

THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF RELIGION AND GENERAL LITERATURE.

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

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No. i.

POETRY.

HYMN.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GELLERT.

Got, deine Güte seht in so weit,
So weit die Wolken gehen, &c.

BY JOHN DUNMORE LANG, D.D.

O God, thy goodness doth extend
Far as the lofty sky;
Thy loving-kindness knows no end,
And thou art ever nigh.
My Rock, my Fortress, and my Tower!
Great is thy mercy as thy power:
Then hear me, O Most High!

I ask not for the heaps of gold
The worldling may enjoy:
A little may I humbly hold,
And usefully employ.
But grant me wisdom, Lord, to know
Thee and the gifts thou dost bestow
On sinners such as I.

I ask not honour nor renown,
All glorious though they seem:
A spotless character's fair crown
Of higher price I deem.
To gain Thy praise, O do thy will—
Be these my chief ambition still,
And a true friend's esteem.

Nor do I ask for length of days,—
If wealth my lot should be,
O make me humble, God of Grace!
Patient, if poverty.
And as my times are in thy power,
O grant, in death's decisive hour,
Thy mercy, Lord, to me!

RELIGIOUS LITERATURE.

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

THE advantages of RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE are very great. It forms the basis of true honour and felicity. Not all the lustre of a noble birth—not all the influence of wealth—not all the pomp of titles—not all the splendour of power—can give dignity to the soul that is destitute of inward improvement. By this we are allied to angels, and are capable of rising forever in the scale of being. Such is its inherent worth, that it hath always been represented under the most pleasing images. In particular, it hath been compared to light, the most valuable and reviving part of nature's works, and to that glorious luminary which is the most beautiful and transporting object our eyes behold. If we entertain any doubts concerning the intrinsic value of RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE, let us look around us, and we shall be convinced how desirable it is to be acquainted with God, with spiritual, with eternal things. Observe the difference between a cultivated and a barren country. While the former is a lovely, cheerful, and delightful sight; the other administers a spectacle

of horror. There is an equal difference between the nations among whom the principles of piety prevail, and the nations that are overrun with idolatry, superstition, and error. Knowledge also is of great importance to our personal and private felicity: it furnishes a pleasure that cannot be met with in the possession of inferior enjoyments; a fine entertainment, which adds a relish to prosperity, and alleviates the hour of distress. It throws a lustre upon greatness, and reflects an honour upon poverty. Knowledge will also instruct us how to apply our several talents for the benefit of mankind. It will make us capable of advising and regulating others. Hence we may become the lights of the world, and diffuse those munificent beams around us, which shall shine on benighted travellers, and discover the path of rectitude and bliss.

This knowledge, also, tends to destroy bigotry and enthusiasm. To this we are indebted for the important change which hath been made since the beginning of the Reformation. To this we are indebted for the general cultivation and refinement of the understandings of men. It is owing to this that even arbitrary governments seem to have lost something of their original ferocity, and that there is a source of improvement in Europe, which will, we hope, in future times, shed the most delightful influences on society, and unite its members in harmony, peace, and love. But the advantages of knowledge are still greater—for it points out to us an eternal felicity. The several branches of human science are intended only to bless and adorn our present existence; but RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE bids us provide for an immortal being—sets the path of salvation before us, and is our inseparable companion in the road to glory. As it instructs in the way to endless bliss, so it will survive that mighty day when all worldly literature and accomplishments shall for ever cease. At that solemn period, in which the records and registers of men shall be destroyed—the systems of human policy be dissolved, and the grandest works of genius die—the wisdom which is spiritual and heavenly shall not only subsist, but be increased to an extent that human nature cannot in this life admit. Our views of things, at present, are obscure, imperfect, partial, and liable to error; but when we arrive at the realms of everlasting light, the clouds that shadowed our understanding will be removed; we shall behold, with amazing clearness, the attributes, ways, and works of God; shall perceive more distinctly the design of his dispensations; shall trace with rapture the wonders of nature and grace, and become acquainted with a thousand glorious objects, of which the imagination can as yet have no conception.

If our condition be not the best in the world, yet we hope it will be better, and this helps to support it with patience. The Christian's hope is an expectation of all necessary good both in time and eternity, founded on the promises of God, and on the righteousness and intercession of Christ.

UNCERTAINTY OF HUMAN EXPECTATIONS.

DARK and uncertain is the state of being in which we now exist. Human life is not formed to answer those high expectations, which, in the era of youth and imagination, we are apt to entertain. When we first set out in life, we bid defiance to the evil day; we indulge in dreams and visions of romantic bliss, and fondly lay the scene of perfect and uninterrupted happiness for the time to come. But experience soon undeceives us; we awake, and find it but a dream. We make but a few steps in life, without finding the world to be a turbulent scene; we soon experience the changes that await us, and feel the thorns of the wilderness wherein we dwell. Our hopes are frequently blasted in the bud—our designs are defeated in the very moment of expectation—and we meet with sorrow, and vexation, and disappointment on all hands. There are lives besides our own in which we are deeply interested—lives in which our happiness is placed, and on which our hopes depend. Just when we have laid a plan of happy life—when, after the experience of years, we have found out a few chosen friends, and have begun to enjoy that little circle, in which we would wish to live and to die—an unexpected stroke disappoints our hopes, and lays all our schemes in the dust. When, after much labour and care, we have reared the golden structure—when we have fenced it, as we fondly imagine, from every storm that blows, and indulge the pleasing hope that it will always endure—an invisible hand interposes, and overturns it from the foundation.

Son of prosperity I thou now lookest forth from thy high tower: thou now gloriest in thine excellence, thou sayest that thy mountain stands strong, and that thou art as firm as the cedar of Lebanon; but stand in awe. Before the mighty God of Jacob, and by the blast of the breath of his nostrils, the mountain hath been overturned, and the cedar of Lebanon hath fallen like the leaf before the tempest. At this very moment of time, the wheel is in motion that reverses the lot of men, that brings the prosperous to the dust, and lays the mighty low. Now, O man, thou rejoicest in thy strength; but know that for thee the bed of languishing, the bed of death will be spread. Thou now removest from thee the evil day, and sayest in thy heart, thou shalt never see sorrow; but remember the changes of this life. The calmest and the stillest hour precedes the whirlwind and the earthquake; the monarch hath drawn the chariot of state in which he was wont to ride in triumph; and the greatest who ever awed the world have moralized at the turn of the wheel.—Logan.

THE CHRISTIAN'S VIEW OF THE WORLD.

HAPPY only the man who knows the world by knowing his God, his Bible, and himself: he shall know the world to purpose. The philosopher sees the world pass away; but he sees it with a pang: he sees it with regret: there is so much taken from his happiness: "I lose my eyes, my teeth, my hearing, my health, my vigour;" and he grows peevish and fretful. But the Christian sees it pass with a calm and solid satisfaction: "Here," says he, "I see a flying world passing away: yet I faint not; for, though my outward man perish, yet my inward man is renewed day by day. I have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I am waiting for this abode. I am not disappointed to hear that life is but a handbreadth: I know it. You tell me that my tabernacle is to be taken down: I knew that I should be crushed before the moth."—Rev. R. Cecil.