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## Poetry.

### A Dirge.

BY REV. GEORGE CROLY.

"Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"
Here the evil and the just,
Here the youthful and the old,
Here the fearful and the bold,
Here the matron and the maid,
In one silent bed are laid;
Here the vassal and the king
Side by side lie withering;
Here the sword and scepter rust,
"Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"

Age on age shall roll along
O'er this pale and mighty throng;
Those that wept them, those that weep,
All shall with these sleepers sleep.
Brothers, sisters, of the worm—
Summer's sun, or Winter's storm,
Song of peace, or battle's roar,
Ne'er shall break their slumbers more;
Death shall keep his sullen trust,
"Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"

But a day is coming fast,
Earth, thy mightiest and thy last;
It shall come in fear and wonder,
Heralded by trump and thunder;
It shall come in strife and toil,
It shall come in blood and spoil,
It shall come in empires' groans,
Burning temples, trampled thrones;
Then, Ambition, rue thy lust!
"Earth to earth and dust to dust!"

Then shall come the Judgment sign,
In the east the King shall shine;
Flashing from Heaven's golden gate,
Thousand thousands round his state,
Spirits with the crown and plume:
Tremble then, thou sullen tomb!
Heaven shall open on our sight,
Earth be turned to living light,
Kingdoms of the ransomed just,
"Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"

Then thy mount, Jerusalem,
Shall be gorgeous as a gem;
Then shall in the desert rise
Fruits of more than Paradise;
Earth by angel feet be trod,
One great garden of her God!
Till are dried the martyr's tears
Through a thousand glorious years.
Now in hope of Him we trust,
"Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"

## The Study of Bibliography.

*A Lecture delivered before the Halifax Young Men's Christian Association, in Temperance Hall, on Tuesday Evening, Feb. 16.*

BY THE REV. EDMUND MATURIN, A. M.

(Concluded.)

Having thus briefly traced the early history of printing, I shall now proceed to give some account of the most celebrated Libraries that have been formed in different countries, and at various periods in the history of the world.

The land of Egypt was famous from the earliest times for the successful cultivation of the Arts and Sciences, and accordingly it is mentioned in holy writ, with the highest commendation, that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Here it was that the first public libraries were established for the diffusion of learning and philosophy among the civilized nations of the earth.

The most magnificent library in the world in ancient times was that founded by the Ptolemies, Kings of Egypt, in the city of Alexandria, about 290 years before Christ. It was called the Museum, and it afterwards consisted of two buildings, situated in different parts of the city, the one being supplemental to the other; and it is said that the collection of books in them both gradually increased to 700,000 volumes. This vast collection continued for many ages in all its splendor, until the first Alexandrine war, when, during the plunder of the city, the original library was destroyed by fire.—The other library still remained, and was enriched by subsequent donations, so that it finally surpassed the former one in the number and value of its books. At length, however, A. D. 642, after various revolutions under the Roman emperors, it was utterly destroyed by the Saracens, under the orders of the calif Omar, when they took possession of Alexandria. This event forms a striking illustration of Mohammedan intolerance. A petition had been presented to the conquerer for the preservation of the library. His answer was expressed in the form of a logical dilemma. "These books," he said, "either agree with the Koran, or they do not. If they agree with it, they are useless, and need not be preserved, as the Koran is sufficient. If they do not agree with it, they are pernicious, and ought to be destroyed." Accordingly, the sentence of destruction was executed with implicit obedience; the volumes were distributed among the 4000 baths of the city—and such was the quantity of this precious fuel, that six months were scarcely sufficient for its consumption.

Now let us glance for a moment at the libraries of ancient Greece and Rome.—Pisistratus, the Tyrant, is said to have been the first who established a public library in Athens, about 562 years before Christ.—Among other books, he deposited there the works of Homer, which he had collected with great difficulty and expense. This library was afterwards gradually increased by the Athenians themselves, and continued through various vicissitudes in a flourishing state for several ages. At one time it was transported into Persia by Xerxes—but subsequently restored; at another time the victorious Barbarians were on the point of setting fire to it, when one of their own chiefs dissuaded them from the design by this profound observation, that as long as the Greeks were addicted to the study of books, they would never apply themselves to the study of arms.

