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*From the Panoplist.*

MEMOIRS OF PRESIDENT DAVIES.

HE was born November 3, 1724. His father was a planter, in the county of Newcastle, on the Delaware, of great simplicity of manners, and of reputed piety. His mother, an eminent Christian, had earnestly besought him of Heaven; and considering him as given in answer to prayer, she named him *Samuel*, and with great solemnity devoted him to the Lord. "The event proved," says Dr. Finley, "that God accepted the consecrated boy, took him under his special care, furnished him for, and employed him in, the service of his church, prospered his labours with remarkable success, and not only blessed him, but made himself a blessing."

The prayers and vows of this excellent woman were succeeded by active exertions. There being no school at hand, she took upon herself the task of teaching her son to read: and her efforts were early rewarded in the uncommon proficiency of her pupil. He continued with his parents till about the age of ten. They had not the happiness, during this period, of observing any special impressions of religion made on his mind; but he behaved himself as is common for a sprightly, towardly child, under the influence of pious example and instruction. After this he was sent to an English school, at some distance from home, where he continued two years, and made great progress in his studies. But failing of the pious instructions to which he had been accustomed, he became more careless of the things of religion, than before.

Yet even at this period, he habituated himself to secret prayer, especially in the *evening*. The reason for this punctuality, as stated in his diary, was, that "he feared lest he should perhaps die before morning." It is likewise remarkable, that in his prayers, he supplicated nothing so ardently,

as that he might be introduced into the gospel ministry.

The time was now come, when that God to whom he had been solemnly dedicated, and who designed him as an eminent instrument of shewing forth his praise, would bring him home to himself. He was awakened to solemn and serious concern respecting eternal things. In the light of divine truth, he was led to see himself a sinner, exposed to the awful displeasure of God, and to all its insupportable consequences. These impressions were full of anxiety and terror. In this distress, he was enabled, to discern the necessity, the importance, and all-sufficiency of the salvation revealed in the gospel. This divine system of mercy now appeared in a new light. It satisfied his anxious inquiries, and made provision for all his wants. In the blood and righteousness of the REDEEMER, he perceived a solid ground of hope, an unfailing source of consolation. Here he was enabled to place his whole reliance. Here he found a peace and satisfaction before unknown. "Believing, he rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." His religious comforts were, however, long intermingled with doubts and perplexities. But after some years of repeated and impartial examination, he attained a confidence respecting his state, which continued to the close of his life.

From this happy period, his mind seemed almost entirely absorbed by heavenly things. His great concern was to *keep his heart*, and set a watch over every thought, word, and action. Animated with love to God he felt stronger desires than ever, *to serve him in the gospel of his Son.*— Having tasted the sweets of religion, he longed for nothing so much as to be instrumental in bringing his fellow sinners to know the same pure and substantial delights.

Inspired by these sublime objects, he engaged, with new ardour, in the pursuit of knowledge. His progress was impeded by a variety of obstacles. But the native vigour of his genius, united to an indefatigable assiduity, surmounted them all. Sooner than could have been rationally expected, he was found qualified for the gospel ministry. He passed the usual previous trials with distinguished approbation, and consecrated all his faculties and acquirements to the service of the sanctuary.

Being now licensed to preach the gospel, he applied himself to unfold and enforce those precious truths, whose power he had happily experienced on his own heart. In the exercise of this sacred and delightful office, his fervent zeal and undissembled piety, his popular talents and engaging method of address, soon excited general admiration, and ac-

quired him a distinguished character. Scarce was there a congregation where he was known, but would have esteemed it a happiness to enjoy his stated ministrations. But how mysterious are the ways of heaven! He was about this time attacked with complaints, which were supposed consumptive, and which brought him apparently to the borders of the grave. In this enfeebled state, and without hope of recovery, he determined to spend the remainder of what he apprehended an almost exhausted life, in endeavouring to advance his Master's glory in the good of souls. Being among a people who were destitute of a minister, he assiduously laboured, *in season and out of season*. While, by night, his hectic was so severe as to render him sometimes delirious, and make it necessary that he should be attended by watchers, he still preached in the day.\* Nor did his indefatigable and heroic zeal go unrewarded. God gave him some precious first-fruits of his ministry, particularly, in the remarkable conversion of two gentlemen, who manifested in their future lives and conduct, that they were saints indeed.

In consequence of an earnest application, he removed, after a time, to some of the distant settlements of Virginia, where he undertook the charge of a dissenting congregation. Nothing but the purest motives of self-denying benevolence could have dictated such a step. It separated him from the beloved society of his friends, and his brethren in the ministry; it plunged him into a sea of anxious, unremitting labours; while it exposed him to the bitter censures and resentments of many. Numbers of the inhabitants were but little removed from absolute heathenism. All the obstacles which could arise from blindness and prejudice, from profaneness and immorality, his preaching encountered. Yet his patience and perseverance, his magnanimity and piety, added to his evangelical and powerful ministrations, were not without success. The more he was known, the more he was esteemed. Contempt and aversion were gradually turned into reverence. Opposition yielded to the doctrines of the cross, and the powerful energy of the divine Spirit. *The wilderness, and the solitary places rejoiced, and blossomed as the rose*. A great number, both of *whites and blacks*, were hopefully converted to the living

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\* *These remarkable facts are related on the authority of Dr. Gibbons of London, who, being an intimate friend of Mr. Davies, appears to have received them from his own mouth.*

God. In this success, the benevolent soul of Mr. Davies found a rich gratification. His tract of preaching was singularly extensive, his labours almost incessant, and his pecuniary compensation small. But to be an instrument of spreading the Redeemer's triumphs, and of adding new subjects to his spiritual kingdom, though from among the despised and oppressed natives of Africa, was to him, the highest reward.

From this scene of toil and of enjoyment, the providence of God now summoned him away. He was chosen by the synod of New-York, at the instance of the trustees of New-Jersey college, to accompany the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent to Great Britain and Ireland, in order to solicit benefactions for the college. This election evinced the confidence both of the synod and corporation, in his superior abilities and popular talents; a confidence, which the issue of the affair no wise disappointed. A service in itself difficult and delicate, in its consequences precarious, and involving a temporary sacrifice of those domestic enjoyments, which were peculiarly dear to him, he cheerfully undertook, and executed with singular spirit and success. The benefactions he received from the patrons of religion and learning in Great Britain, were numerous and liberal, and such as placed the college in a prosperous condition.

Returning from his voyage, he entered anew on his beloved task of preaching the gospel to his people in Virginia. Here he continued till the year 1759. The unusual lustre of his piety and talents was now no longer to be confined to so remote a region. A vacancy being occasioned in the college of New-Jersey by the decease of the eminent President Edwards (who had occupied the place but a few days) Mr. Davies was elected by the Trustees to fill the important station. He received the news of this event not merely with concern, but with a kind of consternation. Though earnestly invited to accept the charge it was with great difficulty he was brought to think it his duty. The province he occupied was important; and it was unspeakably distressing, both to him and his people, united by the strongest bonds of mutual affection, to think of a separation. Repeated applications, however, at length prevailed to shake his resolution. But to preclude all mistake in a case so important, he withheld his consent, until he had submitted the matter to the Reverend Synod of New-York and Philadelphia. They unanimously gave their opinion in favour of his acceptance. Thus to use his own expressions, the evidence of his duty was so plain, that even his sceptical mind

was satisfied; while his people saw the hand of Providence in it and dared not oppose.

The period of his presidency was equally auspicious to the college, and honourable to himself. It was here that he gave the crowning evidence of the vigour and versatility of his genius. His previous situation had afforded little leisure and comparatively few means, for the cultivation of general science. He came likewise to the college at a time when its literary state and reputation had been much improved by the great and acknowledged abilities of President Burr. It was natural, therefore, that even his friends should have some doubts of his complete preparation to fill and adorn so exalted a sphere. But it soon appeared that the force and activity of his mind had supplied every defect, and surmounted every obstacle. His official duties were discharged, from the first, with an ability which disappointed every fear, and realized the brightest hopes.

The ample opportunities and demands which he found for the exercise of his talents, gave a new spring to his diligence. While his active labours were multiplied and arduous, his application to study was unusually intense. His exertions through the day seemed rather to dispose him for reading, than rest by night. Though he rose by break of day, he seldom retired till twelve o'clock, or a later hour.—His success was proportionate. By the united efforts of his talents and industry, he left the college, at his death, in as high a state of literary excellence, as it had ever known since its institution. The few innovations which he introduced, into the academical exercises and plans of study, were confessedly improvements. He was particularly happy in inspiring his pupils with a taste for composition and oratory, in which he himself so much excelled.

His unremitting application to study, and to the duties of his office, probably precipitated his death. The habit of his body being plethoric, his health had, for some years, greatly depended on the exercise of riding, to which he was, from necessity, much habituated in Virginia. This salutary employment had been, from the time he took the college, almost entirely relinquished. Toward the close of January, 1761, he was seized with a bad cold, for which he was bled. The same day, he transcribed for the press his sermon on the death of king George the second. The day following, he preached twice in the college-hall. The arm in which he had been bled, became, in consequence, much inflamed, and his former indisposition increased. On the morning of the succeeding Monday, he was seized, while at breakfast,

with violent chills. An inflammatory fever followed, which in ten days, put a period to his important life.

What are called *premonitions* of death, are generally rather the fictions of a gloomy or misguided imagination, than realities. Yet the following anecdote contains so singular a concurrence of circumstances, as gives it a claim to be recorded.

A few days before the beginning of the year in which Mr. Davies died, an intimate friend told him, that a sermon would be expected from him on new-year's day; adding, among other things, that President Burr, on the first day of the year in which he died, preached a sermon on Jer. xxviii. 16. *Thus saith the Lord, This year thou shalt die*: and that after his death, the people remarked that it was premonitory. Mr. Davies replied, that "although it ought not to be viewed in that light, yet it was very remarkable."—When new-year's day came he preached; and to the surprise of the congregation, from the same text. Being seized about three weeks afterward, he soon adverted to the circumstance, and remarked, that he had been undesignedly led to preach, as it were, his own funeral sermon.

It is to be regretted that the violence of his disorder deprived him of the exercise of reason, through most of his sickness. Had it been otherwise, his friends and the public would doubtless have been gratified with an additional evidence of the transcendent excellence of the Christian religion, and of its power to support the soul in the prospect and approach of death. But he had preached still more emphatically by his life; and even in his delirium, he clearly manifested what were the favourite objects of his concern.—His bewildered mind was continually imagining, and his faltering tongue uttering some expedient to promote the prosperity of Christ's church, and the good of mankind.

His premature exit (he was but little more than thirty-six) was generally and justly lamented, as a loss almost irreparable, not only to a distressed family, and a bereaved college; but to the ministry, the church, the community, the republic of letters, and in short, to all the most valuable interests of mankind. An affectionate tribute was paid to his character and virtues, by Dr. Finley, his successor, in a sermon preached on the occasion of his death, from Rom xiv. 7, 8 *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*

Having detailed the leading incidents of the life of Mr.

Davies, we will pause, and contemplate some of the prominent and most interesting features of his mind and heart.

The Father of spirits had endued him with the richest intellectual gifts ; a vigorous understanding, a glowing imagination, a fertile invention, united with a correct judgment, and a retentive memory. None, who read his works, can doubt that he possessed a portion of *original genius*, which falls to the lot of few. He was born for great undertakings. He was destined to excel in whatever he undertook. "The unavoidable consciousness of native power," says Dr. Finley, "made him bold and enterprising. Yet the event proved that his boldness arose not from a partial, groundless self-conceit, but from true self-knowledge. Upon fair and candid trial, faithful and just to himself, he judged what he could do ; and what he could, when called to it, he attempted ; and what he attempted, he accomplished."

How pleasing to contemplate a mind of such elevation and energy, divested of the pride of talents and of science, moulded into the temper of the gospel, and consecrating all its powers and exertions to the promotion of religion !— "I desire," says he, in a letter to his intimate friend, Dr. Gibbons, "seriously to devote to God and my dear country, all the labours of my head, my heart, my hand, and pen ; and if he pleases to bless any of them, I hope I shall be thankful, and wonder at his condescending grace. O, my dear brother ! could we spend and be spent, all our lives, in painful, disinterested, indefatigable service for God and the world, how serene and bright would it render the swift approaching eve of life ! I am labouring to do a little to save my country, and, which is of much more consequence, to save souls from death, from that tremendous kind of death, which a *soul* can die. I have but little success of late ; but, blessed be God, it surpasses my expectation, and much more my desert. Some of my brethren labour to better purpose. The pleasure of the Lord prospers in their hands."

Mr. Davies' religion was, in principle and spirit, purely and eminently *evangelical*. It brought him to the foot of the cross, to receive salvation as a free gift. It penetrated his soul with the profoundest reverence for a pardoning God, and the tenderest gratitude to a dying Saviour. It engaged him in an ardent and vigorous pursuit of universal holiness, while, at the same time, it rendered him humble and dissatisfied with himself, amid his highest attainments. These traits of character are strongly illustrated by some passages in a letter to the friend above-mentioned, to whom he was accustomed to disclose the inmost recesses of his heart.—

Having spoken of a violent sickness, from which he was just recovering, he proceeds in this style : “ Blessed be my Master’s name, this disorder found me employed in his service. It seized me in the pulpit, like a soldier wounded in the field. This has been a busy summer with me. In about two months, I rode about five hundred miles, and preached about forty sermons. This affords me some pleasure in the review. But alas ! the mixture of sin, and of many nameless imperfections that run through, and corrupt all my services, give me shame, sorrow and mortification. My fever made unusual ravages upon my understanding, and rendered me frequently delirious, and always stupid. But when I had any little sense of things, I generally felt pretty calm and serene ; and death, that mighty terror, was disarmed. Indeed, the thought of leaving my dear family destitute, and my flock shepherdless, made me often start back, and cling to life ; but in other respects, death appeared a kind of indifference to me. Formerly I have wished to live longer, that I might be better prepared for heaven ; but this consideration had but very little weight with me, and that for a very unusual reason, which was this :—After long trial, I found this world a place so unfriendly to the growth of every thing *divine* and *heavenly*, that I was afraid, if I should live longer, I should be no better fitted for heaven than I am. Indeed, I have hardly any hopes of ever making any great attainments in holiness while in this world, though I should be doomed to stay in it as long as *Methuselah*. I see other Christians indeed around me make some progress, though they go on with but a snail-like motion. But when I consider that I set out about twelve years old, and what sanguine hopes I then had of my future progress, and yet that I have been almost at a stand ever since, I am quite discouraged. O my good Master, if I may dare to call thee so, I am afraid I shall never serve thee much better on this side the region of perfection. The thought grieves me ; it breaks my heart, but I can hardly hope better. But if I have the least spark of true piety in my breast, I shall not always labour under this complaint. No, my Lord, I shall yet serve thee ; serve thee through an immortal duration ; with the activity, the fervour, the perfection of *the rapt seraph that adores and burns*. I very much suspect this desponding view of the matter is wrong, and I do not mention it with approbation, but only relate it as an unusual reason for my willingness to die, which I never felt before, and which I could not suppress.

