

The last evil to which we will advert, as prevailing in various quarters in the present day, is that of shallow and dogmatizing speculation in things sacred. By many, reason and revelation have been regarded as antagonistic, some asserting that we need not receive as truth anything which reason cannot grasp; others demanding that in things sacred reason shall not presume to interfere. Both are equally in the wrong; those who would banish all reasoning upon the statements of revelation are acting a very foolish and short-sighted part, forgetting altogether that reason and revelation are both alike from God, and that the mental faculties with which we are endowed can never be exercised more worthily than on sacred themes. To demand an unreasoning reception of the statements of revelation is to degrade faith into mere credulity. How but by reason are we to test the claims of revelation, weighing the evidence adduced on their behalf? If an alleged revelation directly contradicts our reason, we must reject it; if its testimony is opposed by an actual fact coming under our observation, the fact will outweigh that testimony. But equally irrational is it to suppose that we may safely reject all that reason cannot comprehend; so far as reason can proceed, her path and that of revelation will be coincident, but when she can guide us no further, gladly should we avail ourselves of the superior guide. Knowing that the universe teems with mysteries, and that to whatever department of science we direct our researches, we soon find limits beyond which we cannot advance, most unphilosophical is it to imagine that in the truths relating to the divine Being, His character, His dealings, His designs, all will be simple and plain. To presume, then, to strip religion of mystery, to pull in pieces the Bible, to reject everything which is miraculous or superhuman, to degrade the inspired volume by speaking of other books as equally inspired; while by some this may be regarded as cleverness, or as the indication of a mind free from vulgar prejudice, it is in fact but a token of a shallow and false philosophy, which can neither regenerate society nor satisfy the cravings of the human soul. This evil, indeed, is not peculiar to the present age, but it mentioned because of late years it has been brought more prominently to view in the lectures and writings of some who are exerting great influence, and because it is a snare into which young and enquiring minds may easily fall. We do not wish to interdict the fullest, the freest exercise of reason, but we protest against its being defiled or made to supply the place of the inspired word of God.

Such are the chief thoughts which have suggested themselves. From the width of range and the multitude of topics they embrace, they have necessarily been cursory and superficial, intended not to supersede but to suggest thoughts in the mind of the reader, to afford materials for an impartial estimate of the times in which we live, and to show that this is an age of intellectual and social struggle, of individual responsibility, and of glorious promise. We have seen that mind is actively at work; that various social problems are being solved, and that the reaction produced by the progress leads some to oppose the principles and to counteract in measure the movements of others. Hence is it a struggle from which we augur results of the happiest kind. Any false step detected, any fallacy is exposed, every principle enunciated is subjected to a sifting process, and in the long run it will be found that while the chaff has been blown away, the solid grain, all that is valuable and worth preserving will remain.

But this struggle involves individual responsibility. The phrase has almost degenerated into mere cant, that 'every man has his mission,' but the idea it involves is most important. No one, whatever his position, can be an idler and remain guiltless; no one can plead exemption from social duties. As on a memorable occasion, when the destinies of nations were trembling in the balance, the talismanic words, 'England expects every man to do his duty,' thrilled every soul, nerved every arm, and turned the scale of conflict; so now there are voices around us, voices in the crowd, voices in the social circle, voices which the winds blow to us from across the ocean, and voices which man's own heart re-echoes. 'The age expects every man to do his duty now.' There is an old adage, fraught with much truth, 'That man is terrible who does one thing. He who, having discovered one worthy object of labour, one department in which he can be useful, sets himself perseveringly to carry out the same, despite of obstacles, of ridicule, of reproach, that man is a hero; and though for him no martial music may sound, though no poet may emblazon his name in imperishable verses, though he may be laid in an obscure and unmarked grave, his influence lives on, the triumphs he has achieved prepare the way for other victories, and in the eyes of beings not dazzled by earthly glory, no: darkened by worldly passions, he may rank higher than the warrior who has conquered armies, and returned laden with the spoils and standards of the foe. A man who overcomes a prejudice, who vanquishes an evil habit, who raises a fellow-man from the degradation of ignorance, or the pollution of vice, who sows the seeds of high and holy principles, that man is more worthy of praise, and more to be envied, than if he had added provinces to an empire, and enriched his country's coffers or his own.

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And departing, leave behind us  
Footprints in the sands of time.

It is an age of glorious promise. What harvests will be reaped hereafter from the seed time of the present! We can scarcely be too

sanguine, but we must not be too impatient; the harvest may not be reaped in our day, but it will come; the golden age will be a tale no longer; the brotherhood of the human race will be recognised, not in theory merely, but in fact; the dignity of labour will be perceived; the social burdens will be borne more equally; the principles of revealed truth will supersede the statute-book; nations will not lift up sword against nation; and in the language of a poet:

'The warrior's name will be a name abhorred,  
And every nation that will lift again  
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead  
Shall wear for evermore the curse of Cain.

Down the dark future, through long generations,  
And warlike sounds grow fainter and then cease,  
And, like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,  
We hear once more the voice of Christ say  
Peace.

Peace—and no longer from its brazen portals  
The blast of war's great organ shakes the skies,  
But, beautiful, as songs of the immortals,  
The holy melodies of love arise.'

