

For the Pearl.

FRAGMENTS OF PIOUS THOUGHT.

III.

THE IMPORTUNATE BEGGAR.

ON a fine day in the summer of 1829 we left the smoke and din of London, to visit one of the beautiful villas which abound in the vicinity of the great metropolis. We were passing along elated with joyous feeling, inhaling the balmy air, and gathering reflections from every object around, when we were accosted by an individual who solicited a small pittance at our hands. Not more noticeable were his clothes from their threadbare aspect, than they were from their remarkably neat and cleanly appearance. The peculiar manner in which his request was urged, and indeed his *tout ensemble* indicated a superior education and circumstances very different from those in which he now appeared before us. The piteous tone of his voice, together with his care-worn countenance, at once moved our sympathies, and we were in the act of extending relief, when covetousness, reminding us of former deceptions and of the many base in postors which prowl in every direction, in a moment closed our purse. We proceeded in our course, and safely landed our little silver piece at the bottom of our pockets, comforting ourselves with the thought that indiscriminate charity was a monstrous evil. But our reverie was of short continuance, for the moan of the stranger again pierced our ears, when, hoping to escape it we quickened our pace. Swiftly we footed the ground and as swiftly did the poor beggar pursue us: finding escape hopeless, we stopped and listened to a tale of woe which caused our very heart-strings to vibrate—and then there were pleadings—O what pleadings! for the sake of his wife and little ones. It was enough—covetousness “unclenched his sinewy hand,” and our small silver coin was fished up, and with a number of others was presented to the importunate beggar.

To us this case was not without moral instruction. We stood reproved for our want of holy fervency and importunity in prayer, and we trust the reproof was made a lasting blessing. Oftentimes when the fire has burned dimly on the altar, and our hosannahs have been uttered faintly and feebly, have we been aroused and our dormant energies enkindled, by the recollection of the warmth and earnestness of the poor beggar suing for a few pence. His *temporal necessities* were not greater than are the *spiritual wants* of the children of men. Let a man be rich as Croesus, wise as Plato, and powerful as Cæsar, yet without the favour of his God, he is poor indeed. He is in fact a moral pauper, lacking every good thing, and without hope in the world. The beggar applied for relief to one who had never promised aid—but man, feeling the pressure of his moral wants may apply to God, whose exceeding great and precious promises, constitute the glory of his written word. The exhaustless treasury of divine grace is exhibited to every applicant of the divine mercy, as an inducement to his asking largely, that his joy may be full. And for what was this poor beggar so earnest in his appeals—for a little of the pelf of earth, while approaching to God we ask for favour that is better than life, peace that passeth all understanding, and joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Is not that man a wonder, who acknowledges his spiritual wretchedness and destitution, and yet coldly and indifferently presents his prayers to Almighty God for help and deliverance? Friend, art thou the man? And does our poor beggar manifest more importunity for the things of earth than thou dost for the glories of heaven? The reader must give the reply while again we subscribe ourselves,

SILVANUS.

SHE IS THINE.

A correspondent in the London Morning Post relates the following:—“It will be remembered that an extraordinary excitement was created some months since, in the fashionable circles, by the secret marriage of a lady, equally celebrated for her wealth, beauty, and accomplishments, to the younger branch of a family, more illustrious for its talent, than remarkable for any other possessions. Upon

the discovery of the marriage by the father of the lady, a variety of circumstances prompted the demand of that kind of satisfaction which an exchange of pistol balls is supposed to communicate. A message was delivered from a friend of the obdurate and indignant parent to a distinguished nobleman, the husband of one of the ladies, whose honour was supposed to be implicated by the transaction. A ‘meeting’ took place, happily without serious consequences. A considerable time elapsed before a reconciliation took place; and that event was, we believe, the result of accident. ‘*She is Thine,*’ has ever since been the reigning favourite in the most *distingue* circles, and is invariably introduced on ‘bridal occasions:’ add but to this, that it is a reigning favourite with the queen of British song, (Mrs. Wood,) and another cause of its universal popularity will be discovered. The father of the bride, happening to hear the exquisite music of ‘*She is Thine,*’ took up the ballad, and casting his eyes over the poetry, became so much affected that his carriage was ordered, and he returned home. That night a letter of forgiveness was forwarded to his daughter.

She is thine—the word is spoken;
Hand to hand, and heart to heart!
Though all other ties are broken,
Time these bonds shall never part.
Thou hast taken her in gladness,
From the altar’s holy shrine;
Oh, remember her in sadness,
She is thine, and only thine!
In so fair a temple never,
Aught of ill can hope to come;
Good will strive, and striving ever,
Make so pure a shrine its home!
Each the other’s love possessing,
Say what care should cloud that brow;
She will be to thee a blessing,
And a shield to her be thou!

From the Church of England Magazine.

THE JEW AND HIS DAUGHTER.

