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Religion.

What heart is there by ill of life oppress,—
What soul so shod by the direct word.
That can find no welcome peace and rest,
Where men in pain of life all hurried go,
To let that heart cheerily joy despair,
But find in Christ a true, a ready cure,
Best with religion he shall surely wear.
A sunshine of the mind that shall endure—
O God, with mercy's healing hand,
The drooping sinner cheer and guide,
Till he, a white robed saint, shall stand
With angels at his Saviour's side!

The joys of life are mixed with certain woe,
The paths of pleasure oft the soul deceive;
No lasting peace the men of riches know,
But with possessions numerous cares receive;
The heart must be of God's good grace possessed,
To steer a course of safety to the grave;
The life of life can never be redressed,
But where the palms of saints in peace shall rise.

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The drooping sinner cheer and guide,
Till he, a white robed saint, shall stand
With angels at his Saviour's side!

The lives of worldly pleasure are great,
Oft magnified by young and untaught eyes,
All needful seems to them a good estate,
In which the soul up honour's steep may rise.
The pleasures of the world seem just at hand,
The fall cup ready for the seeking soul,
And thousands in those paths expectant stand,
Where adders sting and poisonous serpents roll.

O God, with mercy's healing hand,
The erring sinner cheer and guide,
Till he, a white robed saint, shall stand
With angels at his Saviour's side!

Beligion's joy shall ne'er the soul deceive,
Her heavenly pleasures ne'er the heart betray,
Too much we cannot of their bliss believe,
When angels know them in their fair array,
Upward these pleasures lead the joyful mind,
Where all the good in glory's beams are drest,
And make the souls on earth more just and kind,
And fill with love for man each happy breast.

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the voices of those who filled the midnight of the prison with sounds of cheerfulness and joy. Still the apostles continued their praises, and the prisoners listened. "They that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death: being fast bound in misery and iron; when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivered them out of their distress."

For he brought them out of darkness, and out of the shadow of death, and brake their bonds in sunder." When suddenly, as if in direct answer to the prayer of his servants, an earthquake shook the very foundations of the prison; the gates were broken, the bars smitten asunder, and the bonds of the prisoners loosed.

Without striving to draw a line between the natural and supernatural in this occurrence, and still less endeavoring to resolve what was evidently miraculous into the results of ordinary causes, we turn again to the thought suggested by that single but expressive phrase of Scripture, "the prisoners were listening." When we reflect on their knowledge of the apostles' sufferings, for they were doubtless aware of the manner in which they had been brought in and thrust into the dungeon, and on the wonder they must have experienced in hearing sounds of joy from those who were in pain, and on the awe which must have overpowered them when they felt the prison shaken and the chains fall from their limbs: and when to all this we add the effect produced on their minds by all that happened on the following day, and especially the fact that the jailer himself became a Christian; we can hardly avoid the conclusion that the hearts of many of those unhappy bondmen were prepared that night to receive the gospel; that the tidings of spiritual liberty came to those whom, but for the captivity of the apostles, he would never have reached; and that the jailer himself was their evangelist and teacher.

The effect produced that night on the jailer's own mind has been fully related to us. Awakened in a moment by the earthquake, his first thought was of his prisoners; and in the shock of surprise and alarm, "seeing the doors of the prison open, and supposing that the prisoners were fled," he awoke that inevitable death awaited him, with the stern and earnest reprobation of a Roman official, he resolved that suicide was better than disgrace, and "drew his sword."

Philippi is famous in the annals of suicide. Here Cassius, unable to survive defeat, covered his face in the empty tent, and ordered his freedman to strike the blow.—His messenger, Titus, held it to be a Roman's part to follow the stern example. Here Brutus bade adieu to his friends, exclaiming, "Certainly we must fly, yet not with the feet, but with the hands;" and many, whose names have never reached us, ended their last struggle for the republic by self-inflicted death. Here, too, another destination would have been committed to a Roman official, he resolved that suicide was better than disgrace, and "drew his sword."

