

The Religious Intelligencer.

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That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ—PETER.

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THE GREAT TEST.

"Oh! to enter eternity which one doubt upon the mind," exclaimed the pious commentator, Scott, momentarily overwhelmed with a sense of its great realities a short time before his decease. "Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! Eternity!"

It is fruitless to attempt to gain an adequate idea of eternal existence.

"How long art thou, eternity?" is asked in a grand old German hymn. And the reflective answer:

"A little bird, with fretting beak,

Might wear to nought the loftiest peak,
Though but each thousand years it came,
But thou wert then as now the same."

Four hundred and thirty-two million years, according to the sacred books of the Hindoos make one day of Brahma. But an epoch of Brahma would not be eternity. Far-reaching and tedious to contemplate is the illustration by which Saurin once endeavored to impress his hearers with serious reflections of their future state. "I take," he said, "the greatest number of years that can be imagined. I add ages to ages, millions of ages to millions of ages. I form of these a fixed number, and stay my imagination. I then suppose God to create a world like this. I suppose him creating it by forming one atom after another, and employing in the production of each atom the time fixed in my calculation. Then I suppose the Creator to arrange these atoms, and to pursue the same plan of arranging them as of creating them. Finally, I suppose him to dissolve the whole, observing the same method in the dissolution as he observed in the creation and disposition of the whole." Great, indeed, would be the time spent in the accomplishment of such a work. But even this would not be eternity.

"A circle infinite thou art,
Thy center is eternal now."

In no manner is the power of religion more impressively illustrated than in the conduct of the Christian, serenely contemplating, at the close of life, his proximity to eternity; and in no condition is the utter destitution of the unregenerate soul so clearly visible as when it is called, in the last hours of its probation, to reflect on the same event. In the vigor of his health, man may deceive both himself and his fellow-men; but when he stands on the brink of eternity, rescued from his lethargy into which he has fallen, instinctively conscious of what he is, and what is to be his destiny, lost in his endeavours to gain a conception of the endless state upon which he is about to enter, he can no longer deceive himself, and it is most frequently the case, he dares no longer deceive others. On the brink of eternity man walks with care. There his real feelings are expressed. There the inner world of his false views, theories, and hopes, and the Christian proves to the last the truth and consolation of his faith, looks forward to a more glorious inheritance, rejoices and triumphs.

"I past for eternity," said Zeuxis. "Tis sweet for me to think of eternity," said Brainerd. "I am almost there," said a dying man. "I am not afraid to plunge into eternity," said Andrew Fuller, shortly before his death. "I bless God," said Dr. Watts in his last days, "I can lie down with comfort at night, not being solicitous whether I awake in this world or in another." In like strain Charles Wesley expressed his feelings on his death-bed.

"In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a helpless worm redeem?
My only hope thou art—
Strength of my falling flesh and heart;
Oh, could I catch a snail from thee,
And drop into eternity!"

"I go," said Whitfield, in his memorable sermon, preached at Newburyport on the day of his death, "to my everlasting rest. My sun has risen, alone, and is setting—say, it is about to rise and shine forever. I have not lived in vain. And, though I could live to preach Christ a thousand years, I die to be with him, which is far better." "I have now done with mortal things," wrote Elizabeth Rowe, "and all to come is vast eternity. Eternity! How transporting is the sound? As long as God exists, my being and happiness are, I doubt not, secure. These unbounded desires which the wide creation cannot limit, shall be satisfied forever."

To such as these—true, humble, devoted followers of Christ—eternity approaches like the stealing of eve to the laborer, bearing him peace and rest. The serenity of a summer's twilight is in their twilight of life. Their death is a *mors sine morte*. The Delectable Mountains and the beautiful Beulah are theirs. To him who inhabits eternity, and beneath whose wing they have found a refuge in the varying scenes of life, they are going. He is their Father, their Savior, and comforter; and the way that leads to him cannot be otherwise than delightful.

