

receiving that, may we also have the welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

To the younger members, of whom so goodly a number have been present, I would say—bear with me while I offer you a word of exhortation. While it rejoices our hearts, to see so many young and ardent laborers conjoined with us, and while we have cause to feel proud of the talent and the amount of literary attainments exhibited by many of you, let me exhort you to much watchfulness, study and prayer. You are yet young; I would recommend to your earnest attention, the bearing and example of the stupling David when going forth alone in the sight of the warriors and mighty men of valour of both armies, to do battle against him who had defied the enmity of the living God. The warfare you are engaged in, is a soul-sarring one. The armour of the soldiers and the splendour of the array is such as to attract your attention. You are now on the battle field; look well to your armour—see that it is firmly buckled on; for this armour is not only admirably suited to ornament the person, but also to protect and enable you to fight successfully—fight the Gaza fight. Look steadily to the Great Captain of our Salvation. The enemy opposed to you is not only strong and powerful, but also subtle and vindictive. If you are victorious, you may, as David, hear the sounds of praise and laudation. We beseech you not to linger to listen to such—the melody may be pleasant, the sounds may be agreeable, still it is but the praise of men. But remember that, like David, you will have to suffer the persecution of the world and of the powers that be, and this even in the face of promised support and assistance. This may be so severe, that, like David, you may have to leave for a time that shelter to which you were introduced by that very power which now harasses and annoys you. But though like him you may have to wander solitary—even as an outcast—be not dismayed, there is a throne in prospect, there is honor in reserve.

And now that we are about to separate, may the protecting arm of an All-gracious providence be around us,—may we arrive at our several abodes in safety, refreshed with the brotherly communion we have enjoyed,—and may our flocks from our hands again drink renewed draughts, drawn from that precious fountain which is free to all.

A portion of the 122d Psalm was then sung, and thereafter the Moderator having engaged in prayer, pronounced the Benediction, and the Synod closed, to meet again at Kingston, on the first Wednesday in May, 1856.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### The Book of Books.

THAT "aggregate of printed leaves"—a book, is not only one of the wonders of the world, but one of the greatest wonder-workers upon the earth. How vast a power for good do the pen and the press confer on the instructors of mankind! Spoken words reach only a few ears; and their effect is seldom more permanent than the figures sketched on the sand, which the next tide obliterates forever. But the press gives diffusion and perpetuity to speech. It causes words, which were originally addressed to hundreds, to be heard by millions; and it enables a gifted teacher to speak even after he has gone to his grave,—nay, to speak to the ends of the earth, and to the end of time. By means of their

published writings, the great thinkers of the world enjoy an earthly immortality. Their bodies die; but their genius and wisdom survive, to assert for them that noblest and most lasting of all dominions—the power of delighting and instructing their fellow-men.

Nor is the power much less wonderful which books convey to their readers. The elder Cato comforted himself in the prospect of death, by anticipating his admission to the society of departed sages and legislators. But with the writings of the ancient worthies in our hands, we require not to die, in order to converse with "that divine assembly of exalted spirits." In the little body of thought, which lies before us in the shape of a book, we possess the constant presence and companionship, of its author. In a form thus slight and portable, we have, preserved for our benefit, the mighty energy of Homer, the solemn grandeur of Milton, the exalted piety of Pascal. In a single apartment, walled with shelves, we have around us the assembled spirits of the wise and good of all time, waiting to pour their souls into ours, and to enrich us with their treasures of knowledge and experience. Nay, it is the property of books not merely to admit us to the fellowship of their authors, but to invest us with a sort of omnipresence. With the warrior, we live over again the day and the hour and the agony of the battle. With the traveller, we cross again the ocean, and climb the Alps, and tread with glowing heart the classic soil. With the philosopher, we turn anew the midnight lamp, and adjust the crucible, and watch with breathless interest for the spark or the effervescence which is to confirm or overthrow the favourite theory. In books we possess a spell to raise the dead, and be it prophet or sage, philosopher or poet, whom we may wish back from the grave to instruct or charm us, we have but to issue the summons, and he stands before us with his "thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

