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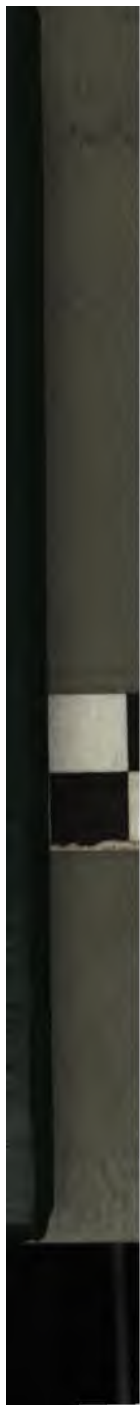
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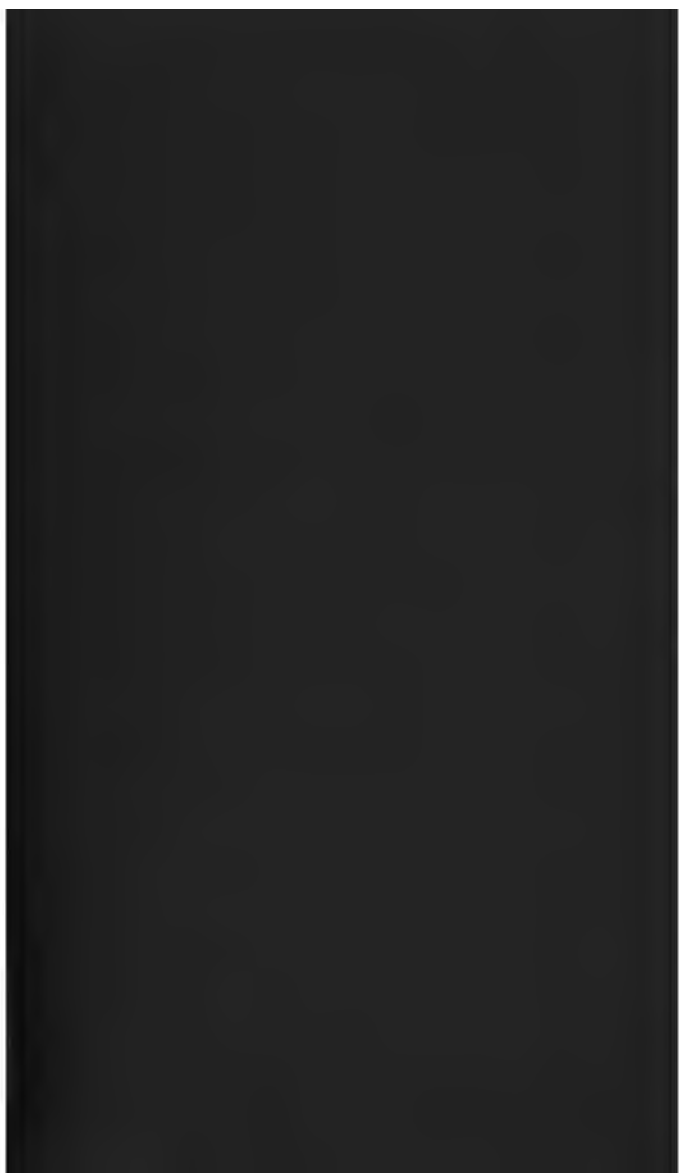
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WORDS OF LIFE'S LAST YEARS. .

LONDON :
PRINTED BY R. CLAY, SON, AND TAYLOR,
BREAD STREET HILL.

Words of Life's Last Years:

CONTAINING

CHRISTIAN EMBLEMS;

METRICAL PRAYERS AND SACRED POEMS,

TRANSLATED FROM FOREIGN WRITERS.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THOUGHTS ON DEVOTION," Etc. Etc.

Qui non potest volitare ut aquila, volitet ut passer."

Ambros. de fugâ seculi, c. 5.

LONDON:

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1862.

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TO

S. A. M. S.

FOR WHOM THE LAST PRAYER OF AFFECTION

WILL BE OFFERED,

These Pages are Inscribed.

PREFACE.

THE old Greek adage, "A great book a great evil," was not much heeded—as their folios largely testify—either by the "Fathers" of the Church, the schoolmen, or the Puritan divines. Great books, however, besides their heavy taxes on time, are very hard to lift, and not less hard (especially for the short-sighted) to place conveniently. Little books, on the other hand, have the disadvantage of being very easily mislaid, and not at all easily found.

But, in our day, there is less complaint of the bulk, or of the smallness, than of the unending multitude.

One does, indeed, wish, that all volumes which teach nothing, or worse than nothing, could be made blank ; a process which might decimate some libraries.

But as to the hugely and rapidly increasing remainder, it is fair to consider that *readers* have multiplied also, perhaps as fast as books ; and, further, that the readers of most books are, and will be, comparatively

few. Thus there arises the more need for *various* supply, the great hosts of the reading public being divided into unnumbered groups, and each group selecting the set which, for various reasons, it prefers. In different families or circles the class of books in request will be often altogether unlike.

Still, it may be said, this is no sound reason for adding to the vast numbers extant, and now procurable even in the cheapest forms.

I reply, some persons have little opportunity or power of attempting to profit others, *except* by writing and publication ; in which method they *may* happen to do some good. It may be well, too, that such attempts be continued, partly for the *writer's* sake, since long habits of composition make a measure of such employ medicinal. It is true this object may by some be well and gainfully attained by contributions to serials ; but one may happen to contract a distaste of these, from having been sometimes brought into unwelcome juxtaposition with sentiments and styles with which one does not accord. This may serve to explain the publication of "Words of Life's last Years," which probably only some partial friends will care to read.

A few sheets at a time, like a small bird's short flights, are best proportioned to the writer's range. If more follow, they may differ a good deal from these, and from each other, but will yet each have *one aim*. Should none such appear, the present are so far com-

plete. If any be added, and it be thought fit to unite them, an excuse for their diversity can be found in other miscellanies. I would name especially the recent "Horæ Subsecivæ" of Dr. Brown, with their wide dissimilarities of topic; a work totally unlike, indeed, by its original and poignant character, to anything which is here offered, but yet affording a favourable precedent for gathering into one such matters as some would think too diverse to be associated. Had it not been for a thought of such additions, it would have been pedantic to preface this petty volume. Having announced the purpose that it should be miscellaneous, I need not, perhaps, apologize for combining prose and verse. If, however, this were expected, I might observe, that between "Christian Emblems" and "Sacred Poetry" there is a near affinity. All emblems are more or less poetic; for one leading constituent of poetry is metaphor, and metaphor is the essential dress of an emblem.

The pieces which immediately follow the Emblems, and are termed "Metrical Prayers," are translated from a very popular old manual, Schmolck's "Andachten,"¹ in which they begin a series of similar metrical devotions. They are (as I judge) at once very simple and very comprehensive; apparently designed for use either continuously, or separately, or in such partial combination as may be preferred. Although we possess in

¹ Nurnberg, 1748, edit. xviii.

English very numerous and excellent *hymns* of supplication (much to be valued *as* prayers), I know not any English *prayers*—strictly so named and intended—which are in metre. Indeed some devout persons may object to such a form, forgetting perhaps that, in the Hebrew, several psalms, both of petition and of thanksgiving, if not, strictly speaking, metrical, have that acrostical or alphabetical form which must be regarded as, in its artificial structure, *equivalent* either to metre or rhyme; besides which, not only those, but many other parts of Scripture, are “undeniably poetical,” their poetic character consisting chiefly in what has been termed “parallelism.”¹ This poetic form in devotional composition has, at least, one great advantage—that, for many persons, it much facilitates the storing and retaining them in the memory.

I may here mention, that in the following translations it has been endeavoured to adopt, as nearly as might be, the metres of the original. Two German hymns (pp. 89 and 91) I find (since these sheets were written) translated in the admirable “*Lyra Germanica*” of Miss Winkworth; but I do not withdraw them, since it may interest some reader to observe how differently, as to words, the same thoughts may be presented. I shall mention also what appears at least, for myself, worth remembering, in illustration of

¹ See on these points Lowth, *Præl. de Sac. Poes. Heb.* p. *et seq.*; *Jebb, Sac. Lit.* § I; and Horne’s *Introd.* v. II. 469, edit

the fact—well known but not perhaps enough considered—how little it can be foreseen what unlooked-for circumstances may give a direction to our thoughts, whether in pursuits of study or of active life.

Not only was one of the following papers occasioned by what we term an accidental detention at the Giessbach Falls, but farther, I should not, without that detention, have become acquainted with the “Palmblätter” of Gerok, a volume there lent to me by a Swiss lady, from which several pieces are here offered. They have interested me; and I hope will be judged not unworthy of being clothed in an English dress.

I have since learned that the author is a Protestant clergyman in Stuttgart. I design to offer him this little volume, and shall be happy if my versions have not misrepresented the pieces here selected.

It may seem an affectation to annex contents and an index to so slender a work. But (quoting the preface to a former small volume)¹ “the writer judges it a duty, in days when most books must be rather glanced at than read, to supply *all* facilities for reference. He wishes these might be secured by limiting the full privileges of copyright to such works only as shall have an alphabetic index, and a full abstract of contents, noting against each particular clause the page where it is to be found. The benefit of preparing these before even resolving to print would outweigh the labour.

¹ On Trees. Jackson, Walford, and Hodder, 1848.

It would bring to view the number, weight, and order of the statements and thoughts to be offered, and might prompt a useful remodelling of what was ill-arranged, and the pruning or compression of what was redundant.

“If sometimes it should so disclose to the writer the defects of his work, as to induce abstinence from the press, this might prove good economy for all parties ; but if parental attachment forbade that self-denial, a faithful abstract and index might at least give the reader some means of estimating what the book had to promise.”

THE COTTAGE, FROME,
1862.

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1001



CHRISTIAN EMBLEMS.

I.

“THE SWIFT SHIPS.”

COLERIDGE has somewhere written thus, or with this import: it is the poetry of human nature to read the Creation in a figurative sense, and find there correspondencies and symbols of the spiritual world.

We may say further, it is very observable, how the successive works of art, as human inventiveness has gone on to frame them, have in their turn supplied new images or symbols for the moral and spiritual teacher. The tent of nomadic tribes in the wilderness, the house or hut of the tillers of the soil, the castle of its lordly owner, the temples of heathen or of Hebrew worship, have been themselves imitations or hints from nature; from the leafy bower and stony cave, from the rock-piled fastness and the overarching grove; and both original and copy have furnished emblems for the moralist and divine. Navigation, probably, was first

suggested by the natural raft of drifted timber, and by the floating shell of the nautilus ; and while the river has always symbolised the lapse of time and life, the vessels on its stream were introduced, in very early ages, to give more distinctness and individuality to the figure. Thus, a patriarch in one of the most ancient Scriptures (Job ix. 26) combines an emblematic use of nature and art together : “ My days—are passed away as the swift ships ; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey ; ” and an apostle, in one of the latest, directs us to the same emblem in a different application. “ Behold also the ships, which, though so great, and driven of fierce winds, yet are brought about with a very small helm ; thus, the tongue is a little member, yet worketh mightily.”¹

As life and time are like an ever-rushing river, so each individual or family may be viewed as voyagers in a different vessel. “ The ships ” which the man of Uz had followed with a meditative eye, were probably little larger than the skiffs of modern navigation, and so might the more appositely figure a single voyager’s progress on the wave of time. Our bodily frame, our earthly belongings, our little scheme and occupancy of the life that now is, may be well symbolised by the small boat with its equipment.

¹ See Bishop Jebb, Sac. Lit. p. 274, and Schleusner, on James iii. 5.

We have come for health and recreation to the sea-shore. Even in this little port, we observe with pleased curiosity many vessels of different kinds, and still more in the offing. But we can transport ourselves in fancy to some of the great and most frequented estuaries, the Thames, the Clyde or the Gironde, the Nile or La Plata, the Ganges or Peiho; or to the Malayan or Polynesian seas. Thus we may bring into mental view all diversities of maritime inventions and habits, including the pirate bark, the Chinese junk, the Tahitian canoe. The varieties of individual human life are indeed vastly more numerous; but we shall find, on the many waters, some figurative hints to illustrate man's history, and experience, and prospects; and an Anglo-Saxon may plead connexion with the old Vikings, for licence so to allegorise.

There is one broad division of the human voyagers, which indeed cannot always be fixed for individuals, and still less should be censoriously determined; but which must, at least, secretly exist, even where unascertained. Either they honour and obey the Sovereign of all, or they do not; either they own His supremacy and are grateful for His benefits, or they are mutinous; at the least disaffected, unattached.

The pirate boat and the war canoe may be fittest emblems of a class, too frequent on every shore, who practise violence or predatory wrong.

The privateer, by its very name, but too aptly typifies that spirit which has none but selfish ends, and cares not under what colours its grasping aim may be advanced.

These, openly or tacitly, discard allegiance; and sometimes contrive to be willingly ignorant or sceptical, whether there *be* any sovereign rule. At least, they affect to be irresponsible, and in so doing assume for a time to be better and bolder mariners than we.

Again, pursuits, not so boldly culpable, may be represented by the same sort of figure. The heavy bark of *commerce*, laden (it may be with captives or with slave-tilled cotton) to the water's edge, may figure those minds which are absorbed in love of lucre, with no desire above it or beyond; those whom Cowper indignantly depicted as—

“Merchants rich in cargoes of despair.”

While on the same tide, but with quite another temper, floats the gaudy *yacht*, or the slight, well-painted wherry; her speed is great, her movement graceful, her oars glancing in the sunny spray; yet here, too, may be no recognition of rule, but rather an affectation of giddy or sportive independence, which loves to forget or make light of His power and majesty who “sitteth on the floods.” Here and there we see a *pilot-boat*, emblem of minds endowed with ability and desire

of influence ; qualified, perhaps, to lead in this world's counsels, but too prone to confide in their own power and acuteness, and to forget Him "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand."

More rarely are seen vessels of *discovery*, exploring and surveying the remotest coasts—types of the scientific spirit, elaborately trained and prepared, enterprising and inventive, ready to sound the ocean and to mete the skies, but too often, like Buffon, La Place, Humboldt, not looking above the laws and phenomena, and even by implication denying or ignoring that intelligence which alike framed all material wonders, and the minds that investigate these. Such is one great division, the larger and the more conspicuous, of what one may venture to call the spirit-fleet. Some stanzas from the "Ancient Mariner" may, perhaps, best justify the term and the idea.

"A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
 And still it near'd and near'd :
 As if it dodged a water-sprite,
 It plunged and tack'd and veer'd.
 * * * * *

"See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !
 Hither to work us weal ;
 Without a breeze, without a tide,
 She steadies with upright keel !
 * * * * *

"Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
 How fast she nears and nears !
 Are those her sails that glance in the sun,
 Like restless gossameres ?

“The sun’s rim dips; the stars rush out :
At one stride comes the dark ;
With far-heard whisper, o’er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark !”

But there is, if I may so speak, a different squadron of the spirit-fleet, a convoy less in number and apparent force, equally various in size and appointments, but all having this great principle of order and discipline, that they each profess adherence to their one Leader, study *his* charts, await *his* signals, use *his* telescope and sextant, and steer by *his* compass. While they diligently handle the cable, the rigging, the sail, the rudder, they look in all emergencies for their great Leader’s prompt and efficient succour; remembering with grateful wonder the pledges of His power and kindness, mindful that He braved of old the direst storms, and stemmed the darkest floods on their behalf. In Him, though He seem distant, they confide, assured that, in all their exigencies, He will steer the lifeboat, and command the rescue.

This less numerous fleet—increasing and reinforced, we trust, notwithstanding too many desertions,—has in it great varieties also, from the rude barge to the royal steam-yacht; from the most primitive birch canoe to the steel-clad ship of defence. True, we have not all the classes. No pirates or privateers really belong to us; though, unhappily, some such are among

us sailing under false colours, who have proved, that however built and decorated, and whatever ensign they may hoist, they are really in the service of the common enemy.

But we have, in the department of *commerce*, enlarged and elevated minds—such as was a Thornton, who

“ Make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
A stream of liberal and heroic deeds.”

They may be represented by their own noble ships ; often so freighted, likewise, as to aid directly the efforts of Christian philanthropy. Nor must we neglect or undervalue the simple fishing-boats, emblems of that lowly industry, where honest godliness may ply the oar and cast the net, remembering the homely labours of those who were made also “ fishers of men.”

