

Christian Mirror.

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WEEKLY.]

"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL xii. 4.

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POETRY.

RELIGION—WHAT IS IT ?

BY BISHOP HEBER.

Is it to go to church to day,
To look devout and seem to pray,
And, ere to-morrow's sun goes down,
Be dealing slander through the town ?

Does every sanctimonious face
Denote the certain reign of grace ?
Does not a phiz that scowls at sin,
Oft veil hypocrisy within ?

Is it to make our daily walk,
And of our own good deeds to talk,
Yet often practise secret crime,
And thus mis-spend our precious time ?

Is it for sect and creed to fight,
To call our zeal the rule of right,
When what we wish is at the best,
To see our church excel the rest ?

Is it to wear the Christian dress,
And love to all mankind profess,
To treat with scorn the humble poor,
And bar against you every door ?

Oh, no ! religion is not this :
Its fruit more sweet and fairer is—
Its precept this : to others do
As you would have them do to you.

It grieves to hear an ill report,
And scorns with human woes to sport—
Of others' deeds it speaks no ill,
But tells of good or else keeps still.

And does religion this impart ?
Then may its influence fill my heart ;
Oh ! hark the blissful, joyful day,
When all the earth shall own its sway !

"I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE."

Thou art the Way—and he who sighs,
Amid this starless waste of woe,
To find a pathway to the skies,
A light from heaven's eternal glow,
By thee must come, thou gate of love,
Through which the saints undoubting trod ;
Till faith discovers, like the dove,
An ark, a resting place in God.

Thou art the Truth—whose steady day
Shines on through earthly blight and bloom,
The pure, the everlasting ray,
The lamp that shines e'en in the tomb ;
The light that out of darkness springs,
And guideth those that blindly go ;
The word whose precious radiance flings
Its lustre upon all below.

Thou art the Life—the blessed well,
With living waters gushing o'er,
Which those who drink shall ever dwell
Where sin and thirst are known no more ;
Thou art the mystic pillar given,
Our lamp by night, our light by day ;
Thou art the sacred bread from heaven :—
Thou art the Life—the Truth—the Way.

THE CASKET.

THE BEST DEFENDER.

AFTER all, there is no better shield than a good conscience. How the weapons of the wicked break when they strike it ! How quiet he, who is thus protected, may be in the day of battle !

We say "may be." But some good men worry themselves exceedingly because their good is evil spoken of, their motives misunderstood, their actions maligned. They lie awake at night and get pale and thin, and sometimes they drop into the grave, under the pen or tongue of slander, when a little more grace or considerable philosophy would have taught them that bad men are seldom persecuted, and that fire is always needed to refine gold.

Very good men spend their time and their talents, and their money even, in defending themselves against the aspersions of their enemies ; and after they have fought the battle out and got the victory, they are not thought quite as well of by the public as they would have been had they suffered in peace the assaults of their foes. Controversy brings out the weak as well as the strong points of character, and thus a man sinks in the esteem of some while he rises in that of others.

But he, who knows he is right, and of whom the world knows he will not do wrong, never loses by keeping still while the small artillery of the jealous or malicious is playing at him.

This is a sublime advantage which right always has. It is better than a coat of mail or a giant's spear. It is both. It wards off the blow, and gives another. Silently but surely it does execution ; and the man that has it on his side is as sure of final victory as the returning conqueror.

We can understand, on this principle, how a philosopher can be a martyr rather than make a fool of himself by admitting that the sun moves around the earth. He knows he is right ; and while he will not quarrel with the ignorant for doubting his opinion, he will not abandon his opinions to please them. He knows he is right, and it is easier to be drawn and quartered than to say he is mistaken when he is not.

But if this quiet adherence to right is an honour to learning, how much more to a man of God. What loftier height can a good man wish to stand upon than on the consciousness of being right ? He is safe and admired, though hell roars at his feet. The acclamations of angels cheer him, and the smile of God, like sunshine, breaks through the clouds upon him.

