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Poetry.

For the Wesleyan.

THOUGHTS

OCCASIONED BY A TRANSIENT VISIT FROM A RETURNING CALIFORNIAN.

Go, wanderer go, a mother's smile will greet thee,
A mother's love chase sadness from thy brow;
And smiles of joy dispel the deepening gloom
That mournful memories hang around thee now.

Go, for they miss thee at the evening hour,
Thou dost not listen to the Sabbath bell;
Fears, tortuous fears, gnaw ceaseless at the heart,
And dreams re-echo one sad word—farewell.

Go, for thine heart is sad, thy spirit lonely,
By thy long roamings from the sweets of home,—
And lov'd ones mourn for thee, as one who sleepeth
The long, deep sleep—in some far foreign tomb.

But stay, whence comes that trace of with'ring care?
Whence the dark shadowing of a sudden'd thought?
Whence the deep sighing of a burthen'd spirit,
That tells sweet peace is not with treasures bought?

Could California's heaps of glittering dust
Not lull the heavy heart to dreams of pleasure?
Nor thy far wanderings 'neath those sunny skies
Fill up the vacuum of thine hours of leisure?

Go, chase the brooding shadows from thy brow—
Go, light thy brow from lamps of social gladness—
Go, smile the bright smile of the glad and free—
And let thy spirit eye forget its sadness.

Friend, of a fleeting hour—companion, of a day—
Our spirits sicken at the parting token;
Something like sorrow lurks in every eye,
Which seems to wish farewells were never spoken.

Wilmot, July 8, 1851. AMELIA.

Christian Miscellany.

"We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts and reasonings of pure and lofty minds.—DR. SHARPE."

The Benevolence of Christianity.

We hold that in every act of his government, GOD designs to impress the whole intelligent universe with a fuller idea of his character and perfection, and thus draw to himself the homage and the confidence of every creature. But such an effect could never follow were not his administration one of supreme benevolence. Wisdom and power we may admire; but viewed alone, and uncombined with any other quality, they would never so act on the heart as to enkindle its love. The homage which we pay these high attributes is not the homage of the heart. Admiration there may be; but to call forth affection, the majesty of power and the perfection of wisdom must be blended with the plenitude of goodness. It is this which raises the soul into adoration, and the adoration always corresponds to our apprehension and experience of the divine goodness.

Now this goodness has been so expressed and set forth in that one great act of the divine government by which provision has been made for the recovery and happiness of man, as to leave every other exhibition of it at an immeasurable distance. Nor is it possible, we think, that even the infinite GOD should ever by any subsequent act exceed what he has already done. In that great stupendous scale of miracles which his conduct towards this fallen world embodies, we ascend step by step in the contemplation and discovery of his character, but in the scheme of mercy we at once rise to the very summit. The divine nature is one immense goodness, and this goodness all centred in the Saviour of the world. He was full of grace—the very sum and perfection of benevolence.

Of this benevolence his ministry was the grand expression. We know of no merely human system whose aim has been the amelioration and improvement of human nature, which has not left man still destitute of the chief good. But mark, Christianity looks upon him in his known physical, intellectual, and moral condition; and not only professes to raise him, in his whole nature and being, to a level with the first and purest born of GOD's creation, but to put him in possession of that good which cannot fail to render

