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## Poetry.

For the Wesleyan.

### CHRISTMAS ODE.

"Glory to God in the highest,—and, on earth, peace, good will toward men."

Look up, O Earth, and celebrate with joy,  
That hallowed morn that once, on Shinar's plains,  
Greeted the Shepherds, who, in spirit rapt,  
Breathless and silent, heard celestial strains.

Not heralded by kingly pomp He came,—  
He, in whose sight the jewelled crown is dim,  
Nor flaming messenger, in thunder loud,  
Bade nations tremble as they welcomed Him.

But in the calm and silent midnight air,  
Heaven's chosen minstrel poured forth the  
song.

"Glory to God, peace and good will toward men,"  
Ye hills and valleys still those notes prolong.

Guilt hid its face,—envy and hatred shrank,  
From the bright heralds of the Prince of  
Peace,—

While trembling hearts too long, by sin enthralled,  
Blest the glad words that told their swift re-  
lease.

Nor hushed that song to-day, tho' from Heaven's  
courts,  
No more the white-robed messengers appear,—  
But though unseen, are ye not hovering round,  
Bright spirits sent our drooping hearts to cheer?

Lingers not Love, a heavenly sojourner,  
Forever pointing to his distant Home,—  
And Faith and Hope the Pilgrim's footsteps  
check?

When, in God's flowery paths, he fain would  
roam.

These echo back the sweet harmonious song,—  
And many voices catch the joyful strain,—  
The dwellers in the city's crowded haunts,  
And those who stray in Nature's wide domain

And shall our lips be silent, we, for whom  
The Lord of Glory stooped to guilty earth?  
While Heaven's glad arches ring, shall we re-  
fuse

To celebrate the great Immanuel's birth?

No, blest Redeemer, on this hallowed morn,  
Touch thou our hearts with coals of living fire:  
So shall our lips delight to sing thy praise,  
Thy love, our every thought and act inspire.

No longer, swept by every passing breeze,  
Our Harps in plaintive melodies shall sound,—  
But tuned by joy, shall wake their liveliest  
chords.

And notes of gladness blend with awe profound.

Oh, let our lips essay the song of praise,  
While slowly travelling through the vale of  
tears;

So we, at least, shall join the nobler choir,—  
And swell the Anthem, through eternal years.

M. E. H.

## Christian Miscellany.

"We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts and reasonings of pure and lofty minds."—*Dr. S. A. P.*

### The Three Parallels

It is interesting to trace the harmony of the divine procedure both in the operations of providence and the influence of grace. There have been in the church of Christ three distinguished characters, who were born in different countries, and lived in different ages; and yet in whose history are found several striking traits of similarity.

The first of these, both in order of time and quality, was the great Apostle of the Gentiles, St. PAUL. This man was of Hebrew origin by both parents, who gave him a double name; Saul, from the Hebrew *Shaul*; and being born in a Roman city, of which he was free, they gave him the Roman or Latin name of Paulus. This man was educated in the highest branches of the learning of that day. He was pious-

ly disposed from his youth; and so zealous was he for the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish church, that, while persecuting unto death those who dissented from that mode of worship, he really believed that he was doing God an acceptable service. Such were his views whilst rigidly conforming to all the outward forms of the Mosaic ritual, but a total stranger to the religion of the heart. But no sooner had he received the knowledge of salvation by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a call from him to preach the Gospel, than, without consulting his own ease, honour, or emoluments, in obedience to the divine command, he went and preached the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ, which before he had so zealously laboured to destroy. This brought upon him a flood of persecution from his countrymen the Jews, and exposed him to numerous perils from the Heathen. But none of these things moved him. Inflamed with love to his Redeemer, and the souls of his fellow sinners, he ascends Mars' Hill, that emporium of idolatry, and with a courage that dares to look death and him that hath the power of it, even the devil, in the face, without fear, and there, in the presence of their idols, their altars, and philosophers, erected the standard of the Cross, and preached unto them Jesus as the only Saviour of sinners. His grand theme was justification by faith in Christ Jesus, and great success attended his ministry, with violent persecution, in every place. He closed his life and labours with the triumphant exclamation, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

The second character of the three parallels is DR. MARTIN LUTHER, by birth a German. He also was brought up a scholar; and, contrary to the intention of his father, entered himself as a Monk of the order of St. Augustine, at Erfurt. He zealously pursued his studies, and conformed with untiring diligence to all the rigid rules and ceremonies of the Church, hoping thereby to gain the divine peace and favour. While thus vainly labouring for salvation, he providentially found in the library a copy of the sacred Scriptures, which he diligently perused; and by the light of divine truth which illuminated his mind, he saw the fallacy of seeking salvation by the merit of works, and that the only way by which a sinner can be reconciled unto God, is by faith in the atoning merit of our Lord Jesus Christ. No sooner had he experienced that peace with God which is the immediate effect of justifying faith, than he began to preach the same unto others. This soon exposed him to all the fiery indignation and bloody persecution of the Papal power. Yet, amidst all their foaming rage, like Paul, he could say, "None of these things move me." When summoned to appear before the Diet at Worms, his friends, knowing that the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome is not to keep faith with heretics, reminded him of the case of John Huss, and strove to dissuade him from going; but he declared his determination to go, were there as many devils there as tiles upon the houses. He appeared before the Diet, and nobly defended his doctrines and conduct, though opposed by the Legate Eckius, whom the Pope had entrusted with his bull against Luther, and commanded to carry it into execution. But the Lord raised him up a powerful protector in the Elector of Saxony. Regardless of the bellying of the Pope's bulls,—in one of which he said, speaking of Luther and his doctrines, "If this pestiferous canker cannot be cured with gentle medicines, sharper knives must be proved, and fiery scarrings,"—he still preached and wrote in support of justification by faith alone, without the merit of works, and declared, "This doctrine shall

never be overthrown, neither by the Emperor, the Turk, the Tartar, the Persian, the Pope and his agents, nor by all the devils in hell." By the kind providence of God he escaped the snare, and was brought to his native place, where he died in great peace.

