

THE WESLEYAN.

"HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS."

Scripture.

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POETRY.

ADDRESS TO THE DEITY.

SELECTED BY MISS A.

Thy hand unseen, sustains the poles,
On which this vast creation rolls,
The starry arch proclaims thy power,
Thy pencil glows in every flower;
The meanest pin, in Nature's frame,
Marks out some letter in thy name,
Where sense can reach, or fancy rove,
From hill to field, from field to grove,
Across the wave, around the sky,
There's not a spot, nor deep nor high,
Where the Creator has not trod,
And left the footsteps of a God.

BIOGRAPHY.

MEMOIR OF THE REV. WILLIAM BLACK.

Of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

BY THE REV. RICHARD KNIGHT.

Extracted from the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, for July, 1837.

BIOGRAPHY is both pleasing and instructive when it is the record of a life truly devoted to God, and to the promotion of the best interests of mankind. It is still more especially so, when the religious life which it records has been sustained amidst circumstances which tend to exhibit the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in its fitness to support the mind, and to give direction not merely in the ordinary events of life, but in those which are more trying and critical. Such, it is presumed, is the case in reference to the subjects of these memoirs.

Mr. Black was born at Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, in the year 1760. At a very early age his mind was seriously impressed, though these impressions were but evanescent, and soon yielded (to use his own words) "to enmity against the blessed author of his being, particularly against his sovereignty, holiness, and justice." The tide of emigration had now began to be directed towards Nova-Scotia and the Canadas. Mr. Black, senior, left England in the year 1774, and soon after his arrival in Nova-Scotia purchased an estate at Amherst; and having stayed a few months, returned to England in the autumn for the purpose of taking over his family. During his absence his excellent wife, who was herself, happily for her son, a partaker of divine grace, had paid particular attention to the religious instruction of William, often taking him into her closet to talk to him and pray with him. Nor were her godly admonitions in vain. Many times, both before and after the family had left England, they deeply affected him; and there were seasons when, with many cries and tears, he sought the Lord for mercy, which, he says, he surely should have found, had he not believed the subtle fiend, who whispered,

"It is too soon for you to be religious; it will destroy your happiness, cut off all your pleasures, and expose you to the ridicule of all who know you." This season of promise, however, passed away; and William was not only more undecided than ever, but showed some unhappy symptoms of a state of mind even worse than carelessness. This was inexpressibly grievous to his anxious mother, to whom it was not given on earth to see the effects of her pious labours; for, in about twelve months after their arrival in the province, it pleased God to remove her from the world. Before this a family altar had been set up, and from thence she offered prayer to God for herself and her household; but after her decease, this important and necessary duty fell into disuse; with this ornament of her Christian profession were lost, for a time, both the form and the power of religion. The only voice which had been lifted up in praise and prayer to God in this emigrant family, was now silent in death. Her pious example could no longer be seen; the counsels, reproofs, and prayers which conjugal, maternal, and Christian affection dictated and enforced, could no more be heard; and that peace and harmony which pervaded the family while this excellent woman lived, deserted it at her death, and were followed by their painful opposites. Susceptible to maternal counsels William's heart had been in his parent-land, it does not appear that his mother's death produced upon his mind any permanent salutary effect. He became soon as careless and worldly as before. His utter regardlessness of religion will be seen in the following account given by himself.

The war between England and America had now broken out; and "in the fall of 1776," says Mr. Black, "some people came among us, and raised all the disaffected to, and disarmed all the friends of Government in the county of Cumberland. They forbade us to stir off our farms, burned the town, and threatened many with imprisonment and death: there being but a handful of men in garrison, and these not knowing the weakness of the hostile party, they durst not come out to relieve the country, until strengthened by the arrival of a frigate from Halifax. In the night they would frequently fire upon the garrison, and the garrison upon them. Now was a time that called for repentance and a preparation for death; but my ears were shut against all these warnings of Providence. It was our usual custom at this time to sit up whole nights at cards and dancing. When we heard the cannons roar, and the discharge of the musketry, we would run to watch the flash of the fire from the guns, and as soon as that was over, return again to waste our time in sin and vanity. We could easily see the garrison from my father's house. Death and danger