

NOVEL READING.—So long as the slightest shade of uncertainty rests upon a question, we are not fond of dogmatizing; but there is, at least, one deliverance about works of fiction, in the safety and soundness of which we feel altogether confident. Did we hear of any one acquaintance who had bidden his conclusive adieu to them all, we should not have the slightest apprehension lest either the moral or intellectual of his nature should at all suffer by it. Did we hear of him on the other hand, much and greedily addicted to the perusal of them, we should tremble for the deterioration of both.—*Chalmers.*

TRUE RELIGION.—Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace." Are there no oil in true religion? doubtless there are; but they spring not from religion, but from self.—*Howells.*

SOCIALISM.—"Call it not socialism, call it devilism, for it has made me more a devil than a man!" exclaimed a poor dying man in my neighbourhood, says the Rev. J. A. James to one of his town Missionaries who visited him on his death-bed. "I got into company that led me to socialism, and to drinking. I rejected the Bible, denied the Saviour and persuaded myself there was no hereafter; and as the result acted the part of a bad father and bad husband. I have the testimony of my master, that I was a steady and respectable man, until I listened to the Owenites; but since that time I have become a vagabond, and they who formerly knew me, have shunned me in the streets. The system of the Owenites is worse than that of Paine, such, adds Mr James, is the testimony of a dying victim, and martyr of socialism, and a similar confession has been made by many others. I have seen the husband once moral, happy, and useful, as long as he professed religion; and have seen him in his misery, poverty, and ruin, since he has thrown it off; I have heard the impassioned accents of his heart broken wife, so far as weakness allowed her to be impassioned, exclaiming as she looked at her miserable companion, 'Oh, sir, he has been a changed man ever since he went among the Owenites!' such is socialism.

MISERY.—Were we called upon to name the object under the sun which excites the deepest commiseration in the heart of Christian sensibility, which includes in itself the most affecting incongruities, which contains the sum and substance of human misery we would not hesitate to say, "An irreligious old age."—*Hannah More.*

POLLOK'S "COURSE OF TIME."

It was in the spirit of devout self-consecration that Pollok entered on the composition of "The Course of Time" in the beginning of December, 1824, and at the age of twenty-seven. The first hint of his poem, we learn from some interesting reminiscences by his brother, was suggested by Byron's lines to Darkness, which he took up one evening in a moment of great mental desolation. While perusing those lines, he was led to think of the resurrection as a theme on which something new might be written. He proceeded, and on the same night finished a thousand verses, intending that the subject of the poem should be the Resurrection. Meanwhile thoughts and images crowded upon his mind, which it would have been unnatural to introduce under such a theme: when all at once the whole plan of his work rose before him with the completeness and the vividness of a prophet's vision. "One night," says his brother, "while he was sitting alone in Moorhouse old room, letting his mind wander back and forward over things at large, in a moment, as if by an immediate inspiration, the idea of the poem struck him, and the plan of it, as it now stands, stretched out before him: so that at one glance he saw through it, from end to end, like an avenue, with the resurrection as only part of the scene. He never felt, he said, as he did then; and he shook from head to foot, overpowered with feeling: knowing that to pursue the subject was to have no middle way between great success and great failure. From this time, in selecting

and arranging materials, he saw through the plan so well that he knew to what book, as he expressed it, the thoughts belonged whenever they set up their heads."

From this time till the finishing of his poem his whole soul was on fire with his subject. In the old room at Moorhouse, on the sublime path between Moorhouse and Eaglesham, when hastening to join the worshippers on the "hallowed mom," on the lofty summits of Balgicli, and, officerest of all, when he communed with his own heart upon his bed and was silent, he was struggling with his great argument, and seeking to give to the images of Truth that moved before his spirit "immortal shape and form."—Thoughts rushed upon his mind as if, like the widow's cruse, it had been supplied by miracle; and only weariness and faintness of his body seemed to clog the movements of a spirit that at this period spurned repose.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.—It is a growing conviction in my mind that vital and influential Christianity consists, much more than is ordinarily apprehended, in an intimate personal acquaintance with our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the great revealer of God; He is the revealed Divinity. The man knows the Father who knows the Son; that man alone knows the Father. Christ is Himself "the Way, the Truth, and the life;" and it is only in so far as we really know and love Him, that we are "in the Way," or that "the Truth and the Life" are in us.—*Dr. Brown's Discourses of our Lord Illustrated.*