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The loud exclamation of St. Paul, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here," gave immediate re-assurance to the terrified jailer. He laid aside his sword, and called for a light, and rushed to the inner prison, where Paul and Silas were confined. But now a new fear of a higher kind took possession of his soul. The recollection of all he had heard before concerning these prisoners, and all that he had observed of their demeanour when he brought them into the dungeon, the shuddering thought of the earthquake, the burst of his gratitude toward them as the preservers of his life, and the consciousness that even in the darkness of midnight they had seen his intention of suicide,—all these mingling and conflicting emotions made him feel that he was in the presence of a higher power. He fell down before them, and brought them out, as men whom he had deeply injured and insulted, to a place of greater freedom and comfort; and then he asked them with earnest anxiety, what he must do to be saved. We see the apostle here self-possessed in the earthquake, as afterward in the storm at sea, able to overawe and control those who were placed over him, and calmly turning the occasion to a spiritual end. It is surely, however, a mistake to imagine that the jailer's inquiry had reference merely to temporal and immediate danger. The awakening of his conscience, the presence of the unseen world, the miraculous visitation, the nearness of death,—coupled perhaps with some confused recollection of "the way of salvation" which these strangers were said to have been proclaiming,—were enough to suggest that inquiry which he made, "What must I do to be saved?"

His answer was that of faithful apostles. They preached "not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." "Believe not in us, but in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved; and not only thou, but the life shall bring salvation to all thy house."

From this last expression, and from the words which follow, we infer that the members of the jailer's family had crowded round him and the apostles. No time was lost in making known to them "the words of the Lord." All thought of bodily comfort and repose was postponed to the work of saving the soul. The meaning of "faith in Jesus" was explained, and the gospel was preached to the jailer's family in the midnight, while the old and died; the world lay down, and the light was thrown on anxious faces and the dangers on the brow of eternity.

Eternity! Stupendous thought! The ever-present, unborn, undecaying, and unperishing—the endless chain, compassing the life of God—the golden thread entwining the destinies of the universe.

Earth has its beauties, but time shrouds them from the grave; its honors, but they are but the sunshine of an hour; its palaces, they are but as the gilded sepulchers; its possessions, they are toys of changing fortune; its pleasures, they are but bursting bubbles. Not so in the undying bourne. In the dwelling of the Almighty can come no footsteps of decay. Its day will know no darkening—eternal splendour, its approach of night. Its fountains will never fail—they are fresh from the eternal throne. Its glory will never wane, for there is the ever-present God. Its harmonies will never cease; exhaustless love supplies the song,

hospitality and love. "He took them up into his house," and placing them in a posture of repose, set before them, and refreshed their exhausted strength. It was a night of happiness for all. They praised God that his poor had been made effectual in their weakness; and the jailer's family had their first experience of that joy which is the fruit of believing in God.—*Conybeare and Howson.*

Helen and the Silver Pencil.

Little Helen was standing at the door of her father's store in Charre-street, New Orleans, with his silver pencil in her hand, which he had given her for her amusement.

There came by a man with a basket of oranges. "See here," said he, taking out of the basket a fine yellow orange. "See here, little girl, what a nice orange. Give me that pencil, and you shall have it." At once Helen handed him the pencil, and took the orange.

"Oh, what a foolish child," you exclaim. Yes, but remember she was very young.—She knew not the worth of the pencil, and had no idea that she had done wrong; for she ran immediately to her father, delighted with her orange, and told him the whole story. Did you ever hear of a woman who parted, not with a silver pencil but with a kingdom for an apple?

"What does father mean?" asks the younger of the two children, to whom he is relating the incident. "I will tell you," answers the elder, "he means that you gave up the kingdom of heaven for the forbidden fruit."

Right, my child. Eve gave away paradise for an apple. But there is this difference between her case and that of Helen.—Eve knew that she was doing wrong when she ate the forbidden fruit; for God had plainly commanded her not to touch it. "Have foolishly Eve acted?" adds the elder child.

"Was she more foolish, my child, than her children? What are all the men and women doing, who love not the Lord Jesus, but selling heaven for trifles?"

When I see an ambitious man so set upon office and honor that he neglects Christ, I think of Helen and her bargain. His body will soon be in the grave, and his soul in heaven. His bags of gold and silver, his houses, lands, and bank stock, must all be left behind. He will be poor throughout eternity; too poor to buy one drop of water.

When I see a young person so taken up with vain amusements that she can find no place in her heart for Christ, I think of Helen and her bargain. I think of the time when Christ, whom he rejected on earth for the pleasures of sin, will reject him, and he be driven to the place where there is "wealing and gnashing of teeth."

When I see a little child so fond of his sports, that he neither loves to pray to his Saviour, nor to hear the Christian's counsel, I think of Helen and her bargain. She sold a silver pencil for an orange; but such children are selling heaven for their toys. O what a sad bargain.—*Phin. Chris. Observer.*

The Unity of the Bible.

