

THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER



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Poetry.

HAVE I DONE WHAT I COULD?

I cannot draw the warrior's sword;
I would not if I could—
I may not give the thunder word,
To drench the field with blood:
But I may act a warrior's part,
Within that listed field—the heart.

My path leads not through foreign lands,
O'er mountain, waste, or sea;
I wander not with pilgrim bands;
Nor care the world to see:
There may be gems of art in Rome,
But I have choicer gems at home.

I cannot plead with ferid tongue,
Nor strike the minstrel's lyre;
Or bland its magic tones with song,
To set the soul on fire;
But I may breathe a "still small voice,"
To make some aching heart rejoice.

'Tis not for me to paint the scene
The artists' brush portrays—
The laughing hill, the meadow green,
The sun's cloud-softened rays;
But, surely, I a sketch may paint
Of scenes to glad yon lonely saint.

The sculptor's chisel is not mine,
Nor mine to mould the clay;
Or make the Parian marble shine
As with Promethean ray;
But is there no rude shapeless heart
On which to try the sculptor's art?

I am not skill'd to heal disease,
To set the fractur'd limb;
I cannot strait the cripple's knees,
Or clear the eye-ball dim.
But I may ply that art divine,
The art to pour the "oil and wine."

I have not wealth, or power, or skill,
To broad cast all around;
The world's wide field I may not till,
Nor sow its fallow ground;
But little spots are here and there,
Which I may weed of grief or care.

The man of learning and of parts
Soars far above my path;
I cannot cope with stately hearts,
Who scorn my ember hearth:
Be mine while in this dreary wild
The lot to bless the poor man's child.

Scriptural Exposition.

PROVERBS XXVIII: 27.

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

'There is none that desireth want, nor that wisheth to be poor. And therefore the carnally-minded, for to save themselves from it, carefully gather, and enclose so much wealth as they can by any means possible, and they think that by such means they shall avoid lack. And indeed, after man's judgment, it is the best way that a man can take. But the Holy Ghost doth teach us another means—clear contrary to natural reason. *He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack.* This is against reason, which saith, that we must gather and hold fast to avoid poverty. She looketh not to what God can and will do. She is blind to the works of the Lord, and chiefly in those that he worketh according to his free promise.' Here also covetousness combines with reason to contradict the word of God. The promise is given by him,

who hath full power to make it good—who has a thousand ways of repaying what is done or sacrificed at his command. The fruit is absolutely certain, 'as the best preventive against poverty, putting money in the bank of heaven which can never forfeit credit. The best securities on earth will not hinder "riches from making to them wings, and flying away." But when have the securities of heaven ever been falsified? Yet after all, with the carnal mind covetousness prevails above faith, and a "trust in uncertain riches makes the living God a liar."

Do we—the professed followers of Christ—lay these truths really to heart—testing our own principles and practice by them—and honestly intending to take them—instead of selfish prudence and expedience—as our rule and measure of conduct. Again and again does God ratify his engagement. Yet many who are "earnest in contending for the faith" of the Gospel, and who would resist at any cost the invasion of heresy—we fear would be ashamed to expose the scanty limits of their liberality.

Did we really believe the promise annexed to this duty, we should not so often *hide our eyes* from a case of distress. Yet not only do we neglect to look out for objects of compassion, but actually we turn away from them, as the servant of God would turn away from sin; and then justify ourselves on the ground of frequent imposition, and the many worthy objects, which may or may not come before us. *Many a curse* is entailed upon this grudging spirit, both from God and man. And is there no danger here of the everlasting curse? Ponder it well—lest prudence and discrimination check the glow of charity, prove a cloak of selfishness, and obscure that light of Christian benevolence and love, which ought to shine before men in the profession of the true servants of God.

PROVERBS XXIX: 1.

He, that being often reprov'd (a man of reproof, Marg.) hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

This is indeed an awful word. The intractable ox, *hardening his neck* against the yoke, is but too apt a picture of the stubborn sinner, casting off the restraints of God. This was the uniform complaint against Israel, a true picture of the mass of the ungodly before our eyes. Conviction follows upon conviction, chastening upon chastening. Still the rebel *hardens his neck*, stops his ears against the voice of God, and invites his threatened judgments.

