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Religious Communications.

For the Christian Spectator.

On Gratitude to God.

MAN, in his unsanctified state, is capable of emotions of gratitude to God, viewed in the character of a benefactor. A heart wholly selfish, may, with entire consistency, return love for love, and gratitude for acts of divine munificence. It is also a point of immense practical importance, to discriminate between that gratitude, of which we are naturally capable, and that which is exclusively the fruit of holiness. It is the more necessary to do this, because there are no natural feelings of the heart more like exercise of holiness, than emotions of gratitude, and none on which men place a more confident and destructive reliance.

There are those, it must be admitted, who are opposed to the analysis of moral feeling, for purposes of discrimination. "Love," they would say, "is love, and gratitude is gratitude; and why should plain subjects be rendered intricate, and honest minds perplexed, by refinements and distinctions, of which the Bible knows nothing?" Such persons, however, are either unacquainted with the contents of the Bible, or they disregard its declarations and warnings. In the Scriptures we are taught that the heart is deceitful above all things, and difficult to be known; and with reiterated importunity, are we urged to take heed that we be not deceived, to examine our hearts, and to implore the omniscient scrutiny for the prevention of a fatal delusion. What then is holy gratitude? Our answer will be

contained in the following particulars:—

1. Holy gratitude presupposes a belief of the entire dependence of all things upon God, and of his immediate and constant agency in the government of the world. Without dependence, there could be no occasion for gratitude. The Most High is independent. He can receive nothing from any one which he did not first bestow. He stands in no such relation of dependence, therefore, to any of his creatures, as admits of gratitude; but his creatures are, every one of them, so constantly and universally dependent on God, as to create a constant opportunity for him to lay them under obligations of gratitude.

He is surrounded by a universe, sustained every moment by his outstretched arm; every mind created by him, every faculty maintained by him, every want supplied by him, and every enjoyment bestowed by him; of whom, and through whom, are all things. Here we find sufficient reasons why to him all hearts should be turned, and all the praises of the universe be offered.

We have said that holy gratitude presupposes a belief of God's constant and immediate agency in governing the world.

There is a philosophy which teaches that six thousand years ago, God made the world as an architect would make a clock, and swinging for once the pendulum, withdrew his hand from it: and that the world will go on from the first impulse, according to the laws of its mechanism, till it

cially in the pronunciation of the former of these languages, which is in a sense his mother tongue.

While at Smyrna, the Missionaries will early visit the Seven Churches of Asia, which are all still in existence; if the fact that a few Christian families (at least) still remain in each of the places formerly occupied by those Churches, will justify such an assertion. We hope they will send us, by the time when the spring opens, such accounts of those Seven Churches, that some of our Churches in New-England will send out and support Pastors sufficient to take the oversight of them. What a field of benevolence is here laying open to those who love our Lord Jesus Christ. The Missionaries are to direct their course to Jerusalem, as soon as they shall have been prepared at Smyrna for their operations in that city.

It is a most pleasing circumstance, that through the enlarged benevolence of an individual, a foundation has been laid for the establishment of a Bible Society, if practicable, in Jerusalem, where the Apostles first began to preach the gospel, and to which our churches are now sending it back.

MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF CONNECTICUT.

Extracts from letters from Missionaries in the service of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, addressed to the Trustees of the Society.

1. From the Rev. Isaac Reed, dated, New Albany, Indiana, October 5. 1819.

"Aiming to follow the spirit of the instructions, accompanying the commission you were pleased to send me, as also the explanatory letter of your Secretary, I have, as opportunity of absence from this place has offered, spent several weeks in missionary labor in various places; and the knowledge, which I have thus gathered, from actual observation of the moral and religious state of these parts of our country, resolves itself in these words, *The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers few.*

"In May last, I spent 8 days in Harrison and Crawford counties, and preached four times in Corydon, the seat of justice in Harrison county. Here an infant presbyterian church exists; and there are a number of intelligent people, who would do something to support a presbyterian minister. In Crawford county, I preached in two towns of 20 or 30 families each. The people seemed very thankful for my visit, attended well, and desired me to come again.

"In August, I visited the counties of Clark and Jefferson, and attended the installation of the Rev. John M. Dickey at New Lexington, the first presbyterian minister installed in this state. This is a

church gathered and organized by your missionary, the Rev. O. Fowler, the last autumn. But, alas! the majority of the people, among whom I travelled, in this tour, are literally as sheep having no shepherd; and every one does that which is right in his own eyes. Here and there one has known better days; enjoyed greater privileges; and is now mourning over the destitute state of the country. At Madison, in Jefferson county, I found a missionary just arrived from the Missionary Society of young men, in New York city; and there seemed considerable prospect that the people will settle him. I think he merits their confidence. Madison has nearly 1000 inhabitants, but very few presbyterians. There is, however, a brick meeting house building for that denomination; and religion seemed to have gained since I was there a year before. On my return, I preached in Charleston, one evening, during the week of the circuit court. The attendance was numerous. One of our brethren preaches there two Sabbaths in a month. Another place of my preaching was New Providence, on Silver Creek, where there are a number of Connecticut people; and among them one male and several females professing religion. They are very anxious for missionary labors. It would encourage your hearts, and strengthen your hands, in the cause of missions, to hear them converse, and pray for you and your servants.

"Soon after I again visited that part of the state, and preached in a settlement on Indian Creek, where are several people who were educated presbyterians. Some of them have been there eight years, and have never before seen a Presbyterian minister in their settlement. On my return. I stopped a while with a man in the woods, who was clearing a little spot round his cabin. He said he had the bible in his house, but had been but twice at meeting in a number of months, and that because he had not known where to find one.—Oh! how much we need Missionaries in these parts!"

2. From the Rev. Joseph Treat, dated Windham, Ohio, October 14, 1819.

"You have doubtless observed that, for some time past, your Missionaries in this vicinity have received very little, either by public contributions or private donations, to aid the funds of your society. The people have adopted a different mode of aiding the same general object. A Missionary Society was formed last December at Hudson, (Ohio,) styled the Portage Missionary Society, the object of which is to supply the destitute settlements in the Presbytery of Portage, which includes the four west counties on the Reserve. The Society held its first annual meeting in September, at Charleston, at which time the Treasurer reported that he had received about 140 dollars. This money has been, in part ex-