

POETRY.

SONNETS—BY WORDSWORTH.

Baptism.

Blest be the Church, that, watching o'er the needs
Of Infancy, provides a timely shower,
Whose virtue changes to a Christian flower
The sinful product of a bed of weeds!
Fittest beneath the sacred roof proceeds
The ministration; while parental Love
Looks on, and Grace descendeth from above
As the high service pledges now, now pleads.
There, should vain thoughts outspread their wings and fly
To meet the coming hours of festal mirth,
The tombs which bear and answer that brief cry,
The infant's notice of his second birth,
Recal the wandering soul to sympathy,
Fills what man hopes from Heaven, yet fears from Earth.

Catechising.

From little down to least—in due degree,
Around the pastor, each in new-wrought vest,
Each with a vernal posy at his breast,
We stood, a trembling, earnest company!
With low soft murmur, like a distant bee,
Some spake, by thought-perplexing fears betrayed;
And some a bold unerring answer made;
How fluttered then thy anxious heart for me,
Beloved Mother! Thou whose happy hand
Had bound the flowers I wore, with faithful tie;
Sweet flowers! at whose inaudible command
Her countenance, phantom-like, doth reappear:
O lost too early for the frequent tear,
And ill requited by this heartfelt sigh!

Confirmation.

The young ones gathered in from hill and dale,
With holiday delight on every brow:
'Tis passed away; far other thoughts prevail;
For they are taking the baptismal vow
Upon their conscious selves; their own lips speak
The solemn promise, Strongest sinews fail,
And many a blooming, many a lovely cheek
Under the holy fear of God turns pale,
While on each head his lawn-robed servant lays
An apostolic hand, and with prayer seals
The covenant. The Omnipotent will raise
Their feeble souls; and bear with his regrets,
Who, looking round the fair assemblage, feels
That, ere the sun goes down their childhood sets.

From "Memory's Tribute."

THE BAPTISM

Chap. II.

"How our hearts burnt within us at the scene!
Whence this brave bound o'er limits fixed to man?
His God sustains him in his final hour!
His final hour brings glory to his God!"—Young.

THE distance we had to walk was less than a quarter of a mile. The conversation on the way was of a desultory nature, and related chiefly to the character of the individual we were going to visit.

"Mr. Northend's death," said Mr. H., "will be to me a sore calamity. We have lived here, side by side with our farms adjoining, for more than twenty years. As neighbours we have never had any difficulty, a perfectly good understanding has always subsisted between us. Besides the feelings which bind old settlers together, there is another tie, which has ever linked us in the closet union—we are both Episcopalians. We live in a community, who have little or no knowledge of that sublime liturgy, apostolic ministry, and correct system of faith, which is the glory of that Evangelical Church, which we call ours. These circumstances have created a kindred feeling, and cemented more closely the bonds of friendship between us.

"There is still another reason, why I am attached to this man, and it would have attached me to him, had none of the circumstances, to which I have alluded, existed. He is truly a most sincere and devoted Christian. He is one of the excellent of the earth. I have often thought, that if ever there was a perfect exemplification of the precepts of the Gospel, in the life and conversation of any individual, it was in this man. Once it was far otherwise. An ordinance of the Gospel was blessed to him in a wonderful manner; and I dare predict, that the great anxiety which he feels to see you this evening, is, to witness the initiation of his grandchildren into the fold of Christ by

baptism, before he dies. There is in his mind, connected with this holy rite, the remembrance of events which constituted a new era in his life."

I was both delighted and surprised with the intelligent and feeling manner in which Mr. H. conversed upon religious subjects. As he finished the last remark, we had reached the dwelling of Mr. Northend. It was a neat and substantial farm house, every thing about it wore the aspect of comfort.

Mr. Heyden took me immediately to the sick room. The group assembled there was of a truly interesting character—they consisted of the children and grandchildren of the sick man, together with a few neighbours who had called to tender their services to the family.

The grave and solemn aspect that sat upon each countenance, would have told the most superficial observer, at the first glance, that in the apprehension of that company, the angel of death had spread his awful wings over the dwelling in which they were assembled.

As we entered the room all were seated except a female, the only surviving daughter of Mr. Northend, who stood with tearful and anxious eye, bending over the couch of her father.

The venerable old man lay stretched upon the bed, with locks as white as the snow-white pillow upon which his head rested. A holy calm was spread over his countenance. It was plainly evident, however, that he was suffering much bodily pain. His respiration was short and difficult—his pulse feeble and irregular—and, his already sunken eye and ghastly visage indicated, that the days of Henry Northend were numbered, and the sands of life almost run out.

As soon as my name was announced, I immediately approached the bed, and took his bony hand, which was already moist with the clammy sweat of death. "My desire," he at length said, with some difficulty, "my desire is to receive once more before I die, if it be the Lord's will, 'the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.'"

The elements having been already prepared, I immediately commenced the communion service; a service at any time, and under any circumstances, solemn and impressive: but doubly so in the chamber of the dying, and under circumstances like the present.