“ In my sickness, I found the unspeakable importance of a Mediator, in a religion for sinners. O ! I could have gi-



ven you the word of a dying man for it, that JESUS whom you preach is indeed a necessary, and an all-sufficient Saviour. Indeed he is the only support for a departing soul.—*None but CHRIST, none but CHRIST.* Had I as many good works as *Abraham* or *Paul*, I would not have dared build my hopes on such a quicksand, but only on this firm eternal rock.

“ I am rising up, my brother, with a desire to recommend him better to my fellow sinners, than I have done. But alas! I hardly hope to accomplish it. He has done a great deal more by me already, than I ever expected, and infinitely more than I deserved. But he never intended me for great things. He has beings both of my own, and of superior orders, that can perform him more worthy service.— O! if I might but untie the latchet of his shoes, or draw water for the service of his sanctuary, it is enough for me. I am no angel, nor would I murmur because I am not.”

Mr. Davies cultivated an intimate acquaintance with his own heart. He scrupulously brought to the test the principles and motives of his actions, and severely condemned himself for every deviation from the perfect rule. Having been solicited to publish a volume of poems, he communicated to a friend the following ingenuous remarks: “ What affords me the greatest discouragement, attended with painful reflections, in such cases, is the ambitious and selfish spirit I find working in me, and intermixing itself with all my most refined and disinterested aims. Fame, for which some professedly write, is a strong, though a resisted temptation to me; and I often conclude, my attempts will never be crowned with any remarkable success, till the divine glory be more sincerely my aim, and I be willing to decrease, that Jesus may increase. It is easy to reason down this vile lust of fame; but oh! it is hard to extirpate it from the heart.— There is a paper in Dr. Watts’ miscellaneous thoughts, on this subject, which characterizes me, in this respect, as exactly as any thing I have seen; and a poem of his, entitled, *Sincere Praise*, is often the language of my heart.

—“ Pride, that busy sin,  
Spoils all that I perform;  
Curst pride, that creeps securely in,  
And swells a little worm.  
“ The very songs I frame  
Are faithless to thy cause;  
And steal the honours of thy name,  
To build their own applause.”

But though rigid in judging himself, he was exemplarily catholic in the opinions he formed of others. He entertained a high regard for many, who differed from him in various points of faith and practice. Taking a large and luminous survey of the field of religion, he accurately distinguished the comparative importance of things, and proportioned his zeal accordingly. While conscientiously tenacious on all great subjects, he was generously candid in points of minor consequence. Few indeed have so happily avoided the opposite extremes of bigotry and latitudinarianism. Few have exhibited so unwavering a zeal for evangelical truth, and the power of religion, yet in such uniform consistency with the sacred principles of love and meekness. His warm and liberal heart could never be confined within the narrow limits of a party. Real worth, wherever discovered, could not fail to engage his affection and esteem.

Truth he sought for its own sake, and loved for its native charms. The sentiments, which he embraced, he avowed with the simplicity of a Christian, and the courage of a man. Yet keeping his mind ever open to conviction, he retracted his opinions without reluctance, whenever they were proved to be mistakes: for he judged that the knowledge of truth alone was real learning, and that attempting to defend an error, was but labouring to be ignorant.

He possessed an ardent benevolence, which rendered him the delight of his friends, and the admiration of all, who knew him. The gentleness and suavity of his disposition were remarkable. One of his friends declared, that he had never seen him angry during several years of unbounded intimacy, though he had repeatedly known him to be ungenerously treated. He was as ready to forgive injuries received, as solicitous to avoid offending others. His heart overflowed with tenderness and pity to the distressed; and in his generous eagerness to supply the wants of the poor, he often exceeded his ability. While thus eminent in his disposition to oblige, he was equally sensible of the kindness of others; and as he could bestow with generosity, so he could receive without servility.

His deportment in company was graceful and genteel, without ceremony. It united the grave with the pleasant, and the accomplished gentleman with the dignified and devout Christian.

He was among the brightest examples of filial piety.—The virtues and example of his excellent mother made an indelible impression upon his memory and heart. While

pouring blessings on her name, and humbly styling himself, a "degenerate plant," he declared, not only that her early dedication of him to God had been a strong inducement to devote himself by his own personal act, but that he looked upon the most important blessings of his life, as immediate answers to her prayers. As a husband, he was kind, tender, and cordial; mingling a genuine and manly fondness with a delicate respect.

As a parent, he felt all the affectionate, trembling solitudes, which nature and grace could inspire. "There is nothing," he writes to his friend, "that can wound a parents heart, so deeply, as the thought that he should bring up children to dishonour his God here, and be miserable hereafter. I beg your prayers for mine, and you may expect a return in the same kind." In another letter, he says, "We have now three sons and two daughters; whose young minds, as they open, I am endeavouring to cultivate with my own hand, unwilling to trust them to a stranger; and I find the business of education much more difficult than I expected. My dear little creatures sob and drop a tear now and then, under my instructions, but I am not so happy as to see them under deep and lasting impressions of religion; and this is the greatest grief they afford me. Grace cannot be communicated by natural descent; and, if it could, they would receive but little from me."

Few have had a higher relish for friendship, than Mr. Davies. Few have better understood its delicacies, or more faithfully and judiciously discharged its duties.—These and various other parts of his character, are agreeably unfolded in the following letter, written in the year 1751.

*"My Very dear friend,*

"I redeem a few nocturnal hours to breathe out my benevolent wishes for you, and to assure you of my peculiar regards. Human life is extremely precarious and uncertain; and, perhaps, at your return, I may be above the reach of your correspondence; or, perhaps, your voyage may end on the eternal shore. I, therefore, write to you, dear Sir, in the last agonies of friendship, if I may use the expression. If, upon your return, you only hear my worthless name tost from tongue to tongue, and find this system of clay that now breathes, and moves, and writes, mouldering into its native element, you may safely indulge this reflection: "Well, once I had a friend; a friend, whose affection could find room for me in his retired importunities for mercy at the throne of grace, when his own wants were so numerous and great,

that they might have engrossed all his concern." Or, if I am doomed to survive you, I shall have the melancholy satisfaction to reflect, " My friend did not live without such assurances of my tender affection as might engage his confidence in my useless friendship."

" And now, when I feel the soft emotions of friendship, and speak of the final period of this mortal state, I cannot restrain myself from intermixing some of the solemnities of religion. We shall have an interview beyond the grave, though we should never converse more beneath the skies, in the low language of mortals. But oh! on what happy, or on what dismal coast shall we meet? On the verdant plains of the celestial paradise, or in the dreary regions of horror and despair? The human mind is incapable of forming a more important inquiry; and if the hurries or amusements of this infant state of things can banish it from our minds, we have forfeited the character of rational creatures; we are as really, and more perniciously mad than any wretch in bedlam, though we are not stigmatised as such by the world, who are seized with the same delirium. The valley of the shadow of death appears frequently tremendous to me; but, it is in those unhappy hours, when my views of the glorious method of salvation through a mediator appear in an obscure light, and my complacency in it is wavering or languid: when the fervour of devotion is abated, and my soul is lulled asleep in a carnal security: but my mind cannot rest under this uncertainty: it is too important a matter to make an implicit venture in. Oh! Sir, an eternity of consummate happiness! An eternity of the most intolerable misery! My mind sinks beneath the unwieldy thought, and I cannot finish the sentence! If I am mistaken in this, if I form to myself some easy scheme of religion that may suit the humour of this world well enough, but will not obtain the approbation of the supreme Judge, then my reason is a pernicious superfluity, my very being an eternal curse; *Wo is me, my mother, that thou didst bear me.* But, in those joyful hours, when I can rest my guilty soul on an all-sufficient Redeemer with all the humble confidence of a confirmed faith; when I read the evidences of regenerating grace upon my heart; when I can recollect the solemn transactions between God and my soul, and renew them in the most voluntary dedication of myself, and all I am, and have, to him, through the blessed Mediator; then immortality is a glorious prospect; The grizzly phantom, death, is disarmed of all its horrors, and, with the inviting mildness of an angel, charms me into its cold embraces. Then the

mortal pale, the dying cold, the quivering lips, the falling jaws, and all the grim attendants of the last agony, carry nothing terrible in them.

“ Clasp'd in my heavenly Father's arms  
I would resign my fleeting breath:  
And lose my life amid the charms  
Of so divine and blest a death.”

“ Dear, dear Sir, I have opened to you some of my sentiments on experimental religion, and, you know, we unhappily differ upon sundry points, relating to it. Our differences on many other points, and sundry of them even with respect to this, have but a very remote connexion with everlasting salvation; and, no doubt, multitudes arrive in the same heaven, who are tenacious of different sides. But that thorough change of heart, usually denominated regeneration; that distressing conviction of our undone condition by sin, and utter inability to relieve ourselves by virtue of that strength common to mankind in general; that humble acceptance of Christ as our only Saviour and Lord, by a faith of divine operation, that humbling sense of the corruption of human nature, and eager pursuit of universal holiness, which I have, I believe, mentioned in conversation and my letters, appear to me of absolute necessity.

“ I should be glad you would read the second and third of Dr. Doddridge's Sermons on Regeneration, which, I think, give a very just and rational account of that important change. I would not venture my soul on a religion short of this for ten thousand worlds, and I am inexpressibly anxious, (pardon the perhaps needless anxiety of my love) lest you should fatally mistake here. My anxiety is heightened when I consider your favourite authors. Tillotson's and Sherlock's works, the Whole duty of Man, and such authors, are truly valuable in their place, and handle many points to peculiar advantage; but if I know any thing of experimental Christianity, they treat of it very superficially, and, I think, in their most obvious sense, tend to mislead us in sundry things of great importance relating to it, not so much by asserting false doctrines, as by omitting sundry branches of it absolutely necessary. I have examined the matter with some care; and I am sure their deliniation of Christianity is not an exact copy of what I must experience before I can see the Lord: I must indeed come up to their account of it; but I must not rest there; there is a necessity of experiencing something farther than they inculcate. The same thing I would inoffensively observe with respect to all the sermons

I have heard in Virginia from the established clergy.— Hence, by the bye, you may see the peculiar safety of my scheme ; if their scheme of religion be sufficient, I am as safe as they, since mine includes it ; but if it should prove essentially defective, then you see where the advantage lies. This difference is not at all owing to their being of the church of England, for many of that church agree with me ; and many Presbyterians with them ; but it is owing to their imbibing the modern divinity, which, like a pernicious leaven has diffused itself among all denominations : and however confidently some assert it, I could not embrace it without wilfully throwing myself into ruin.

“ You know, Sir, what use I would have you make of these hints ; and I am confident you will pardon the affectionate solicitude for you, which prompts me to them. I speak solemnly, dear Sir, solemnly, as in the presence of God, and not with the contradictory spirit of a disputant. Of all the systems of practical religion, which have come under my examination, I have endeavoured to choose the most sure as the foundation of my hopes ; and I should show a guilty and unfriendly indifference about your immortal interests, should I not recommend it to you, and caution you against those that appear insufficient. It matters little to me whether you use the ceremonial peculiarities of the church of England, or not ; as I know they have but little concern with experimental religion : but our notions of the substance of vital piety ought to be well examined, and impartially formed ; as a mistake here may be of pernicious consequences. But I must desist. May almighty grace prepare you for a glorious immortality ! May divine Providence be your guardian through the dangers of the boisterous ocean !

“ May He, whose nod the hurricanes and storms,  
 And blustering waves in all their dreadful forms,  
 With calm adoring reverence obey ;  
 May He with friendly vigilance preside  
 O'er the outrageous winds and boist'rous tide,  
 And safe thro' crowds of deaths conduct your dang'rous  
 way !

“ I commit two letters to your care, one to Dr. Doddridge, and one to Mr. Mauduit. Upon your arrival in London please to write a few lines along with mine to Dr. Doddridge, informing him where to find you, that he may commit his answer to your care.

“ And now, dear Sir, with affectionate salutations to your family, my whole self wishes you a most hearty farewell.”

The ardent and active mind of Mr. Davies entered with a lively interest into the concerns of his country. Her prosperity and honour, her sufferings and her wrongs, he regarded as his own. During that gloomy period when the French and Indians were ravaging the frontiers of Virginia, and when a general listlessness and inactivity seemed to have seized the people, he exerted all his faculties to rouse a spirit of resistance. The sermons, which he preached for this purpose, exhibit him to great advantage as a *Christian patriot*.



PROFESSOR AND HONESTUS—A DIALOGUE.

“If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”—Thank God (says Professor, on reading these words) this will not apply to me—I envy no man of his wealth or prosperity of any kind; nor am I anxious after much of this world’s goods—They are vanity and vexation of spirit.

*Honestus.* Perhaps you draw your conclusion too hastily. The subject is of too serious an importance to be passed over on a slight examination: for if we build on a sandy foundation, the storm will come and destroy the whole, however beautiful may be the structure.

*Professor.* Surely you do not think that I am in love with the world, surely you do not discover any evidences of it?

*Hon.* You know my temper too well, to suppose me capable of flattering you, and on this subject, perhaps my honesty might offend—

*Pro.* I am open to conviction, therefore speak plainly, and tell me if I exhibit any evidences of a worldly spirit.

*Hon.* A worldly spirit may be evidenced by other things besides a disposition to grasp at wealth—for example, when I choose to be like the world in opinions and practices, I think it evidences that we are at a very good understanding—I cannot think that I ought in such circumstances, to conclude that I am crucified to the world, and the world to me.

*Pro.* Very true—But neither my sentiments nor practices are like those of the world. The world esteems religion very little—they use *no* exertion to promote its interest—I esteem it of the greatest importance, and think it my duty to use *every* exertion for that purpose. It is the only firm bond of society—the only comfort of life, and the only thing which gives us a prospect of happiness beyond the grave.

*Hon.* Notwithstanding all this, at your request, I shall

point out to you those things in which there is a striking likeness between you and the world. You will grant that my long and intimate acquaintance with you will enable me to do you justice while I censure, and I trust my anxiety for your welfare, will make me faithful, even at the expence of what the world would call *points of delicacy*. I cannot charge you with any desire to amass wealth. Your age, perhaps is the only reason why this charge is not applicable: for I believe that youth will seldom be found avaricious. But it has often been with regret that I have seen your punctilious attention to the modes of dress—your perfect conformity to the world in this particular, shows how far the world can influence you, contrary to more important considerations. I know you will tell me that there is neither holiness nor unholiness in the texture or fashion of a coat.—To this I readily agree, but a man may discover such an attention to things of this sort, as to leave little doubt as to the unholiness of his heart. While there is no more than a due proportion of time and care directed to the article of dress, I care not much what is the mode. But when more important considerations are overlooked, and these things permitted to employ the time in preference, I cannot but condemn such conduct. You well remember when we were visited by Hilaris and Integer; the one as remarkable for his sobriety, as the other for his attention to his person and dress. Every body spoke highly of the piety and manners of Integer. The world itself could not withhold its tribute of respect to his merit. You were as loud in your approbation as any other person, but which of the two did you imitate? Not the manners of Integer, but those of Hilaris.