Awfully frequent are these instances among the children of godly parents, or the hearers of a faithful minister. Every means of grace is a solemn but despised reproof. Aggravated sin makes the judgment of a righteous God more manifest. The more enlightened the conscience, the more *hardened the neck*. Every beating pulse is rebellion against a God of love.

Sometimes it is the more immediate voice of God. An alarming illness, a dangerous accident, or the death of a companion in wickedness, is "the rod and reproof" intended to "give wisdom." But if the "fool" continue to despise all God's reproof, his *destruction will be sudden and without remedy.*

Such was the *destruction* of the old world, and of the cities of the plain, long *hardened* against the forbearance of God. Pharaoh grew more stubborn under the rod, and rushed madly upon his *sudden* ruin. Eli's sons "hearkened not unto the voice of their father, and in one day died both of them." Ahab, *often reprov'd* by the godly prophet, *hardened his neck*; and "the bow, drawn at a venture," received its commission. How must Judas have steeled his heart against his Master's *reproof*! Onward he rushes, "that he might go to his own

place." Truly Divine patience has its end. And this fearful moment once arrived, "the vessels of wrath—endured with much long-suffering"—are now shown more manifestly, "as fitted for destruction." No remedy—not even the Gospel—can remedy the case. As they lived, so they die, so they stand before God—*without remedy*. No blood—no advocate pleads for them. As they sink into the burning lake, every billow of fire, as it rolls over them—seems to sound—*without remedy!*

Sinner! wouldst thou but be wise to consider thy guilt, thy state, thy prospect, while yet "thy judgment and damnation linger?" Is not "the Spirit of grace" pleading with thine heart? Would he not now save thee, wouldst thou obey his call? Thou art standing upon mercy's ground, betwixt heaven and hell. O thou God of Almighty Sovereign grace, show "the pattern of thy long-suffering." Let the sinner sing thy everlasting praise, as "a brand plucked out of the fire," a monument of thine over-bounding grace.—Bridges.

Biography.

DAVID MARKS.

"Thy will be done."—Mat. 6: 10.

David Marks died Dec. 1, 1845, aged 40.

Mr. Marks entered upon the active ministry in the Freewill Baptist denomination, at the early age of fifteen years. But though his educational attainments were necessarily limited, yet his manly ability, his fervent piety, and his melting eloquence, drew immense crowds to his preaching. His intense application to study, and his onerous labors in the ministry, early enervated his once vigorous constitution. But as nature failed, the strength and purity of his piety became more conspicuous. His last sickness was but a scene of progressive spiritual triumphs. As he was rapidly approaching the grave, he remarked, "O, if I had health, how I would delight to run through the churches, and again hold up the doctrine of holiness of heart, of entire consecration to God! I am weaker—thank God for it! O, I am happy, very happy! I am going to my father,—to the society of disembodied spirits, to the sweet labours of eternity! The tomb is not gloomy,—the Saviour has passed through it! My bloated limbs took beautiful to me,—a sign that I am near my home! There is nothing to be accomplished by my staying here. I have nothing to do. I am entirely reconciled and ready."

JOHN HOWARD.

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."—Psa. 137: 6.

John Howard, the philanthropist, died Jan. 20, 1790, aged 64.

His having been immured within the walls of a French prison led him, when fortune changed, to examine the condition of the captive. To relieve and comfort the prisoner, he travelled between fifty and sixty thousand miles, at an expense of nearly one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. So calm and peaceful was he in his last hours, that he cheerfully gave directions respecting his funeral. "There is a spot near the village of Dantighay—this would suit me nicely. You know it well, for I have often said that I should like to be buried there. And let me beg of you, as you value your old friend, not to suffer any pomp to be used at my funeral, nor any monument or monumental inscription whatsoever to mark where I am laid; but lay me quietly in the earth, place a sun-dial over my grave, and let me be forgotten."