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THE

CHRISTIAN RECORDER,

VOL. I.

JANUARY, 1820.

No. 11.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

MISSIONS.

This article has already occupied much more room than was anticipated, but the great importance of the subject, and the necessity of doing justice to the labours of the different associations employed in disseminating the lights of Christianity among the heathen, will plead our excuse with serious minds. It is indeed a great consolation to all who sincerely believe in the Gospel, to behold exertions to promote its extension, surpassing all that have been made since the Apostolical age. Good men of every denomination, are seen uniting together in this meritorious labour, with an intelligence and zeal that cannot fail, through the divine blessing, of ultimate success. No desire perhaps recurs more often to pious minds, than to behold all mankind converted to the truth as it is in Jesus, and they are eager to meet with opportunities of assisting in such a glorious work.—Even persons who do not upon common occasions manifest any warm regard for Christianity, cannot forbear from reflecting at times on the promises in the Scriptures, which foretell the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth, and from experiencing a lively interest in the success of the attempts so generally making to bring about their accomplishment. The great objection now brought against Missionary labours, is the little success which hath attended them in proportion to the time, and trouble, and expence. At first they were ridiculed for promoting visionary schemes, which must utterly fail, and it was triumphantly said, that instead of making converts, the Missionaries would teach the Heathen our vices and learn theirs. This argument is now given up, converts are multiplying in all lands; but, the Missionaries are still accused of coming far short of their promises.

We are naturally sanguine and even many of the most devoted friends of the Missions looked for much greater success than has yet attended them; but the ways of God are not as our ways. It was perhaps excusable when arguing without experience, and consequently without a knowledge of the difficulties which had to be surmounted, to expect the greatest success. From recollecting the progress of the primitive Disciples, and that the Apostles never preached without adding something to the Church, we looked for the same effects from the Sermons of our Missionaries, and felt a disappointment when after years of laborious exertions, little or no impression seemed to be made upon the Heathen. But it is unreasonable to expect such an extraordinary interposition of the Spirit as accompanied the labours of the Apostles. The present Missionaries possess many advantages not given to those ancient servants of God, and with the Scriptures in their hands, their superior knowledge, the more common influence of the Spirit, will be found equal to the accomplishment of their object. But it is a work not measured by days and months, or even years; it may appear to the mere human eye to languish and fail, when it is making in secret the most rapid progress. In a Christian Country, for example, you have no difficulties to conquer in making a man a Christian, compared to those which meet you in converting a Heathen; the former is like a cleared field, you have only to sow the seed, and pray to God to give it increase; but the latter is the same field in a state of nature, covered with trees and brambles, which must be all cut down, grubbed up, and cleared, before you can attempt to sow any of the seed—and even then, the crop will be often small and imperfect, the prejudices leave rankling weeds—there is much ignorance and remains of superstition which require many years to eradicate and remove—and after all, the same amiableness, simplicity, and sweetness of Christian temper and disposition, may not be effected. Even among ourselves, we find that those who are eminent for their personal religion do not find it the work of a day—it is after frequent combats with their own hearts, ardent prayers, and serious reflections, that they become the steady friends of the Gospel. Our expectations, therefore, should be moderate, not only as it regards the number of the converts, but the progress which they make in vital Christianity. And even if few or no converts be made, we are not to despair, for God, according to our estimation, is slow, where at length he is to bring about the most glorious purposes.—Abraham was promised a son from the Lord, but twenty-five years elapsed before the promise was fulfilled.—The land of Canaan was promised to his posterity, but five hundred years passed away before they came into possession.—He was assured that the Messiah would descend from him, according to the flesh, but two thousand years were required to complete the preparations necessary for this glorious event. It is the business of the Missionary to do his duty, with pious zeal, and to the extent of his ability, leaving the issue in the hand of God. The greatest impediments to the success of Missions is the difficulty of procuring eligible persons to undertake them. A holy and burning zeal for the salvation of the souls of men is not alone sufficient—they must be wise as serpents and harmless as doves; and this wisdom must extend to a correct knowledge of human nature, as well as of the Scriptures, with an ability to discriminate between different characters with rapid correctness. The Missionary must have the most elevated and faithful conceptions of the Christian doctrine, for it is evident that his errors will produce errors in the converts. Ignorance engenders narrow and imperfect views, and party spirit, uncharitableness. In sending the light of the Gospel, therefore, to the Heathen, the most anxious care should be taken that it be pure, and not disfigured

by error; and while the Missionary joins knowledge with charitable zeal, he must be ready to encounter the greatest difficulties and discouragements, even death itself, in support of the truth.

The next Missionary Society that solicits our attention, is that of the Methodists, which has of late years exerted itself with great energy. This denomination of Christians may with great propriety be considered altogether Missionary. The Rev. J. Wesley, the learned and eminent founder of the Methodists, was himself an indefatigable Missionary, as his life abundantly proves. In 1776, he was joined by Dr. Coke, who afterwards became superintendent of Missions, and was himself a most ardent promoter of them, both by precept and example. He made several voyages to America, and watered the Churches that Mr. Wesley and Mr. Whitfield had planted. He likewise visited Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the West Indies, establishing Missions in all these places, which still exist. Now this was done at a time when no other Protestant Church, except the Established and the Moravian, had engaged in any Foreign Mission.—The success which attended their labours, encouraged them to proceed, though exposed to great difficulties and dangers. But although the Methodists had Missionary establishments in America, and the West Indies, which were supported from their general funds, they had no particular Society set apart for directing them; they were left to the special care of Dr. Coke, and it was not till after the death of this worthy clergyman on his passage to the island of Ceylon, that a Methodist Missionary Society was deemed necessary. It is impossible to contemplate the end of this good man and zealous servant of God, without pausing a moment. It appears that the propagation of the Gospel in Asia was a subject that had rested upon his mind for more than twenty years, and, during all this period, he was strenuous in his exertions to get the Conference to agree to it; but, for a long time in vain. A prospect of being useful did not offer itself till lately, but as soon as this happened, it was determined to visit Asia with the Gospel. Dr. Coke was full of joy at this determination, and with the zeal, fortitude, and energy of youth, he presented himself at the age of 67 years, to conduct the enterprize; but it was too much for his strength, and he died on the passage—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours."

In the first general Report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for 1818, the number of Missionaries employed in different stations to disseminate the Gospel is 103. Of these one is stationed in Gibraltar with great advantage. In France, several attempts have been made to stir up the Protestants to a greater earnestness for the truth, and likewise in the Netherlands, and with such success as to encourage them to persevere. The Report contains some very interesting details, transmitted from Africa by the Missionaries stationed in that vast continent. In the West Indies, it is now generally admitted, that the labours of the Missionaries have been useful; it appears that no fewer than forty are employed in the different islands, and their success among the Blacks, is very considerable; nearly 16,000 have joined, who, instead of becoming more troublesome, as had been foolishly anticipated, are more content, cheerful, and submissive, than they formerly were, more obedient and more faithful; and so clearly are these things proved, that Christian slaves bear a much higher price than others. It is surprising that such a number of Missionaries have not made a greater impression upon the Whites; hardly 250 of this population have as yet joined them. This appears very extraordinary, as it bears no proportion to their increase in other places.

In the British Colonies in North America including Newfoundland, 38 Missionaries are employed, who are usefully occupied preaching in different parts of these vast countries, and especially in such places as previous to their coming were in a great measure destitute of public worship. The Committee very justly notice that the courage, patience, and self-denial of the Missionaries in Newfoundland, have been put to severe trials during the late calamitous seasons.

In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, as well as in Upper and Lower Canada, numbers of Methodist Preachers come from the States, which unfortunately produce some collision with the Preachers sent from the Methodists at home, not only because the intimate connexion between the Methodists in America and England is broken off, and the form of Church government is different, (the Methodists in America being governed in Conference with Bishops, and those in England by the Conference without Bishops;) but because there appears to be a marked difference in learning and political feeling.

In Bombay and Madras, on the continent of India, the Committee regret that the Mission has not been enlarged, one Missionary only being fixed in each place. This they attribute to the want of funds; but they earnestly trust that the increase of supplies may enable them to enlarge their exertions in this direction, and in this confidence, the appointment of two additional Missionaries is recommended.—"For what are all the Missionaries," says the Report, "employed among the millions even of British India? As men immortal and accountable, living in the practice of idolatry, 'that abominable thing which the Lord hateth,' they are objects of deep commiseration; but they have a special claim to our regard as fellow-subjects, and inhabiting portions of the earth which Almighty God, in his Providence, has now made a

part of the British Empire. The new and awful discoveries which are daily made of the polluting and murderous nature of their superstitions, in writings of unquestionable authority, with the success of the Missionary labours of the excellent men of other denominations already employed there, the Committee think ought to be considered as special calls upon British Christians to increase the means of acquainting the natives of India with their divine religion."

From a careful examination of the Report of the Society for 1818, and the more recent accounts published from the various Missionaries, it appears evident that next to the West Indies, the Methodists are most successful in the Island of Ceylon. Here they were received with the greatest kindness by the constituted authorities, and the most sound advice given them on their landing, which they had the wisdom to adopt. Under such able direction as that of the Rev. Mr. Bisset and Mr. Twestleton, two of the established clergy, and the countenance of the Governor and other public characters, the Missionaries have proceeded with uncommon success, building and repairing churches, preaching to the people, establishing schools, learning the languages, and now translating and printing the Scriptures in the different idioms spoken in the island. To produce a permanent effect upon any people in a moral and religious point of view, we must begin with the rising generation. To secure the minds of the children, to open their understandings, and fortify them with good principles, is to cut up vice and idolatry by the roots, and through the divine blessing attending such exertions, give the fairest hopes of future success. The children educated in the different schools now amounting to many thousands, will form the most excellent Missionaries, and as some notion of Christianity, though much corrupted, still exists among two thirds of the inhabitants, there is every reason to believe that when the youth are instructed, they will instruct their parents, and induce them to re-consider their ways, and embrace the Gospel.

