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CONTENTS.

PAGE

<p>DIVINE MEDITATIONS, by Joseph Hall, D. D. - - - - -</p> <p>MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS.—Mother, do you pray for your Son, p. 82. The Use of the Pew Bible, - - - - -</p> <p>BIOGRAPHICAL.—Notice of the Rev. David Caldwell, D. D. - - - - -</p> <p>GLIMPSES OF NEW BOOKS.—Gospel Sonnets by Erskine, - - - - -</p> <p>DESCRIPTIVE.—Mount Carmel, - - - - -</p> <p>MINISTERIAL EDUCATION.—Eternity as a Motive for Students, p. 84. Preparation for the Ministry, p. 84. Gold Washings, p. 84. Letter to a Young Minister, p. 85. The Student no Idler, - - - - -</p> <p>CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS, ACADEMIES, AND COLLEGES.—The Schoolmaster, p. 86. The True foundation, p. 87. Testimony against Common Schools, p. 87. The End of Education, p. 87. List of Parochial Schools and Academies, p. 88. Another Academy in Virginia, - - - - -</p>	<p>81</p> <p>82</p> <p>82</p> <p>83</p> <p>84</p> <p>85</p> <p>85</p> <p>88</p>	<p>THE METHODS OF GRACE.—The Three Wanderers, p. 89. ANECDOTES, ' 89</p> <p>SABBATH SCHOOLS.—The Teachers' Responsibility, p. 90. The Teacher's Retrospect, - - - - - 90</p> <p>DOMESTIC MISSIONS.—Ordination of Missionaries, - - - - - 90</p> <p>FOREIGN MISSIONS.—Missionary Labourers Wanted, p. 91. Gleanings of the Latest Missionary Intelligence, - - - - - 91</p> <p>BOARD OF PUBLICATION.—Presbyterian Colportage, p. 92. A Good Beginning, p. 92. Life of Macdonald, p. 92. Publications, - - - - - 92</p> <p>POETRY.—A Hymn, p. 87. Come to Christ, p. 89. Child's Hymn, - - - - - 96</p> <p>THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, p. 92. BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS, 94</p> <p>ECCLESIASTICAL RECORD, p. 93. CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT, 96</p> <p>GENERAL INTELLIGENCE, p. 95. MISCELLANEOUS, 96</p>
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Divine Meditations.

BY JOSEPH HALL, D.D.

I.

As there is no vacuity in nature, no more is there spiritually. Every vessel is full, if not of liquor, yet of air; so is the heart of man; though, by nature, it is empty of grace, yet it is full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Now, as it filleth with grace, so it is emptied of his evil qualities; as in a vessel, so much water as goes in, so much air goes out: but man's heart is a narrow-mouthed vessel, and receives grace but by drops; and therefore asks a long time to empty and fill. Now, as there be differences in degrees, and one heart is nearer to fulness than another; so the best vessel is not quite full, while it is in the body, because there are still remainders of corruption. I will neither be content with that measure of grace I have, nor impatient of God's delay; but every day I will endeavour to have one drop added to the rest; so my last day shall fill up my vessel to the brim.

II.

There are three messengers of death; Casualty, Sickness, Age. The two first are doubtful; since many have recovered them both: the last is certain. The two first are sudden: the last leisurely and deliberate. As for all men, upon so many summons, so especially for an old man, it is a shame to be unprepared for death: for, where others see they may die, he sees he must die. I was long ago old enough to die; but if I live till age, I will think myself too old to live longer.

III.

As man is a little world, so every Christian is a little Church, within himself. As the Church,

therefore, is sometimes in the wane, through persecution; other times, in her full glory and brightness: so let me expect myself sometimes drooping under temptations, and sadly hanging down the head for the want of the feeling of God's presence; at other times, carried with the full sail of a resolute assurance to heaven; knowing, that, as it is a Church at the weakest stay; so shall I, in my greatest dejection, hold the child of God.

IV.

Christ raised three dead men to life: one, newly departed; another, on the bier; a third, smelling in the grave: to show us, that no degree of death is so desperate, that it is past help. My sins are many and great: yet if they were more, they are far below the mercy of him that hath remitted them, and the value of his ransom that hath paid for them. A man hurts himself most by presumption: but we cannot do God a greater wrong, than to despair of forgiveness. It is a double injury to God; first, that we offend his justice by sinning; then, that we wrong his mercy with despairing.