Reverse the medal, and how different is the picture. "It is not giving up my breath," wrote a young nobleman, who after a gay and dissipated career, in which he had derided religion, and held himself aloof from its influence, was prostrated by a fatal disease, "it is not being for ever insensible that is the thought at which I shrink. It is the terrible hereafter, the something beyond the grave at which I recoil. Those great realities, which, in the hours of mirth and vanity, I have treated as phantoms, as the idle dreams of superstitious beings, these start forth,

and dare me now in their most terrible demonstration. My awakened conscience feels something of that eternal vengeance I have often defied.

"To what heights of madness is it possible for human nature to reach? What extravagance is it to jest with death and to laugh at damnation! to sport with eternal chains, and to recreate a jovial fancy with the scenes of infernal misery!"

"Oh with what horror do I recall those hours of vanity I have wasted? Return, ye lost neglected moments. How should I prize you above the Eastern treasures! Let me dwell with hermits; let me rest on the cold earth; let me converse in cottages; may I but once more stand a candidate for an immortal crown, and have my probation for celestial happiness."

Alas! to hear the approach of the waves of eternity with such confessions as these—to acknowledge that life has been a failure, that the future is dark, that the soul is predestinated that something dreadful awaits it—how solemn! how awful! How pitiable is the expression of the departing C. J. Gardner, "Would I were that dog" of Randolph of Roanoke. "Remorse, remorse, remorse!" of the voluptuous Sir Francis Delaval. "Let my example warn you of the fatal error into which I have fallen;" of the ambitious Cardinal Maxarine. "Oh, my poor soul! what will become of thee? whither wilt thou go? How does it touch the heart with commiseration to hear the brilliant Madame Du Defant declare in one sentence her infidelity, and, in another, refute the declaration by exclaiming in despair, "Tell me why, detesting life, I yet dread to die or to read the melancholy assertion of the erring Byron, made near the close of his life, "I have often wished for insanity, for anything to quell memory, the never-dying worm that feeds on my heart!"

Are we building our heavenly hopes on a foundation that will stand in the presence of eternal realities? Soon, at the longest, we must play our part in the last great tragedy of life. We live surrounded by the elements of dissolution. Of those elements our frail bodies are made, and they must soon perish. "Like the dream of a distracted person," says Jeremy Taylor, "man goes off, and is forgotten." "A dream of a shadow," sung Plunder of life; and the Hebrew Psalmist, "We spend our years as a tale that is told." Almost before we are aware, our years will draw to a close, and the threshold of eternity will lie before us. Will our last hour usher us into misery or felicity? Overwhelmed with remorse for a wasted life, shall we tremble over the brink of eternity as the sere leaf trembles in the autumn wind, over the precipice that girts the sea? or filled with the love of God, shall we rejoice in the assurance that we have a glory begun within us that is for ever to endure?

—Independence. H. B.

THE GRAVES OF THE MURDERED.

I was riding along a country road one day, when my friend pointed out to me a lonely grave in the adjacent field. Many years ago—perhaps in "the times of this ignorance"—the victim whose body was buried there took the sword and perished with the sword. He kept a tavern and endeavored to sell intoxicating drinks both respectably, and safely. He did sell liquor for a long time, without apparent personal harm, but frequently, in spite of his efforts, some drunken fellows would get into a brawl in his tavern, and show that liquor-selling is in fact an "unregulated irregularity." Still the man did his best by telling this and that applicants at his bar that he "had got enough." This often produced explosions of curses and threats, which ought to have convinced the liquor-seller that his aim to make his business decent and safe was hopeless. But it did not seem to convince him.

There were some sad consequences traced to his bar which made him uneasy. He saw some of his neighbors forming intemperate habits, and yet in spite of remonstrances, these men were doing the thing so respectably, "never taking too much," that the landlord could not deny them when they asked for the stated dram. In due time, some of them became confirmed drunkards, and lost both character and property. Still what could the landlord do? Must he be held responsible?

One day two men came into his bar-room, and asked for liquor. They were somewhat intoxicated, and he told them they "had enough." They insisted, and he was firm, and from one degree of resentment they passed to another, until they attacked and stabbed him to death in his own bar-room. And thus he died. One of his murderers finished his life in the penitentiary and the other, the young man, was hung. Where the murderers were buried I know not, but were conspicuous by the roadside, was the grave of the murdered man, at the head of which is a stone which states the fact and the time of its occurrence. Rum made a deep mark that time, as indeed it usually does.

