

POETRY.

HOURS WITH CHRIST.

Saviour slain, and slain for me,
While thy mercy I implore,
While I humbly bend the knee,
While my prayer is gushing o'er,
Speak refreshment to my soul,
Great physician make me whole.

Though abased and full of shame,
Sinking with well-founded fear;
All my trust is in thy name,
Bid thy love to me appear;
Bursting like a day of light,
Through the stormy cloud of night.

Not the lightning's deadly blaze
Bursting wheresoe'er it flies;
But the summer morning's rays,
As the healing beam doth rise;
Bidding night and terror cease,
Bringing glory, bringing peace.

Oh! to tread life's weary way
Cheered by my Redeemer's smile;
Sun of righteousness, thy ray
Will its weariness beguile;
Making life a happy road
To a happier abode.

EDMESTON.

Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

COMMUNION SABBATH IN THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

The day was calm and mildly beautiful. It was one of those grey summer mornings when not a breath of air prevails strong enough, to rend or fold aside the thin veil of shadowy vapours spread softly over the peaceful bosom of the green reposing earth, and serving also to mitigate the bright radiance of the brow of heaven. The sun himself seemed to move with more sober and chastened majesty up the smooth steep of the sky. Even the song of the birds was attuned to a lower, and, as it were, a more pensive tone, harmonising with the serene and almost thoughtful aspect of nature, which seemed to be in the enjoyment universally of a sacred peace, a hallowed Sabbath stillness, earnest and foretaste of the heavenly rest.

Groups of the assembling people began now to appear, from hall, and farm, and cottage, bending their steps towards the house of prayer, along the public roads, and the church-way by-paths, across the green sward—at one time half hid beneath the shading of trees, or sinking out of sight amid the undulations of the ground; at another coming out into full relief on the heights and broad bare turnings of the roads and fields. The whole district was pouring out its population, from the aged grandfathers and grandmothers, clad in antique and well-preserved garb,—perhaps the wedding attire of other days,—to the half-grown boys and girls permitted to come, not to swell the crowd, but to witness, and prepare for themselves at no distant period engaging in, the celebration of that most sacred ordinance. It was beautiful to mark the little rills of human life flowing from many a glen, and valley, and brae and little hill, each for a while on its own separate path, till they gradually met, and converged and sped along blending and swelling into broader and deeper streams, as they approached the church-yard and the church,—the resting place of the human dead, and the temple of the living God. And it was most affecting to think, as one viewed the collecting flock, of the near, the certain bourn of all, and for many the uncertain hereafter.

In many of these groups of the assembling people there prevailed a deep, unbroken silence, each being too much occupied with his own thoughts to have any inclination to talk with the others. In some there might be seen a father engaged in a low and almost whispering tone of conversation with a son, who was that day, for the first time, to become a communicant, and to whom he was imparting at once instruction and encouragement; or a mother similarly occupied with a daughter. And on many a youthful countenance might be seen the mingled expression of anxiety and hope, humility and resolution, self-denial and trust in God; fear lest the world and temptation might prevail, and lead them to stain their Christian profession, and the close-clinging grasp of an earnest faith in Him who alone could keep their feet from falling, and preserve them blameless. And many a tender and pious word, from a gentle and affectionate mother's tongue, sunk that day into the softened heart of son or daughter, too deep to be reached by all the wiles of mortal or spiritual adversaries, and made an impression too strong to be effaced by all the rude encounters of life and time.

There were, no doubt, others less awakened to a right feeling of the solemnities of the occasion and appearance betrayed a thoughtless levity of heart and manner, which gave little reason to hope that they could derive much advantage from their presence in the house of prayer. Yet even among such it has been found, that though they may have "come to laugh," they have "remained to pray;" the arrow, shot at a venture, has reached their heart unseen, never to be extracted, till it has subdued them into obedience to the King of kings.

Within the manse all was silent and sacred peace. The feeling of depression had passed away from the heart of Mr. Douglas. His mind had seemed for a time to sink beneath the weight of his sacred duties; it was now elevated by the power of their entire ingrandeur, a solemn dignity, in his manner, which showed that he was not overshadowed but inspirited by the powers of the world to come,—upheld and borne onward by the might and the majesty of the message which he had to deliver. Yet his tender and affectionate attention to all his family was not diminished, but rather increased; while to Margaret especially, he acted like an elder brother more than a father, so kind, so encouraging, so frank was his manner, and in terms of such equality and companionship did he address her. Mrs. Douglas also, spoke henceforth the journey of life should be shared on equal terms, its aim and purpose being now the same. Tears of joy and gratitude repeatedly filled the eyes of Margaret, for she felt and understood the meaning and the spirit of their conduct,—she perceived her "the household of faith," among whom all the distinctions of life and time disappear in the contemplation of eternity. James perceived, admired, and yet wondered at, the perceptible change in the manner of his parents and his elder sister to each other,—could resolve upon the process; or rather, that he did not possess the pre-requisite inward and re-moulding in that he had ever done before, and wished that he had after endeavouring for a time to restrain her feelings, at length cast her arms about Margaret's neck, and sobbed out, "Margaret, dear Margaret! be still my sister!"

At length the bell pealed out its joyful invitation, and the minister and his family proceeded towards the church. Many of the people had already taken their seats; but considerable numbers were still standing in the church yard, and around the doors. It was very pleasing to witness the expression of love and respect on every countenance, as they first made loved them into the church.

"I'm right glad to see the minister looking so well the day," said a venerable old man, who had just made way for him, and was about to follow.

