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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

REMARKS ON I. JOHN, II. 3.

And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.

THE Scriptures speak of two kinds of knowledge of Christ. One is a mere intellectual, inoperative knowledge of his existence, offices, and works; just as we study mathematical or other sciences, or as we become acquainted with distant events in which we feel no personal interest. The other is that spiritual, captivating discernment of the glory of Christ, and his suitableness to be our Saviour, which belongs only to a regenerate soul, and implies that we have passed from a state of sin and condemnation into the holy and happy kingdom of the Son of God. It is evident that in our text the Apostle has this latter kind of knowledge in view.

Of all the enquiries that can be started by the mind of man, the most important is, whether we have such a saving acquaintance with Jesus Christ? In this wide universe, no discovery ought to be deemed by us so interesting, so delightful, as this, that we are indeed the disciples and servants of Christ, and heirs of that heavenly inheritance which he has purchased with his own blood for his people.

Now the Apostle tells us here that this discovery may be made, and in what way. He does not represent it as a matter of doubtful conjecture and feeble hope, but as a matter of certainty. "We do know that we know him." Nor does he treat it as something peculiar to the Apostles, but as a thing which was shared with them by Christians generally. Other passages of Scripture forbid our concluding that no one can be a child of God at all who is not in possession of this strong assurance. But this much I think we may safely infer from our text, that it is, ordinarily, the attainable privilege of the disciples of Christ, and that all, therefore, should press forward to the attainment of it with the utmost ardour and diligence.

How then shall we ascertain that we have this saving acquaintance with Christ the Lord? The answer is, "if we keep his commandments." The law of God is placed in the hands of our Redeemer, for the government of our hearts, and the regulation of our conduct. And our practical subjection to his law is the test of our vital union with him as our Saviour.

Absolute perfection in holiness is not indeed the lot of man upon earth. And if our assurance of divine favour rested upon our claim to such perfection, the high privilege for which I am pleading would be impossible to be enjoyed. But we may come to know our calling of God by our earnest, prevailing, and growing obedience to the commands of our Master; and by the consciousness of that war which

we are determined to carry on against all sin, until the last remains of it shall be completely exterminated from our hearts.

Without attempting a detail of the divine commandments, the following observations may be of some use for illustrating the point before us.

The first trait of a genuine submission to Christ as our King is a sincere desire to know his will. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light." The Son of God "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." If we belong to the number of his purified people, we shall be excited by our "hunger and thirst after righteousness," and sweetly impelled by a sense of redeeming love, to place ourselves at the feet of our divine Instructor; seeking, with all simplicity and meekness of temper, to be informed, by his word and spirit, what he would have us to do. This has been the aim and study of the saints in every age. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord; teach me thy statutes. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts; quicken me in thy righteousness."

In the next place, our obedience must be cordial, founded in love to our Ruler and his laws. He "requires truth in the inward parts." Under human governments, if our external actions be fair, we cannot be censured; for men cannot search the heart, to discern its secret obliquities. But it is a first principle of divine legislation that our hearts are to be devoted to God. Where this is wanting, we may use words of prayer and praise, with outward appearances of much earnestness; and yet before that omniscient eye which searches our inmost thoughts, all may be no better than a wicked, insulting mockery. We may "bestow all our goods to feed the poor," and even "give our bodies to be burned" in martyrdom; and yet we may be destitute of love, and consequently, in the estimation of a holy God, "we are nothing." If, therefore, we are true Christians, we shall investigate the state of our hearts with the utmost care, and "keep them with all diligence." We shall measure our obedience by our love, and indeed place it mainly in that love. The resolution of the Psalmist will be ours; "I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart." And with him we shall daily pray, "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed."

Again, the spirit of our obedience to Christ must be universal; that is, it must extend to all his commandments, so far as we are enabled to know what they are. They are all given by the same wisdom, all enforced by the same authority. Nothing then can be more unreasonable, nothing more insolent, than the plan of keeping some of the divine precepts, while we knowingly disregard others. Such schemes manifestly show that the heart is unsound, that our wills are not subdued to the divine will, and, in fact, that the principle of obedience to the King of Zion does not exist in our bosoms. Where do we find a warrant for culling out those laws which happen to suit our convenience, while we trample upon others which require self-denial and sacrifices? The very idea of a law given us which we are not required to obey is an impious absurdity. The purpose of a true and thriving

Christian is exceedingly different from this. Thy laws, O my Redeemer, are all right and good. Through thy grace strengthening me, I resolve to keep and observe them all faithfully, whatever may be the opposition of my wayward inclinations, and whatever the loss of any of my worldly interests. Though I feel and lament that I come short in every thing; yet there is nothing in which I would keep back my heart or my hands from obeying and glorifying thee. Sin, in all its forms and degrees, is my aversion. My soul thirsts for complete holiness, for entire conformity to thy will. Let me be so sanctified that "every thought shall be brought into captivity to thee," my God and Saviour. "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments."