As to the Romans, it was not till after they had accomplished the conquest of Greece, that a taste for the pursuits of literature seems to have been diffused among them. The first public library at Rome is said to have been founded by Paulus Æmilius, 167 years before Christ, or, according to other authorities by Asinius Pollio, upwards of 100 years afterwards. The Emperor Augustus Cæsar erected two public libraries at Rome, the Octavian and the Palatine; the latter of which is stated to have survived the various revolutions of the Roman Empire, till the time of Pope Gregory the Great, in the end of the 6th century, whose mistaken zeal for Christianity is said to have induced him to order all the writings of the ancient heathen authors in this library to be destroyed. Other libraries were founded at Rome by various successors of Augustus—Tiberius, Vespasian, and especially by Domitian—the last of which was destroyed by lightning in the latter end of the 2nd century. But the most superb of all the libraries founded by the sovereigns of Imperial Rome, was that of the Emperor Ulpius Trajan, from whom it was called the Ulpian Library. There were also other public collections of books in the principal cities and colonies of the Empire, and from the number of calcined volumes which have been excavated from the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, it appears that the use of books was well known to the inhabitants of those buried cities of Italy. But the irruption of the barbarians who desolated the Western Roman Empire was far more destructive to the interests of literature, than volcanoes or earthquakes, and soon caused the disappearance of those libraries which for several centuries had been multiplied in Italy. The libraries in the East, however, escaped the torrent of destruction, and both Alexandria and Constantinople preserved their valuable collections until the capture of those cities by the Saracens and the Turks, who finally subverted the Roman Empire in the East. The fall of Constantinople under Mahomet II. in the year 1453, was the occasion of dispersing the learned men of that city over Western Europe, but the Imperial Library, which had been originally founded by Constantine the Great, in the 4th century, is said to have been preserved by the express command of the Conqueror, though it is believed to be now no longer in existence.

Descending to more modern times, we can only take a rapid survey of some of the great public Libraries of Europe in the present day.

Of these, the Vatican Library, at Rome, is supposed to be the most extensive of all existing collections. It was founded by Pope Nicolas V. about A.D. 1450. It was greatly enlarged by Sixtus IV. about twenty years afterwards, but suffered an almost total dispersion at the sacking of Rome, in 1527. Sixtus V. may be properly regarded as the second founder of the Vatican, as he rebuilt the library in 1588, and considerably increased the collection—which has been greatly enriched by his successors. The books are enclosed in presses, and consequently there is no pompous display of volumes, as in other grand repositories.—The library is about 1000 feet in length—a double gallery of 200 feet, opening into another of 800, with various rooms, cabinets, and other apartments, form the appropriate receptacle of this immense collection.

Next to the Vatican, the Imperial Library at Paris is undoubtedly one of the largest and finest collections in the world. It is said to have been commenced by Charles VII. in the 15th century, but it was greatly increased by successive kings of France, and especially by Louis XIV. Since that time, however, it has been vastly extended, and at the present day it is supposed to contain about 85,000 MSS. and 500,000 printed books.

The Imperial Library at Vienna is one of the most celebrated in Europe for the rarity and splendor of its volumes. It was founded by the Emperor Maximilian I. in the year 1498, but the present building was erected in the reign of Charles VI. and completed in 1735—and it is said that no library in Europe can equal it in point of elegance and magnificence.

Not much inferior, perhaps, to that of Vienna, in the value of its contents, is the Royal Library of Munich, in Bavaria.—The books are deposited in the College formerly belonging to the Jesuits, and on the suppression of that order, this building was devoted to its present use, in the year 1784. Dr. Dibdin, in his "Bibliographical Tour," thus refers to this Library. "They tell me that there are at least half a hundred rooms filled by books and MSS. of one kind or another—including duplicates—and that they suppose the library contains nearer 4 than 300,000 volumes. I scarcely know how to credit this, although I can never forget the apparently interminable succession of apartments, in straight lines and in rectangular lines, floor upon floor, even to the very summit, of the building, beneath the slanting roofs. It should seem as if every Monastery throughout Bavaria had emptied itself of its book-treasures, to be poured into this enormous reservoir."

