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ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.—No. III.

ON THE FALL OF MAN.

IN our last No. we briefly considered the representations of Scripture, respecting the original state of Man. We are now to contemplate him in a very different light, even as a tempted, weak, and apostate creature. The account given by the sacred historian is to be found in the third chapter of Genesis; to which we refer the reader, with the request that he will peruse the following pages, with the passage of scripture, which we design to illustrate, lying open before him.—This will save room, which must otherwise be occupied by a transcript of the chapter.

Supposing the reader to have perused the passage, we proceed to consider, 1. The Tempter; 2. The Temptation; 3. The Penalty inflicted on the offenders. And in considering the whole record, we shall aim not to be wise above what is written; but, with all humility, to receive the information which it has pleased God to afford.

In the first place, then, we affirm that the tempter was the *Devil*. We learn from the scripture, that, between man and the Deity, there are orders of beings purely spiritual in their nature; of whom some revolted from God, and were cast out from heaven. One of these, is in a particular manner represented as the *Adversary*, the *Tempter*, and *Destroyer*. Of the truth of this statement, we have proof in the following passages: *Jude* verse 6. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." *2 Pet.* II. 4. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell," &c. *Matt.* xxv. 41.

is prospering in your hands, it will excite in your bosom a glow of gratitude to him for making you the messengers of salvation to sinners. And when your fondest expectations shall be blasted, and they whom you imagined to be exalted to heaven, are before your eyes, thrust down to hell, it will be greatly needed, and it only can support your sinking spirits. And what a balm will the assurance of all sufficient grace be to every one who shall painfully and tenderly study and pray and labour for the flock entrusted to his care; whom no gales of popular applause can enliven, whom not the music of the heavenly harpers can soothe, while he sees that flock scattered and languishing and exposed to every savage invader. The fact, that the most acceptable and useful are only instruments with which the work is accomplished, reduces all the sincere and faithful to the same degree in the scale of merit. A preacher may come before his audience, and though his talents be moderate, his manner plain, and his knowledge not extensive; yet, by the blessing of God on his labours, religion will revive, and sinners learn to bow in humble adoration before the throne of grace; and strangers will come to see the happy change. When another ascends the sacred desk, and in all his intellectual greatness, and in all the pathos of moral sentiment, and clearness and force of scriptural truth, wields some mightier topic of divine vengeance or mercy, of Emanuels sufferings and glory, of man's present state and his future destiny; the corruscations of his fancy may delight; the thunder of his eloquence may overawe: but the quickening spirit only can impart that more than electric influence that moves and melts, that transforms and saves.

For the Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine.

ON MAXWELL'S POEMS.

About two years ago a small volume fell into my hands entitled "Poems, by William Maxwell, Esq.?" Knowing the author to be a native of my own beloved Virginia, which had hitherto made a poor figure in poetry, I opened the book with more than common interest; with a mixture of wishes and hopes and fears, amounting to strong solicitude. These poems gave me much pleasure at the first reading. And after repeated perusals of them since that time, though I cannot say they are every where faultless, they please me still. In the mean while, I have heard them spoken of now and then in a manner I did not like; and am confident they are much less known in the district of country where I live than they de-

serve to be. Let me be indulged, then, in attempting to bring my fellow citizens more extensively to a participation of the pleasure which the poems of Mr. Maxwell have afforded to myself.

Of criticism as an art, I know very little; of the trade and mystery of a reviewer, nothing. But I trust I have some particle of capacity for distinguishing and enjoying good poetry; such as wafts the soul away from "this work-day world" to the sweet regions of fancy; or melts the heart into tender feeling, and fills the eye with delicious tears. Such, according to my experience, is much of the poetry of Mr. Maxwell.