I observe, lastly, that our obedience is to be constant, unintermitted, and persevering. Our religion was not made for Sundays merely, whether the hours be spent in the church or the closet. We are indeed to allot special seasons for our special approaches to God in acts of piety; and much of our time must necessarily be employed in the business of the world in which we live. But the whole of our time is nevertheless to be devoted to God in the discharge of duty. All our powers, all our actions, are to be consecrated to his service. What less could the Psalmist mean by saying, "I will have respect unto thy statutes continually?" What else are we to understand by the precept which requires us to be "in the fear of the Lord all the day long?" Or this, "whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God?" Every thing that the ungodly sinner does is polluted by his enmity to God, and devotion to his own rebellious passions. On the other hand, the servant of Christ obeys him not only when sitting at the communion table, or kneeling at prayer, or in the immediate exercise of Christian benevolence; but also when his hands are busy in the counting house, or guiding the plough in the field. All is devoted to God by faith and prayer. We are never to say, now religion is over for this time, and to be laid aside until some returning period. But, let thy service, my God, be the business of my life, wherever I may be, and however engaged. And in this course we are to go on through the whole of our days; disdaining to look or wish for a cessation of our labour and welfare, until we have perfectly gained the victory over all our enemies "through him who loved us," and stand complete in the glorious image of our God.

Now if we can find that we are thus given up, heart and soul, with all that we have, to the keeping of our Master's Commandments; if we see clearly that "this one thing we do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" what should hinder our drawing the joyful conclusion that we do indeed "know Christ" with that renovating kind of knowledge which accompanies salvation? Such fruits do not grow in the ground of our corrupted nature. Such sacred dispositions to lay ourselves out with all our faculties for the honour of our Redeemer can only have been implanted and cherished by his Holy Spirit.

And as this unquenchable desire, to "be holy as God is holy," could only be given to us from above, so he who gave it, and who cannot fail in his promises, will take care that in due time it shall be fully satisfied.

Let it be remembered that this well-founded, joyful confidence in Christ as our effectual Saviour is intended to be a refreshment, a fore-taste of heaven, only to the diligent servant of God. Mere pretenders to religion have no part nor lot in the matter; and nothing can be so dangerous to them as their presumptuous calculations of the safety of their state. This feast is not designed even for those Christians who may possibly have "the root of the matter" in them, but who are lukewarm in the service of God, who creep and loiter in the way to heaven. It is a merciful appointment that they shall not obtain solid peace and strong consolation until they arise from the dust, bewail their folly, and set out with new and vigorous exertions to run the race which is set before them. Alas, the number of these dull, halting professors amongst us is so great as to bring the very doctrine of Christian assurance into doubt and disrepute.

These remarks may assist us in detecting the sandy foundations on which many rest their hopes of heaven. Let us take a few specimens.

Some depend upon the plea that they are spending their lives in a harmless kind of way, doing nobody any mischief. Now supposing, though not admitting, that it is possible to live in this world so as neither to serve God nor yet do harm to men; is it worth while to talk to one who can pretend to Christianity upon such a plan as this? Is this "keeping the commandments of Jesus Christ?" Are we placed here, with our powers and means and occasions for action, merely to doze our time slothfully and unprofitably away, in the fond conceit that we are doing no harm? You send your servant to perform your business. He lies down and sleeps; but pleads, when called to account, that he was all this while doing no harm. What will you say to his plea of justification?

Some again, who bear no marks of zealous activity, in obedience to Christ, place their confidence of safety upon something like an immediate revelation from heaven which they imagine they have received. They were in great trouble about their souls. They tried many expedients for relief, but all in vain. At length, and they remember well the time and place, the word came suddenly into their minds, "son, or daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." This filled them with joy. And never since then have they doubted of their safe and happy condition. Poor self-deceiver! Go and enquire at the word of a holy God, whether it be most likely that the devil should quote Scripture to delude thee, or that a child of God should live a mere worldly and unholy life?

Once more; many rely confidently upon what Christ has done and suffered for us, while they take no serious pains about keeping his commandments. This indulgent scheme of theirs they call expecting salvation through sovereign grace, without the works of the law. But it is manifest that such presumers are blind, that they have no just perceptions of the real grace and salvation of the gospel. Who

has authorized thee, daring antinomian, to make Christ crucified a pillow of slumber for thy laziness; or to fancy that an unsanctified soul can hold communion with God, and find admittance into the kingdom of heaven? Read, in our text, and in the whole book of God, the condemnation of thy madness; and talk no more of the grace of God, while thou deniest its native and uniform effects upon the heart and life of the true believer.—And here I cannot help giving a caution against an advice which I have met with in some otherwise good old writer on experimental religion. “Wouldst thou have comfort? Look not upon a work within thee. But look to Christ, and only to Christ.” These directions, I hope, were rightly intended; but in my opinion they were dangerously expressed. To be sure, when the question relates to the meritorious grounds of our acceptance with God, we must look to Christ, and to him alone. But when the question regards our vital union with Christ as his people, we must look to the work of his cleansing grace within us, and to the effects of that work in our new obedience to his laws. How can we know whether the tree be good, but by the goodness of its fruit? How can we satisfy ourselves, Scripturally and rationally, that Christ is our actual Saviour, unless we see evidence that he powerfully delivers us from our sins?