Then let the good man, the pastor, the officer, the agent, all who are set to do work for others, as well as Christians in the noiseless walks of life, let them take heart when their names are cast out as evil, their virtues overlooked, their faults exaggerated, and their conduct censured. If they would escape such trials they must go to heaven. Short of it, they will have them. But when offences come, be not cast down or even ruffled. Perhaps you are to be blamed. Search and see. If you are wrong, repent and reform. If you are right, stick to it ; but do not get into a passion. Be quiet, and slander itself will die of its own venom, as the caught serpent pierces itself with its deadly sting.

We repeat it, there is no better shield than a good conscience. This is an excellent doctrine to preach ; and if all men would always practise upon it, the moral world would be saved the trouble of many a wordy war.

TO A MOTHER.

You have a child on your knee. Listen a moment. Do you know what that child is ? It is an immortal being ; destined to live for ever ! It is destined to be happy or miserable ! And who is to make it happy or

miserable ! You—the mother ! You who gave it birth, the mother of its body, are also the mother of its soul for good or ill. Its character is yet undecided ; its destiny is placed in your hands. What shall it be ? That child may be a liar ; you can prevent it. It may be a drunkard ; you can prevent it. It may be a thief ; you can prevent it. It may be a murderer ; you can prevent it. It may be an atheist ; you can prevent it. It may live a life of misery to itself and mischief to others ; you can prevent it. It may descend into the grave with an evil memory behind and dread before ; you can prevent it. Yes, you, the mother, can prevent all these things. Will you or will you not ? Look at the innocent ! Tell me, will you save it ? Will you watch over it, will you teach it, warn it, discipline it, subdue it, pray for it ? Or will you, in the vain search of pleasure, or in idleness, or in fashion or folly, or in the chase of some other bauble, or even in household cares, neglect the soul of your child, and leave the little child, the little immortal to take wing alone, exposed to evil, to temptation, to ruin ? Look again at the infant ; Place your hand on its little heart ! Shall that heart be deserted by its mother, to beat perchance in sorrow, disappointment, wretchedness and despair ? Place your ear on its side, and hear that heart beat ! How rapid and vigorous the strokes ! How the blood is thrown through the little veins ! Think of it ; that heart, in its vigor now, is the emblem of a spirit that will work with ceaseless pulsation, for sorrow or joy for ever.

THE WORKERS OF INIQUITY.

"Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread."—Ps. liiii. 11.

BUT who are the workers of iniquity ? Answer. Those who eat up God's people, whether professor or non professor. Who have been the persecutors of God's people and troublers in Israel, in all ages ? Answer. Professors of religion, and those who claim to be the true Israel, the favorite children of God. Yes, it was this very class of persons who willfully put to death the Lord of Glory. They valued themselves on being the seed of Abraham, and in their sight the apostles were so vile that they deemed him unfit to live. Alas for poor fallen human nature, we find it ever the same. As it was in the days of Christ and his apostles, so it is now, only men are worse than ever. * * * The apostle has said, that if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution. Who does not know that the keenest persecutions came from professors of religion, false brethren. It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom they come. It is only necessary for a child of God to awake and be active, to incur the jealousy, evil speeches and hate of all around him, especially of those who are known as troublers in Israel. Mankind cannot bear reproof. It is not the prayer of an un-renewed heart, to say like David "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness," &c. No, they prefer to be flattered with smooth things. The example of a devoted good man is the greatest reproof that a Laodicean church and a wicked world can receive. Nothing sooner excites jealousy & hatred among evil men than to see a man, and especially an obscure man, take a decided stand for God. Such a man may expect speedily to be devoured of men. And yet, you will hear these same wicked men saying, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." Deluded souls, have you yet to learn, that religion consists in that fervent charity which will make you bridle your tongue, swift to hear, long suffering and kind, speaking evil of none, but forbearing one another, and forgiving one another in love. Have you forgotten that the apostle John has given you a rule whereby you may know whether your love of the brethren is of the right kind. Hear him, "By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." It may be you have forgotten some of the commandments, if so, you are not keeping them. David says, "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Again, "Inkeeping the commands there is great reward." Christ says, "Then are ye my friends when ye do whatsoever I command you."