But time would fail me to attempt any description of the other great European libraries on the Continent—those of Gottingen, Stutgard, Dresden, Berlin, Copenhagen, and St. Petersburg, all of them distinguished for the extent and value of their collections. I must, however, say a few words about the Bibliographical repositories of Old England—confining myself to two of them, the British Museum in London, and the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

The British Museum is the public property of the British nation; and it has been formed chiefly by the munificent grants of Parliament for the purchase of great collections, by royal donations, and by numerous valuable bequests of private individuals. It was commenced in the year 1753, and the plan of a public establishment of this kind was first suggested by the will of Sir Hans Sloane, an eminent physician, who had accumulated a very large collection of natural and artificial curiosities, together with an extensive and valuable library. He was very anxious that his sumptuous museum, which had cost him upwards of £50,000, should, if possible, be preserved entire, and permanently dedicated to public benefit; and with this view he directed that the whole of his collection should be offered to Parliament for the moderate sum of £20,000, which was immediately accepted. The first important addition to its contents was the Royal Library of Books and MSS. which had been collected by the preceding Sovereigns of England, from Henry VII. to William III., and which was presented by George II. in 1757. In the year 1823 the noble private library of George III., consisting of about 65,000 vols. (which had cost the King about £200,000), was presented to the nation by George IV., and deposited in the British Museum. It also contains the Cottonian, Harleian, Lansdowne, and other collections of MSS., all of which are of immense value; while it further enjoys a legal right, in common with ten other libraries in the United Kingdom, of receiving a free copy of every work published in England. It appears by a Parliamentary return dated March 19, 1847, that there were at that time 159 persons officially engaged in the Museum, and that the annual salaries of its officers amount to about £21,000.

The Bodleian Library in Oxford was founded by Sir Thomas Bodley in the beginning of the 17th century. There was a University Library established there by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, about one hundred and fifty years before, but it was entirely plundered during the reign of Edward VI., and the room continued empty until it was restored by the present founder. He furnished the Library with a numerous and choice collection of books, chiefly purchased in foreign countries at a vast expense, and which have since been greatly increased by the generous donations of several noblemen and other benefactors. The present edifice consists of three lofty and spacious rooms arranged in the form of the Roman letter H. It is richly supplied with the most valuable works, and the Oriental MSS. in particular, are supposed to be the most rare and beautiful to be found in any European collection.

The principal public library in Ireland is that of Trinity College, Dublin. It is a remarkable circumstance that its origin was owing to the liberality of the British army. In the year 1603, the Spanish troops were defeated by the English at Kinsale, and her Majesty's army, to commemorate the victory, subscribed the sum of £1800 from the arrears of their pay to establish in the University of Dublin a public library. "And it is somewhat remarkable," (says Dr. Parr, in his life of Archbishop Ussher,) "that when the Trustees were in London about the laying out this money in books, they then met Sir Thomas Bodley there, buying books for his new erected library at Oxford, so that there began a correspondence between them on this occasion, helping each other to procure the choicest and best books on several subjects that could be gotten, so that the famous Bodleian Library at Oxford, and that of Dublin, began together." The private library of Archbishop Ussher, consisting of 10,000 vols., with many valuable MSS. was the first important donation which the library received, since which time it has been continually increasing, and now contains about 1500 MSS. and 130,000 printed books. The present building is a very handsome structure of hewn stone, with a rich Corinthian entablature, surrounded with a balustrade. It was completed in the year 1732, having been twenty years in building. The great room itself is 210 feet in length, 41 feet in breadth, and 40 feet in height, and is fitted up in a very elegant and appropriate style of decoration.