There were several, besides the sick man, who partook of the holy supper, and among the number his three children, a daughter and two sons. The view of his children stretching out their hands to receive the memorials of a Saviour's dying love, seemed to revive the strength, and spread new animation over the death-stricken features of Mr. Northend. At the conclusion of the service he appeared totally changed. Those symptoms of speedy dissolution, with which he was oppressed when I first entered the room, had entirely disappeared. His voice was now strong, and its tones clear and distinct.

The short silence that succeeded the administration of the Lord's Supper, was first interrupted by Mr. Northend, addressing himself to me, in the following manner: "If you will now administer the sacrament of baptism to my grand-children, I will withdraw my thoughts from earth, and rest them in the bosom of my God."

The baptismal service of the Church has ever appeared deeply affecting and truly solemn to me. But the other sacrament which had just preceded it, and the situation of Mr. Northend, standing, as it were, on that invisible line which separates time from eternity, imparted to the service on this occasion a peculiar pathos, and an almost divine power.

When the administration of the holy rite of baptism was concluded, the old man raising himself up in the bed, requested that the youngest child, bearing his own name, *Henry Northend*, should be placed upon his lap. When this was done, laying his hands upon the smiling infant, he said aloud, "The God of my fathers, the great and merciful God bless you my child, and all of you my children. With great desire have I desired to see this hour; it has often been the subject of my prayer since lying upon this bed of sickness, and my prayer has been answered. Surely," continued he, addressing himself to me "God has sent you here to baptize these little ones, and to administer to my children the pledges of a Saviour's dying love. Yea, and furthermore, to bury me. My two sons, who have now duly received the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of our Saviour

Jesus Christ,' have been long desirous, and I trust, in a state of preparation, to be partakers of those 'holy mysteries.' And, eternal God! thou art witness, how long and anxiously I have desired to see these little ones washed in 'the laver of regeneration.' Do not imagine," continued he, "that I attach any undue importance to the sacrament of baptism. I would give it in my esteem no higher importance than Christ has given it. I know very well, from what I have observed in others and seen in myself, that baptized persons may be as truly alienated in heart from God, and exposed to his wrath, as those who are in an uncovenanted state. I was baptized in infancy, but I spent one half of my life 'without hope and without God in the world.' Though God was exceedingly merciful to me, and gave me health and domestic happiness, and the means of comfortable subsistence; and I lived here on the banks of this lake, daily witnessing the displays of almighty power, and walked amid this scene of beauty and grandeur, spread around us, from which there now seems to ascend, continually, as from one broad altar, the incense of adoration and the song of praise, I lived and walked here 'the enemy of God.' Baptism does not necessarily make us holy. It is the outward act divinely instituted to bring us into covenant with God, to make us 'members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of Heaven.' And if on our part, agreeably to 'the solemn vow, promise and profession made at our baptism, we do actually renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy word and obediently keep his commandments,' I believe that Christ for his part will most surely keep and perform the promise made in his Gospel, 'to release us from sin, to sanctify us with the Holy Ghost, and to give us the kingdom of Heaven and everlasting life.'

"I do love to think and to dwell upon this subject. The baptism of my children was the commencement of a new era in my history. O the baptism! How my thoughts rush back to that hour! O my God, hadst thou not blest that ordinance to my soul—hadst thou not, through it awakened me to a knowledge of my character as a sinner, and led me by the guiding of thy spirit to flee unto Christ for refuge—where had been my hopes in this hour? I plainly perceive that the world and all its possessions are receding from my view, and that eternity is very near me. Transcendantly glorious and exalted does my Saviour appear at this moment; but when I turn my eye to that dark period of my life, when I was the servant of sin, and was living without any experimental knowledge of Christ, or him crucified, I shudder at the thought. O the baptism, the baptism, it saved my soul!"

These last words were uttered in a tone, and with an energy that seemed almost superhuman. The strength by which he had been enabled to speak so long, was the result of excitement. Exhausted by the effort he had made, he sunk back upon his pillow, and died as quietly as the infant child drops to sleep. A slight quivering ran over his features, and shook his frame. Restoratives were instantly used, but to no purpose. He had forever ceased to breathe.

To be Continued.

A PASTOR'S COUNSEL.

The Rev. J. W. Fletcher, of Madeley, having married a parishioner and being about to register his name in the record, said, "Well, William, you have had your name entered in our register once before this." "Yes, sir, at my baptism." "And now your name will be entered a second time. You have, no doubt, thought much about your present step, and made proper preparation for it in many different ways." "Yes, sir." "Recollect that a third entry of your name—the register of your burial, will, sooner or later, take place. Think, then, about death and make preparations for that also, lest it overtake you as a thief in the night." This person also is now walking in the ways of the Lord, and states, that he often adverts to this and other things which his serious and affectionate pastor found frequent occasion to say to him.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED ONCE A FORTNIGHT, BY

E. A. MOODY, LUNENBURG, N. S.

Where Subscriptions, &c. will be thankfully received.
Terms—10s. per annum—when sent to the country
by post, 11s. 3d.—Half to be paid in advance.
No subscriptions received for less than six months.
General Agent—C. H. Belcher, Esq. Halifax.
Communications to be addressed (POST PAID) to the
Editors of the Colonial Churchman, Lunenburg, N. S.