As in Beethoven's matchless music there runs one idea, worked out through all the changes of measure and of key, now solemn, now breaking out in rich and natural melody, whisped in the treble, murmuring in the bass, dimly suggested in the prelude, but growing clearer and clearer as the work proceeds, winding gradually, gradually back until it ends in the key in which it began, and closes in triumphant harmony; so throughout the history of the Bible, from one great idea—the man's ruin by sin, and his redemption by grace; in a word, Jesus Christ, the Saviour. This runs through the Old Testament, that prelude to the New, dimly promised at the fall, and more clearly to Abraham; typified in the ceremonies of the law; all the events of sacred history paving the way for His coming; His descent proved in the genealogies of both and Chronicles; spoken of as Shiloh by Jacob, as the Star by Balaam, as the Prophet by Moses, the David of the Psalms, the Redeemer looked for by Job, the beloved of the Song of Songs. We find Him in the sublime strains of the lofty Isaiah; in the writings of the tender Jeremiah; in the mysteries of the contemplative Ezekiel; in the visions of the beloved Daniel; the great idea growing clearer and clearer as the time drew on. Then the full harmony broke out in the song of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." And Evangelists and Apostles taking up the theme, the strain closes in the same key in which it began; the devil, who troubles the first paradise, for ever excluded from the second; man restored to the favor of God, and Jesus Christ the key-note of the whole.—*American Messenger.*

Eternity.

"Eternity has no gray hairs." The flowers fade, the heart withers, man grows old and dies; the world lies down, and the light is thrown on anxious faces and the dangers on the brow of eternity.

The Vine Cluster.

The chemist who can analyze the fruit of the vine finds many ingredients there. Of these no single one, nor any two together, would form the juice of the grape; but the combination of all yields the polished and judicious berry, which every one knows so well. In different climates, and even in different seasons, the proportion and blending of these ingredients may vary, but that is not good cluster which any is wanting. The fruit of the true Vine has also been analyzed, and in the best specimens the nine following ingredients are found (Gal. v. 22): LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONG-SUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEANNESS, TEMPERANCE.

In poor samples there is a deficiency of one or other of these elements. A dry and diminutive sort is lacking in peace and joy. A tart kind, which sets the teeth on edge, owes its austerity to the scanty infusion of gentleness, goodness, and meekness. There is a watery, deliquescent sort, which for the want of long-suffering is not easily preserved; and there is a flat variety, which having no body of faith or temperance, answers few useful purposes. Love is the essential principle which in case is entirely absent; and by the gleaming fullness and rich aroma which its plentiful presence creates, you can recognize the freshest and most generous clusters; while the predominance of some other element gives to each its distinguished flavor, and marks the growth of each, Sibony, or Lebanon.

Reader, if you abide in Jesus—if His words abide in you, you will neither barren nor unfruitful. Grace such as these will be in you, and abound. Is it so? The great vice-principle, the main element of the Christian character, holy love, does it abound in you? And blending with it, tinged it, and deriving sweetness from it, can you detect from time to time joy in God, peace of conscience, patience in suffering, and forgiveness of injury, affectionateness, beneficence, trust in God, and trustworthiness in your places and calling, a lowly willingness to learn, and a readiness to take up the cross and deny yourself. When Christians live close to Christ, His mind is transferred to their hearts, and they are made to see the things which are true, and the things which are hidden. He will soon be in the grave, and his soul in heaven. His bags of gold and silver, his houses, lands, and bank stock, must all be left behind. He will be poor throughout eternity; too poor to buy one drop of water.

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Sorrows of the Heathen.

