

Christian Mirror.

NEW SERIES.

WEEKLY.]

"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL xii. 4.

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POETRY.

(ORIGINAL.)

THE MYSTERY.

BY THE REV. JOHN HEWARD HINTON, LATE OF
READING, IN BERKSHIRE, ENGLAND.

MY SAVIOUR! when my eyes survey
The field of labour marked for me,
The miseries which my heart should sway,
And the vast debt I owe to thee;
'Tis strange my soul should feel no more
These themes of overwhelming power!

Is it for this I bear thy name?
Is this the love I owe my Lord?
Can I thus put my vows to shame?
And still resist thy heavenly word?
O, break! MY HEART—thy guilt confess,
With tears, and grief, and "bi terness!"

CHOICE EXTRACTS.

FAITH AND WORKS.

From Luther's Preface to the Romans.

ANY thing from this wonderful reformer must be interesting; but here is a specimen of his writings, which is doubly valuable. It shows the nature of the warfare, which he had been roused to wage against Romanism, which offered salvation to those who would enter the church, and conform to its ceremonies.

"In the fourth chapter, having in the preceding three chapters unfolded the nature of sin, and laid open the road to righteousness through faith, Paul proceeds to meet certain arguments and objections. In the first place, he takes that which all who hear about faith generally make; how can a man be justified without works? Are we then, they say, to do no good works? Upon which he takes Abraham as an example, and asks, What did Abraham with his works? Were all his works in vain? were they all unprofitable? Hence he concludes, that Abraham, without any works, was justified solely through faith; that even before the test of circumcision, he is praised in Scripture, and righteousness imputed to him, solely on account of his faith. Genesis 15: 6. But if the rite of circumcision which God commanded, and was therefore a good work of obedience, did nothing for his righteousness, then certainly can no other work contribute to justification. But, as the circumcision of Abraham was an outward sign, by which he testified his righteousness, through faith, so are all good works but outward signs, proceeding from faith, but which testify, like good fruits, that the man is, inwardly, already righteous before God.

Paul thus confirms, by the powerful example of Scripture authority, his former doctrine, (chapter 3.) of faith, and cites, besides, as a witness, David, in the thirty-second Psalm, where he says, verse 1, that a man may be justified without works, although he does not remain without works, if he is justified. He then applies this argument to all the other works of the law, and maintains that the Jews merely on account of their descent through blood, cannot be heirs of Abraham, much less on account of the works of the law—but that if they wish to be the heirs of Abraham, since Abraham was justified through faith, and called the father of the faithful, before the law, before Moses, and before the circumcision. The law besides operates to anger more than to grace; since no one conforms to it with desire

and affection; and displeasure therefore, more than favour, comes through the works of the law. Faith can alone obtain the favour, promised to Abraham, and these examples are written for our sakes, that we also might believe.

In the fifth chapter, he comes to the fruits and to the works of faith: peace, joy, love towards God and towards men, security, confidence, cheerfulness, courage and hope, in trouble and under sufferings. For all these follow where the faith is sounded on account of the exceeding mercy which God shows us in Christ, whom he ordained to die for us, before we could even pray for that mercy and whilst we were still enemies to him. The conclusion is, therefore, that faith justifies, independent of works, and yet it does not follow that we are to do no good works—holy works are not to remain behind, but those who rely on works know nothing of them: they frame for themselves works of their own, in which there is neither peace, joy, safety, love, hope, consolation, or any kind of real Christian work and faith."

THE BIBLE INTERPRETER IS ITS AUTHOR.

It is plain we cannot attain to the understanding of Scripture, either by study or by strength of intellect. Therefore your first duty must be to begin with prayer. Entreat the Lord to deign to grant you, in his rich mercy, rightly to understand his word. There is no other interpreter of the word of God but the author of that word himself; even as he has said, "They shall all be taught of God."—Hope nothing from your study, or the strength of your intellect; but simply put your trust in God, and in the guidance of his Spirit. Believe one who has made trial of this method.—Martin Luther's letter to Spalatin.