Of all books, the most wonderful, whether as an imperishable embodiment of its authors' thoughts, or as a vehicle of instruction to its readers—is that whose literary characteristics I have undertaken to describe. Irrespective of its peculiar claims and character as the Record of Divine truth, the Bible stands, as a mere book, apart and aloft from all others. The first in order of time, it is also the first—by a long interval—in point of literary excellence. Its poetry is far in the van of all other poetry; its history of all other history; its morals of all other morals. Compared with the average level of other writings, it is "an exceeding high mountain from whence we behold all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." It is the earliest and the brightest star in the literary heavens. He who goes for the first time to its pages, will find himself, like Columbus, exploring a new world with features and productions immensely more varied and beautiful than the old. In a mere literary point of view, it is well entitled to its name—the Book of Books. Nor did that unfortunate son of genius—the singularly gifted Shelley, speak unadvisedly, when, in answer to a friend who asked him what book he would save for himself if he could save no other, he replied, "The oldest book, the Bible." Dr. McCulloch's *Literary Characteristics of the Holy Scriptures*.

### A Highland Widow.

SHE came one morning among the many who occupy, with various matters of business, the time of the minister of a populous parish.

She was cleanly dressed, and appeared very sad and dejected. Her story, and the cause of her sorrow, were soon told. She and her family, consisting of four daughters and a son had been accepted by the Government Commissioners as emigrants to Australia. Under the impression that they were to sail early in spring, her daughters had left their service. The son, in the meantime, had broken his arm, and was unable to work. They were strangers, in a strange land. The certificates in their possession, from their minister and landlord in the Highlands, represented them as a sober, industrious, and most deserving family. Week after week passed, while waiting for the expected order to sail. The purse, never very full, was fast getting empty in the great city. But at last the order came, that in three days they must embark. Their passage was paid. They must go or lose all. One difficulty alone remained,—they could not supply themselves with all the necessary articles of clothing; and unless these could be obtained, their chests, when opened at Liverpool, would be found wanting in the shoes, the petticoats, the shifts, &c. which were absolutely necessary for the voyage; and she and her family would be sent back in poverty and despair! How much was required to make up the defective articles? Only twelve shillings! A small sum, reader! but nevertheless, as far, almost, as Australia itself from the poor woman's grasp. Oh! ye who think little at twelve shillings, or twelve pence, would ye accompanied a minister in his daily rounds, and soon would you be taught to feel what comfort to the widow and the fatherless, the hungry and the sick, aye, and to your own heart, ye are daily making and daily spending without hardly knowing how or why! Perhaps, however, the money might be got, "somehow or other," in a few days. But that afternoon I was obliged to leave town, and in two days the ship was to sail; and after she had sailed, the twelve shillings, one hundred times multiplied would not get the widow and her family on board. "What is to be done?"—"God alone knows!" she replied, meekly bending her head, and wiping her tears with her apron. I have not shut an eye for four nights,—the lassies are as ill as me. We have parted with all we had." Who will give me twelve shillings? thought I. Why not give it yourself? exclaim my readers. Try the experiment first, I reply, when such demands come daily on you—hourly almost! a very convenient philosophy is this, of everything being done now-a-days by ministers! "Go to the minister! Ask the minister! Apply to the minister! Fond of money those ministers.—why not get twelve shillings!" Instead of saying so, please go to your own minister if you have one, and say to him, "I can afford to give such and such in charity—twelve shillings occasionally—I do not know of any case where it can be of use. Ah! had I known of such a considerate friend how glad I would have made my poor Highland petitioner! What can be done? To repeat questions, which too clearly said, "Nothing can be done," she replied in such a tone, "Surely God, who has helped me in my widowhood—who has never left me since I grieved away—will not desert me in the clerical hour. 'Though He slay me, yet I'll put my trust in Him!'" "I can give you four or five shillings," cheerfully said I; "but what good will that do!"—"God who made one friend a stranger might find another before we were said!" "Come back," I said, "in an hour and we shall see what can yet be done."—This was one of those expedients to which we were