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Poetry.

THE SISTERS OF BETHANY.

BY S. IRENE ELDER.

"Now what shall we do for the Master,"
Said Martha to Mary, one day,
"For Lazarus says He hath promised
To tarry in passing this way."

Then the beautiful face of Mary
With sudden joy was stirred,
And she said, "When the Master cometh,
Let us lose not the smallest word."

"That may fall from His lips, but heard them
As jewels, to mark a day,
That was bright with His blessed presence,
Before He went away."

"For John hath told our brother
Of a sadly mystical word,
That He spake, 'how He could not tarry,'
And Andrew and Simon heard."

"And their hearts are filled with forebodings,
And they know not what to say;
For who shall deliver Israel
If the Master cannot stay?"

"And do you not notice, Martha,
That His face diviner shows,
As though He were bearing for others
Some burden of unspoken woes?"

"O! Master, divine and holy!
If I could Thy burden bear!"
And tears from the eyes of Mary
Fell down on her beautiful hair."

Then Martha looked wisely prudent,
And said, "That the Master knew,
Doubtless, better than any,
The thing that was wisest to do;"

"That if any burden was on Him,
It was hardly likely that they,
With their women's hands of weakness,
Could help to take it away."

"But the guest-chamber needed retouching
And draping anew with white;
For the Master, as oft was His custom,
Might be pleased to tarry a night."

"And she should show how she loved Him,
By placing upon the board
The richest and rarest dainties
That Bethany could afford."

Then Mary draped the chamber
In folds of purest white,
And shaded the window lattices
To let in the softest light.

And placed the rose of Sharon
In a vase upon a stand,
And with it the valley lily,
The sweetest flower in the land.

O! blessed sisters of Bethany,
Who could minister to our Lord:
O! happy sisters of Bethany,
Who could hear His loving word.

When Mary had finished her duties,
She slowly entered her room,
And took from a hidden casket
A box of rare perfume.

But the blood left lips and forehead,
And a look like sudden pain
Came over the face of Mary,
As the subtle essence again

Filled the air around her with odors;
And again she was in a room
Of a stately house in Damascus,
And again this rare perfume

Had been poured upon her tresses
By the hand of one she loved,
And a face that seemed like a god's scanned
Hers.

And read what his heart approved,
This perfume and love together
Had pervaded the paths she trod,
Until even the streets of Damascus
Seemed like the garden of God.

And she had returned to Bethany,
With her face more beautiful grown,
And a heart that was queen in a realm
Where her king sat on his throne.

But while the laughing maidens
Were rustling her bridal gear,
The plague had come to Damascus,
Thrilling all hearts with fear.

It had entered a lonely dwelling
Where little children lay
Dying and uncared for;
And none dare bear away

The corpses of their parents,
That were grimly stretched in view,
Till the lover of Mary entered,
And did what a man could do

To care for the dying children,
Whom none in their terror would heed.
Alas! for the noble merchant,
He died for a noble deed.

Three years, that seemed like ages,
Had crept round the earth since then;
But the brightness had gone from the sunlight,
The beauty from mountain and glen.

And nothing boded to her senses
The day she had stood in the room
Of the merchant's home in Damascus,
Like the odor of this perfume.

She felt his hand on her tresses,
As he dropped its fragrance there;
She felt his touch on her forehead,
As he gently lifted her hair.

Then Mary said, with an effort,
As though she her thoughts would hush
"Yes the Master shall have the dearest,
For He giveth all for us."

And so it came that Mary
While the Master sat at meat,
Entered unnoticed behind Him,
And poured the perfume on His feet.

And wiped with her beautiful tresses
The feet, with nails to be riven;
O! beautiful Mary of Bethany,
How Jesus must love you in Heaven!

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE GOLDEN RULE.

"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

It is presumed that no precept can be more wisely and benevolently adapted to the condition of men than the foregoing. Its observance, other things being equal, is the best guarantee for happiness, individual and collective. When we say happiness, we do not mean the gratification of lusts and passions, selfish and mercenary, seeking their own ends regardless of the rights, privileges and happiness of others, but that happiness which is greatest when it is most general. The philosophy of true happiness is the knowledge of the happiness of others. The Saviour "rejoiced in Spirit" when He said "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." The apostle John had "no greater joy than to know that his children walked in the truth." Barnabas when he had "seen the grace of God" by which "a great number believed and turned to the Lord," "was glad."

The happiness which springs alone from personal considerations is of doubtful character, to say the least of it. The prosperity of Mordecai was destructive of the happiness of Haman.