I fear that we cannot boast of any great literary collection in the Province of Nova Scotia, but I believe it will be generally admitted that the best establishment of this kind is the library of King's College, Windsor. It was founded at the beginning of the present century, and appears to have been formed partly by purchase, but chiefly by donations, the most valuable of which was presented a few years ago by the University of Oxford. Among the "Memoranda" of the late Bishop Inglis it is stated that "in the latter end of the year 1800 he sailed for England, having been entrusted by the Governors of the College with the contributions of themselves and a few other friends of the Institution, to the amount of £250, for the purchase of books as a foundation for a library for the College." He states again that "Books to the amount of more than five times the sum originally subscribed were collected and forwarded to Nova Scotia"; and he further adds, that the Committee formed in England "continued their zealous and successful exertions to increase the library and its fund, until they procured a large addition to the books, and £400 in money." The present collection consists of about 4,700 vols. in Theological, Classical, Scientific, and General Literature. It contains some of the most valuable works in these departments, as well as several of the most splendid productions of the modern English press. Still, however, there is much need of a judicious selection of other books, which are usually found in the library of a learned institution. The collection does not include any ancient MSS. whatever. It is almost entirely deficient in rare and curious books, as well as specimens of early printing, as it does not contain a single volume of the 15th century, and only one English book of the 16th century—while several standard works of great importance are still wanting in all classes of literature. However, it is hoped that some of these defects will gradually be supplied in future years, as there is now a fund set apart for the purchase of additional books, according to the resolution of the Committee of the Alumni passed in June 1857, and expressed in the following terms: "Your Committee have unanimously recommended to the General Meeting to grant the sum of £50 for the purchase of modern works in the various departments of literature and science, under the direction of the Executive Committee, the same to be placed in the Library of King's College."

It would be endless to enter into a particular account of the great private libraries of England in past and present times, some of which are even more extensive and valuable than many of the old public collections of the country. But they can scarcely be considered as of permanent interest, as it is generally their fate to be dispersed in the course of a few years, at the death of their owners, or under other circumstances. One of the finest private collections of books and MSS. ever formed in England was that of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, in the beginning of the last century. After his death the MSS. were purchased by Government for £10,000, and the printed books were sold to Mr. Osborne, a bookseller, for £13,000—though it appears that Lord Oxford expended £18,000 on the binding only of a part of his magnificent collection. A catalogue of these MSS. (which are now in the British Museum) has been published in 4 vols. fol., London 1808-12, and a catalogue of the books, which was chiefly drawn up by the famous Dr. Johnson, was printed in 5 vols. 8vo., London 1743-45. But this collection has been greatly exceeded in the present century by the late Richard Heber, Esq. (brother of the well-known Bishop of Calcutta), who died in 1833, and his immense library was sold by auction, and has been dispersed over all the world. It was not, indeed, confined to one place or one country; he had several collections, both in England and on the Continent. Altogether his library is said to have contained about 130,000 vols., and to have cost him about £100,000. The love of books appears to have been the ruling passion of his life from his earliest years. He commenced forming a library in his eighth year, and at that early age he compiled a catalogue of his books; and from that period to the close of life he pursued the same object with the most persevering assiduity. Probably, however, the most valuable private collection of books in England at the present day is that of Earl Spencer, at Althorp Park, Northamptonshire. It is particularly rich in its Biblical and Classical departments, in which it is distinguished for the number of ancient, rare, and beautiful editions. It is said, indeed, to be the richest private collection in Europe; and a descriptive catalogue of a select portion of its contents was compiled by one of the most eminent English Bibliographers, the late Rev. Dr. Dibdin, and published in 7 vols. Imp. 8vo., London 1814-23.