even an immortality of existence supremely desirable and happy. There is nothing restricted—nothing exclusive, in the genius or the provision of Christianity. Looking at the conduct and the distributions of divine providence from a certain stand-point, we should be apt to conclude that the whole arrangement was nothing more than a dispensation in favour of some chosen number. While these are thrown into the lap of abundance, the great majority are reduced to the most absolute dependence, and not a few are called to endure the extreme pressure of poverty or privation—to bear up beneath its most crushing force. At the introduction of Christianity the question stood to be resolved, whether the same restrictions and apparent partiality were to characterise the distributions of divine grace. All doubt disappeared with the first intimation with which the Saviour opened his ministry. He was sent to preach the Gospel to the poor, and his whole ministry was to them an assurance, that they in common with all men, and to an equal degree, were to partake in the provisions of infinite mercy—that their poverty should be no impediment to the full enjoyment of all the blessings of eternal love. And would but the poor accept the offered provision of heaven, they would find that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." Christianity positively improves the present condition of men. It has converted many a dwelling of deepest poverty and wretchedness into the abode of comfort and happiness. It has lit up with the beams of inexpressible joy many a countenance formerly shrouded in gloom. It has snatched many a hopeless victim from the dark margin of despair and ruin. It promises and proffers to heal every hurt, and bind up every wound of our suffering humanity. Nor does it overlook the deeper anguish of the mind. Inward distress exceeds outward destitution; mental sorrow is greater than any physical suffering, and it was therefore to be expected that the state of the mind would receive from the Saviour of men at least equal attention with the condition of the body. In the midst of the deepest gloom that can settle on the human spirit, Christianity reveals a light which brightens into the effulgence of eternal day. In the depth of earthly sorrow, she pours into the cup most impregnated with all that is bitter and distasteful, the purest consolations of divine love. Beneath the heaviest and most crushing load of mental suffering, she supplies a power which is omnipotent and all-sufficient. But for such gracious succour and support, and how many hearts must have sunk beneath their weight!—how many purer and nobler spirits must have been bruised and broken! Not only does He bind up the bleeding soul, but sets it free from every enslaving force. The Saviour came proclaiming deliverance to all that were bound; and while he loosed many that were bound with disease, he introduced others into the glorious liberty of the children of GOD. Nor has Christianity ever ceased, by the temperance, and purity, and virtue, which it enforces, to free men from many bodily distempers. It is conservative of health, and gives freer circulation to the stream of life; and could we bring its mighty principles to act on the spirit that is now enslaved, every fetter would of itself fall off, and the man stand up in all the conscious erectness and dignity of his moral freedom.

Such is the benevolence of Christianity, and Christianity has its fixed and definite period for the manifestation of this benevolence. The present is the dispensation of mercy, and with the close of this dispensation will come the end of the world, and the retributions of eternity. This is that everlasting age whose progress is to be marked by the triumphs of simple truth—the growth of civilization and social improvement—the accomplishment of prophecy—the renovation of the world—the recovery of humanity

—the universal brotherhood of man—the completion of GOD's great remedial plan, and the final union of earth and heaven. Now, if this be the age which GOD has selected for the most splendid revelation of his benevolence and his mercy—for the lavishing of his munificence and immeasurable goodness on the children of earth, what infinite consequences are involved in the part which we now act. We can never be otherwise than in circumstances which will call for the provisions of Christianity. Such are the capacities and the yearnings of man's soul, that nothing less and nothing else can satisfy him. Worlds are but shadows to a spirit which has no superior but GOD, and which will hold on its course when that of nature ends. It must find its happiness in an object corresponding with its own spiritual nature, and as immortal as itself. Christianity reveals that object. It sets before men THE SUPREME GOOD. And in nothing does its benevolence come out more conspicuously than in the fact, that it is the only system which contemplates man in the whole of his nature, and through the entire duration of his being. There is neither shade nor modification of character—there is no imaginable state or degree of wretchedness—whether physical, intellectual, or moral, to which it does not reach. It deals with humanity in all the conditions in which humanity is found. And to raise, improve, renovate, and render this humanity for ever blessed, is its immediate and specific end. No child of Adam is excluded from its provision. Its calls and its overtures are addressed to all. It speaks to each individual man as if he were the only one with whom it had to deal; and in strains of melting tenderness and ineffable love, beseeches him to accept the gift of GOD, which is eternal life.—Pathway.

Business and Prayer.