We have our *pilot*-boats of different classes (would that they were more numerous) in those of our legislators and other official persons, who are governed by right principles, and truly aiming at the public weal ; and in those Christian ministers and teachers, who would faithfully guide others in the wise, happy, heavenward course. We have had some vessels of *discovery*—the late Sir Edward Parry was a memorable instance of it—where, while observing the remotest stars, sounding the deepest seas, surveying tropical or Arctic shores, still, all has been done with reverent and

filial thought of Him, who "alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves."

It is obvious that the vessels of our Christian fleet both widely differ and are widely dispersed. Many coast in shallow waters. Some traverse the fathomless ocean. The forms, the equipments, are exceedingly diverse, but all ought, in their several departments, to be vessels of help and brotherhood. The greatest may protect or succour the least; the least may sometimes supply or counsel the greatest. Let us be ready to hail a neighbour vessel kindly and genially, and even if the answer be in a foreign tongue, still make what signs and practical tokens of friendliness we may.

We all sail or steam, more or less, against wind and tide. The pirate, the privateer, the pleasure-skiff, who do not own our Commander, may drift away to leeward; but we must often face and breast opposing gales, and sometimes resort to the labouring oar, when a cheerless calm makes the sail droop uselessly.

Nor let the young mariner despise the hints of experience. Be alert and watchful to profit by the favouring breeze—

"As when a ship by skilful steersman wrought,
Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail."

Avoid, when it may be so, the headlands enveloped

in mist. How many shocks upon the breakers, and collisions with other voyagers, have arisen from not clearly discerning one's own course, or misjudging another's: and, what is worse, a disastrous collision may be the result simply of greater speed and strength. The writer was once off Flamborough Head in a very powerful steamer; the passengers were engaged in a Sunday morning service on the deck; the helmsman, although at his post, had been someway inattentive or remiss; and we discovered, suddenly, a small trading vessel almost close under our bow; by a few fathoms more of our swift movement this bark would in the contact have been inevitably sunk. Vigorous, rapid, energetic minds should, in the name of equity and charity, take heed, lest they alarm, and overbear, and run down the feebler.

Be never afraid or ashamed to raise your leader's standard in the face of the foe; yet do not ostentatiously parade it; nor even imagine the ensign itself, or the display of it, enough, without the loyalty and love of which it is but the promise or token.

Be not tempted to carry too much sail. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Lay in stores of the most useful and exchangeable ballast you can collect. A valuable solid freight may occupy no more room than mere sand or pebbles.

Mark the signals with a vigilant eye and glass, and respond to them with punctual fidelity.

Never distrust your beloved and infallible Commander, nor provoke His displeasure and rebuke.

Remember that you must expect, in common with all who navigate life's ocean, starless nights and frequent tempests ; nay, that there may be more of these allotted to you, than to those who own no commander and no discipline.

Forget not also, for it is true in regard to each and all, that on these voyages there is no anchorage. Each vessel on life's great river still unceasingly moves onward—

“ Silent and slow it glides away,
Steady and strong the current flows.”

The language quoted before, “ they are passed away as the swift ships,” or “ as ships with spread sail sweep they on,”¹ referred primarily to the days ; but how truly may it be used also of the persons to whom those days and hours momentarily belonged, as a precious loan and trust, imperceptibly expended—too often lavished—not to be renewed.

“ Like the dews on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
They are gone, and for ever.”

It is a gloomy thought, that each and all, from the

¹ Mason Good's version.

stateliest ship to the frailest boat, must alike be dismantled and fall to pieces ere long, either in actual wreck, or as being broken up because seaworthy no longer. But, then, with this great distinction or contrast, that the mutineers or disloyal will be fatally wrecked in the course which they themselves, against all wise counsel, have chosen and persevered in. It leads them to the terror and surprise of a dark, harbourless, and rock-bound coast. Their voyage is powerfully described by one of our lyric poets :

“ Fair laughs the morn and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm ;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening prey.”

But the convoy of our great Commander will be stranded only where *He* shall choose and appoint. Be they ever so little ships upon the lake, be they “vessels of bulrushes” by the great river's brink, they shall be grounded, as was the ark of the Hebrew infant, where He has ordered them to be, and where His lifeboat shall be close at hand. Or they shall be thrust into “a certain creek with a shore,” and “the prow remain unmovable, though the stern be broken by the violence of the waves.”

The ship is wrecked, the boat is staved, but there shall be no loss of life : of that life which is the true

and everlasting. The voyagers may be rescued only on planks, or on relics of the ship, yet they shall escape all safe to land. Even the fragments shall be one day reunited, to float upon the glassy deep, in "a place of broad rivers and streams;" and what is better, the vessels which have long parted company, with mournful farewells, shall be reunited too; and those which never could hail each other on the broad flood of time, shall have fraternal greetings on the boundless ocean of futurity.

Let us try to invite and win the revolted to the voluntary service of our beloved Prince and Leader. Their own service is hard and perilous, and without recompense. If they have a commander, though they may acknowledge none, it can be but the arch-pirate whose rewards are destruction. They are involved in profitless contentions and a wretched rivalry. Let us seek to win them by cordial invitation, but, above all, by making it apparent to them that ours is a cheerful, willing service; the only real freedom; that we can trust implicitly our Divine leader; and that, in our rudest storms, we can call to mind George Herbert's dream—

"An earthly globe,
On whose meridian was engraven,
These seas are tears, and heaven the haven."

II.

"EARTHEN VESSELS."

It seems a strange simile which was once used to characterise himself by the poet-king, "I am like a broken vessel." Yet we have but to remember that man's mortal frame, so "fearfully and wonderfully made," was formed by the Almighty "from the dust of the ground,"—and it will at least not surprise us, that the work of the moulder in clay should be chosen as a figure to describe him.


More than this, humanity, even in its best estate, and with its finest qualities, may fitly be compared to a *broken* vessel, inasmuch as it is fallen from its integrity, and marred by the fall. How beautiful soever the form and material, the vessel has a fracture running through it.

Be it of Bohemian glass, or Dresden china, or Italian alabaster, and in each case moulded with consummate skill, still will the shock and unsoundness be but too discoverable. Although "curiously wrought" to the highest polish and refinement, it cannot be concealed that the vase is not as it was, and not as it ought to

be—not unharmed and perfect. If, on the other hand, it be of ruder, coarser make and material, then, let it be ever so firm and solid, the fracture may but the more clearly appear. The more ordinary and strong the utensil, the more discernible those broken edges.

Yet man, though in every case but a broken vessel, is not therefore unserviceable. He is preserved and employed by God's providence in much important work, still capable of receiving valuable gifts, and of ministering to most useful ends. The vessel is cemented by the all-wise Maker's hand. When fitly joined and skilfully holden, it can convey the richest cordial, or contain precious fruits, fragrant flowers, or gold of Ophir.

The sacred writer, however, in his use of that phrase, had reference rather to a state of calamity and discouragement, in which he deemed himself, for the time, and under certain pressures of feeling, to be, as it were, a *ruined* vessel (*vas perditum*, as the Vulgate has it), cast away as useless—disqualified for service. There could not well be a greater mistake. How many a healing medicine or reviving beverage has been handed to the poor patient in a broken cup! How many a draught of the refreshing fountain has reached the thirsty pilgrim's lips in a despised potsherd, which his necessity had grasped, or which another's kindness brought. The epic poet of Italy represents the knight



Tancred as carrying his dented helmet, battered in combats, and filling it from a murmuring rill, that he might thus pour baptismal water on the dying Clorinda.

The beautiful psalm, whose author describes himself as like a broken vessel, expressed the alternations of profound trouble and of confiding faith; and itself supplied those words, doubly hallowed by the utterance of the expiring Saviour, "Into Thy hand I commit my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." And still does it yield words of comfort and encouragement to the distressed, as fresh and efficacious now as when first penned in the wilderness, or chanted on Mount Zion, almost thirty centuries ago. But if the vessel had not been so "broken," that particular treasure of admonitions would not (humanly speaking) have been collected or poured forth; whereas, notwithstanding, nay, as a fruit of the writer's adversities, it was so, and has flowed down through so many ages, in many tongues, to many and remotest nations.

Who can number the hearts that have been soothed or animated by this very effusion, by the balm which this "broken vessel" scattered through the world? "In Thee, O Jehovah, do I put my trust; for Thou art my rock and my fortress. Thou hast known my soul in adversities. My times are in Thy hand. O how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for

them that fear Thee ! Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in Jehovah."

It should not be forgotten, however, that this figure or symbol of the "earthen vessel" recalls to our view unsearchable and awful truths, concerning the sovereignty of God's providence and grace. A Hebrew prophet was instructed to procure and destroy one, as a tangible symbol, representing the fearful result of national sins. "Go, get a potter's earthen vessel, and take of the ancients of the people and of the priests, and break it in their sight; and say, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts—even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again." The comparison had been so used before: "As the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel!" And another prophet thus rebukes the impious: "Perverse as ye are, shall the potter be esteemed as the clay? shall the work say of the workman, He hath not made me?" And again: "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker, the potsherd with the moulder of the clay: shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?"¹ We know how solemnly an apostle has referred to these passages; and it ought to be remembered with reverence and awe, that the Maker of all so forms and moulds and crushes His vessels, according to His holy will.

¹ Isaiah xxix. and xlv. Lowth's version.

But then, He also "endures, with much long-suffering, the vessels of dishonour, fitted to destruction." Nay, let us rejoice in the intimation which may seem conveyed in this fact; when "the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again *another* vessel, as it seemed good to him." Few could have more the aspect of a vessel of wrath or of destruction, than the stern persecutor, breathing out threatenings on the road to Damascus; who yet was suddenly re-made a chosen vessel for his Lord, to bear His name before nations and kings, and to suffer martyrdom in His cause.

Let it be our lowly earnest ambition to be made vessels unto honour, prepared unto every good work. Let us shun all false and worthless glaze and varnish. Solomon reminds us, "As drossy silver laid upon a potsherd, so are warm lips with a wicked heart." "Literally, silver of drosses; by which is probably meant, the lead separated from silver, with which earthenwares are glazed."¹—It is far better to be thought homely earthen pitchers,² than to carry a deceptive glaze, while really valueless and rejected. One has heard of some (would that the temper were unknown, even among so-called Christians!) who, in

¹ Prov. xxvi. 23. Holden's Version and Comment. The Vulgate renders it "argentum sordidum."

² Lament. iv. 4.

reference to distinctions and contrasts of the present social state, have used the simile with self-complacent arrogance, saying of the masses—they are the crockery, we the china. Yes; but remember, as the china is ever the more delicately brittle, so likewise will its ornament and polish occasion the more humiliation or reluctance, when, ere long, it shall fall and be shattered. And how shortsightedly does that view of it (pride ruling, instead of grateful lowliness) ignore both the primæval sentence, “Dust thou—and to dust thou shalt return;” and also that symbolic act, by which are cast daily into countless tombs “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.”

There is a Jewish story, concerning the reply of Rabbi Joshua to a daughter of the emperor, who, when she taunted him with his mean appearance, referred her to the earthenware vessels in which her father kept his wines. And when, at her request, the wines were shifted into silver vessels, and then turned sour, the Rabbi fairly urged this as a new illustration of his maxim, that the plainest and humblest may preserve excellence the best.

Certainly, all thoughtful Christians will feel, even at their best estate, as prophets and apostles would were they still with us—I am like a broken vessel; though wondrously cemented and containing heavenly treasure, yet not the less conscious of utter fragility. No wonder

that, with this consciousness, St. Paul should have written, "We have this treasure in *earthen* vessels," not vessels of gold or silver, but frailer than the slightest shell,¹ which a mere touch may shatter. He had, as we cannot but have, the sure and near anticipation of that final blow which overthrows the perishable form; and although he ever longed with ardour to impart personally the treasure of God's truth, he was ever, likewise, ready for, and even desirous of, the stroke which should cast the frail vessel down, yet leave that truth in its permanence and power.

We learn from the old Greek historian, when enumerating the great tributes of silver and gold paid to Darius, that "this treasure was preserved by the king in the following manner: the metal was melted down and poured into earthen jars, which, when filled, were broken away;"² *i. e.*, the jars were broken, leaving the masses of silver and gold, to which they had given shape.

So may we say, those "earthen vessels," the apostolic men and martyrs who first conveyed the treasure of redemption to mankind, were in succession removed, many of them by violent hands "broken away;" but in their testimony, in their writings, in the power of their examples, has the massy gold remained; remained,

¹ δστρακινοῖς σκεῦεσι.

² Herodotus, Taylor's Translation, p. 237.

too, in the shapes which they had severally impressed, and has been thus transmitted down, to enrich many generations.

We may consider, also, that metals and minerals drawn from the earth may, by no great latitude of phrase, be spoken of as earthen. The gold is mingled with other dust, though separable from it; the crystal is embedded in rock or clay; even diamonds and other precious gems are found in the earth or sand. Well may we reckon on that promised transmutation, when the frail vessels of mortality, so soon to fall to pieces, shall be moulded all anew, and become vessels of gold or crystal in God's holy temple above.

It is but a poor and feeble type of that futurity, when we read, that "Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had put in the house of his gods," and Belshazzar had displayed at his idolatrous banquet; that this king also, by the hand of his treasurer, numbered them to the prince of Judah, who brought those thousands of golden vessels to adorn the reconstructed temple. A fitter emblem, in some respects, may be afforded by an incident of our own time, though connected with the works of a remote antiquity. In the ruined cities of the ancient Etruria, there have been discovered earthen vases of most exquisite workmanship, buried in sepulchres long before the Christian era. Of these a magni-

ficent collection was purchased by the late King of Prussia, and conveyed to enrich, as admirable specimens of antique art, his museum at Berlin.

How wonderful and glorious that great disinterment, when the King of kings shall collect *His* costly relics, His purchased trophies, for "our gathering together unto Him!" When each frail earthen vessel which held and communicated, in its measure, the riches of His grace—the herald of His love, whether in cottage or cathedral, in privacy or publicly—the assiduous teacher of the lambs of Christ's flock—the lowly comforter of the sick and dying—and that most "broken vessel" of all, who has testified to His mercy on the bed of weakness and anguish—shall be exhumed, each as a vessel to honour, from the tombs of earth, or their essential atoms gathered from the winds of heaven! When all which the One Oblation purchased and redeemed from ruin, shall be beautified, perhaps by angelic art, rescued from the dust of ages, borne joyfully into the great house of God, the temple and treasury on high!

Nor shall they be only beautiful externally, as adorned by Divine skill, and bearing the material resemblance and image of the Perfect, but "all glorious within," "sanctified and meet for the Master's use," not having merely an outward grace and decoration like those brittle treasures of kings, but filled and illumined

with a celestial flame, transparent to display the life-inspiring brightness of the Lord who bought them, who ransomed them from the earth's recesses and the ocean depths, to be ranged as lamps of crystal in His sanctuary, and to go out no more. Neither can the chosen vessels thus fashioned into perfectness be mute or without sound, but like the tremulous chalices of glass which are made to give forth sweet music, these, at the touch of His animating love, shall pour out harmonies, richer than the imagined music of the spheres, in adoration of Him who formed them from the dust; who, when broken and marred, deigned yet to strengthen and employ them for Himself; who at length has disinterred them from the silent darkness, fashioned them anew in perfect beauty, uplifted them to shine with His own radiance, and be fixed beside His throne.

III.

FALLS OF THE GIESSBACH.

IN a forest of the Bernese Alps (where, however, ample comforts are provided for the traveller) we were detained, by rains of the preceding evening, to pass the Sunday ; and no public worship, in any language, was within reach. The following thoughts were revolved on the mountain footpath which borders the waterfalls of the Giessbach. It were hard to imagine a more picturesque commixture of the grand and the beautiful than this scene exhibits.

