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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Religious Emotion.

BY REV. JOHN MILLER.

Every man knows from experience that his mind is affected by the communications that he receives. If tidings of a cheering kind are conveyed to him, they produce joy; if news of an afflictive character is communicated, it produces sorrow; if ideas of danger are made known, he is filled with alarm; if anything new or particularly striking is discovered, he feels a lively interest. Religion is no exception to this law of our nature; it produces emotions in the mind according to the nature of its various doctrines. This fact is fully developed in the Bible, and in the world every day. The word "gospel," meaning glad tidings, conveys the cheering effect it produces on the mind. In proof of this, numerous quotations might be made from the Bible, and reference might be made to the experience of every truly converted soul.

In the same way, when men are enlightened by Divine influence, to discover their deeply affecting state as sinners before God, lying under his fearful curse and liable to be consigned to the place of endless and inconceivable woe, we know that the emotion experienced is one of the acutest distress. Without a doubt, but for the relief afforded by the gospel, insanity would be the result in many cases.

Again, the knowledge of the boundless perfections of the Divine nature, produces that reverence designated the fear of God; and the magnificence of creation overawes the mind.

The emotions of the human mind agree with their causes, not only in their nature, but also in their degree. Emotions are produced by the events occurring from day to day. The death of a dear relative, the loss of property or the acquisition of wealth, will affect us; but these are trivial matters compared with the truths contained in the sacred volume. The character of our Maker, our responsibility, our sin, our mortality, a judgment day, the glorious scheme of salvation, heaven, hell, and endless futurity, are subjects of the sublimest nature—interesting in a degree not to be estimated—and therefore fitted to operate on our minds in the most powerful manner.

We have reason to lament, that, affecting as these topics are, they fail to produce, for the most part, the slightest effect on the minds of many. The reason is very obvious. Unconverted men are practical infidels; the great doctrines of Scripture are habitually excluded from their minds; the world engrosses their attention and hence spiritual things fail to operate on their hearts. With Christians it is very different. All who experience Divine grace are made to feel powerfully the influence of the doctrines of revelation.

The effects of Divine truth on the mind, are greater on some occasions, than on others. In times of revival, when the Holy Spirit descends in copious effusions, the religious emotions of many are very powerful. When by the loss of a dear relative, we are brought into close contact with eternal things, we feel strongly the influence of the doctrines of Scripture. Under special calamities, when we are led to deep and close reflection, godly feelings are likely to predominate in the mind; and particularly, at the time of conversion, the feelings of the mind under the influence of religion, are very powerful. One reason for the peculiar exercises of the mind at conversion is the novelty of the things of God and eternity. We say novelty, because the things of God are really new to the heaven-born soul. He read, he heard, he talked, of them before; but he did it as the blind man talks of colours; he had no proper conception of them. Now, the rays of the Sun of righteousness have darted into his soul, and he sees the things of God and eternity in their true grandeur and importance. No wonder that the emotions of the newly converted are of a powerful character; the wonder is that they are not exercised in a more extraordinary manner. This novelty passes away, and often with it, the effect it produced; but Divine things do not become less grand and important. If Christians continued to give their

thoughts as much to spiritual matters, as they did in the hour of their conversion, their godly and joyous emotions would be more abundant and uniform. When professors allow their minds to be absorbed with the world, and when the means of grace are partially neglected, it is to be expected that they will lose the enjoyment of religion.

A very improper use is sometimes made of religious feelings, and that is, *They are regarded as the rule of conduct.* When I first discovered this, it appeared very extraordinary. Being in New Brunswick, at a prayer-meeting, I asked an old deacon to pray, but he refused. He told me afterwards, that he did not feel right, and, therefore, would not pray; he regarded it as a mockery to pray, unless he felt as he ought. Another brother rarely conducted worship in his family for the same reason. I have not met with this sentiment in Nova Scotia; but have known a number of persons, who habitually absent themselves from the Lord's supper, because they do not think themselves worthy. This I apprehend means, that their feelings are not what they would wish. In all our churches, there are many persons whose religion is of an impulsive character. It anything occurs to excite them, they have a great deal of religion, but if they are not excited, their religion is at a low ebb. There is something very erroneous in making our feelings a rule of conduct.—For a person to refuse religious exercises because he does not enjoy religion, is precisely like an individual standing out of doors in a very cold day, and complaining that he is very cold. Another person urges him to come within doors, and to place himself near the fire; but he refuses, and gives as his reason, that he is exceedingly cold. How absurd would such conduct appear! Would not a mere child see the absurdity of such conduct, and be ready to argue, If you are very cold, that is the very reason why you should go within doors, and place yourself near the fire? In the same way, if professors do not enjoy religion, instead of neglecting prayer and other means of grace, they should pray twice in that state, for once when they sensibly experience Divine influence. Mr. Fuller, in treating of backsliding, says: "When people put out fire, they deal largely in the opposite element—water. In the same way, when Christians backslide, they should deal largely in the opposite element, that is, they should abound in prayer, in the reading of the Scriptures, and other religious exercises." In this way, a state of apathy and coldness in the Divine life, would be overcome.