*Pro.* And pray, where is the impropriety of any thing I did in the instance alluded to? Does my conduct argue any want of attachment to religion because I choose to pay a decent respect to my own person?

*Hon.* By no means. This is not what I am censuring. But your imitation of the one, and not the other, shows very clearly that you were not influenced by any other principles than those which govern the world. Your conduct certainly met with your own approbation, and it is the only proper criterion by which you or any other person can determine on what your affections are placed. The exemplary conduct of Integer commanded the respect of the world, but you cannot think that it really loved that devout piety which he exhibited, or it would have copied after him; nor can I without violence to reason, conclude otherwise of you, as you have not reduced to practice one of those lessons which



his conduct or conversation so forcibly taught. Besides your conduct testifies that you feel a stronger attachment to the esteem and notice of the world, than you do for religion, when you consume the hours which ought to be devoted to acts of worship, in the decoration of your own person. Witness the amount of your conversation before we set out? Was it, "With what temper shall I approach the house of God, and attend his worship." Or was it not wholly on the subject of your external appearance? "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." From this I conclude that you yet love the world. When at church, at those periods, not immediately devoted to public acts of worship, how did your conduct appear? Was it marked with a gravity becoming a disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus? What was the subject of conversation in the circle to which you attached yourself? As I was not near enough to hear, I can only determine by what appeared to be its effects—Empty titters were frequently to be heard, as though conscious yourselves of the impropriety of such conduct. I know of no subject in religion calculated to produce such effects in conversation, and must conclude that something quite foreign from it engrossed your time and attention.—When you seated yourself in your pew, the vacancy of your countenance would have left the impression on a mind unacquainted with you, that you were not a worshipper but a spectator.

*Pro.* Is it necessary then that at worship our countenances should be beclouded, and a gloom spread over every feature?

*Hon.* You have often heard my sentiments on that subject, and cannot so far misunderstand me as to suppose I mean any such thing. But there is a correspondence in the feelings of the heart and certain actions. It is impossible to feel a deep interest in the transactions in which we are engaged without discovering some evidences of that feeling. Fear, horror, or any painful emotion will immediately discover itself on the countenance. We speak of the expressions of the countenance, by which we mean the readiness by which the feelings of the heart are discovered. If a man feels serious, his countenance will not be gay, nor when devout, or deeply interested, will it exhibit a vacant stare. On your return from church your attention was much employed, not on what you had *heard*, but what you had *seen*; in short I could not see any striking difference, in modesty of dress, gravity of deportment, either within or without the church, from the most thoughtless of my acquaint-

tance. By what is it then that you exhibit your weaniedness from the world? By nothing that I can see but in words.

Now sir, I have followed the dictates of friendship in giving you my sentiments agreeably to your request. I have not consulted my own feelings, or I should have been silent, where candor and honesty would have obliged me to censure. I do not consider you singular. The same observations apply with equal propriety to others of our acquaintance as well as you. From this, you ought to conclude with less certainty in your own case, or that of others, when the evidence in your favor is so slight.

Unable to reply, and unwilling to admit the justness of his friend's remarks, Professor hung his head in silence and left the room—Now reader tell me with what propriety these observations apply to you.

R.

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*For the Virginia Religious Magazine.*

REFLECTIONS ON MATTHEW XXVII. 3, 4, 5.

*Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.— And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

This passage is calculated to excite several useful reflections.

The first is, the danger of indulging a sinful propensity, under the notion that it will always remain weak and subject to our controul. Avarice seems to have been the ruling passion of the unhappy Judas. Doubtless there was a time of his life when he would have shuddered at the thought of obtaining money, however large the sum, at the expense of treachery. Yet he tampered with his love of money, suffering it to grow upon him by imperceptible degrees, until at length he refused not to betray his innocent, benevolent Master into the hands of his enemies for thirty pieces of silver. Reader, you are shocked at the crime, so replete with baseness, ingratitude and cruelty. Consider then the source from whence it flowed; a single desire unchecked in its progress from weak beginnings, to an inveterate habit a supreme passion of the soul. Learn hence a lesson for your own benefit. Search your heart diligently; and if you find

any wrong propensity there, let it not remain, because it is supposed to be weak; but labour by the grace of God to eradicate it at once, lest it acquire more strength, and lead you ere you are aware to ruin. It is in this gradual way that men become misers, drunkards, debauchees, and monsters of wickedness in all its abominable forms. It is thus that they harden their hearts against the fear of God, provoking him to give them up to their vices, and at length to give them up to everlasting perdition.

A second reflection is, the danger of parleying with temptation and evil advisers. Judas must have known that he was about to commit iniquity in betraying his Master.—Probably, however, he persuaded himself that he might gratify his darling propensity at a very small expense of guilt. He knew that Jesus was innocent of any crime. By his innocence, or else by the exercise of his miraculous power, the traitor may have expected that his Master would escape the malice of his prosecutors. Judas seems not to have supposed that he was delivering up the blessed Jesus to condemnation and death. And it is a very natural conjecture that the chief priests deceitfully assisted their wretched instrument in these extenuating calculations. But how dreadful was the result! After receiving the price of treachery, and betraying his master with a kiss, he saw him unjustly condemned to death by the very men who had contributed to gloss the enormity of the crime. Every extenuating circumstance at once disappeared; and the traitor stood defenceless in all his guilt before the tribunal of conscience and of God! It behoves us, therefore, if we would escape the tortures of this miserable man, to resist every colouring which may be used by our own passions or by the artifice of seducers to soften the hateful features of sin.—It is perilous even to hesitate whether we shall yield to temptation, or resist it at the first moment of its appearance. Deliberation in such cases rapidly deludes the soul with blindness and unfounded hopes, and plunges it into guilt and misery.

A third reflection is, the folly of relying upon seducers for consolation in the hour of remorse. The betrayer of our Lord, consciously hateful to God, the world, and himself, tormented with inexpressible anguish, could think of no resource but to seek a relief from the chief priests and elders, his employers. From this circumstance it seems probable that they had taught him to expect a different result of what he had done; and he perhaps flattered himself that by asserting his Master's innocence, and returning the money he

had received for the treachery, he might yet prevail with them to spare their victim. What bitterness must have filled his soul when he presented the thirty pieces of silver, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood! Was there ever a case which called louder for compassion? But the wretched sinner sought it from his tempters in vain. With the most unfeeling and even scornful indifference they reply, what is that to us? see thou to that.— The measure of distress and despair was now full. Not a gleam of hope beamed any longer upon the traitor's benighted mind. He cast down the infamous pieces of silver in the temple, and went and hanged himself. Let me intreat the reader, especially the youthful reader, to attend to this matter. You will find many ready to entice you, into the paths of sin and folly. You may be surrounded with jovial companions in the day of vicious pleasure and dissipation. But remember that the hour of serious reflection, of remorse, and of final judgment must arrive. And you will in vain seek for consolation from the associates and instigators of your transgressions, when you will need consolation most. They who have taught you to silence conscience and defy the Almighty will turn away with cruel indifference, and even disgust, from your bed of sickness.— They will administer no comfort, nor endeavour to administer any, to your departing soul. Make it then your first and great concern to secure the favour of your Creator and the testimony of an approving conscience. Seek the grace of God by Christ Jesus to pardon, sanctify, and preserve you. So shall you escape the deadly stings of a guilty mind; and in those moments when all the world will be unable to support your spirit, you will find God himself to be your Helper and the immovable Rock of your salvation.

PHILANDER.



*From the Assembly's Missionary Magazine.*

SUCCESS NOT THE SUBJECT OF REWARD.

[Continued from page 225.]

3. WE are to consult the direct testimony of scripture on this subject. But what shall we call direct testimony? I am not acquainted with any passage of scripture which says, in so many words, that success shall, or shall not, be considered in the reward which we are to receive from God. If such a passage could be produced, it would, at once, decide

the present question; for I doubt not that my opponent is sincerely disposed, as well as myself, to bow implicitly to the decisions of holy writ. Still I think that something which may not improperly be called direct testimony, in regard to the point under discussion, may be found in the sacred volume. Wherever a *principle* is explicitly and formally settled, every thing that is clearly and unequivocally embraced by that principle, is also thus settled. Now it seems to me that we have, from our Saviour himself, a decision, in regard to a principle which clearly and unequivocally embraces the subject in controversy. I refer to what he says on the case of the poor woman who cast her two mites into the treasury. "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living." Mark, xii. 41, 42, 43, 44. That this passage teaches *several* important truths is readily admitted; but I think it will not be easy to deny that the drift and scope of it was intended to decide and fix on this principle,—that it is the heart *only* that God regards, separately from all external influence that our actions may have on others. Accordingly I find that Poole, in his Synopsis, gives this as the sense of the best commentators on the forty-third verse.—His words are, "Scorsim hoc illis dixit, quia nihil attinebat aut viduam hoc audire, aut cæteros: sed discipulos docere voluit quæ vera esset liberalitatis æstimatio apud Deum et Dei imitatoris—*In pua censendum nil nisi dantis a Mor.*"—He said this to them [The disciples] apart, because it was not proper that either the widow or others should hear it: but he was desirous to teach his disciples what is the true estimate of liberality with God and those who imitate him. *In which estimate nothing is to be considered except the love of the donor.* If this was really the great lesson which our Saviour intended to teach his disciples, and, through them to teach the world; and if it be admitted, as it certainly must be, that God will reward only that which he approves in those who serve him, then Jesus Christ has fixed his seal on this principle,—that in those who perform good actions God will not only estimate and reward the inward temper of the heart, but he will reward *nothing else*. Wherever this inward temper is really good, it will in all cases—and

let it be well remembered—manifest itself by outward correspondent actions; but still it is the *disposition, the inherent personal grace alone*, that will be the subject of reward.—Some may have ability and opportunity to do much, and others little; some may be successful and others not; but the criterion of God's approbation and remuneration will be, *the quantity of love to himself* which there was in the heart. When Doctor Nott preached his missionary sermon, there were probably some actually present who contributed as much in ten cents, as others did in ten dollars.—Admit that in one case, the ten cents were the same expression of love to God and the souls of men, as the ten dollars were in the other. I believe—and think the Saviour has so decided—that both these classes of persons will receive exactly the same reward, for what they did on that occasion. Yet ten dollars will go a thousand times as far as ten cents in supporting missionaries, by whose instrumentality the gospel is to be preached and souls converted to the Redeemer.

There are several other passages of scripture which I think might be shown to bear on the point before us, by considering the principle which they establish. But as I wish to make this discussion as short as possible, I shall refer only to one text more, as speaking doctrinally on the point. "Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb *to be his servant*, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength."—Isaiah xlix. 4, 5. Though it is not here said in terms, the apparently unsuccessful and complaining servant of Jehovah should have as large a reward as if acknowledged success had attended his labours; yet that this is really implied, and is indeed the sense intended to be conveyed, seems plain from considering what is the design of the sacred penman in the passage. There appears to have been in view two circumstances, which are represented as having a depressing influence on the mind of him who complains that he has laboured in vain. The first is, the disappointment and distress arising from the want of success itself—The second, the construction that might be put on this circumstance by enemies; namely, that it was occasioned by the want of fidelity in him who had been employed in the work. To comfort the mind of the faithful servant of God, in the view of both these circumstances, it is said v. 4. "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord,

and my work with my God ;” and v. 5. “ Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.” That is, though men may condemn me for the want of fidelity, God will acquit me ; and though success has not attended my labours, yet, by his judgment, I shall receive the same reward as if my work had been as prosperous as I have endeavoured to render it. Let it be remarked, that without this last idea, the complainant is not fully comforted. If fidelity, unsuccessful as it had been, was not to be rewarded as much as if success had been granted, the consolation imparted remained very incomplete. But it appears to be the very design of the passage to state, that a faithful, unsuccessful servant of God, should have *all the consolation* that can possibly arise, from the consideration that his future justification and reward should suffer *no diminution at all* from the want of success. And if this be really its design, it is a direct decision in my favour, of the question discussed.

But it is to be remembered, that scripture teaches, not only by doctrine and precept, but by example, and that it is peculiarly by considering scripture examples, that we learn the decisions of God in regard to human character, conduct, and actions. Let us try our question then by this test. Enoch and Elijah alone of all the human race, have been translated that they should not see death.” This was certainly intended by God as a high honour, and a very considerable reward. That they stand in the first rank of glorified spirits, we have more than conjectural evidence. And such evidence we have, too, that though, probably, both were concerned in most laboriously endeavouring to reform the age in which they lived—Elijah certainly was—yet they were both remarkable for the want of success. The old world was destroyed for its wickedness, and the kingdoms of Judah and Israel were bettered but little by the warnings of Elijah. In these two instances, then, a remarkable want of success did not prevent the highest rewards. Nor are these by any means singular instances. Noah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and several others, might be added to the number, from the Old Testament ; and the martyr Stephen in a striking example of it, in the New. These are represented in scripture as among the most eminent saints : represented in such a way as to leave no doubt that they will appear as stars of the very first magnitude in the Heaven of eternal glory.— Yet none of these were distinguished for success in turning others to righteousness, but rather for the want of it. And the very same may be said of many martyrs, in later ages of

the church. The truth is, that to preserve one's own integrity untainted and unshaken, in a degenerate age, and go on, labouring steadily to do good to others, with little encouragement from success, requires a higher degree of grace, and evinces a more firm and heroic virtue, than can be required or exhibited where numbers are in favour of religion, and where every effort to do good is seen to be effectual. We find, accordingly, that in scripture story, the former are represented as being most peculiarly the objects of the divine approbation and worship.