Innocence and happiness are inseparable: it is not surprising, therefore, that writers of a bygone age, who deoated so romantically on Pagan virtues, should have given enchanting descriptions of the happiness of a state of unostentatious nature. But hard facts, produced from every land, dissolve those idle dreams, and corroborate the apostolic testimony concerning these millions,— "hateful, and hating one another."—*As coming much nearer the truth. Dances and merriment are deceptive to the eye of the traveller; for even in laughter, the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness." (Prov. xv. 13.) No minister ever found a happy sinner at home, nor any missionary a happy heathen abroad. Heathendom, far and wide, is "the region and shadow of death." Its ceremonies and superstitions, whether developed in the Obesahim and witchcraft of Africa, or in the cruelties of India and China, make fearful havoc of human life. Idolatry is misery; its votaries have "their sorrows multiplied." (Psalm xvi. 4.) Filled as it is with wretchedness, the Pagan world has no hospitals, no infirmaries, no almshouses, no charitable institutions. Instead of alleviations of human woe, it has introduced general piracy, swinging-hooks, spikes, and murders of infants of the aged, and of captives taken in wars. It has introduced wholesale butcherings of insurgents in China, to the cannibals feasting on enemies, and sometimes on friends or strangers, in the South Sea Isles. No Howard or Wilberforce was ever heard of in heathendom: such Godlike men are the creations of Christianity. And that the Pagans are helpless is no longer to be questioned. The wise men of the world have had ample scope for trying all their schemes; but they have never discovered or made known the true God. Idolatry is the master-sin of heathenism. Philosophy has adorned and systemized that sin, but never confronted it; man's wisdom, "no better than folly," has increased, but never diminished the number of the gods. And yet idols are the ugliest things in the world,—from Ashtaroth, Beel, and Nebo to the unnumbered deities of India. The heathen are sunk too low ever to help themselves. To not a few missionaries the people have said, "O, why did you not come sooner, and make known to us the words of life and salvation?"—*Wesleyan English Mag.**

Power of Prayer.

Prayer has divided seas, rolled back flowing rivers, made fiery rocks gush into fountains, quenched flames of fire, muzzled lions, disarmed vipers and poisons, marshalled the stars against the wicked, stopped the course of the moon, arrested the sun in its rapid race, burst open iron gates, recalled souls from eternity, conquered the strongest devils, commanded legions of angels down from heaven. Prayer has bridled and chained the raging passions of man, and routed and destroyed vast armies of proud, daring, blustering atheists. Prayer has brought one man from the bottom of the sea, and carried another in a chariot of fire to heaven! What has not prayer done?—*Ryland.*

Sabbath at Sinai.

Rose early, and went out to the roof to read over and examine the passages relating to Sinai. I had read them a thousand times before; but to read them on the spot, and at the foot of the old mountain, was new and strange. The morning was clear, but cold. One of the monks kept walking about also, as if anxious to give me the company. He was not very attractive in look, and could talk nothing but Arabic. I tried him in vain with Greek and Latin. I got this much out of him, that the peaks which are visible from the convent are not the real peaks of Sinai. Jebel Misis is "fok fok."

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coming. And while they timidly lingered in a city where the sun and moon never shone, they spoke together of the city whose sun shall never set, "for there shall be no night there, and they need no candle there, neither light of the sun," nor of the moon to shine in it. And they thought of their brethren in the faith, torn, mangled and burned for the sake of the Crucified, their ashes blown over the earth, and their bones bleaching on the plains, "uncondemned and untried." For these, too, they sang the psalm of victory and esteemed them blessed. And then as they clustered together to hear the gospel read, the messenger comes with a quick tread, to tell that another and another are approaching the hour of their deliverance. They then kneel in the breathless stillness of the sepulchre, and lay their hands and heads on the coffins of their suffering brethren, that their faith fail not. Then they prepare a new song for their natal day. But now their city is deserted. They have all gone to another country. Their places shall know no more forever. I searched eagerly for their names. I found preserved in a gallery, a precious little epitaph: "Victoria sleeps in God." On the grave, how low lived she? How died she? No matter. She "sleeps in God."

We paused a few moments in some of the chapels, small square chambers. Here they held their solemn assemblies. How sweet the solace of hope and faith when the figure of a serpent, Hence some travellers have mistaken it for a representation of the brass serpent.

It was Sabbath—and Sabbath at the foot of Sinai. These rocks had heard the words, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and could testify that He who spoke these words, meant the Sabbath for a blessing, not for liberty, not for bondage. Every argument that I had read at home against the Sabbath, took for granted that the institution was evil and not good, and that Christ has brought us a happy deliverance from the Sabbath yoke! We found how good it was to rest from our journey each seventh day, and we did not find that it made the rest less pleasant to know that it was "according to the commandment." It was pleasant to hear the Sabbath-bell, even in the midst of superstition. The frequent tolling or striking was no grating sound, either at noon or midnight.