In this more impulsive religion, there is something, not only very absurd, but also degrading. It is acting like the lower animals, which are guided by instinct; there is no reason or principle of action with them. Men with all their reason, and with the Bible in their hands, act in a similar way, when, in religious matters, instead of being guided by their reason in connection with the revelation of God, they look to their feelings, and act just as they happen to be moved.

Men, in serving their Creator, should be guided by the principles of revelation; their guiding star should be the Bible. With that in their hands, their enquiry should be, not, How do I feel? but, What saith the Lord. The Scriptures teach in the clearest and most copious manner, that it is the duty of men to love and serve God, with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind, at all times and under all circumstances. There is no situation in life, no contingencies in our present state of being, which give the slightest abatement of this demand. It is the requirement of justice made upon us as the creatures of God indebted to him for life and every blessing we enjoy. The obligation to love and serve God, is greatly increased in the case of the Christian, by his redemption from sin and hell, and his prospects of eternal glory through Jesus Christ. The path of duty is pointed out as with a sunbeam; and the considerations, by which duty is enforced, are the strongest that could be presented to the human mind. Every argument, which can be drawn from our present condition and our future destiny is pressed on our attention by the sacred penmen, to induce us to tread the path of duty. The fact that God loved us in our lost and ruined condition, that he redeemed us from hell, that he has condescended

on us all the blessings of his grace, and animated us with the hope of eternal life must be regarded and always felt by the Christian, to be the most potent kind of argument. Wherever religion is enjoyed, men will readily say "the love of Christ constraineth us;" and again, "we love him, because he first loved us." Besides salvation, the thought of death, judgment, heaven, hell, and the solemn truth, that as we sow now, so shall we reap in eternity, are considerations all calculated to operate powerfully on the mind. The Christian, in treading the path of duty, should be actuated by these great and weighty principles. They should tell on his mind, as a rational being, with irresistible power. With these great truths full in his view, let every man tremble at the thought of treading the broad and downward way. We say, then, away with the idea that our feelings are to be our guide in the path of duty. Let us act the part of rational beings; and let us live under the influence of the high and holy principles of revelation. Let the Bible be our rule, and according to its dictates let us be guided at all times.

Westport, Sept. 1863.

### Speech of Earl Russel at Blairgowrie.

At a complimentary dinner given to Earl Russel, at which Earl Airlie presided, an address was presented to the former, referring to his various services to the country during his long political career. After the chairman had given the toast of the health of their guest, his Lordship arose and said:

Gentlemen, I am deeply grateful to you for the invitation you have given me to be present here to-day, and for the manner in which you have received the toast which has been proposed, and to the noble lord in the chair for the manner in which he has proposed it. Gentlemen, I think the noble lord has very fairly observed that however important are those matters of domestic interest to which he alluded, yet, the contest being over, there is no longer much excitement about them, and that for some time the state of foreign affairs has greatly occupied the attention of the country. I confess I do not wonder that this should be the case, for the state of foreign affairs has been a very anxious one. On the state of foreign affairs depend in a great part the commerce and manufactures of the country. Every rumour or alarm tends to depreciate or to improve the property of thousands of persons in this country; and the apprehension of war may cause burdens to be placed on the people of this country, and might bring on a struggle in which every mother would have to feel for the danger of her son, who in the army or navy might have to encounter the enemy of his country. (Hear.) But beyond all, in the dangers of war, in averting it if it can be prevented and honourably averted, of meeting it courageously and with constancy if it must be met—on these depend the character of this country and its high place among the nations—(cheers)—its fame to future ages, its very existence as a great country. (Cheers.) I have, therefore, partaken in a more than ordinary degree of this anxiety during the period that I have held the seals of Secretary for Foreign Affairs. When Lord Palmerston last came to office there was a war in Italy still depending, though it very soon closed. Then there came the question whether the Italians should be allowed, without interference, to throw off their Governments, most of them corrupt and effete Governments—(Hear, and cheers)—and attempt to create a freedom and a unity for themselves; whether France, or Austria, or any other Power should interfere to direct and turn aside the destiny to which Italy would aspire. In these circumstances the Government of Lord Palmerston did not hesitate to say that the people of Italy should choose for themselves their future destiny; that with the capacity they had, and with the courage they had shown, it was our belief that they were fit to take their place among the great nations of the world.