"It is the happiness of his heart that brings the bloom to his cheek," said old Marion Gibson, who had so much recovered as to be able to attend, as she hobbled towards the church door, leaning on her son's arm; "And if it be allowed for a faithful servant to enter into some portion of the joy of his Lord, even while in the body, I ken no man more likely to possess that joy than just our ain minister."

The solemn services of the day proceeded with even more than usual solemnity. There was a deep and fervent earnestness of manner in the minister, which communicated itself to the audience, and fixed them in breathless attention. This, again, by its collected sympathies of many hundred human hearts, till every nerve thrilled, and his whole frame throbbing and laboured with the mighty heave of his dilated mind, as he strove to give adequate utterance to that most transcendent theme that ever heart burneth and lip trembled to commemorate,—INFINITE REDEMPTIVE LOVE. Again and again was the whole assembly hushed into deepest silence, like the deep pauses of nature amid the peelings of a thunder-storm;—again and again did the long protracted, sobbing bosom, like the sudden and deep gusts of autumn, rustling among the shed leaves of the forest. The young communicants felt their hearts kindling within them, and were ready to say, with the rapt apostle, "It is good for us to be here." And, it not a few bended their heads, and until they were compelled to hands, to hide their strong emotion, and in some instances, the bursting tears.

But, when he came to enumerate the specific characteristics of the worthy communicant, who came clothed in the wedding-garment,—and of the unbid-

den, the intrusive guest, who disregarded that attire his voice sunk into a low, searching, and pleading tone, as, one by one, he stripped off the flimsy pretences by which the heart too often strives to deceive itself, detected the most secret motives, and, with skilful hand, unwound the sophistries of delusive self-esteem, or pharisaical self-righteousness. To many a soul did he reveal its own character, in a manner which could not be gainsayed, and which plunged it into profound self-abasement; and not a few did he rescue from that depressing anxiety which often defrauds the humble Christian of that "joy and peace in believing," which he might have obtained, had he better understood either his own nature, or the true meaning and application of the Gospel-message of reconciliation. The elders looked at each other, as they, with the congregation, alternately trembled and glowed, while the doctrines of the Divine Word, faithfully stated, were searching the very depths of their souls. Much as they had previously admired and loved their minister, never had their minds so much enjoyed, and at the same time bowed beneath his ministry, as on that Communion Sabbath.

The preliminary duties having been gone through, he took his station at the head of the hallowed table, breathed forth a prayer of the most simple yet sublime and spiritual devotion, and, over the consecrated symbols of salvation, pledged anew his people's vows of holy allegiance to the King of kings. A grey-haired venerable man, a neighbouring minister, next took his station. Mr. Douglas looked round, and his wife and daughter approached, and seated themselves in such a manner that Margaret should receive the sacred symbols from his hands. The greater part of the young communicants accompanied by their parents, placed themselves at the same table that they might enjoy the privilege of participating at the same time. The aged minister, officiating, marked the affecting aspect of the scene, and availing himself of it, addressed them in a most impressive manner,—calling earth and heaven to bear witness to their vows, and adjuring them all, by the holy love then filling their souls, to keep these vows unbroken, till they should all again meet,—not on earth, not around that table, (for that the uncertainties of life, and the certainties of death, rendered impossible,) but in the presence of the Redeemer, in his everlasting kingdom. It was a solemn moment,—a moment not to be forgotten till every eye that beheld it had been closed in death,—nay, such a moment can never be forgotten, being infused into the very essence of many an immortal soul, and so consigned to the imperishable records of eternity.

At the conclusion of the peculiar services of the day, Mr. Douglas resumed his place in the pulpit, to give the closing address. Its tone was of the same elevated and spiritual character which had distinguished all his labours that day. Faithfully did he point out to his people the dangers which would beset them on returning to the world, and resuming their ordinary social and personal duties; and wisely did he instruct them in the only methods by which they could be enabled to maintain the Christian warfare, and press onwards in the Christian pilgrimage. With great tenderness did he address himself to the young communicants; and, in accents meltingly affectionate, did he implore them to hold fast the beginning of their faith, to persevere to the end, watching unto prayer, and keeping their affections fixed on things above, and their raiment of outward behaviour undefiled from the world, that they might not bring discredit on the Christian name, nor lose the hallowed fervour of their first love to him whose vows were now upon them,—and that when the cry should be heard, "Behold he cometh," they might meet him and enter into joy unspeakable and full of glory. Long afterwards it was remarked, that his feelings seemed to cling peculiarly to the aged, who might never again enjoy that ordinance, and to the young, who had done so for the first time; and that he seemed as if he could not know how to cease addressing to them the language of earnest admonition, pathetic entreaty, kind encouragement, faithful forewarning, and tender, heart-warm, Christian love, while the eloquence of his mind-illuminated countenance gave life, energy, and power to every word.

A calm, thoughtful, and impressive sermon, full of sound instruction in all that pertained to Christian life and character, from the sage lips of the venerable friend who had aided in the former services, closed most appropriately the public duties of the Communion Sabbath. The people separated, with grave decorum, and retraced their homeward course, conversing on the scenes they had beheld, the truths they had heard, the duties they had been engaged in, and the feelings they had shared. Many went home healed and rejoicing; some with the arrow in their heart and very few untouched and unimpressed. In many a family that evening was the worship of God resumed, where for a time it had been neglected; in some begun for the first time, and in all, where it had been usual, it was conducted with more than common spi-