

fastings, and self denial, they reap the fulness of vanity—the reality of emptiness. If it be not true, how wise are they who reject its illusory happiness, and harden the heart, and blind the mind, and callous the feelings, against all its warnings, reproofs, checks, strictness, and preparatory repentings. They are really happy who, at the time of their enjoyment, feel that what gives them felicity is substantial and real; but what happiness can that be which is derived from deceptive promises and fanciful prospects of a future blessedness which is, in substance, like the fairy fields and paradisaical gardens expected by the deluded followers of Mohammed. If it be not true, it inspires hopes only to deceive; it nourishes expectations only to destroy; it promises felicity only to disappoint; it presents before the mind a prospect of glory and ineffable joy finally to overspread it with the darkness of death; it feeds the soul with the image of a future happiness never to be realized; allures it with the shadow of a heaven whose substance will never be obtained. Religion, whether it be true or false deprives us of many worldly enjoyments; it separates relations and friends; it divides households into distinct parts, and disturbs the peace of many families and communities; but if it be false, these effects are the result of no adequate cause, and are completely unjustifiable.

If religion be true, it is the best of all principles on which to act, for, 1st. It corrects the taste of mankind in regard to pleasure, and leads them to seek it from the purest sources; it prepares them to partake, with a superior relish, of the good things of this life, and to derive comfort and satisfaction from even their daily occupation; it affords its possessors confidence and fortitude in the hour of danger and affliction; it gives peace of mind amidst the severest trials, and composure of spirit in scenes of terror which make the irreligious man fear and quake. Secondly, it influences those who enjoy its power, and feel its sacred tendency, to love their friends with true affection; it inspires them with feelings of philanthropy and universal regard; it teaches them to do good to all their fellow-men, to love even their enemies, to return blessing for cursing, and prayers for persecution and reproaches; it inculcates respect in subjects, and moderation in rulers, honor towards parents, and mildness, though strictness of discipline, towards children; it encourages diligence in business, while it enjoins fervency in spirit for the service of God; it opens the heart and hand to the poor, and pours forth its charity upon all classes of men, and its benevolence and assistance to those who are in wretchedness and want. Thirdly, If it be true, it yields more substantial joy than can be obtained from all the anticipations and possessions of earth, for it bids us look beyond this world, and beyond the grave, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; it points to the immeasurable fields of eternity for the final abode of the righteous, where beauty unrivalled, pleasure unalloyed, delight unthought, unheard of by mortals, amid the fragrant groves of the celestial paradise, refreshed by the breezes of God's heavenly influence, cheered by the glory of the Lamb who is the light of the place, enlivened by the hosannas of the angelic choir, enchant the mind, and enrapture the soul. If it be true, it affords the greatest consolation in the hour of death, for it instructs the Christian to die in the assured hope of a glorious resurrection; that his body and soul, hereafter united, shall shine in the brightness of the Redeemer's likeness, and that he shall never suffer the reverse of his happy condition. If this be the result of a course of conduct regulated by the precepts of the gospel, that principle which affords such excellent rules of life, induces such superior advantages, and ends in such felicitous consequences, ought surely to be highly prized, and constantly and strictly acted upon.

That religion insures all this, may be proved from its origin, nature, and means of operation. Should this proof be substantiated, the former view of this subject, considered as deceitful and unworthy of trust, will, of course, be without foundation, and hence of feeble tenure. That we are the offspring of chance, that we are sustained in life, independent of any other being, let him believe who can and is so disposed; but we will acknowledge that in the mechanism of our bodies, in the combi-

nation of matter and spirit, of which we feel ourselves possessed, and in the continuation of our existence, both as material and immaterial, there are traces of a superior wisdom, consummate skill, infinite goodness, and absolute perfection. This being the case, it is unwise to suppose that our Creator would leave us without rules of conduct suited to our nature, and adapted to our situations. The same Being who made us, has, undoubtedly, a right to demand our obedience and our love. For the expression of this right, and to give a knowledge of the manner of its satisfaction, he must make some revelation of himself to his creatures. While we believe that this being is infinitely good, and holy without the least moral blemish, we must necessarily believe that his will and requirements would be a transcript of this purity and benevolence. While we believe in the eternity of this being, and in our own future and endless destiny, we must necessarily believe that the duties we perform, and the transgressions we commit, relatively to this will and these obligations, will affect this destiny. Such a revelation has been made, such a transcript has been given, such an influence has been declared. In the government of the natural, moral, and celestial worlds, such laws only are established as are absolutely necessary. In the management of the universe, and in the regulation of all its component parts, however extensive or minute, there is no waste of power or wisdom. Were it necessary that spirits in the eternal world should be subjected to the performance of legal obligations, such obligations would be imposed. Were it necessary that day should not be succeeded by darkness, the light would always remain, and the sun no more go down. Were it not necessary that man should be susceptible of moral impressions and moral cultivation, he would not have been endowed with passions and faculties suited to this end. All mankind are not in the same moral or natural condition, and they have been differently situated in these respects, in different ages of the world. That God would make various revelations of himself and his will, that he would impose injunctions in some manner dissimilar, relatively to these several conditions and ages, is predicated of his infinite wisdom and love. That this is the case will be discovered by referring to the record which God hath given us of his dealings with the children of men. Hence we observe that to our first parents in a state of innocence and holiness, was given this simple prohibition, "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." To them, after their fall, God made the promise of the Saviour. To Abraham he gave a clearer knowledge of his character and designs. To Moses he gave tables of stone, which were graven by the finger of God, and on which the divine mind was inscribed. To Isaiah and others of the prophets was imputed a manifest discovery of the glory which was to follow the advent of the Messiah. To John the Baptist was delivered the preaching of repentance, and of a kingdom which was at hand. To Christ, the Redeemer of ruined man, was it committed to open a new and living way into the holy of holies, and to teach mankind the extent of Jehovah's requirements. And to the apostles were entrusted the recording and transmission of the pure doctrines of the gospel, and of the gracious purposes of this new merciful dispensation.