I have said that Christians ordinarily may attain to an assurance of the divine favour; and have intimated that the reason why many fail of enjoying so precious a blessing is that they are sluggish and negligent in the service of God. But before I close these remarks, I ought explicitly to mention a case which varies from these general rules. It happens now and then that a most humble, conscientious and active servant of Christ travels onward towards heaven harassed with many doubts and fears; very seldom enjoying any cheering anticipations of the success of his journey. This arises from a frame of mind prone to despondency, and to look at things rather on the dark than the bright side. And this again may be the effect of lingering disease and weakness of body; or of other afflictive circumstances which lie too deep for our discovery. I believe, however, that even such Christians, with hardly ever an exception, are supported by a hope in God which, feeble as it is, they would not exchange for a thousand such worlds as this, with all their vain pleasures and fleeting glory.

PHILANDER.

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A SERIES OF DISCOURSES

ON THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION, &c.

BY T. CHALMERS, D. D.

(Continued from page 347.)

HAVING in our last No. given so large a specimen of the reasoning contained in this interesting volume, we shall of necessity, present to our readers a more condensed view of the remainder.

In the three first discourses the author fairly disposes of the infidel objection drawn from Astronomy; and then proceeds to the informa-

tion given by the sacred record. From this we learn that Christianity has a far more extensive bearing on the other orders of creation than the infidel is disposed to allow; and whether he will own the authority of this information, or not, he will at least be forced to admit, that the subject matter of the Bible itself is not chargeable with that objection which he has attempted to fasten upon it.

The fourth discourse, as we have before observed, is "On the knowledge of man's moral history in the distant places of Creation." The text is I. Peter, i. 12. *Which things the angels desire to look into.* From this passage of Scripture the author derives a train of reflections of the following import. The several senses convey to us information concerning their various objects, and thus keep up and extend our intercourse with external nature. It is however by the organ of the eye that the most multiplied acquaintance is formed with the varied creation on every side of us. It is this which makes the earth appear to man only as the pedestal on which he may stand to descry all the wonders of that magnificence which the Divinity has spread around him. It is by the narrow outlet of the eye that the mind of man takes its excursive flight over those golden tracks where in all the exhaustlessness of creative wealth lie scattered the suns and systems of Astronomy. But it becomes the philosopher to be humble even amid the proudest march of human discovery, when he thinks of the height and depth, of the length and breadth of that which lies beyond all that he has ever seen. But man has a great deal more to keep him humble of his understanding than a mere sense of that boundary which skirts and terminates the material field of his contemplations. He ought to feel how, within that boundary, the vast majority of things is mysterious and unknown to him; that even in the inner chamber of his own consciousness, there is a little world of incomprehensibles; and in proportion as he recedes from the centre of his own personal experience, there is a cloud of ignorance and secrecy, which spreads, and thickens, and throws a deep and impenetrable veil over every department of human contemplation:—and should he in some lofty enterprize of thought leave this world, and shoot afar into those tracks of speculation which astronomy has opened, let him remember that, the moment he has ascended a few little miles above the world he treads on, every sense but one forsakes him, that distant worlds have scarcely told him any thing but the simple fact of their existence; that he sees not their landscape, and knows nothing of their moral systems.

But the knowledge which we cannot acquire, might be communicated by the testimony of competent messenger. Suppose then that an inhabitant of one of these planetary mansions should light upon our earth; all that we should require, would be, sufficient credentials, for the belief of every point of information which he might offer. A message has actually come into the world, and told us of matters more remote from every power of observation than these; even of the counsels of the Eternal Spirit, whose goings forth are of old, even from everlasting. The object of this message is not to convey information to us about the state of the planetary regions. It is a message from

the throne of God to this rebellious province of his dominions; and the purpose of it is to reveal the fearful extent of our guilt and danger, and to lay before us the overture of reconciliation. Were a similar message sent from the metropolis of a mighty empire to one of its remote and revolutionary districts, we should not look for much information respecting the state and economy of the intermediate provinces—though still there may chance to be some incidental allusions to the extent and resources of the whole monarchy; to the existence of a similar rebellion in other quarters of the land, or to the general principle of loyalty by which it was pervaded. Casual references of this kind may be inserted in the proclamation, or they may not. It is with this precise feeling of ambiguity that we open the record of that embassy which has been sent us from heaven, to see if we can find any thing there concerning other places of creation, to meet the objections of the infidel astronomer. But we must take care not to push our speculations beyond the limits of the written testimony. The informations of the Bible on this subject are of two sorts—that from which we learn the fact that the history of our redemption is known in other places of creation—and that from which we indistinctly guess at the fact, that the redemption itself may extend beyond the limits of this world.