With all my concern for the reputation of "the Ancient Dominion" in regard to her literature, as well as every thing else that is truly useful and ornamental, I shall never ask any one to admire a meritless production on the ground of its having been manufactured on our own soil, or to prefer such a work to a better one from abroad. But I must protest, with all earnestness, against the absurd and anti-patriotic prejudice which denies literary excellence, beforehand, to every thing which has not crossed the Atlantic, and disdainfully flings aside the effusions of native talent without a fair examination. Surely it may be considered as a settled point at this day, that, though our education is in an imperfect state, there is no region of the globe on which Heaven has bestowed the gift of genius more liberally than on Virginia. Let us not undervalue the precious boon. Let us cherish and cultivate the powers with which we are endowed; and let us expect that great things will result from their diligent and faithful exertion.

The poems under consideration are so many in number, and so very miscellaneous in their subjects, that few remarks can be made which will apply to them generally. The first, however, is that they are not only free from all that is profane and corrupting, but animated with that spirit which becomes a man of piety and virtue. The cause of christianity, pure and undefiled, appears to lie near the poet's heart; and he loses no fair opportunity of rendering his homage to the gospel. I know, indeed, that all this would never make dulness interesting, nor ought to save it from oblivion. But I know also that where an opposite spirit is exhibited, where the poison of infidelity or licentiousness is infused, no power, no brilliancy, can redeem a work from the condemnation of God and of all virtuous readers. My next remark is that these poems are characterized by a rich vein of sound good sense. The author commonly aims to instruct while he pleases

us ; and he is successful in his aim. Even in his most playful moods, he reminds me sometimes of Cowper by his care to throw in gracefully some useful sentiment. I observe again that the poetry of Mr. Maxwell possesses that vital, affecting influence upon the imagination and the heart which is the sure indication of genius. He seizes and keeps the attention, and carries the feelings of his reader with him in all his excursions. He inspires us with his own indignation against vice, his own contempt of folly, his own sympathy with human joys and sorrows. As to the versification, which is also very much diversified, according to the variety of his subjects, it appears to me to be remarkable for its easy flow, and its perspicuity ; with as much smoothness as a sound, unsophisticated ear will be likely to desire.

But instead of multiplying these observations, I would rather illustrate their justness by filling as much room as can well be allowed me with extracts from the poems. They shall be given in the order in which I find them in the volume.

The following are from the *Elegy to the memory of the Rev. Benjamin Grigsby*.

“ Him too in vain the dying saint requires,
While life still ebbing from her breast retires.
Alas, to other worlds, untried, unknown,
Her trembling spirit must depart alone ;
No pious friend her sinking heart to cheer,
To calm the doubt, to wipe away the tear,
To whisper hope, the failing hand to press,
And soothe the poor nature in her last distress.” [p. 22.]

“ Yet let me call to mind the blessed end
(If my poor heart will let me,) of my friend :
And oft remember, with no earthly pride,
True to his Saviour, as he liv'd, he died.
O how triumphant is the Cristian's death !
Theme for the rapture of a seraph's breath.
Unmark'd perhaps by thoughtless man, he dies ;
But dear to God, and precious in his eyes :
Angels, unseen, attend his dying bed,
And lay the pillow for his failing head ;
Grace, brightening to the last, reveals her beams,
And soothes his slumbers with inspiring dreams ;
Faith wipes the human tear that fills his eye
For friends and kindred that stand weeping by ;
And hope discovers through the parting gloom
A bright eternity beyond the tomb.” [p. 24.]

It seems to me that every serious reader of the above passages must wish to see the entire poem from which they are taken.

The next piece, *the Bards of Columbia*, is of a quite different cast; humorous, satirical, and amusing in a high degree. For instance:

“ Yet courage, man, for Scriblerus commends,
And has your merit at his fingers' ends:
‘Tis very pretty now,—extremely fine—
One, two, ten syllables in ev'ry line!
Besides, these rhymes come in so very pat,
It is not ev'ry one can write like that.
And then to make you hang yourself at once,
He couples you with some notorious dunce;
Nicely divides the laurel branch in two,
A twig to Noddy, and a twig to you.” [p. 32, 33.]

