

ON PRAYER.

BY SAINT CHRYSOSTOM.

Prayer is an all-efficient paucity; a treasure undiminished, a mine which is never exhausted; a sky unobscured by clouds; a haven unruffled by the storm; it is the root, the fountain, and the mother of a thousand blessings. I speak not of the prayer which is cold, and feeble, and devoid of energy; I speak of that which is the child of a contrite spirit, the offspring of a soul converted, born in a blaze of unutterable inspiration, and winged, like lightning, for the skies.

The potency of prayer hath subdued the strength of fire; it hath bridled the rage of lions; hushed anarchy to rest; extinguished wars; appeased the elements; expelled demons; burst the chains of death; expanded the gates of heaven; assuaged diseases; repelled frauds; rescued cities from destruction; it hath stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt; in a word, it hath destroyed whatever is an enemy to man. I again repeat, that I speak not of the prayer engendered by the lips; but of that which ascends from the recesses of the heart. Assuredly, there is nothing more potent than it; yea, there is nothing comparable to it. A monarch vested in gorgeous habiliments, is far less illustrious than a kneeling suppliant, ennobled and adorned by communion with his God.—Consider how august a privilege it is, when angels are present, and archangels throng around; when cherubim and seraphim encircle with their blaze the throne; that a mortal may approach with unrestrained confidence, and converse with heaven's dread Sovereign! Oh! what honour was ever conferred like this! When a Christian stretches forth his hands and invokes his God, in that moment he leaves behind him all terrestrial pursuits, and traverses on the wings of intellect the realms of light! he contemplates celestial objects only, and knows not of the present state of things during the period of his prayer; provided that prayer be breathed with fervency. Could we but pray with fervency; could we pray with a soul resuscitated, a mind awakened, an understanding quickened, then were Satan to appear, he would instantaneously fly; were the gates of hell to yawn upon us, they would close again.

Prayer is a haven to the shipwrecked mariner;—an anchor unto them that are sinking in the waves, a staff to the limbs that totter; a mine of jewels to the poor, a security to the rich, a healer of disease, and a guardian of health. Prayer at once secures the continuance of our blessings, and dissipates the cloud of our calamities. O prayer! O blessed prayer!—Thou art the unwearied conqueror of human woes; the firm foundation of human happiness; the source of ever-during joy; the mother of philosophy! The man who can pray truly, though languishing in extremest indigence, is richer than all beside; whilst the wretch who never bowed the knee, though proudly seated as monarch of the nations, is of all men most destitute.

Let us then direct our thoughts to Him that was poor, yet rich; rich because he was poor. Let us overlook the enjoyments of the present, and desire the blessing of the future; for so shall we obtain the blessings of the present and the future. Oh! may we all obtain them through the grace and beneficence of Christ our Lord; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed all glory, now and for evermore! Amen.

A REMARKABLE DREAM.

Communicated by a Lady.

Preliminary Observations.

There are not many phenomena of frequent occurrence, that seem more inexplicable than Dreams. The impressions, of which our minds are susceptible during the season of repose, are certainly a branch of intellectual philosophy; but as the science of the human mind is still in a state of comparative infancy, the light by which we are guided in our researches, respecting the cause of dreams, is little more than that which the sanctions of authority enable plausible conjecture to impart.

In his "Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind," Professor Dugald Stewart has discussed the subject of dreaming with his usual acuteness and perspicuity. According to the hypothesis of this justly celebrated philosopher, our dreams are frequently suggested by bodily sensations, with which

particular ideas are strongly associated. They are also, he conceives, influenced by the peculiar temper of the mind, varying in their complexion, according as our habitual disposition at the time inclines us to cheerfulness or melancholy. Of many important facts immediately connected with dreaming, this learned Professor has taken particular notice; so that his various observations tend in the aggregate, to throw more light on this interesting but obscure phenomenon, than perhaps those of any of his predecessors.

But whatever opinions we may form of the origin and nature of dreams, the evidence of their existence will admit of no dispute. Among those which have been recorded, many appear too striking in their coincidences with subsequent facts, not to arrest the attention of every thoughtful reader. And in cases where they precede events which could not have been anticipated, but which afterwards arise and almost prove them to have been prophetic, we find ourselves at a loss how to account for them on any hypothesis, to our own rational satisfaction.

The following is the substance of a remarkable Dream, related by the late Rev. R. Bowden of Darwen, who committed it to writing from the lips of the person to whom the dream happened on the evening of May 30, 1813.

THE DREAM.

A Gospel minister of evangelical principles, whose name, from the circumstances that occurred, it will be necessary to conceal, being much fatigued, at the conclusion of the afternoon service, retired to his apartment in order to take a little rest. He had not long reclined upon his couch, before he fell asleep and began to dream.—He dreamed, that on walking into his garden, he entered a bower that had been erected in it, where he sat down to read and meditate. While thus employed, he thought that he heard some person enter the garden; and leaving his bower, he immediately hastened towards the spot whence the sound seemed to come in order to discover who it was that had entered. He had not proceeded far, before he discerned a particular friend of his, a Gospel minister of considerable talents, who had rendered himself very popular by his zealous and unwearied exertions in the cause of Christ.

