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Religious Miscellany.

WAKING.

I have done, at length, with dreaming!
Henceforth, O thou soul of mine!
Thou must take up sword and gauntlet,
Waging warfare most divine.
Life is struggle, combat, victory;
Wherefore have I slumbered on,
With my forces all unmarshalled,
With my weapons all unadorned?
O, how many a glorious record
Had the angels of me kept,
Had I done instead of doubted,
Had I warded instead of wept!

I have wakened to my duty,
To a purpose strong and deep,
That I dreamed not of a lifetime,
In my long, inglorious sleep;
O, those old days of dalliance,
When I waned with my fate,
When I trifled with a knowledge
That had well-nigh come too late!

O, how many a glorious record
Had the angels of me kept,
Had I done instead of doubted,
Had I warded instead of wept!
Yet, my soul, look not behind thee;
Let the brave soul of the present
Overreach the crumbling past,
Build thy great acts high and higher;
Build them on the conquered soil,
Where thy weakness first fell bleeding,
And thy first prayer rose to God!

O, how many a glorious record
Had the angels of me kept,
Had I done instead of doubted,
Had I warded instead of wept!

THE NEW MAN: OR MAN'S SPIRITUAL STATE BY GRACE.

BY REV. GEORGE JOHNSON.

CHAPTER I.

The use and limitation of human reason, and the necessity of a divine revelation in order to Man's New Creation.

It is said, "The proper study of mankind is Man." But to obtain correct knowledge of man is not merely to study his physical nature, or visible and material form. This, indeed, far from being the only proper study of mankind. To acquire a knowledge of the human body, and how to preserve it in health and vigor, is a subject worthy of a rational being; but here his investigation should not end. It should extend to man's mental being and spiritual nature. Now, should this be the limit of his information? Man, who is accountable to God, and must be either rewarded or punished in the future state, should not be satisfied with merely an acquaintance with his material body and spiritual nature; but, especially, he should acquire proper conceptions of his spiritual state, or the religious character of his own soul. This is the department of knowledge, which is of infinite importance to some men, and of the highest importance to all men. The acquisitions of the human mind, this should rank supreme! How requisite then to attain that wisdom which, through divine influence, "profiteth to direct." (Ecc. x. 10)

In treating on Man's Spiritual State, we may naturally inquire, "Whence did man originate?—What was man?—What is man?—What has God done for man?—What should man be?—And what will ultimately be man's future destiny?" These are questions of vast importance, and can only be properly answered by the pencil of divine inspiration. If we had no other guide than mere reason, the light of nature, or tradition, we should be utterly ignorant of any satisfactory and scripturally answering all or any of these questions.

Man, it must be admitted, is a rational being,—a moral agent,—accountable to the Great Author of his existence, and must be rewarded or punished for his conduct,—consequently, his conduct must have respect to some law or rule, which determines the quality of his actions.

That Man is a Moral Agent, we presume will not be denied. By a moral agent we understand one who is capable of performing moral actions. For actions to be moral they must be performed voluntarily, and with respect to some rule or law, or law, which determines whether they be good or evil. He who performs moral actions cannot be compelled to act by any power superior to himself. He is free agent, but a mere machine or creature, impelled by the irresistible power of the mover, and consequently could not be accountable for his conduct, whether good or evil. But a moral agent acts from his own free choice, without any compulsion. Whatever he does is done voluntarily, therefore, it according to that law or rule, which determines the quality of moral actions, his actions justify him; but if not agreeable to that law or rule, he is guilty, because his actions are or are not, in perfect accordance to that law or rule by which he is acquitted or condemned. As man can only do that which is morally good or evil, as a moral agent, the moral agency of man is inseparably connected with vital religion or man's spiritual state.

Man is then a rational being. He is, undoubtedly possessed of reason, by which he is capable of determining the relations between two or more ideas, and by comparison can discover whether they agree or disagree. He can distinguish between what is right and wrong, good or evil, and can comprehend everything which comes within the province of reason.

Reason as a faculty of the human mind, though an excellent gift of God, and of itself, valuable in the investigation of truth, has its limits, beyond which it cannot pass. Were the attempt made to fully solve any of the questions above referred to by the light of reason only, without any assistance from revelation, though cultivated to its utmost extent, and used by the most capacious minds, vered in all the arts of logic and philosophy, would God! it perfectly impotent for the accomplishment of a work of such magnitude. It would be confounded at every step. It would manifest its incompetency to grasp subjects so stupendous, and which surpass the powers of

human reason originally to discover. Reason may to a certain extent, comprehend what God has been pleased to reveal, though altogether incapable of discovering it without revelation. Man is, undoubtedly, endowed with reason, or rational understanding, which places him far above animal creation. He is an intellectual being, capable of intelligence, and of using his rational faculties. These faculties are bestowed upon him for noble purposes; and if properly regulated, by a well balanced mind, acquainted with the use and limitation of reason, and willing to use it as the gift of God, and the handmaid of religion, they will ever be of great importance in the things of God. We are then to use reason as an assistant to revelation and not as superior to, or in the place of it. By reason we can investigate revelation, and are enabled to demonstrate its truth, importance, inspiration, authority and design. It however, could not originally discover the essential doctrines of the Bible, or be of itself a sufficient rule of either our faith or practice.