From the Dublin University Magazine.

### ASPECT OF DEATH IN CHILDHOOD.

To me few things appear so beautiful as a very young child in its shroud. The little innocent face looks so sublimely simple and confiding amongst the cold terrors of death—timeless, and fearless, that little mortal has passed alone under the shadow, and explored the mystery of dissolution. There is death in its sublimest and purest image—no hatred, no hypocrisy, no suspicion, no care for the morrow ever darkened that little face; death has come lovingly upon it; there is nothing cruel, or harsh, in its victory. The yearnings of love, indeed, cannot be stifled; for the prattle, and smiles, and all the little world of thoughts that were so delightful, are gone forever. Awe, too, will overcast us in its presence—for we are looking on death; but we do not fear for the little lonely voyager—for the child has gone, simple and confiding, into the presence of its All-wise Father; and of such, we know, is the kingdom of Heaven.

### CHARACTER.

Character will always operate. There may be little culture—slender abilities—no property—no position in society; still, if there be a character of sterling excellence, it will command influence. It will secure respect, and produce impression; besides, who knows in what it may result? Therefore, let all pay the utmost attention to character: nothing is more important.

## Communications.

[For the Gleaner.]

### THE OUTCAST'S GRAVE.

The summer sun sunk in the distant west,  
And ere night its gloomy mantle spread  
around;  
Lone, sad with care, and heart with grief oppressed,  
I roam'd along 'the Stranger's' Burial Ground.  
Wrapped deep in thought, and torn by stern despair,  
By early scenes that time can never efface,  
Alone I wandered, pres't with grief and care,  
Along the lovely banks of Harbor Grace.

While others joined each gay and happy throng,  
At evening's close around each happy home,  
To spend each hour in merriment and song,  
I, a stranger, wandered there alone.  
Through the outcast stranger's burial ground,  
Mid mouldering mounds unmarked by tomb,  
Each green and russet crumbling mound,  
Denoting the length of each tenant's swoon.

'Twas near twilight when all was still  
And hushed as the cold and silent grave,  
Save the murmuring sound of the distant rill,  
And the measured swell of the rolling wave  
On the rock-bound shore, while the parting rays  
Of the sinking sun, in masses hung  
Like streams of gold o'er each swelling wave,  
Ere night the folds of its mantle flung.

O'er earth each bright and sparkling ray,  
Like a gorgeous pall o'er land and sea,  
O'er the broad expanse of that magic bay,  
Shone o'er each wave most beautifully.  
O'er tower and spire and gilded dome,  
O'er mound and vale, o'er vale and dell,  
Its gorgeous rays in splendour shone,  
Before bidding this earth its last farewell.

While o'er the waves of that silvery bay,  
Borne on the wings of the breeze along;  
From the host of ships that at anchor lay,  
Came the measured swell of the seaman's song.

'Twas a magic scene, an enchanted hour;  
From the verge of the golden cloud on high,  
Rose spire and dome and gilded tower,  
From the glittering verge of the eastern sky.

In a lovely spot by that stormy shore,  
Washed by the hoarse Atlantic wave,  
Where loud and stormy tempests roar,  
I stood beside the outcast's lonely grave;  
Unmarked by slab, by column, by urn, or stone,  
But beneath a humble mound of mouldering clay,  
Wash'd by each angry billow's eddying foam,  
The unhappy friend of my early childhood lay.

Yes 'neath that mound with the earth's cold womb,  
Cold, cold, in death, there slept a youthful form—  
The lonely tenant of that silent tomb,  
Whom once I met as blithe as lark at morn;  
In green New Brunswick's fertile plain:  
I met him first free, generous kind and brave—  
I little thought when next we'd meet again,  
To drop a tear upon his lonely grave.

I gazed upon that grave where cold in death  
My first and truest friend now mouldering slept,  
And thought of the happy days when first we met,  
And o'er the outcast's silent bed I wept!  
I wept!—deem me not wrong, nor frail, nor weak;  
Tears have been shed by the bravest of the brave—  
But not such heartless tears as some can weep.

'Twas the only tomb raised o'er his humble grave.  
Though fortune ne'er had fallen to his part,  
Nor fame his humble labors ever bless'd,  
Yet a loftier, prouder, nobler, generous heart  
Never beat or throbb'd within a mortal's breast!

I sat me down beside that humble mound,  
Beneath a thorn that o'er his bed did wave,  
At twilight hour, when all was still around,  
And wrote the following stanzas o'er his grave:  
[To be continued.]

### THE STRANGER.

Buctouche, 25th April 1850.

BATHURST, April 12, 1850.