V.

That which the French proverb hath of sicknesses, is true of all evils: That they come on horseback, and go away on foot. We have oft seen a sudden fall; or one meal's surfeit hath stuck by many to their graves: whereas pleasures come like oxen, slow and heavily; and go away like post-horses, upon the spur. Sorrows, because they are lingering guests, I will entertain but moderately; knowing, that the more they are made of, the longer they will continue: and, for pleasures, because they stay not, and do but call to drink at my door, I will use them as passengers, with slight respect. He is his own best friend, that makes least of both of them.

VI.

Earth, which is the basest element, is both our mother, that brought us forth; our stage, that bears us alive; and our grave, wherein, at last, we are entombed: giving to us both our original, our harbour, our sepulchre. She hath yielded her back, to bear thousands of generations; and, at last, opened her mouth to receive them; so swallowing them up, that she still both beareth more, and looks for more; not bewraying any change in herself, while she so oft hath changed her brood and her burden. It is a wonder we can be proud of our parentage, or of ourselves, while we see both the baseness and stability of the earth, whence we came. What difference is there! Living earth treads upon the dead earth; which, afterwards, descends into the grave, as senseless and dead as the earth that receives it. Not many are proud of their souls; and none, but fools, can be proud of their bodies. While we walk and look upon the earth, we cannot but acknowledge sensible admonitions of humility; and while we remember them, we cannot forget ourselves. It is a mother-like favour of the earth, that she bears and nourishes me; and, at the last, entertains my dead carcase: but it is a greater pleasure, that she teacheth me my vileness by her own, and sends me to heaven for what she wants.

VII.

I account this body nothing, but a close prison to my soul; and the earth a larger prison to my body. I may not break prison, till I be loosed by death; but I will leave it, not unwillingly, when I am loosed.

VIII.

Every sickness is a little death. I will be content to die oft, that I may die once well.

Miscellaneous Communications.

For the Presbyterian Treasury.

MOTHER, DO YOU PRAY FOR YOUR SON?

In visiting some of my parishioners some time since, I called upon one of them, a good pious mother. Upon my inquiring into the spiritual condition of the family, she began rather dolorously to speak of her only son. She said that she had frequently conversed with him, had endeavoured to interest him in the word of God, had reasoned with him on the danger of his dying in a state of impenitence, and, as she expressed it, "all to no purpose." He remained a thoughtless, careless youth. That lad was by no means deficient in mental abilities, and he had made good use of the advantages of a public school. Yet, he gave no indications of being interested in the one thing needful.

I replied to her, all that you have done Mrs.— is very well, and that as a pious mother you feel deeply concerned respecting your dear boy, I cannot doubt, but there is one thing which perhaps you have omitted. Pray, said she, evidently surprised at my remark, what is that? I answered, have you ever prayed *with* your son? From the change upon her countenance, I inferred that she was perplexed in mind. Endeavouring to relieve her embarrassment somewhat, I remarked, that you have prayed *for* your son, I already supposed, but does he *know* that fact? The question seemed to awaken a train of thought which had before never occupied her mind. That she was a praying mother, I had no reason to doubt, but the moral influence of prayer for her child, *within his hearing*, she had never perhaps thought of before.

I then mentioned the case of the lamented Barr; that devoted servant of God, attributed, in a good degree, his attention to divine things, to the prayers of his mother. Mrs.— was interested in the narrative.

After some further conversation upon the subject, I mentioned that some twenty years since, there lived a youth in P—— who had imbibed the common opinion that the Sabbath was designed mainly as a day of recreation. Descended from pious parents, he had been taught to pay a decent respect to the institutions of religion. With the great principles of Divine truth, however, he had but a slight acquaintance. The afternoons of the Sabbath were frequently spent in rambling about the suburbs of the city. It so happened one afternoon as he descended from his room to take his usual stroll, he overheard a voice as if engaged in prayer. His mother's room door stood ajar, and that voice was his mother's. In a low plaintive tone, of unusual kindness, tremulous with age, and somewhat affected by disease, these words reached the ears of that lad "God bless ——."