The third character in the parallel is the REV. JOHN WESLEY, a man of more than ordinary literary attainments. From early life until its close, he was warmly attached to the ceremonies and worship of the Church of England. At this period, experimental religion was at a very low ebb in this country.

"The spirit was in the letter lost,  
The substance in the shade."

By diligently studying the Scriptures, he discovered his want of that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. This he sincerely but vainly sought, by rigidly observing the rites and ordinances of the Church. After a long and fruitless search for peace with God as the reward of his devout services, he was providentially brought into the company of some pious Germans, who taught him the way of salvation by faith, by which he became possessed of a sense of the divine favour, the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him. He then began to preach the almost obsolete doctrine of justification by faith. The churches where he preached were crowded, and many were the seals of his ministry, which raised up a host of persecutors, as if he had introduced some dangerous heresy. The church-doors were closed against him; he was branded with preaching Popery, encouraging sedition and rebellion, and was called an enemy to God, the Church, and the King. Professors and profane treated him as a common enemy; but the same gracious Providence which defended Paul from the murderous designs of those who lay in wait for his life, and preserved Luther from the deadly Jesuitical snares that were laid for him, threw the shield of protection over Wesley, or he would not have escaped the murderous mobs at Wednesbury, in Cornwall, and other places, encouraged, as they frequently were, both by the Clergy and the Magistrates. Not because he was spreading heresy and sedition, but because he was awakening a drowsy ministry to a more faithful discharge of their duty, and fanning the dying embers of vital religion in the Church. Through his faithful labours, thousands who were ripe for any revolutionary purpose, were turned to seek the salvation of their souls; and thus our country was preserved from the deprecatd scourge of a revolution. The revival and propagation of vital godliness in the numerous societies of which he was the founder, has been a blessing to thousands of families, and will be to generations yet unborn.

The parallel in the history of these distinguished characters appears, 1. In their strong prejudices in favour of the Churches in which they were educated. 2. In the conversion of their souls to God, by an act of faith in the atoning merit of the Redeemer's blood. 3. Having found this salvation themselves, they began to preach it to others, and similar effects followed in each case. By the preaching of justification by faith, St. Paul beheld the Pagan philosophy of Greece and Rome deserted by its advocates, and numbers of them turned from the worship of dumb idols to serve the true and living God. When the Papal Church had buried the pure precepts of the Gospel under a mass of traditionary legends and idolatrous rites, Luther began preaching justification by faith in Christ; people understood and embraced it; the confessional was deserted, the sale of indulgences suspended, masses for the dead discontinued, and the power of the Roman Pontiff was shaken to the centre. The preaching repentance toward God, faith in

Jesus Christ, and holiness of heart, which are the standard doctrines of the Wesleyans, have produced similar effects in all parts of the world. 4. It is most prominent in their deaths. Paul could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Luther committed his soul, and his family, with holy confidence into the hands of his Redeemer. And Wesley closed a long life of labour and success, saying, "The best of all is, God is with us!"

"O may I triumph so,  
When all my warfare's past;  
And, dying, find my latest foe  
Under my feet at last!"

### The Consolations of Religion.

In the hour of misfortune, when a man, once in happy circumstances, sits down amidst the wreck of all his comforts, and sees nothing but the fragments of his fortune for himself and family, what, in the storm of affliction, is to cheer him but religion; and this can do it, and enable him to say, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord—I will joy in the God of my salvation." What but religion can comfort the poor labourer in that gloomy season when times are bad, and work is scarce, and he hardly knows where to procure his next meal? What can comfort the suffering female in that long and dreary season, when, wasting away in a deep decline, she lies, night after night, consumed by fever, and day after day, convulsed by coughing? Tell me, what can send a ray of comfort to her dark scene of woe, or a drop of consolation to her parched and thirsting lips, but religion? And when the agonized parent, with a heart half broken by the conduct of a prodigal son, exclaims—"Oh! who can tell how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" what, in that season of torture, can pour a drop of balm into the wounded spirit but religion? And when we occupy the bed-side of a departing friend, "the dreadful post of observation darker every hour," what but religion can sustain the mind, and calm the tumult of the soul? what, but this, can enable us to bear with even tolerable composure, the pang of separation? And we too must die; and here is the excellence of piety; it follows us, where no other friend can follow us, down into the dark valley of the shadow of death—stands by us when the last hand has quitted its grasp—reserves its mightiest energies for that most awful conflict—presents to the eye of faith the visions of glory rising up beyond the sepulchre, and angels advancing to receive us from the hand of earthly friends to bear us to the presence of a smiling God.

Other sources of pleasure are open only during the season of health and prosperity. Admitting that they were all which most impassioned admirers contend for; what can balls, routs, plays, cards, do, in the season of sickness, misfortune, or death? Alas! alas! they exist then only in recollection, and the recollection of them is painful.—*Rev. J. A. James.*

### Exhaustless Supplies.

For these six thousand years, God has been multiplying pardons, and yet free grace is not tired—Christ undertook to satisfy, and he hath money enough to pay. It were folly to think that an emperor's revenue will not pay a beggar's debt. Mercy is an ocean, ever-flowing, yet never full.—The saints carry loads of experience with them to heaven. Free grace can show you large accounts and a long bill cancelled by the blood of Christ.—*Manton.*