On approaching his friend, he was surprised to find that this countenance was covered with a gloom which it had not been accustomed to wear, and that it strongly indicated a violent agitation of mind, apparently arising from conscious remorse. After the usual salutations had passed, his friend asked the relation the time of the day? to which he replied, "Twenty-five minutes after Four." On hearing this, the stranger said, "It is only one hour since I died, and now I am damned."—"Damned, for what?" inquired the dreaming minister.—"It is not," said he, "because I have not preached the Gospel, neither is it because I have not been rendered useful; for I have now many seals to my ministry, that can bear testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, which they have received from my lips; but it is because I have been accumulating to myself the applause of men, more than the honour which cometh from above; and verily I have my reward." Having uttered these expressions, he hastily disappeared, and was seen no more.

The minister awaking shortly afterwards, with the contents of his dream deeply engraven on his memory, proceeded, overwhelmed with serious reflections, towards his chapel, in order to conduct his evening service. On his way thither, he was accosted by a friend, who enquired whether he had heard the severe loss the Church had sustained in the death of that able minister ***** He replied, "No;" but being much affected at this singular intelligence, he enquired of him the day, and time of the day, when his departure took place. To this his friend replied, "This afternoon, at Twenty-five minutes after Three o'clock!"—*Imperial Magazine.*

A PRACTICAL FARMER.

A practical farmer, whose livelihood depends upon his calling, should make it the pinnacle of his worldly ambition to excel in it. If he neglect his farm for any thing else, he is generally a loser both in interest and credit. Solomon, the wisest observer of men and things, tells us of his disgust at the sight of a slovenly farmer. "I went by the field of the slothful—and lo, it was all grown over with

thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall was all broken down." Own thy where art thou? Perhaps dozing away thy time in slumber and sloth, or spending thy time at the tavern, or perhaps dreaming of promotion, or engaged in the business of some petty office. Better mind thy own proper business, else "else" shall thy poverty come as an armed man." A farmer, on the other hand, who keeps his land and his stock in excellent order, need not be ashamed even if Solomon himself were passing by. Every passing traveller, no sooner casts his eyes over such a farm, than he honors the proprietor in his heart. The proprietor, moreover, is sure to receive for his pains, something that is more solid than honor, a comfortable, decent livelihood, for which he is indebted to Him only whose is the earth and the fulness thereof.—*Ct. Courant.*

"The man who has been the slave of intemperance must renounce her altogether, or she will insensibly reassume her despotic power; with such a mistress, if he seriously mean to discard her, he must indulge himself in no dalliance or delay. He must not allow his lips a taste of her former fascination. Webb, the celebrated walker, who was remarkable for vigor, both of body and mind, drank nothing but water. He was one day recommending his regimen to a friend who loved wine, and urged him, with great earnestness, to quit a course of luxury, by which his health and intellect would be equally destroyed. The gentleman appeared convinced, and told him 'that he would conform to his counsel, though he thought he could not change his course of life at once, but would leave off strong liquors by degrees.' 'By degrees,' exclaimed the other with indignation, 'if you should unhappily fall into the fire, would you caution your servants to pull you out only by degrees?'"

It is said of Queen Mary II, that she ordered good books to be laid in the places of attendance, that persons might not be idle while they were in their turns of service. She gave her minutes of leisure to architecture and gardening; and since it employed many hands, she said, she hoped it would be forgiven her.

How peculiarly useful may females be in a domestic state! In many cases, observes one, the opinion of the wife may be preferable to that of our own.—Their judgment may be less clouded by interest—they stand back from the objects; we are too near; they are cool and calm; we, by being in the scene, are ruffled and inflamed. An eminent minister a few years ago, in a publication, declared to the world, that he had never, in any particular business, acted contrary to the suggestions of his wife, without having reason afterwards to repent of it.

FALSE NAMES.—Nothing can be so dangerous to virtue, as the soft names that are given to Vice, dressed in the engaging shape of "amiable indiscretions," and "venial errors," or perhaps in the bolder attire of "those frailties that honour the heart." We must take some time to reflect, before we can discover that we are speaking of Sin, the daughter of Satan, and mother of Death.

PATIENCE IN AFFLICTION.—In affliction, constrain yourself to bear patiently for a day or so, merely for the sake of trying whether patience does not lighten the burthen.—If the experiment answers, as you will undoubtedly find, you have only to continue it.

Lewis of Bayer, emperor of Germany, used to say, "Those goods are worth getting and owning that will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happen, but will swim out and continue with us." All spiritual blessings are of this kind.

We are commanded to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. The fire of divine love and holy gratitude on the altar of the heart, must never go out, but be fed and fanned with unceasing watchfulness and care.

ANECDOTE OF HENRY IV.

Henry IV. king of France was desired to punish an author who had written some free satires on the Court. "It would be against my conscience," replied the king, "to trouble an honest man for having told the truth."