

GENERAL LITERATURE.

THE YOUNG SHOWN WHERE TO FIND HAPPINESS.

[Continued from page 210]

But Clementine had sought and found "the pearl of great price," and had learned to despise the glitter of earth's parade. "I want to tell you," she writes, "how happy I am. My heart has at length felt, what my mind has long understood; the sacrifice of Christ answers to all my wishes, and meets all the wants of my soul; and since I have been enabled to embrace, with ardour, all its provisions, my heart enjoys a sweet and incomparable tranquillity. Formerly, I vaguely assured myself that a merciful God would pardon me; but I now feel that I have obtained that pardon,—that I obtain it every moment,—and I experience inexpressible delight in seeking it at the foot of the cross. My heart is full, and it is now that I understand the angelic song, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.'"

In another letter she writes, "I experience a pleasure in reading the Bible, which I have never felt before; it attracts and fixes me to an inconceivable degree; and I seek sincerely there, and only there, the truth. When I compare the calm peace which the smallest and most imperceptible grain of faith gives to the soul, with all that the world alone can give of joy, or happiness, or glory, I feel that the least in the kingdom of heaven is a hundred times more blessed than the greatest and most elevated of the men of the world."

And again she says, "the certainty, that without divine grace I can do nothing, but that that grace is always with me, that it surrounds me, preserves me, supports me,—this sweet assurance fills my heart; and thus I feel most profoundly, that faith alone can satisfy the void which I sometimes used to feel in my soul. The profound conviction, that there is an infinite and merciful Being, who orders all things,—that not a hair of the head falls without his permission,—and that he will control every circumstance for my real welfare gives me an habitual peace and tranquillity which nothing else could inspire."

And is there ground for suspicion here that gloom possessed the mind? Is there reason to apprehend that religion was, to this young person, the source of melancholy, and that she only resorted to it as a subterfuge, earth's gifts having failed her? No; it is distinctly stated, in these valuable extracts, that it "answers to all her wishes, and meets all the wants of her soul;" that "incomparable tranquillity, habitual peace, and inexpressible delight," were experienced in consequence of a reception of Gospel truth; that faith can alone satisfy the void that is felt in the soul of man; and that nothing else can inspire the habitual peace which true religion imparts.

Yet language like this is not peculiar; it is common to all who have learned to place their confidence in a crucified Redeemer. Among genuine believers we never hear the voice of despondency or complaint, unless when faith fails, and they are unable to realise their interest in the blessing of salvation. Give them the possession, and the anticipation of these, and they ask no higher joy; entire satisfaction is the result.—"The statutes" of the Lord rejoice the heart, and his people rejoice in his Word, as those that find great spoil.

If we are favoured by familiar intercourse with the pious, or if we read the accounts of them, transmitted to us by those who are so, we cannot fail also to be struck with the conviction, that remarkable support and consolation, along with their trials, are afforded them, and that tranquillity and confidence, in days of

adversity, and at the hour of death, is the fruit of reliance on the Saviour.

The authoress hopes she may be forgiven for mentioning the experience of a much loved sister, whose resignation and peace on a death-bed were eminently conspicuous. This endeared relative was, earlier than many of her contemporaries, called to her everlasting rest; but not before she had left, for the benefit of others, a short but luminous compendium of her faith, or before she had proved its sincerity, by her separation in heart from the world, and by the excellence of her temper, and her practice.

That religion was not in her productive of gloom, may be gathered from some observations which have been noticed in her Memoir, and which are still fresh in the memory of the writer to whom they were made. "I have never," said she, "been so happy as last night. I was not able to sleep, and began to meditate on the employment of saints and angels around the throne. I ruminated until I thought I saw the multitude of the redeemed, which no man can number. I fancied I heard their angelic voices, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Methought I joined with them; and at last I concluded, by praying that I might be soon, if not immediately, removed, to unite my note of praise with theirs." "Such expressions," adds her memorialist, "illustrate the character of those highly-favoured moments, in which God is sometimes pleased to animate his faithful people, by a peculiar blessing upon their meditations concerning the heavenly state. 'He thus giveth songs in the night.'"