But the taste for the collection of rare and valuable books, however laudable in itself, is undoubtedly one which may be indulged to excess, and in such case it really becomes a mental disease, which has received the well understood name of the "Bibliomania." This passion for old and rare books has now to a great degree subsided in England, and books of this description can now frequently be procured at less than one-tenth part of the price for which they were sold about forty or fifty years ago, when the Bibliomania was at its height. Never, perhaps, was there an occasion on which such high prices were given for scarce books as at the sale of the Roxburghe Library, in London, in the year 1812. This valuable collection was the property of John, Duke of Roxburghe, who had expended about £5,000 in the purchase of his books, which were sold by auction after his death, during forty-six days' sale, for £23,397 10s. 6d. But there was one book at this sale which excited an extraordinary competition among the literary noblemen of the day. It was an Italian work—a single volume in folio—the first edition of Boccaccio's Decameron, printed at Venice in 1471, and it derives its peculiar value from the circumstance that it is the only perfect copy of this edition known to be in existence. It was originally purchased by an ancestor of the Duke of Roxburghe for 100 guineas, and after a spirited bidding it was at last knocked down to the Marquis of Blandford for the enormous sum of £2,260. This was the largest sum that ever was given for any book or MS. in the annals of literary history, and yet it is a curious fact that this identical volume was sold seven years afterwards for 918 15s. at a loss of £1,341 5s. Next to this book, some of the early productions of the English press, printed by Caxton, brought the highest prices at this sale. Thus the work on the "Histories of Troy" supposed to be the first book printed in the English language, in 1471, was purchased by the Duke of Devonshire for £1060 18s. The "Mirror of the World," printed in 1480, sold for £351 15s., and two other works of Caxton sold for £336 each. It is curious to compare these prices with those given for Caxton's books at the sale of Dr. Bernard's library in 1698. Thus, for instance, the first of these, which sold for £1060 18s. in 1812, brought only 3s. in 1698. At that sale there were thirteen Caxtons on the list, and the highest price given for any of these was 5s. 4d., while in 1812, among eleven Caxtons, the lowest price given for an imperfect copy of one of them was £31. On the former occasion the whole thirteen volumes sold for £2 1s. 4d; on the latter, the eleven volumes sold for £2,736 4s. So wonderfully was the taste for old English literature revived in the 19th Century, and so perfectly arbitrary are the prices of old books, as depending entirely on the public demand for them! Thus our English Prayer Book, which was first printed in 1549, was originally sold at 2s. by authority of the King and Privy Council, and the edition of 1552 was sold at 2s. 6d. In the present day it is extremely difficult to procure a perfect copy of either of these books at any price. At the sale of the late Duke of Sussex's library there was an imperfect copy of each of them, which sold for more than 30 guineas each, and at the same sale there was a perfect copy of the Prayer Book of 1558, a small 12mo., which sold for 100 guineas. It is well known that the Prayer Book underwent some further revisions in 1604 and in 1662, besides which there was a special edition, called the Scotch Liturgy, published in 1637, and yet it is rather extraordinary that the original editions are now so excessively rare that there is no public or private library whatever which contains a complete set of these six volumes. However, this defect has been in some degree supplied by a beautiful fac-simile reprint of them all in exact imitation of the originals, which has been published in the most splendid manner by the late Mr. Pickering, of London, in the year 1844. There is nearly the same difficulty in obtaining a perfect copy of one of the old English Bibles of the 16th century, and especially of Coverdale's, or the first English Bibles printed in 1535. Indeed there is only one copy in the world which contains a perfect and entire title-page. This precious volume is the property of the Earl of Leicester, and it is said to have been discovered so lately as in the year 1846, concealed in an old oak chest at the Earl's mansion in Norfolk. There is, however, a modern reprint of this Bible, retaining the orthography of the original English text, published a few years ago by Messrs. Bagster, of London, who are so well known for their numerous Biblical publications in various languages. Such works, independently of their internal value and critical importance, must always be regarded, from their historical character, and hallowed associations, as interesting and affecting memorials of the Protestant Reformation in England.

It was my intention to have included in this Lecture a list of books, and of the best editions of them, which are most highly recommended to those who are engaged in a general course of study in the various departments of human knowledge. And it is of great importance to be well acquainted with these two points. 1st. The best books which treat on any subject, as much time and money are often lost in the purchase and study of inferior works, which do not contain the requisite amount of information; and 2nd., the best editions of those books, as there is often the greatest difference in point of value and matter, between the different editions of the same book, and to be able rightly to judge on these two points, requires a very extensive and accurate knowledge of books and authors. I find, however, on consideration that as I have already occupied your time so long, it would be quite impossible for me to do justice to this subject on the present occasion, and besides it would practically be of little use, as the books recommended are not generally to be had in this country. Our Booksellers are not prepared to undertake the risk of importing expensive works, which are not likely to meet with a profitable sale, and as it is a general principle in all branches of commerce, that the supply is regulated by the demand, it is not to be expected that our Book Stores will be supplied with valuable standard works till the public are disposed by a more cultivated taste to judge for themselves, and, by a more liberal encouragement, to appreciate the value of such works, and, in the mean time, those who are determined to form a really good library have no alternative but to import their books direct from England, by making their selections from the extensive stock of some respectable Bookseller in London, where the best and cheapest of all articles are to be obtained. After all, however, it is the observation of the wise man, that "Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh;" the truth is, that human life is really too short to attain to a perfect knowledge of all the various branches of study, and therefore it is desirable to concentrate the energies of the mind, as much as possible, on one great practical object. It is not so much the quantity as the quality of reading that forms the proper subject of intellectual improvement. It must not be forgotten, too, that the process of assimilation is continually going on between every human being and all others with whom he associates, not only among his living companions on earth, but also among the illustrious dead with whom he converses in those imperishable monuments of themselves which they have left behind in their published works. This is especially true with regard to the diligent study of the Holy Scriptures, in a spirit of humility and prayer. We there converse, not only with the best and wisest men that ever lived but with God Himself; and thus "beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord we are changed with the same image;" and the more we live on those glorious promises, and walk according to those holy precepts, the more deeply we shall feel in our own experience the truth of the language of the pious Bishop Horne, in his comparison of the most admired human compositions with the divine Psalms of David, "The fairest production of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands, and lose their fragrancy; but these unfading plants of Paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful—their bloom appears to be daily heightened, fresh odors are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellencies will desire to taste them yet again, and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best."

