of need.—From the German.

### THE HISTORY, OFFERING, AND CHARACTER OF ABEL.

The history of Abel is an extremely brief one, and the facts contained in it very few; but those facts are of great importance, highly instructive and interesting.

Abel the second son of Adam and Eve, was born, probably, not long after his brother Cain, but from some cause, which is not stated in the sacred history, his birth seems to have been regarded by his mother with very different feelings to those she manifested when Cain was born, whom she beheld with joy, and called Cain, saying, with apparent delightful anticipations of future comfort in him, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." But Abel was not welcomed by such a sanguine expression: the name given him signifies vanity, or a vapour; and as all names in the first ages were not merely arbitrary distinctions, but contained a meaning, in some way or other applicable to the persons bearing them, it is reasonable to suppose that it was some important cause which led Eve to call her second son, Vanity. Abel, however, was chosen by God, to become a partaker in his salvation, which Cain proudly rejected. That Abel was a converted person is evident, though this change we have no account. It took place, probably, very early in life, and most likely through parental instruction. It is not too much to suppose that Adam would frequently sit with his wife and children in their primitive dwelling, and recount the transactions that took place in Eden—the giving of the law—his transgression and sentence—and the cheering, though mysterious promise, about the seed of the woman. Eve, too, might have often shown to her children—when leading them to enjoy the sight of nature after the winter was past, and the rain over and gone—when flowers again appeared on the earth, and the time of the singing of birds was come—when the fig-tree and the vine, with the tender grape, gave forth a good smell,—she, perhaps, in those rambles pointed out to them, from afar the delightful bowers of paradise, and, not without feelings of terror, would direct their attention to the flaming sword and the cherubim, always guarding its entrance. These instructions and facts, accompanied by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, would produce a conviction of sin at the same time that they encouraged a hope of mercy.—Besides, there appears little reason to doubt that sacrifice was offered by Adam in the presence of his family, and these services would tend to deepen impression, and give an impulse to Abel's piety. But the time passed on; Abel grew in stature and age, and as it was necessary he should have a calling, it is not improbable that the occupation of a shepherd was mainly, if not wholly, a matter of his own choice. It suited his temper and character.—He was a spiritual man, and this employment was congenial to his feelings. It is perhaps the most unworldly of all the engagements of the

sons of men, and doubtless tended much to his

growth in grace, as it afforded him opportunity for contemplation, and placed him amidst scenery calculated to raise feelings of devotion. It was a pilgrim's life; changing from place to place, he would not be over much attached to any, but would regard himself as a traveller to a better country, that is, an heavenly. It is worthy of notice, that for a long period during the early ages, the people of God were, with scarcely an exception, shepherds. Such were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, his children in Egypt and afterwards in the wilderness; and it was in this school, so favourable to advances in the knowledge of God and the human heart, that David was trained to be a prophet and a king.

How long Abel continued this course of life we know not; but a time arrived when his brother Cain and himself were to engage in a solemn act of worship, perhaps they were now to become heads of families themselves. Cain appears to have been a moral and intelligent man, strict in outward observances of religion, active and industrious, and of an inventive and enterprising genius. There is no reason to believe but that he was on good terms, at least externally, with his parents and his brother, till the fatal day when he slew the latter. But Cain, doubtless, had the world, not God, uppermost in his affections: he regarded not the law in its spiritual bearings on the heart; and though he fancied that he had kept its precepts. Never having committed outward or flagrant acts of transgression, he probably not only regarded himself as righteous, but despised in his heart what he might think the effeminate piety of his brother. Such a character as this would not see or feel the necessity of atonement, or the need of mercy; and, of course, he offered no sacrifice for sins. He was a rational religionist; he brought the fruits of the earth, and laid them on the altar, as a thank-offering; and probably his very language, while offering, resembled that used by his counterpart, the Pharisee, in after days: "God, I thank thee that I am not as others;" but no sin was confessed or deplored, or, if acknowledged in a slight manner, it was not felt or mourned over. Cain's offering was presented altogether in unbelief, and in willful ignorance of both the law and gospel; and the Lord had not respect to it nor to him: there it lay on the altar, without the least token of Divine regard.

But now Abel brings his offering—a lamb; and probably he felt more than ever humbled under a sense of his sins of heart, as well as of life, and that he justly deserved the wrath of God; but with a trembling hand he slays the lamb, and places it on the altar, confessing that thus he deserved to die; but trusting in some better atonement yet to be made for him, he offers it in faith, groaning from his heart, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." The Lord beholds the offering with approbation; and probably the token of it was the sending of fire from heaven (as in the case of Elijah at Carmel, and Solomon at the dedication of the Temple) to consume the sacrifice. Who can imagine Abel's holy joy, mingled with awe, at such a testimonial of Jehovah's favour, witnessing that he was righteous? And now the depravity of Cain's heart developed itself, first, in during rebellion against God, and then in murderous anger towards his brother. His countenance fell; he was not humbled, nor led, like Job, in after times, to say, "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me." He will not believe he is wrong; it is God and Abel who are in fault; and this, perhaps, he tried to bring his brother to admit, when afterwards talking with him in the field, and though Abel would answer meekly and reasonably, yet Cain, like all carnal worshippers, whether Pagan, Papist, or formal or rational Christians, so called, could not endure these meek and convincing reasonings. One could suppose his language might be something like this: "I have done right from my youth up; I have been respectful and obedient to my parents, active and diligent in my calling; I have never sinned as our father Adam did; and if you and he are, as you have often said, such wicked creatures in heart and life, (and for aught I know, it may be true enough,) it is not so with me; I am upright, and my sacrifice ought to have been accepted as well, nay, before yours." Abel talked, says the sacred historian, and likely enough, tried to show Cain that he was a sinner, and needed God's mercy, but Cain's wrath and hatred against Abel and the truths he advocated, soon reached an ungovernable height, and, like those who saw Stephen, in later days, for speaking the truth, he gnashed with his teeth, and, rushing upon him with the malice of a demon, either with his hands alone, or with whatever might be near,—stones or club,—he dashed his brother to the ground, and became a murderer!

TO BE CONTINUED