Another circumstance has attended the labours of the Missionaries, which may have a great effect upon their ultimate success; they have converted to the faith two of the most learned and respectable of the Pagan priests, who are now in England, under the care of the Rev. Dr. Clarke, the most learned of all the Methodists. These two men not only possess great natural abilities, but an earnest desire to be taught, and an anxious zeal to qualify themselves as Missionaries, and to atone, by spreading the light of the Gospel, for their former crime in spreading the darkness of idolatry. It is impossible to withhold from the Methodist Missionaries the meed of praise for their indefatigable labours, directed as they have been, by Christian prudence, and an adherence to that order and decency, without which, the purity of our religion cannot be truly discerned or its advantages reaped.

"All these means," says the committee, in their Report, "which appear essential to the diffusion of Christian Knowledge and influence, have been put into activity in the Ceylon Mission; the printing and circulation of the Scriptures; the liturgy and useful books on religious subjects; the instruction of children in the Faith of Christ and the preaching of the Gospel. But the blessing of God is necessary to make it prosper; and for this, every friend of the Gospel ought fervently to pray."

The last Missionary Society which claims our notice, entitles itself "The Church Missionary Society," which was established in 1800, particularly for Africa and the East; but likewise with the view of contributing its aid to the diffusion of divine truth throughout the world. It is conducted by members of the Church, and endeavours to promote among Heathens and Mahometans the knowledge of the only Saviour of the world, and the use of the primitive modes of worship. It wishes well to the exertions of all sincere Christians in this great cause, while it looks for especial support to the members of the Established Church. Such was the declaration of this Society at its first establishment, and though it was, and still is made a question, whether a new Society belonging to the Church of England was required, when two eminent Societies already existed in her bosom, the meritorious exertions of this Association cannot be denied. In their Report for 1817, the Committee justly remark, "that whether the hostile nations rush together in battle, or the sword be returned to its scabbard and rest for a season; whether abundance of God's gifts tempt to forgetfulness of him, or want and misery provoke to impiety and discontent; whether the occupations of the cabinet and the field, and the course of public events leave true Christians awhile unnoticed in their efforts, the objects of hospitality or of love—still the work of the Lord is prospering! Old institutions are renewing their strength—new institutions arise—truth is extending its empire—the union of Christians is increasing—their zeal in giving, their prudence in devising, their energy in action, their perseverance in difficulties, their humble affiance in God, their single eye to his glory, their candour to their fellows, and their forbearance towards their foes, are augmenting daily."

The number of stations which this Society occupies, including the schools dependent on the Zanguebar Mission, amounts to 45. In these are upwards of eighty Christian Teachers, who are labouring to make known to all around them the truths of the everlasting Gospel. To the education of the young, their Teachers are particularly attentive, of whom, more than three thousand are under their care, 400 of them being wholly supported at the expence of the Society. We find their Missionaries in the East and West Indies, New Zealand, Malta, and the Levant, labouring with astonishing perseverance

and success, especially on the continent of India; but the principal field of their labours has always been Africa, where, after a lengthened and gloomy night, the cheering ray of mercy, through the labours of this Society, begins to dawn, and the long injured Negro rejoices in the liberty of the Gospel. To give even a brief notice of the different stations, and the degree of success which has been vouchsafed to each, would far surpass the limits assigned for this article; let it then suffice to remark, that there is great cause for congratulation. We are making reparation to the injured Africans, for the miseries we had inflicted upon them, and we are restoring to the Asiatics, the light of Christianity, which had passed from them to us.—Never before this period was access so easy between the different parts of the world, and do we think it a Providence of God, that there was an universal peace on the appearance of our Saviour upon earth, and that the greater part of the civilized world was under the dominion of one nation, the Romans, which rendered the communication between the different nations expeditious and easy—and shall we not admit a similar Providence in the present state of the world, which offers such facilities of communication to all parts of the habitable globe, and has stirred up in each, a disposition both to disseminate and receive the truths of the Gospel.

Thus we find that various Societies have been formed to propagate the Gospel in Heathen countries. The Church of England has led the way; her two venerable Societies were long engaged in this work before any other Missionary Institution existed in Great Britain. The Society for propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland followed. The Royal Danish Mission College and the Church of the United Brethren, were the next to join their ranks. The Missions of the Wesleyan Methodists succeeded them. At length the Baptist Missionary, the London Missionary Society, the Edinburgh Missionary Society and others began a new series of labours. These were joined by the Church Missionary Society to meet the growing demands of the Pagan world. To conclude, it is proverbially said, as to the things of this world, "One soweth and another reapeth;" but in the heavenly harvest it is different, for those who have cast in the seed and those who have gathered the crop, "shall rejoice together."

ON FORMS OF PRAYER.

(Continued from page 371.)

It is hardly possible to conceive a more trying situation than that of a devout worshipper of God attentively catching the words of extemporaneous prayer, made by the clergyman, and when heard, finding that he cannot adopt them as his own. If then a form of prayer be desirable, a better than that which we use has not yet been framed, as will appear to the conviction of every sincere Christian who reads it carefully over. In it nothing is asserted but what is agreeable to God's word—nothing prayed for, but according to his promises—nothing enjoined as a duty, but what is agreeable to his commands.

When we enter the Church, we lift up our hearts to God, and entreat of him the acceptance of our services—that he will enable us and all who shall meet in his name to worship him in spirit and truth. We pray that the Holy Spirit may help our infirmities, and dispose our hearts to seriousness, attention, and devotion, and that we may improve this opportunity to the honor of his holy name, and the benefit of our souls, through Jesus Christ. We now join the minister in reading a few select sentences from the Scripture, to prepare our minds to approach our Maker, and, lest we should still be distracted with wandering thoughts, the minister in a serious exhortation calls our attention to the importance of the business on which we are entering. Our minds having been brought to a right frame and temper, all, both minister and people, prostrate ourselves before the most high God, confessing upon our knees our manifold sins, and the whole is conceived in a form that suits every congregation, and every person that pronounces this general confession with his lips, may unfold the misery of his own heart on account of his particular sins. While we are upon our knees the minister rises up, and pronounces and declares, that God will pardon all those who sincerely repent, and believe the Gospel. And according to our faith, so shall it be done unto us.—When this is done, we address God, as our Father, in that blessed form of Prayer which our Saviour hath taught us. Having praised God in Hymns and Psalms, our hearts are composed to hear with attention what God hath told us in the sacred Scriptures, and after hearing his word, we proceed to worship and adore him, in that sacred and celestial Hymn called *Te Deum*. This elevates our souls to the highest pitch of adoration, and we are in earnest to hear the glad tidings of the Gospel. The lesson from the New Testament conveying this glorious intelligence having been read, we praise God that he hath revealed these things to us, acknowledging our belief in the holy Scriptures, by repeating the Apostles' Creed. With proper collects and prayers, and a general thanksgiving for all the favours we enjoy, spiritual and temporal, we finish the daily service. But on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, we repeat the Litany, a service of the most solemn and interesting nature, comprehending every thing that we can possibly desire of God Almighty, either for ourselves or others, and calculated to raise our devotions to the highest pitch of ardour. We now proceed to the Communion service, of which the simplicity and beauty interest our hearts and warm them with gratitude to God for the blessed sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fine, our worship presents a regular and pleasing succession for instruction and admiration; the facts upon which Christianity is built—the truths which it reveals, the duties which it inculcates, the examples which it furnishes, the rewards which it offers, and the punishments which it denounces, provides adequate support for human infirmity, on the trying occasions which most require it; and when God should be praised for his goodness leads gratitude to the throne of Grace, with the song of thanksgiving. This service allows preaching its proper place, and gives it the full effect in the scale of duties, but directs the attention in an especial manner to prayer and the holy Communion, as the services which constitute Christian worship, respects the privileges of the congregation, and assigns them their part in public prayer, in order that they may join in it, and not be mere spectators at its performance. It enables those who come to the House of God with devout affections, to give utterance to them in the unexceptionable words of Divine inspiration or primitive piety; shows in the prayers which are used, what is to be believed and what is to be done, that God may graciously hear, and mercifully answer them. It constantly presents to the mind, and fixes insensibly on the memory, the substance of evangelical truth, and in this manner assists the recollection of religious conceptions, the revival of virtuous impressions, and of pious sentiments. To conclude, this worship fulfils the commandment of God, with such regard to its design, as may be said to assist our devotion, to guard our faith, and to direct our practice, and to establish a remedy which has an admirable tendency to consolidate the body of Christ, and to inspire the mind of every reflecting person with elevating conceptions, exhilarating hopes and transporting anticipations.