I was once traveling along a certain railway, when on a hill within a few feet of the track I saw the graves of two murderers. Perhaps the grave of the murdered was there too, but I was struck with the fact stated that the man was brutally murdered by men who had served themselves to the deed with intoxicating liquors. The bad men were greedy for their victim's money, but the probability is that he would never have been murdered, and that these two dishonored

graves would not now hold the remains of two murderers ignominiously hung, but for intoxicating liquors. And thus does rum mix itself in the bloody crimes which have their monuments in all parts of the country.

But "our town" has its graves of the murdered also. The lust of money was at the bottom of the crime, but, as afterwards appeared, it could not be done by the brutal man until he had repeatedly stimulated his courage with draughts of legally sold rum. The sight the wretch left behind him beggars description, and those who saw it shudder to recall it. And to this day, as people stand by these graves they recall the facts which show that these are graves of the murdered in consequence of rum. Ages will not efface the mark made here by rum.

But I frequently see some graves which are not always associated with murder. There was no indictment, or trial, or conviction, or execution for murder, and yet people sometimes said that those graves were filled by a sort of murder. This poor woman died not of disease, but because her husband, made drunk at a legalized rum tavern, drove her into the storm. Why not cut on her head-stone, as in the first case mentioned in this letter, "Murdered on Town-Meeting Day, April—, 18—?" And here is another grave holding the body of a man blown to pieces with powder one fourth of July, just because he was demoted by the use of legally sold and purchased rum. Why not put a stone at his grave, in which may be cut, "Murdered on the Fourth of July, 18—?" In fact, our graveyard, and every other one with which I am acquainted, has some graves of the murdered which are not recognized as such by any judicial proceedings of any kind. The feelings of survivors might revolt from the honest truth told on a head-stone, and yet each one might have a record beginning, "Murdered on—day of—, 18—."

But there is another kind of murder which I do not find in the statute, and which is by no means uncommon. I remember a grave in which was buried the body of a poor idiot girl, who lived a score of years or more. Poor thing, she never walked, barely had intelligence enough to know the presence of her angel mother, could not talk, and was a helpless burden whose pitiful condition excited wonderful love from her friends. How came she so? What destroyed the reason, the comfort, the usefulness, the life of this poor girl? Her drunken father entailed it on her. He was the murderer, and those who helped him to form and continue the habit, were accessories to that murder. How would it look to state the fact on the head-stone of the poor idiot girl?

If any one will be at the trouble to examine the reports of the asylums or schools for idiots he will be astounded to find how often men in this way murder the very reason and happiness of their offspring. One of my neighbors, a very excellent but suffering person, has been all his life the victim of fits which were his drunken father's inalienable entailment upon him. Such cases are very common. Suppose this last man should wear on his breast a placard stating that his mind, his comfort, his usefulness, had been murdered by rum before his body was born? Suppose these poor rum idiots should wear the same statement—"Murdered by rum drunk by an infatuated father and sold by legalized liquor-dealers." Why not state the truth? It would be an unpleasant, but a true and wholesome statement.

So much for "the graves of the murdered." Some are literally graves, others are metaphorically, though alive, because they hold the murdered remains of soul, of reason, of joy, and rum did it.—[N. Y. Observer.

For the Intelligencer.
DIALOGUE ON TOBACCO.

CONTINUED FROM INTELLIGENCER OF FEBRUARY 22ND.

"Let every man prove his own work." Gal. 5: 4.

C.—Your conclusion with respect to the use of Tobacco, are in my judgment harsh and uncharitable, as the offence (if offence it be) keeps good company and is supported in the example of many learned and good men.

P.—Such an answer is no vindication of the habit. As learned and good men may retain their merited destinations without assuming a state of impeccability; the "good company" of which you boast is however, daily becoming less numerous, by the withdrawal from your ranks of men who have the perception to discover and the candor and moral courage to confess the inconsistency of Christian offerings to the "Smoke Idol."

C.—Yet many ministers, of the most ardent zeal and unquestioned piety, prominent in evangelical labours and "revival" scenes continue attached to your so-called "vice."