I do not know whether these words were the special means in the hands of God's Spirit, of leading that soul to God, yet they had their effect. The stroll of that afternoon was taken, but not with its usual zest. Those few words of a mother's prayer seemed to reach the very depths of that young man's soul.

Having proceeded thus far in my narrative, I was interrupted by Mrs.— inquiring, "then he became converted?" Yes ma'am, said I, shortly after this he gave evidence of being a new creature, and since that, has been endeavouring to serve his Master, in newness of life. And pray, said the good woman, as with increasing interest she seemed prying into my mind, "who was that lad?" Mrs.—, I re-

plied, you have frequently heard him in the pulpit, endeavouring to preach the gospel. I am that lad.

Dear Christian reader, have you a wayward, careless son? Do you pray for him? and *does he know that fact?* When the church, to which you belong, is endeavouring to revive the good old system of training up our children under the influence of God's word, and especially of making our standards more fully understood, depend upon it, the effort will be more largely productive of good, if mothers will pray for and with their sons. The effort of our Church is a noble one, and we fondly hope to see its good fruits, but much will depend upon the fervent effectual prayers of the handmaidens of the Lord. TITUS.

For the Presbyterian Treasury.

ON THE USE OF THE PEW BIBLE.

In the church where I worship, there is a manifest return to the practice of looking out the passages which are cited by the minister. In one or two pews I observed six or seven Bibles open at once. Every one knows how universal the custom is in Scotland; as soon as the minister names his text, there is a rustling all over the house. Nor is it the text only; chapter and verse are given for every formal quotation, and this (to use the Scotch phrase) is "turned up" by every attentive hearer. The preacher will be apt to put on his spectacles and read carefully, when he knows that so many eyes are following him. He will scarcely do, what I once heard a young brother do, preach from a text which is not in the Bible; nor will he even make the blunders in reading which we sometimes hear.

Some time ago, being in a Reformed Dutch church, about two hundred years old, I was exceedingly gratified to find the seats of the Consistory furnished with a row of fine large quarto Bibles; it was a venerable sight, and awakened many pleasing associations. This reminds me, that it is stated as having been once no uncommon thing to find Greek Testaments, and even Hebrew Bibles in the Elders' Pew of the churches of Dort and Leyden; but this was in the century before the last. Is there any reader of these lines, who remembers the Greek and Latin Scriptures, in the pew of James Ross, in the old Market Street Church! Dr. Wilson sometimes has been known to appeal to the famous old schoolmaster, from the pulpit, and in regard to the reading of a Greek passage.

The use of the pew-bible greatly encourages the preacher, in the citation of Scripture. Those New England sermons, indeed, which have no Scripture in them, except the text, afford very little manual occupation to a dexterous Scottish bible-searcher, who happens to be present. Quoting chapter and verse does indeed break the graceful continuity of rhetorical discourse; but what of that! It is more important to have God's authority, than a whole greenhouse of flowers. It is good to cite Scripture, *as Scripture*. Hence Dr. Witherspoon, though he never used a scrap of manuscript in the pulpit, always made a point of turning to the passage quoted, and reading it out of the pulpit Bible.

Instead of distracting the attention, as some pretend, this practice serves to fix it. The youthful hearer is in the posture of expectation; he has something to bring him back when wandering; he is still waiting for a "thus saith the Lord." It evidently tends to close and extensive familiarity with the word of God, and facility in referring to it. There is no risk in saying,

that if we look attentively at those times and countries, in which the people have made free use of the pew-bible, we shall find the preaching most expository, and the congregations most orthodox. It is when pretty, and mellifluous, and nicely articulated essays take the place of gospel sermons, that we find the hearers leaving their Bibles at home. Let us rejoice at the partial restoration of this good old usage; and even hope for the day when Presbyterian limbs shall wax strong enough to stand up in public prayer. At present, the striplings sit down to pray, while their hoary-headed grandsires stand beside them.

ANGULARIS.

Biographical.

For the Presbyterian Treasury.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE REV. DAVID CALDWELL, D.D.

From the Sketch of his Life and Character, by the Rev. Eli Caruthers, A. M.

The subject of this short memoir, was born of Scotch Irish parents, in the county of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in the year 1725.