A succession of leaps from the loftiest ravine of the Faulhorn, the torrent everywhere fringed by tall dark pine-trees, with smaller ones in their prime of growth, and a whole underwood of tiny saplings budding in the freshest light-green of early summer, glittering with moisture, ever bedewed with spray from the Falls—the lake of Brienz in its blue calmness seen many hundred feet below, and in new glimpses at each turn in the ascent, with another cataract rushing down the opposite mountains—altogether form one of the noblest landscapes which even the Oberland can offer. The successive waterfalls are closely approachable by a safe footway running in zigzag up through the forest. It

was formed by Johannes Kehrli, who lately died, aged eighty-three, and to whose memory a tablet is fixed on one of the rocks "as having first made these falls accessible (*zugänglich*) to the lovers of nature." Several strong, rude bridges of wood are thrown across the torrent. At one point the spectator, sheltered by an arch of overhanging rock, has the whole cataract rushing perpendicularly and closely in front of him, quite veiling the lake, the mountains, and the foliage, yet fully admitting all these on one step's change of position, by which the veil is quite and suddenly withdrawn, yet the rush and the precipitous flood still close at hand. On the topmost bridge, where the spray is most profuse, and where the fall has just issued from a dark gorge between very lofty rocks, a brilliant fragment of rainbow (*spray-bow*) wavered and glittered across the chasm beneath. At certain points the sudden vertical cataract, dashing down as into a huge cauldron, where its pent waters foam and struggle toward their next downward leap, has an almost terrific grandeur; and yet in those showers of liquid pearl, sparkling in the sunbeams, and gliding in bright waves over the rock, beauty seems to reign over the turmoil. The whole prospect has more magnificence than either pen or pallet can express.

But then,—what of all this,—if it were the mere result of some impersonal self-originated law?

The language of a German whom I met near the spot, who, in answer to some general phrase of admiration, said, "Our Lord God rejoices in these regions," [unser Herr Gott *freuet sich* an diese gegenden,] although it seemed at first hearing quaint, and almost irreverent, yet conveys a solemn truth. "Our Lord God," the all-perfect Spirit, must have all the highest and most refined emotions which a glorious spirit can possess. "When He stretched out the heavens as a curtain, and spread them out as a tent to dwell in; when He meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure; when He weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance; when He renovated the earth which had become desolate and void, 'God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.'" We read, "the Lord shall *rejoice* in His works,"¹ and the eternal Wisdom is described as "rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth." Indeed, in scenes like these we recognise irresistibly the fact, that the Creator and Upholder of all things is not sovereign and omnipotent only, but loves and rejoices over the sublime and beautiful in His own works. The Divine architect and sculptor who built the everlasting hills and carved the towering peaks, is also the heavenly painter of the vernal and autumnal forests, the harmonist of the rush-

¹ Psalm civ. 31.

ing torrent, the enchaser of its wreaths of ever-waving jewellery;—and “the Lord shall rejoice in His works.” But further, He has made them and preserves them in order that His intelligent creatures should likewise admire and rejoice. The perfect and unchangeable must have supremely rejoiced in His own perfection, even “before His works of old; when there were no created depths, no fountains abounding with water; before the mountains were settled; while as yet He had not made the earth.” But He hath since “prepared the heavens,” and “appointed the foundations of the earth,” that creatures indued with conscious life and reason might admire these works and adore their eternal Author. Of what avail would be the unconscious world of matter, however immense and multifarious its beauty or grandeur, if there were no spirits made to contemplate all these, and to ascend through them toward the incomprehensible beauty and majesty of the Supreme; that real immutable Being, of whose glory they all are but faint effluxes and shadowy types? Nor are we the only, nor in all likelihood the most numerous or most enthusiastic admirers. Who knows but that hosts of heavenly visitants look upon these scenes of our little orb as if on miniatures or photographs of the wonders which they have surveyed in the greatest?

Further, of how much less value would be this magnificent display, if it were not designed and adapted to

offer emblems, to impart lessons of spiritual truths, which essentially and deeply concern the conscious minds that gaze on it!

True, it would still be an exquisite passing show, a bright series of "dissolving views," a fleeting diorama of magical loveliness and splendour; but without profound meanings, without the promise or intimation of transcendent and durable good.

But surely it ought never for the Christian mind to be thus visionary and profitless; never thus destitute of real significance, of spiritual instructiveness and worth. Meditating on this cataract only, in its various aspects, may we not find, for instance, in its ample outflowing from age to age, in its far-sounding, ceaseless self-effusion, in its brilliant, unintermitting swiftness (petty though the type in relation to the grand reality), a beautiful symbol of Him with whom is the fountain of life; an emblem of that primal and endless emanation of His vivifying energy, by which all sentient beings live, and move, and are? ¹

Again, and in a more exalted and inestimable sense, are we not taught and invited by the oracles of God to look upon this pure and lucid element, especially when

1 " — Fount of all
Which below we fountains call!
Unimagin'd beauty's well,
Deep of deeps unsearchable!"

SYNESIUS.

it takes the form of gushing and diffusive fountains, as eminently typical of that Divine and spiritual boon which our heavenly Father—through the beloved Son—has promised to confer! Thus writes the most evangelic of the prophets: “O every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;” and “with joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation.” “In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.” “I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit on thy progeny, my blessing on thine offspring.” So spoke our Saviour to the Samaritan, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of water, springing up unto everlasting life.” And still from His throne of glory He proclaims, “Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

It is true there are many displays of this element, in its state of rapid and tumultuous movement, far more gigantic and overpowering than that which suggests our present thoughts; such as the great Rhine-fall, the stupendous Norwegian torrent of the Voring-foss, the mighty flood which thunders at Niagara, the terrible cataracts of the Amoor in Eastern Asia.

But such vast displays seem adapted rather to be images of Divine Omnipotence, as acting ever through

the material and intellectual universe; while falls, such as this of the Giessbach, more aptly typify those springs of grace, which renovate and refresh the spiritual Israel; resembling the torrent which burst from the smitten rock in Horeb, which suddenly allayed at Rephidim the thirst of a pilgrim nation, and was to them a declared type of spiritual benediction; "for they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them," (followed them by the clear and abounding torrent, which still outbursting from it, flowed with them in their onward journeying,) "and that rock was Christ."¹ It symbolised those spiritual graces, which to the devout among them, the "Israelites indeed," were already, in a measure, imparted, through the mediation of Messiah to come. And this spiritual stream grew ampler and more copious far, when the Saviour had Himself appeared, had poured forth His atoning life-blood on the holy mount; and by those mystic drops evoked, as it were, the full outflow of heavenly refreshing, the healing flood which should suffice for all the thirsty nations, and quench the spiritual need which His grace alone can satisfy. "The Holy Ghost" (we read) "had not yet been given" (so copiously and signally), "because Jesus was not yet glorified;" but when He had accomplished the triumph of self-immolating love, then did He send forth the promised Comforter; then flowed

¹ 1 Cor. x. 4.

forth, in unrestricted fulness, the waters of the sanctuary, when "He had led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

How is it that we believe (it can be but with feeble faith) in these grandest of objects—in the infinite and unceasing agency of the Most High, in the special influence of the Eternal Spirit, in the redeeming self-abasement and victory of the Son of God—and yet sometimes forget, or be almost indifferent to these: absorbed in worldly cares or trifles, perplexed by worldly annoyances! It is much as if one ascending toward the source of a majestic cataract, should occupy himself merely with the wild flower or mountain strawberry which invites his hand, or strive with the bramble which entangles or checks his foot. That traveller, we at once feel, is worthiest of the scene, who fixes his eye and mind most devoutly on the noblest objects; nay, who sometimes goes apart under the sheltering arch of moveless rock, behind the ever-rushing fall, to exclude from view all earth for a season, shutting out by that flowing veil, "dark with excessive bright," the forest and the lake, the mountains and the sky.

So should the Christian pilgrim endeavour, screened as it were in the rock-clift, kneeling in the shadow of the Rock of ages, to hide himself from the world for a season, and seclude the world from him, behind the

plenitude and affluence of His perfections, who creates and sustains, who redeems and glorifies.

Yet further, these magnificent falls may symbolise, not only the perpetual Divine energy, and the more special heavenly influences, but afford emblems also (indeed, no image is more familiar) of the fleeting, restless, mutable life of man.

The great cataract has its minute diverging rills, which part from the main torrent and flow in separate-ness over ledges of the rock, or between its crevices, in little channels of their own. Such tiny rills are apt figures of our little life, the brief individual course which each fulfils below; sometimes gliding onward like a silvery thread, or winding smoothly between the mossy stones; sometimes repelled and scattered by a granite barrier, forced into eddies, struggling in a troublous current toward the goal.

But as the bow of promise, although wavering and broken, gleamed with its brilliant hues over the huge cascade while I gazed upon it, even where its tossed waters threw their farthest clouds of spray, so, if God grant us an increase of faith, shall the promises of His better covenant gild the darkest moments of our course, and the least as well as the broadest current be shone upon with manifold and varying tints from the "Brightness of His glory."

But we must revert for an instant to the wider

scenery that borders these falls: the beautiful and picturesque forest, chiefly of pines, though other trees are intermingled, which richly clothes the surrounding steeps, even close on the edge of the waterfall. Many, as has been said, are in their full and lofty growth, laden with cones; many more in their greenest infancy; but some have fallen in the winters' storms, and lie prostrate and decaying. One recalls the psalmist's image, "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord: he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers;" and the prophet's similar strain, "Blessed the man who trusteth in Jehovah; he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river;" and the reviving promise which another prophet utters, "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree." Indeed, the view of these clusters of young pines, many of them small and tender, while beautifully green and upshooting toward the sky, may well remind us of the assurance, "They that are planted in the house of Jehovah shall flourish in the courts of our God;" for more truly may one say of these, than the patriarch of the stones which were his pillow, This is none other but the House of God. As our Divine teacher said of the lilies, "Solomon was not arrayed like one of these," so we may affirm of this

vast fane amidst the mountains, whose walls are massy rocks, whose roof the dark blue sky, whose choir the far resounding waters—verily, the temple of Solomon in all its splendour was not adorned like these monuments of Him from whom all glory comes. The plants which His creative hand has planted here, do not depend on variable and fitting raindrops, but are ever watered from the spray of the unfailing torrent close to which they spring, and whence they gather verdure; so that each may seem to say rejoicingly, “I am a green fir-tree,” and the voice of the cataract to respond, “From me is thy fruit found.”

So should we ever and fervently implore, that we and each of ours may be planted, and transplanted spiritually, closer and yet closer to the Fountain of life; not dependent (so to speak) on the casual showers, or empty shining vapours, or errant waterless clouds¹ of worldly wisdom, but bedewed and fertilized by the perennial source. He whose voice is “as the voice of many waters,” evermore reminds us, “From *Me* is thy fruit found;” and, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” May we in true and happy humility acknowledge the claim, and seek, by growing in every grace, to fulfil, according to our little strength, the sacred obligation.

But yonder fallen and prostrate pines utter their

¹ νεφέλαι άνδροι.

lessons also. This was a straight, bright, verdant sapling once ; but slow decay mined at the root, or a sudden flash smote and rent it, or it bent to the tempest, and because not firmly enough rooted on the rock, fell suddenly, even in its prime, and lies a hopeless ruin. Others, too, of sounder strength and deeper root, which withstood the Alpine blasts of centuries, at length, from mere old age, have dropt under their snowy burden ; and “if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be.” Who, even in blooming youth, or vigorous manhood, still more in drooping age, ought not to read a pensive memento in those falls ?

But still, the overthrow of these giants of the forest is not the true image of the Christian’s closing day ; rather, in some sense, a contrast to it ; typifying much more aptly the fall of those, who have rejected the counsel and the promise of Jehovah. So, indeed, an inspired pen has employed the figure. “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree ; yet he passed away, and lo, he was not : yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.” Let us seek the emblem of the believer’s departure in the waterfall itself, descending to the unruffled lake, its troubled waters still sparkling in the sunset, then mingling with the calm expanse, there first and thenceforth to reflect the glorious mountains and the roseate sky.

So be it our supplication and our trust that millions of the petty rivulets of our brief mortality, purified and illumined by the Sun of righteousness, as they sink tremblingly into the glassy deep, may rise as bright waves in that multitudinous ocean which gladdens the immortal shore.

There is a circumstance connected with these falls of the Giessbach, which though foreign to their natural scenery—only superadded at certain times by art—yet seems adapted to suggest Christian and instructive thoughts.

It is the custom on stated evenings (or on others by express request) to illuminate the waterfalls. Brightly coloured lamps are conveyed to the different points of close access, even those highest up in the forest, the brilliant light of which is thus reflected in the several cascades. Especially at that point already mentioned, where, under a canopy of rock, the spectator stood behind the torrent, powerful red lights are placed, to illuminate that part of it with a crimson glow. These coloured lights are also changed; in order, by different hues, to vary the effect; which is no doubt singular and beautiful.

It is, however, not only very transient, but, by its artificial character, seems discordant with the scene. One feels it almost an affront, or at the best a triviality, to attempt the decoration of what is worthy only to be

illuminated by the quivering moon-beams, or by the flashes of the storm.

Such an employ of art brings to mind our great poet's words—

“ To gild refinèd gold, to paint the lily,
 To throw a pèrfume on the violet,
 To smoothe the ice, or add another hue
 Unto the rainbow.”

It must impress also afresh on the thoughtful observer that familiar truth—how petty and transitory are the gaudy shows, and even most gorgeous pomps of man's device, as compared with the perennial grandeur, and sublime simplicity, of the works of God!

It were well besides if it should more indirectly suggest to some minds, how deceptive and dramatic are the exhibitions of a costly religious ceremonial; its tapers and flambeaux; its incense and orchestra; its intonings, vestments, and processions, as adornments for the pure transparent majesty of heavenly truth and heart-felt adoration.

While surprised and affected by the splendour of such artificial displays, the most genuine taste in the one case, the most genuine piety in the other, will delight to return to the unembellished beauty which is permanent and real.

I hazard one other suggestion, in connexion with that vanishing illumination. A great prophet, whose

words were austere and not imaginative, did not hesitate to set forth the grand judicial act of God under a very homely figure drawn from the rural arts of man. "His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His floor, and will gather the wheat into the garner." So need not we scruple to let the crimson brightness which art has shed across the cataract, be suggestive of that wonder which so transcends both art and nature, the outpouring of that priceless stream which flowed upon the awful mount; which tinges with its sacred glow "the still waters" of Christian consolation, nay, the most impetuous gush of Christian sorrows. That crimson stream, to the believer's eye, gleams like a bow of promise over all the effluence of spiritual supplies; and sometimes, if but transiently and fitfully, yet gloriously, amidst the gloom and terror of the final storm. Like the peaks of an Alpine range, it brightens at the sunset, and sheds abroad its ruddy light while heart and flesh are failing. It bids the worn pilgrim, sinking to his rest, still whisper, if with faltering accents, "at evening time it is light." "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation: which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

IV.

THE LAMPLIGHT OF SCRIPTURE.

WHEN the Psalmist wrote, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,"¹ and when Solomon penned his proverb, "The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light,"² each writer seems to have employed, in both clauses, the one simile of *lamplight*. One might indeed devise and affix a different meaning; namely, that the word "light," in each second clause, refers to *sunlight*, and thus intimates that clearer and *growing* illumination which may be expected from the continued earnest study of Holy Scripture. That hope is, indeed, quite just, and highly valuable; but it does not appear to be, in those passages, suggested. There is no ground to believe that sunlight was intended.

The word rendered "light" is applied in the Hebrew (as in English) to that of a lamp or candle, as well as of the sun. Thus we read, "I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the *light* of the *candle* (lamp);"³ and Job tells of "the days when God preserved me,

¹ Ps. cxix. 105.

² Prov. vi. 23.

³ Jerem. xxv. 10 (אור נר).



when His candle (or *lamp*) shined upon my head, and by His *light* I walked through darkness." ¹ It is well known, also, that the poetical parts of the Old Testament abound in what Dr. Lowth has termed "synonymous parallels;" *i.e.* passages in which a second clause repeats, with some variation of phrase, the meaning of the former. The 114th Psalm, throughout, affords a complete specimen of this. So the commencement of Isaiah lx. "Arise, shine," &c.

There is an instance of such synonymous parallelism, or duplication, in Job xviii. 5, 6, where the phrases also happen further to illustrate that sense of the word *light*, which has been supposed in the passages first-named.

"The *light* of the wicked shall be put out,
And the spark of his *fire* shall not shine.
The *light* shall be dark in his tent,
And his *lamp* shall be put out with him."