But a greater than patriarchs, prophets, and martyrs, is here. The divine Redeemer himself, saw little of the fruit of his labours on earth. Yet God hath "highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name." To him the passage from Isaiah, already quoted, no doubt principally referred; though, as an excellent commentator has remarked, it was clearly intended to speak of the members with the head, and to comfort the ministers of Jesus with the truth that comforted their master. It is not out of the view of the writer that though the Saviour had little success in his teachings and labours on earth, yet the work which he accomplished is the foundation of all the success of the gospel that has ever been witnessed—the meritorious cause of acceptance with God to all the redeemed of the Lord—This is an indubitable and a glorious truth. But who will undertake to say, that every faithful, but apparently unsuccessful minister of Christ, shall not, in his measure, resemble his Lord, even in this particular. Merit, indeed, neither the successful, nor unsuccessful minister of Jesus can ever claim. But who will say, that the desires, the prayers, and the efforts of him, who sees, during his life time, but little fruit of his labours, shall not, in the judgment of the great day, be found to have done as much toward the propagation of the gospel, as those of him to whom the success appeared, to human eyes, to be immediately attached? It is in answer to prayer that God converts sinners from the error of their ways; and no good effort is ever lost: It may produce a train of the happiest consequences, when its author shall long have been sleeping in the dust. For aught we know, the same degrees of zeal and fidelity shall be found *in all instances*, eventually productive of the same degrees of success; that is, so far as they ever can be properly said to be productive of it. I would much rather embrace and undertake to defend this sentiment, than the one which I oppose.



## UNIFORM PIETY EXEMPLIFIED IN THE CONDUCT OF DANIEL.

RELIGION, when exhibited in the *lives* of men, more readily engages attention, and is more impressive, than when it is barely seen in *precept*. For this reason, among others, the divine Author of the Holy Scriptures hath seen fit to transmit to us a particular account of the conduct of a number of persons, in different ages of the world, and in different situations of life, who acted under its influence. By per-using their lives, we meet with something more than a description of religion; the thing itself is presented to our view.

Among the eminent saints, whose lives are recorded in the sacred volume, the prophet Daniel holds a conspicuous place. He was of the seed of David, and was carried a captive to Babylon in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. He, who is the Ruler of nations and the Head of the church, had an important work to perform in his state of captivity. Wonderful was the providence of God in fitting him for this work, and in introducing him to it. Holding the heart of the king of Babylon in his hand, and improving him as an instrument of accomplishing his eternal purposes, he inclined him to select from the captive youths, a number of the most beautiful appearance and promising talents, to be taught the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans. Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, of whom Daniel was the chief. For them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank, was appointed. The reason of their being so delicately trained up, probably was, that they, being in the flower of their age, might be allured with the delights of the court, and thereby be brought to forget their father's house and their religion; and, eventually, to be the means of bringing over all God's people to idolatry. But the thoughts of the Most High were not as the thoughts of the king of Babylon. While he was correcting his covenant people for their great wickedness, he took care of the faithful among them, and made them to be pitied of those who carried them captive. He gave Daniel and his friends a double portion of that excellent spirit of religion, which the Holy Ghost begetteth in the hearts of all, who are training up for heaven. This kept them not only from being defiled with the king's meat, but from being corrupted with the errors of that idolatrous court. To prepare Daniel for what he had to do and suffer in the cause of religion, God brought him

into favour with the prince of the eunuchs. This was a direct step to his promotion, while he was found eminently faithful in the service of his God. He was advanced to posts of honour, which he neither sought nor coveted; and, unexpectedly to himself, he was enabled to be a kind of nursing father to the people of God in their afflicted state. His precious life was spared, that his prayers might ascend before the throne of the God of Jacob, during the whole of the seventy year's captivity. He maintained his integrity, and at the same time possessed great influence, under the reign of several kings, even in critical revolutionary times.

When Darius, the Median, took the kingdom, he appointed an hundred and twenty princes, who were set over the whole kingdom. Over these were appointed three presidents, of whom Daniel was first, that the princes might give accounts unto them, and that the king should have no damage. These presidents and princes hated Daniel, because he was above them. Their eye was evil, because he was good. To support a charge against him, on account of his administration, they found to be impossible; for there was an excellent spirit in him, and in all his undertakings he was upright and faithful. But they were determined that he should be deposed; to effect which, they wickedly and maliciously attacked him on the ground of his religion. They contrived to have a decree signed by the king, which would necessarily lead Daniel to part with his *religion* or his *life*. A more wicked and heaven-daring plot was never conceived by man. It verified the words of the inspired penman; *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but, who can stand before envy?*

Concealing their object from Darius, these men went to him with the flattering language of courtiers, and addressing themselves to the proud feelings of his heart, as a great monarch, drew him into a snare. "King Darius," said they, "live forever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors and the captains have consulted together, to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions." Such flattering language was calculated to make a proud monarch blind to all consequences. They wished to confer, as they pretended, great honour on their king; yea, to set him up above all gods.—but the real object was, to destroy an eminently holy man, and the best in the kingdom. Pleased with their flattery and ignorant of their wicked plot, Darius signed the decree.—

Now they were prepared to remind him, if it should be necessary, as they well knew Daniel stood high in his esteem, that it was for his honour and interest, as well as his duty, to see this executed; because it was an established custom with the Medes and Persians, not to repeal, but to execute their laws. This was the snare which was laid for Daniel; and on obtaining the king's signature to the decree, they supposed that they had this holy man completely in their hands. Here we see to what lengths the human heart will go in wickedness. A company of vile men, in power, agreed to dethrone God, at least for thirty days. And to make it treason against their king, to put up one petition to God, in that time. What contempt of the Most High!

Having obtained the decree, their next business was to watch the motions of Daniel, whom they had devoted to a cruel death. Now we have a view of *his* situation. He must either give up communing with his God, yea, he must *deny* his God, or part with his life. There was no other alternative. Did he hesitate what course to take? Did he go to them and lay open his embarrassing situation? Did he study to conceal from their view the manner in which he was disposed to treat his God? No. He was resolved. He knew that the honour of the true God was publicly attacked, and that matters were now in such a train that the interest of religion, and the cause of his afflicted people, depended greatly on his *firmness*.

Although every thing pertaining to this world was at stake, he did not alter the course of his devotion. When he knew the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did afore-time. The piety and sincerity of Daniel, in this case, were strikingly manifested. He did not fly to his chamber, like a mad man, and throw open his windows, that by praying in the view of his enemies, he might glory in his courage, and bid defiance to their decree. True religion never courts persecution.—The windows of his chamber, where he was accustomed to bow the knee before God, were *already open*; and, under existing circumstances, it would have been, in a sense, yielding the point, for him to shut them. It is expressly mentioned that these windows were towards Jerusalem, the city of his God. Looking to the prayer made by Solomon, when the temple was dedicated, we see why particular mention is made, that the windows of Daniel's chamber were open towards Jerusalem. Doubtless all the devout Jews in their

captivity, prayed towards the land of their fathers, and the city and house of their God. *There* God had promised to accept his people. *There* he had placed his holy name.— Daniel believed that God, in his own time, would deliver his people out of their captivity, and bring them back again. In the midst of all his honours, riches and employments, he did not forget these things. Daily, and three times a day, he carried the cause of his people before God. This was not ostentation; because it was no more than what had been his usual practice. David did the same, as appears from his own words; “ Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice.”

The pious among the Jews had three seasons of praying to God, in a day. The first was at nine in the morning, which was their third hour; the second was at twelve, which was called their sixth hour; and the third was at three in the afternoon, which was called their ninth hour. The last was at the time of their evening sacrifice, the hour that Christ offered up himself a sacrifice for sinners. Daniel, in his high station, ordered his affairs, though numerous, in such a manner, that they should not hinder his solemn devotions. He had his particular seasons for prayer, and so have all who mean to walk with God. If he had restrained prayer, under these circumstances, he would have declared by his neglect, that he regarded man more than God; he would have sinned against his own conscience, offended the generation of the righteous; and hardened his enemies and the enemies of his God, by giving them occasion to triumph and blaspheme. Being resolved, he feared not to be found praying; his boldness prevented his enemies from breaking open doors to obtain proof against him.

Here, we behold the faithful man. Here, we see true religion exemplified. Such was the practice of one, who had the testimony of a heavenly messenger, that he was greatly beloved of God; of one, who, during the whole seventy years' captivity, was the chariot of Israel, and the horseman thereof, as Elijah was in his day.

Reader! pause, and ask yourself, whether you possess any portion of the excellent spirit of Daniel. Perhaps you profess, as he did, to be the friend of God; and yet stand chargeable with great inconstancy in your secret and family devotions, excusing yourself on account of the multitude of your avocations, and the crowd and hurry of your business. But is it rational to conclude, that in the comparatively small sphere in which you move, your hands are more full than were Daniel's? Upon him the management of an extensive

kingdom, of an hundred and twenty provinces principally devolved, and yet he found time and a heart to be frequent and constant in his devotions. He wisely regulated all his affairs, and failed not of drawing near to his God, three times every day. In what light, then, will you view your real character, if you find it in your heart wholly to dispense with family worship, on account of worldly concerns? Will you not have reason to fear, that you are destitute of that excellent spirit, which appeared in Daniel, and on account of which he was greatly beloved of God? Trying as such a conclusion may be, it is naturally drawn.

But are you ready to say, that you do not *wholly* dispense with the worship of God in your house; that you commonly seek the divine favour, at least once every week? Admitting that you can say this, consistently with truth, still, comparing such a practice with Daniel's *constancy* in prayer, you cannot but see that God is greatly robbed of his honour. That holy Being, whom Daniel delighted to serve; and who took such particular notice of his *constancy* in prayer, no doubt takes particular notice of all your neglects of the duty. He weigheth the actions of men, and pondereth all their goings.

Supposing your conscience allows you to say, that you never omit the morning and evening sacrifice in your house, only at those times when strangers, who are not religiously disposed, are present. Would this shield you from blame? Would this fully satisfy you, that you possessed a spirit of prayer? Compare such a practice with the conduct of Daniel. He failed not to pray, when he knew he was among the enemies of God, and when he was conscious that they were seeking occasion to deprive him, not only of all his honours, but his *life*. Seriously consider this example, and let the reproof which it may administer be as seed sown on good ground. H.



*From the Panophst.*

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IT seems to have been the opinion of all ages, that the Being who is styled in Scripture the *God of the spirits of all flesh*, has easy access to the human mind, and great influence over its determinations. If a man be deliberating, whether to engage in any particular enterprise or not, ; it is generally thought, that without diminishing the free agency of that person, God may have great influence over his conclusion,

that he may lead him to such a view of the subject, that his mind will incline this way rather than that. Almost all prayer is offered on this supposition, that our minds are capable of divine influence. We pray that God would direct us to safe and prudent measures in our common undertakings; that he would keep us from error, and lead us into the truth as to religion; that he would lead us to a right use of his providences; that he would establish us in the truth, and sanctify our hearts. Now these requests, which are the most common amongst men, who pray at all, do certainly imply a belief, that God can operate on our minds; for unless this be supposed, how can he direct us to the choice of suitable measures? How can he preserve us from fatal wanderings, establish us in the truth, or sanctify our hearts?

Were we to discard all belief in the reality of divine influence on the mind, the reason and ground of prayer would be weakened, and the subjects of it greatly diminished. It is certainly a very reasonable opinion, that Deity, who is himself a Spirit, has influence on the spirits which he has made. One man has great influence over another. A man of clear discernment, great information, and much acquaintance with the ways of the world, will suddenly produce great changes in the opinions, views, and pursuits of his neighbor. How differently will a subject appear to the latter, after having conversed with the other. And how totally changed will be his determinations and actions with regard to it. Now, if such effects arise from the influence of man with man; how much greater effects will result from the influence which God has upon man. If we can alarm one another, by exhibiting dangers; cannot God alarm the sinner by convincing him of his danger? If we are sometimes able, by various means, and long importunity, to alter the determinations and change the course of our neighbours, as to earthly objects; cannot God, by some of those innumerable means, which are always at his command, alter our determinations, and change our course as to heavenly things? If we can comfort and confirm one another; cannot God give consolation and establishment to the christian's mind?

But if the doctrine of divine influences were less intelligible than it is, we could not for that reason reject it, as it is clearly and strongly asserted both in the Old and New Testament. We say in the Old Testament, because, although the law, of itself, does not contain so much grace, as is implied in God's communicating aid and help to sinners, in their endeavors after holy obedience; yet God has never, even in this respect, left himself without a witness; but con-

ferred on the Jews, out of mere favor, that influence of the Holy Spirit, of which the law made no mention. Petitions for divine influence, acknowledgment of dependence on it, and promises of the outpouring of the Spirit, are very profusely scattered among the Psalms and Prophecies. *Teach me to do thy will, saith the Psalmist, for thou art my God. Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.— Surely it is meet to be said unto God, that which I see not, teach thou me.* The Psalmist uses the language of a child under an humble sense of his need of parental instruction.— *Shew me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee will I wait all the day. Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way.* Solomon, when he came to the throne of Israel, impressed with the importance of the station to which he was called, sought direction and strength from above. *Give therefore unto thy servant an understanding heart, to judge this people, that I may discern between good and bad.*

*The way of man is not in himself, and it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.* The prophet Isaiah speaks of gospel days, as a season, *when the Spirit of God shall be, in unusual measures, poured out from on high.* In allusion to gospel times, God speaks thus by the mouth of Joel; *It shall come to pass, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions, and also on the servants and handmaids in those days I will pour out my Spirit.* This prophecy will fulfilled, according to St. Peter, at the feast of Pentecost, when so many were converted, and the converts received miraculous powers. Acts ii. Now, although it is evident, both from the prophecy, and the fulfilment, that miraculous powers, such as speaking in different languages, were to be one consequence of the outpouring of God's Spirit; yet no person can reasonably doubt, that secret divine communications to the hearts of these worshipers, who then embraced the gospel, were likewise foretold; nor can any one doubt, that in this sense, likewise, the prophecy was fulfilled.

The New Testament, as might have been expected from the nature of the Christian dispensation, is more clear and copious on this subject. Christ expressly asserts, that no person can enter the kingdom of heaven, unless he experience a divine birth by the agency of God's Spirit. *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God.* And the general progress of a Christian,

as well as particular parts of a Christian carriage, is attributed to divine grace. Persevering believers are said to be *kept by the power of God through faith to salvation*. Christians are said to be *led by the Spirit*. It is by the Spirit that they *mortify the deeds of the body*.

In opposition to this, it has by some been objected, that by the Spirit is meant nothing more, than the word, which was given by the inspiration of the Spirit. Persons are said to be born of the Spirit, they tell us, when the word of God has such influence on them as to lead them to a holy life, although no divine communications are made to the mind. To this, it is replied, that Paul does indeed say to the Corinthians, *I have begotten you through the gospel*; and the church is said to be *cleansed and sanctified by the word*: but none of these expressions excludes the agency of the Spirit. It is not doubted, that divine truths are necessary to be known, before we shall seek after salvation, and that the word is a most powerful instrument of conversion and holiness; but yet it is not efficacious of itself. And it is exceedingly evident, from the general tenor of the New Testament, as well as from particular passages, that spiritual communications are necessary to accompany the word, in order to its producing the fruits of righteousness. The children of God are said to be *chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*. In this place, the sanctification of the Spirit is mentioned in distinction from the word, and therefore it is impossible that both should mean the same thing.