To the Editor of the Gleaner,

Dear Sir,—Amidst the late storms, we had in this place no lack of the ball-room, the card-table, and their attendants. A friend, mourning, in common with myself, that professing christians should be present and prominent on such occasions, has sent me a periodical containing the following extract on the subject of Dancing, with a request that (if I thought proper) I should read it from the Pulpit. I shall, however, prefer requesting that you will have the kindness to insert it, at your earliest convenience, in the Gleaner. I trust that in this way, the object intended may be better accomplished than in the other, without being liable to any serious objection. The extract is not denominational, being taken from a publication of the American Tract Society. I have heard that similar sinful gaieties—belonging to "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world"—have been uncommonly prevalent in your own vicinity. The insertion may not therefore be unsuitable to your neighborhood. Certainly, if dancing, as practised among ourselves, be consistent with the life of God in the soul, I admit that I am perfectly ignorant of the nature of true christianity; and I fear it could not be proved that any real, established christian, could continue to be mixed up with the indulgence and promotion of such godless practices and pleasures, as never fail, with us, to accompany the entertainments of the ball-room.

I remain, yours faithfully,

G. McD.

### SHALL CHRISTIANS DANCE?

Why not Christians, if any body? We would not advise a sinner to dance. A sinner is an enemy to God; and shall he dance? A sinner must repent, or perish; and shall he dance? A sinner is on the way to hell, and may be there in an hour; shall he dance? There is something supremely shocking in the idea of a dancing sinner. What fearful declarations are those of Job! "They send

forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave!" Job 21: 11, 13.

But a christian is a redeemed sinner. "He is bought with a price." "He is washed, he is sanctified, he is justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." "He is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold old things are become new." The christian is the image of Christ, and is to show to the world that he has been with Jesus, and has learned of him. The christian is "crucified to the world," and is, in a little while, to be in heaven, beholding and enjoying, and for ever to enjoy the glory of God. Let him sing for joy, and dance too before the Lord, as David did, if such an exercise be suited to his present condition, and adapted to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men. For this is the apostolic exhortation: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Shall Christians dance? Then they must have a time to dance. At what point of time shall it be? Just before, or just after, they sit down at the table of the Lord? Is it the kind of preparation which fits them for that scene which Calvary beheld? Will the dance help them to "examine themselves?" Will it enable them to deny themselves as they should, after they have been anew to see Christ crucified? Can they, at the dance, think intensely upon the scenes in the garden; in the palace of the high priest; in the hall of Pilate; on the way to Calvary; at the nailing of the victim; and at the innocent sufferer's cry of agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This cry under Almighty wrath, crushing Him to death for our sins, makes the ears of christians tingle. How can they forget it, so as to find a time to dance?

Shall Christians dance? Then they must have leisure to dance. "Wot you not," said Jesus, "that I must be about my Father's business?" He began early, and continued to the end to be about his Father's business, so that in the end he could say to his Father, "I have glorified thee upon the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Then he was ready to depart, and with his last breath cried "It is finished." Duty and suffering were completed. Are christians, the followers of such a Saviour, at leisure, so that their work is done long before their sun is set? Do they understand God's word so well, that they need study it no more? Are all their duties to God in the closet, in the family, and in His house diligently and faithfully performed? Do they perform all that is needful for the young, for the aged, for the church, for the world, and then find leisure to unite with gay companions in moving to the sound of the viol, amid the mazes of pleasurable dissipation? Is the soul only cared for? and from the dance can they return home to commune with God? to pray for all saints and the ministers of Christ, with all prayer, and without ceasing? Can they "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep themselves unspotted from the world?"

Shall christians dance? Then they must have money to maintain the dance. They are God's stewards, and he claims all they have, as well as all they are. The gold—"it is mine." The silver—"it is mine." Does he require christians, as his stewards, to take his silver and his gold, and use them to decorate their persons; to furnish room, and equipage, and music, and refreshments, for the dance? His poor must have food, and raiment, and shelter, out of His silver and gold. The institutions of religion must be sustained, the Word of God must be put into every family of man; the ministry must be furnished for every creature; and all this must come out of his treasures. And when millions are needed more than are obtained—when the cry is wafted to christian ears upon every breeze, "Come over and help us," where is the money to be found to maintain the dance?

Shall christians dance? Then they must be imitated by others. Allowing that christians have time, leisure, and money for the dance, and that it may be proper for them to dance, still a question remains: Is it expedient? Is it lawful in the sight of God, does it tend to edification? Is it attended with no danger to others? Will the gay and the thoughtless be likely to derive benefit from such examples of christianity? Did the Apostle Paul say, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend?" Should not we also look to the welfare of others? If it be not perilous to ourselves, yet if it be to others, charity requires us to abstain. If we would not advise sinners to dance, we certainly should not set the example. If but one member of a church be found in a ball-room, who will not know it? Will not every eye be fixed upon that individual? Will not some be ready to say in heart, "Did I not see thee at the Lord's Table?" Will it not be reported the next day? And will not the echo fly among the circle of the lovers of pleasure? Will not the thoughtless urge this example as a plea for the indulgence which conscience forbids? And will not many be emboldened, not only near by, but far off, to do what no sinner should venture to do, as it must be at the peril of his soul? And will not those gay companions of yours despise you for your vain indulgence.—American Tract Society.

It may here be observed that when the wise man says (Ecclesiastes 3, 4) "there is a time to dance," he may chiefly intend dancing as an expression of religious joy. Dancing undoubtedly means this in Psalm 14, 19, 3 and 150, 4, &c. It is not dancing that is condemned, but our dancing with all that is im-

G. McD.