Could reason alone convey to us any correct information of man's origin and pristine state? Would it have raised the veil, and permitted us to look beyond our present condition, to that state of primitive perfection in which our first parents were originally created. Had not revelation come to its assistance, we must have continued without any certain knowledge of man's primal innocence, holiness or happiness, except what might be transmitted by tradition. Nor could we, by the mere efforts of reason, attain any information respecting the covenant of works under which man was originally placed,—or the test of his obedience,—the seductive influence which was used, by an apostate spirit, to draw him from his allegiance to his rightful Sovereign; or of his fall, the curse of God pronounced upon the guilty, and man's expulsion from Eden. Without either revelation or tradition he would, notwithstanding his reason, have been wholly ignorant of these particulars.

Unassisted reason would place us in no better position, with respect to the design of God, relative to man's present state of existence; the duties which he owes to his Maker, to himself or his fellow men; the obligations he is under to love, obey and worship God; or what will be his future state, either with respect to his body or his soul, rewards or punishments! Reason, we are aware, signifies that power, faculty or capability of the human mind, by which it can perceive the existence, relations and connexions of things, compare their natures and properties, and deduce correct conclusions from true and clear premises. That man is in the possession of this faculty will be readily admitted. Yet he cannot comprehend things, which do not come within the province of reason, however highly cultivated or however powerful the grasp of his intellect.

Reason is man's grandest distinction and superiority over the irrational creature. By reason he is supposed to be, and actually is, distinguished from animals, and evidently surpasses them. Man is governed by reason, the lower animals by instinct. In all men there is a superior principle by which he rises far above the whole of animal creation. This superior principle is reason, which the Divine Being stamped upon man's immortal nature, when originally created. By its guidance and direction, under the light of revelation, God has placed the whole of human action.

Reason cannot be instinct, or instinct reason, because they are diverse from each other. Reason, in all its operations, is either instinctive to those impulses by which instinctive propensities are governed, or else by the exertion of its power, suppresses these emotions. In either instance reason is fully distinguished from instinct; not only as one faculty differs from another, but as actually possessing a power by which it can withstand impulse.

The superiority of human reason over instinctive impulses, and its refusal to be guided by them, demonstrate that it is accountable with judgment. On the perceptions, relations, comparisons, and deductions, which reason, deliberately and freely makes, are the decisions of judgment founded. Reason also traces the ideas which are presented to the mind, through all their labyrinthine, previously to their adoption. It retrospects the past, investigates the present, calculates the future, and sheds its light upon everything which comes within the sphere of its operation. These are all branches which belong to the province of reason. Human reason, or man, by that important faculty, has then an elective power, through the exercise of which, the influence of motives comes to be irresistible. He is able to prefer one to another, when even their claims are, to all appearance, equal. By its use he is enabled to see the consequences of the investigation of truth; yes, actually discern and vilify it as a hindrance. Others, however, run into a perfectly opposite extreme. They being strongly impressed with the absurdity of depreciating reason, are too apt to overvalue it. One party decries it as utterly worthless; the other exalts it, not only as the highest gift of God, but as little less than divine. The rationalist may consider reason as next to infallible, and as being an all-sufficient director of revelation, and that all revelation must come within the province of reason; but wild fanatics may despise it as useless; and denigrate it, and its deductions, as carnal reason and carnal reasoning. By its native light the former respect to be guided into all truth, and led into all virtue; while the latter disregard it as altogether worthless, and as only having a tendency to infidelity or irreligion. One party degrades it into a demon; the other converts it into a goddess. But these fearful extremes should be carefully avoided.

The eye of reason, it must be admitted, like the human eye, is formed by its Maker, capable of perceiving and distinguishing the objects suited to its nature. When they are placed before it in a proper light. Until these objects,

however, are proposed to it, reason can no longer perceive and distinguish them, than the human eye can see what is not presented to it. Reason then has its powers, its uses and its limits. Reason is of vast importance in the investigation of religion. Attempts have frequently been made in order to prove that reason is inimical to revelation, and consequently can be of no use in religion, but never was anything more fallacious. It is undoubtedly of considerable use in acquiring a knowledge of, examining, arranging, distinguishing, comparing, judging, proving and defending the truths of revealed religion, although it cannot be received as a perfect standard by which all the mysteries of religion must be measured prior to their reception as articles of faith and practice.