“ Greece lov'd the Muses, and their flow'ry lays,
Her sons were only covetous of praise;
And thus she nourish'd her poetic throng,
To charm her groves with many a grateful song.
Columbia's children, only bent on gain,
Neglect to cultivate their rhyming vein.
'O give us money, money, is their cry,
We can grow wise and witty by and by.
Give us but sailors' rights, and a free trade,
No more embargoes, and our fortune's made.
Then off they dash to marry for their lives;
They think they're men as soon as they get wives;
(In truth the girls are charming, I agree,
As charming as the muses, it may be:
Though why not woo them both at the same time?
Or why should marriage spoil our taste for rhyme?)
And thus it is that ev'ry head-piece teems
To hatch a thousand visionary schemes,
And take out patents for its whims and dreams.
Go now, sweet bard, and charm these sons of wealth.
Persuade them rhymes are sov'reign for their health:
Alas, the adder cannot hear the strain,
And the sweet charmer tries his song in vain.”

[p. 40, 41.]

But I must hasten on to the poem which is my favourite of the whole collection; *Wolcott, an Elegy*. The subject is certainly, in itself, one of the best adapted in the world for elegy. That pensive, melancholy poetry which so deeply wounds and

yet so irresistibly fascinates the heart. The author commemorates the reverend, departed friend who had been his preceptor in his early years; and the delightful scenes, distant, and never to be revisited, where those years of childhood were spent. I wish I could present this piece entire to the reader; but I must limit myself to a few paragraphs.

“ Here, led by Heav’n, a happy child I grew,
 Fresh as the wild-rose in the morning dew;
 The bird that caroll’d on the hawthorn by
 Less gay, and scarce more volatile than I.
 Then oft the groves and solitudes around
 Bore witness to my lyre’s unskilful sound;
 So soon I felt the darling passion strong,
 And lisp’d the feelings of my heart in song.
 I knew the merry mock-bird’s fav’rite tree,
 And dear enough his wild wood-notes to me;
 I aim’d no death against the robin’s breast,
 The sparrow twitter’d fearless on her nest;
 Young as I was, a visionary boy,
 I felt a sympathy with nature’s joy;
 And **WOODWARD**, happy as myself the while,
 Look’d on, and own’d my pleasure with a smile.
 Not his the brow of dark forbidding frown;
 With graceful ease his spirit would come down,
 To share my childhood’s inoffensive play
 With useful freedom, profitably gay;
 Pleas’d from his graver studies to unbend.
 And lose awhile the master in the friend;
 To win and guide me still his constant view,
 At once my teacher and my playmate too.
 Thus, all unknown the anxious cares of man,
 How fair the morning of my life began!
 My head unburden’d with Ambition’s schemes,
 Light all my slumbers, innocent my dreams;
 Too sweet the scenes my playful fancy drew,
 And Hope half whisper’d, ‘ you may find them true.’
 Stay, rude Experience, hear my pleading sigh,
 Nor bid these visions of Remembrance fly;
 Why wake the dreamer from his smiling sleep?
 Why wake the dreamer to be wise and weep?”

[p. 47, 48, 49.

No reader, I believe, will wish me to have shortened such a quotation. Let us take another.

“ Fair was the scene when Sunday’s smiling ray
 Call’d the good villagers to praise and pray ;

When up the hill in order they repair
 To join their pastor in the house of prayer.
 The sober matron, in her russet best,
 Her little infant smiling at her breast ;
 The blooming maid—her eyes are rais'd above—
 Her bosom sighs, but not with earthly love ;
 The swain, unconscious of his resting plough,
 And free to seek a nobler service now ;
 Forgot alike their labours and their sports,
 They meet their Maker in his earthly courts.
 Away with earth !—I see the preacher rise ;
 And hark, he speaks ; a message from the skies ;
 No poor ambition, void of grace and sense,
 Betrays his tongue to gaudy eloquence.
 He scorns the tricks of vain theatric art,
 That catch the eye, but cannot cheat the heart.
 Warm, but yet prudent, is his temper'd zeal ;
 He feels himself, and makes his hearers feel.”

[p. 52, 53.]

Before we leave the scene, let us drop a sympathising tear
 with the pastor's widow.