And here it may be remarked that although we know little of the economy and moral condition of the planetary inhabitants, we are not to infer that they, although no higher in the scale of understanding than we, know little of us. Our first parents in their state of innocence had frequent and familiar intercourse with God. He walked with them in the garden of paradise; and there did angels hold their habitual converse. And should the same purity which charmed superior spirits to the haunts of Eden, be perpetuated in every planet but our own; then might each of them be a scene of heavenly communications, and an open way for the messengers of God be kept up with them all: and thus, as we talk of the public mind of an empire, a public mind might be formed throughout the whole extent of God's sinless creation, and just as we read of the eyes of all Europe being turned to the one spot where some affair of eventful importance is going on, so might the eyes of the universe be turned to the one world where rebellion against the Majesty of Heaven had planted its standard, and where God was putting forth all his attributes for its restoration to divine favour.

For the full understanding of this argument we must keep steady hold of this consideration, that among unsinning intelligencies, God is all in all—that they rejoice in his light, and with unutterable raptures behold his glory—that they see the impress of the Divinity in every scene that surrounds them, and that whatever is good and fair, appears so because it is a part of his fulness who diffuses the richness of his glory through all his works. Now surely where delight in God is the constant enjoyment, and the earnest intelligent contemplation of God is the constant exercise, nothing can so set his adoring myriads in a gaze, as some new and wondrous evolution of the character of God. This is found in the plan of redemption. Here all the attributes

of Deity are most illustriously displayed, and mercy is made to rejoice over them all—Here a way is thrown open by which, we sinful and polluted wanderers may, with the whole lustre of the divine character untarnished, be re-admitted into fellowship with God, and again brought back within the circle of his loyal and affectionate family.

With what delight and eagerness of desire did the angels contemplate the unfoldings of this attribute of mercy! None but an angel can describe the joy that then spread through the adoring myriads that surround the throne of the Eternal.

Now the character of this transaction, viewed as a manifestation of God, does not depend upon the number of worlds over which this sin and this salvation may have extended. Should ours be the only world embraced by the scheme of redemption, the moral display of the Godhead is mainly and substantially the same, as if it had reached thro' the whole of that habitable extent which the science of astronomy has made known to us. The objection about the narrowness of the theatre on which this great transaction took place carries with it all the grossness of materialism. The event derives its chief interest from the display it gives of the mind and purposes of the Deity. Should the world redeemed be only a speck in the immensity of creation, this magnifies his loving kindness who rather than lose one solitary world of the numbers which he has formed, would lavish all the riches of his beneficence and wisdom, on the recovery of its guilty inhabitants.

Now though the Bible does not speak decisively as to the proper effect of redemption being extended to other worlds, it does speak most clearly about the knowledge of it being disseminated among other orders, of intelligence than our own. In proof of this position all the quotations that might be assembled will not be put down. When Moses and Elias made a visit to our Saviour from heaven, the topic which they brought with them was the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem; and we are told that the mystery of Christ was revealed for the very intent that unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known the manifold wisdom of God—that it is the divine purpose to gather together in one, all things that are in heaven, and in earth—and that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. Declarations of this sort stamp a character of universality on the whole matter of Christian salvation; and establish a widely disseminated knowledge of this scheme among other orders of created intelligence. The atonement forms the high song of eternity; the Lamb, who was slain is surrounded by the acclamations of one wide universal empire; and there never ceases to ascend from the worshippers of him, who washed us from our sins in his blood, a voice loud as from numbers without number, sweet as from blessed voices uttering joy, when heaven rings jubilee, and loud hosannas fill the eternal regions. [See Rev. v. 11, 12, 13.]

A king might have the whole of his reign crowded with enterprises of glory, and yet it is conceivable that by the act of a single day, in behalf of a single family; by some unusual condescension, by

some noble effort of self-denial, he might draw such a lustre around him as would eclipse the renown of all his public achievements—and in future ages this deed of modest unobtrusive virtue be appealed to as the most sublime and touching memorial of his name. In like manner did the king eternal immortal and invisible, surrounded as he is by the splendours of an everlasting monarchy, turn him to our humble habitation; and the footsteps of God manifest in the flesh have been on the narrow spot of ground we occupy; hither hath the king of glory bent his mysterious way, and entered the tabernacle of men, and in the disguise of a servant did he sojourn for years under the roof which canopies our obscure and solitary world. And if we look to the moral grandeur of the transaction, from the retirement of our dwelling place, there may issue forth such a display of the Godhead as will circulate the glories of his name amongst all his worshippers. Thus, to pursue the argument no farther, it appears from the annunciations of Scripture, that this little world of ours has been the scene on which the Almighty has so illustrated his grace and majesty as to communicate more exalted joy to the multitudes who day without night circle his throne rejoicing.