P.—I have nowhere said, or implied that a man who is a consumer of tobacco, is not therefore in the way to heaven, but I do reiterate that the example of such Christians would be more consistent with Christian profession, did they totally abstain from its use, and both their progress and usefulness would be enhanced thereby, even as the Apostle admonishes Heb. 12: 1. "Lay aside every weight and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." This tobacco indulgence is a heavy weight to many Christians—a heavy expense too and also a heavy responsibility as they hereby give the weight of

their example, to a class of imitators who boast therein having nothing higher as a reason to offer in vindication of the practice.

C.—Such examples are a sufficient vindication being based upon the Apostles reasoning, Rom. 14: 14. "There is nothing unclean of itself," though it may be so construed by men morbidly sensitive to scruples of conscience.

P.—Your ascription bears upon it a jesuitical disguise, but is transparent nevertheless, and cannot be made to serve your purpose, for the passage quoted clearly gives to all men full liberty of conscience in the premise, to decide either for or against, and respects equally both conclusions; the whole chapter however (Rom. 14), is most decidedly opposed to a latitudinarian course of sensuous indulgence in meats or wines or anything by which sin is evolved, or men endangered of being turned out of the way of truth, not that "meats" or "drinks" constitute a part of religion, but that every act of the Christian must bear full evidence of being an emanation of a mind regulated by divine grace. The persistent attempt to class your "vice" as a "habit" in the category of nutritious aliments, and to obtain for its use, the sanctions of sanitary precepts, and the favour of the word of God, must not however pass without observation and rebuke. But if on the contrary, it were of the highest value in the dietary scale, its bearing upon the social and spiritual well being of the community must alone decide its claims to use or rejection, for the true Christian will not only cheerfully abstain from particular articles of food, but lay down his life should it be necessary in order to promote the kingdom of Christ and the salvation of souls.

C.—You speak as though the very charities of Christians who use tobacco were compromised thereby.

P.—And so they are, to a serious extent, as we will shew.—Many Christians do bar themselves the luxury of doing good by wasting their means in sacrificing to the "Smoke Idol." Money spent uselessly is wasted—to waste the price of food is to deny bread to the hungry; many poor men, in this way literally take the bread from needy families. Poor men may be cited, who say they wish to but cannot (will not) send their children to a Sabbath School for fear of clothing suitable for them to appear in on the Sabbath, who nevertheless spend annually in tobacco an amount sufficient to provide clothing for their neglected children; with equal confidence we can point to not a few who confessedly are "too poor" to take a paper, or buy a popular Book, who are so by reason of the costly indulgence in this "vice habit."

The streams of Christian benevolence, are largely drained of their refreshing influences from this "pernicious indulgence."—How many Bibles are lost! how many souls perish in this "Smoke!"

Then this "habit" is not only destructive of good in the waste of money; but in the equally serious waste of precious time consumed by its votaries. What would be the gain in a spiritual point of view to that community or church whose tobacco consuming members should agree to redeem the time (worse than lost upon this lust) by uniting in devout prayer for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon themselves, the church and the world?

Let individuals, who excuse themselves from duty of private prayer, but find time for indulgence in the Pipe, ponder seriously this matter, let such persons think of the inference deducible from such a practice. There is a Christian man who has fifteen minutes after his noon-meal at his disposal, how does he spend it? Look into his dwelling—and blush, he sacrifices to the "Smoke Idol," but from his closet no incense arises to his Saviour, and praise sits silent on his tongue: he hurries back into the world to engage in renewed spiritual conflicts, weakened, when he might have been refreshed.

The course of such an one must needs be chequered and erratic. Let us further examine the moral and social position, and efforts of men partaking freely of this sensuous indulgence. How does such a man stand among his brethren? what is the measure of his influence for good among his fellows? Is he in the front as a moral reformer and pioneer of intellectual advancement? He, a moral reformer! Nonsense! He, a total abstainer, and example to his fellow men of self-denial and practical economy! The advocate of "Temperance and morality" addicted to this "low indulgence." Neither truly knows whereof he affirms, nor what he is. He may be likened to the beautiful fruit produced in abundance on the mountains in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea, shining with a most brilliant lustre in the sun, and apparently delicious, but on being tasted proving as bitter as gall, being in fact not a fruit but the laboured effort of the gall insect as in the case quoted. Such practice, is not a sequence of Temperance, but the product of the gall insect of lust throwing out upon a otherwise healthy limb the foul excrement of lust under specious covering.