To those who cry out against forms of worship, as tending to make it dead, and without animation, we remark, that every thing depends upon the state of the heart; we must feel what we are repeating, or it is of no use; but surely he who has a form of sound words before him, is not so liable to be distracted, as he who has his words to collect, as he proceeds with his supplication. The difference between public and private devotion, is not sufficiently attended to—in the former,

premeditated prayers are infinitely better, and conceived in general terms, that every person may apply them to their own situation; but in private prayer, it is different; then, we are alone in communication with the Father of Spirits—we are pouring out our hearts at his feet; those hearts, which are already uncovered before him—and here, a set form is less necessary. As to coldness in our worship, this depends not upon praying with or without a written form; but on our sincerity.—If we really feel the requests we make, the malignity of the sins we confess, and the blessings which we have enjoyed, it will surely be more edifying to others to express this in correct and perspicuous language. But were it still a question, in other countries, where ministers of the Gospel are numerous, and every means of information are at hand, it is not so in this; for, here the majority of our population have not the advantage of attending public worship; they are for the most part in the wilderness, and far from the sound of the Church-bell; to give such persons a Bible, is certainly to give them a great treasure; but unless they have a gift of prayer, they cannot on the Sunday pursue, with their children, any regular plan of worship; but, give them likewise a Prayer Book, and their minds are set at rest. They call their families together with holy confidence; they read devoutly the morning and evening service; and they feel that its different parts correspond with their condition and necessities. They experience that the blessings they pray for are those which they really wish and need; that they are really the miserable sinners in the sight of God, which they profess themselves to be, and that they have received these mercies for which they are giving thanks. What a joyful spectacle, to behold several families collected together in the midst of a new Settlement, far removed from the habitations of men, offering up their devotions to Almighty God, in language at once beautiful, affecting, and sublime. It is not, therefore, a matter of indifference, whether we provide such persons with Prayer Books, it is our duty to furnish them; for, in doing so, we protect them from error, and give them a safeguard against the delusions of false interpretation, by illiterate teachers. The Prayer Book is the mark that distinguishes the friends of our establishment, and if we sincerely believe that it contains the best form of worship, founded entirely on Scripture truth, it becomes our duty to increase its influence, and instead of being content to furnish Bibles alone to our destitute neighbours, and leave them to their own judgment, we shall accompany it with our liturgy, well knowing that without such assistance, it cannot be determined what articles of faith they shall adopt.

TO CONCLUDE:

Should any one think that a prescribed form of prayer represses the spirit, let him engage sincerely in the prayers, and this objection will vanish; he will find, that a prayer depends for its acceptance at the throne of Grace, not in its being read or repeated extempore, but on the devotion with which it is offered up. But, say many, a form of prayer is flat and uninteresting. This might have some force if we went to the House of God for recreation; but we go for the relief of our necessities, for the continued supply of our wants, both spiritual and temporal, and a proper sense of these wants and necessities will always make the same prayers interesting. A hungry man, in good health, relishes a repetition of the same daily food—it is the diseased man that requires changes of diet.—The truly pious man can every day exercise repentance, and faith, and love, and desire, in such a way as to obtain fresh hopes of mercy, peace of conscience, increase of grace, and expectations of glory; and when these effects are not produced, the fault is not in the prayers, but in the disposition of those who offer them. Repent then, from the heart, and they will be no longer flat and uninteresting, but every sentence will produce a corresponding feeling in the heart.

LETTERS OF HENRY KIRK WHITE.

TO MR. B. MADDOCK.

Nottingham.

MY DEAR BEN,

And now, my dear Ben, I must confess your letter gave me much pain; there is a tone of despondence in it which I must condemn, inasmuch as it is occasioned by circumstances which do not involve your own exertions, but which are utterly independent of yourself: if you do your duty, why lament that it is not *productive*? In whatever situation we may be placed, there is a duty we owe to God and religion: it is resignation—nay, I may say, contentment. All things are in the hands of God; and shall we mortals (if we do not absolutely repine at his dispensations) be fretful under them? I do beseech you, my dear Ben, summon up the Christian within you, and steeled with holy fortitude, go on your way rejoicing! There is a species of morbid insensibility, to which I myself have often been a victim, which presses upon my heart, and without giving birth to one actively useful or benevolent feeling, does but brood on selfish sorrows, and magnify its own misfortunes. The evils of such a sensibility, I pray to God you may never feel, but I would have you beware, for it grows on persons of a certain disposition before they are aware of it.

TO MR. R. A.

Nottingham, 18th April, 1804.

MY DEAR ROBERT,

I have just received your letter. Most fervently do I return thanks to God for this providential opening; it has breathed new animation into me, and my breast expands with the prospect of becoming the minister of Christ where I most desire it; but where I almost feared all probability of success was nearly at an end. Indeed, I had begun to turn my thoughts to the Dissenters, as people of whom I was destined, not by choice, but necessity, to become the pastor. Still, although I knew I should be happy any where, so that I were a profitable labourer in the vineyard, I did by no means feel that calm, that indescribable satisfaction which I do, when I look toward that Church which I think, in the main, formed on the Apostolic model, and from which, I am decidedly of opinion, there is no positive grounds for dissent. I return thanks to God, for keeping me so long in suspense, for I know it has been beneficial to my soul, and I feel a considerable trust that the way is now about to be made clear, and that my doubts and fears on this head, will, in due time, be removed.

Could I be admitted to St. John's, I conclude from what I have heard, that my provision would be adequate, not otherwise. From my mother, I could depend on 15 or £20 a year, if she lives, towards College expences, and I could spend the long vacation at home. The £20 per annum from my brother, would suffice for clothes, &c. so that if I could procure £20 a year more, as you seem to think I may, by the kindness of Mr. Martyn, I conceive I might, with economy, be supported at College; of this, however, you are the best judge.

You may conceive how much I feel obliged to Mr. Martyn on this head, as well as to you, for your unwearying exertions. Truly, friends have risen up to me in quarters where I could not have expected them, and they have been raised, as it were, by the finger of God. I have reason, above all men, to be grateful to the Father of Mercies, for his loving kindness towards me; surely no one can have had more experience of the fatherly concern with which God watches over, protects, and succours his chosen seed, than I have had; and surely none could have less expected such a manifestation of his grace, and none could have less merited its continuance.

In pursuance of your injunction, I shall lay aside Grotius, and take up Cicero and Livy, or Tacitus. In Greek, I must rest contented for the ensuing fourteen days, with the Testament; I shall then have conquered the Gospels, and if things go on smoothly, the Acts. I shall then read Homer, and perhaps, Plato's Phædon, which I lately picked up at a stall. My classical knowledge is very superficial; it has very little depth or solidity; but I have really so small a portion of leisure, that I wonder at the progress I do make. I believe I must copy the old divines, in rising at four o'clock; for my evenings

are so much taken up with visiting the sick, and with young men who come for religious conversation, that there is but little time for study.

TO MR. B. MADDOCK.

Nottingham, 24th April, 1804.

MY DEAR BEN,

Truly I am grieved, that whenever I undertake to be the messenger of glad tidings, I should frustrate my own design, and communicate to my good intelligence a trait of sadness, as it were by contagion. Most joyfully did I sit down to write my last, as I knew I had wherewith to administer comfort to you; and yet, after all, I find that by gloomy anticipations, I have converted my balsam into bitterness, and have by no means imparted that unmixed pleasure which I wished to do.

Forebodings and dismal calculations are, I am convinced, very useless, and I think very pernicious speculations.—"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."—And yet how apt are we, when imminent trials molest us, to increase the burthen by melancholy ruminations on future evils!—and which, should they be realized, will certainly arrive in time to oppress us sufficiently without our adding to their existence by previous apprehension, and thus voluntarily incurring the penalty of misfortunes yet in prospective, and trials yet unborn. Let us guard then, I beseech you, against these ungrateful divinations into the womb of futurity—we know our affairs are in the hands of one who has wisdom to do for us beyond our narrow prudence, and we cannot, by taking thought, avoid any afflictive dispensation which God's Providence may have in store for us. Let us therefore enjoy with thankfulness the present sunshine, without adverting to the coming storm. Few and transitory are the intervals of calm and settled day with which we are cheered in the tempestuous voyage of life; we ought therefore to enjoy them, while they last, with unmixed delight, and not turn the blessing into a curse, by lamenting that it cannot endure without interruption. We, my beloved friend, are united in our affections by no common bands—bands which I trust are too strong to be easily dissevered—yet we know not what God may intend with respect to us, nor have we any business to enquire: we should rely on the mercy of our Father, who is in heaven—and if we are to anticipate, we should hope the best. I stand self-accused therefore for my prurient, and I may say, *irreligious* fears.—A prudent foresight, as it may guard us from many impending dangers, is laudable; but a morbid propensity to seize and brood over future ills, is agonizing, while it is utterly useless, and therefore ought to be repressed.

I have received intelligence, since writing the above, which nearly settles my future destination. A—— informs me, that Mr. Martyn, a fellow of St. John's, has about £20 a-year to dispose of, toward keeping a religious man at college; and he seems convinced that, if my mother allows me £20 a-year more, I may live at St. John's, provided I could gain admittance, which, at that college is difficult, unless you have previously stood in the list for a year. Mr. Martyn thinks, that if I propose myself immediately, I shall get upon the foundation, and by this day's post I have transmitted testimonials of my classical acquirements. In a few days, therefore, I hope to hear that I am on the boards of St. John's.

Mr. Dashwood has informed me, that he also has received a letter from a gentleman, a magistrate near Cambridge, offering me all the assistance in his power towards getting through college, so as there be no obligation. My way therefore, is now pretty clear.

I have just risen from my knees, returning thanks to our heavenly Father for this providential opening—my heart is quite full. Help me to be grateful to him, and pray that I may be a faithful minister of his word.

REV. OFFICIAL MOUNTAIN'S SERMON.

SIR,

As I suppose that your publication, like others conducted on the same plan, is open to any remarks which may be offered upon articles which have appeared in a preceding Number, I take the liberty of troubling you with my own, upon the subject of the Sermon preached at Quebec, on a melancholy public occasion, as noticed in the eighth Number of the Recorder.

Upon the whole, the author, I think, has no reason to quarrel with you, and if he is solicitous to be paid in praise, may give you a receipt in full. But there is a reservation often appended to accounts, in the form of "errors excepted," and in the present case, it appears to me, I confess, that there is one such exception to be made. There is a passage which strikes me in a light so very different from that in which it is represented in your strictures, that I cannot avoid thinking that you have misunderstood it: and so misunderstood it, as to give it a character directly the reverse of what was intended. The passage is this: "I speak not of the private loss sustained by the family and friends of the Duke of Richmond—let the marks of their attachment, and the depth of their present sorrow, *if it be necessary, testify to this*: I speak not of his private qualities—let it be left to those who had opportunities of close and continued observation, to perform this task, *if it be required, &c.*"

The expressions "if it be necessary," and "if it be required," appear to you ungracious, and not called for.