But according to the record of God's message of mercy to man, not only do angels desire to look into the mysteries of our redemption that they may behold the wonderful displays of the divine character; but with the most amiable sympathy do they contemplate the efficacy of the gospel on the hearts of those to whom it is sent. * For there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. The great Father of goodness, amidst all the praises of his widely extended family, and all the glories of his universal dominion, bends a pitying eye on us; and this endearing feature in the divine goodness is beautifully reflected down on us in the revealed attitude of angels. From the heights of heaven they are bending a wakeful regard over the men of this sinful world, and the repentance of every one of them spreads a joy, and a high gratulation throughout all its dwelling places. And here we may, seizing the opportunity afforded by the parables of the chapter referred to below, take a familiar view of that principle on which the inhabitants of heaven are so awake to the deliverance and restoration of our species.

To illustrate the difference in the reach of knowledge and affection between a man and an angel, let us think of the difference between the reach of one man and another. One, on the strength of those instinctive fondnesses which nature has implanted in his bosom, earns the character of an affectionate father, or a kind husband, or a bright example of all that is endearing in domestic relations.—To these, another adds a deep interest in the families that are near him; lends his services to the town or district wherein he is placed; and gives up a portion of his time to the thoughtful labours of a humane and public spirited citizen.—But we can conceive a still farther enlargement. We can figure to ourselves a man, whose wakeful sympathies overflow the field of his own immediate neighbourhood; to whom the

* *Isaie, XV. 7.*

name of Country comes with all the omnipotence of a charm upon his heart, and with all the urgency of a most righteous and resistless claim upon his services; who never hears the name, but it stirs up all his enthusiasm in behalf of the worth and the welfare of its people; who gives himself up with all the devotedness of a passion, to the best and purest objects of patriotism; and who, spurning away from him the vulgarities of party ambition, separates his life and his labours to the fine pursuit of augmenting the science, or the virtue, or the substantial prosperity of his nation. And lastly we can conceive a still loftier flight of humanity; a man, the aspiring of whose heart for the good of man knows no limitations; whose longings and whose conceptions on this subject overleap all the barriers of geography; who looking on himself as a brother of the species, links every spare energy which belongs to him with the cause of its melioration; who can embrace within the grasp of his ample desires the whole family of mankind; and who in obedience to a heaven born movement of principle within him, separates himself to some big and busy enterprize which is to tell on the moral destinies of the world—Should such a man with all these lofty feelings, mingle the softness of domestic virtue, the kindness of a neighbour, and the devotedness of a true patriot, would not the combination of so much grace with so much greatness, clothe him with transcendent dignity of character? And do not such men as Howard, and Wilberforce, Clarkson and Carey, afford a fine illustration of these conceptions? Such is the benevolence, at once so gentle and lofty, of those men who sanctified by the faith that is in Jesus, have had their hearts visited from heaven by a beam of warmth and sacredness—What then is the benevolence of the place from whence such an influence cometh? How wide is the compass of this benevolence among unsinping spirits—Angels have a mightier reach than men; and can look upon this world and all which it inherit as the part of a larger family. They felt the gladdening impulse of that joy which the birth of human nature produced; and they loved us even with the love which a family on earth bears to a younger sister. Keep this in view and it will be seen how the principle so finely and so copiously illustrated in this chapter may be brought to meet the infidelity which we are combating. It was nature in the shepherd to leave the ninety and nine of his flock in the wilderness, and seek the solitary wanderer that had strayed from his fold—It was nature that turned all the anxiety of the woman from her nine pieces of silver that were safe, to the search for that one which she had lost—There is too one lost world among the planets which roll in the immensity around us; one that has wandered from the right way, has strayed from peace and purity. And, Oh! if there be any truth in this chapter, and any sweet or touching nature in the principle which runs through all its parables, we may cease to wonder that for every step of her recovery, and for every individual that is rendered back again to the fold from which he was separated, another and another message of triumph should be made to circulate among the hosts of paradise; and that, fallen as we are, all the sympathies of heaven should be awake on the enterprize of