Here, as in the former passages, we have synonymous parallels; one clause speaking of the *lamp with its light*, the other, of the *light within the lamp*; and in the

¹ Job xxix. 3, more literally, "when He caused His lamp (נר) to shine upon my head, and by His light (אור) I traversed the darkness." Dr. Mason Good supposes a reference to the mode by which palaces were anciently illuminated, and quotes Lucretius—

"Si non aurea sunt juvenum simulacra per sedes,
Lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris," &c.

texts cited at the beginning,¹ that figure of lamplight, while it obviously presents the *general* lesson that God's Word is given and adapted to enlighten and to guide us, will be found to involve some more *specific* aspects of such admonition. If reflection may unfold to us latent appositeness and wealth in a brief and simple passage, this both argues the Divine origin of the Book, and encourages investigation in order diligently to sift its treasures. It is well if (to use Luther's homely figure in his "Table Talk") we can shake a branch in the forest of Scripture, and find some fruits among the leaves, which had as yet, at least by us, been unobserved.

The figure now adverted to fully implies, and ought impressively to remind us, that, without revealed truth, we are, as it respects whatever should interest us most, both in past and future events, and all spiritual concernments, in a state of unrelieved darkness. What need of lamplight if we dwelt in *sunshine*, or even in the light of a cloudy day, or of a full and brilliant moon? In darkness only is lamplight requisite and useful.

Now, that we *are* in this state of darkness, mentally and spiritually—little as the thoughtless or the busy may realize it—is but too sure.

Although, within a certain range, we possess a small

¹ Ps. cxix. 105, and Prov. vi. 23.

measure of intellectual daylight (perhaps it would be more fitly called twilight, or moonlight),—beyond those limits, and in the whole region of the spiritual, we are at once confronted by utter night. The records of secular antiquity, our personal consciousness, and the confessions or avowals of modern unbelievers, agree and combine to show that it is thus :—except so far as the Word of God may enlighten us.

What, for example, without that Word, could we know of man's and of our own real origin? Absolutely nothing; while daily liable to have palmed on us fables and imaginations that are *worse* than nothing; the theories or chimeras of those who teach, that our species—this aspiring humankind—is but a slow development of transmutations, in the lapse of countless ages, from the very meanest of organised forms; and that the highest intellect, instead of being “given by the inspiration of the Almighty,” sprang merely from subtle agencies of matter.

What, either, without the Lamp of God, do we know concerning man's futurity?—whether he shall have a conscious life after death, or whether his sorely humiliating and repulsive dissolution shall be, like that of the lowest forms of vitality from which they conjecture that his own arose, the entire destruction of conscious existence. And if perchance he be to “live again,” what know we, apart from the light of God's

Word, as to whether that new life shall be better, more exalted, more felicitous, than this—or whether it shall not, on the contrary, involve degradation and suffering?

Again, with respect to that weightiest of all inquiries, the character and will of the First Cause, or Supreme Intelligence; let it be granted that we may learn, from all in earth or heaven, much of unbounded power and wisdom, and even of Divine goodness; still, amidst so many terrific marks and tokens of severity, such wide and inflexible general laws, such aboundings of moral and penal evil, what in nature could assure us that the Deity would be favourable and gracious to *ourselves*? Taught by an inward witness, and sometimes by the judgment and reproof of our fellow-men, that we have often transgressed the laws written in the heart, how do we ascertain that those laws will not necessarily have their rigorous issues, their grievous irremediable results?

Here is a spiritual “darkness that may be felt;” which no natural and external radiance, no inward beam of genius, no lights of secular history nor ancient wisdom of this world, no growth and splendour of modern science, have at all dispelled. It is dense alike between the tropics and at the poles; in the highest stages of refinement as in the lowest grades of barbarism.

Have we no *need* then of the “*lamp-light*” of God?—

The figure appears specially appropriate to remind

us, that while the light of Scriptural revelation is a directive and sufficing light, it is yet very *partial* and *limited*; and this aspect of the comparison may, we think, be fairly illustrated, by supposing the lamp to be used in that situation where lamps are above all and at *all* hours requisite; that is, in a cave or cavern. And in truth, even as to *bodily* position—though we are, through a great portion of our time, in sunlight—where are we in reality but in the cave of boundless space, rolling with the little orb we dwell upon, through a circuit comparatively narrow, amidst the illimitable cave's mysterious immensity? The sun, which makes daylight in our portion of the cave and around our horizon, what is it but what poets have named it, the great lamp of day? and what the moon but the lesser lamp of night? Thus, indeed, we almost literally read in the first book of Scripture, "God made two great *light-bearers* or *luminaries*;"¹ which is the very office and description of a lamp. And when both those light-bearers or luminaries are hidden from our view, then is the vast cave or concave wholly dark; veiled oftentimes by a canopy of vapour, adorned at other times with a display of twinkling stars, which indeed richly decorate, yet most faintly illumine, its unmeasured abysses.

¹ Genesis i. 14—16. The same Hebrew word is used for a lamp ("oil for the light," or lamp), Exod. xxv. 6; Numb. iv. 16.

While thus our present earthly condition is really that of travellers in an obscure immeasurable cavern, whose heights and depths not even telescopic power can reach,—so may our spiritual state be not less aptly described as that of pilgrims through a dark and lofty cave, whose far-reaching recesses no mental vision can explore. But a cave which is within the earth, and which has solid boundaries, is a more distinct and definite object to our imagination than the unbounded concave of the visible heavens. We have such caves, and some of no small dimensions, in our own island. But one of far vaster extent is found in North America—the great Kentucky cavern—where travellers with their guides, provided with lamps or torches, advance for miles in a dark hollow subterranean region. No doubt in every such case the lamp casts some beams upward toward the highest elevations of the rocky roof, as well as downward on the rugged path, with its windings, and sideways also on the bordering hazards or obstructions. But the upward beams have their chief utility as showing certain marks,¹ traced or traceable on the nearer walls or lower arches of the cave, to prevent perilous errors or wanderings; not so much, nay, scarcely at all, in illuminating those remoter and hidden distances in which a faint light must be wholly

¹ Arrow marks were found everywhere (as indicators) in the Catacombs of Paris; which are now closed.

ineffectual. The traveller in such a scene does not *expect* to discern clearly the concave above his path, nor the course and depths of the torrents which may rush on either hand.

So the spiritual pilgrim, though furnished with the invaluable lamp of God's Holy Word, can no way expect the whole sphere of truth, above and beneath and around him, to be rendered by it discernible and luminous; to discover and penetrate by this lamplight "the secret things which belong unto God." The questions of Zophar may suffice to rebuke such a desire, "The height of heaven—how canst thou know? The depth below the grave—how canst thou understand?"¹ The explorer must be content to discern those prominences or way-marks, above and around, which will best help to direct and preserve him in the narrow but more fully enlightened path before him, or to reclaim him from erring steps when he has begun to go astray. If the great transatlantic caverns, or even the much lesser caves of our own land, have dark heights and hollow nooks or chasms which no lamp can illuminate, why should we wonder or despond because Scripture casts no full light on the mysteries of God's spiritual universe and sublime administration? It is not said, "Thy Word is a lamp" to gratify prying or perplexed

¹ Job xi. 8. Mason Good's version.

of ambitious curiosity. but "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path."

Further,—We may be reminded from the figure thus employed, that *scriptural* light (made availing by Divine influence, "enlightening the eyes") is abundantly more adapted, in *kind*, to our spiritual position and necessities, than any merely natural light of reason or conscience alone.

This, indeed, may seem little more than to speak, in another form, of that spiritual darkness never dispelled by worldly wisdom, which was treated of before. But still, the supposition lately dwelt on—that of darkness within a cave—may render the need of a different *kind* of light more evident.

Persons who are brought—by their fault, or their calamity, or their calling—to sojourn in caves, mines, or tunnels, have found that mere *daylight* cannot suffice in the situation where they are. The scanty rays of pale dim day, even at noon, which can descend through the crevices and fissures of the roof, or at the chief entrances, or by what are called shafts in the tunnel, are of the wrong sort to disperse or overcome the local shade.

They want that concentrated *firelight* which we call artificial, but which is as really *God's* light as His sunbeams are: created and sustained by Him, although often instrumentally kindled or elicited by man; that

light which is darted in the tempest flash, and stored in the volcanic crater, but which is also treasured in the flinty rock, and in the combustible relics of primeval forests, whose products kindle our tapers, and enlighten and warm our hearths.

So the spiritual pilgrim of the cave cannot be cheered or guided by those cold beams of sunless day which may find entrance there—the chill and wavering lights of “the wise and disputers of this world;” he needs and he welcomes the sacred lamp of Scripture, with its warm and vital flame, quickened by gracious inbreathings from that Holy Spirit who wakened it at first, and can reanimate it when it falters.

And we may add—for it seems right to accept and use those developments and enhancements of the original which our own age affords—that, in these latter times, the fixed and uninterrupted *ministration* of scriptural truth—the stated opportunities for its public exposition and for peaceful meditation on it—may be compared to stationary lamps set up at intervals in the dark path, where, by many jets shedding forth their united flame, the light and warmth of scriptural instruction are at once concentrated and diffused. May we be grateful, both for the portable, and for the public and stationary lamplight, of the word of grace.

Again,—it seems peculiarly important, in our day, to consider that the light of revelation, like lamp-

light, is only then *secure* when it is inclosed in its proper vehicle. True, the lights sheltered within the tabernacle or temple may have burned unchanged and steadily, without such a preservative ; but the light borne by the traveller requires to be screened and preserved by glass or horn, vellum or paper. We have learned, probably from the ingenious Chinese, to use sometimes the last-named substance. The play on words here may seem quaint or childish ; but it at least serves to suggest and recall the obvious but very weighty fact, that only by parchments or papers could the light of Divine truth be securely guarded, and transmitted from age to age. These lamps for the light, these vehicles and defences for the precious truth, have happily been multiplied and cheapened exceedingly. If the sacred light had not been thus guarded, but carried only in the minds and lips of men, how certain are we from experience that it would have been tossed and blown about by "every wind of doctrine," or so dimmed by the damps and vapours of the cavern as to lose both its steadfastness and lustre, thus becoming, if not wholly extinct, at best a variable and smoky flame, unavailing to save the pilgrim from false perilous steps ? Yet we have those around us who affirm that this lamplight of Scripture cannot suffice to guide our feet without the added tapers of tradition ; or, perhaps it should be rather said, who pronounce it quite needful to *inclose*

the Scripture lamp *itself*, and make it safe by the encircling stained glass of patristic and mediæval learning. But by this, however tasteful or venerable, or effective and rich in tints, we have seen that the pure and simple light of God's Word may be at once deceptively coloured and hurtfully obscured. We see meanwhile that the grand Papal lantern, with its far more gorgeous envelopments and appendages, utterly scorns and strikingly outglitters each partial imitation.

We decline those showy and competitive safeguards for the light of God's truth, and hold fast the primitive lamp of Scripture (which we deem the true spiritual safety-lamp) as our surer and unchanging guide.

Yet let it be well pondered,—That this holy lamp itself, in order to afford real guidance, must be *rightly* held and used—applied, with a sincere and serious aim, to our personal direction. If the pilgrim in a cavern carelessly or proudly carry his lamp behind him, or beneath his cloak, or even, at certain dangerous passes or doubtful turnings, omit to lift it up or move it from side to side that he may descry what is around, or if he do not very attentively point it to shine before his *feet* and be a lamp to his *path*, it is manifest that the light cannot be to him, then and so far, of practical use and service.

The writer once visited, in an Irish town (Nenagh), an aged Roman Catholic, who produced to him a Bible ;

but from so very high a shelf, and so encased in unshaken dust, that, too obviously, the "lamp" had been treated as though it had no light to yield. We fear the Bibles of not a few Protestants might tell a similar tale.

It is true we have known happy Christians, often lowly and distressed, who bore very much of God's Word engraven in their memories and their hearts, and might be thus said in some sense to carry the "lamp-light" *within* them. This, however, implies much previous earnest study of the written word; and even then, few comparatively can so hold its contents in remembrance as to be greatly independent of its present aid. Unless we revolve its real import, and with close self-application, we neglect the light which God has given; and if it be presumptuous not to prize and use, still more to cast away and reject it.

The holy "lamp" which scorners affect to despise, refusing to look on the perfection and bliss which it reveals, yet gives, in spite of them, some glimpses to themselves of an "outer darkness" and a lurid flame; and the half-stifled whispers of conscience respond to those funereal visions. If it was unhappy, even in the ages *before* Christ's coming, to reject the fainter lamp-light of revealed truth, as those did who asked, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" much more now, when the "light" has so ~~grown~~ grown in brightness, when the "lamp" is so enlarged,

when the rejection involves contempt of that Divine Enlightener who "was manifest in the flesh." We are to remember that the whole written word is but the efflux and utterance of that eternal, *living*, and creative Word, whose advent is its most marvellous and leading topic, first as an event foretold, then as a fact recorded. The lamplight of Scripture is but the reflected exhibition to our faith of this "great mystery of godliness;" while the manifestation of the Eternal Word is the original and essential "Brightness." If we give not our allegiance and devotion to Him, we reject the All-glorious and All-gracious, the Divine Forerunner, who for our sakes traversed all the dark cave of mortality and suffering. While if we are His, and abide in Him, His spiritual presence, even feebly realised by faith, casts a gleam of heaven's radiance through the dubious and sometimes dreary way.

It is, however, an affecting and awful thought,—That ere we can emerge and issue from the cave, a solemn and lonely transit awaits us all. Caverns often have in them dark-flowing rivers. In that of the Peak in Derbyshire, the traveller is ferried over a narrow brook. In the Speedwell mine, of the same county, there is a lengthened stream to navigate, and a waterfall beyond.

Well do we know, but often too faintly realise, that at the end of our spirit's pilgrimage rolls the chill dark

river, into which each must plunge alone—no fancied bark of mythology can waft us over. The sceptic Hume could, even in his last hours, jestingly allude to that classic fable ; but while he put on smiles amidst the negation of hope, the rude stern wave swept off the doubter, his tongue grew mute, and the hand, whose keen pen had laboured to blot or cancel the best hopes of others, became cold and powerless. It could not reveal one secret of the whelming torrent, or of the eternal shore.

Some of us, too, are near the brink. Soon we must be immersed in the chilling, lonely stream ; but if our great Leader awaits us, we need not hopelessly shudder at its touch, since He, the meek but heroic Cross-bearer, faced all its waves for us, and meets us there as the Lamp-bearer of immortality, holding “the seven stars in His right hand.”

He greets those who have been planted in the likeness of His death, and shall clothe them, after their ascent from the gloomy stream, in the white raiment of their risen Lord.

Or what if (as some devout men expect) this Lord and Deliverer shall suddenly—even before some of us cross the stream of death—appear in His new majestic Advent ? What if the hour be at hand when He shall shake the vast concave of these solar heavens with the shout of His angelic retinue ? What if some of the young

shall "*not* sleep," but, being miraculously "changed," shall enter, without passing the dark flood, into His immediate presence?

The mere *possibility* of this forms but a further argument for holding the lamp of heavenly truth with firmer grasp; for having "our loins girded and our lamps burning;" for being always in posture and in spirit as those who wait for their Lord.

In any case, even if we sometimes walk tremblingly, or are "ready to halt," although clasping that lamp of God's truth whose light is so precious, still let us patiently and confidently wait for a celestial sunlight; nay, for far more than sunlight, since prophecy has taught us, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, but *Jehovah* shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." And the concluding lines of the latest revelation confirm that cheering prediction: "I saw," writes the beloved disciple, "the city had no need of the sun, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof;" and "they shall see His face"—"and there shall be no night there."

One sun, as was remarked before, is the great "Light-bearer" in this expanse of heaven. But, as the devout Ken sings in a midnight hymn—

"The sun at his meridian height,
Is very darkness in Thy sight;"

and as Augustine said long before, "Compared with-

that supreme brightness, it must not be called light, but night."

How infinitely superior the unchanging glory of that Divine Enlightener, in whom "is no darkness at all!" Darkness, and woe, and death, must shrink and fly away before the uncreated effulgence; and, awful though it be, it can be no scorching, blinding, insufferable light, for it is the smile of loving-kindness from the Most Holy and Most High, who is love as well as light, who "telleteth the number of the stars, but who healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds."