As I was going through the western part of Virginia, (says an American writer,) an old clergyman gave me a short account of a Jew, which greatly delighted me. He had only lately become acquainted with him. He was preaching to his people, when he saw a man enter, having every mark of a Jew in his face. He was well dressed, and his looks seemed to tell that he had been in great sorrow. He took his seat, and listened in a serious and devoted manner, while a tear was often seen to wet his manly cheek. After the service, the clergyman went up to him and said, “Sir, do I not address myself to one of the children of Abraham?” “You do,” he replied. “But how is it that I meet a Jew in a Christian church?” The substance of his account was as follows:—he had been well educated, had come from London, and with his books, his riches, and a lovely daughter of seventeen, had found a charming retreat on the fruitful banks of the Ohio. He had buried his wife before he left Europe, and he knew no pleasure but the company of his beloved child. She was indeed worthy of a parent’s love. Her mind was well informed, her disposition amiable; she could read and speak with ease various languages; and her manners pleased all who saw her. No wonder, then, that a doting father, whose head had now become sprinkled with grey, should place his whole affections on this lovely child. Being a strict Jew, he brought her up in the strictest principles of his religion.

It was not long ago, that his daughter was taken sick. The rose faded from her cheek; her eye lost its fire; her strength decayed; and it was soon too certain that death was creeping upon her frame. The father hung over her bed with a heart ready to burst with anguish. He often tried to talk with her, but could seldom speak except by the language of his tears. He spared no expense or trouble in getting her medical aid: but no human skill could extract the arrow of death now fixed in her heart. The father was walking in a wood near his house, when he was sent for by the dying daughter. With a heavy heart he entered the door of her chamber. He was now to take a last farewell of his child; and his religion gave him but a feeble hope as to meeting her hereafter.

The child grasped the hand of her parent with a death-cold hand. “My father, do you love me?” “My child, you know that I love you; that you are more dear to me than all the world beside.” “But, my father, do you love me?” “Why, my child, will you give me pain? have I never given you any proof of my love?” “But, my dearest father, *do* you love me?” The father could not answer. The child added, “I know, my dear father you have been the kindest of parents, and I tenderly love you: will you grant one request? O, my father, it is the dying request of your daughter; will you grant it?” “My dearest child ask what you will, though it take every farthing of my property; whatever it may be, it shall be granted, I will grant it.” “My dear father, *I beg you never again to speak against Jesus of Nazareth.*” The father was dumb with surprise. “I know (added the dying girl) I know but little about this Jesus, for I was never taught; but I know that he is a Saviour; for he has made himself known to me since I have been sick, even for the salvation of my soul. I believe he will save me, though I have never before loved him. I feel that I am going to him, that I shall ever be with him. And now, my dear father, do not deny me; I beg that you will never again speak against this Jesus of Nazareth. I entreat you to obtain a Testament that tells of him; and I pray that you may know him; and when I am no more, you may bestow on *him* the love that was formerly *mine!*”

The labour of speaking here overcame her feeble body. She stopped, and the father’s heart was too full even for tears. He left the room in great horror of mind: and ere he could recover his spirits, the soul of his dear daughter had taken its flight, as I trust, to that Saviour whom she loved and honoured.

The first thing the parent did, after he had buried his child, was to procure a New Testament. This he read; and, taught by the Spirit from above, is now numbered amongst the meek and happy followers of Christ.

SIN.

Sin is a kind of insanity. So far as it goes, it makes man an irrational creature: it makes him a fool. The consummation of sin is, ever, and in every form, the extreme of folly. And it is that most pitiable folly which is puffed up, with arrogance and self-sufficiency. Sin degrades, it impoverishes, it beggars the soul; and yet the soul in this very condition, blesses itself in its superior endowments and happy fortune. Yes, every sinner is a beggar: as truly as the most needy and desperate mendicant. He begs for a precarious happiness; he begs it of his possessions or his coffers, that cannot give it; he begs it of every passing trifle and pleasure; he begs it of things most empty and uncertain—of every vanity, of every shout of praise in the vacant air; of every wandering eye he begs its homage: he wants these things, he wants them for happiness, he wants them to satisfy the craving soul; and yet he imagines that he is very fortunate; he accounts himself wise, or great, or honourable, or rich, increased in goods, and in need of nothing. The infatuation of the inebriate man, who is elated, and gay, just when he ought to be most depressed and sad, we very well understand. But it is just as true of every man that is intoxicated by any of his passions, by wealth or honour or pleasure, that he is infatuated: that he has abjured reason. What clearer dictate of reason is there than to prefer the greater good, to the lesser good. But every offender, every sensualist, every avaricious man, sacrifices the greater good—the happiness of virtue and piety—for the lesser good, which he finds in his senses or in the perishing world. Nor is this the strongest view of the case. He sacrifices the greater for the less, without any necessity for it. He might have both. A pure mind can derive more enjoyment from this world, and from the senses, than an impure mind. This is true even of the lowest senses. But there are other senses besides these; and the pleasures of the epicure are far from equalling even in intensity, those which piety draws from the glories of vision, and the melodies of sound—*ministers as they are of thoughts and feelings, that swell far beyond the measure of all worldly joys.*—*Dewey’s Discourses.*