

POETRY.

CHRIST'S NATIVITY.

Among Campbell's minor poems are some fine devotional pieces, and none more so than the following, which is truly worthy of his genius:—

When Jordan hush'd his waters still,
And silence slept on Zion's hill;
When Bethlehem's shepherds, through the night,
Watched o'er their flocks by starry light;

Hark! from the midnight hills around,
A voice of more than mortal sound,
In distant hallelujahs stole,
Wild murmuring o'er the raptur'd soul.

Then swift to every startled eye,
New streams of glory light the sky;
Heaven bursts her azure gates to pour
Her spirits to the midnight hour.

On wheels of light, on wings of flame,
The glorious hosts of Zion came
High heaven with songs of triumph rung,
While thus they struck their harps and sung:—

O Zion! lift thy raptur'd eye,
The long-expected hour is nigh,
The joys of nature rise again,
The Prince of Salem comes to reign.

See, Mercy, from her golden urn,
Pours a rich stream to them that mourn;
Behold, she binds, with tender care,
The bleeding bosom of despair.

He comes! to cheer the trembling heart,
Bids Satan and his host depart:
Again the day-star gilds the gloom,
Again the bowers of Eden bloom.

O Zion! lift thy raptur'd eye,
The long-expected hour is nigh,
The joys of nature rise again,
The Prince of Salem comes to reign.

Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

AN ADDRESS FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH, ON THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE LORD'S DAY.

The Committee, appointed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh to watch over the great interests of Sabbath Sanctification, beg leave to call the attention of the people within the bounds of the Presbytery, to the necessity, that lies on all classes of the community to acknowledge and maintain, with renewed care and zeal, the sacredness of the Lord's Day, and the universal obligation to "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy."

Circumstances that have recently occurred in our neighbourhood, lead us to press this call anxiously on the attention of the people. Encroachments on Sabbath Sanctification, in many private forms and ways have been increasing, and public violations of the sacred rest have been threatened, and actually committed.

Against these, the Presbytery, as the established guardians of Religious Institutions, have offered their solemn protest and interference. And against every violation and encroachment whatever, on the institution of the Lord's Day, they are bound to give, explicitly and earnestly, their warning and remonstrance.

We therefore, knowing how prone the minds of men are, even of the best, to become unhappily familiarised with the sight of evil, so as to lose the sensitive impression of its sinfulness, desire to do what ever can be done to keep alive, for this important subject, the care and zeal which through the multiplying of Sabbath desecrations, may first slumber and then be deadened.

And we beseech you, brethren, by what you owe to the authority of Him who created and redeemed you—by what you owe to the welfare of your own souls—by your concern for your families and the community, man good,—we beseech you to fix your serious attention anew on the subject of this Address.

Be roused to a still livelier feeling of its importance. Estimate more highly the sanction by which its claims are pressed on your conscience. Resolve, with decidedness, that, be the customs of men in this respect what they may, you will keep the commandment of God. Scrupulously abstain from doing or countenancing any thing that breaks in upon the sacredness of the Divine institution. Place yourselves in opposition to all encroachments on the oral society or in your own circle, to avow an opinion and to show forth an example, so clear and unequivocal, as, instead of your "having any fellowship"

with practices at variance with Sabbath observance you will "rather reprove them."

Do we require, brethren, to set particularly before you, the motives by which the observance of the Sabbath is enforced?

You know, that the instituting of the Day of Rest was the first of the appointments of Jehovah, after he had completed the work of creation and the first of the divine actions in which God condescended to give an example unto man. You know that if the observance of the Sabbath was deemed indispensable to the good of man even while he was an unfallen creature, much more is it needful now that the sin and worldliness of his nature would keep him afar off from the source of holiness and happiness. You know that the commandment enjoining the Sabbath was promulgated with inexpressible solemnity, "from the midst of the lightnings and thunders and tempests" of Sinai,—was enrolled in the laws that are moral, and therefore unchangeable,—and, for denoting its sacredness and perpetuity was engraven, along with the others, on tables of stone by the finger of God. You know that the Sabbath is the memorial to you at once of the finished work of the Creation, and the finished work of Redemption,—and Redeemer, for making known His gracious will for your salvation, and for your specially drawing near to Him with faith, and gratitude and holy satisfaction,—is the best of seasons for cultivating all the devout sentiments and charitable affections,—is the symbol and the means of that peace which arises from assurance of the Divine favour, and which is the prospect of entering into the heavenly rest.

"Remember, then, the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." We exhort you to prepare your minds for its observance, by timeously closing your secular concerns the evening before; and by then seriously directing your thoughts to the design of the coming solemnity. For if the turmoils of business or pleasure be carried forward to the very dawn of the Sabbath and morn, can it be supposed that the mind, still moved and perturbed by the earthly bustle, is to receive the spiritual and moral good of the Sabbath?

We exhort you to begin the Sabbath with devout reflection on its duties, and earnest prayer that the blessing that enricheth may descend on its services—and to preserve it entire for the sacred ends of Religion and Righteousness,—abstaining from "thoughts and recreations," and "devoting the whole time to the public and private exercises of divine worship, except so much as is taken up in the works of necessity and mercy."

We exhort you, moreover, to weigh with jealousy the pleas for encroaching on the special duties of the Sabbath, that are drawn from supposed works of necessity and mercy; and be you well assured that every thing is the reverse of such a character, by engaging on which your Bible is disrelished and shut, private exercises of divine worship are postponed, and hurried over, or rendered formal.