How can we, who are still treading the dangerous road through this terrestrial cavern, conceive of that ascending and unending path which the Saviour's glory illuminates, beaming forth goodness, purity, and joy, on the redeemed multitude, whom none can number!

If we have thought of this, if we have expected this, is it not with thoughts too languid, with faith too wavering? We have not, indeed, cast away, nor wholly neglected, the lamp of God; yet have we not too often compassed ourselves with sparks of our own, or of some frail fellow-mortal's kindling, and so almost forgotten for a season the changeless lamp of truth which only God can preserve in brightness to us?

We should watch against preferences for the sparks of earthly fancy, which may war with our supreme love

and reverence for the light from heaven. Meantime, let us not despond at the defects of faith, or the feebleness of hope.

He who causes the minute orb of the human eye to reflect an immeasurable hemisphere, and discern worlds whose distances no astronomer has measured, can assuredly cause one ray from His lamp of Scripture to open visions of that beatific light which emanates from His throne. He has power to bring the weak and weary into more close Divine communion with "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb," so that we may exult in having passed out of darkness into the glowing lustre of the Infinite, and feel that while His Word was "a lamp to our feet," His paternal and immediate presence sheds a bright fervour which no created luminary ever vied with, and bestows joys that transcend a seraph's thought!

V.

“PEARLS.”

THE figure used by our Divine Teacher, where human passions and pursuits are typified by the merchant seeking goodly pearls, has in it a more far-reaching aptness than may at first be obvious. The phrases are more widely allusive than they appear to be. The figure, no doubt, is specially oriental ; yet it suits all places and all time. All, even of the highest ranks, are in a certain sense merchants, however some may resent the application of the term to themselves. If there be ground for the demarcation, conventional in our land, that a merchant is only he who sells or barter things material and tangible, even this line includes some who would shrink from it. Some of our nobles sell their own lead, copper, or coals. But besides this, it may be affirmed that the soldier, the “wrangler,” the law student, the author, all exchange, as truly as the peasant, their best possessions—health, time, strength, skill—for advancement and honour, if not for emolument. And they may be fairly said to be “in quest of pearls.”

For pearls, like other jewels, are emblems and tokens of wealth, honour, luxury. He, whose chief aim is to

be rich, would prefer to exchange his gold for fine pearls, if the investment were as good for its safe and negotiable character, as it is for its very small bulk. The persecuted and itinerant Hebrew finds it, for him, the most secure, as being most easy to hide and to transport. He, on the other hand, who delights "to covet honour," may be fairly said, in metaphor, to seek "fine pearls;" for the fine pearl is a chosen symbol of rank, and even of royalty, decorating the coronet and crown. And he who competes for learning and its successes, seeks the finest pearl the *world* can give; not, perhaps, the largest or of the most golden tinge, but like the "wondrous" one (belonging to the Prince of Mascaté), which old Tavernier describes as "the most marvellous in the world, so clear and transparent that you might almost see through it."¹ The classes who are devoted to pleasures and display may be said, also, to intend the quest of pearls, though with less of toil, except so far as the Latin poet's adage may be true—"pleasure itself is labour." Allurement and glitter invite them, but their pearls are like those which the same merchant calls—"fit for little else than to powder."²

In these pursuits, they who are eagerly zealous may be likened to the pearl-divers of Ceylon, or of the Persian Gulf; resembling them by a sort of self-

¹ Tavernier's Travels in India, b. II. c. xvii. p. 145. ² *Ib.* p. 147.

baptism in the sea of worldly life, diving for its gains, some of accumulation, some of decoration, some of research, some of sumptuousness ; and, sometimes, like them in being quite breathless, amidst and after their efforts.

Many, indeed, can hardly be said to seek pearls, but dive more childishly—perhaps not less earnestly—for coral, or shining pebble. But one passion, frequently, does not exclude another. Some dive, with various aims, together, or at different times. Even Julius Cæsar, whose ruling passion was the love of victory and of sway, combined with this the strong desire of wealth and of ornamental luxury ; for we read that “he sought Britain (as a conquest) in the hope of pearls, which he was wont to examine in his hand, comparing their size and weight.”¹ And on his return to Rome he dedicated a breastplate, inlaid with British pearls, in the temple of Venus, as the first-fruits of his pearl-harvest. The pearls were little idols of his own covetousness, and baits to stimulate the cupidity of Rome. The great idol, too, seemed rightly chosen by one of the most licentious, as well as ambitious, of rulers. The effects of such passions and efforts are often more fatal than those which attend the labour of the pearl-diver. This latter is, indeed, violently exhausted for a time by his task ; but the votaries

¹ Sueton.

of ambition, covetousness, and dissipation, or even of excess in study, are often more lastingly unnerved and overthrown.

It may be said, your comparison, however, is faulty; for the merchant is not the diver. But, then, the merchant's tasks, though they may not so exhaust bodily strength, involve mental cares not less severe and hurtful. So, they who seek the pearls of riches, honours, fashion, luxury, engage their divers too. Many are laboriously ministering, often with great hardship, to their several acquisitions; but it may well be doubted whether any of these have toiled or been harmed and worn out in the pursuit, more than some of themselves.

It remains that we contemplate the case of him, who having sought the "goodly pearls" of this world, perhaps, as eagerly as any one, has unexpectedly found (not on the same world-haunted sea or coast¹) "one pearl of great price." His steps were graciously directed and

¹ The bay of Condatchy in the pearl-fishing season seems a fit image of the world's conflict and hurry. "Thousands of people of different colours, castes, occupations; the tents; the bazaars; the multitude of boats; the anxiety of their owners; the many jewellers and merchants; the unloading of oysters; the oyster lotteries; the conjurers who attend the divers; the penances inflicted; the jugglers, snake-catchers, and fakeers, whose real by-work and aim is to pilfer the traders and filch pearls"—altogether form a spectacle which is a miniature of the

sustained, up steep and rugged heights ; and there, as in a deep lake on the mountains,¹ the precious pearl was discovered. The lover and slave of this world, if his heart be touched, and his foot led upward, finds, in the upper springs, the pearl of heavenly truth and grace.

The pearl is specially and variously suitable as an emblem of the Gospel treasure. It has a splendour which, however rich and bright, is mild and serene.

It also is the customary possession and gift of sovereigns, adorning the sceptre ; dropping, as it were, from it to the favoured subject's hand.

At the risk of a quaintness or "conchetto," I add, the pearl is a singular emblem of God's grace to the fallen, inasmuch as its beauty and costliness arise out of a condition of disease. It is an instance how the author of nature many ways brings or elicits the beautiful and pure, from the very midst of disorder, decay, and death.²

grasping, fraudulent world ; while the sharks that often seize the divers, are a type of the too frequently ruinous conclusion. See Percival's Ceylon, pp. 59-70.

¹ Such as are the lakes of the Pyrenees.

² The pearl is held to arise from a malady of the oyster. And afterwards, as to the repulsive heaps of decaying oysters at Con-datchy, see *ibid.* "The shore (says Sir J. E. Tennent) is raised many feet by enormous mounds of shells, the accumulations of ages, the millions of oysters, robbed of their pearls,

It is an emblem likewise, by its portableness. The divers sometimes swallow pearls in order to concealment; the Egyptian queen is said to have dissolved them in a luxurious beverage.¹ So the pearl of great price (with a happy contrast of motives) is received into the soul, and borne, as it were, from the shores of time to be the aliment of heaven. Dr. South (among not a few ignoble and bitter sayings), has said well and nobly, "The pleasure of the religious is an easy and portable pleasure, such an one as he carries in his bosom, without alarming the eye or envy of the world; a man putting all his pleasures into this one is like a traveller's putting all his goods into one jewel."

When we reflect that pearls and gems are of no use but as ornaments (differing thus from the costly metals which serve to make commodious and durable utensils), it seems strange that, amidst the advance of civilisation and intelligence, their actual prices should continue so vast. True, their peculiar beauty and durability are undiminished, and besides being apparent to our eyes and experience, seem fully recognised in that Apocalypse which expatiates on them, in all their splendid variety,

having been year after year flung into heaps, that extend for many miles."—*Ceylon*, vol. ii. p. 560.

¹ "Diminutive pearls, from a lake in Ceylon, are exported to India, to be calcined for lime, which the natives affect to chew with their betel."—*Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 492.

as ornaments of the heavenly city. Yet only the permanence of human pride and selfishness,—still seeking that which, because so rare as well as beautiful, is procurable but by a very few,—can fully explain their price. If those feelings did not rule, the knowledge that pearls come from creatures of a very low grade,¹ and that diamonds under strong heat vanish into gas, one would think must lower their value. If, indeed, jewels could operate (in proportion to their size and brilliance) as amulets were once thought to do, one might well imagine their exorbitant prices; but what wearer does not feel that the richest pearl cannot soothe an aching brow, and that the Koh-i-Noor itself could not lull the bosom wrung by injustice, wounded by regret, or stung by self-reproach.

We may well speak of the worth of such things as ideal;—more truly as fantastic, or fallacious. But the pearl of great price is at once sublimely ideal (emanating from the Divine mind), and also real, because spiritual; giving peace and hope, and deep gladness, to the spirit of man within him.

The “very costly pearl” is also an emblem, though a very faint one, of God’s grace in Christ Jesus, on account of the immense actual cost of that unspeakable

¹ Not really oysters: the shell-fish producing pearls is habitually so called, but is of another genus. See Tennent, vol. ii. p. 560, note.

gift ; a *free* gift, yet purchased, not with silver or gold, or any corruptible thing, but with the marvellous and priceless oblation.

True, the "merchant" is spoken of as having "bought" his pearl. So is the Christian, in the sense of reckoning all things inconsiderable, compared with its acquisition ; but, therefore, *not* as a price or equivalent. Indeed, the pearl could not be Heaven, could not be Christ, if a sinful and weak man could, in the proper sense, *buy* it. But yet he may be, nay, must be, ready to give all he has, in testimony of the value he sets on this free gift of God.

It behoves every Christian to reflect deeply and practically, with what temper and purpose this royal and celestial gift should be received and appropriated. There should be, as was said before, a readiness at God's call to give up all else for it. The merchant is represented as selling "all that he had," all his *pearls* therefore—

"Nature must count her gold but dross,
If she would gain the heavenly land."

But we are prone—and I suppose conscious, more or less, of the proneness—to have reservations. In ordinary cases, it seems the Christian may rightly retain possession of many comforts ; but let him possess as though he possessed not, using them as loans or trusts. All are merchants, but the Christian's

merchandise is that of a steward. The pearls, be they ever so small, or only powder of pearl, are for his Lord's use ; the pearl of great price, while most precious for himself, is for his Lord's court and crown. He will never part with it, but he feels, adoringly, whence it came, by whom it was lent ; and he rejoices to solicit his fellow-men to share in it ; for the pearl beyond all price is as if a magic pearl, of which we may say,

“Tis mine, yet yours, and will be joy to thousands.”

Both for himself and them, he will strive to have it placed in a fair and valuable setting ;—earnest that the inestimable pearl of God's pardoning renovating grace, may be surrounded by the genuine gold of practical graces.

Are we professedly seeking this “pearl of great price” ? Let us beware lest we overlook it, or accept in lieu of it, its polished casket. “Mother of pearl” (conchologists, and our own eyes, tell us) is “glossy and iridescent ;” as such we may justly be pleased with it ; but we sadly trifle if we fail to consider that it is but the *vehicle*, not the *pearl*.

—Forbid that we should let slip Heaven's treasure, by caring chiefly for the eloquence of some who offer it ; and so—while the single-hearted grasp the pearl—should miss and lose it ; too preoccupied, and charmed it may be, with “the convolutions of a smooth-lipp'd shell.”

METRICAL PRAYERS, AND SACRED POEMS,

**CHIEFLY TRANSLATED OR IMITATED FROM
FOREIGN WRITERS**



METRICAL PRAYERS.

MORNING.

"Heilige Dreyfaltigkeit," &c.

I.

THANKSGIVING.

HOLY Lord, Triune Jehovah, in Thy blessed name I
rise,
Father, Son, and Spirit, sanction, with Thy grace, my
lowly sighs !
Now the scatter'd shades are flown, and the beams of
morn I see,
Let my soul, with cheerful fervour, muse on all I owe
to Thee !
Great First Cause of time and nature, Thou, my God,
art great alone ;
Thee this earth, and yon bright heavens, as their
glorious Monarch own.

Light and darkness, hours and moments, silent eve and
glittering dawn,

Hast Thou, for our use ordaining, through their heavenly
circuits drawn.

Yet how soon these senses, gently seal'd amidst the
shadowy hour,

Might have sunk in death's chill slumber, seal'd by
that mysterious power.

Or how suddenly some dear one might from earth and
time have past ;

Or the bands of wrong and rapine midnight terrors
round me cast.

But Thyself, my Guardian, deignedst, still defence and
help to give :

Thou hast watch'd my tranquil dwelling, and hast bid
my dearest live !

Yes ; that I am yet existing, is but, Lord, a loan from
Thee ;

Thou my days of life inscribest in Thy book of
destiny.

Therefore to Thy sovereign goodness I my feeble strain
will raise,

Oh ! Allwise, Alltrue, Almighty ! let my spirit speak
Thy praise !

Praise to Thee for every bounty which the vanish'd
night conferr'd—

For Thy blessings, so responsive, to the prayers Thy
mercy heard.

Thou hast quiet rest secur'd me, safe and undisturb'd
by foes ;
By Thy help in health awaking, from my tranquil couch
I rose,
To behold Thy cheering sunlight, and my friends anew
to greet ;
All, O Lord, is of Thy mercy, let my soul her thanks
repeat !
While the darkness o'er me brooded, still Thy Spirit's
light was here ;
Ne'er did Thy compassions leave me, when no human
help was near.
While unconsciousness enwrapp'd me, Thou didst all
my being guide ;
While in death's still semblance lying, Thou didst in
my breast reside.
Graciously by Thee protected, Satan's wiles in vain were
spread,
And the mischief of the wicked fell with shame upon
their head.
Now this morning hour, devoutly, shall Thy benefits
record,
And a thankful heart's oblation for Thy constant grace
afford ;
How through all life's fleeting changes, from Thy father-
hand benign,
Midst my conscious undeservings, prompt and full
supplies were mine.

How Thy power creative, rais'd me out of nothing's
blank abyss,

How Thy rescuing love redeem'd me from despair and
wrath to bliss :

How Thy renovating Spirit mov'd my fall'n perverted
will,

And to this day hath upborne me, though so prone to
error still.

All, yes all, is from Thy fulness, every good hath flow'd
from Thee :

Since I find with this new morning, all Thy gifts
renew'd to me.

Yea, myself, like new found being, life and health again
partake :

Lord, my all, a scanty offering, to Thy sovereign love I
make !

Let me now, Lord, and for ever, Thee confess, and Thee
adore,

Love and praise, and highest worship, from my lips
and heart outpour ;

Soul, and life, and all within me, to Thy service
hallowed be,

Still to celebrate Thy goodness, here and in eternity.

II.

PETITION.

YES, my Lord, Thy welcome daylight shines around me
 once again,
 But Thou knowest each day's circuit brings its destin'd
 care or pain ;
 Knowest that I still am sinful, weak, necessitous, and
 frail,
 And the allotted share of sorrow, daily must my heart
 assail.
 Therefore, O this day permit not Thy own grace to
 disappear,
 Cast me not from Thy blest presence, leave me not to
 sin and fear !
 O let not the foe of goodness, with fell might my soul
 appal,
 And with arts infernal urge me to a dire and fatal
 fall.
 Pardon that my heart hath yielded to ill thought or
 passion base ;
 Vain desires and dreams unholy let Thy light and love
 efface ;

- O permit not, sovereign Saviour, that this day which
beams on me
Should become the hapless season of a dark apostasy !
That Thy priceless grace contemning, with a hard and
blinded heart,
I should choose in awful exile from that grace and
heaven to part.
Lord, my conscience quite awaken, Thou who art the
light of men,
That no death-like sleep may seal it, while Thy day-
spring beams again.
Let me meditate no evil, nor in word or act offend,
Lest Thy wrath and sore destruction on my wayward
course attend.
Let the hour and power of darkness vanish like the
midnight gloom,
Let me ne'er Thy bounties idly or in selfish sloth
consume.
Never like a child of darkness may my soul Thy light
misuse,
Nor Thy gracious sunbeams aid me an unhallowed path
to choose.
Reckless error and disorder, deeds unchristian, words
untrue,
Put far from me ; and whatever Thou, my Lord, wilt
have me do,
Let me so commence and finish, that the circle of
this day

May not in my right vocation slothful negligence
betray.