him who travelled forth in the greatness of his strength to seek and save us. And here it is worth while to remark how fine a harmony there is between the law of sympathetic nature in heaven, and the most touching exhibitions of it on earth. When one of a numerous household is sick, is not that the one to whom all the tenderness is turned, and who monopolizes the care of his family. When the sighing of the midnight storm sends its dismal forebodings into the mother's heart, to whom of all her offspring are her thoughts and anxieties then turned, but to her sailor boy whom fancy has placed amid the surges of a troubled ocean? When one is shipwrecked, and sold into bondage, and loaded with fetters, and the fame of his disaster reaches his kindred; who is it that for weeks and months engrosses every care, and calls out every sacrifice, and sets them on every expedient to get him home again. Now conceive, as we are warranted to do by the parables of this chapter, the principle of these earthly exhibitions to be in full operation around the throne of God, and we shall cease to wonder that such exertions should be put forth, such sacrifices made for the recovery of this ruined, captivated world. Nor shall we resist by our incredulity the gospel message though it tells us that throughout the whole of this world's history, long indeed in our eyes, but only a little month in the high periods of immortality, so much of the vigilance, and so much of the earnestness of heaven, should have been expended on the recovery of its guilty population.

We have now come, in order, to the sixth discourse in this series. It is *on the contest for an ascendancy over man among the higher orders of intelligence*. Text, Col. 11, 15. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. The object of this discourse is to enlarge the view of the general subject under discussion, and to show that however paltry this world may appear to the infidel on comparing it with the regions discovered by astronomy, it is the object of a very deep and permanent interest among the hosts of heaven on the one side, and the powers of darkness on the other. To do any thing like justice to this part of the argument, it would be necessary to enter into a minuteness of detail, which our very narrow limits forbid. We therefore refer to the Book itself; and would here recommend to our readers to study the collection of texts contained in the appendix, in connection with the discourse to which each division belongs. We mean this recommendation to be general, but think it particularly important in reference to the fourth, fifth, and sixth Sermons.

We shall now look back a little on the course which has been taken. The Author first states as before observed, the astronomical objection to Christianity—He then draws the character of a true Philosopher, as illustrated by the greatest of all the tribe, and shows that he fearlessly believes whatever is supported by evidence, and confidently rejects whatever wants such support. Next, it is shewn that the astronomical objection has not the shadow of evidence to prop it; and, if the assumption on which it rests were true, the argument derived from this assumption is inconclusive—After this the author

appeals to the informations afforded by the Bible, and collects from them such traces of relationship between man and other orders of being as serve to prove that Christianity is not that paltry and provincial system that infidelity presumes it to be. From the interest which angels take in the economy of redemption; the sympathy in our ruin and recovery, which is excited in the breasts of the blessed inhabitants of heaven; and from the struggle for the ascendancy over man which is going on among higher orders of intelligence, it is inferred that Christianity according to the declaration of its acknowledged and authentic records is a system connected with the high plans of God's universal government; that the unfoldings of the mystery of redemption, in a new and most striking manner evolve the character of the Deity for his own glory, and the enlargement of the happiness of the multitudes without number who surround his throne. Thus does it seem to us, that the objection of the unbeliever is completely overthrown, and that on his own ground he has received a signal overthrow.

III. According to the division of the subject proposed by us, the third part, which we have termed the *application*, now comes under review. This is contained in the seventh sermon, the subject of which is, *The slender influence of mere taste and sensibility in matters of religion*; and the text Ezekiel, xxxiii, 32. *And lo! thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one who hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, and do them not.*

It is the design of this discourse, to illustrate the position that our taste may be gratified and our sensibilities highly excited by the objects of religion, or by the manner in which they are exhibited, and yet our practice remain unchanged. A variety of appearances in human nature is adduced in confirmation of the remark. Music has a well known power. It may raise the inspiring note of patriotism, and the inspiration may be felt; it may thrill over the recesses of the soul to the mustering up of all its energies, and may sustain to the last cadence of the song, the firm nerve and purpose of intrepidity; and all this may be realized upon him who in the day of battle, and upon actual collision with the danger of it, turns out to be a coward. In like manner one who has a taste for music, may have his mind subdued to a unison with piety, may have his inner feelings stirred up to the most lofty determinations; and his affections so weaned for a time from the dust, as to raise the hope of immediate entrance on some high career of active benevolence, and faithful discharge of duty. But he turns to the world, and all this glow abandons him; the words which he hath heard he doeth them not; and in the hour of temptation he turns out to be a deserter from the law of allegiance. The charms of eloquence may have the power of fascination on the mind of another; and while he listens to the accomplished orator, his heart may, according to the nature of the subject treated, burn with indignation against injustice and oppression, or feel the kindling ardours of patriotism, or glow with the hallowed fervors of piety; and here again he engages in the pursuits of time and all this noble feeling which had been lighted up is extinguished, and all these high purposes are as evanescent as the dew of the morning.