Human reason, we are free to admit, is a noble faculty, imparted to us by God, through which we may deduce certain conclusions, from truths presented for our consideration, and which come within the province of reason. Reason, however, highly was made by God, and exalted, has its limits, and we must allow, that many important truths contained in the Bible, are placed beyond its capability to either discover or properly comprehend. Those then who contend that all necessary truth is discoverable, and capable of being demonstrated by mere reason, independent of revelation, egregiously err, and those who place such stress upon reason, in matters of religion, as to conclude every thing impossible and absurd, which they cannot properly comprehend by reason, esteem it too highly. A law may be reasonable in itself, although men do not allow it, or do not know the reason of the law-giver. By reason we may distinguish good from evil, and truth from falsehood, or comprehend those particulars which come within the province of reason; yet many of the truths of revelation may be, and doubtless are, above reason, or beyond the powers of the human mind, or which could not have been known without revelation.

Allow human reason all the perfection of which it is susceptible, it must be admitted, that it may be corrupted by passions, prejudices or interests, therefore it cannot be a sure guide in matters of faith and practice. As man may be influenced by passions and interest, no matter what his reason may discover, he cannot be a certain and infallible guide in religion. To admit its dictates, as the only standard of right and wrong, would be to follow that which is incapable of either correctness or certainty. Its weakness being such, it could not discover all those truths essentially necessary to be known, believed and obeyed. Could it even discover them, such are its temptations to corruption, that we have no warrant but that it may have vitiated them. If we consequently suppose that it may have discovered some truths and transmitted the same to posterity, still, as we have no authority to assure us that this is the case, we should by merely trusting to it, be involved in inevitable doubt and uncertainty.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FREE FROM SIN.

BY DAVID HILBORN.

Free from sin! oh, cheering thought,
That once will come the day
When sin, with all her pains and pains,
Shall cease to hold her sway;
When no more must strongly curb
The heart's impure desire,
But every thought shall be pure
As gold tried by the fire;
When no more must overcome
Our passions all too strong,
And sinful pleasures cannot tempt
Us to the path of wrong.

Oh! here on every side are we
By Satan's wiles beset;
And that we love what we should hate
Must be our main regret.
But in that land of purity
What joy to us 'twill be,
To worship him with perfect praise
Who made the sinner free.

Oh! here no sinful, wayward thoughts
Shall our great bliss alloy;
But then our hearts shall harmonize
With heaven's love and joy.

DIRECTIONS TO PENITENTS AND BELIEVERS FOR COVENANTING WITH GOD.

The Passages given here may be conveniently read in the public service in the beginning of the year.

I. Get these three principles fixed in your heart: That things eternal are much more considerable than things temporal; that things not seen are as certain as the things that are seen; that upon your present choice depends your eternal lot. Choose Christ and His ways, and you are blessed forever: refuse, and you are undone for ever.

II. Make your choice. Embrace with Christ. There are two things which must necessarily be supposed, in order to a sinner's coming to Christ:—
1. A deep sense of his sin and misery.
2. An utter despair of himself, and all things besides Christ.

As Christ will never be accepted, so can the sinner never be received of Him, till he be free from all other gods, and trust in Him alone. Christ will have no sharer with Him in the work of saving souls. "If ye seek Me, let these go their way," as He said in another case: let not only your sins go, but all dependence upon your righteousness, all the refuge of lies wherein you have trusted; let all go, if you will have Me to be a refuge to you. I cannot not to call the righteous; if I should, they would not come; or if they come, let them go as they come; let them go to their righteousness in which they trust; and let naked, destitute sinners, distressed sinners, come to Me; who am come to this end, to seek and to save them that are lost.

Sinners, will you come now? Will you venture here? For this your adventuring on Christ, you have this three-fold warrant:—

1. God's ordination. "This is He whom God the Father hath appointed, and sent into the world, to bring back His exiles to Himself, to save sinners. This is He whom God the Father hath sealed; hath marked Him out for the chosen People in whom is salvation; hath sealed Him His commission, for the redeeming and reconciling the world to Himself." "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." (Isaiah xlii. 1.)

2. God's command. "This is His command, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John iii. 23.)

3. The promise of God. "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; so that he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." (1 Peter ii. 6.)

Now, having this three-fold warrant,—the warrant of God's ordination, command, and promise,—you may be bold to adventure on Christ, and to apply yourselves to Him thus:—"Lord Jesus, had I am, a poor captive sinner, who have sinned against Thee, and have a great love to Thee, and have a great desire to be reconciled to Thee, and have a great desire to be saved by Thee, and have a great desire to be united to Thee, and have a great desire to be glorified with Thee, and have a great desire to be made like unto Thee, and have a great desire to be made partaker of Thy glory and honor, and have a great desire to be made partaker of Thy kingdom and inheritance, and have a great desire to be made partaker of Thy life and joy, and have a great desire to be made partaker of Thy peace and comfort, and have a great desire to be made partaker of Thy love and fellowship, and have a great desire to be made partaker of Thy grace and mercy, and have a great desire to be made partaker of Thy glory and 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