

he most noble and virtuous action that ever was accomplished, had no greater beginning. Of such a quick growth and spreading nature is sin, that it rivals even the kingdom of heaven, which our Lord telleth us "is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown up (in those countries), it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." (Matth. xiii. 31). The Apostle James (i. 13-15) represents it by a simile of another nature. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." It is conceived, bred, lives, and grows in a man, till at last it holds him in perpetual subjection, and "reigns in his mortal body" (Rom. vi. 12). And, therefore, it is absolutely necessary that we govern and manage our thoughts, without which it will be impossible that we should avoid falling into divers sins; and, as we may be tempted to commit even the greatest sins, we must carefully watch against the beginnings, if we hope to avoid the last degrees of evil.—*Church of Scotland Record.*

**THE CANDLE.**—A burning candle is blown out by the breath, and by the same breath a smoking one is blown in; and, even so, it is equally easy for the Most High to take away our prosperity when it makes us proud, and to restore it to us when we are humbled. He does the one with the breath of His displeasure, the other with that of His grace.

**"PRAYER.**—Then only can we pray with hope when we have done our best. Prayer without means is a mockery of God. No Christian may think it enough to pray alone. He is no true Israelite who will not be ready to lift up the weary hands of God's saints. No evil can surprise us if we watch, no evil can hurt us if we pray."

**"IDLENESS.**—Paradise served not only to feed Adam's senses, but to exercise his hands. He must labour because he was happy; we must labour that we may be so. How much more cheerfully we go about our business, so much nearer we come to our paradise."

**"A HAPPY DEATH.**—To live holily is the way to die safely, happily. There is no good steward but is glad of his audit; his straight accounts desire nothing more than a discharge."

**"CONFIDENCE IN GOD.**—Cheer up, then, my soul; and upon the fixed apprehension of the glory to be revealed, while thy weak partner, my body, droops and languishes under the sad load of years and infirmities, sing thou to thy God even in the midnight of thy sorrows, and in the deepest darkness of death itself, songs of confidence, songs of spiritual joy, songs of praise and thanksgiving, saying with all the glorified ones, 'Blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!'"—*Bishop Hall.*

## THE CREATION.

'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.'—GEN. ii. 1.

Young heart, impatient of thy powers,  
Why wilt thou fret to know  
That knowledge comes with weary hours,  
And heavy step, and slow?  
That each thing great in its degree  
In toil and care begins,  
And no perfection here may be  
But that which labour wins?  
Perchance 'twas writ to do thee shame,  
That He, whom angels praise,  
Paused o'er His fair creation's frame,  
And lingered six long days.  
His word at once had hung them there,  
Planet, and star, and sun;—  
Perchance, to teach thee patient care,  
He made them one by one.  
Think how the great world silent lay,  
A void and formless place,  
God's Spirit brooding far away  
Over the water's face,—  
Till, bursting on that darkness wide,  
The glorious light had birth,  
And, in her beauty and her pride,  
He made the fair young earth.  
Three days she hung all cold and still,  
Wrapp'd in that sunless light,  
No golden lustre on the hill,  
No silver moon at night.  
God made the sun, and in his ray  
Sprang flowers by stream and meadow;  
On all her heights the sunlight lay,  
And on her sward the shadow.  
The graceful moonbeams touched her sod  
With slanting silver bars;  
'Shouted for joy the sons of God,  
And sang the morning stars.'  
Slowly He wrought, and duly set  
All things above, below;—  
Wilt thou, His creature, chide and fret  
If thine advance be slow?  
Patience, and zeal, and toil He asks;  
Then, let thine heart be strong,  
Nor weary of thy lowly tasks,  
Because the time is long.

CICIL FRANCIS ALEXANDER.

We have commenced in this number a new series written by an old correspondent, who was long and favourably known to our readers, on the prominent characters in the New Testament. The first of the series on "the Parents of our Lord" will be read with interest.

Our correspondent "K" was too late in sending his letter, if he wished it to be inserted in this issue; but he will see that a "Lay Reader" has gone over the same ground.

A report from the Presbytery of Guelph, containing much that is interesting was received too late for insertion in this number.