When a kind mother closes the eyes of her expiring babe, she is thrown into a flood of sensibility, and soothing to the heart are the sympathy, and the prayers of the attending minister. When a neighbourhood assembles to the funeral of an acquaintance, regret and tenderness sit on the faces of the company; and the deep silence broken only by the utterance of the man of God, carries a kind of pleasing religiousness with it. The sacredness of the sabbath, and the decencies of its observation may engage the affections of him who loves to walk in the footsteps of his father; and the recurrence of the day of rest may bring the charm of its regularity and quietness—But the deep and tender impression of a family bereavement is not religion—The love of established decencies is not religion—The charm of all that sentimentalism which is associated with many of its solemn and affecting services, is not religion. It requires fruit; it demands a permanent influence upon the affections and habits. Yet how many lay a flattering unction to their souls, when they think of their amiable feelings, and becoming observances!

In bringing these Astronomical Discourses to a close, the author thinks it his duty to advert to this exhibition of character in man.—The sublime and interesting topic which has engaged us, possesses in itself a charm to fix the attention, to regale the imagination, to subdue the whole man into a delighted reverence, and in a word, to beget such solemnity of thought and emotion, as may occupy and enlarge the soul for hours together, as may waft it away from the grossness of life, and raise it to a kind of elevated calm above all its vulgarities and vexations. But the whole of this effect upon the feelings may take place without religion. The variegated scenes of this lower world may exhibit their beauties to the delighted beholder; and the magnificent discoveries of Astronomy may present the glories of the heavens in perpetually enlarging views of grandeur and majesty, until the mind feels unable to stretch itself farther; and yet with all these there may be as utter a destitution of true piety as though man were naturally incapable of religion. These considerations deserve deep and serious attention. And the more so because in the present age of refinement and sensibility, no mistake is more common than that of substituting the religion of *taste* for the religion of *conscience*. We would therefore earnestly recommend to our readers the diligent study of this last discourse; wishing them continually to bear it in mind, that nothing will endure the rigorous test of scripture but that practical piety which brings the whole man with all his powers and attainments to a cordial acknowledgment of the divine supremacy, and an unreserved submission to the revealed will of God.

We have now given such a view of the contents of this volume as our limits will allow; and as far as might be in the very words of the author. So that our readers have some opportunity to judge for themselves both as to the style and manner, as well as the *matter* of the book. As to the former, a sober and correct critic would find something to censure; and as to the latter the just philosophical reasoner, would find much to commend. As for ourselves, we greatly

admire that intrepidity which goes forward to the contest with the adversaries of religion on any ground that they may choose to occupy. Truth, we are persuaded, need never shrink from the most rigid trials. Incorruptible and unchangeable, it passes through the hottest fire of controversy, as gold through the furnace. We are entirely convinced too that when the true method of philosophising shall be more fully understood and more generally practised, it will be as fully admitted that the religion of the Bible requires that same species of investigation, which has been so happily applied to the phenomena of nature.

The author of the work before us is a man of original and powerful mind. This volume affords many instances of profound thought, of happy illustration, and lofty eloquence. We rejoice that such a man as Dr. Chalmers, deeply imbued with evangelical piety has been raised up in the present times in the Church of which he is a member. And we more rejoice that our common Christianity has enlisted under her banner, a champion of such prowess.

The work is for sale in Richmond. We recommend the purchase of it to the readers of the Monitor.

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From the Religious Remembrancer.

DOMESTIC MISSIONS.—NO. 1.

Abstract of the First Report of the Board of Missions, to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.—May, 1817.

Mr. John Monteith* was appointed a missionary, three months in Detroit, and one month on missionary ground on his way. On the 27th of June, Mr. Monteith arrived at Detroit; and he states he was so cordially received by the people, that it appeared unnecessary to bear any longer the character of a missionary. He is now settled in that place, and has entered on a wide field of usefulness. "The profaneness of the soldiers," says Mr. Monteith, exceeds any thing I ever imagined. There is no Sabbath in this country. But what is remarkable, though I have openly and plainly held forth the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, both in public and in private, I am apparently treated with the greatest respect by all descriptions of people, and have not heard a word spoken against religion. It meets with no opposition, but the practice of the people."

In his second communication he says, "I am about 200 miles distant from any Presbyterian minister. I feel the weight of my task. Ignorance and wickedness prevail around me, and there is scarce an individual to give me assistance. All the Christian zeal perceivable is among the Methodists. The army is without a chaplain, and I have more than I am able to perform. My success has been great in reforming morals; but no conversions have appeared. I am not at all discouraged, but am anxious to have assistance. Salvation belongeth to the Lord."

