

THE

PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

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An Address of the Conductors.

The importance of periodical publications is well understood by reflecting men. The philosopher and statesman, the physician and divine, have recourse to them, as very convenient vehicles for conveying to others the views they wish to prevail in the different branches of science to which they have devoted their lives. A large portion of the information now circulating in the world has been derived from such publications.

They are powerful agents in the religious world. In the hands of errorists and enemies to the truth, they are destructive as the spirits of darkness, beguiling and misleading unstable souls; but in the hands of the friends of truth, they go forth like angels of light, on messages of grace and love, instructing the ignorant, consoling the disconsolate, supporting the weak, succouring the tempted, and encouraging all in the good ways of the Lord. A weapon of such potent efficacy it were treason to our Sovereign Lord to leave in the hands of his enemies. Christians in both hemispheres have felt it to be their duty to avail themselves of periodical publications as powerful auxiliaries in promoting that great cause of truth and righteousness which has engaged the best affections of their heart. In England "The Christian Observer," conducted by members of the established church, and "The Evangelical Magazine," edited by

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Episcopal clergymen and Dissenting ministers, have for a series of years been ably supported and extensively circulated. Blessings to England, they have powerfully maintained the interests of evangelical truth, and widely diffused the influence of genuine Christianity.

Religious Magazines have not prospered so much in this country. After a few years labour, they have been relinquished by their conductors. Various causes might be assigned for their failure. The density of the population in England and the arrangements of business, the result of time, offer facilities for circulating publications and collecting the avails, which cannot be found in a new country, whose population is widely scattered over an extensive territory. Literary men in England are less occupied with business foreign to the life of a student, than that class of society are in this nation; and consequently a larger mass of talents can at any time be put in requisition, for furnishing the necessary materials for a periodical publication of a religious nature.

The difficulties to be encountered in this country in conducting a Magazine, should not deter from the attempt. The best plan, in our opinion, for such a work, would be to commit it to a man of piety and talents, who should devote to it all his time, and derive from it his support. Such a man, properly qualified, consecrating to it all his faculties, aided by a number of literary

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ever. What provision have you made for an exchange of worlds? You have a hope; on what is it founded? Have you peace with God, through faith in our Lord Jesus? Then may you say, with Paul the Apostle: To me to live is Christ; and to die is gain. "Lord, so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom!"

W. N.

FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

EARLY ASSOCIATIONS.

Some how or other we feel attached to places and scenes, with which we have been familiar in early life. We may forget much that we have seen on a journey, or read of in books, but it is difficult to find a person, who can forget the oak that shades the spot of his nativity, or the blue line of the mountain which his eye has often traversed. We may explore countries at a distance, and make a right estimation of their beauties, but our native woods and hills, never lose their charm entirely. Hence when individuals and families remove and form new settlements, they always contrive to raise in the mind a pleasing remembrance of the place they have left. They lay out their villages and gardens in the same way, give the same names to their towns, trim their trees after the same fashion, and build churches like those in which they used to worship.

The gospel does not condemn this strong bias of the mind to local scenery, but only directs and controls it. Productive it evidently is of great blessings, and we could point out many ways in which its agency is concerned, in adding to our stock of happiness. Perhaps the holy angels, as they rove around the universe, may receive fresh views of their Maker's goodness from fields of being, which have been wrought out, with more

than ordinary beauty, by the Divine hand.

It has often occurred to me, that the associations, to which the mind is accustomed, if properly directed, might aid the cause of holiness. Hence well written lives of pious, devoted men, have always been considered among the most useful kinds of reading. We pause with delight, to view a character, shaded with comparatively few imperfections. We are ever curious to know the early habits of great men, the villages or cities where they were born and lived, the scenes which were consecrated by their presence, and the causes by which they became eminent in the world.

Here Christianity opens a wide field of employment for the youthful mind. Men of the deepest learning have unfolded the evidences of religion, divines have illustrated its doctrines, martyrs have bled in its defence, poets have portrayed its charms, patriarchs and apostles have exemplified its precepts. But above all Christianity has exhibited in our Lord Jesus Christ, a model of unrivalled perfection. He is the source of that moral excellence, which has adorned so many wise and holy men.

Hither as to a fountain, other stars repair,
And in their golden urns draw light.