Now setting aside the inconsistency of such an interpretation with the whole tenor of the Sermon, the words themselves convey to my mind, in the plainest manner, and in conformity (as I think) with the received acceptance of such phrases, an assumption which has more in it of courtesy, than of invidious reflection, and are completely tantamount to a declaration, that it must be superfluous in itself, as well as foreign to the immediate purpose, to dwell upon the private loss sustained by the noble mourners, or the private qualities of him for whom they mourn.

I submit this explanation of the passage to yourself and to your readers, and remain,

Sir,
Your most obedient humble
Servant,
A SUBSCRIBER.

Although we were not singular in our interpretation of the passage of the Sermon mentioned by this Correspondent, we thank him for setting us right, and gladly hasten to remove a misconception, to the currency of which we have contributed. We are, in truth, much pleased to find that the only passage which we deemed a blemish in the Rev. Official Mountain's excellent discourse, is, when properly understood, really courteous, and not ungracious.—And that this satisfactory explanation accords with the intention of the Rev. writer, appears further evident from the following extract of a letter which we have received from a Master in composition, whose judgement we feel no difficulty in preferring to our own:

"The phraseology which has been condemned, taken in connection with the context, is only another mode of expressing, if less directly, yet more impressively, a conviction of that it could not be necessary, &c.

"In adopting this mode of expression, which is by no means unusual, and which is authorized by the example of the best writers, ancient and modern, I should not have conceived it possible that Mr. Mountain could have laid himself open to censure or misconception."

CHALMERS' SERMONS.

(Continued from page 376.)

The third Sermon is chiefly valuable for giving a clear practical disquisition on the three great means of acquiring a knowledge of divine truth, and cannot be attentively read by any serious person without reaping the greatest benefit.

"First, then, we ought to have an honest desire after light, and if we have this desire, it will not remain unproductive. There is a connexion, repeatedly announced to us in Scripture, between desire upon this subject, and its accomplishment. He that willeth to do the will of God shall know of my doctrine. He who hungereth and thirsteth shall be filled. He who lacketh wisdom and is desirous of obtaining it, let him vent his desire in prayer, and if it be the prayer of confidence in God, his desire shall be given him. There are thousands to whom the Bible is a sealed book, and who are satisfied that it should remain so; who share in the impetuous contempt of the Pharisees against a doctrine, to which they are altogether blind, who have no understanding of the matter, and no wish that it should be otherwise; and unto them it will not be given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. They have not, and from them, therefore, shall be taken away even that which they have. There are others, again, who have an ardent and unquenchable thirst after the mysteries of the Gospel; who, like the prophet in the Apocalypse, weep much because the book is not opened to them; who complain of darkness, like the Apostles of old, when they expostulated with their Teacher, because he spoke in parables, and like them who go to him with their requests for an explanation. These shall find, that what they cannot do for themselves, the Lion of the tribe of Judah will do for them. He will prevail to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. There is something they already have, even an honest wish to be illuminated, and to this more will be given: they are awake to the desirableness, they are awake to the necessity, of a revelation which they have not yet gotten; and to them belongs the promise of, Awake, O sinner, and Christ shall give thee light.

"Secondly,—We ought to have a habit of prayer conjoined with a habit of inquiry; and to this more will be given.—We have already adverted to the circumstance, that it is in the Bible, and not out of the Bible, where this light is to be met with. It is by the Spirit of God, shining upon the word of God, that his truth is reflected with clearness upon the soul, it is by his operation that the characters of this book are made to stand as visibly out to the eye of the understanding, as they do to the eye of the body; and, therefore, it is evident that it is not in the act of looking away from the written revelation, but in the act of looking towards it, that the wished for illumination will at length come into the mind of an inquirer. Let your present condition then be that of a darkness as helpless and as unattainable as can possibly be imagined, there still remains an obvious and practicable direction which you can be doing with in the meantime. You can persevere in the exercise of reading your Bible—there you are at the place of meeting between the Spirit of God and your own spirit: you may have to wait as if at the pool of Siloam; but the many calls of the Bible to wait and to be of good courage, all prove that this waiting is a frequent and a familiar part of that process by which a sinner finds his way out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel.

"And we have also adverted already, though in a very general way, to the difference in point of result between the active inquiries of a man who looks forward to the acquisition of saving truth as the natural and necessary termination of his inquiries, and of a man who mingles with every personal attempt after this object, the exercise of prayer, and a reverential sense of his dependence on God. The latter is just as active, and just as inquisitive as the former. The difference between them does not lie in the one putting forth diligence without a feeling of dependence, and the other feeling a dependence, without a putting forth of diligence. He who is in the right path towards the attainment of light, combines both these properties. It is through the avenues of a desirous heart, and of an exercised understanding, and of sustained attention, and of faculties in quest of truth, and labouring after the possession of it, that God sends into the mind his promised manifestations. All this exercise on the one hand, without such an acknowledgement of him as leads to prayer, will be productive of nothing in the way of spiritual discernment; and prayer, without this exercise, is the mere form and mockery of an acknowledgement. He who calls upon us to hearken diligently, when he addresses us by a living voice, does, in effect, call upon us to read and to ponder diligently when he addresses us by a written message. To ask truth of God, while we neglect to do for this object what he bids us, is in fact not to recognize God, but to insult him: it is to hold out the appearance of presenting ourselves before him, while we are not doing it at the place of meeting, which he has assigned for us: it is to address an imaginary being, whom we have invested with a character of our own conception, and not the Being who bids us search his Scriptures, and incline unto his testimonies, and stir ourselves up, that we may lay hold of him. Such prayer is utterance, and nothing more; it wants all the substantial characters of prayer: it may amount to the seeking of those who take the kingdom of heaven by force, and of whom that kingdom suffereth

violence. He who without prayer looks confidently forward to success, as the fruit of his own investigations, is not walking humbly with God; if he were humble, he would pray. But whether is he the more humble who joins with a habit of prayer all those accompanying circumstances, which God hath prescribed, or he who, in neglect of these circumstances, ventures himself into his presence in the language of supplication? There may be the shew of humility in confiding the whole cause of our spiritual and saving illumination to the habit of praying for it to God; but, if God himself tells us, that we must read, and seek, and meditate, then it is no longer humility to keep by the solitary exercise of praying; it is, in fact, keeping pertinaciously by our own way, heedless of his will and his way altogether; it is approaching God in the pride of our own understanding; it is detaching from the whole work of seeking after him some of those component parts which he himself hath recommended. In the very act of making prayer, standing singly out, as the alone instruments of success, we are, in fact, drawing the life and the spirit out of prayer itself, and causing it to wither into a thing of no power, and no significancy in the sight of God: it is not the prayer of acknowledgement, unless it comes from him who acknowledges the will of God in other things as well as in prayer; it is not the prayer of submission, unless it comes from the heart of a man who manifests a principle of submission in all things.

"Thirdly,—We ought to do all that we know to be God's will, and to this habit of humble, earnest, desirous reformation, more will be given. We trust that what has been said will prepare you for the reception of another advice besides that of reading or praying, for the attainment of that manifestation which you are in quest of, and that is, doing.—There is an alarm raised in many a heart, at the very suggestion of doing, for an inquirer, lest he should be misled as to the ground of his justification; lest among the multitude or the activity of his works, he should miss the truth, that a man is accepted, not through the works of the law, but by faith in Christ Jesus; lest by every one performance of duty, he should just be adding another stone to the fabric of a delusive confidence, and presumptuously try to force his own way to heaven, without the recognition of the Gospel or any of its peculiarities. Now, doing stands in the same relation to prayer that reading does; without the one or the other, it is the prayer either of presumption or hypocrisy. If he both read and pray, it is far more likely that he will be brought unto the condition of a man being justified through faith in Christ, than that he will rest his hopes before God in the mere exercise of reading. If he both do and pray, it is far more likely that he will come to be established in the righteousness of Christ, as the foundation of all his trust, than that he will rest upon his own righteousness. For a man to give up sin at the outset, is just to do what God wills him at the outset. For a man at the commencement of his inquiries, to be strenuous in the relinquishment of all that he knows to be evil, is just to enter on the path of approach towards Christ, in the very way that Christ desires him. He who cometh unto me must forsake all. For a man to put forth an immediate hand to the doing of the commandments, while he is groping his way towards a firm basis on which he might rear his security before God, is not to deviate or diverge from the Saviour. He may do it with an eye of most intense earnestness towards the Saviour, and while the artificial interpreter of Christ's doctrine holds him to be wrong, Christ himself may recognise him to be one of those who keep his sayings, and to whom therefore he stands pledged to manifest himself. The man, in fact, by strenuously doing, is just the more significantly and the more energetically praying: he is adding one ingredient to the business of seeking, without which the other ingredient would be, in God's sight, an abomination: he is struggling against all regard to iniquity in his heart, seeing that if he have this regard, God will not hear him. To say that it is dangerous to tell a man in these circumstances to do, lest he rest in his doings, and fall short of the Saviour, is to say, that it would be dangerous to place a man on the road to his wished for home, lest when he has got on the road, he should stand still and be satisfied. The more, in fact, that the man's conscience is exercised and enlightened, (and what more fitted than wilful sin to deafen the voice of conscience altogether?) the less will it let him alone, and the more will it urge him onward to that righteousness which is the only one commensurate to God's law, and in which alone, the holy and inflexible God can look upon him with complacency. Let him humbly betake himself, then, to the prescribed path of reading and prayer, and obvious reformation, and let us see if there do not evolve upon his mind, in the prosecution of it, the worthlessness of all that man can do for his meritorious acceptance with the Lawgiver—and the deep ungodliness of character which adheres to him—and the suitability of Christ's atonement to all his felt necessities, and all his moral aspirations, and the need in which he stands of a regenerating influence, to make him a willing and a spiritual subject of God. Let us see whether, though the light which he at length receives be marvellous, the way is not plain which leads to it; and whether though nature be compassed about with a darkness which no power of nature can dissipate, there is not a clear and obvious procedure, by the steps of which, the most alienated of her children may be carried onwards to all the manifestations of the kingdom of grace, and to the discernment of all its mysteries.