In the eight chapter of the epistle to the Romans, the matter is placed beyond all reasonable doubt. If any words be capable of proving a doctrine, that of divine operation upon the human mind is there proved. Being led by the Spirit, and having the Spirit dwelling in us, is there stated to be indispensable to our religious security. *Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be, that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he, that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if through the Spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Unless the necessity of divine influences be here asserted, these strong declarations must have little or no import. For it is here said, that they, who are Christ's, have the Spirit of Christ; and that they, who are the sons of God, are led by this Spirit; i. e. directed and influenced in



a holy life ; and that those, who live in Christian obedience, do it by aid from above. It is through the Spirit, that they mortify the deeds of the body.

*Goodness, righteousness, and truth*, are said to be *fruits of the Spirit*, (Ephesians v. 9.) and so are *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, and temperance*, (Gal. v. 22, 23.)

We know not the way of the Spirit ; nor ought we to attempt minuteness in describing the manner, in which its effects are produced. God uses various instruments, and frequently accomplishes the same purpose by different means. At one time he leads the mind to serious contemplation of some weighty and alarming subject, and presents that subject to the view, in a clear and striking light. He fixes the attention of sinners on those considerations, which most evidently demonstrates their danger, and the certain ruin, to which they are approaching. He directs the humble soul, the broken and the contrite heart, to those declarations of mercy, contained in the covenant of grace ; and either communicates, or withholds consolation, as his wisdom and goodness dictate.

As to directing the christian's life, God may, by an imperceptible impulse, preserve him from violent and overbearing temptations ; or when temptations are presented, may invigorate and establish his good resolutions by bringing to his mind some striking passages of Scripture, or some alarming ideas of God's presence, or of the world to come. He may excite to a religious activity by representing to him the danger of sloth in the business of salvation ; or may urge him to sobriety by representing to him the great solemnity of the work, in which he is engaged.

Though the indwelling of the Spirit, or to be led by the Spirit, is peculiar to the children of God ; yet there is reason to believe that all men under the gospel receive something of divine communications. The ancient Jews did *always resist the Holy Ghost* ; but they could not have resisted the Holy Ghost, unless he had been sent to them. Of sinners it may, in general, be said, as of the ancient Jews, that they will not submit to the suggestions and influence of divine grace ; they oppose and grieve the Spirit of God. Whereas the humble and contrite soul yields to the grace of Christ, becomes obedient to divine emotions, is led by the Spirit, and through the Spirit mortifies the deeds of the body.

As God has a perfect knowledge of all means, circumstances, events, and combinations of events ; it seems reasonable to suppose, what is in fact the case, that he makes

use of various means in producing the fruits of holiness in the human heart. Sometimes loss of worldly substance, severe disappointments, imminent danger, alarming sickness, the examples, or the private admonitions of good men, consideration of their triumphant death, or of the despairing death of the ungodly, and the reading of pious books, are used by God, as means of conviction, serious enquiry and holiness. But the public ministration of the word, as it is the great instrument of God's own appointment, must be viewed as that, by which he usually, though not invariably, operates. That knowledge indeed of the blessed gospel of Christ, which we obtain by reading, by private and public instruction, is, in a certain degree, instrumental in every conversion, and in promoting the piety of every good man; for it is under the impression of evangelical truths, that our minds are excited, alarmed, renewed, and led on to holy obedience.

The strength of religious impressions, and the outward evidence of the change, produced by them, are not less various, than the means by which these impressions are made. Some persons are exceedingly distressed, and violently agitated under the fearful apprehensions of divine wrath; and there have been very extraordinary and sudden changes in the tempers, pursuits, and lives of men. There have been instances of men, whose lives had been wholly given up to dissipation and sinful pleasure, suddenly arrested in their dangerous career, and exhibiting, ever after, the fruits of holiness in a well ordered life. For although there are many marvellous accounts of this nature, which, upon close examination, come to nothing; yet there are others, supported on such clear and weighty evidence, that it is difficult to see, how any candid and reasonable man can possibly deny them. Yet far the more common and ordinary way of the Spirit's working is less perceptible. *The wind bloweth where it listeth; and ye hear the sound thereof but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.* Our blessed Saviour has said, *so is the kingdom of heaven, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.* To the opinion of Dr. Waits, on the subject of regeneration and divine influences we do most cordially accede. "In the primitive days of Christianity," saith he, "and in the age of miracles, the Holy Ghost attended the preachers of the gospel, with his extraordinary gifts of healing, of tongues, of prophecy, as well as with the

graces of conviction, sanctification, and comfort; and the suddenness, and the glory of the change that was wrought on sinners, carried with it an illustrious and uncontested proof of the presence and power of God and his Spirit—Nor has some faint resemblance of such glorious graces been altogether wanting in latter ages. There have been some most remarkable instances of great sinners, converted at once by the gospel of Christ, and the demonstration of the Spirit.

“But in his more usual and ordinary communications of grace, he works so gentle upon our nature, and in so sweet and connatural a manner, as not to distinguish his agency, in a sensible manner, from the motions of our own souls; for he never disturbs our rational powers, nor puts any violence on our natural faculties; yet, when we are changed, when we are renewed, when sin is mortified; the Scripture tells us, the Spirit of God has done it. When our souls are prepared for heaven, and our corrupt nature sanctified, and suited to the things, that are prepared in heaven for us, we are assured by the word of God, that the Holy Spirit has been the great operator, and has wrought this change in us.”

LEIGHTON.

*From the Assembly's Missionary Magazine.*

#### REGENERATION.

THAT the Infidel, or the Socinian, on their principles, should even make a jest of the doctrine of Regeneration, as implying a radical and entire change of the heart, is not at all to be wondered at. But I have often thought it somewhat remarkable, that any christian, who holds the doctrine as, in this view, supernatural, should not likewise admit the necessity of a supernatural divine agency in the production of the change. The description, so expressly and so frequently given in holy scripture, of the depravity of human nature, and of the total impotence of its powers to effectuate any thing spiritually good, together with the many strong terms, in which it designates the change itself, the necessity of it, and the means by which it is effected, one would think, were sufficient to preclude all hesitation on the subject.

Under this view, I would request the reader to consider with due attention and impartiality the following passages: viz. Rom. vii. 18. “In me, that is, in my flesh,” meaning his nature as carnal and unrenewed, “dwelleth no good

thing;" nothing of the nature or description of that in which real moral excellence and its acceptableness in the sight of God consisteth. Rom. viii 7. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Psal. liii. 2. "God looked down from Heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one." Gen. vi. 5. "And God saw that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Jer. xvii. 19. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Again, read Jer. xiii. 22. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." 2 Cor. iii. 18. But we all," that is, believers, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord."—Ch. 4, v. 6. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." John iii. 3. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.—That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that, which is born of the spirit, is spirit. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit." Eph. ii. 8. "For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that, not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Eph. ii. 10. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Gal. vi. 15. "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." "Therefore," 2 Cor. v. 17. "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." With many other passages to the same effect.

I am not here concerned to account for this woful defection of our nature, which originally must have come pure and perfect from the hand of its Creator, and fully competent to whatever our well-being, as so constituted required. Nor am I concerned to make such explanations of these and the like passages, as shall point out their consistency with the many observable appearances of moral capacity and virtue, which are exhibited by men while as yet in their regenerate state. Let it suffice, for the present, that, those

passages bear, not only explicit, but in my opinion, decided testimony to the following truths: namely, That the unrenewed heart of man is radically bad; that its natural tendency or disposition is to evil; and that, as such, and so disposed, he is morally incapable of thinking, resolving, and acting in such a manner, as the nature and perfections of God, as his relations to God, and as the holy and spiritual laws of God require; that, in order to this, a great moral change or renovation of the heart, must take place; and that the change, if effected at all, must be effected by the agency of a superior power; or, according to the gospel, by the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit.

Such being the case, my discussion might terminate here, were I not sensible, that there are, both professors and preachers of christianity, who, though they expressly assent to these truths, yet do not admit a most important, and as I conceive, inseparable article of their import: that is, that both the change itself, and the efficiency of the productive power, are above nature: I mean, above the reach and standard of its powers and their proper operation in this our lapsed state; and that the change is such, as cannot be effected, either exclusively by the agency of our own powers, or by the agency of the same powers, even aided or actuated, according to their nature, by a power superior.—“Who,” saith Job, xiv. 4. “can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” “Do men” saith our Saviour “gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit; a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” Every effect must correspond with its productive cause. Every cause, producing effect, and operating according to its nature, must produce that, and only that, which is congruous to its nature, how highly soever the effect be wrought, and with what co-operation soever, it has acted; and no cause can produce an effect, in point, either of extent or of quality, above the rate of the power it possesses either naturally or in the circumstance in which it acts.

I cannot, accordingly, accede to the ideas of those who say, that though the intervention of a divine power be necessary to the production of the change, which in scripture is called a divine nature, and the new creature, yet, in this production, we are not to suppose, that the spirit of God operates otherwise than by graciously aiding or promoting the faculties of our minds in their contemplations of the truths of the gospel, or in their efforts, by the ordinary means ap-

pointed, to attain to the spirit and habits there recommended. Observe, by the faculties of our minds is here meant their faculties, as they are in their unrenewed state. They are the same, or such as in the passages already recited are called "unclean things," "thorns," "thistles," "and a corrupt tree." Now, can these unclean things, by an effort of their own, and operating, as they must, according to their nature, can they produce a clean heart? can these thorns produce grapes? these thistles figs? or this corrupt tree good fruit. This would be an appearance even more than supernatural, and much more extraordinary, than that for which we plead. It would be, not above only, but contrary to nature.

Suppose then, such energy and direction to be by a superior power imparted to them, as that they shall effectuate a change wrought up and completed to the utmost extent of their possible exertion; I ask, to what that change would amount? can it, on any principle of reason or philosophy, be supposed to be of any other nature, than of that by which it was effected? can enmity, the nature of the carnal mind, exerting the most accommodating powers which it may possibly put forth, and those directed, and promoted, agreeably to their proper, that is, their natural tendency or drift, by any supposable superior aid whatsoever, can it, I say, convert itself, or be converted into love? can the "unclean thing," by any operation, consisting with its natural uncleanness, make itself, or be made clean? or can that, in which "dwelleth no good thing," work itself, or by any intervention in aid of the best things dwelling in it, be wrought up into an habitual frame or principle of goodness? That the ultimate tendency and drift of the influences of the spirit of grace on the unregenerate heart, is the repentance, faith, and conversion of the sinner, is by no means to be doubted; as the aim of the husbandman in the preparatory tillage of his ground is, that he may obtain a profitable crop. But, in neither case are the operations suggested, in a strict and proper sense, effectually to the purposes respectively mentioned. As the grain, in the one case, is not engendered or formed by any action of the husbandman, but depends on a plastic agency of a different kind, and by a superior power; so the change, of which we speak, requires an influence or operation of a different kind from any which has been supposed, in order to its actual accomplishment. It is well known, moreover, that those influences of the spirit of grace referred to, do not always terminate in the requisite change; which is an evident proof of their not being of that

kind from which the requisite change results. How many, who had been favoured with them, have, after all their good purposes, and apparent reformations, returned, "as the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire?" The good spirit of God, in his sovereign proceedings, (no doubt, ungratefully and often opposed) hath not seen meet, in this case, by any other more directly pointed and decisive operation, to affect the refractory heart.

The proceedings of the spirit of grace in this affair are founded in great and remarkable wisdom. The attention of the thoughtless sinner is, in the first place, arrested. He is led to serious reflection on the nature and consequences of the life he has led. His conscience is alarmed; and presents to him the just and awful awards of the final tribunal. He sees, and in a manner, he feels the necessity of deliverance from "the wrath to come." For this grace he is prompted, of course, with a degree of earnestness to pray; and withal to attempt the amendment of his life, so far at least, as that, according to his apprehension, he may not farther incur the displeasure of heaven, or preclude his successful pursuit of the grace he needs. From the numerous defects, however, of his best attentions and endeavours in the way of duty and from the growing experience he has thereby acquired of the strength and prevalence of his sinful habits, he is gradually brought to see yet more the depth of his depravity, the greatness of his guilt, and the extent of his spiritual poverty and weakness; and, in effect he is yet more convinced, that his only sure ground of hope is the provision made in the gospel for "the chief of sinners;" and that, otherwise, his case is desperate. When this impressive conviction has obtained, his mind is, on the whole, in a condition more consonant to, or suitable for, the reception of those more special influences and informations which directly tend to and immediately terminate in the change in regeneration implied. But the *impressive conviction* referred to, with the efforts of reformation, either preceding or attending it, are not of the nature of real religion. They are only preliminary, and, as I think, I may justly say, preparatory in the wisdom of God to the vouchsafement of that grace by which the heart is renewed, and the principles of saving faith and repentance are produced; and, indeed, as I do verily believe, and that on grounds, as I conceive, unquestionable, is the utmost point to which the powers of the unrenewed mind, aided by the concurrent intervention of the Holy Spirit, can be consistently supposed to reach.—

Still, withal, there must remain a radical defect. There still are wanting the productive seeds, as I may say, of genuine piety in the heart. There still are wanting, in particular, those perceptions of the peculiar beauty and excellence of the divine perfections, and of divine things, in general, which are necessary to render them objects to us of holy and supreme affection, and to produce in us a real taste for them, a proper relish of them, and a commanding desire of the participation and enjoyment of them, together with such intercourse with, and accommodation to them, as true religion, or as the love of God and universal holiness, implies.— The perceptions, of which I speak, are the same with that *spiritual discernment*, suggested by the apostle in the second chapter of 2 Cor. “The carnal mind receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually* discerned.” The divine act of capacitating, qualifying, or disposing the mind for the admission of these perceptions, together with the efficacious communication of them through the medium of the word of truth and grace, is, as I apprehend, the first step, if so I may speak, or the radical operation of the Spirit in the work of regeneration. On these depend, from these result, that holy taste, that relish, that well-pleasèdness or delight in, and enjoyment of spiritual objects, and that desire of, and propension towards them, which I have mentioned, and which essentially belong to the “new creature,” or “the new man,” so called in the fourth of Eph. “which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Now all this supposes an effect produced, *specially different* from any whose production may be attributed to the agency of the powers of the carnal and unrenewed mind.— These powers, however aided and prompted, can, by their proper operation, as has been observed, produce no effect other than after their kind. In the effect of their production there must be wanting all that which essentially distinguishes the new and divine from the old and earthly nature, the spiritual from the carnal, a principle of piety from the reverse, or from the counterfeit, or mere resemblance of it.— In the one, “all old things,” at least in their principle, remain; in the other, they “are done away, and all things have become new.”