If a professed disciple would not have his secular business become a millstone about his neck to drown him in perdition, he must be a man of prayer; he must daily secure spiritual communion with GOD. If he suffer his business to consume his time and spirits so as to deprive him of opportunities for prayer, reading the Bible, and real communion with GOD, he must decay in piety, and his service of mammon eat up his service of GOD. No one who believes that GOD answers prayer, will think of omitting either secret or family devotion for want of time, even when business is unusually urgent. Which is worth most to you or your family, an additional period of your own unblest labour, or the blessing of GOD on your efforts, won by spending that time in pleading with him in prayer? The plea of want of time is essentially atheistical; none should urge it but those who regard prayer as an empty mockery that never receives an answer from the Lord. Let the day begin with communion with GOD, let the disciple pass the whole day in the spirit of prayer, and all his duties will become spiritual duties, and all its scenes be inscribed with "Holiness to the Lord."

But this must be real communion with GOD, and not a mere formal prayer. Many morning prayers are a sort of paying compliments to the Most High. A Frenchman, it is said, visited his chapel in Paris to say his daily devotions, but he found no priest in attendance, and the building undergoing repairs. He walked up to the altar, laid his card on it with a low bow, and withdrew, well satisfied with the homage he had paid to the Lord. It is to be feared that too many of the morning prayers of the closet and the family are little more than laying a card upon the altar, a complimentary presentation of respects. But nothing less than such a communion with GOD as touches the heart and draws forth its earnest desires, can be any safeguard to us in the busy scenes of the day. Hence it would be well if every christian would make and keep the

resolution by which some have been profited, to have so many seasons of prayer, and to continue them so long as to keep the heart in a tender, lively, spiritual frame, so as never to leave the closet without some meltings of the heart, some sensible manifestations of GOD's love.

This point may best be enforced by the words of a devoted disciple of Christ. He said with great earnestness and simplicity, "I have made a discovery this summer which I regard as of great value. I used to defer my morning's devotions till after the first work of the morning. But this summer immediately on rising, before doing aught else, I pray; and I pray till I feel GOD's presence. Then I read the scriptures till breakfast, when I find my heart warm and ready to engage with interest in family prayer. At noon the hay wants turning; but I push off to spend a season in prayer; and the heart having become warm in the morning, it needs but little to restore its fervour, and I am soon at work again with a lively sense of GOD's presence. When all is done, I look back on a day spent with GOD, and give thanks for all his mercies, commending myself to him. And now, (he added with great animation), I can commend this plan to all Christians. It has carried me all through haying and harvesting, and in the busiest of it all I have had as much enlargement of heart and spiritual joy as ever in my life."—London Tract Magazine.

Profane Swearing.

Profane swearing is a great sin, because it is a sin against GOD, and because it so spreads to others. It doth eat like a canker. Companions and children learn it. The profane person has a class of disciples around him. All experience shows how easily children pick up the horrid oaths. Their anxious parents are surprised to be greeted with profane words by their children whom they have carefully sought to guard against it. They have heard it from some black-throated wretch in the street, when playing or going on an errand. It has often been the case that a whole neighbourhood has been polluted by some one person. His oaths were repeated in all corners with strange correctness, even to the tone of voice and accompanying motions; and when his foul heart had invented a new one, it was almost as by lightning spread abroad and stereotyped by many hearts who could turn off copies of it with pleasure. Sins of the tongue are easily taught. How true it is, as all experience shows with reference to profaneness, "that James says, 'The tongue is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.' And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea is tamed, and has been tamed of mankind. But the tongue can no man tame, it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Beware of it, boys, as you value your life; and if you would avoid swearing, avoid drinking."—Lan. Express.

Conversion of the Aged.

In a sermon to young men, Dr. Bedell said, "I have now been nearly twenty years in the ministry of the Gospel, and I here publicly state to you, that I do not believe I could enumerate three persons over fifty years of age, whom I ever heard ask the solemn and eternally momentous question, 'What shall I do to be saved?' Another distinguished, and still living divine of our country, has said, 'I will not say that none are converted in old age, but they are few and far between, like the scattered grapes on the outermost branches after the vintage is gathered! Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'

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