His father was a substantial farmer, and was the father of four sons. David, at the proper age, was put to learn the carpenter's trade, and not only completed his apprenticeship, but afterwards wrought four years at the business, before he had ever seen a Latin Grammar. At the age of twenty-five, he commenced his course of classical learning, and when prepared, entered the College of New Jersey, and was graduated in the year 1761. He was a student in Nassau Hall, when the President, the Rev. Samuel Davies, departed this life; and assisted in conveying his remains to the grave. After leaving college, he spent some time in teaching, while he pursued the study of theology; and for the sake of better advantages, returned to Princeton, where he was for some time employed as teacher of the ancient languages, in the college.

After obtaining license to preach from the Presbytery of New Brunswick, he was appointed by the Synod to spend a year among the Presbyterian settlements of North Carolina. Two congregations, Buffalo and Alamance, united in giving him a call to settle among them. This call, after due deliberation, he accepted, and continued in connexion with the same people until the day of his death. Mr. Caldwell's fondness for learning, as well as the wants of the country, induced him to open a school in his own house, which is believed to have been the first classical school instituted in North Carolina; and in process of time became very much frequented, and greatly celebrated in all that region. In teaching he took peculiar delight; and in the government of youth he had a remarkable tact. His method was his own, and could not be advantageously imitated by others. His government was paternal and kind; and he seldom had occasion to resort to any discipline harsher than a sarcasm or cutting reproof. For the most part, however, his reproofs were administered with so much calmness, and even pleasantness, that no resentment was felt by the

objects of them. And, although hundreds of pupils were, in succession, under his tuition, it is not remembered, that he was ever under the necessity of sending one away.

Although Mr. Caldwell was a profound theologian, and an instructive and faithful preacher, yet it was as a TEACHER OF YOUTH that his labours were rendered most extensively useful. His school was a nursery for the Church; and some of the most excellent ministers of the country received their whole education, literary and theological, under his tuition. It is believed, that not less than fifty, who entered the sacred ministry in the Presbyterian Church, were educated by him. As many as four of his pupils became governors of States; and a number occupied seats on the judicial bench, and in Congress, as well as in other stations of importance.

But Dr. Caldwell was not only the pastor and teacher, but the physician of his people. At that time, there were few regularly bred physicians in the country, and none in the new settlements. We had then no medical schools in the country. Often, therefore, ministers found it necessary, as a matter of duty and charity, to make themselves acquainted with the art of healing. Providence so ordered events, that Dr. Caldwell had an opportunity of studying medicine at home. A young physician, a relation of Mr. Caldwell, came into those parts, and was received into the family, where he resided with his books and medicines, but in a short time sickened and died; upon which Dr. Caldwell applied his active mind to the study, and became skilful as a practitioner; and when no other physician could be had, was always ready to obey every summons to the bed-side of the sick, as far as practicable.

He was also a skilful farmer. He devoted several hours, every day, to healthful exercise on his farm; and by perseverance in ditching and draining, rendered his place more healthy, and his meadow the most productive of any in the vicinity.

Dr. Caldwell's lot was cast in troublous times; and his place of residence became the seat of war. One of the most sanguinary conflicts of the war of the Revolution was fought at Guildford Court House, between the British army under Lord Cornwallis, and the American troops under General Greene. The Presbyterian ministers were peculiarly obnoxious to the enmity of the British, on account of their known republican principles, and their determined and active patriotism. On this occasion, Dr. Caldwell was a great sufferer. The British army was encamped in the midst of one of his congregations, and all his books and papers were deliberately burnt, and every thing on which a ferocious soldiery could lay their hands, was destroyed. "Every pannel of fence," says Mr. Caruthers, "was burnt; every particle of provisions consumed or carried away; every living thing destroyed, except one old goose."

It should not be omitted, that Dr. Caldwell's usefulness was greatly promoted both in the congregation and in the school by his having re-

ceived of the Lord "that good thing," a prudent wife. He married Rachel, the third daughter of the Rev. Mr. Craighead, of Sugar Creek; who was in many respects a help-meet, and was as much distinguished for her courage and patriotism, as for her piety and good sense.

The account of Dr. Caldwell's sufferings, and the dangers and privations of his family, while the British had possession of the country, is very interesting; but our object in this brief memoir, is chiefly to notice him as the pioneer of education, and especially of classical learning in the South.