Help me to do nought remissly, nought forgetfully
postpone,

Nought attempt inopportunely, nor to vain delays be
prone ;

Towards seductive paths of ruin suffer not my steps to
bend ;

Against men and beasts malignant, o'er me, Lord, Thy
shield extend.

If I shall, this day surviving, still on earth a pil-
grim be,

Lord, at eventide discover still Thy grace and love
to me !

Finally, remove whatever burdens or disturbs my
breast,

Graciously avert or shorten ills which this weak heart
molest ;

And if this day be my latest, let not, Lord, Thy mercies
cease,

But my closing hour make happy, and my death-bed
crown with peace !

III.

PRAYER.

FATHER, whose unfailing bounties with each daybreak
 reappear,
 To my lowly supplication now incline Thy gracious ear.
 Oh ! impart the gifts most needed through this day's
 revolving hours,
 In its various tasks, to render, unto Thee, Lord, all my
 powers.
 If it please Thee, life protracting, health and strength
 and sight preserve,
 And this feeble mind enlighten, Thee with faithfulness
 to serve.
 Grant me, Lord, Thyself revealing, light in Thine own
 light to see ;
 Like the early dews distilling, kindly pour Thy grace
 on me.
 Let my thoughts, and words, and doings, filial fear
 towards Thee express,
 And towards all my fellow-beings, equity and gentleness.
 Grant me to be faithful, upright, modest, temperate,
 and wise,
Ever circumspect and earnest to secure the immortal prize.

Heavenly Saviour, guide and guard me, that whate'er
I shall pursue,
In Thy name and strength be purpos'd all I think, and
speak, and do.
Cheer me in the weak beginnings, through each hour
Thy succour lend ;
Let the means by Thee be prosper'd, and Thy blessing
crown the end.
Give me firmness, my vocation well and truly to
fulfil,
Aims, and hours, and toils dividing, in accordance with
Thy will.
Fit occasion, Lord, vouchsafe me, for whate'er shall
best increase
Thy own praise, the weal of others, and my own essen-
tial peace.
If for good, let morning's mercies be prolong'd to even-
ing's shade ;
Still my daily bread providing, this day's efforts bless
and aid.
Make the heaviest care more easy, fears and perils turn
away ;
Let me with a patient calmness bear the burdens of
the day.
Lord Triune, myself I render, to Thy just and sovereign
claim,
All I am, possess, and hope for, spirit, soul, and earthly
frame,

Speech and silence, rest and action, take, I pray Thee,
Lord, as Thine ;
Life and death, my God, Thou rulest ;—unto Thee I
both resign.
How Thou mayst my lot determine, to Thy will I
meekly leave ;
Let me, this day and for ever, from Thy grace my all
receive.
Angel, who redeem'st from evil, let Thine eye my spirit
shield ;
From the dawn to latest shadows, strength supply and
refuge yield.
God the Father, let Thy greatness evermore my way
protect ;
God the Son, O let Thy wisdom every hour my steps
direct ;
Holy Spirit, still uphold me, by thy grace sustain,
defend,
Both in life and death my Guardian, Comforter, and
heavenly Friend.
Lord of glory, bless Thy servant ; from all ill my
shelter be ;
Let Thy beams my heart illumine, and the powers of
darkness flee.
On Thy child, restor'd, adopted, cause Thy glorious face
to shine ;
Let Thy peace, Thy full redemption, Lord, eternally
be mine !

IV.

INTERCESSION.

LOVING Father, who dost visit not alone Thy chosen
 race,
 But the thankless and the evil, with the beams of light
 and grace,
 O let each partake Thy mercy, that no human heart
 this day,
 In the direful path of ruin, may continue, Lord, to stray !
 Let all Christendom obey Thee, with new earnestness
 and zeal,
 And designs and deeds of kindness still advance the
 public weal.
 Let, within each several household, useful aims and
 ends abound,
 And the hours by none unhallow'd, to Thy rightful
 praise redound.
 Hear Thy suppliants, who, devoutly, lift to Thee their
 early prayer,
 Pity and convert the godless, who to slight Thy
 mercies dare ;
 Who the prayerless hours will lavish, without faith or
 holy fear,
 As if light and time were granted, only to be wasted here.
 These who journey guard from perils ; for the needy,
 food provide ;

Be the Helper of the friendless, be the weary pilgrim's
Guide :

Let the willing hands find labour, and their meet
requital gain :

And affliction's rising torment, for each sufferer, Lord,
restrain :

Let each one, with faithful service, his appointed work
fulfil :

With Thy blessing crown each effort to perform Thy
holy will

Those whose tasks are fraught with danger, by Thy
mighty power defend :

On each spirit sorely burden'd let reviving grace
descend.

Father, to Thy sovereign goodness, I commend all human
kind :

Those still more whom kindred, friendship, nearness,
to my spirit bind.

Yet, good Lord, the unknown, the stranger, e'en the
foe that seeks my harm,

Visit Thou with heavenly kindness, shield by Thy
protecting arm !

Guide by Thy divine compassion all with whom this
day I meet ;

Lord, throughout the wide creation, be Thy work of
love complete !

SCHEMELER.

EVENING.

“ Werde munter, mein Gemüth ! ” &c.

V.

THANKSGIVING.

YES, arouse thee, O my spirit, ere the body seeks
repose !

Once again the day hath vanish'd—once again its
labours close.

Now returns the hallowing even, and the night its
respite brings ;

Thou, my soul, art one day nearer to the term of mortal
things.

Now put off thine earthly burdens, let thy toils till
morning cease ;

Banish care ; thy Lord all-seeing, shall defend and give
thee peace.

Summon here thy thoughts devoutly, ere upon thy
couch thou rest ;

Homage pay to thy Creator, ever gracious, ever blest !

Lord, in power and truth eternal, unto Thee is change
unknown ;

No alternate light or darkness gilds or shades Thy
glorious throne.

Thy all-present age is boundless; while both day and
 night are Thine,
For Thou bidst sun, moon, and planets, in their won-
 drous orbits shine.
Thou dost guard thy children hourly, to pass through
 the fleeting day,
And dost help each hour's new labours one by one
 aside to lay:
While from Thine ordaining goodness still the solace
 we receive,
That Thy children from their toiling find a sacred pause
 at eve!
If this day in cheering progress aught my hand or
 heart hath gain'd,
All, my Lord, from Thee proceedeth—help conferr'd,
 and life sustain'd.
If in health or substance richer, to Thy blessing all I
 owe:
Whence, but from the Eternal Fountain, can the
 streams of comfort flow?
Therefore, Saviour, I adore Thee at the peaceful even-
 tide,
With my heart and lips extolling, Thee, my gracious,
 faithful Guide.
For Thy mercies are unnumber'd, and unsearchable
 Thy might,
Who hast formed the day for action, and for tranquil
 sleep the night!

What I pray'd for at the dawning, Thou didst in the
day fulfil,
Still my soul in life upholding, shielding this frail
fabric still.
Sight, and strength, and food, and shelter, all, my God,
from Thee descend ;
Health and reason, skill and welfare, on Thy power
and grace depend.
Now when on the waning daybeam, night her gather-
ing shadow throws,
Thou wilt grant me, midst Thy blessings, soon these
wearied eyes to close.
That in peace I sink to slumber, safe from peril and
alarm,
Thanks I yield to Thy compassions, which my foes and
fears disarm.
Thou hast all o'errul'd in mercy. If some cross or woe
betide,
If affliction hath assail'd me, or success hath been
denied ;
Sin deserv'd yet heavier chastening, and more length-
en'd ills to' endure ;
But Thy hand the rod hath lighten'd ; e'en hath deign'd
the wound to cure.
O my kind forbearing Saviour, still Thy kindness is the
same ;
Though too oft my soul was thankless, yet unsought
Thy bounties came ;

Oft no heartfelt prayer was offer'd, oft the call of love
 refus'd,
 Oft I griev'd Thy Holy Spirit, oft Thy benefits mis-
 us'd.
 Now for all Thy loving-kindness shall my grateful
 ardours rise ;
 Every ill Thou hast averted, every good Thy grace
 supplies,
 I will own with adoration, while I live ; and when I
 die,
 Be the grateful tribute render'd by my soul eternally !

VI

PETITION.

FATHER, in rich grace abounding, O forgive, for Jesu's
 sake,
 Whatsoe'er against conviction, or in wilful blind mis-
 take,
 Openly or in concealment, I against Thy will have
 done ;
 Look upon Thy contrite servant, through the wounds
 of Christ, Thy Son !
 Hide my trespass, Holy Saviour, whether good was
 left unwrought,
 Or, by more direct transgression, I have acted, spoken,
 thought

Against Thee, against my neighbour, or my own interior weal!

Ah, requite not those demerits! Let Thy pardoning mercies heal!

Chase, this night, all powers of darkness, from my lowly couch away;

Leave me not in guilt to slumber, bound in evil's fatal sway!

Whether sleeping, Lord, or wakeful, let not sin my soul molest,

Let not thoughts or dreams unholy, wound my conscience while I rest.

Satan, with his dark devices, from our homes and hearts exclude;

Never let that power malignant haunt our hallow'd solitude!

Save from violence and rapine, fearful storm, devouring fire;

Save from those whose night is sleepless till for mischief they conspire;

Suffer not distracting terrors to disturb the silent hour;

Lull me, O my holy Saviour, in Thine arms of love and power.

Let not, Lord, my spirit tremble, by tormenting visions scar'd;

And O let not death arrest it, unconsenting, unpar'd!

VII.

PRAYER.

HOLY Father, Son, and Spirit, be to me in mercy near ;
In Thy name, in Thine embraces, let me rest without
a fear !

Take Thy creature, blest Creator, soul and body, and
whate'er

Thy all-bounteous hand hath lent me, into Thy pro-
tecting care !

If I live, I live to Thee, Lord, for my real life Thou art ;
If I die, to Thee I die, Lord, who canst nobler life
impart !

Thine I am when death assails me, Thine when truer
life succeeds ;

Be both life and death, O Saviour, one with Him
whence life proceeds !

Help me to review the mercies through this day from
Thee receiv'd,

And to mourn for every trespass which Thy Holy
Spirit griev'd !

Has there, from my words or actions, aught of ill or
harm occur'd ?

Let Thy providence prevent, Lord, evil issues where I
err'd !

With the shield of Thy salvation, guard me through
the darkest hours ;
With Thine arm, almighty Guardian, or Thy blest
angelic powers.
Give me peaceful joyful musings, while to rest I lay
me down ;
Let unbroken sleep refresh me, and new health my
waking crown !
Grant me then a gladsome spirit, this frail body's
strength renew ;
When I quit my couch to-morrow, let what these hands
find to do,
Be begun with prayer ! And lengthen, if it please
Thee, life's brief span,
For Thy honour, for my welfare, and to serve my
brother man.
Meantime, since this life is waning, nor one coming
hour is sure,
Tell me, tell me, that Thine angel, awful Death, is at
the door ;
Be the bier, in contemplation, at my bedside nightly
set ;
Never let my soul, unwatchful, her impending change
forget !
Nay, if this same night thy envoy, shall this brittle life-
thread break,
Or my Saviour's startling advent shall the slumbering
world awake—

Cheer us with Thy smiles benignant, take us, bear us,
to be Thine !
Let the last glimpse of all earthly—be the first of all
Divine !

VIII.

INTERCESSION.

HOLY Lord, Thine Israel's Keeper, whose kind eye
can never sleep,
Guard the dearest! Through night's vigils, all their
souls in safety keep !
Yea, the whole of mortal kindred watch through dark-
ness into dawn ;
Never be Thy gaze omniscient, nor Thy sheltering arm
withdrawn !
Father, in Thy mercy, listen, where ascends the sup-
pliant cry !
Respite e'en the bold offenders who Thy sacred might
defy.
Lord, in Thy Divine forbearance, seal not yet their
fearful doom,
Who in crimes or wanton orgies shall the stilly night
consume.
Smite not yet the rash transgressor, though his madness
brave Thy frown !
Let not wrathful hate still rankle, while Thy sun goes
mildly down !

Lord, compassionate the godless, who will sink in sleep
 unbless'd,

With no sigh for grace or pardon to Thy mercy-seat
 address'd.

Make the weary strength recover, future labours to
 fulfil ;

Solace those who at the midnight, must too oft be
 toiling still !

Grant that no one through the darkness may in helpless
 misery roam !

Guide the seaman, free the bondsman, lead the way-
 worn traveller home !

O provide a timely refuge for the destitute and sad ;
Soothe and cheer the lonely widow, make the mourning
 orphan glad !

Deign to smooth the sick man's pillow, wrap the babe
 in slumbers light !

For the toss'd and restless sufferer, soften all the
 wearisome night,

Lighten every grievous burden, ease and rear the
 aching head,

And o'er gloomiest hours of anguish gleams of heavenly
 mercy shed !

Still our much-lov'd land environ ! Thy kind arm
 can shield it well ;

Plague, and dearth, and horrid warfare, from our
 favour'd coasts repel !

Fraud and murder, hate and discord, from our borders
chase afar ;
Nor let fire or flood, wide-wasting, our abodes and
harvests mar !
Give our Sovereign grace and wisdom ; and the lowliest
subjects bless ;
Grant the poor man ampler comforts ; let the wicked
cease to' oppress !
The glad news of free Redemption cause all human
hearts to own !
By Thy heralds let the Gospel soon subvert each idol's
throne ;
Till we rise from earthly darkness to yon blest eternal
shore—
Till Thy light and love o'erwhelm us, while in rapture
we adore !

SCHMOLCK.

IX.

MORNING HYMN.

“Die goldne Sonne, voll Freud und Wonne,” &c.

THE golden sun, with his gladsome wings,
 From the' orient hills forth dawning, brings
 His spirit-enlivening, loveable light ;
 My brow yet reposes, my limbs recline,
 But now shall I rise, by Thy help divine,
 And gaze on the firmament pure and bright.

Mine eye shall survey what God hath wrought,
 That He be ador'd, and we be taught
 His boundless, holy, and sovereign might ;
 And whither the just, who in grace increase,
 Shall come, when in peace, they hence de cease
 And quit the vain shadows of this world's night.

All here is fleeting, but He changeth never,
 Free from all wavering, steadfast for ever ;
 His word and will through eternity last :
 His loving-kindnesses ne'er can decay,
 Yield the heart healing, its death-pangs allay,
 Perfect its joy when the conflict is past.

Father of mercies, O pardon and spare !
All the transgressions my soul which ensnare,
Lord, from Thy record of justice efface ;
Then guide and rule me in pity most tender ;
All to my sovereign Lord I surrender,
All in Thy hand for eternity place.

Wilt Thou enrich me with comforts or wealth ?
Deepen this thought for my spirit's true health,
Thou only art greatest, and fairest, and best ;
Lord, my salvation, my refuge, my treasure,
Fountain of life and of joy without measure,
In Thee my soul must supremely be bless'd.

Wilt Thou chastise me with bitterest grief ?
Do I drink the full cup unallay'd by relief ?
Ah, Lord, ordain that which seemeth Thee good !
Thou only know'st what shall heal or shall harm,
Thy strong consolation all ills can disarm,
"The bitter is sweet, the medicine is food."

Crosses and sorrows ere long shall be ended ;
As, when fierce tempests their rage have expended,
Bursts forth the sun with its heart-cheering glow,
Fulness of joys and unchangeable rest .
Have I, laid up in the home of the blest :
Thither let hope and affection outflow !

PAUL GERHARDT.

X.

MORNING HYMN.

“ Seele, du musst Munter werden,” &c.

Soul, awake to glad emotion !
Earth and ocean
Greet the beams of new-born day.
To the Fount of all creation
Adoration
Yield as best thy frailty may !

Mark this heavenly truth unfolden
Where the golden
Light of stars in sunlight sinks.
So, to God's eternal splendour
All surrender
Which our darkness beauteous thinks !