E. M.

## Religious Miscellany.

### The Father of Hedley Vicars.

A correspondent of the Western Episcopalian, "Senex," furnishes the following account of the father of the fine young officer whose memoir has lately excited so much interest:

Hedley was the son of Lieut. R. Vicars, of the British artillery, stationed in St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1816, and some few following years. In 1818, I think, he married the daughter of Thomas Williams, Esq., a very lovely young lady, whose mother was devotedly pious, and of very superior attainments. Lieut. Vicars was an officer of fine person and of graceful manners, but of the most earnest piety. When or how he became so, I am not prepared to say. Finding little sympathy with his religious views and feelings among the churchgoers at that time, he sought co-operation with some of the more intelligent of the Wesleyan missionaries laboring in the Island. By their joint labors many of the soldiers became the subjects of renewing grace.

I remember well seeing him on one occasion in the pulpit of the Wesleyan chapel in his regimentals, and preaching with an earnestness that drew tears from every eye. It is present to my recollection also, that in his zeal he so exposed the infidelity of some of the leading minds in the city, as to involve himself in a lawsuit for an alleged libel on the character of a distinguished citizen, Dr. C., in which the Christian soldier pleaded his own cause, and I think won it. Thirty years have passed away since then, during which the memoirs of Hedley furnished the Church with another beautiful illustration of the power of Christian faith, of parental example even under the unfavorable influence of a military life.

The Christianity of the father was a very exact type of the son's; it was not only exemplary and practical, but eminently a life of God in the soul, of which a published pamphlet of a portion of his diary, and of his labors among the soldiers in Newfoundland, which I possess, furnish ample evidence. Take the following specimen:

"I think it a grevious sin we often commit unawares, indulging a peevish, discontented temper, and finding fault, as it were, with God about the management of his weather, not considering that hail, snow, vapor, and stormy wind all fulfil his word. Beware of this, O my soul! thou professest to trust Him in the greatest concerns, even for thy salvation, why not then in the least?—By the grace of God this fine weather was in some degree sanctified to me; the late storms, and cheerless density of the atmosphere, by contrast, endeared the bright azure of the vaulted heavens, and the meridian splendor of the great orb of day—all nature seemed to animate my soul to soar aloft as on eagles' wings, and humbly join in praising the almighty Architect. O may the rays of this love constantly shine upon me! I had occasion to go on duty to a battery at some distance, and with a light heart I set out, accompanied by a sergeant. The path we pursued led in some places over rocks and craggy eminences which overhung the sea; in many parts the glassy ice and slippery snow presented a treacherous footing, and the supporting rail, at no time superfluous but now out of repair, seemed to threaten the incautious passenger, that one false step would precipitate him into the waves beneath, and launch an immortal soul into the ocean of eternity. What an awful thought, that such might have been the fate of my companion! Perhaps to this hour he might be living without God in the world; or, Felix-like, be deferring serious religion to a supposed 'more convenient season!' Had not the forbearing mercy and long-suffering of a gracious Providence upheld him, and His 'arm unseen' conveyed him safe on this occasion what a pang of sorrow would have pierced my heart to think he was lost forever! Alas! how would conscience, that silent monitor, have brought to remembrance the many opportunities I have let pass of earnestly and affectionately beseeching him to seek the things that make for everlasting peace! How bitterly should I have accused myself for my sinful negligence in exhorting him to 'flee from the wrath to come!' And how many dear friends and acquaintances have I whom I would wish to serve, and do any thing to oblige, and yet conscience tells me I am not clear of their blood if they die without any more religion than they have at present!—I wish to beseech them, with kind importunity, to 'seek the one thing needful,' yet often the faint attempt dies upon my lips; a selfish fear of displeasing them tempts me to hurt my own conscience and do them a real injury! O my soul, what a slave art thou to shame! This fatal rock, how often have I slept upon it! Be ashamed of this cowardly self-love, and pray for grace to clear thyself, and to tell them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, that the Lord Jesus must reign triumphant Sovereign in their hearts here or they can never meet him with joy at his second coming. Let me lose no opportunity, but always be doing or saying something, late and early, for the good of souls, as I know not which word may prosper, this or that."