The present state of the church lays us under peculiar obligations to rise in our affections above local attachments and associations. Missionary establishments can be carried on, only by men, whose holy devotedness to religion qualifies them for every difficulty, because there is a principle in man which often leads him to look back upon the friends of his bosom. But we cannot compromise with the requirements of religion. He that loveth father or mother, houses or lands, more than me, is not worthy of me. The command to Abraham was explicit: Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred

and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee. These declarations lead not to stoical insensibility. No persons are more warm in their friendships than pious holy men. Scarcely ever was there an individual of greater decision than Henry Martyn, but it was a decision blended with the finest sensibility. He reminds us of some angel whose wing is bold and untiring, but who bends with a lowly soul, before the throne of his Sovereign, and he who wept, when surveying for the last time, the shores of his native land, was destined amidst unexampled difficulties, to deposit in eastern deserts, the beautiful germs of their moral renovation.

But if Christianity demand sacrifices in her ministers and followers, it is not without presenting a rich compensation. She contrasts the shortness of the present with the ages of futurity: What is our life? it is even as a vapour which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. My days have departed like a shepherd's tent. All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of grass. Thus does she teach us the vanity of time, but pours over this contracted state of being the light of eternity, unfolding at the same time wreaths of glory for the Christian soldier, woven by those pure spirits who inhabit around the throne of God.

Waving however all those pure enjoyments, which flow to the heart from the prospect of the future, Christianity gives present consolation. Let the heart be kept glowing with love to Christ and filled with a sense of his presence, then a desert or an island of the deep, teems with comforts more than can be numbered.

Should He command me to the farthest
verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous
climes,
Rivers unknown to song, where first the
sun

Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting
beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles, 'tis nought
to me
Since God is ever present, ever felt
In the void waste, as in the city full.

With such views, it becomes the ministry to act. Success waits on the footsteps of every herald of salvation, who keeps his heart disengaged from the world. The Moravian missionaries have accomplished much in the lapse of a few years. They have reared in the depths of the wilderness living monuments to their Saviour, and a hundred forests have borne witness to their diligence and devotion.

Attracted by the love of fame or gold, thousands make present sacrifices. They leave their homes and every object that the heart holds dear. Shall the follower of a Redeemer, indulge slothfulness in the midst of all that enterprise exhibited around him, by the men of the world? Conscious we are that these remarks have been often made, but it will be necessary to repeat them, till the last hut of the moral wilderness shall feel the light of the gospel.

The present system of education has no small agency in fostering local attachments. Children are not reared on the noble principles of the gospel, which seems to pass beyond the limits of place and country. With what apparent delight do aged persons recur to the scenes of childhood. The minds of the young become insensibly fixed on the seats and walks of those who have gone before them in life, and the range of affection towards the families of our world, becomes narrowed into a circle that comprehends but a few. If but a small share of the diligence which parents use in teaching children to promote their own little interests, were employed in spreading before them the map of a lost world, much more good would be likely to result. In that map they would behold cities,

now the strong holds of error, where the gospel once shone with the purest brilliancy; countries covered all over with Mahomedan delusion, and whole continents filled up with savages who know not the way to life eternal, with only here and there some green spots, reclaimed by men of missionary spirit.

Nothing, however, contributes so much to nourish the pleasing associations of the mind as poetry, which renders engaging whatever it touches. It casts renewed attractions round our dwellings, sheds gleams of felicity over our mountains and glens, and deepens the shade of our native groves. She paints to the life, whatever interests the heart, and blends her colours with all the tender associations of the mind. If the bard sojourn in distant countries, it is to assemble their charms to make out a perfect picture for his native land. We may detect something of this spirit even in the strains of Hebrew poetry. The Hebrews, says an elegant critic,* were a simple people of husbandmen and shepherds, with no commercial pursuits, or foreign intercourse, to withdraw their attachment from their native soil. Their lands, which were equally divided among the heads of families, could not, without difficulty, be alienated from their possessors, and, if alienated, were always allowed to be reclaimed at the return of the jubilee. These circumstances were strong contributives to the growth of those local affections and patriotic prejudices which give an ardent and heartfelt character to poetry.

It may not be improper to remark here, that at times when we are the least conscious of it, the heart may be insensibly gliding away from a fixed attachment to the person of the Saviour. There is a charm in science, and a fascination in the pursuits of elegant literature, which insensibly steals on the affections.