The wealthy tobacco consumer too presents an equally conflicting moral temperament as seen in its practical development; his £1 looms large upon the subscription lists for benevolent purposes, but his annual payments for "Cigars, meerschaums and tobacco, present a total vastly preponderating that which he conceives it his duty to give to religious or benevolent enterprises.

The actual aggregate state of the case—Self-indulgence versus Christian liberty—stands thus in Great Britain. The amount spent annually in tobacco exceeds £8,000,000 etc!! or more than ten times the amount subscribed in that country to all the religious and benevolent schemes put together; a state of things which proportionately is fully equalled in this province and on all the Continent of America, a state of things which no truly pious mind can regard with indifference, and the practical evil of which must involve a stain of moral self-pollution upon every contributor to the frightful evil. "Come out from among them and be ye separate."

"Touch not, taste not, handle not the unclean thing." The gratification (and no one claims any higher benefit from the habit) is unworthy the high and holy aspirations of a sanctified mind, as it is at best but a false gratification, produced, not by quickening but by the stupifying of the mental and physical powers, while the "comfort" obtained from it blunts the spiritual desires for enjoyment, turning aside the heart from those pure delights which in Christ refresh and delight the soul—to the turbid streams of sensuality, which while they allure, sap and destroy true sensibility and too often prepare the way for further successful inroads upon experimental godliness, by the enemy of souls.

That only the title of the cost of this senseless and "filthy indulgence" should be laid upon the Altars of missions, piety and benevolence, is a disgrace to the age in which we live.

Reader have you contributed to this foul plot upon the active charity of our common Christianity by a personal sacrifice of your money for this "filthy weed"? and will you not break the trammels of this lust, and join the self-denying band (increasing daily) resolved no longer to share the personal responsibility connected with the continuance in society of such a monstrous evil, and to divert the sums spent in self-indulgence to the spreading abroad of the word of God, the preaching of the Gospel to the poor, and the amelioration of human woe?

We have confused our remarks to the moral aspects of this vexed question not because strong Physiological arguments cannot be brought against "the habit,"—Scientific and Professional men, have done this to a demonstration already but because we think the Christian will be more powerfully impressed by a train of reasoning based upon his own practice. And brought into collision with the frightful results of indulgence when multiplied into the aggregates of a community or a nation, a few only of the salient points of this question have yet been dwelt upon the phases of the question are perpetually presenting topics for discussion, and may lead us, subsequently, to return to the subject.

J. B.

With adverse winds and waves by night a fragile bark contends;
Nor care, nor skill, nor toil severe, her mariners befriends.
When, lo! an object still more dread exalts their anxious fears!
For, walking on that troubled sea, a human form appears!

On him, a hostile spirit deem'd, with trembling awe they gaze;
And, when he hears their laboring bark, a cry of terror raises.
Yet from that form, too dimly seen, and hence in gloom array'd,
These cheering words are heard ere long: "Tis I; be not afraid!"

What music in that voice of love now charms their listening ear!
No hostile shade those words reveal, but their lov'd Master near.
His soothing voice restores their peace, and calms the raging main;
And soon the wond'ring band with him their wish'd for haven gain.

EXPOSTULATION.

To all his saints the Lord is near—most near when most they need;
And yet in straits how soon dark fears to hope and peace succeed.
How soon, when outward troubles lurk, or inward trials rise,
Their wondrous Saviour's truth and love are clouded in their eyes.

And canst thou, child of light, despond, and can thy heart believe,
That He who heavenly hope inspires, will e'er that hope deceive?
Will He who hears the raven's cry the prayer of faith not heed?
Will He who doth for sparrows care forsake his child in need?

Could He in time of trouble fail thy present help to be;
Or any needful good withhold, who bore the cross for thee?
On him, the same in stormy nights as days the most serene;
On him, the Friend who changeth not, in every trial lean.