According to these representations, which I believe to be just and scriptural, I think, I may correctly and philosophically say: that, in regeneration, a *new simple perception* obtains in the human mind; or, in other words, new apprehensions, or notions of divine things, altogether foreign and



specifically different from any heretofore possessed, take place.\* Not that any faculty, such as we call natural, in contradistinction from the moral, is, in this instance, created, or in any wise imparted to the human mind. The soul of man, in its original constitution, is endowed with every natural faculty, needful to the purpose. But, these faculties, by our fatal defection, have become most wretchedly vitiated and disordered. Through the prevalent influence of sinful principle and habit, they have become incapable of such moral perceptions, as accord with the distinct and specific nature of divine and spiritual things. And, so long as this moral vitiosity and disorder remains in its power, it is in vain to expect, that any such notions of God, or, of whatever appertains to his nature or works, should so obtain and exist in our minds, as to produce in us the affections and determinations which correspond with their peculiar charac-

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*\* It is well known by the learned, that, the perceptions or ideas, of the class here referred to, whether communicated by sensation or reflection, or otherwise, (if otherwise communicable) are the origin, and compose the ground-work, or materials of all our knowledge. They are the impressions made on our minds, independently of our own choice, on occasion of objects presented, through whatever sense or medium conveyed. And they are called simple, as being, though distinctly discernable, yet, in their nature, undefinable, and wholly incommunicable to those who are devoid of the senses or other powers, by which, according to the established order of things, they are conveyed; or to those whose powers of perception, have been disqualified by accident, disease, or any disorder, whether natural or moral. When these powers are possessed in sound condition, they receive the true impression or notion of the properties of the objects presented; when unsound, they either receive them not at all, or they receive false impressions. And where the mind is furnished with true simple ideas, it has the power to repeat, compare, and combine them even to an almost infinite variety. If, accordingly, it has the power of perception, or spiritual discernment, in its healthful and competent state, it will admit the true notion of spiritual things and it will be affected by them according to their nature, or their true and specific qualities. Moreover, carrying this notion along with it in its contemplations through all the variety of the works of God, and of the forms of his revealed perfection, it will be wrought into the various sentiments, and delightfully animated to the practice of universal holiness.*

ters, or of the nature of that religion which he requireth of us. These impediments once, in proper measure, removed; this disorder rectified; this disease corrected, or overpowered by a superior counter-operation, divine objects, in their genuine forms presented, will have their free and proper impression. Their truth, their importance, their peculiar beauty, excellence, and glory will be sensibly perceived and felt; the heart will delightfully embrace them; and the man, with all his soul, and strength, and mind, will devote himself to the love and service of God forever.—*To be concluded.*

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*From the Assembly's Missionary Magazine.*

ON SPIRITUAL IMPULSES AND FEELINGS.

[*In a letter to a Friend.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

SINCE I saw you last, I have frequently thought of you with much concern, and sincerely wish you divine support and direction in all your trials and difficulties. As I make no doubt of your being a partaker of divine grace, I believe the Lord will, in the issue, bring you safely through all your troubles. Yet, if I may speak my mind freely, I am jealous over you, lest you should increase your own distresses, and lessen the benefit you might receive from them, by some mistakes I see you in danger of running into.

You remember the account you gave me of *your receiving many promises from God*, particularly respecting your *temporal circumstances*, and expressing the strongest *confidence* of their *literal* and punctual fulfilment. Perhaps you will think me your enemy, should I endeavour to rob you of any part of the consolation you have derived from this source. However, bear with me till you have heard me out; and I trust it will appear, that I do not wish to usurp dominion over your faith, but to be an helper of your joy.

I rejoice that you are enabled to abound in *prayer*, and thereby to make your requests known unto God; being desirous to cast all your care upon him, and to derive instruction and support from his word. I am fully assured, that the word of God will be found a sufficient directory in all cases whatever, and a source of spiritual comfort under the greatest trials.

It is your duty and privilege to *search* the scriptures daily, both for direction and consolation; and to endeavour, when you cannot have the bible in your hand, to *recall* the

precepts and promises, and meditate upon them; praying that the Holy Spirit would not only assist your natural power of recollection, but more especially that he would give you a *spiritual understanding* of his word, and an *answerable frame of heart*, properly affected with the various truths therein contained.

You have reason to bless God for the suitable provision he has made in his word, which, I gladly allow, is as exactly suited to your case, as if the words had been spoken to you individually; though, blessed be God, the same word of truth is equally suited to all other believers; and you have no more cause to complain of this, than you have to complain, that while the sun warms and enlightens *you*, as much as if you lived alone on the earth, it does as much for millions more at the same time.

You ought to be thankful that God has given you a memory, and assists you to recollect, from time to time, suitable passages of scripture, which sometimes occur to your mind in a very apt and seasonable manner. But perhaps this observation will rather displease you; and you will hardly allow that you do recollect them, but think they are *immediately suggested* to you from God. However, if your memory be like mine, it will be very difficult to prove this point. I have many a time had good things and bad suddenly occur to my mind, which at first I thought I had never read or heard before, and yet have afterwards found out where I first met with them. And be this as it may, it is a matter of *no consequence* at all, whether God assists my natural faculties in recollecting his word, or immediately suggests it. If he has *once* spoken in his holiness, it is as true as if he had said the same thing a thousand times. The bare suggestion of words to the mind would not necessarily be accompanied with the exercise of grace; for Balaam and other natural men, have had wonderful things told them by God himself, and yet had no grace at all in their hearts.—And, on the other hand, if my memory, or twenty other natural faculties of body or soul, were made use of in bringing the word of God to my mind, yet if I had at the same time the real exercise of grace, I might be assured, that *that* was owing wholly to the Spirit of God.

I therefore wish you and all Christians to ground their consolation, not on the MANNER in which the promises are brought to the mind, but on the MATTER contained in the promises themselves; not to think they are christians, because promises come *suddenly* to their minds, as if a VOICE spoke them, when they did *not know* there were any such

words in the book. The suddenness proves nothing either one way or the other; the voice is probably formed by the strength of their own imagination; and, if it really came from heaven, would be no surer than the written word was before: and as to their not knowing the words were in the book, that is the worst sign of all; for it only proves they have not read their Bibles so much as they ought to have done. Suppose you were to take any one plain promise of the gospel, and read it over ten times a-day for twelve months together; if upon the last day of the year, after reading it 3650 times, you found your mind enlightened to discern its real original meaning, was persuaded of its certain truth, and made to embrace it as good, sincerely and earnestly desiring the enjoyment of the blessings therein contained, for the same ends for which they were promised, and depending on the faithfulness of the Promiser for their fulfilment, thus being excited to give up your heart to him; if you had felt no emotion of the kind for 3649 times that you had read the words before, and if at last your comfort came on ever so slowly, you might nevertheless be safely assured, that it came truly from God.

But at this time I meant chiefly to speak of the promise of *temporal blessings*, which you seemed to be so confident of, that God had made them to you in particular, and would accordingly undoubtedly fulfil them. Now, it is a certain and comfortable truth, that "goodness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. But verily, my dear friend, *I have no notion that God has made one promise of temporal blessings to you, but what is common to all believers in similar circumstances.* Herein you seem, to me, to be in great danger of mistakes, and such as will probably lead you into other considerable errors, if they are not rectified. Christian friendship, therefore, induces me to use freedom and plainness on this head.

Before the canon of scripture was closed, God made known his will at sundry times, and in divers manners, to many of his servants, by way of immediate revelation. He made various particular events known beforehand to Abraham, and Joseph, and David, and others; and gave them promises which belonged to them exclusively, and could not be safely applied to any other. For instance, he promised Abraham, that his seed should be as the sand of the sea for multitude; and that all nations of the earth should be blessed in his seed, &c. He engaged, that Joseph should be exalted above his brethren, and all his fathers house. He fore-

told, that David should be himself seated on the throne of Israel; and afterwards sware unto him, that of the fruit of his loins he would raise up the Messiah, to sit upon his throne. God also made new revelations to bad men, as well as to the godly; to Pharaoh, to Balaam, to Jeroboam, to Jehu, to Ahaz, &c.

But we, who have now the whole Bible to direct and support us, are not encouraged to expect or desire, *new* revelations; but it is our duty to make use of the *perfect* revelation which God has *already* made, and put into our hands; and I must insist upon it, that it is so full and perfect, that you cannot need any additions to it.

The *precepts* of the Bible are so plain and full, that if we have a single eye to the divine glory, they will, in all cases, be found a *sufficient directory* as to every branch of duty.— Indeed, had I ever so much grace and spiritual understanding, the Bible would *not* tell me what would come to pass next year, nor even what will take place to-morrow. It will not tell me, whether I shall be rich or poor in futurity; whether I shall continue in my present circumstances, or alter my outward condition, within any limited time: It will not inform me, whether I shall live long, or die soon; nor will it assist me to predict a thousand events which my curiosity would like me to know. But it will do that which is ten thousand times better; it will direct me to be concerned, that whether I live, I may live to the Lord, or if I die, that I may die in the Lord; it will teach me to acknowledge God in all my ways, and encourage me to cast all my care upon him; it will tell me that my times are in his hands, and teach me to bless the Lord at all times. It will not absolutely assure me what God will do as to any of my outward concerns; but it will assure me, if I am a christian, that he will deal well with me, he will surely do me good: it will teach me, that as I know not what is good for me, of all that is before me, I ought, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. Surely it is *much better* for me to know what I ought to do to-day, than to know what will come to pass to-morrow. I had much rather know the *duties* of one hour, and have a heart to do them, than have a revelation of all the future *events* of my life. Now, I am thoroughly convinced of this important truth, which I dare confidently assert and maintain, viz. that *common sense, a Bible, and a right spirit, will inform a christian what is present duty.*— They will not always direct him to *action*, because his present duty may be *patient waiting*. They will not inform him how he may certainly avoid a variety of troubles, (though

they will probably assist him to escape many difficulties, which he would otherwise meet with), but they will teach him how to glorify God, by bearing all unavoidable troubles in a becoming manner.

Thus also the supports and consolations of the Bible will be found quite sufficient for every christian in the worst of troubles. Place me in the worst condition that ever a child of God was in, and let God only enable me truly to understand, and fully to realise, what he has already said, in his *good old revelation*, and I should have support and comfort enough; I should need no *new revelation* to make me easy. By the *OLD* revelation, I mean the scriptures in their original sense and meaning, understood as saying *nothing more to me than what they say to all christians in the like circumstances*; so that *every other christian would learn just the same things from them which I do, if he had but an equal measure of spiritual light*. By a *NEW* revelation, I intend all sorts of impressions concerning supposed facts not already discovered in scripture, or concerning future events not already foretold, whether these impressions are made in the words of scripture, or by any other words strongly fixed on the mind. If detached sentences of scripture are made use of, that makes the case none the better, unless the sense gathered from them was originally contained in the Bible.

Perhaps you will stand me out that you have known some such instances of these sorts of impressions being fulfilled, that I can never persuade you they are always delusive. As to myself I only say, that I have no better opinion of *these* tales, than I have of tales concerning *ghosts* and apparitions. I should not care to affirm, that no man, in any one instance whatsoever, really saw an apparition; but I believe, that out of a hundred such tales, half of them are barefaced lies, and probably forty-nine of the other half were merely the effect of a strong imagination; and *if* one in a hundred should be true, I do not wish to experience the truth of either kind of wonders myself: nor have I any more desire to receive a new revelation, than I have to receive a visit from a real ghost.

However, I must be more positive in maintaining, that, supposing them both to be real, there is no more token of grace in the one case than the other. Indeed it is possible, that a new revelation, if it were really made to a gracious man, might be attended with the exercise of grace; and so might his seeing an apparition. But certainly, it is a *far better* evidence of grace for a man to bear up under trials, by means of scriptural consolation, while he is uncertain of

future events, than for him to be supported and comforted, by the certain foreknowledge of some agreeable change in his outward circumstances.

Suppose that you were in a state of poverty, and being greatly distressed on that account, were to be relieved by an express revelation, that some distant relation should die, and leave you a large fortune; I think verily, you would not have the opportunity of exercising such grace, and giving God such glory, as another person, who, though as poor and afflicted as yourself, should yet be composed, and resigned to the will of God, notwithstanding he had no expectation of any remarkable alteration of circumstances in his favour, but who should rely on the providence of God, to supply him with absolute necessaries, submitting to his wisdom and sovereignty, and rejoicing that he had chosen the poor of this world, to be rich in faith, and heirs of his kingdom.

I wish you, my dear friend, to pray earnestly for more spiritual understanding of the good old revelation already made: be content that the Bible has said already, to all believers, enough to support them in all their worst distresses, and do not indulge a wish to make it say more than it has said. There is much instruction and consolation treasured up therein, which we have as yet but a very imperfect acquaintance with; let us study that, leaving secret things to the Lord, and being thankful that he has given us such an ample revelation of his holy will.

It is more flattering to *spiritual pride*, to hold an immediate dialogue with the Almighty, and to foretel our own future prosperity, and I know not what besides, than to study the plain word of God, and learn no more from it than what all our christian brethren might learn by the same means; and indeed this tendency, of such sort of impressions, is one great objection to them. But the other method is much more honourable to God, and to his written word, more favourable to the exercises of grace, and, in the issue, more comfortable and safe for ourselves. At best, I may be mistaken as to these new revelations; but the old can never prove false. If I were desirous of changing my circumstances in life, a revelation of my certain success in courtship might disappoint me; but an assurance, that God would perform the thing he had appointed for me, could not. If I were in poverty, a promise of riches might fail; but a promise that God will add all that is really needful to them who seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, cannot deceive me. If I were under trials, an impression that they should have an end at a given period, might fail;

but a promise, that they shall issue, some way or other, to the glory of God, and my welfare, cannot fail, for God has ensured this to all believers.

Since I was first acquainted with religion, I have known many instances, of the sad consequence of giving heed to impulses, both in those that I believe were truly gracious, and in others whom I could not but suspect to be destitute of divine grace. I have seen repeated instances of persons carried away by these impressions, who have appeared for a long time exceedingly confident of the fulfilment of the imaginary promises of certain events, which they desired; but yet instead of waiting God's time for their accomplishment, they have been subject to the *most violent and disorderly sallies of passion*, upon any appearance of a disappointment, even while they have professed to retain their confidence, that God had indeed said such and such things to them; a sad indication to me, that their faith in this particular was not the gift of God. And when real christians, as I verily believe, have for a while been drawn into such snares, how have they been tempted to throw away all their experience, good and bad together, when events had taken place quite contrary to their expectations! I wish to use all possible tenderness in attempting to rectify mistakes of this kind, but have sometimes had cause to repent not speaking my mind more plainly and fully.