See whate'er hath breath and liveth,
Homage giveth
To the sun's enlivening aid.
How each flower and herb invited,
Turns delighted
To his gleam which breaks the shade.

So be thou, my soul, upsoaring,
Fresh outpouring
Thy best incense ! for from night,
Through which brooded clouds of sadness,
God brings gladness
On the wings of morning light.

Pray thou mayst His potent blessing
Be possessing,
When thou wouldst some good fulfil ;
But that He may curb thee kindly,
When thou blindly
Wouldst decline to specious ill.

Think of Him, thy Judge for ever,
Absent never,
Reading all thy secret soul ;
Every stain of dark offending
Apprehending,
Cognisant of the latent whole.

To the rush of moments golden
Fast we're holden
Which sweep down our tent of clay,
And this fabric frail and mortal
To the portal
Of the cold grave bear away.

So entreat that thy departure
Be not torture,
But a soft dismissal ; pray,
Till thou see beyond earth's confine
Heavenly sunshine,
When death's gloom is past for aye !

Meanwhile God's kind glances on thee,
Put not from thee !
Whosoe'er His Grace doth hail,
Round him rays of heavenly lustre
Still shall cluster,
Making earth's poor brightness pale.

This new morn do cares oppress thee ?
Let Him bless thee
Who is as the sunbeams here ;
Which from their life-giving fountains
Gild the mountains,
Yet the deepest valleys cheer.

Round whate'er His bounties lend thee,
To defend thee
Still His fiery watch are nigh :
Till thou rise, 'mid seraph legions,
To the regions
Whence affrighted fiends must fly.

BARON VON CANITZ.

XI.

THE WATER OF LIFE.

“Wie der Hirsch nach frischen Quellen,” &c.

As the hart for limpid waters,—
 Pants for Thee my soul's desire :
 Like the swelling sails, my ardours
 Heavenward, homeward, still aspire ;
 To the realm of hallow'd gladness,
 To the Fount from Judah's Rock,
 Where the true celestial Shepherd
 Feeds and guides His happy flock.

Must it not, my soul, entrance thee,
 Where no strife the stream impedes,
 By the trees of life embosom'd,
 Welling o'er heaven's verdant meads ;
 When its crystal floods redundant,
 Which unsullied joys afford,
 Springing from Thy throne, my Saviour,
 Through Thine Eden still are pour'd.

Yes, whate'er of heavenly rapture
 On my waiting heart hath rush'd,
 Whatsoe'er, at blissful moments,
 In bright drops hath softly gush'd ;

Yonder shall flow forth o'erwhelming ;
Of true joy the unfathom'd sea,
Which, untroubled, pure, exhaustless,
Surging bears me up to Thee !

What, if misery's direst hail-storm
Smote the soul with tyrant sway !—
In you full and living current
All is whelm'd and wash'd away ;
There is soothing for all sadness,
Cure for every dark distress ;
There, of all our earthly mourning,
Comes serene forgetfulness.

Heart, my heart, how will it fare thee,
When thou meet'st that cooling wave,
From hot dust of worldly travail,
Toil-oppressèd limbs to lave ;
When, like whitest swan, slow sailing,
Thou shalt dive in heavenly blue,
When old things are pass'd and vanish'd,
And thy Lord " makes all things new " ?

Eye, mine eye, how bright thy sparkle,
Godlike-clear each hallow'd gleam,
When thine unseal'd lid shall glisten,
In that stainless wonder-stream !

In pure Siloa's deathless fountain,
Which for stars' remotest rays,
Nay, for glimpses of the Eternal,
Sharpens thine immortal gaze.

Wearied, worn, and sadden'd spirit,
Stain'd with guilt, and sin-sick still,
How, when with thy latest failing,
Shall be' extinct thy latest ill !
When, all freed from want and wailing,
Spotless as God's angels now,
From the deep of grace thou risest,
There before thy Lord to bow.

In thy healing flood I plunge me
Oftimes, like the Syrian chief,
Till all base desire is banish'd,
Till all anguish finds relief ;
Till the soul, refin'd from drosses,
With rais'd brow and buoyant wing,
Angel-pure, in stainless beauty,
From her Jordan shall upspring.

As a sea-bird from the billow,
Swift replumes her wingèd car,
And, with sunward flight upsoaring,
Liquid pearl-dust scattereth far ;

So my soul, with lowly 'elation,
Purer raptures, conquests higher,
Learn to soar in loftier ardour,
And with kinglier sweep aspire !

Lord, I pine, I pant, I languish,
Groaning for the unfetter'd life ;
Waft me, Prince of Peace and Glory,
To Thy rest, from earth's low strife.
Verily, weary of her sorrows,
Wearier of her empty glee,
Now my longing soul imploreth,—
When, Lord, wilt Thou call for me ?

KARL GEROK.

Breathes not from that land the prè sage
Of Jehovah's work divine !
'Neath their fig-trees' ample leafage
Seest thou not thy tribes recline ?

Doth not on summits of holy Moriah
Yon gorgeous temple in vision arise ?
Hear'st not from Zion the hallow'd, the regal,
Harpchords and psalmodies swell to the skies ?

Know'st not, *who*, to that fair region,
Will with boons celestial speed,
And His flock to founts of healing,
As their tender Shepherd lead ?

Ah ! have not His tidings of peace and of glory
Thy soul with departing presentiments cheer'd ;
Thou who lately the serpent of brass hast uplifted,
Seest thou not Love's banner on Golgotha rear'd ?

Faithful chief, lay down in calmness
Thy gray temples ; and be still :
What for thee was far too glorious,
Shall thy glorious Lord fulfil.

Bitter, to sink when the goal is so nigh thee,
Close by the victor's fresh garland, to fall ;
Yet sweet, in dying, thy blessed perspective,
One star, one sceptre, of mercy for all.

Must I—so to death resign me,
Ere the tasks of earth quite close ;
And surrender life's brief remnant
To that sudden chill repose ?

Yet here, from Abārim's shadowy mountains,
Grateful the perilous past I recall ;
And with exultant hope, far above sunbeams,
Soar to the Highest, "the Holiest of all."

Now, my rod, which heaven made mighty,
Must a younger champion wield ;
In the impending day of battle,
God of Israel, be their shield !

Me, though the cold shade of death shall environ,
Zion, thy bulwarks resplendently shine ;
List from His holy hill, far, far above me,
Harpings celestial, and hymnings divine !

So, on' the sunlit steep of Pisgah,
Bows the seer's gray head to death ;
Lull'd by airs of purple evening,
Floats from earth his latest breath.

Lone and sublime, when of millions the leader—
Lone now, from mortals, at Jordan's dark brim ;
But the true Lord of life seal'd his eyes gently,
Hid the still corpse—took the spirit to *Him*.

XIII.

“BEHOLD, THIS DREAMER.”

“Fröhlich waltt auf Sichems triften,” &c.

JOCUND roams o'er Sichem's meadows,
 Joseph, deck'd in colours rare ;
 Gold-like, to the sunset breezes
 Waves abroad his flowing hair.
 But his envious brothers scorn him,
 Gentle, good, to Israel dear ;
 And with gibe and bitter scoffing,
 Shout, “Behold this dreamer here !”

Thus oft, when with child-like meekness,
 Some young pilgrim heavenward tends ;
 And from mire-dust up to'ward star-beams,
 With presensive glance ascends ;
 Ever scoffs the world in blindness,
 All unapt his flight to share ;
 Mocking his diviner impulse,
 Whispers, “Mark the dreamer there.”

Oft too, when a heart all-loving,
 Guileless, seeks its brother's weal ;

And midst worldlings' selfish hurry,
Treasur'd feelings dares reveal ;
Him the world gives up for buried ;
With sarcastic pity dooms ;
Taunts his warm ingenuous spirit
With, “ See, see, the dreamer comes ! ”

So, when evil's fatal fetters
Godliness hath bravely snapt,
And for spirit-liberation,
Torn the garb his limbs that wrapt,
Far from the fraternal banquet,
Shunn'd, in loneliness he walks,
While insensate jesters murmur,
“ Yon the' enthusiast dreamer stalks ! ”

But give heed, unkindly brethren,
Other scenes must soon be' unveil'd ;
One day, comes again the dreamer,
And his visions have not fail'd.
Lo, in anxious dread now kneeling,
Flutter your faint hearts with fear ;
Fain would 'scape this strange disclosure—
This unwelcome dreamer near.

For he comes in princely vesture,
Laden with a Pharaoh's gold ;
Richly clad in gorgeous raiment,
Mild, severe, yet self-controll'd.

Trembling, ye forebode his vengeance,
 Yet his eye betrays a tear ;
 Softens too that brow so kingly,
 'Tis e'en he—the dreamer here.

Have not now the sheaves submissive,
 Joseph's envied sheaf obey'd ?
 Know ye him to whose fair colours,
 Sun, moon, stars, obeisance paid ?
 Yet be cheer'd ; his gentle kindness
 Speaks your joyous welcome near ;
 Lovingly, with arms inviting,
 Comes the injured dreamer here.

And ev'n so there comes in triumph,
 Many a scornèd seer again,
 Whom the world in blinded stupor,
 As a dreamer could disdain ;
 Bravely, by his Lord fast-holden,
 Hath he toil'd by sea and shore ;
 Victor now, with banners streaming,
 Comes the dreamer, scorn'd no more.¹

So, at last, the Mightiest cometh,
 In the pomp of heaven array'd,
 Whom, at His first advent, rebels
 Outrag'd, vilified, betrayed :

¹ This stanza seems specially applicable to the life of *Columbus* ; though possibly he was not thought of.—Tr.

The base foe behind Him thronging,
 Brought the scourge, the nails, the spear ;
 Shouting with envenom'd malice,
 “Lo—this glorious Dreamer here !”

By the cruel cross o'erburden'd,
 Comes He bleeding, hard bestead,
 Mute, as the white lamb to slaughter,
 Sinks His meek exalted head.
 Toward the drear, deserted hill-top,
 Whence dismay'd, His followers flee,
 Toils He lonesome, faint, forsaken ;—
 See the Dreamer's victory !

Dream'd He not of crowns and sceptres,
 And dominion ne'er to fail ?
 But the crown of thorns invests Him,
 Weak, exhausted, death-like pale !
 Dream'd He not of love and concord,
 And of paradise brought near ?
 But the frightful cross awaits Him,
 Lo—the hapless Dreamer here !

Yes—He comes, with glorious advent,
 As the waning ages glide ;
 Tremble then, O guilty brethren,
 All His dreams are verified !
 Shuddering, prostrate, ye shall meet Him,
 And your hearts in dread sink down,

Shrinking with remediless terror,
From the awful Dreamer's frown.

Lo, He comes in sovereign splendour,
In His heavenly might moves on ;
With celestial light invested,
Greater far than Solomon ;
With His own angelic legions,
While the heavens His triumphs share ;
Comes to recompense and punish,
Lo—the prophet Dreamer there.

Will His mild, forgiving aspect,
Bless you from the judgment seat ?
Ah ! come now, in supplication,
Haste to clasp your Saviour's feet.
Ere the' archangel's trump resounding,
O'er the rudely startled sphere,
Thunders thro' the graves' dark caverns,
Lo—the omniscient Dreamer here !

KARL GEBOK.

XIV.

M A R A H.

“Mara, Mara, sprach das Volk,” &c.

“MABAH, Marah !” (Israel murmur’d) “who this bitter
spring can drink ?

E’en upon its brim—so long’d for—must Thy people
pine and sink ?”

But, at Moses’ prayer, their Saviour, show’d a tree, for
healing meet,

Which the bitter fount transmuted, and the charmèd
stream grew sweet.

Marah, Marah ! this heart mutter’d—now the streams
of trouble flow,

Turn from the distasteful fountain, and repel the cup
of woe !

But I sought a Saviour’s mercy, and He show’d the
sacred tree,

From whose wonder-working virtue, bitterest pains must
fade and flee.

Know’st thou, O my soul, that holiest, wood, whose rich
immortal balm,

Sweetens e'en the bitterest chalice, and the stormiest
wave can calm ?

Changeth into floods of promise, dark affliction's trou-
bled sea,

Softens all the soul's disquiet, stills e'en death's sharp
agony !

Look to thy Lord's cross uplifted, His dire woes contrast
with thine,

Contemplate that awful burden ; dar'st thou at thy own
repine ?

Should the follower rest on roses, while the Chief was
crown'd with thorn ?

May I shrink from lighter crosses, while He bore the
scourge and scorn ?

On that cruel cross, the spotless and beloved Son
survey,

Smite thy contrite breast, the burden, of thy own trans-
gressions weigh !

Say—my Lord was holy, harmless,—yet that measure-
less anguish bore,

Me, whate'er my soul endureth, ah ! my ill desert is
more !

Soul, draw near that cross ; behold Him, uncomplaining,
helpless, lone,

As the Lamb of God, in silence, for a ruin'd world
atone.

Learn thou there, in patient meekness, ne'er e'en
Kedron's brook to shun,
But, "O Father, not my pleasure, not my will, but
Thine be done !"

Muse on thy Deliverer's cross, then, mark His crowns
of majesty,
He that calmly bow'd, expiring, sits supremely thron'd
on high !
Say—my heart, thy way to glory, winds mid crosses,
conflicts, woes,
And who with his Lord o'ercometh, soon to share His
triumph goes !

Marah, Marah ! cries weak nature, and the bitter cup
pass by ;
In the hour of battle, shuddering, would from wounds
and perils fly ;
But O holy tree of healing, welcome, welcome, thy
perfume !
Thou the crushing load canst lighten, and shed fragrance
round the tomb !

KARL GEROK.

XV.

"LOVEST THOU ME?"

"Hast du mich Lieb? Simon Johanna, höre," &c.,

LOVEST thou Me? Son of Iona, listen,
 'Tis thy Lord's query by Tiberias' wave.
 Lovest thou Me? Before thy lips affirm it,
 Ah, ponder well His words who died to save.
 Hark, as with kind fraternal voice He pleads,
 Whose searching eye thine inmost spirit reads!
 Son of Iona, sadness broods on thee.
 Say—lov'st thou Me?

Lovest thou Me? How ill those words thee measur'd,
 "If all men should deny Thee, yet not I;"
 Soon, O how soon, the ardent vow forgotten,
 Me thou denied'st, with fearful blasphemy!
 Is this the "Rock" whom I myself uprear'd,
 The "Peter" late by burning zeal endear'd,
 Who vow'd, with heart of flame, all mine to be?
 Ah—lov'st thou Me!

Lov'st thou Me *now*? Simon, but that desiring,
That only ask I—lov'st Me now anew?

Come, sorrowing child, come, dry the tears repentant,
 Give the faint hand, the contrite heart give too !
 Poor bruised reed, I will not break thee quite,
 Weak smoking flax, I will not quench thy light,
 Though but one dimly glimmering spark I see ;
 O lov'st thou Me ?

Say, hast thou love to Me ? I dearly won it ;
 Light too my burden, soft my yoke hath been ;
 Yea, did not greenest pastures smile before thee,
 While on my rod and staff thy soul could lean ?
 The Friend who snatch'd thee from dark ruin's shore,
 And gently on His loving arm upbore,
 Whom love constrain'd unto the cross for thee ;
 Lovest thou Me ?

Lovest thou Me ? Then watch my ransom'd sheep !
 Sav'd—now, to save, be thy Divine employ !
 O happy task, these erring ones to keep,
 With thee the rescued, grateful, full of joy !
 Thyself hast wander'd, fetch the lost that roam,
 Thou know'st the Shepherd's voice : ah, lead them home !
 Keep the stray'd flock from Satan's inroads free
 If thou love Me !

Lov'st thou Me, Simon ? Go my lambs to feed ;
 Those little ones I bind upon thy heart ;
 Lead them to sunny vale and verdant mead,
 From twilight wilds where now they roam apart ;

Lovest thou Me?—then love Me e'en in them,
Grasp for my crown the smallest, simplest gem ;
Yearns not thy soul with parent's sympathy,
If thou love Me ?

Say, lov'st thou Me ? One day, their cruel might
Shall bear thee whence frail flesh would shrink again :
Hands which the Shepherd pierc'd, His flock will smite ;
Simon Iona, cleav'st thou to Him then ?
Love, e'en the wildly-rising waters quells ;
Love, e'en the fiercely wasting flame repels ;
Love, 'neath the axe, will bow the adoring knee !
Lovest thou Me ?

