

## RELIGIOUS.

To the lovers of rhetoric we would recommend the following beautiful specimen from the pen of the Rev. John Newland Maffit. The article is admirably calculated to impress the mind of the serious reader with the solemnity and grandeur of the Sacred Writings, abounding, as they do, with the most lofty sentiments, together with the finest in poetry. We regret that we can give but a part of it in this number—it will, however, be concluded in our next.

### BIBLICAL SUBLIMITY.

It is now a sort of standing acknowledgment in the mouths of thoughtless thousands, that the Sacred Writings abound with sentences of matchless sublimity. But ask these amateurs of the sublime in what passages they find the thrilling emotion which takes hold of the heart and binds the frame in subdued wonder, they only repeat what the rhetoricians have carved out for them; they say, 'there be light and there was light'—they say, 'God came from Teman and the Holy One from Mount Paran!' But however sublime may be these often quoted texts, there are yet deeper fountains of emotion, bottomless as the ocean of wisdom which first gave birth to passion, and then rolled up the element on which it may feed for ever.

It is not our design to analyse the emotion of sublimity; the philosophers and rhetoricians have done this long centuries since. Neither shall we draw our visions of sublimity from the stupendous drama of the apocalypse, in which heaven, earth with its far off ages, and hell with its unfathomed horrors, appear and are withdrawn like the shifting scenes of a mysterious but terribly graphic development, alike important to men, demons and heavenly ones. Neither shall we travel over the field so fully and faithfully explored by Lowth, by Michaelis, and other critics on Hebrew poetry. It has been remarked by a philologist that the Hebrew language, above all others, is well adapted to express energetic action. Strong and discriminating and powerful, the Hebrew phrase never slumbers over the idea it would express. It borrows its illustrations from nature, and therefore the biblical student must study nature, to know what inspiration means. It flashes its undimmed blaze upon a subject

before hidden or dark or complicated, and does more, in a word, than philosophy could have done for ages.

Without reference, then, to criticism or philosophical inquiry, we will indulge ourselves over a few passages of inspiration, as the pervading spirit of the 'book of books' would teach us.

There was a time when the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth. The clouds had never gathered upon the mountain brow; never had the solemn thunder called out from cloud to cloud the growling summons of the storm; never had the red lightning fringed the bosom of the black tempest with rapid and lissing furnace fires, untamed and savage and unsparring, the very bolts of vengeance launched red hot upon the watery atmosphere with the lion's roar of power.—What was the action of the Almighty mind in this season of drought, when there was not a man to till the ground? Simply and sublimely this: 'There went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.' The first white vapour that ever exhaled from shore and fountain and flood was seen creeping along the serpentine brooks, gathering density and shape in its progress, disclosing its heaviest columns where Pison and Gihon and Hiddekel and Euphrates rolled their waters to far separated regions. This mist hung like a bridal curtain awhile over the earth, then went up and was dissolved in showers, and Eden bloomed afresh beneath the first tears of the affectionate heavens.

Man had perished on account of infidelity and crime beneath a deluge of waters. The whole race, with the exception of a single family, was extinct. This family was shut with the frail planks of gopher wood between them and the hungry waves which entombed humanity and the rich memorials of ancient art and grandeur. One hundred and fifty days had this melancholy remnant of mankind heard the pattering of tremendous rains and the beating of such surges as never might have raved except on a shoreless ocean. Hope was dying within them. What now was the action of the Eternal mind? 'And God remembered Noah, \* \* \* and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged.' Not a single swelling epithet here used or needed. Memory is described as the act of the infinite God—and they