"Though to the natural eye, then, the doctrine of Christ be not plain, the way is plain by which we arrive at it. Though ere we see the things of Christ, the spirit must take of them, and shew them unto us—yet this spirit deals out such admonitions to all, that, if we follow them, he will not cease to enlarge, and to extend his teaching, till we have obtained

a saving illumination. He is given to those who obey him; he abandons those who resist him. When conscience tells us to read, and to pray, and to reform, it is he who is prompting this faculty; it is he who is sending through this organ, the whispers of his own voice to the ear of the inner man. If we go along with the movement, he will follow it up by other movements; he will visit him who is the willing subject of his first influences by higher demonstrations; he will carry forward his own work in the heart of that man, who, while acting upon the suggestions of his own moral sense, is in fact acting in conformity to the warnings of this kind and faithful monitor; so that the Holy Spirit will connect his very first impulses on the mind of that inquirer, who under the reign of earnestness, has set himself to read his Bible, and to knock with importunity at the door of heaven, and to forsake the evil of his ways, and to turn him to the practice of all he knows to be right; the Spirit will connect these incipient measures of a seeker after Zion, with the acquirement of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.

"Let it not be said, then, that because the doctrine of Christ is shrouded in mystery to the general eye of the world, it is such a mystery as renders it inaccessible to the men of the world—even to them does the trumpet of invitation blow a certain sound. They may not yet see the arcana of the temple, but they may see the road that leads to the temple: if they are never to obtain admission there, it is not because they cannot, but because they will not come to it. 'Ye will not come to me,' says the Saviour, 'that ye might have life.' Reading, and prayer, and reformation, these are all obvious things; and it is the neglect of these obvious things, which involves them in the guilt and the ruin of those who neglect the great salvation. This salvation is to be found of those who seek after it. The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, which is life everlasting, is a knowledge open and acquirable to all; and, on the day of judgment, there will not be found a single instance of a man condemned because of unbelief, who sought to the uttermost of his opportunities, and evinced the earnestness of his desire after peace with God, by doing all that he might have done, and by being all that he might have been.

"Be assured, then, that it will be for want of seeking, if you do not find; it will be for want of learning, if you are not taught; it will be for want of obedience to the movements of your own conscience, if the Holy Ghost, who prompts and who stimulates the conscience to all its movements, be not poured upon you, in one large and convincing manifestation. It may still be the day of small things with you—a day despised by the accomplished adepts of a systematic and articulated theology; but God will not despise it; he will not leave your longings for ever unsatisfied; he will not keep you always standing at the threshold of vain desires and abortive endeavours.

"That faith, which is the gift of God, you have already attained in a degree, if you have obtained a general conviction of the importance and reality of the whole matter: he will increase that faith. Act up to the light that you have gotten by reading earnestly, and praying importunately, and striving laboriously, and to you more will be given. You will at length obtain a clear and satisfying impression of the things of God, and the things of salvation; Christ will be recognized in all his power, and in all his preciousness; you will know what it is to be established upon him; the natural legality of your hearts will give way to the pure doctrine of acceptance with God, through faith in the blood of a crucified Saviour. The sanctifying influence of such a faith, will not merely be talked of in word, but be experienced in power; and you will evince that you are God's workmanship in Christ Jesus, by your abounding in all those fruits of righteousness which are through him to the praise and glory of the Father."

THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN JERUSALEM.

The Holy Sepulchre, and most of the sacred places, are attended by Franciscan friars, who are sent thither every three years; and though they are of all nations, yet they all pass for French or Venetians, and they could not maintain their ground were they not under the king's protection. About sixty years ago, they had a habitation without the city on Mount Sion, on the spot where our Saviour instituted the Lord's supper with his disciples; but their church having been converted into a mosque, they have since resided in the city on Mount Gihon, upon which stands their convent, called St. Saviour's. Here dwells their superior, with the members of the family, which supplies with monks all the places in the Holy Land that stand in need of them.

"From this convent the church of St. Sepulchre is but two hundred paces distant. It comprehends the Holy Sepulchre, Mount Calvary, and several other sacred places. It was partly built by direction of St. Helena, to cover the Holy Sepulchre; but the Christian princes of succeeding ages caused it to be enlarged, so as to include Mount Calvary, which is only fifty paces from the Sepulchre.

"In ancient times, Mount Calvary, as I have already observed, was without the city; it was the place where criminals, sentenced to suffer death, were executed; and, that all the people might attend on these occasions, there was a large vacant space between the eminence and the wall of the city. The rest of the hill was surrounded with gardens, one of which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, who was, in secret a disciple of Jesus Christ; here he had constructed a sepulchre for himself, and in this the body of our Lord was deposited. The Jews were not accustomed to bury their dead in the manner that we do. Each according to his ability, had a kind of little closet excavated in some rock, where the body was laid at length upon a table, also cut out of the rock, and this receptacle was closed by a stone placed before the entrance, which was generally no more than four feet in height.

"The church of the Holy Sepulchre is very irregular, owing to the nature and situation of the places which it was designed to comprehend. It is nearly in the form of a cross, being one hundred and twenty paces in length, exclusive of the descent to the discovery of the Holy Cross, and seventy in breadth. It has three domes, of which that covering the Holy Sepulchre serves for the nave of the church. It is thirty feet in diameter, and is covered at top like the Rotunda at Rome. There is no cupola, it is true; the roof being supported only by large rafters, brought from Mount Lebanon. This church had formerly three entrances, but now there is but one door, the keys of which are cautiously kept by the Turks, lest the pilgrims should gain admittance without paying the nine sequins, or thirty-six livres demanded for this indulgence; I allude to those from Christendom; for the Christian subjects of the Grand Signor pay no more than half that sum. This door is always shut; and there is only a small window, crossed with an iron bar, through which the people without hand provisions to those within, who are of eight different nations.

"The first is that of the Latins or Romans, which is represented by the Franciscan friars. They are the keepers of the Holy Sepulchre, the place on Mount Calvary, where our Lord was nailed to the cross, the spot where the sacred cross was discovered, the Stone of Unction, and the chapel where our Lord appeared to the Blessed Virgin after his resurrection.

"The second nation is that of the Greeks, who have the choir of the church, where they officiate: in the midst of it is a small circle of marble; the centre of which they look upon as the middle of the globe.

"The third is the nation of the Abyssinians, to whom belongs the chapel containing the pillar of *Impropere*.

"The fourth nation is that of the Copts, who are Egyptian Christians: these have a small oratory near the Holy Sepulchre.

"The fifth nation is the Armenian. They have the chapel of St. Helena, and that where the soldiers cast lots for, and divided, the apparel of our Lord.

"The sixth nation is that of the Nestorians, or Jacobites, who are natives of Chaldea and of Syria. These have a small chapel near the spot where our Lord appeared to Mary Magdalen, in the form of a gardener, and which is, on that account, denominated Magdalen's Chapel.

"The seventh is the nation of the Georgians, who inhabit the country between the Euxine and the Caspian Sea. They keep the place on Mount Calvary where the cross was prepared, and the prison in which our Lord was confined till the hole was made to set it up in.

"The eighth nation is that of the Maronites, who inhabit Mount Lebanon. Like us, they acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope.

"Exclusively of these places, which all who are within are at liberty to visit, each nation has a peculiar spot allotted to it in the aisles and corners of this church, where its members assemble and perform their devotions, according to their respective rituals: for the priests and religious who enter this place are usually two months before they leave it, that is, till others are sent from the convent in the city to attend in their stead. It would be scarcely possible to remain there long without being ill, because the place has very little air, and the vaults and walls produce a coldness that is extremely unwholesome: nevertheless, we there found a worthy hermit who has assumed the habit of St. Francis, and lived twenty years in the place without ever leaving it. There is, moreover, such abundant employment to keep two hundred lamps burning, and to sweep and cleanse all the holy places, that no more than four hours a night can be allowed for sleep.

"On entering the church, you come to the Stone of Unction on which the body of our Lord was anointed with myrrh and aloes, before it was laid in the sepulchre. Some say that it is of the same rock as Mount Calvary; and others assert that it was brought to this place by Joseph and Nicodemus, secret disciples of Jesus Christ, who performed this pious office, and that it is of a greenish colour. Be this as it may, on account of the indiscretion of certain pilgrims, who broke off pieces, it was found necessary to cover it with white marble, and to surround it with an iron railing, lest people should walk over it. This stone is eight feet, wanting three inches, in length, and two feet, wanting one inch, in breadth; and above it, eight lamps are kept continually burning.

"The Holy Sepulchre is thirty paces from this stone exactly in the centre of the great dome, of which I have already spoken: it resembles a small closet, hewn out of the solid rock. The entrance, which faces the east, is only four feet high, and two feet and a quarter broad, so that you are obliged to stoop very much to go in. The interior of the sepulchre is nearly square. It is six feet, wanting an inch, in length, and six feet, wanting two inches, in breadth, and from the floor to the roof eight feet one inch. There is a solid block of the same stone, which was left in excavating the other part. This is two feet four inches and a half high, and occupies half of the sepulchre; for it is six feet, wanting one inch, in length, and two feet and five sixths wide. On this table the body of our Lord was laid, with the head towards the west, and the feet to the east; but on account of the superstitious devotion of the Orientals, who imagine that, if they leave their hair upon this stone, God will never forsake them, and also because the pilgrims broke off pieces, it has received a covering of white marble, on which mass is now celebrated. Forty-four lamps are constantly burning in this sacred place, and three holes have been made in the roof, for the emission of the smoke. The exterior of the sepulchre is also faced with slabs of marble, and adorned with several columns, having a dome above.