When days and months of languishing were afterwards appointed her, confidence in God and undisturbed serenity in prospect of a future state, continued to be experienced by her. It is stated, that "at this period she said to a friend, 'I never spend one dull hour,' although she was very often necessarily left alone, being unable to bear the fatigue of society for any length of time together. A younger sister one day lamented that her sufferings were so great; she replied, 'I would cheerfully suffer it all over again, that you might enjoy the same consolation from religion, in the same circumstances.' Her uncommon patience struck every one who saw her. She never complained; and when it was noticed to her, said 'It would be a wonder if I were not patient, when I have so many mercies to be thankful for.' "Her thoughts and occupations," writes a near relative, "were in sickness, as they had ever been in health, such as became one, so deeply impressed as she had the happiness to be with the unspeakable comfort, as well as importance, which belongs to the truth as it is in Jesus." And again, it is added, "Never was a death-bed more tranquil and calm. Not a doubt nor a fear disturbed her. Not a complaint or a murmur once escaped her lips; all was peace, peace."

In reference to what he had beheld of her bodily sufferings and peaceful state, and to the value of the Bible in promoting a confidence so enviable, a relative to whom she was tenderly attached, (her brother, now Sir George Sinclair, Bart.) thus bore testimony:—"I called upon to tend the sick-bed, and to witness the protracted sufferings of one unto whom the heart is closely knit, by the double ties of reverence and love, have we not found, that whilst the taper of life is imperceptibly hastening to extinction, the pure lamp of faith still burns internally, with unquenchable and undiminished, nay, even with increasing brightness? Have we not perceived that, when all human help is vain,—when the memory of the past is fading away,—when the occurrences of the present ceases to interest, and all personal concern in the future

events of this world is about to be cut off for ever, the mercies of our God and the promises of our Redeemer, are the theme on which the dying sufferer loves to expatiate and to reflect? When the eloquence of the orator, the liveliness of the wit, and sublimity of the philosopher, can no longer fascinate or instruct, the Scriptures are still listened to with avidity and delight. When a transient slumber has recruited for a time the fast decaying strength of the body, how eagerly does the mind again seek to refresh itself at this pure and inexhaustible source of spiritual peace and serenity! It is then that the perusal of the Bible disarms death of all its terrors,—it reminds the expiring Christian, that in humble reliance on the Saviour's sufferings and intercession he is hastening to an inheritance of eternal happiness, far greater than it has entered the heart of man to conceive."

And again, we ask, is gloom manifest here? Were dissatisfaction, and discontent, the result of a life spent in the service of God? And was sorrow, or comfort, the most apparent at its close? The reply to such inquiries is evident. But if we peruse the writings, or listen to the melancholy lamentations of those who have spent their lives in the pursuit of worldly gratifications, we shall soon be convinced where chagrin shows itself, and where gloom really exists. The contrast is striking! Let not the subject be carelessly and hastily considered; let it be deeply pondered, and viewed with the seriousness it demands. If the pleasures of the world afford not satisfaction even in time, where is the inducement to make them our portion, for time is the limit of their duration; they pretend not to exist beyond it. They come with a flattering show and appearance of earthly happiness, to entrap the unwary; but when grasped, they are discovered to be phantoms instead of realities; and even if they should be enjoyed for a moment, they vanish when we most need their aid,—in the season of affliction, of poverty, of sickness, of old age, and at the hour of death!

But we began this chapter by addressing those interesting characters among the young, whose sincere desire it is to live as they ought, but who, from untoward circumstances, have not been accustomed to view genuine religion in its just light. With them we would importunately plead. Oh! halt, inquire, pray. Is it rational to suppose that God claims no part of your time, of your thoughts, and of your affections, than the worldly are disposed to allow? Can religion be comprised in a few cold, heartless ceremonies? Can the world's pleasures ensure lasting happiness? And if not, how is joy here, and joy hereafter, to be attained? In these questions, your conduct during life is involved. Oh, then, solve them without delay. If the will of God is revealed in the Scriptures, there, with Clementine, seek the truth. Seek it unweariedly, seek it prayerfully. Light, it is promised, shall be given when thus sought, to walk in the path; strait indeed may be the entrance, and narrow the way, but still it is the hallowed path that leads to unending felicity.—*Scottish Christian Herald.*

THE WAYS OF GOD'S SPIRIT.

THE ways of God's Spirit with the heart of man are mysterious. Incidents of apparently the most trifling nature are often made the means of fastening deep conviction upon the soul, while other means and providences which seem to be invested with an almost omnipotent energy, are utterly powerless. The following two authentic incidents illustrate the care with which the Spirit does his work in the soul.

There was a man bitterly hostile to religion, who had long been the opposer of his pious wife, who one Sabbath morning took his axe upon his shoulder and went to his wood-lot to fell trees. As he looked around he saw one tree dead and