But it is possible to consecrate the researches of science, with each embellishment of taste, to the service of our Redeemer. Never was there a poet who touched the harp more skilfully than Cowper. Whether he portray the vices of a city population, or linger in contemplation on rural objects, it is evident that a master handles the lyre. He has drawn us nearer to our firesides. His graphic pencil has imparted fresh interest to our villas, gardens, woods, and waterfalls. Yet Cowper was a Christian, and this is his highest praise, that, more than any other poet, he has laid in a divine sanctity, with the most deeply cherished associations of the mind.

It has been made a question how far poetry may be applied to sacred subjects, and whether religion does not entirely reject poetical ornaments. There is, indeed, a majesty in religion, which seems at a great distance from the inventions of men, and nothing can be more out of place, in hymns constructed for popular use, than the gay decorations of fancy. Nevertheless we should be sorry to embrace, in all its latitude, the opinion of a great critic* on this subject, or to think that poetry is not destined to perform important services for religion.

In the opinion of Sir W. Jones, the greatest orientalist of his day, the highest strains of poetical composition are to be found in the Bible. In proof of this we may appeal to the songs of Moses and Deborah, and to the CIV and to the CVII psalms. Had the psalms, or the book of Job, or some parts of the prophets, been the productions of any old heathen bard, the intense curiosity of the learned would be diligently applied to their investigation.

It would not be difficult to trace the history of this art from the dawn of revelation, with a view of showing that its finest materials have

* Campbell's Lect. on Poetry.

* See Johnson's Lives of Watts and Waller.

been drawn from the scriptures. But the present state of the art gives evidence that sacred themes are the legitimate province of the poet. Is it fanciful then, to anticipate a period when there shall be a still deeper reformation in our national strains; when the mythology of the ancients shall be less venerable in the view of our youth; when the war song shall give place to the hymn of gratitude, and poetry shall contribute its benign influence to the cause of religion.

In connexion with this subject it may be proper to remark, that the associations of the young are often tinged by romances and novels. Nothing fires the imagination so quickly as reading about castles and chateaus in the forests, country seats, and the thousand nameless objects which enter into the wild descriptions of a picturesque writer. In this way so many are disappointed in their estimation of life. They fancy many more pleasures in existence than they find on trial, and thus contract a distaste for solid happiness. Perhaps our Bible classes will go a great way in correcting this taste, for even intellectually considered, the Bible is the most entertaining of all books.

T. B. BALCH.

ON THE WARS OF OUR INDIAN TRIBES.

It has afforded the Christian public great delight to hear of the arrival of the two Osage Mission Families, at their respective places of future residence and labour. They have endured the trials of a long and fatiguing journey; and each company has buried two of their companions on the way; but probably had they remained quietly in their native homes, as large a proportion of them would have sickened and died. Certain it is, that some small families in this healthy region, and living under the most

favourable circumstances, have experienced, during the last summer, more sickness than either the Great or the Little Osage Mission Family. This should encourage our dear missionary friends; for their health and lives are in the hands of our almighty Redeemer; and they shall, if he pleases, be vigorous in any clime, and under all the privations to which he may call them.

The most discouraging and afflictive circumstance at present known relative to our Osage missions, is the impending war between the Cherokees of the Arkansas, and the Little Osages. On this subject, the superintendent of the *Union* station, the Rev. Mr. Vail, has offered some remarks, which ought to excite the attention of our fellow Christians in the United States. He asks, *if it would not be wise and proper for our national government to interfere for the prevention of wars between the Indian tribes.* We apprehend that it would; and that such an interference would meet with the approbation of all our moral and religious fellow citizens. Indeed, none could oppose such a measure, unless they were influenced by the cruel and wicked desire that the Indian tribes should mutually destroy each other, and thereby desolate the lands which they now occupy.

As to the *right* of our government to put the strong hand of power on all the Indian nations, and say to them, "you shall no longer wage war among yourselves;" we have no question: for to us it would seem a strange anomaly in national policy and law, that there should be various tribes of people within our territorial bounds, independent of the sovereign power extending over the same limits. If any portion of our territory and its inhabitants is exempt from national control, why may not half or the whole of it, be equally exempt; and so present us with a government without a loca-