I pray, therefore, my friend, that you may be contented with inquiring into your present duty, and satisfied with the stores of consolation, already treasured up in the divine word as the common stock of the people of God. Perhaps you are ready to reply, Well, but then the Bible will not assure me to the contrary, but that I may be as poor as Job or Lazarus! Very true; it will not secure you from one affliction that other believers are liable to; but however, as it assures you the Lord will never fail you, nor forsake you; that he will cause all things to work together for your good; that though for the present, if need be, you may be in heaviness through manifold temptations; yet, the trial of your faith, being more precious than that of gold, which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, will be found to glory and honour, and praise, at the appearing of Christ Jesus; you will, in the issue, find cause to say, This is enough; God hath spoken in his holiness, and I will rejoice, since he in all things shall be glorified.

Hoping you will take all my freedom in good part, I subscribe myself, Your's, &c.

AGNOSTOS.



OBSERVATIONS ON THE SAVIOUR'S APPEARANCE IN THE  
WORLD IN THE STATE OF INFANCY.

IN the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, perhaps there is no circumstance more striking, than the *Antient of days* manifested the *babe of Bethlehem*. In looking for the reasons why the Saviour must be born, we must inquire with sobriety, and decide with modesty. And perhaps nothing more ought to be attempted on such a subject, than to show that there is an admirable propriety and beauty in the divine appointment, which we know has actually taken place.

Early after the fall, God threatened the serpent, that his head should be bruised by the *seed of the woman*. And Isaiah thus delivers his prophecy concerning the advent of the Messiah; "Unto us a child is born." In another place, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." These prophecies being specific, must have a fulfilment. Christ's body must have been formed of the dust, as Adam's was, and he been a true and proper man. He might have been formed as Eve from a part of the human body; in which case he would have been flesh and blood. But as in either of these cases the scripture would not have been fulfilled, so neither in the first would the Saviour have been the woman's seed, or one of that race for whom he appeared as a surety. We are not to suppose that the appointment of the *woman's seed* to bruise the serpents head, was arbitrary, and simply sovereign. Perhaps there may hereafter appear more wisdom and beauty than we now see, in making the same channel that had brought death into the world, convey the life of the world also. Perhaps it was not possible for Christ to have suffered, unless he had partaken of flesh and blood in its lapsed state. If he had been made as Adam, innocent and free from the curse, it does not readily appear how he could have suffered. In order then that he might suffer for our salvation, he must take upon him flesh and blood, and not only so, flesh and blood which by the fall of man had received a capacity for grief and sorrow. The scriptures evidently favour this idea. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, (i. e. of pains and griefs) he also himself likewise took *part* of the same." &c. Heb. ii. 14—18. Nor can we well discover how on any other plan, he could have brought the human race sufficiently near himself, to have imparted the benefits of his obedience and death. But when he became the seed of the woman, he took a nature on him at once innocent and possible, and established

such a close union with the human race, as made it possible to transfuse his merits through the past and coming generations.

Christ was also born, and passed through a state of childhood, that he might obey the law *in every point*, and so bring in a perfect and universal righteousness. From the whole tenor of scripture it is evident, that obedience in behalf of sinners was necessary for their salvation. "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation." If we form our opinion, of the nature of that obedience which Christ performed, from scripture declaration, from the nature of the divine law, and from the various relations which Jesus sustained while among men, we shall have good reason to believe that his obedience was unusual in *kind* as well as degree. To perform such an obedience would require him to pass through all the grades of life from infancy onward. The scriptures seem absolutely to require that obedience should be paid in kind. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law." Nor is this less reasonable than it is certain. No one duty could be omitted more than another, the smallest being as sacred as the greatest. The law in all its requirements being equally reasonable and immutable, could pass nothing by. And when we notice the great variety of relations which Christ sustained, as a child, a friend, a protector and so a parent, a neighbour and a citizen, and that he thus virtually fulfilled all the duties of life, of every kind, we discover a most weighty reason why he made his appearance in the world a son and an infant of days. The apostle very clearly intimates that this was one reason why Christ was born. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his son, *made of a woman, made under the law*, that he might redeem them that were under the law." For this end was he born, that as he passed on he might fulfil every duty, from the first sensibilities of the filial obligation, to the full grown obedience of the man and neighbour. In so doing, he so sanctified the several stages of life, that from every point thereof there might be opened a door of admission into heaven. But it was further requisite that he should be born; that he might bear the whole curse that was due to sin. The curse pronounced for sin was wide, and, as to its objects, universal: and being once pronounced, became irrevocable. Now Jesus came to be made a curse for us.—And although the curse which he endured was principally, and most severely felt when he hung upon the tree, yet it

was not the less felt in its various degrees, in the different periods of his mortal life. The weariness, and griefs, and all the ills of life he felt. Among other things he took upon him the weakness and the pains of infancy. There is doubtless a degree of weakness which in paradise would have been attached to infancy. But far less extensive than at present. It is evident that by the fall a great change took place on the mother in parturition. "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth thy children." And it is fairly presumable that a proportionate change passed on her infant seed. To this, being a part of the curse, the Saviour must submit. He must not only drink the dregs of the cup of wrath; but also all the bitter ingredients, which sin had mingled in the cup of life. And to this end Jesus passed through life, feeling all its natural evils, bearing our burdens, carrying our sorrows, and as he passed along, taking away the sins and curse of man.— He was an infant, endured the *particular* curse that was due to that period of human life, and so sanctified the infantile state, that a way was opened up for them to come to eternal happiness.—*Assembly's Magazine,*

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*From the Assembly's Missionary Magazine.*

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS ON SAVING FAITH.

To possess clear, scriptural, consistent views of saving faith, is of the utmost importance. Our Saviour says, "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." The consequences resulting to those who have this faith, as well as to those who shall remain without it, will be eternal. "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." "What must I do to be saved?" is an interesting question. The answer given to it, by unerring wisdom, is, that we "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" and then the encouragement to a compliance with this direction immediately follows, which is a divine promise, that we "shall be saved."

Faith is a transaction of the mind and heart with God, about our eternal salvation. It is the exertion and desire of the soul, in coming to Christ. Thereby we cordially accept of Jesus, as our own Saviour, and give ourselves to him, to be his servants forever. For our imitation and to their honour, it is recorded, 2 Cor. viii. 5, that the members of the churches of Macedonia "gave their own selves to the Lord." A great diversity of metaphors is used, in the sacred wri-

tings, to illustrate the nature of this grace ; such as, looking, coming, flying, &c.

I select three phrases, used in the scriptures, for the illustration of saving faith.

1. It is represented as the act of a soul, when receiving Christ. John i. 12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Wherever the gospel is preached, there Jesus Christ and his salvation are freely offered to all, without exception, who hear it. Never was human benevolence so freely and sincerely exerted, to procure relief to indigence and distress, as is displayed by God in the plan of redemption. The great Jehovah has offered up his own Son as a sacrifice for sin, that through him, his rebel enemies may obtain pardon, peace, and glory! Having made this offering, and having pointed out the way to eternal happiness, it only remains for sinners to determine if they will accept of it; for it is only by receiving Christ, as he is offered to us in the gospel, that we can make him our own. By faith we live upon him, are nourished by him, and make use of him, for "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

2. Faith is represented, John vi. 53, as the act of "eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of man."—Happy they, who hunger and thirst after righteousness; happy they, who feed upon the true bread which came down from heaven! However, as it is not the act of taking, or eating food, which nourisheth, but the food when taken; so it is not any intrinsic excellence in faith, viewed simply as our act, which saves us, but the merits and grace of Christ, applied, used, and digested by faith. By it, we plead the righteousness of Christ for our justification; and live upon his grace and fullness, for our sanctification. It opens a communication between heaven and earth. It conducts its possessor directly to the mediatorial treasures of him in whom it hath pleased the Father, that "all fullness should dwell;" of him "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The conversation of the good man, is in heaven; to that country he trades. The road, between Christ's inexhaustible fullness and his own penury and emptiness, he travels with delight. He views Jesus Christ as the divinely appointed trustee of the covenant of grace; and, he comes to him, firmly believing that he possesses a boundless store of spiritual blessings, and that he possesses them for the express purpose of bestowing them upon every one who shall faithfully apply for them.

3. Faith being the credit given to the divine testimony, is

denominated, "BELIEVING." Mat. xxi. 22. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

The Lord means as he speaks, and will do as he hath said. He is not a man that he should lie; for "righteousness is the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." We have an example in the third chapter of Jonah, which illustrates the nature of that credit which we are to give to God's declarations. Directed by the Lord, Jonah cried, "Yet forty days, and Ninevah shall be overthrown." So the people of Ninevah believed God; that is, they gave full credit to God's message, delivered to them by Jonah. Another example occurs in Acts xxvii. After Paul had appealed to Cæsar, and when he was on his voyage toward Rome, he and those who were with him were threatened with a watry grave. The Lord who frequently appears for the deliverance of his own people, in the very article of extreme danger, sent his angel to communicate the following intelligence. "Fear not Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar, and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Whereupon Paul animated his fellow-passengers, saying, "Be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be, even as it was told me." God hath said it, I believe it. A filial, unsuspecting confidence in the Lord, as inviolably faithful and true, is signally pleasing to him, and infallibly secures our own eternal happiness.—God hath placed his word on a foundation which cannot be shaken, and on that we may safely fix our faith. His promises, confirmed by his oath, are exhibited to gain our unwavering reliance. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

" The gospel bears my spirit up;  
 " A faithful and unchanging God,  
 " Lays the foundation of my hope,  
 " In oaths, and promises, and blood."

Many doubts arise in the minds of anxious inquirers, with respect to their right, or warrant, to receive or believe in Christ; but how divinely encouraging are the means employed by the Lord to remove these doubts? "Buy wine and milk without money and without price. Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Him

that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Christ is now riding through the evangelised world, in the chariot of the gospel, and as he passes along, he exhibits to all a pardon, purchased and sealed with his own blood. He, affectionately, asks, "O sinners, who among you desires a pardon?" Jesus the Redeemer, came to save sinners—the very chief of sinners; and the invitations given, and the offers made, in the scriptures, authorise them to come to him for salvation, without any discouragement. When you meet a beggar and offer to relieve his wants, his unworthiness, however great, does not preclude his right to receive the good which you tender him; neither, doth your unworthiness annihilate your right to believe in Christ, as your own particular Saviour, and to receive the offers and invitations made to you in his gospel. He promises not only to accept you, when you shall come, but also to guide you through life, to support you in affliction and death, and to be your portion in eternity. His own words are, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" which, according to Dr. Doddridge's emphatical translation, are, "I will not—I will not leave thee; I will never, never, never forsake thee."

Faith presupposes a conviction of our apostacy from God, and of our consequent depravity and wretchedness. For the whole need not a physician but the sick. Before coming to Christ, by faith, we must feel, that we are exposed to God's wrath, and to the curse of his broken law; that, by our personal exertions, we cannot answer the acquirements of the law; and that "there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The kind invitations, given in the gospel, are intended to embolden trembling inquirers to fly for safety to the true city of refuge, and also to leave impenitent sinners without excuse. But alas! the tender proposals of salvation, which are made to us in the gospel, will increase our guilt and inflame our misery, unless we accept them. O careless sinner! by your unbelief you make God a liar. Undervaluing the gospel is a more heinous crime than the violation of the law; for, in the gospel, God is making his last effort to reclaim you, and, therefore, if you continue to disregard it, there remains no more sacrifice for your sin. "If," said Christ, "I had not come and spoken unto you, you had not had sin, but now ye have no cloak for your sin." What will it avail you, that Christ hath bled to death on the cross, unless you come to him? Will a proclamation of pardon, issued to rebels, from competent authority, profit them, unless they comply with the terms on which the indemnity is offered?

Will wealth profered to an indigent man enrich him, if he do not accept it? Will a suitable garment provided, but not put on, cover or warm you? Will food exhibited, but not eaten, satiate a craving appetite? Neither my brethren, will a Saviour mercifully provided for you, and tenderly proposed to you, rescue you from eternal death, and procure for you everlasting life, unless, by faith, you make him your own.

G.

WHATSOEVER is injurious to piety must be a proper subject for animadversion. Those, indeed, who act open hostility to christianity, are not likely to be checked by any observation; but the *friend* of christianity will not be surely offended if it is suggested to him, that he may possibly have injured the cause, which it is his earnest desire to support, by countenancing a practice which, though highly injurious, is not uncommon: I mean the practice of telling anecdotes of mistakes which have been made in reading the scriptures at church. The most solemn parts of the word of God are, by these means, connected with some *ludicrous* idea; an idea which perhaps, can never be erased from the mind, and which effectually prevents the impression that these passages are calculated to make: for I suppose it will be granted, that a *serious* and a *ludicrous* impression cannot be made at the same time. This being the case, we can hardly imagine that the greatest enemy to religion could have hit upon a better expedient to promote his designs, than the practice here alluded to. In order to perceive its full effects; we have only to suppose that the *whole* of the church service, and *all* the most striking parts of scripture, had some ridiculous story connected with them.

I was lately in a large company at a friend's house, when the conversation took the turn in question. Several clergymen were present of great learning and piety, between whom much useful conversation had previously passed. One of them happening to tell a story of a strange blunder made by a parish clerk, it was immediately followed by another, till the whole company catching the contagion, almost every one had some laughable story of the same sort to relate. Several young persons were present who seemed so much to enjoy the conversation, that I apprehend they never will read or hear the texts which were mentioned, without associating them with the anecdote that caused so much mirth.

I will likewise take the liberty of mentioning another practice, which I have often witnessed, and which, though

not precisely the same, is very similar in its effects : I mean the talking on religious subjects in a manner which has a tendency to excite laughter. Some persons, from their peculiar turn of mind are much tempted to this. I do not mean to charge them with want of reverence for religion, but whilst they indulge themselves in this way of talking, they are not aware of the impressions which they may be making on the minds of others. All such as have a natural turn for wit and humour should here be on their guard. Religion is not a *gloomy*, but it is a *serious* thing.

The subject of this paper may, perhaps, appear strange to some who have never met with any thing of the kind : many however, I am convinced, will feel its importance.

O. R.

It is impossible not to feel the force of O. R.'s animadversions. No small portion of blame, however, is also due to those clergymen, who, by their careless and incorrect manner of reading the scriptures, furnish matter for ludicrous anecdote.

*Christian Observer.*

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COMMUNICATION.