We breakfasted at nine, and had prayers in our rooms; but as we went out to have more regular Sabbath worship at the foot of the hill. We preferred the free air and broad mountain-side to our narrow chamber. So we went about a mile up the hill, to the spot where it begins to look over to the other side, and there we sat down with our Bibles. We sang together one of David's psalms, and kneeling down on the rock, we joined in prayer. After reading the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, I preached on Romans iii. 21, 22,—the sin and the righteousness—man's sin, God's righteousness,—righteousness placed at our disposal and within our reach by that very God who on this mountain had condemned our sin,—righteousness of which we are in immediate possession upon our reception of the divine testimony respecting it. We then sang the doxology, "To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" and after service we separated. I returned to the convent, and spent the afternoon in reading the passages which refer to Sinai, and in texts for my class at home.

Such as these come into my mind, "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29); "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20); "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4).

In the evening I enjoyed the starlight upon the rock. These blue Sabbath heavens! How calm they looked, even when the moon was mounting so terrible as Sinai. It seemed as if its errors were all confined to itself. It could not communicate these to the heavens above it, nor dim the brilliance of a single star. Orion looked brighter than ever, as he passed along the peaks, and shed down his quiet luster upon their awful glow.—*Desert of Sinai.*

The Catacombs of Rome.

Few antique remains possess greater interest than the catacombs of Rome. They are supposed to have originated in the excavations made to procure lava and travertine rock for building purposes. Their narrow reticulated streets, ramify into endless meshes and unsearchable ways so entirely past finding out, that a person once lost would stand a poor chance of ever finding his way back without a guide. They served as a hiding place of the persecuted Christians, and as the abode of early Christians. Along the various alleys are tiers or shelves where the dead were deposited. Occasionally the passage widened into small chambers where they held their forbidden services. They extend for many miles around and under Rome. Large portions of them still remain unexplored.

I visited those of St. Sebastian, and to be among the largest known. The entrance is through the church of that name, on the Via Appia, several miles from the city. A sluggish looking friar, in cowl and cassock, handed each of us a small taper and then led the way into the earth. A few bumps from the ceiling, soon reminded me that the ancients had either smaller hats or bodies than some of us moderns. And when I remembered the place was hallowed by devotion, I cheerfully hunched both. Down we stooped, and stepped to the right and left, hither and thither, and soon I knew as little of the entrance and the way back as if I had never been on the outside of the earth. Down we went, and deeper still through the streets of the dead, till so they appeared. On each side were their unnumbered houses with four or five stories where once their bodies were laid. I beld my taper into the coffin cases; here and there a few bones were left, and seldom these. Into these narrow niches pious, persecuted devotion softly pushed all that was mortal of those who through faith and patience had inherited the promises." In these nocturnal streets walked and stood the funeral train, with smoking torches, singing their cheerful obsequies in muffled praise. And while the living and the dead lurked and lived in the night of the grave, they would speak in the night of death, wherein "no man can work, and trim their lamps anew to prepare for it."

Early in the week I called out determining, if there was a Methodist in Paris, I would find him. What was my surprise in stepping out on the street to see immediately opposite, over a Chapel door, in large letters, Wesleyan Chapel. I cannot imagine how I missed my gaze before. But, Mr. Editor, language fails to describe the blessedness, the sweetness, and sacredness of the following Sabbath to my heart. The day before yesterday had reached me of the saddest bereavement. I ever felt, and in the wonderful goodness of God the whole service was exactly adapted to one in distress. It is a large chapel, and was crowded; a handsome, intelligent young man was in the pulpit, who, after reading the Litany and other prayers, announced the bereavement, and then the sufferings compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. It was a plain, earnest, heart-consoling discourse, and all members of orthodox churches were invited to unite in the sacrament. After service, I presented a letter of introduction to

Mr. Cook kindly given to me in England, by whom I was introduced to Mr. Greaves, the minister who had preached, and Mr. Hogarth the preacher in charge in Paris. I would look back with pleasure always to my trip, it it were only to recall the inspiring feelings that passed over me, when my hand was cordially grasped by these self-denying Methodist preachers of Paris. "You will preach for us to-night, won't you?" "O yes, labor is rest sometimes." "Ah! that is from Wesley." At night, the chapel was again filled, I suited my text to my own feelings, thinking it would suit others. My heart was full—full of sadness for a dear one lost—full of gratitude for God's love. God's spirit was with us. My tears flowed—my tears flowed in Paris. I would look back with pleasure always to my trip, it it were only to recall the inspiring feelings that passed over me, when my hand was cordially grasped by these self-denying Methodist preachers of Paris. "You will preach for us to-night, won't you?" 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