“ But where is she, the partner of his heart ?
 Perhaps in some recess she mourns apart.
 Ah no ! she would not linger here alone ;
 Spoil'd is the nest, the wounded dove has flown.
 And whither, whither will the mourner fly ?
 Who now will kiss the sorrow from her eye ?
 Her father's hospitable home is near,
 And friends and kindred shall embrace her there ;
 And she shall feel the solace of their love—
 But sigh for him whose spirit soars above.”

[p. 57.]

The following stanzas conclude a charming poem entitled
 “ *the Resolution.*”

“ But Religion now found me astray,
 All languid and fainting with care ;
 She rais'd me at once as I lay,
 And sav'd me from cruel despair.
 ‘ O quit this dark valley of wo,’
 She said with a whisper of love ;
 ‘ If you would be happy below,
 Set your heart upon heaven above.’
 Farewell now, ye passions of earth,
 Too little, too base for my heart !

Ye have led me astray from my birth,
 It is time for you now to depart.
 I have wasted the fairest and best
 Of the hours that my Maker had giv'n;
 Then Oh! let me husband the rest!
 Henceforth I live only to Heav'n." [p. 81, 82.]

The latter part of the volume consists of what the author calls *Lyric Notes*. They are little things; but generally elegant and pleasing. Take the following allegory, illustrating the search after peace of mind, as a specimen. It is, in my view, eminently beautiful.

THE DOVE.

"O tell me where the dove has flown
 To build her downy nest;
 And I will rove the world alone
 To win her to my breast.

I sought her in the rosy bow'r
 Where Pleasure holds her reign,
 And Fancy flies from flow'r to flow'r;
 But there I sought in vain.

I sought her in the grove of Love,
 I knew her tender heart;
 But she had flown; the peaceful dove
 Had felt the traitor's dart.

Upon Ambition's craggy hill
 The pensive bird might stray;
 I sought her there, but vainly still—
 She never flew that way.

Faith smil'd, and shed a tender tear
 To see me search around:
 Then whisper'd, 'I can tell thee where
 The bird may yet be found.

By meek Religion's humble cot
 She builds her downy nest:
 O! seek that sweet secluded spot,
 And win her to thy breast'." [p. 167, 168.]

I entertain a hope that the remarks and transcriptions which I have made, may induce some of the lovers of poetry

to read Mr. Maxwell's volume, who have hitherto deprived themselves of that pleasure by their negligence, or their prejudices against our domestic literature. At any rate, I have paid my humble tribute of thanks, though late yet sincere, to the author for the gratification which his book has afforded me. And with this book in my hand, I will no more suffer the assertion to pass in silence, that Virginia has not yet produced a poet worthy of the title.

MELANCTHON.

ON THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE.

The christian discipline has already received an attention due to its importance. In the aggregate and in its details it has been amply discussed by every variety of character;—by the weak, the ignorant, the learned, the ingenious, the profound. But a subject so vast may yet admit new views and further illustration. As a lowly specimen of what may be done in this way, should those capable be stimulated to attempt, the following desultory remarks are submitted with, it is hoped, a just diffidence. We are aware of being wholly inadequate to the undertaking, and that we are rendered still more unfit by the debility and distraction superinduced by sickness. We are not however deterred. If nothing be attempted, nothing will be accomplished. Without presuming on any merit, somewhat of novelty may enter into our remarks.—The remarks themselves are suggested by those passages of scripture, which define the business of the sacred office and enjoin its exercise; or by what is frequently designated as the Apostolic Commission.—These passages present to the mind's eye a comprehensive view of the whole field of Christianity.—Its entire delineation is a task too mighty, too arduous, to be attempted. Conscious of inability; and not unmindful of the limits resulting from a periodical publication, we dare only attempt to sketch a few detached outlines; and these faintly traced. To render them more vivid by the aid of superior, nay celestial light, we would avail ourselves of the the corresponding passages of scripture, placed so in contrast, and exhibited in such characters, as to draw and engage the corporeal and intellectual eye to contemplate, with fixedness and attention, the view at once minute and comprehensive, which they present, of what we design should be the principal object in our subsequent discussion.