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]

### MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

#### EXTRACTS

From the Report of the Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, for the year ending December 1828.

The Committee present their Annual Report to their Subscribers and Friends, with increased conviction of the vast importance of Christian Missions to the spiritual and eternal interests of mankind; and with invigorated confidence in the power of the Gospel to subjugate the world to its mild, benignant, and felicitating influence. The conflict betwixt light and darkness may be severe and long-continued, but "Truth is great," and will ultimately triumph. The cruelties, obscenities, and depravities of idolatry have been unveiled, and its revolting and degrading character irrefutably proved. The people that sat in darkness and the shadow of death have seen,

though distantly and dimly, the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings, and are imploring the counsel and assistance of more favored nations. A cry has been heard from the desert, "Come over and help us." The energies of the Christian world are awakening into action; and the appalling disclosures of the thralldom and misery in which myriads of Pagans are involved, are stimulating Christian philanthropists to new and extraordinary acts of beneficence and sympathy.

During the past year, communications have been received from the Missionaries of this Society, strongly expressing the gloom and wretchedness which still overspread those extensive portions of the globe, which have either not been favoured at all, or but partially favoured with the ministry of evangelical truth; but delightful intelligence has also been received of the extending influence of the Gospel, and of thousands who have been rescued by it from ignorance and misery. New proofs, indeed, have been given of the arduous, and, in many instances, the perilous nature of those endeavours which are requisite to attack the strongly fortified citadels of delusion and crime, and to achieve victories of mercy over every form of opposition; but new demonstrations have also been afforded of the efficiency of the labours of zealous and faithful men, to bring into the obedience of faith the untutored African and the idolatrous Asiatic, the superstitious European and the isolated fishermen of North America.

Christian Missions are assuming a novel character, at once interesting and important. No longer have Missionaries to inquire where it may be deemed practicable to erect the Gospel standard; or where the self-denying messenger of mercy may venture cautiously to attempt to teach the nature and the doctrines of the Christian revelation; the door of entrance into the midst of densely populated and awfully benighted countries, has been thrown wide open; and the wanderer of the wilderness has earnestly sought instruction from the Christian Missionary. "The fields are white unto the harvest;" and a numerous band of pious and devoted Missionaries are only waiting for necessary supplies, to speed with grateful cheerfulness to any portion of the globe to which they may be appointed; there to dedicate themselves to God and to his cause, "not counting their lives dear unto themselves, that they may finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus Christ."

#### THE IRISH MISSION.

The accounts from the Missions in Ireland, to which the Committee first direct their attention, continue to be of a favourable description. Thirteen Districts are still occupied in that country by twenty-one Missionaries, who are unwearied in their zeal, successful in their exertions, and specially cheered by that brighter dawning of the spiritual day with which the sister country is at present favoured. The Schools also, which are established for the instruction of children, and to which the youth of every denomination are admitted, are widely disseminating the uncorrupted principles of Scriptural truth among large masses of the youthful population.

Mr. Edwards, the Committee's General Superintendent of the Schools, observes:—

"Though we have at present three masters less than the number allowed by the Committee, owing to affliction and the difficulty of obtaining suitable and competent ones, we have upon our list a greater number of children than, I think, we have ever before reported. We now reckon 1438; of whom 702 read the Scriptures; 505 are taught writing; 336 are learning arithmetic; of these, 267 can say the multiplication-table, whilst many are learning, and others can say the whole of the tables of weights and measures. Two or three of the masters put the whole, or nearly the whole, of their children under a course of catechetical instruction, but we return only 607 as regular catechumens. About 1000 of the children attend our Sunday-Schools, of whom 164 can say the Church Catechism, and others are learning it; 315 can repeat four or five sections, or the whole of the first part, with one or two sections of the second part of the Conference Catechism. Many of the children manifest great aptness in committing large portions of the Scripture to memory. One boy could repeat 2000 ver-