The precept, "As ye would that men should do to you" &c., forms a rule of life, general in extent and particular in special in its effects. Obligatory in all conditions and circumstances, it forms a perfect rule of life in all the relations sustained by man to his fellow man,—recognized, or acknowledged in its most obvious, apparent and general bearings, by all that regard the rights of others, and yet too often overlooked in some of its less observed, though not less important, details. To steal, to embezzle, to defraud, or to destroy the property of others, is reprehensible in the highest degree, in the opinion of most men; and herein is no small security to property,—so far so good. Beyond this however there is room to disregard the golden rule. If my neighbor, friend or foe, illiterate or literate, stupid or wide awake, has an article for sale that has suddenly or otherwise risen in value, that rise in value, is as much a part of the real value of that article, as much so, as any portion of the article can be a part of its value. Say, by way of illustration, some one has a hundred barrels of flour worth eight dollars per bbl. the rise in price is fifty cents per bbl. equal to fifty dollars, which fifty is really a part of the value of the flour; hence for any one knowing the rise in the price, to take the advantage of the seller, who knows not the rise in price, and to purchase it for eight dollars per bbl. would be a vio-

lation of the precept, "As ye would, &c., or in other words, taking fifty dollars from the seller without an equivalent. Change the illustration. A dealer in flour comes to me and sells me one hundred barrels of flour for the full price, after he knows the price has fallen fifty dollars, in which transaction he takes from me fifty dollars without giving an equivalent, thus he makes me bear a loss which was in truth his own.

By such a course, and the course indicated is but one in principle of a multitude that might be cited as illustrations of the violation of the Golden Rule, is it a wonder that so much of want, misery, ruin, even animosity and lawlessness every where abounds in this world? The man that steals your property is branded with disgrace, while the man who buys, knowingly, your property for seven-eighths of its real value, because you know no better, is accounted clever, shrewd, has an eye to business, keeps himself posted, that is, lies in wait to catch his victim.

Let the reverse of this course, or principle become the even the general practice,—let men no longer look "every one on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," Phil. ii. 4, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" 1 Cor. x. 24, and what a heaven on earth begun. It is impossible to conceive of a more desirable condition of men in this world than would result from such a Christ-like course. And does christianity professedly seek, or profess, anything less than this? Have we a right to the christian name beyond our adherence to the Golden Rule?

N. E.

THE BAPTISTS IN SCOTLAND.

Whether there were any Baptists in Scotland, as in England, at the Reformation, we know not. John Knox, in the same spirit as the other reformers, wrote a treatise against what he calls "the cavillations of an Anabaptist." But whether his opponent was Scotch, English, or Continental, we do not find. The first traces of the Baptists in Scotland are found in the time of the Commonwealth. When the English army, under Cromwell, came to this country in 1650, many of the soldiers, and even some of the officers, were Baptists. These kept up the worship of God in the regiments, preached the Gospel, and immersed those who from among them received the love of the truth. Some of the troops were stationed in Leith, Edinburgh, Dalkeith, Perth, and elsewhere. At Leith they had a church, and there, in 1653-4, they printed the "London Baptist Confession of Faith," with a preface of their own, ending in these words: "Signed in the name and by the appointment of the Church of Christ, usually meeting at Leith and Edinburgh, by Thomas Spencer, Abraham Holmes, Thomas Powell, John Brady." One copy of the edition we have seen; but whether there is another we know not. In 1659 the Baptists in and about Edinburgh promoted a petition for universal toleration to all Scots except Papists and Prelatists. From the chronicles, diaries, and historical fragments of that day, we learn that the question of believers' baptism had made some impression on inquiring minds. But when the English troops under General Monk left the country in 1660, all traces of the Baptists in Scotland seem to have vanished. A fatal termination was put to the progress of their principles, and to the reign of freedom, both civil and religious; and for nearly one hundred years they are not heard of again in the land.

The Baptist Churches now in Scotland have had three distinct commencements, for the most part little connected with one another. The oldest date of any church now existing is 124 years. About the year 1750, Sir William Sinclair of Dunbeath was

baptized in England, returned home, and began to preach the gospel to his own tenantry, and formed a church on his estate at Keiss, in Caithness, which continues to this day—the oldest Baptist Church in Scotland.

Another and much larger stream, flowing from altogether a different source, took its rise in 1765, with two good men, members of John Glass's Church, in Glasgow. These were Robert Carmichael, who had formerly been an Antiburgher minister, and Archibald Maclean, a printer, but who afterwards became the much more renowned of the two, both as a pastor and a theological writer. In order to baptism, Mr. Carmichael went to London, and was immersed by the well-known Dr. John Gill, in October 1765. On his return he immersed Mr. Maclean and five or six others. After this a church was formed in Edinburgh, and these two good men appointed co-pastors in 1768. This church now meets in Bristo Place. Mr. Maclean's writings are pretty well known in the theological world. They occupy six 8vo volumes. His Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews is very precious, and much more readable than the bulky tomes of the greater Owen. He died in 1812, having been one of the pastors of the same church forty-four years. In 1769 a sister church was formed in Glasgow, which now meets in John Street.