"At the entrance of the sepulchre there is a stone about a foot and a half square, and a foot thick, which is of the same rock, and served to support the large stone which closed the access to the sepulchre. Upon this stone was seated the angel when he spoke to the two Maries; and as well on account of this mystery, as to prevent the sepulchre from being entered, the first Christians erected before it a little chapel, which is called the Angel's Chapel.

"Twelve paces from the Holy Sepulchre, turning towards the north, you come to a large block of gray marble, about four feet in diameter, placed there to mark the spot where our Lord appeared to Mary Magdalen in the form of a gardener.

"Farther on is the Chapel of the Apparition, where, as tradition asserts, our Lord first appeared to the Virgin Mary after his resurrection. This is the place where the Franciscans perform their devotions, and to which they retire; and hence they pass into chambers with which there is no other communication.

"Continuing your progress round the church, you find a small vaulted chapel, seven feet long and six wide, otherwise denominated the Prison of our Lord, because he was here confined while the hole was made for erecting the cross. This chapel is opposite to Mount Calvary, so that these two places form what may be termed the transept of the church, the hill being to the south, and the chapel to the north.

"Very near this is another chapel, five paces long and three broad, standing on the very spot where our Lord was stripped by the soldiers before he was nailed to the cross, and where they cast lots for his apparel, and divided it among them.

"Leaving this chapel, you find on the left a great staircase, which pierces the wall of the church, and descends into a kind of cellar dug out of the rock. Having gone down thirty steps, you come to a chapel on the left hand, which is commonly called the Chapel of St. Helena, because she prayed there while she caused search to be made for the sacred cross. You

descend eleven more steps to the place where it was discovered, together with the nails, the crown of thorns, and the head of the spear, after lying buried in this place upwards of three hundred years.

"Near the top of this staircase, turning towards Mount Calvary, is a chapel, four paces long, and two and a half broad, under the altar of which is a pillar of gray marble spotted with black, two feet in height, and one in diameter. It is called the pillar of *Impropere*, because our Lord was there forced to sit down, in order to be crowned with thorns.

"Ten paces from this chapel, you come to a very narrow staircase, the steps of which are of wood at the beginning, and of stone at the end. There are twenty in all, by which you ascend to Mount Calvary. This spot, once so ignominious, having been sanctified by the blood of our Lord, was an object of the particular attention of the first Christians. Having removed every impurity, and all the earth which was upon it, they surrounded it with walls, so that it is now like a lofty chapel enclosed within this spacious church. It is lined in the interior with marble, and divided by a row of arches into two parts. That towards the north is the spot where our Lord was nailed to the cross. Here thirty-two lamps are kept continually burning: they are attended by the Franciscans, who daily perform mass in this sacred place.

"In the other part, which is to the south, the Holy Cross was erected. You still see the hole dug in the rock, to the depth of about a foot and a half, besides the earth that was above it. Near this is the place where stood the crosses of the two thieves. That of the penitent thief was to the north, and the other to the south; so that the first was on the right hand of our Saviour, who had his face turned towards the west, and his back to Jerusalem, which lay to the east. Fifty lamps are kept constantly burning in honour of this holy spot.

"Mount Calvary is the last station of the church of the Holy Sepulchre; for, twenty paces from it, you again come to the Stone of Unction, which is just at the entrance of the church."

Deshayes having thus described in order the stations of all these venerable places, I have now nothing to do but to exhibit to the reader a general view of the whole together.

It is obvious, in the first place, that the church of the Holy Sepulchre is composed of three churches: that of the Holy Sepulchre, properly so called; that of Calvary; and the church of the Discovery of the Holy Cross.

The first is built in the valley at the foot of Calvary, on the spot where it is known that the body of Christ was deposited. This church is in the form of a cross, the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre constituting, in fact, the nave of the edifice. It is circular, like the Pantheon at Rome, and is lighted only by a dome, beneath which is the sepulchre. Sixteen marble columns adorn the circumference of this rotunda: they are connected by seventeen arches, and support an upper gallery, likewise composed of sixteen columns and seventeen arches, of smaller dimensions than those of the lower range. Niches corresponding with the arches appear above the frieze of the second gallery, and the dome springs from the arch of these niches. The latter were formerly decorated with mosaics, representing the twelve apostles, St. Helena, the Emperor Constantine, and three other portraits unknown.

The choir of the church of the Holy Sepulchre is to the east of the nave of the tomb: it is double, as in the ancient cathedrals; that is to say, it has first a place with stalls for the priests, and beyond that a sanctuary raised two steps above it. Round this double sanctuary run the aisles of the choir, and in these aisles are situated the chapels described by Deshayes.

It is likewise in the aisle on the right, behind the choir, that we find the two flights of steps leading, the one to the church of Calvary, the other to the church of the Discovery of the Holy Cross. The first ascends to the top of Calvary, the second conducts you down underneath it: for the cross was erected on the summit of Golgotha, and found again under that hill. To sum up then what we have already said, the church of the Holy Sepulchre is built at the foot of Calvary; its eastern part adjoins that eminence, beneath and upon which have been constructed two other churches, connected by walls and vaulted staircases with the principal edifice.

The architecture of the church is evidently of the age of Constantine: the Corinthian order prevails throughout. The columns are either too heavy or too slender, and their diameter is almost always disproportionate to their height. Some double columns which support the frieze of the choir are, however, in a very good style. The church being lofty and spacious, the profile of the cornices displays a considerable degree of grandeur; but as the arches which separate the choir from the nave were stopped up about sixty years ago, the horizontal line is broken, and you no longer enjoy a view of the whole of the vaulted roof.

The church has no vestibule, nor any other entrance than two side doors, only one of which is ever opened. Thus this structure appears to have never had any exterior decorations. It is besides concealed by shabby buildings, and by the Greek convents erected close to its walls.

The small structure of marble which covers the Holy Sepulchre is in the figure of a canopy, adorned with semi-gothic arches; it rises with elegance under the dome, by which it receives light, but it is spoiled by a massive chapel which the Armenians have obtained permission to erect at one end of it. The interior of this canopy presents to the view a very plain tomb of white marble, which adjoins on one side to the wall of the monument, and serves the Catholic religious for an altar. This is the tomb of Jesus Christ.

The origin of the church of the Holy Sepulchre is of high antiquity. The author of the *Epitome of the Holy Wars (Epitome Bellorum sacrorum)* asserts, that forty-six years after the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus, the Christians obtained permission of Adrian to build or rather to re-build a church over the tomb of their God, and to enclose in the new city the other places venerated by the Christians. This church, he adds, was enlarged and repaired by Helena, the mother of Constantine. Quaresmius contests this opinion, "because," says he, "the believers were not allowed till the reign of Constantine to erect such churches." This learned monk forgets that anterior to the persecution by Dioclesian, the Christians possessed numerous churches, and publicly celebrated the mysteries of their religion. Lactantius and Eusebius boast of the opulence and prosperity of the believers at this period.

Other writers worthy of credit, Sozomenes, in the second book of his History; St. Jerome, in his letters to Paulina and Ruffinus; Severus, in his second book; Nicephorus, in his eighteenth; and Eusebius, in the life of Constantine, inform us that the Pagans surrounded the sacred places with a wall; that they erected a statue of Jupiter on the tomb of Jesus Christ, and another of Venus on Mount Calvary; and that they consecrated a grove to Adonis on the spot where our Saviour was born. These testimonies not only demonstrate the antiquity of the true worship at Jerusalem, by this very profanation of the sacred places, but prove that the Christians had sanctuaries on these spots.

Be this as it may, the foundation of the church of the Holy Sepulchre dates at least as far back as the time of Constantine. A letter of that prince is yet extant, in which he commands Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, to erect a church on the place where the great mystery of salvation was accomplished. This letter Eusebius has preserved. The bishop Cæsarea then describes the new church, the dedication of which occupied eight days. If the account of Eusebius required confirmation from other testimonies, we might adduce those of Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, (*Catech.* 1. 10. 13.) of Theodoret, and even of the Itinerary from Bourdeaux to Jerusalem, in 333, which says: *Ibidem, jussu Constantini imperatoris, basilica facta est miræ pulchritudinis.*

This church was ravaged by Cosroes II, king of Persia, about three hundred years after its erection by Constantine. Heraclius recovered the genuine cross; and Modestus, bishop of Jerusalem, rebuilt the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Some time afterwards, the calif Omar made himself master of Jerusalem, but he allowed the Christians the free exercise of their religion. About the year 1009, Hequem, or Hakem, who then reigned in Egypt, spread desolation around the tomb of Christ. Some will have it, that this prince's mother, who was a Christian, caused the church to be again rebuilt; while others assert, that the son of the Egyptian calif, at the solicitation of the emperor Argyropilus, permitted the believers to enclose the sacred places with a new structure. But as the Christians of Jerusalem possessed, in Hakem's time, neither the resources nor the skill requisite for the erection of the edifice which now covers Calvary,^[1] as notwithstanding a very suspicious passage of William of Tyre, we find no indication that the Crusaders ever built any church for the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; it is probable that the church founded by Constantine has always subsisted in its present form, at least as far as regards the walls of the structure. The mere inspection of the architecture of this building would suffice to demonstrate the truth of what I advance.

(*To be continued.*)

ANECDOTE OF A BARONET AND HIS FOOL.

A Baronet of the 17th century, who lived in Yorkshire, was supposed at the crisis of a fever to be dead; when the following conversation took place between his jester or fool, and his servants:

Servant—Our Master is gone!