"GOD WITH US.—God with man! with ourselves! How inspiring the doctrine! Art thou a pilgrim, walking in perplexed ways? He is thy guide. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Thou art a creature of affliction and sorrow. He is with thee as thou passeth through the water and through the fire. "Call upon Him in the day of trouble: He shall deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Him." Thou art tempted. But He is thy shield and thy strong tower. "In that He suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Dost thou feel thine own littleness and insignificance? Thy God thinketh upon thee. "The hairs of your head are all numbered." "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." Thou mayest be little and unknown among men, but a precious diadem in the hand of God. "He is nigh unto thee in all that thou callest on Him for." Various and changing may be the scenes through which thou passeth. But all shall be tempered by His wisdom for thine own advantage. "All things work together for good unto them that love Him." Thou shalt die. But, when thou walkest in the shadow of death, He shall be with thee. Thou shalt mould in the dust. But thy "flesh also shall rest in hope;" "for in His Book all thy members are written." And, while adoring "Him that sitteth upon the throne," and "the Lamb which is in the midst," God with us shall be the burden of thy song for ever. Is Christ our Emmanuel? God with us? Then let us take care that we are with Him—coming to Him habitually in acts of faith and love—walking with Him and before Him—so shall He be to us be all and in all, the strength of our heart and our portion for ever.—*Richard Watson's Sermons.*

Remember that neither the depth nor the length of an affliction is any evidence that the Lord has forgotten to be gracious, or that you are not the objects of His love. Were it so, then never would the tears of sorrow have flowed so freely in the house of Martha. Remember also that a prayer unanswered by so means signifies a prayer unheard; if so, the Jesus never saw the messenger from Bethany, nor cared for the woful tidings which he brought. No, in all cases, "the Lord's time, not mine; the Lord's way, not mine; the Lord's will, not mine;" must be the language of the believer's heart. Enough, if it be but "for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby."—*Bent.*

INTELLECTUAL PREACHING.—If by an intellectual preacher he meant a man who applies the requirements of a vigorous and well-trained understanding to explain and enforce the great topics of Evangelical Truth; or the application, in the most attractive form, of whatever knowledge such a mind, in the pursuit after information of all kinds, can obtain, to the great end of the Christian Ministry; or the employment of sound logic and natural eloquence to make the doctrines which are unto Salvation be or down upon the heart and conscience;—in that case a man cannot be too intellectual: the great and glorious doctrines of Revealed Truth and life eterna deserve and demand the mightiest energies of the noblest intellects. But if, as is too generally the case, this intellectuality means the cold, dry, argumentative discussion of Religious Truth, rather than Evangelical subjects, or even of the latter in an abstract and essay-like form; a mere heartless exercise of the understanding of the preacher, and intended or adapted only to engage the understanding of the hearers without either interesting their affections or awakening their conscience; such intellectuality will do nothing but empty the places of worship in which it is exhibited, or at best draw together a congregation of persons who cannot do without some religion, but who prefer the cold abstractions of the head to the warm affections of the heart.—*James' Earnest.*

PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.—Preach Christ Crucified!—Turn not aside from this, under the temptation of meeting some question of the day, or some bearing of the public mind. There is much mystic verbiage which some esteem to be of transcendental depth. There is much pantheism, which some regard as original and sublime. Your versatility will often be urged to follow after these conceits. You will be told of their amazing influence. They really are nothing. They are the bubbles of the hour. They cannot boast even novelty. I conjure you, care little for them. Yours is not a discretionary theme. It is unchanging. Keep to it. Abide by it. It is one, but it is an indefinite one? Its rigidity can never hamper your thought. Its reiteration can never weary your enquiry. At no point can it restrict you. It is a large place. It is a boundless range. It is a mine of wealth. It is a firmament of power. Whither would you go from it? It is the unwinding of all great principles! It is the expansion of all glorious thoughts. It is the capacity of all blessed emotions. O Calvary, we turn to thee! Our nature, a wreck, a chaos, only canst Thou adjust!—We have an aching void which Thou only canst fill! We have pantings and longings which only Thou canst satisfy! Be Thou the strength and the charm of our inward life! Be Thou the earnestness of our deepest interest! Be Thou inspiration, impulsion, Divinity and all!—Our tears never rehered us until Thou taughtest us to weep! Our smiles only mocked us, until Thou bade us rejoice. We knew no way of peace until we found our way to Thee! Hope was banished from us, until its dove flew downwards from Thee upon our heart! All was dormant until Thou didst stir; all was dull until Thou didst excite us!—*Dr. Hamilton's Advice to Young Ministers.*

Oh! that there were such a heart in us, that, instead of empty words that scatter themselves in the wind, our many vain discourses we held one with another concerning our past and present sufferings, and further fears, and disputing of many fruitless and endless questions, we were more abundantly turning our speech this way unto God and saying: We desire to give Thee glory, and to take shame to ourselves, and to bear our chastisement, and to offend no more; to return each from his evil way, and to gain this by the furnace—the purging away of our dross, our many and great iniquities, our oaths, and cursings, and lying, our deceit, and oppressions and pride, and covetousness, our base love for ourselves, and hating one another; that we may be delivered from the tyranny of our own lusts and passions; and in other things, let the Lord do with us as seems good in His eye.—*Leighton.*