MR. EDITOR,

THE following sentiments of Lequinio, a member of the national convention of France, are too remarkable to pass unnoticed, and will, I think, make an interesting article for your magazine. Speaking of Jesus Christ, in his late book "On Prejudice," cap. twenty-six, he expresses himself thus :

" He called himself the Son of God ! Who among us dare say that he is not ? He always displayed virtue ; he always spoke according to the dictates of reason ; he always preached up wisdom ; he sincerely loved all men, and wished to do good even to his executioners ; he developed all the principles of moral equity, and of the purest patriotism ; he met danger undismayed ; he showed himself averse to the great, who in all ages have made a bad use of their power ; he described the heardheartedness of the rich ; he attacked the pride of kings ; he dared to resist even the face of tyrants ; he despised glory and fortune ; he was sober ; he solaced the indigent ; he taught the unfortunate how to suffer ; he sustained weakness ; he fortified decay ; he consoled misfortune, and knew how to shed tears with them that wept ; he taught men to subjugate their passions, to think, to reflect, to love one another, and to live happily together,



He was hated by the powerful men, whom he offended; and persecuted by the wicked, whom he unmasked; and he died under the indignation of that blind and deceived multitude for whom he had always lived." P.

The above extract is not introduced into this work, (nor can we suppose our correspondent intended it) for the purpose of rescuing its author from the charge of infidelity which has long existed against him. Such an attempt would, unquestionably, fail. But we place it before our readers, as the testimony of an enemy to the divinity of our Saviour, when called to speak of his life and character.

ED.—*Assembly's Magazine,*

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*From the Panoplist,*

EXTRACT OF A LETTER,

*Dated March fifth, Eighteen hundred and six, from a Foreign Correspondent, to one of the Editors of the Panoplist.*

"IN every period of the Christian church, the first step toward licentiousness and irreligion has been the denial of some one of those peculiar doctrines of revelation, which cannot be discovered by the light of nature. As soon as these great and important barriers to human pride and wickedness are removed, every species of scepticism is introduced, and mankind are left to believe whatever they please, and are no longer confined to that faith which our blessed Saviour has made essential to salvation.

"In pursuance of this plan, that illustrious and eminently peculiar doctrine of Christianity, *the divinity of our blessed Lord*, has been the first attacked. As soon as this corner stone of our holy religion is removed, the whole beautiful fabric falls at once. So intimately are all the doctrines of Christ connected, that they must stand or fall together.—And what GOD hath joined, who shall dare to part asunder?"

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THE CREATION,

[*From the Theological and Biblical Magazine.*]

*In the beginning* of time, at that point in the vast and boundless circle of ages, in which Jehovah had before determined to display his almighty energy, *God created the*

*Heavens and the earth.* The rude and shapeless materials, from which a fair and beauteous fabric was shortly to spring forth, were first produced, by a divine power, *out of nothing.*— Here let not reason start, and exclaim, “Impossible! absurd! it is contrary to the nature of things, and to the plainest dictates of reason.” But let us rather humbly subscribe to this revealed truth: “With man it is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”

Then, in six successive periods of time, which the inspired writer terms *days*, were achieved the progressive parts of this great work. Light was the first of all created things: it formed the first link in that chain of wonders which God wrought. The mass of matter was all shapeless and confused, enveloped in complete darkness; when lo! the sovereign mandate goes forth: *Let there be light, and there was light.* What can equal either the sublimity of this ancient record, or the forcible idea it conveys to the reflecting mind of his irresistible power, “who spake, and it was done; who commanded, and it stood fast.” Works of art are effected with labour and difficulty. The plan must first be contrived, then it must be rudely marked out, afterwards by successive operations they are moulded and polished, till they arrive at what is considered the perfection of human skill; but the great architect of nature at once designs, resolves, and executes, without the necessity of one additional touch *God saw the light, that it was good.*— The next of the work of creation was the separation of the water, and the spreading abroad of the firmament, or that azure curtain which overspreads the face of nature, and in which those moving bodies of water or vapour, *the clouds*, pass along; then the separation of the elements, earth and water, took place; the one into dry land, the other into deep and almost unfathomable oceans. The next mandate which goes forth, rendering the new-made earth fruitful, clothes it with verdure, decks it with beauty, and crowns it with abundance. At the same moment, Spring puts forth her buds and blossoms, and Autumn pours forth his luxuriant stores. Alas! what a vail of misery and wretchedness has man’s transgression thrown, not only over the moral world, but even over the beauteous face of nature! On the fourth day, Jehovah enkindled those celestial luminaries, which serve to enlighten, invigorate and bless the world; which have afforded the food of science to the philosophic, and of devotion to the pious mind. While all moved on toward the perfect accomplishment of the vast plan, *God saw that it was good.* The sea and the air were impregnated with their

living myriads. All the inhabitants of the waters, from the gigantic leviathan to the minutest of the finny tribe, were at once ushered into existance. Then too, the vaulted heavens began to echo with the harmonious notes of the feathered race, who, in one chorus, warbled the praises of their Creator. On the commencement of the sixth day, the earth was stocked with an endless variety of living creatures; some of enormous bulk, and others of so minute dimensions, as to elude the keenest eye of the naturalist, and the utmost refinement of art. But the top-stone of the building was yet to be laid; that which, like an exquisitely carved corner-stone, should give unity, strength and beauty to the whole fabric. This was the creation of *man*. Before the formation of man, (with reverence be it recorded) Deity itself seemed to make a momentary pause, and to call a solemn council! In other instances, Jehovah said, "Let there be light," &c. but in this, *Let us make man!* Behold at once a body of wonderful, complex, and delicate structure is framed from the dust of the earth. Yet this is but the habitation, the clay-built palace; the immortal inhabitant had not yet entered. The breath, the spirit of the Lord, went forth and infused into this exquisitely constructed frame, an *immortal something*, called the soul; which, both on account of its immortality and purity, might with truth be said to be impressed with the image of God.

The whole plan being completed in six days, the sacred penman adds, *On the seventh day, God wrested from all his works*; not on account of fatigue, the constant result of human labours, which renders the sabbath a welcome day of rest to the industrious poor; but to signify that we ought, in commemoration of this great event, to dedicate to God a seventh part of our time; that it should be to us, not only a period of cessation from worldly business, but a holy rest unto the Lord. *Therefore God blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.*

It were an endless, though a delightful task, to expatiate on the rich variety, the boundless extent, the inscrutable wonders of creation. Could we extend our view, at one glance, over the face of this earth which we inhabit, and see *here*, a vast continent stretched out, covered with an infinite variety of vegetable and animal wonders; and *there*, a spacious ocean which reflects from its lucid face, the glories of its Creator; could we penetrate beneath the surface, and explore all the hidden wonders of the mineral world; could we soar above the clouds and vapours, which overhang this little spot of earth, survey the whole universe, trace the courses

of the celestial bodies, move on in the orbits of the planetary systems, or visit the fixed stations of those distant sparks, the stars, which one moment faintly glimmer on the sight, and the next, seem lost in obscurity; were it possible that human imagination could grasp but half of these, oh! how great, how exalted, how wonderful must the great author of all appear! Yet these are but a portion, and how small a portion of his ways!

Often have the talents of great and good men been employed in tracing the analogy between the works of nature and those of grace. It is the less necessary to lengthen this paper by entering into this view, though it be a most important view of the subject. Suffice it to say, that the same creating energy is necessary to renew the moral world, to illuminate the dark chaos of the human heart, and to create sinners anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, as that which in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. Does the creation furnish us with exalted conceptions of God, and lead us to give honour to its divine Author? How much more may the great work of redemption inspire our songs! A work which far excels in the wisdom and grandeur of the outline, in the magnitude and importance of the object, and in its interminable duration.

The plan of creation was like that God who sketched it; but the stupendous plan of salvation was (if on a subject so awfully great, we may use so much freedom,) the *chef-d'œuvre* of divine wisdom. The one was executed by the *fiat* of Jehovah; but, to accomplish the other, it behoved Christ, the Son of God, to descend from heaven, to endure the death of the cross! The works of creation even now fade and grow old; soon will they crumble into dust: but the redemption of the soul is precious, because eternal. Soon shall the visible heavens and earth pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat; nor shall even a wreck of the material world remain: yet then the works of grace shall shine with unsullied lustre, and unfaded pomp.

MEMORABILIA.



RULES LAID DOWN BY ST. AUGUSTINE FOR THE CONDUCT  
OF CONTROVERSY.

“ IF in the heat of the dispute an injurious word may have escaped my opponent, I am willing to think it arose from the necessity of supporting his opinions, rather than from the design of offending me. Perhaps he had a kind

intention, designing to undeceive me. In that case I am obliged to him for his good will, though I am under the necessity of disapproving his sentiments." "When I answer any person in speaking or writing, though provoked by contumelious language, so far as the Lord enables me, I bridle myself, and restrain the spurs of vain indignation. I consult for the hearer or reader, and thus endeavour not to be superior to another in railing, but to be more salutary by convincing him of his error."

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INTELLIGENCE RESPECTING THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN  
BIBLE SOCIETY.

*Extract of a Letter from a Roman Catholic Clergyman in  
Swabia.*

"I FEEL the highest regard for the wise and prudent zeal of the English Bible Committee, because it is my own desire to see the pure and genuine word of God spread, and am so enterely against all corruption of this invaluable treasure, that I myself would prevent it by all means in my power. As the degeneracy of all outward churches is so great and general, and still threatens to become greater and more general, I comfort myself with this, that the Lord is retiring into the inner temple, and more gloriously building up the invisible church, At least he does not sit idle at the right hand of his Father, nor can he lose his suite: whatever may now be the appearance, he must finally be the gainer. Our duty however is this, to pray more earnestly than ever: let thy kingdom come! and, Lord abide with us, for it is towards evening. Dr. Sailer, (who by his truly evangelical instructions and writings has proved a great blessing to the Roman Catholics in Germany) thus expresses himself in his last book: 'Christianity is so firmly founded on its own basis, that after it has outlived the times of persecution, after it has remained unshaken in the age of superstition, it will also outlive this age of infidelity and contempt' Therefore we cannot sufficiently rejoice, that we are privileged to serve such a Master, who is infinitely superior to all his enemies, who has the victory in his hands, ever since the world has stood, who finally shall put all enemies under his feet, at whose name every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord. Nor shall we be able sufficiently to know and appreciate all the excellencies of the kingdom of Christ, and the exalted dignity of

his person: never shall we be able fully to comprehend the favour and happiness vouchsafed to them who shall be partakers of the kingdom of God through faith in Christ.— Would not even our blessed Lord and Saviour himself rejoice to see the fraternal union which subsists between us, the interest which we mutually take in each other, and the sincerity of our wish to see all our brethren become partakers of the same blessings; Yes, Lord! let thy kingdom come, and be extended further and further. May our blessed Lord and Saviour daily more become that which he is made of God unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption; yea may he become our all in all, and we fruitful branches in him the living vine. May light and life and love be multiplied in us, and may the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the love of God and his dear Son Jesus Christ.”

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THE CHRISTIAN TRAVELLING BY THE LIGHT OF THE SUN  
AND OF THE MOON.

WHEN a christian has the light of the divine countenance lifted upon him clearly, he goes on his way rejoicing, and sees fully that he is travelling to the mansions of eternal rest. When this light is withdrawn, he has to ascertain his being in the path of life as well as he can, by the reflex acts of his mind, deriving some fainter light from what he has known in times past; and by this he still discerns whither he is travelling. These two states have a strong resemblance to what takes place when we journey by the light of the sun, and the light of the moon. While we enjoy the first we want no information whether we are in the road or not, but pursue it without question, or doubt, or anxiety.— But when we have only the light of the moon, we have sometimes considerable difficulty to ascertain our path, and are almost constantly obliged to examine whether we are in it or not. In a word, as the moon borrows her rays from the sun, so the believer borrows, as it were, the light of his better days, to help him in the dark ones which he experiences. It may seem to the christian that it would be better always to travel heaven-ward by the direct evidence of his good estate. But the infinitely wise and kind parent of all good sees that as in the natural world so in the spiritual it is best that only a part of the time should be sunshine and that a part should be moonlight.—*Assembly's Magazine,*

## LINES TO THE AUTHOR'S BROTHER, ON READING HIS POEMS.

PLEASANT, my brother, are thy early lays,  
 And bright the prospect of thy future days,  
 When various knowledge, thought, and taste refin'd  
 Have well matur'd the vigour of thy mind.

Proceed, young bard, continue to impart  
 The sweet effusions of thy feeling heart:  
 Display the joys which virtuous lovers know,  
 Or bid the tear of gen'rous sorrow flow;  
 With patriot fire assert thy country's cause,  
 And crown her heroes with deserv'd applause;  
 Through nature's realms extend thy daring flight,  
 And with her living image charm the sight.  
 Yet let religion and a Saviour's name  
 Inspire thy bosom with a higher flame;  
 Declare the wonders of redeeming love,  
 The bliss prepared for holy souls above:  
 And while thy boundless theme is grace divine,  
 O may its sacred pleasures all be thine.

PHILANDER.

*From the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.*

## THE AWAKENED AND REPENTING SINNER'S RESOLVE.

1. Vain world, I bid thee now adieu.  
 Too long hast thou detain'd my heart;  
 To heav'n's blest hills I turn my view,  
 And willingly from thee I part.
2. For happiness in thee I've sought,  
 But solid bliss could never find:  
 Thy pleasures are too dearly bought,  
 And often leave a sting behind.
3. The dream is fled, my soul awakes,  
 With wonder thy deceits I see:  
 My peace a guilty conscience breaks,  
 And bids me from thy follies flee.
4. A voice of mercy from the skies  
 Proclaims a dying Saviour's love;  
 Calls me from guilt and death to rise,  
 And seek unfading joys above.

5. My soul the call divine obeys,  
 Jesus, a prodigal forgive ;  
 Transform me by thy sov'reign grace,  
 And bid the dying sinner live.
6. I trust thy sure unchanging word,  
 Humbly my all to thee resign :  
 Be thou my friend, my portion, Lord,  
 And seal my heart forever thine.

ASPASIO.

*From the same.*

ON TIME.

1. Time flies apace,  
 In ceaseless race  
 Man hurries to the tomb,  
 In bliss or wo  
 Ere long to know  
 His everlasting doom.
2. Then let thy heart,  
 Whoe'er thou art,  
 To wisdom's voice incline ;  
 ' Use well this hour  
 While in thy pow'r,  
 The next may not be thine.'

*From the Asylum of the Blind who are taught to read and write*

- 1 HARK ! Sister, hark ! that bursting sigh !  
 It issued from some feeling heart ;  
 Some pitying stranger, sure is nigh ;  
 Tell us, oh ! tell us, who thou art.
2. Sad is the lot, the sightless know ;  
 We feel indeed, but ne'er complain ;  
 Here gentle toils relieve our woe ;  
 Hark ! hark ! that piteous sigh again.
3. If breath'd for us, those heaving sighs :  
 May Heaven, kind stranger, pity thee !  
 If starting tears suffuse thine eyes ;  
 Those tears alas ! we cannot see.
4. But every sigh, and every tear,  
 And every boon thy hand has given,  
 All in full lustre shall appear,  
 Recorded in the book of Heaven.