After reviewing the part taken by Britain in the affairs of Poland and Mexico, the speaker proceeded:

Well, gentlemen, I come now to another question, a question interesting to us all, a question on which I must beg for your attention, because I wish to explain some circumstances in which the character of this country I think has been maligned. I am speaking of what has occurred in what a few years ago were the United States of America. A few years ago we were exulting in the prosperity of that country; we were happy to see a people derived from the same ancestors as ourselves enjoying free institutions, enjoying apparent harmony among one another, and with whom we had, at least just before the civil war broke out, hardly a difference—a difference only with regard to the small island called St. Juan, and which we had proposed to refer to the arbitration of the Swiss Republic. This was the state of affairs when that which we certainly had no part in broke out; when, if I remember rightly, nine of the Southern States of America declared that they would form an independent Republic. Our course on the subject has been attacked and blamed in the bitterest terms—blamed sometimes by the Federals and sometimes by the Confederates. The first offence was felt by the Federals. They said we had no right to grant—so far as we were concerned—to the Confederates the rights of belligerents. Well, now, gentlemen, that question of the rights of belligerents is a question of fact. I put it to you whether, with 5,000,000 people, 5,000,000 I mean of free men declaring themselves in their several States collectively an independent State, we could pass over that as a petty rebellion. Our admirals asked whether the ships they met bearing the Confederate flag should be treated as pirates or no. If we had treated them as pirates we should have been taking part in that contest. (Cheers.) It was impossible to look on the uprising of a community of 5,000,000 people as a mere petty insurrection—(Hear, hear.)—or, as not having the rights which at all times are given to those who by their numbers and importance, or by the extent of territory they possess, are entitled to those rights. (Cheers.) Well, it was said we ought not to have done that because they were a community of slaveholders. Gentlemen, I trust that our abhorrence of slavery is not in the least abated or diminished. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) For my own part, I consider it one of the most horrible crimes that yet disgrace humanity. (Cheers.) But then, when we are treating of the relations which we bear to a community of men, I doubt whether it would be expedient or useful for humanity that we should introduce that new element of declaring that we will have no relations with a people who permit slavery to exist among them. We have never adopted it in the case of Spain or Brazil, and I do not believe that the cause of humanity would be served by our adoption of it. (Hear, hear.) Well, then, it was said that these Confederate States were rebels—rebels against the Union. Perhaps, gentlemen, I am not so nice as I ought to be on this subject. But I recollect that we rebelled against Charles I.—(a laugh)—we rebelled against James II., and the people of New England, not content with these two rebellions, rebelled against George III. ("Hear," and laughter.) I am not saying whether all these rebellions were justifiable or whether they were wrong—I am not saying whether the present rebellion in the Southern States is a justifiable insurrection, or is a great fault or a great crime. But I say that the mere fact of rebellion is not in my eyes a crime of so deep a dye that we must renounce all fellowship and communion and all relationship with those who have been guilty of rebellion. (Loud cheering.) But, certainly, if I look to the declarations of those New England orators—and I have been reading lately, if not the whole, yet a very great part, of the very long speech by Mr. Sumner on the subject, delivered at New York,—I own I cannot but wonder to see these men, the offspring, as it were, of three rebellions, as we are the offspring of two rebellions, really speaking, like the Czar of Russia, the Sultan of Turkey, or Louis XIV. himself, of the dreadful crime and guilt of rebellion. (Loud laughter and cheers.) Well, gentlemen, there came another complaint, and the complaint came this time from those so-called Confederate States, who said that we had,