We exhort you to maintain a conscience that is tender on the subject of any practices whatever which break the Sabbath law, and to be ready to join with your fellow Christians in every Scriptural means of discountenancing such practices, and putting them down; and to consider seriously, for exciting you to this, how a course of indifference to "other men's sins" may make you "the partakers of them."

We exhort you to guard against what are reckoned small and insignificant departures from the sacredness of the Sabbath observance—considering that often beginnings in irreligion, apparently little, have swollen out to great profaneness, and hopeless infidelity,—and that often the most notorious criminals, on the brink of eternity, have been heard to name some of those seeming trivial liberties with the divine appointment of the Sabbath, as their first openings on a career of sin, that has ended in ruin.

Brethren, it is in connection with such things, that you ought to ponder those solemn exhortations, given in the Sacred Scriptures, which enforce the observance of the Sabbath; those threatenings of judgments which are pronounced over the breakers of the Fourth Commandment; those promises of blessings, which are declared to all who love the Sabbath, and which are declared to all who love the Sabbath, and have flowed to nations and individuals, wherever device and misery which have spread like a deluge, wherever this safeguard of piety and morals has been thrown down, or even injured. These facts, of universal experience, are sufficient to justify the care which the Legislature of our land has shewn, for preserving the sanctity of the Lord's Day. And the facts themselves were to be anticipated; because the Sabbath ordinance is Divine, and the keeping of a Divine ordinance must be fraught with the blessing,—contempt for it, with the curse.

It is on the ground of Divine authority, therefore

that we plead for the hallowing of the Sabbath. It is on this ground, too, that we vindicate the zeal and exertion of all who join their endeavours to maintain its sacredness. Here the Divine will is the supreme rule, and the Divine glory is the supreme object; and by the view of these you are to be guided. You are safe so long as you fear the authority of God, and blessed so long as you promote His glory. "Great peace have they who love His law, and nothing shall offend them." While, then, we speak of the awful sanction that enforces the Sabbath observance, we speak also of the gracious design and effects of the institution. While we say, that because the Sabbath was ordained by the Divine will, its obligation is imperative; we say at the same time, that because the Sabbath was ordained for human good, by the motive drawn from its Author, for the serious observance of the day, we plead likewise, by the motive drawn from its effects, for the cordial and delighted observance of it. Enter, therefore, with your whole heart, into the spiritual rest, of which the Sabbath is the sign,—even into the privileges of a conscience pacified by the blood of Christ, and purified by the Spirit of grace. Enter into the purposes of Religion and Righteousness, which the services of the Sacred Day were intended to promote, and you will find that there is, preciousness, as well as meaning, in the ordinance; and while Sabbath-breakers, in their courses of business, or idleness, or vain amusements, are seeking happiness, (seeking without receiving it,) you will find, that the services of the Sabbath, as the means of cultivating love to God, and love to one another, render this the best of the seven, the glory of the week, and the very emblem and preparative of an everlasting day of light and peace.

WILLIAM MUIR,
Convener of the Committee.

RELIGIOUS INTERESTS OF PRESBYTERIAN SOLDIERS.

The religious interests of the Presbyterians of Great Britain, the moment they travel beyond their own territory, have hitherto been strangely neglected, both by their own Churches, and by the Government in its various departments. If we turn to the Colonies, we find religious provision made both for Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, and, in India, for the training of the natives in superstition; but next to nothing is done for Scottish or Irish Presbyterians, though perhaps forming, in many colonies, a far larger body than the members of the Episcopal Church. Let Canada, and the East and West Indies, and, until lately, Australia, bear witness to these things. Hitherto, it would seem, Presbyterians have been so quiet, or they have possessed so little political influence, or the friends of other forms of religion have been so much more active and powerful, that though constituting a fifth part of the whole British population, they have generally been treated as if they were the merest bagatelle. The disastrous fruits of this state of things, are beginning to appear in the North American Colonies, and, we hope, will have the effect of driving Parliament to sound remedial measures. The point to which we wish at present to direct the attention of our readers, is the almost utter neglect of the religious interests of Presbyterians in our army. It is well known, that Scotland contributes more than an ordinary proportion to the defence of the nation, both in men and money; so that the Presbyterians of the army, as a whole, may be rated at nearly 20,000 men; and yet, with the exception of fourteen Scottish regiments, only one of which is, upon an average, in Scotland at a time, is there any religious instruction provided in the ordinances of the Church of their fathers; in other words, not more than one thousand Presbyterians have, at one season, any instruction provided for them. There may be, and generally are, hundreds and thousands of Presbyterian soldiers in London, Dublin, Gibraltar, the three Indian Presidencies, at the Cape, and in the Canadas, and a proportional number of Presbyterian children. But there is not one Presbyterian chaplain or schoolmaster—not one word of instruction through the forms of the Presbyterian Church! Is this right in itself? Is it just to the Presbyterian Church, equally recognised and established by the law of the land as the Episcopal, and much less expensive? May Papists and Hin-doos be instructed by the State, or rather encouraged by it, in their idolatry and delusions, and is the Scottish or Irish Presbyterian so poor and contemptible a soldier that his religion deserves no countenance? Would any party but Presbyterians have borne such wrongs so meekly and patiently, and that for so protracted a period? We are glad to see, from the recent proceedings of the Presbytery of Glasgow, that this important cause has been taken up by that zealous body; and that an overture has been agreed upon to the General Assembly, and also petitions to Parliament. This is as it should be. If the Presbyterian Church government and forms be really a blessing, why