### How to Study the Word of God.

BY REV. DR. HUMPHREY.

If all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, then it cannot be too devoutly read and studied. The remarks which I am about to offer are not for the learned, but for the common readers of the received English version. The great mass of the people cannot study the original Greek and Hebrew. They must read the Word of God "in their own tongues, wherein they were born."

There are many Bible readers who do not know how to read it to the best advantage. Several methods may be adopted, each of which has its advantages, but not to the exclusion of others.

The Bible may be read through in course, so many chapters in a day from Genesis to Revelation. It ought to be read through very early, by the children of every family; and once a year, ever thereafter, is not too often. It would give such a familiar knowledge of its contents that the careful reader would be able at once to turn to almost any passage without the help of a concordance; and to this end we should always use the same Bible, as we are often very much helped by recollecting just where, on the page, the passage we wanted is to be found.

But these daily Bible readings, in course, and spending no more time upon one part than another, are not enough. Some things are much harder to be understood than others. The historical Books of the Old Testament, for example, may be passed over much more rapidly than the Epistles of the New. The right understanding of the cardinal doctrines of the Bible requires *study*.

Another, and a very profitable way of reading the Scripture, is to take up a Gospel or an Epistle, and read it carefully through, from beginning to end, at one or two sittings, so as to take in the whole scope of the writer. This, I believe, is scarcely ever done by common readers. I suppose there are many who, though they read the Bible every day, never yet sat down to read one of the Gospels, or the Acts of the Apostles, or one of the longer Epistles through, as they do other books. All their reading is desultory—a chapter here and a chapter there—without much regard to the connection. Hence, though they may study isolated passages, and be able to quote them, they get no comprehensive views of the main drift of the history or the argument. What proportion of professors of religion, even, spend much time in such continuous reading of the Sacred Books!

If any should offer the excuse that they have not time for it, they must allow us to question them a little. Do they not find time to read forty or fifty pages of history, or a long article in some favorite Quarterly, without rising from their seats? The longest Books in the New Testament can be read through, deliberately, in two or three hours. The Epistles will not, upon an average, require half that time. Many spend more time, every day, in reading the secular newspapers, than it would take to read the whole of the Gospel of John, or the Acts of the Apostles.

But here, let me say, I have no doubt that whole books of Scripture would be read through, much oftener than they are, if they were printed as other books are. It is known to every one, who has paid the slightest attention to the subject, that the divisions and sub-divisions throughout the whole Sacred Volume are extremely arbitrary. In numberless cases the divisions into chapters are made without any regard to the natural transition from one topic to another. The chapter leaves off abruptly, without any conceivable reason, just where you expected something more to carry out the argument—or it begins as abruptly in the midst of a subject. The subdivisions of chapters into verses are still more arbitrary. Sentences are so cut up into fragments, as it were, or so run together into verses, which ought to have been kept separate, as to deprive them of half their force. Instead of presenting to the eye a symmetrical articulation of joints and hands, there are often such violent distortions, as almost deter a great many readers from trying to put the parts together. By whom this hap-hazard work was done, it is of no use now to inquire. Nothing of the kind is to be found in the original Scriptures. Nevertheless, it will be the reader's own fault, if he is thereby deterred from reading the Books carefully through, one at a time.