Fool—Ah! whither is he gone?

Servant—To heaven to be sure.

Fool—To heaven! no that he is not, I am certain.

Servant—Why so?

Fool—Why! because heaven is a great way off, and when my master was going a long journey he used for some time to talk about it, and prepare for it; but I never heard him speak of heaven, or saw him making any preparation for going; he cannot therefore be gone thither. The Baronet, however, recovered, and this conversation being told him he was so struck with it, that he immediately began to prepare for his journey to that country "from whose bourn no traveller returns."

THE BOY AND THE SERPENT.

A boy playing with a tame Serpent, my beautiful little creature, said he, I would not be so familiar with thee, if they had not taken from thee thy venom. You serpents are the most cunning, wicked, ungrateful creatures in the world! nor have I forgot what happened to a poor countryman in this neighbourhood, who having found a serpent, some of thy forefathers, which was frozen quite stiff with cold, put it into his bosom to warm it; scarce had the wicked creature acquired as much strength, when it bit its benefactor, of which he died.

You surprise me a good deal, said the serpent: your historians must be very partial! ours relate the affair very differently. Thy pretended charitable man thought that the serpent was frozen to death, and as he saw that he had a very beautiful skin he took it up and put it into his bosom, not with a view to bring it into life, but that he might be able to get the skin taken off from it. Was this a generous action?

Hold your peace! hold your peace! replied the boy, where is the wretch that does not know how to excuse his ingratitude?

Very well, my son, interrupted the father, who had listened to the conversation. However, I would advise you, whenever you hear of any extraordinary story of remarkable ingratitude, before you believe it to examine first all the circumstances with care. Real benefactors seldom complain of ingratitude; but the world is full of narrow-minded, interested benefactors, who justly merit instead of gratitude, only contempt and disregard.

CARLILE'S TRIAL.

From a London Paper.

The late prosecutions for the sale of impious books, make one of the characteristics of the time. That such works should have been ever produced, is a melancholy evidence of the blind inveteracy of human nature; that they should have found purchasers, is a stain upon the national reputation. But we have strong confidence in the stability of England, and we will believe that this stain is casual—not the purple spot that decides complete decay, but the accidental bruise, which nothing but neglect can envenom into disease. We are friends, in the fullest sense, to the fullest liberty of private judgment. The reason given by God is answerable only to its giver; but society works a change upon this original liberty. Man in a desert and man in a city are different beings: we may solicit pestilence to ourselves, if we have a mad appetite for misery and death; but we must not walk through the ranks of our fellow-men, to strike them into the same premature grave. The judgment of the jury on Carlile vindicates the country; but there is more to be done, and the press will not have done its duty unless it throws off the infamy of his publications by doubled efforts in the cause of morals, wisdom, and Christianity. Carlile's defence was all a falsehood. No man of common sense could believe him to have had any point in view beyond the guilty profit of his publications. We will not do what the jury on their oaths dared not do, and exalt him into a martyr. The miserable man was poor; he knew that money was to be made by the sale of moral poison; he looked for his gain to the ignorance and vice of the populace; and by administering what common experience would have told him was ruin to the peace, the honesty, and the happiness of this life—and religion would have told him was death to the soul—he made money. To this miscreant the means were indifferent—the end was all that he contemplated. We solemnly believe, that if he could have sold packets of the plague with as much profit, he would have sold them with as little hesitation. To men of this order argument is idle, and moral reprehension an honour. Their proper controversialists are the beadle and the jailor, and we consign this miserable slave to the correction that the law reserves for loathsome and malignant villainy. But the purchasers of his works are worth a higher attention. Carlile, we understand, was, about two years ago, a beggar, and dragging on a wretched trade in obscure blasphemy. The commencement of his prosecution brought his name into the public prints; it was known where works were sold that denied the authority of a king, and the providence of a God, and the populace crowded to their purchase: for the last three months Carlile has received not less than 300*l.* a week. Within these six months he could not have made less in clear profit than 2,000*l.* This will be remembered in his sentence. Justice will be cheated if a single shilling of this profligate gain is allowed to remain in his hands. But how many thousand human beings have been the purchasers? What a tide of abomination has been conducted through the land—what guilt has been laid on us by this fierce appetite for infidelity before heaven, are questions full of fear. We will not now condescend to argue for the truth of Christianity—the time is past for doubt; it is woven into all our institutions; it sustains a hallowed connection with all the noble minds that have past away from England; we feel its spirit humanizing, purifying, animating the whole frame of civil life. To doubt of the truth of Christianity, because it touches on the truths belonging to a loftier state of being, would be to doubt of our breathing and our blood, because we cannot develop the mystery of our nature. For ourselves, we would turn with a high and contemptuous indignation from all attempts to question Christianity. We solemnly believe, that no man who came to the examination of the Christian faith with an unprejudiced mind ever returned without conviction.—Infidelity has been rare in the world; a few minds irregularly formed, powerful in some members, feeble in others, have strayed away, and attained their ambition of celebrity by their wanderings, while the great body of civilized man have held on their march by the high way of the Lord, under the same light that led the Israelites, and advancing in the same consciousness of a sublime protection. But authority is trivial unless we know the grounds of its decision. How much of private vice may have made religion fearful; how much of giddy pride may have cherished unbelief; how much of early habit may have distorted the power of judgment. The most repulsive follies would become the maxims of society, if maxims were to be founded on individual opinion. The mighty conflux of intelligent mankind is alone secure of moving in the channels of right reason. Their thousand currents reduce each other to a providential regularity, and the great tide rolls, in its healthfulness and grandeur, under the one impress of a power raised above the influences of this world.—The universal voice cannot be wrong. In the infinite mingling of individual aspirations—all singleness is lost, and the voice ascends an echo to the wisdom that spoke from the throne in Heaven. But if authority is to be our guide, we have the most splendid display that was ever ranged on this side of the grave. Our millions are led on by the wisest, the purest, the most sublime intelligences of earth. Our holy procession to the Temple of Christ is made glorious by a countless array of heroes of the faith—the men of mighty learning, the men of thrones, the martyr, the apostle—all moving under the same banner of the cross, brightening as they advance in the light that shines from the eternal altar, and all cheered with the same hope of sins forgiven, and of happiness that is to be immortal as the soul. We can take no part

with the wilful haters of the light, with the perverted or the vicious. We must turn away from their blindness with pity, or punish by the arm of the insulted law, those intellectual Arabs that lingering in guilt and savageness in their desert, are only to be heard of when they rush out to assail the established and pacific course of the world.

The argument put into Carlile's mouth, was the same vulgar equivocation which has been used on every offence of the kind, and which will be to the end the common resource of detected and shuffling villainy.—"You allow of diversity of religious opinion—why not allow of religious enquiry?" The argument is a falsehood. The works which this culprit printed had nothing to do with religious enquiry; libel is not enquiry.—If a law presses upon the individual, is he to be allowed to commence his appeal by abuse of the constitution? Is not the line between fair enquiry and malignant insult obvious? Is the man seeking to prove a legal truth, to begin by vilifying the monarch, the parliament, the judge, and jurisprudence of the country? The common sense of mankind tears away his beggarly and threadbare covering, and drags out the rebel, the libeller, and the infidel, naked to the lash of the law. If there is a man upon earth who finds himself on calm enquiry unable to obtain conviction of the truth of the Christian religion—and we firmly believe that no such man ever did nor ever will exist—he is entitled to our perfect pity. But his disability cannot lower our conviction. He is born blind—his darkness cannot beguile us into the extinction of our eyes. He is to be guided and not we; the Heavens are broad and bright before us; we can only lament for him, that their light is darkness, and their loveliness a tale.

The variety of sects is the variety of hallowed homage, not the contemptuous caprice of infidel rebellion.—Those men all look up to the same supreme authority. The chances of their place may shew to them the mysterious region above, bright or dark; they may love to be awed by the grandeur of its storms; they may more wisely love to follow the invisible footsteps of the sovereign benefactor in its cloudless calm: but it is to the same Heaven that the eyes of all are turned. In the impious spirit that those publications labour to influence we see much danger to the community, but none to religion; its fabric is as unshaken as the globe: the petty concussion which may crush a few wretches and their victims, cannot ascend to its surface; and the splendid and luxuriant expanse above lies undeformed and undisturbed in the sunshine of Heaven. But the first law of nature and social life, self-defence, summons every heart and arm to break down the attempts that are now making throughout the empire to poison the morality of the nation. It is folly to suppose that those attempts are to be satisfied with alluring men from churches and chapels. Irreligion is to be the tempter to treason; the constitution is to be stricken through the side of Christianity; the people are to have the Bible taken out of their hands, that it may be replaced by the sword; they are to abandon the house of prayer, that they may be found in the field of battle; they are to have no God, that they may have no king. This will pass away; and whether it leaves us for an example of fatal negligence and desperate guilt, or adds the last glory—the crown of enduring holiness, to the honours on England's brow, the world will be still advancing in wisdom; but no miracle will be wrought for us; and it will depend upon ourselves whether that wisdom is to be learned from our triumphant gratitude or from our grave. There is no price too high for religious truth. We cannot know too much of the will of God. But are we to be deluded into the ridicule of conceiving that those impious and insolent assailers of all that is hallowed to our ears and hearts, are seekers after religious truth? Their inquiry is for defect; they are disappointed by excellence; blind leaders of the blind, their triumph is when they both fall into the ditch; they have gained their object when they have buried themselves and their followers in doubt and impurity. This is the perversion for which there is no cure. The patient is maddened by a poison below human nature and beyond human remedy; his language is raving, and for the common safety of the species, he must be fettered till he dies. It is not our purpose here to examine into the full evidences of our holy faith. No nobler subject could be offered to the pen; but it is impossible to restrain ourselves from looking at the grandeur of Christianity beside those meagre and shapeless structures to which infidelity would summon the vast and shivering population of the world—that great city of God—the Jerusalem built upon a hill for a wonder and a guide to the nations, made holy by the monuments of saints and seers—the mighty and magnificent structure of miracle and prophecy, raised by the command of Heaven, and consecrated by the descended glory of the Lord; and those huts and hovels at its gates, built of its fragments, and inhabited by the outcasts of its multitude.