Say, lov'st thou Me ? Lord, thou dost all things know,
Thou see'st my love too languid, cold, and weak !
O that Thy heaven-sent fire may newly glow,
Thy breathing love this heart dissolve or break !
Thy sovereign quest more deeply here engrave,
And bid this humbled soul Thy mercy crave !
Oft Thee I griev'd—Forgive, forgive, e'en me !
Lord, I love Thee.

KARL GEROK.

XVI.

MOUNT TABOR.

“Auf Tabors höhn, welch überird'scher glanz,” &c.

ON Tabor's hill what supramundane light
 Streams at this hallow'd hour ?
 With purpling beams the oak-crown'd cone is dight,
 While mists beneath it lour :
 Are they soft evening's blushes
 With which those summits glow ?
 Or see I the fresh roses
 Of Paradise below ?

And thou my Lord, how brightly radiant now !
 Such lustre ne'er we saw !
 As snow Thy vesture ; as the sun Thy brow !
 I sink in prostrate awe !
 Hear ye from heaven's far concave
 Angelic hymns begun :
 List to the voice Almighty—
 “'Tis my Beloved Son.”

On either hand, see yon majestic twain,
 Jehovah's envoys here ;
 He by fire chariot snatch'd from death's domain ;
 And Sinai's awful seer ;

Here gentle whispers heavenly
My charmed ear surprise,
And voices once untuneable
With angels harmonize !

My soul, too oft to sins and griefs a prey,
How soar'st thou joyously !
E'en as an eagle up the ethereal way
Sweeps heavenward swift and free !
Hast thou here quite forsaken
The dissoluble clod ?
Is the freed spirit wafted
Into the light of God ?

Beneath me far expands Judæa's plain,
Seen but through vapoury gleams ;
The world's low strife, each pageant and each pain,
Grown dim like vanishing dreams.
Hence, hence, with those dark sorrows
And those false joys of thine,
Vain world, I rest embosom'd
As in Heaven's blessed shrine !

Here it is good to be ! Here let us build
Homes, and descend no more !
Abide, with the celestial vision fill'd,
And feast on love's own store !
From the rude world transported,
Our Lord's selected three ;

To gaze thus on His brightness,
Is in His heaven to be !

Yet, woe is me, wak'd from the blissful trance
No ray the loss retrieves ;
Eve lours,—the fitful nightwind whirls askance
Those falling forest leaves ;
The shining guests have vanish'd,
The splendours all are flown—
Nay, One, our all, remaineth,
Jesus is found alone.

Here still art Thou, and I behold Thy smile ;
Enough ! my Lord, enough !
Earth's toils and conflicts claim me yet awhile :
Back, though the way be rough !
Hence to the' heart's cave of stillness
With treasur'd joys I fly,
And muse in darker moments
On Tabor's majesty !

Haste from the mount, for mortal ills are rife ;
Go, use thy "little strength !"
With patient firmness wage the war of life ;
Repose will come at length !
Go, with thy Lord descending,
To dark Gethsemane ;
Then soar with seraph pinion
His face in heaven to see !

KARL GEROK.

XVII.

“IT IS THE LORD!”

“Es ist der Herr! hört ihr das Glaubenswort,” &c.

“It is the Lord!” Hear ye that gladsome word,
 O’er the Gennesareth sea!
 Re-echo it,—that it be ne’er unheard,
 But farthest realms agree
 To hail the risen Saviour’s name;
 And the broad earth with joy proclaim,
 “It is the Lord!”

It is the Lord!—without Him no success;
 Howe’er we work or wait!
 Our nets were cast, but vain our watchfulness
 Through weary hours so late:
 Toiling; yet nought, for all our cares,
 Nought, till a miracle declares
 “It is the Lord!”

It is the Lord ! How gracious and how true !
 His promise, O how good !
 For now, astonish'd, to our bark we drew
 The finny multitude !
 On earth so great, so bounteous none,
 As He, our strength, our shield, our sun !
 “ It is the Lord ! ”

It is the Lord !—for us He here hath stay'd
 Near, while we deem'd Him far ;
 Eyes dimm'd by sorrow and with toil o'erweigh'd
 Knew not our Morning Star !
 Now springs my grateful soul from prison,
 Our hope revives, our sun hath risen ;
 “ It is the Lord ! ”

It is the Lord, whom loving John discerns ;
 O hour of joyfulness !
 That meek soul for a closer nearness yearns
 In the still heart's recess !
 Seek *thou*, too, Him in that deep cell ;
 Thou, too, the homefelt joy shalt tell,
 “ It is the Lord ! ”

It is the Lord. See, Peter breasts the wave ;
 His dauntless love exclaims,
 Away, whate'er can part us ! let me brave
 Tempests, or floods, or flames ;

With joy I plunge into the sea,
Conscious whose love constraineth me !
“ It is the Lord ! ”

It is the Lord !—the rest are following too !
His magnet love they feel !
In quiet troth, if with slow feet, pursue
The burst of Peter’s zeal ;
Though many a blast and wave be near,
Courage ! we have our Pilot here,
“ It is the Lord ! ”

It is the Lord ! He bids us all draw nigh
At His own feast regales !
He nurtures each with grace unfailingly ;
Hither, from hills and vales !
Thrice happy are His festivals ;
Thrice blest the guests His mercy calls ;
“ It is the Lord ! ”

It is the Lord ! They ask Him now no more,
Who art—or what doest Thou ?
Whate’er He doth, ’tis *He* ; ’tis mercy’s store ;
Let faith adoring bow !
For—whether He chastise or cheer—
In sunshine or in clouds appear—
“ *It is the Lord !* ”

It is the Lord ! ah, in how few bright hours
His glories shine on me !
This mortal coil yet fetters all my powers !
But—wait !—It still is He !
One day my love shall see Thee as Thou art,
And shout with jubilant voice and raptur'd heart,
" It is the Lord ! "

KARL GEROK.

XVIII.

I WOULD GO HOME.

“Ich möchte Heim; mich zieht's dem Vaterhause,” &c.

I WOULD go home! Fain to my Father's house,
 Fain to my Father's heart!
 Far from the world's uproar, and hollow vows,
 To silent peace, apart.
 With thousand hopes in life's gay dawn I rang'd,
 Now homeward wend with chasten'd heart, and chang'd:
 Still to my soul one germ of hope is come,
 I would go home!

I would go home, vex'd with thy sharp annoy
 Thou weary world and waste;
 I would go home, disrelishing thy poor joy;
 Let those that love Thee, taste!
 Since my God wills it, I my cross would bear,
 Would bravely all the appointed “hardness” share;
 But still my bosom sighs, where'er I roam,
For home, sweet home.

I would go home ! My happiest dreams have been
Of that dear fatherland !
My lot be there ; in heaven's all cloudless scene ;
Here, flits mirage, or sand !
Bright summer gone, the darting swallows spread
Their wings from all our vales revisited,
Soft twittering, as the fowler's wiles they flee,
Home, home for me !

I would be home ! They gave my infancy
Gay pastime, luscious feast ;
One little hour I shar'd the childish glee,
But soon my mirth had ceas'd ;
While still my playmates' eyes with pleasure shone
And but more sparkled as the sport went on ;
Spite of sweet fruits and golden honey-comb,
I sigh'd for home !

I would be home ! To shelter steers the vessel ;
The rivulet seeks the sea ;
The nursling in its mother's arms will nestle ;
Like them, I long to flee !
In joy, in grief, have I tun'd many a lay,
Griefs, joys, like harp-notes, have now died away.
One hope yet lives ! To heaven's paternal dome,
Ah, take me home !

KARL GEROK.

XIX.

MORNING.

"Jam lucis orto sidere," &c.

Now with the daystar's rising ray,
Our Saviour God we supplicate,
Do Thou the immortal radiancy,
Direct our devious way to Thee !

Be lips and hands unblameable !
Let vain desires molest no more !
Our words sincere and guileless be,
Our hearts imbued with charity !

As glide the flitting moments on,
O Christ, our Guardian vigilant,
From the fierce Foe's new inroads still
The senses' portals fortify !

O grant that each day's labour now
To Thy own praise may minister !
What owes to Thee its origin,
Aid us by Thee to consummate !

LATIN HYMN.

XX.

H Y M N.

THOU, Lord, art the essential Life !
 All our being flows from Thee !
 Death must wield his fearful knife,
 But all Thine must deathless be.

Grant us, Lord, that life Divine,
 Earnest of the immortal, now,
 Clasp our spirit into Thine,
 Life and Resurrection Thou !

Bear us to Thy home on high,
 Lift us from the gloomy grave,
 Save to immortality,
 Body, soul, and spirit save !

Immortality with Thee,
With Thee, like Thee, in Thee one !
 Make us holy, blissful, free,
 Be Thy joy in us begun !

Let us all Thy glory see,
Fill our joy up, in Thy home
Fit us to be thron'd with Thee,
Come, O sovereign Saviour come !

J. S.

XXI.

HYMN.

IMMUTABLE Saviour, my trust is in Thee ;
 All earthly must vanish, all mortal must fall ;
 But since Thou art the same, and for ever shalt be,
 What losses, what sorrows, our hearts should appal !

Weak friendship may waver ; death breaks every tie ;
 The mutable creature decays and expires ;
 But Thou, O Redeemer, the Holy, the High,
 Canst fill to o'erflowing the soul's best desires !

O make us, great Saviour, unchanging like Thee ;
 Unswerving in duties, unwavering in love ;
 Unfailing in hope, from offences made free !
 Till in changeless delight we adore Thee above !

Omnipotent Saviour, augment in each heart
 The love which aspires to Thee, faith which adheres ;
 Give patience to wait, and " desire to depart,"
 Till Thy smile infuse *all* bliss, and banish all tears !

J. S.

XXII.

THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.

“La voyez vous passer, la nuée au flanc noir !”

MARK'D ye yon cloud with sable flank,
 Now darkly wan, now fiercely red,
 As if of hot and sterile summer bred ?
 How on the midnight wind it came,
 As if its livid flash and vapours dank
 Tower'd from cities wrapt in flame !
 Comes it from heaven ?—the mountain ?—or the main ?
 Is it the fire-car which a demon train
 To some near planet bears ?
 O terror ! How from its chaotic heart
 The forky lightnings dart,
 Even as with glittering sting a mighty serpent glares !

The sea—the sea—on all sides wave on wave !
 The weary bird in vain seeks land and rest ;
 Broad billows, rolling through each ocean cave,
 Whiten the surge with foamy crest,

Huge fishes near the azure surface float
In sunshine, with quick fins of silver hue ;
The deep might seem a flock, in fleecy coat ;
The pale horizon melts into the waters blue.
“ Must these be dried up ? ” asks the fire-fraught cloud.
“ No ! ”—and God’s awful breath rolls on its masses
proud.

Lakes, with many a verdant hill
Mirror’d in their glassy flood ;
Pastimes of the archer’s skill,
Songs amid the vale or wood,
Tents where childhood roves at will,
Fishes by the sunny rill,
The free tribe whose sportive band
Dance upon the yellow strand.
For this errant, simple race,
Luxury’s canker hath no place ;
Manly strength and infant glee
In their gladsome sports agree.
Virgins, dark as ebony,
Lave them in the lucid stream ;
While the cymbal’s clash and gleam
Mingles with the melody
Of the far-resounding sea.

The cloud an instant wavers. “ Are *these* lands
My goal ? ” “ No. Onward yet ! ” the mystic voice
commands.

Lo ! Egypt's rich and variegated plain,
 Its mountains, rear'd by man, acutely steep ;
 Its Sphinx and marble ruins, and the train
 Of mighty Nilus, winding to the deep.
 The kingly sun is setting, but still glows,
 And on the calm, bright wave its doubled radiance
 flows.

“Where stay we?” mutter'd hoarse the storm-fraught
 cloud.

“Seek!” cried the sov'reign voice—and trembling
 Tabor bow'd.

Sand—and yet wider sand !

The desert, arid, wild, and drear ;
 Whose hills, like billows on the land,
 Their shifting masses rear !

A dark expanse of solitude.

Yet sometimes there the populous array
 Of caravans from Ophir's golden mouth,
 Or from the tropic south,

Far off in the lone wilderness

Winds, like a giant snake, along the scorching
 way.

“Shall lakes these wastes o'erwhelm ?” the storm-clouds
 ask.

“No !” from' heaven's depth the voice ; “yet farther
 off your task.”

See Babel sunk in ruin's doom,
Like some huge rock amid the ocean tide,
A heap of fallen towers, the tomb
Of wild ambition and insanest pride.
The heaven-assailing spire no more could rise ;
Imprison'd storms moan'd through its desert
halls,
Where Babel erst essay'd to pierce the skies,
And restless myriads throng'd her massive walls.
"Sweep we this wreck?" the wrathful cloud inquires.
"March on!" "Ah, Lord! how far, how far we bear
Thy vengeful fires!"

Two cities in secluded pomp behold!
Whose gorgeous turrets flitting clouds enfold.
They sleep in twilight with their gods profane,
Their crowds, their chariot-wheels—doom'd cities
of the plain.
The eye discerns amid their moonlit shade
The glistening column and the bright arcade ;
Suspended gardens, flowers of brilliant hue,
Cascades, on which the moon her scarf of silver
threw ;
Temples, where, thron'd within their sumptuous
home,
Huge jasper idols deck'd the gilded dome ;
Proud structures, now through towering vapours
seen,

Now thro' whose arches breaks the star-bright
heaven serene.

Ah ! hell-taught cities, mad with base desires,
Each heart some new excess of riot fires,
Each hearth some dark atrocious guilt defiles,
And their twin gangrene blights where nature
smiles.

But slumber reign'd. Scarce in those dissolute
walls

Glean'd the pale lamps of latest festivals ;
And soft night breezes, sighing from the bowers
Of Sodom, breath'd upon Gomorrah's flowers.

There brooded the dire cloud, more black, more near ;
And Heaven's loud mandate spake, " Thine errand's
here ! "

The cloud hath burst ;

The scarlet flame

In tempest nurs'd,

With hideous aim,

Its blazing sulphur, from the gulf new rent,

Flings on each marble arch and snow-white battlement.

The wretched throngs awake,

Who could so late from guilty mirth retire,

Reckless of Jehovah's ire.

Now the palace portals quake,

Now the jostling chariots break,

And pallid fugitives meet

In the long gorgeous street,
The frightful rivulet of fire.
It melts the precious tablets of the dead,
Where jasper, agate, pearl, and porphyry shine ;
Bends like a fallen oak the grim colossal head
Of odious Nabo, prostrate in his shrine.
Columns of lucid marble, fair and tall,
In calcin'd fragments smoulder as they fall.
Vainly the priests, those horrors to arrest,
Their lifeless gods in pale procession bring ;
As vainly waves his glittering vest
Against that flood of fire their pontiff king.
Resistless still, the burning waves devour
Proud dome, voluptuous palace, martial tower.
Left by all that flying band,
The pontiff yet dares stand
On the red, torrent's brink ;
When sudden on his brow
The dazzling mitre flames, and now
His quivering hand that grasps it, like a brand,
Flames too, till quick the godless head doth bow
And in the whirlpool sink.

O pitiless fire ! of the condemn'd not one
Eludes the righteous judgment of that hour.
Lifting polluted hands, as death rolls on,
Each asks what unknown God hath hurl'd the fiery
shower.

Just Heaven the sulphurous arrow wields,
And judgment shakes the spheres :
Not adamant the victim shields :
The all Holy One those fiery waves
Ordains, since harden'd guilt His justice braves,
Invoking demons ; but the dire surprise
Smites each foul idol, and its stony eyes
Flow down in lava tears.
Thus was all whelm'd which Heaven refus'd to save :
Man and man's pomp, the harvest and the sod.
The teeming landscape grew a scorched grave ;
Unearthly blasts the quaking mountains clave ;
All nature wither'd at Jehovah's rod.

And still the palm-tree in Gomorrah's glade,
With sickening yellow leaf and root decay'd,
Bows to the hot air's heavy breath ;
While o'er those doom'd abodes the still Dead Sea—
Chill, moveless pall of guilt and destiny—
Smokes like the gulf of death.

HUGO.

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