He lived to extreme old age, even to his hundredth year, but never lost his equanimity and cheerfulness. Of course, his memory failed, and his physical powers were debilitated, so that for some years he ceased from his public labours.

The estimation in which he was held as a teacher, in North Carolina, may be known by the fact, that he was thought of as a proper person to take charge of the university, when it was first organized; but he considered his advanced age an insuperable objection. He was also among the first who were honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by that respectable Institution.

Dr. Caldwell departed in peace, without saying anything remarkable. He dropped from life, like a fruit fully ripe; or was gathered to his fathers "like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."

He left nothing in manuscript except a few notes of sermons, two of which are appended to the sketch of his life, from which this brief notice has been taken. A. A.

Glimpses of New Books.

GOSPEL SONNETS, or Spiritual Songs, by the Rev. *Ralph Erskine*, from the 23d Glasgow edition. R. CARTER & BROTHERS, New York.

Evangelical poetry is sweet and profitable reading. There is a soothing and attractive spirit about versification, especially when applied to religious subjects, which the sympathizing heart cherishes with enthusiasm.

The *highest* poetical merit is not claimed for Erskine. Poetry was not his chief aim. It was rather his relaxation from the burdens of a laborious profession. Nevertheless, any one who will examine his Sonnets, will acknowledge the existence of the genuine poetical spirit.

The Rev. Ralph Erskine was born in 1685, and was ordained pastor of the church of Dunfermline, Scotland, by the Presbytery of that name in 1711. He died in 1752. He was one of the great men of his age, and one of the most useful of ministers.

It is impossible to give any just idea of this book by one or two extracts. The reader requires to be a little familiarized with the author's style by reading a few pages, before he will fully appreciate the work. With this apology, and with the additional remark, that few but Christians will be

likely to take a fancy to the book, we introduce a few extracts.

THE BELIEVER'S LODGING.

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house : they will be still praising thee.

O happy they that haunt thy house below,
And to thy royal sanctuary flow;
Not for itself, but for the glorious One,
Who there inhabits his erected throne!
Others pass by, but here their dwelling is!
O happy people crown'd with bays of bliss!
Bless'd with the splendid lustre of his face,
Bless'd with the high melodious sound of grace,
That wakens souls into a sweet amaze,
And turns their spirits to a harp of praise;
Which loudly makes the lower temple ring
With hallelujahs to the mighty King:
And thus they antedate the nobler song
Of that celestial and triumphant throng,
Who warble notes of praise eternity along.

THE BELIEVER'S RIDDLE,

OR MYSTERIES ABOUT THE SAINTS' WORK AND WARFARE.

The work is great I'm called unto,
Yet nothing's left for me to do:
Hence for my work Heav'n has prepar'd
No wages, yet a great reward.

To works, but not to working dead;
From sin, but not from sinning freed,
I clear myself from no offence,
Yet wash my hands in innocency.

Triumphing is my constant trade,
Who yet am oft a captive led.
My bloody war does never cease,
Yet I maintain a stable peace.

My foes assailing conquer me,
Yet ne'er obtain the victory;
For all my battles lost or won,
Were gain'd before they were begun.

I'm still at ease, and still opprest;
Have constant trouble, constant rest;
Both clear and cloudy, free and bound;
Both dead and living, lost and found.

Sin for my good does work and win;
Yet 'tis not good for me to sin.
My pleasure issues from my pain;
My losses still increase my gain.

I'm heal'd ev'n when my plagues abound,
Cover'd with dust ev'n when I'm crown'd:
As low as death when living high,
Nor shall I live, yet cannot die.

For all my sins my heart is sad,
Since God's dishonour'd; yet I'm glad,
Though once I was a slave to sin,
Since God does thereby honour win.

My sins are ever in his eye,
Yet he beholds no sin in me;
His mind that keeps them all in store,
Will yet remember them no more.

Because my sins are great, I feel
Great fears of heavy wrath; yet still
For mercy seek, for pardon wait,
Because my sins are very great.

I hope when plung'd into despair,
I tremble when I have no fear.
Pardons dispel my griefs and fears.
And yet dissolve my heart in tears.