The fury of scepticism rushes into headlong credulity. The adversary of Christianity will believe that a few fishermen, in a remote and enslaved province, headed by an obscure Jew, overthrew, without money, without arms, without supernatural help, the whole colossal edifice of paganism. They see that the thing has been done, they know no strength raised against it, but the naked hand of Christianity—they see paganism all breaking down at once, as if it were blasted with fire from Heaven; and yet this was to be done by a few peasants in Judea! The world has seen nothing equal nor similar to this mighty and perfect overthrow. The ancient religions of the East, forming themselves on the corrupted traditions of the patriarchal time, flowed loosely over moral deserts—the savage enthroned his dead chieftain in the sun, and worshipped him there. There is but one instance of a new religion displacing the habitual belief without the use of

violence.—Christianity is, in that instance, single and sublime. There is but one instance of a religion founding its assurance of triumph on the direct aid of Heaven, and that instance is Christianity.—There is but one instance in which the display of God's fore-knowledge was brought into combination with the display of his power.—Christianity is the religion of prophecy and miracle. Mahometanism disclaimed miracle, and could not produce prophecy. Attachment to a national religion becomes a part of the nature. Paganism was opulent in all the means of fixing perpetual influence on the Pagan mind. It amused the vulgar with pageantry, it bound the superstitious by its terrors, it won the great by its elegance, it conciliated the statesman by its restraint on the popular mind. It had but one enemy, the philosopher, but his head was bowed before the altar, which he secretly reviled, and his protest against the abuse of reason, was seldom heard till the grave had closed upon his hypocrisy. Christianity appealed simply to the reason of man, and it triumphed. There is nothing like this in the whole history of intellectual trial. In our own pacific time, not even the feeblest sect, upholding the most absurd doctrine, has been broken down by argument. The fierce passions, the haughty supremacy, the polluted idolatry of the Roman heart, were charmed away by persuasion; the armed Colossus of Rome, rigid and menacing, dissolved into ashes before the spell of words. Yet this the unbeliever must believe. The conversion of the Heathen world was not the work of man. It was an act of the same Omnipotence that had called the earth out of darkness; the same light of Heaven was poured in upon the heart; the same thunders sent the name of the true God from end to end of the moral world.

It has been said, for ignorance made presumptuous by malignity knows no restraint of assertion, that Christ and his Apostles were imaginary beings; and that their names and actions are not found in any histories but those of Christians. Let such reasoners be led to the writings of the great Heathen historians of the day in which the Gospel was revealed. We quote them not for their opinions, they had no power of knowing the spirit of the religion which they calumniated; we quote them for their knowledge—and it is the knowledge of adversaries. Those testimonies are commonplace among scholars, but we are now contemplating ignorance. Tacitus, writing seventy years after the crucifixion, and alluding to the fire at Rome about thirty years before his time, states these facts:—"But neither his bounties to the populace, nor his sacrifices to the divinities, could clear away, the infamous charge of having ordered the burning of Rome, under which Nero lay. To destroy the charge, he laid the guilt and inflicted the most cruel punishments upon a set of people which were held in abhorrence for their crimes, and called by the populace, Christians. The founder of that name was Christ! who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, under his procurator Pontius. This pernicious superstition, thus checked for a while, broke out again, and spread, not only over Judea, where the evil originated, but through Rome also, where every thing bad upon earth finds its way, and is practised. Some who confessed their sect were first seized, and afterwards, by their own confession, a vast multitude were apprehended, who were convicted, not so much of the crime of burning Rome, as of hatred to mankind. Their sufferings at their execution were aggravated by insult and mockery; for some were disguised in the skins of wild beasts, and worried to death by dogs; some were crucified; and others were wrapped in pitched shirts and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve to illuminate the night. Nero lent his gardens for these executions, and exhibited at the same time a mock Circensian entertainment, being a spectator of the whole, in the dress of a charioteer; sometimes mingling with the crowd on foot, and sometimes viewing the spectacle from his car. This conduct made the sufferers pitied, and though they were criminals, and deserving the severest punishment, yet they were considered as sacrificed, not so much out of a regard to the public good, as to gratify the cruelty of one man." This passage gives us, on the authority of a celebrated historian, writing to the Roman empire, on a transaction of only thirty years before, and of which a multitude of witnesses were alive, the following facts:—That there was a religion called Christianity, in the days of the Emperor Nero—that its founder, Christ, was executed—that his religion, sustaining a check in consequence of his execution, rapidly appeared again and was extended—and that within 34 years from the death of Christ the Roman Christians were a very considerable number. Suetonius, the contemporary of Tacitus, describing the principal features of Nero's reign, says: "The Christians, a set of men of a new and magical superstition, were punished." The younger Pliny, the contemporary of both these writers, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan, speaks of the state of the Christians in his own district; and at the moment of his writing, seventy years after the death of our Lord: "There are many of every age, and of both sexes, nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but smaller towns, and the open country." He details "that accusations, trials, and examinations, had been going on against them, in the provinces over which he presided; that schedules were delivered by anonymous informers, containing the names of persons suspected of holding or of favouring that religion; that in consequence of those informations many had been apprehended, some of whom had boldly avowed their profession, and died in the cause; others denied that they were Christians; others acknowledging that they had once been Christians declared that they had long ceased to be such." The prescript of the Emperor Adrian to Minucius Fundanus, the proconsul of Asia, shews that it was the custom of the Asiatic populace to exhibit outrage against the Christians; for the Emperor enjoins, that for the time to come the

Christians should be legally brought to their trial, and not be hunted by insolence and clamour.—Martial, a contemporary of Pliny, speaks of the sufferings of the Christians in an epigram, and finds food for his habitual ridicule in their voluntary deaths. It is to be remembered, that though those men, as being Pagans, and in their philosophic contempt of the idolatry of their day, disdaining to enquire into the tenets of a religion coming from the loathed and captive land of the Jews, were yet alluding to events either fresh in the general memory, or living before their eyes.

(To be continued.)

POETRY.

ODE ON THE NEW YEAR.

THE PRESENT.

Time flying on the wings of Fate,
Swift round his annual course doth move,
And brings us, with another date,
Another season to improve.

'Tis well to meditate the past,
And think how many years have fled;
To learn how life is wasting fast,
And urging downward to the dead!

Ah, what is life!—a vapour light,
That twinkles with fallacious ray:
A meteor gleaming thro' the night,
Then sudden vanishes away!

'Tis wise to catch the fleeting now,
Nor the uncertain future trust;
For man and all his works shall bow
To mingle ruin in the dust!

Oh, happy he, who void of fear,
Perceives his mortal date decrease!
Who joys to find his Heav'n so near,
And lays him down to die in peace!

THE PAST.

Author of being, great First Cause,
Whose fiat bade all worlds arise,
Fast binding in almighty laws,
The restless earth, and seas, and skies!

Thou dost this pond'rous globe sustain,
Suspended in the liquid air,
With all the planetary train
That run their mystic circles there!

Thy watchful Providence appears
O'erruling checquer'd ages past;
We trace it thro' six thousand years,
And felt it bounteous thro' the last!

In blooming Spring, in Summer's heat,
And Autumn's stores, thy care was found,
With herbage green and golden wheat,
Thou hast the year in goodness crown'd!

Our future sons with joy shall tell

How thou hast blest our virgin soil;
Bid Peace within our bulwarks dwell,
And round us cheerful Plenty smile!

Great was our guilt, and great our dread;
But thou art better than our fears:
The gloomy cloud that o'er us spread,
Before thy mercy disappears!

The foe had threaten'd to devour,
And flatter'd greedy hope with gain;
But thou hast baffled lawless pow'r,
And render'd boasted conquest vain.

Oh save us from the foes within
Our private guilt and public crimes,
That the New Year may usher in
More holy days and happy times.

THE FUTURE.

Wrapt in impenetrable shades,
Futurity the search evades
Of busy prying man:
No anxious mind can comprehend
The movements that on Time depend,
Or grasp th' eternal plan!

One certain hope the soul sustains,
That He who high in glory reigns,
Supreme o'er earth presides:
That all the incidents of Time,
Thro' every age and every clime,
His hand unerring guides!

'Midst wint'ry frost and misty gloom,
As sprung from Nature's icy tomb,
The Year begins its way:
Yet soon its march shall bring again
Sweet Spring, with all its flow'ry train,
And all its blossoms gay!

The cry of blood, the trump of death,
As issuing from the pit beneath,
No more the Year attend:
For he who rides upon the storm
Hath made its dreadful horrors form,
A calm and peaceful end!

The mirth of Madness, light and vain,
The wanton song, the oath profane,
Salute the opening Year:
Yet ere it close, Affliction's stroke
May bend the proud beneath the yoke
Of chastisement severe!

O'erwhelm'd with sorrow, bow'd with pain,
The suff'ring saint may dread again
Another Year below:
Yet Time is hast'ning him apace
To better days, or better place,
Beyond the reach of woe.

Eternal God, in thee we trust!
That thou art holy, good, and just,
The rolling Years proclaim:
Amidst convulsions, new and strange,
Thou canst not err, and wilt not change;
Thy love is still the same!

ALIQUIS.

Footnotes

[\[1\]](#) It is said that Mary, wife of Hakem, and mother of his successor, defrayed the expence of it, and that in this pious undertaking she was assisted by Constantine Monomachus.

Transcriber's Note

- Obvious punctuation and spelling errors repaired.