CONSOLATION.

Though hosts of dangers, Christian, lurk, upon thy heavenward way,
Thy constant Guide and Guard is He whom winds and waves obey.
Though storms of trouble o'er thee roll, and earth-born joys all fade,
Yet mercy whispers in the gloom: "Tis I; be not afraid."

Even on the brink of death's dark stream, still cast on him thy care;
Thy Guide and Guard through trials past will not forsake thee there,
Soon with the blest on thy bright shore 'shalt thou enraptur'd stand,
Nor conflict feel, nor danger fear, in Canaan's happy land.

No sigh shall there distend thy breast, no tear thy cheek bedew:
For "there the weary are at rest," and "God makes all things new."
There, with what wonder, love, and praise, wilt thou thy Guide admire:
And bless the wisdom, power, and grace, which sav'd thee, though "by fire."

WAKEFIELD.

I do not wish to Die in Debt to the Church.

Rev. James Scott, an English missionary at Demerara, laboring among recaptured Africans, furnishes the following interesting statement:—

"In the month of October last, one of our female friends—not a native of Africa, but born in this country—came to me to pay her monthly contribution, and presented me with four dollars—seventeen shillings and fourpence sterling. I knew she had a numerous young family, and a husband who had become unkind, which led me to say I feared she could not well spare so large a sum. She replied: 'I know I am behind in my contributions. I have just got a little money to meet my present necessities, and I bring this. It will pay for me until the end of the year. My life is uncertain; I do not wish to die in debt to the church.'—Well, but a few weeks after this she was laid down on a bed of sickness, which very soon after removed her from the church below—whose prosperity appeared to interest her—to the church above, whose bliss she now enjoys. My visits to her bedside were few, for disease, as usual in this climate, made quick dispatch; but they were the most delightful and refreshing I have ever been permitted to enjoy. The day before her decease, the last time I saw her, she said: 'O, what do I owe this dear Saviour, who purchased my soul by this death? O, that precious blood, that cleanseth from all sin! I was a vile sinner—Jesus sought me—found me—saved me. O, his smile is peace, is hope, is heaven! He calls me—I go—I shall see him, and be with him! I shall praise him forever! O, that will be good! It is impossible any description can convey an adequate idea of the heavenly joy of that Christian woman in view of death. I felt more of heaven at her bedside than I think I ever did before.'—[London Miss. Chron.

FEMALE PRAYER-MEETINGS.

By this term is meant a gathering of wives, mothers and the younger or older females of a church, by themselves, for the purpose of spending an hour in prayer and free religious conversation.—Not a "ladies'" meeting, necessarily, nor a mother's meeting, exclusively, but a female meeting, intended to embrace all, the higher and the lower, the older and the younger who may incline to come together, and who can and will unite to sustain and encourage such a meeting.—Every Church has it not. But why not? Is there not a fitness, a necessity for it in every Christian fold? Why should not the sisters of a church unitedly present their petitions to our common Father's throne, thus quickening and deepening a devotional spirit, and in like manner affording mutual encouragement in their Christian course? If they may not speak, and audibly pray in a promiscuous gathering, so much the more should they be urged and encouraged to meet by themselves for these great purposes.

I remember well the first "Female Prayer Meeting" I ever heard of. It was notified on the Sabbath, by the pastor where I worshipped. I did not precisely understand its character or necessity. But my office was at an angle in the streets of the little village where almost all passing or repassing was in my view. On the afternoon of this, to my new meeting I could see certain mothers and sisters wending their way to the dwelling of one of their number, and it seemed to me that their faces told their errands. I sometimes watched them on their return, and was often deeply impressed by their serious manner. I soon became intimate with their pastor, and learned from him his appreciation of that meeting. "Often," he said, "but for the female prayer-meeting, I should despair of my church. That is my right arm. So long as they hold on in prayer as now, I have hope." There, as in many other parishes, these mothers and sisters had more intelligence, character and consistent piety than were apparent in their husbands and sons. By thus communing together, they kept alive the fires of a pure devotion, and their influence was felt throughout the churches and the community.—A Pastor in Congregationalist.