THE PASTOR.

WHAT could the subtlest brawler oppose to the influence of him who visits the poor man's lowly hearth as a familiar friend; who tells him how to make peace between him and his neighbor; who watches over the education of his children; who reclines the one from his wanderings, and stands by the sick bed of the other, and instructs its anxious but ignorant mother how to alleviate its pains; and when it dies, binds up her broken heart, and ceases not to direct her thoughts to its spirit in heaven; and the man who is witness and partaker of the deepest joys and sorrows of this life, and whose vocation is to hallow them all?

It has been beautifully said, that the veil that covers the face of futurity, is woven by the hand of Mercy; yet how often do we desire to tear aside that veil, and gaze upon that countenance, even though we know not whether it shall be in gladness or grief.

LEARNING CHRIST.

"Let us learn," said one of the fathers, "let us learn those lessons on earth, the knowledge of which may remain with us in heaven;" and we are reminded by far higher authority than this, "that tongues shall cease, and knowledge shall vanish away; but charity, under which name, in the language of scripture, all Christian practice is sometimes comprehended, 'charity never faileth;' neither the habit nor the reward of it shall fail among the spirits of just men made perfect. And these, be it in particularly observed, are acquisitions not like the others to which we have adverted, limited to a few gifted or favoured ones, but attainable by all, however circumstanced, who are walking in the open field of Christian duty.—Rev. J. Lonsdale.

Precious beyond rubies are the hours of youth and health! let none of them pass unprofitably

GENERAL LITERATURE.

A RABBINICAL STORY OF SOLOMON.

BY THE REV. ROBERT JAMIESON.

It is well known to every reader of the Bible that Solomon received, in his early years, a promise from God of the gift of wisdom, and melancholy as was his abuse of that divine talent in after life, so far as regards the high purposes of his moral nature, there was no period in his long and busy reign wanting in proofs that he was pre-eminently wiser than his contemporaries. The admirable economy of his government; the comprehensive plans he formed for engaging the industry of his subjects at home, and for introducing rivers of wealth into his kingdom through the channels of foreign commerce; the order that reigned in the vast establishments of the palace and the temple; his exquisite skill in the fine arts; the literary works he composed, displaying a perfect familiarity with the whole range of the natural science of his age, and the penetrating insight he possessed into the principle of human nature; all these are sufficient to attest the justness of his claims to the attribute of wisdom. The Spirit of God, indeed, has been fit to preserve comparatively few memorials of the fruits of his gigantic mind; for of the numerous works, in which he embodied the results of his scientific researches, and his observations on men and manners, the greater part have long since fallen a prey to the ravages of time; and as to the measures of policy he pursued, the course of the sacred history turns so exclusively on his splendid and extensive preparations for the national worship of God at Jerusalem, that but few anecdotes are recorded of those singular qualities, which, in the exercise of his judicial and legislative functions, and the intercourse of his public and private life, must have so often surprised and delighted the people of his day. But the want of such memoirs of his every day habits and conversation will be no subject of regret to those who believe that divine wisdom has recorded everything respecting him which is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction, and correction in righteousness; and as to any other notices respecting either his princely establishments, or his private and familiar conduct among his courtiers, it is of no great consequence to inquire rigidly into their authenticity or the measure of credit they are entitled to receive, as they can never be anything more than matters of curiosity to the student of Scripture. In this light we must regard the Talmud, in which, among the wild and foolish fictions with which that collection abounds, many stories are told of Solomon, whom the blind admiration of his countrymen has made to play as romantic a part as their Arabian and Persian neighbors have assigned, in their well-known tales, to the most renowned of the caliphs. Of a prince so greatly loved and admired as Solomon was by his contemporaries, both at home and abroad, it is natural to suppose that many anecdotes, illustrative of the brilliancy and acuteness of his mind, would be circulated