Another class of churches in Scotland is what are called English Baptists, because their plan is much the same with the churches in England in supporting their pastors, and having educated men wholly set apart to the service of the sanctuary. Although the Haldanes were not the originators of this class of churches—for they kept by Scotch Baptist notions to the last—yet these other churches sprung out of theirs. The first Scotch English Baptist Church was begun in 1806, in Richmond Street Chapel, Edinburgh, by the well-known Christopher Anderson, author of "The Annals of the English Bible," a store-house of all that is interesting and valuable in the narratives of Tyndale, Coverdale, and other good men who laboured to bring the English Bible to the glory which it reached in 1611. Mr. Anderson's church in 1818 removed to another chapel, in Rose Street, where it still is. He was pastor for about forty-four years. The Haldane brothers, Robert and James, became Baptists in 1808. As this led many of their students and preachers to examine the question, the result was that not a few followed their example. In 1810 Dr. William Innes was one of these, but as his church was composed chiefly of brethren who had left James Haldane because of his becoming a Baptist, rather than change again, Mr. Innes and they agreed to bear with one another on baptism, and thus began the first open communion church in Scotland. Both of these excellent men, James Haldane and William Innes, were between fifty and sixty years in the ministry, and both much loved and eminently blessed in the vineyard of the Lord. [The church to which the former ministered, after worshipping for many years in the Tabernacle, Leith Walk, ultimately purchased a chapel in Duncan Street, Newington, in which they now meet. Mr. Innes' church, after meeting for long in Elder Street, Edinburgh, having at length outgrown the accommodation there, built for themselves a new place of worship in Dublin Street, to which they removed in 1858.—*Note, Ed*]

In 1816 a Baptist Home Mission was begun "for the dissemination of the gospel chiefly in the highlands and islands. From that day to this the Society has continued a means of unspeakable blessing in aiding some of the most laborious and useful ministers of Jesus Christ. Its income is now about £2000 a year, and it aids between twenty and thirty of these men, besides what they receive from the churches of which they are pastors. The society has begun to turn its at-

tention to the Lowlands and the towns, but little has yet been done in this direction. Besides the laboriousness of the Highland missionaries, another interesting circumstance is the general length of their days. A goodly number of them, "by reason of strength," get beyond four-score; and most, if not all of them, beyond threescore and ten. Besides what the Psalmist calls "by reason of strength," their longevity is thought to be owing to plain diet, plenty of exercise, more preaching from place to place than close study, and abundance of fresh air in going over hills and dales with the good tidings of salvation.

There is also a Union of Churches, combining the objects of a county association and a general union for the whole kingdom. In Scotland and the islands, including Orkney, Shetland, and the Hebrides, there are about 100 Baptist Churches, with about 7000 members and about 6000 Sabbath scholars. 68 churches are in the union, and as it becomes more manifestly active and useful, more are joining. Income of the Union about £900.

In the education of a rising ministry, the churches have been sadly behind. And this is another reason why Baptist principles have not more rapidly and steadily advanced. In 1845 a Theological Institution was begun, which reared a number of young men for the Lord's work, and continued its operations till 1856, when an Education Association was formed in Glasgow, which continued till 1869; and now the matter is taken up by the Union as one of its most important objects. One remarkable and pleasing circumstance in the Baptist Churches of Scotland at the present time is the number of Englishmen who are settling as pastors over them. About a dozen at least are labouring acceptably and usefully in the land. In like manner, a number of Scotchmen are pastors in England. This is one of the signs of that happy change which, in these wonderful days of ours, is tending mightily to merge Scotch and English people and interests in one—a change which will be still more happy and powerful when once the unhallowed union of Church and State in both lands is forever dissolved.

In taking a general survey of the churches, there are decided tokens of progress, although slow. Scotland is a much harder and colder soil for Baptist truth than either England or Germany, not to say America. For this there are various reasons. One is the national character of self-opinionativeness. Another the early training of the Shorter Catechism, which is very dogged on the right of infants to a few drops of water from the hands of a minister. Another is the extraordinary close and firm bond between the Presbyterian ministers and their people. There is nothing like it among the Episcopalian and Lutheran Churches in England and Germany. Another reason is the much nearer approach of the Scotch reformation to New Testament principles than in those other lands. On this account the people are more satisfied of being right. But with all this the Baptist Churches must clearly take blame to themselves for want of effort, union, and system in keeping old ground and breaking up new ground, and strengthening one another's hands in the work of the Lord. However, we are thankful for tokens of improvement, and pray that the present endeavours to bring about the greater sway of pure New Testament principles in the land may have the smile of heaven resting upon them.

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—Scottish Baptist Magazine.

There are many who are melted under the Word, who are never moulded by it. They have deep convictions, and perhaps joyous emotions; but the old form remains. They are delivered, or cast into another mould. Rom. vi. The soul is still encrusted with sin and worldliness. In the present day there is special need to beware of religion of mere feeling.—*Old Truths.*