Nor, if he would be well instructed into the "things of the Kingdom," must he stop here. He must "search the Scriptures."—He must study the Word of God, to learn what is "the mind of the Spirit," with regard both to the doctrines and duties of religion. Where anything is hard to be understood, instead of rejecting it, he must endeavour to get the true meaning, by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Other helps may be resorted to, but the Bible is its own interpreter. Who, that has been at first perplexed by obscure passages, has not also been agreeably surprised to find, in turning to other parallel texts, how much light they reflect upon each other? The further this method of studying the Bible is pursued, the fewer difficulties will be left to solve. The great reason why so many persons, who are ever learning, are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, is that they rest upon insulated texts, without taking the trouble to inquire how far they agree with other texts, and with the general scope of the Bible. I repeat, that the Word of God must be studied and compared with itself, or it will never be rightly understood. As the richest pearls are brought up by the deepest diving, so, to bring out some of the most precious truths of the Scriptures, we must go down into the mine. We must search for wisdom as for silver, and dig for it as for hid treasure.

I would not condemn the use of concordances and marginal references as helps, but the best way is to get the Bible so much by heart that we can readily turn to any passage we want to find without their aid.—They may be sparingly used to good advantage, but, the more you depend upon them, the more you will, and the less familiar will your knowledge of the Sacred Oracles be. It were better, in most cases, to search a good while, upon the sacred page itself, for what you want, than to ask Cruden where you can find it. Here, as well as everywhere, the more you rely upon your own memory, the better it will serve you.

About the use of commentaries I have only room left for a word or two. They are not to be rejected, as of no advantage, in studying the Word of God. They are important helps to common readers. But before referring to them for the meaning of a passage, it should be studied patiently, in its connection. To take the opposite course—to ask Henry, or Scott, what the true meaning may be, is very much like studying any Greek or Latin classic with a translation, and constantly referring to it, instead of studying the text itself. As such a student will never make an accurate scholar, no more will he who depends upon an expositor to save him the trouble of finding out the meaning himself, gain a thorough and familiar knowledge of the Scriptures. It is searching the commentator, and not the Bible.

But, after all, read and study the Word of God as we will, we shall never understand it without the teaching of the Holy Spirit shining upon the sacred page; and that we may not expect without habitual prayer for the needed aid. God delights to see us devotedly reading and studying His Word, and we have the most abundant assurances that He will teach us if we ask light from above. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not."—May we all so read and understand, and obey the Scriptures, as to be wise unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

## Religious Intelligence.

### Africa, Asia, America.

The great work of gospel propagation, which is the work of civilization and religion, advances hopefully every day. From the now world-wide operations of religious societies we are constantly receiving intelligence, much of which is most encouraging. We glean from the common field, without regard to denominations.

The recent explorations of the great African traveller, Dr. Livingstone, have turned the attention of the Christian world, both in Europe and America, with renewed interest to Africa. The whole country through which Dr. Livingstone travelled, the more southern part of the continent, is represented as one of vast fertility and resources, teeming with population, and every where open to the introduction of Christianity, civilization and commerce. Dr. Barth had previously penetrated and explored Northern Central Africa, to within ten degrees of the equator. The country appeared a most inviting field for the labors of the missionary. Considerable Christian progress is being made from the direction of Liberia, which every day becomes more and more promising, as the point of approach chosen by Providence to reach and Christianize Africa. Beverly R. Wilson, a colored missionary, stationed at Sinou, communicated most cheering intelligence as to the universal desire of the interior tribes, to have schools and missions established among them. Messengers, he says, are flocking to the Christian settlements, commissioned by kings and head men, imploring that teachers of the Gospel may be sent to them. The Missions of the Methodist Episcopal and Baptist Societies in Liberia, and along the coast, are all enjoying great prosperity.

The recent death of Mrs. Harriet M. Hamlin, well known to many in this country, is a loss severely felt by the Turkish and Northern American Mission, in connection with the latter of which she died. For twelve years she performed a most important work, distinguished by great practical wisdom and fervency of spirit. Her influence was blessed to the souls of many, whom she will again meet in Heaven.

In China the Gospel slowly advances.—No people on earth seem less susceptible to Christian influence than this numerous and peculiar people. Bayard Taylor, the traveller, represents them as the most depraved and hopeless of races. Still the work of missions among them is not without encouragement, Mr. Dooty writes from Amoy