As Mr. Monteith travelled in public conveyances, he had no opportunity for acting as a missionary in his way to Detroit. But he ob-

* *Lately a Student in the General Assembly's Theological Seminary.*

tained from the people of that place after agreeing to settle among them, their consent to spend a month in missionary labours in the destitute settlements in the surrounding region. He accordingly visited Raisin, the Rapids of the Miami, Sandusky, Cleaveland, and other places, and preached very frequently. This tract of country through which he passed, he deems very suitable missionary ground; and he is of the opinion that it is important immediately to occupy it by our missionaries. If a missionary sent to that country were acquainted with the French language, he might do good by conversing with the French privately. "After much inquiry," he says, "I have not been able to find a single French Bible in the place:" and speaking of the settlements of Fort Meigs and Raisin, he observes, they "are utterly neglected, yet I am confident that Societies could now be formed in both places. The people are anxious for it."

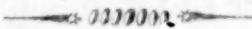


Extract of a Letter from a Minister of the Gospel in Blount County, Tennessee, to the Editor of the (Chillicothe) Recorder; dated May 26th, 1817.

Dear Brother, the times in which we live are pregnant with wonders. Are these the days foretold by ancient Prophets, when the Stone cut out of the mountains without hands shall begin to fill the earth? Or, is it the Mighty Angel flying through the midst of heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach? Or, in the distribution of the word of life, are party names and prejudices to crumble, and totter, and fall, and all the church in this grand work to become one? The beams of divine glory have begun to dawn on almost every land.

In no other way do I see more evidence of the cause of religion reviving in this western and southern part of the Union, than in the anxiety manifested in distributing the Bible; and the Lord only knows whether a great part of those who appear to be forward in that business are not engaged in it from improper dispositions.

We have just had a most solemn sacramental occasion at this place. Some considerable additions have been made to the church, and a number more seem solemnly awakened to a sense of their situation. There is also an increased attention among professors to the concerns of their souls. May the Lord prosper his work, to his own glory.



Deaf and Dumb.—Twenty one persons are under tuition at Hartford, in the Institution for the instruction of the Deaf and Dumb—the average of whose ages, is said to be 23.—The President visited this school, and after a full examination, expressed himself highly gratified with the progress of the pupils.



OBITUARY.—Died, at the seat of Philip Nelson, Esq. on Wednesday, 26th of February, Miss ARIANA BURWELL, aged 40 years.

Heaven waits not the last moment; owns her friends

On this side death; and points them out to men

'A lecture silent, but of sovereign power!

Never were the words of the Poet more truly exemplified than in her who is the subject of this brief tribute of affection.—That she was

the "friend of heaven," the faithful follower of the Lamb—a constant endeavour to do, and suffer the will of God sufficiently evinced to all who knew her;—and that the God whom she served, supports his children, under the severest trials to which humanity is exposed, the peace, and happiness of her last hours equally proved.—In the days of health and felicity no earthly pleasure could draw her from the service of her Lord and Master—to him the devout aspirations of her soul continually ascended, and in sacred communion with her God she passed a large portion of every day.—His revealed will, was her constant study, and from this "divine arsenal" she obtained weapons to combat those enemies which "every where surround us in this body of corruption."—She came forth from her closet, with an earnest solicitude to perform the part allotted her by the divine disposer of all things, in the manner most acceptable to him.—No social, no relative duty was neglected by her. She considered all mankind as the children of her Heavenly Father, and was anxious to render to each individual member of her circle every service in her power. Her heart overflowed with kindness to all—and especially was its tenderness lavished on those who were most closely united to her by the ties of nature. To contribute to their happiness was the constant endeavour of her life; and whilst memory presents the faithful picture of her affectionate unobtrusive character to their view, so long will she live in their bereaved hearts.—He who has said to his people, "I will never leave you nor forsake you," sustained this blessed saint in "the dark days of her distress," and enabled her to be "a conquerer through him who had loved her."—She supported a painful illness of many months, with almost unexampled fortitude—amidst the severest sufferings, no impatient word escaped her lips—though "the outward man perished, the inward man was renewed day by day." She often spoke of death, and always as of an event which she certainly expected, and for which she was fully prepared.—The wants of her fellow-creatures, especially those whom providence had placed under her particular care, were the objects of her dying solicitude; to supply their necessities, the alleviation of her last hours: and the sighs and tears of her afflicted domestics, unequivocally testify the magnitude of their loss to every beholder. When the last solemn hour arrived, she devoted it to communion with that God from whom she was so soon to receive the "crown of glory," reserved for his faithful followers; and whilst her friends bent in breathless anxiety over her pillow, they heard her repeat the following words—"Blessed Jesus save me;"—and a little after—"Lord Jesus! I am saved." Thus did it please God to grant to this happy spirit, a blessed assurance of her "acceptance in the Beloved," and to her mourning relatives the only consolation they could receive, the firm belief that she had exchanged this world of care and sorrow, for those heavenly regions, where, "God shall wipe away all tears—where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying;—neither shall there be any more pain." May all who witnessed, and all who read the blessed end of this servant of the Lord, obtain grace to emulate her bright example!