

THE PEACE AND PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

Who would have supposed that man would have ever been so blind to his true interest and real pleasure as to neglect the religion of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ: for in religion you have happiness here and hereafter—godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. All mankind are in search of happiness—how eagerly is it sought for in the honors, the pleasures, and the riches of the world?—but here real lasting happiness never was and never will be found; nothing this world has to offer can really satisfy man. The man of the world may have a smiling face, but a sad and miserable heart. Happiness can alone proceed from the love and favour of God—the peace and pleasures of true religion, and the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The heart of every faithful child of God can attest the peace and pleasure of true religion; but a divided heart cannot enjoy the promised blessing, and alas! how much contempt they bring on religion who are only *half-religious*—only *almost christians*; for it has been well-remarked, that “a little religion will make you miserable, but a great deal will make you happy,” truly happy. If you are really decided for God, and in earnest about your souls,

“Peace and pleasure you will most surely know,
For great peace have they that love thy law.”

“Peace is sown for the righteous and joyful—gladness for such as are true hearted.” “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.” “The fruit of the spirit is joy, peace.” “The Lord will bless his people with peace.” “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give into you—in me ye have peace.” To the disciple of Jesus Christ the ways of God are always pleasant—to the sincere Christian the paths of his commandments are certain peace. Must not a Man be truly happy who has God for his Father—his Guide—his Counsellor—his Guardian—and his Protector? Must not the Man be happy who can look up to a kind indulgent and merciful Almighty in all his undertakings—all his difficulties—all his trials—and all his troubles; resting assured that all things must and shall work together for his good—that his heavenly Father will not withhold any good thing from those that love and serve him.—“Them that honor me I will honor.” Must not the man be happy who has found pardon for all his sins through the blood of Jesus—is owned and blessed of God here, and has heaven in view as his eternal inheritance hereafter. Oh! be assured, that in true religion, and in true religion only, is real pleasure, solid peace, true joy, and lasting happiness to be found. It must be true, for the word of God that cannot err, has declared it. Many who have been led to see the error of their ways, and have been brought under the influence of true godliness, can, and do rejoice, and are glad that they have found the good and the right way; yea, thousands on earth, and tens of thousands in heaven can bear testimony to this delightful truth, that “her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

A Day for God.

Another night is past. The morning is come. Welcome, day! Now, as the priests washed before they engaged in sacred duties, so will I. The fountain is open; not for the house of David only and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but for all people. Now, sprinkled afresh with atoning blood, and purified by the indwelling Spirit, let me spend another day for God. “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Oh, for the spirit of an angel to serve God to-day! Father, let me know thy will. Eatable me, as an angel, to obey and submit to it. Let no duty be a burden. Let no affliction call forth a murmur. As the blessed Immanuel said: “I delight to do thy will, O my God,” so may I say and feel. As he said again: “The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?” so may I say. He was then in the body as I am. Yet he said: “I do always those things which please him.” If the work be difficult, rely on the aid of the Spirit. If the suffering be painful, bear it as appointed by a compassionate Father, and think: How much more do I deserve; how much more did my Saviour bear for me. If oppressors come, be as Nehemiah. If they threaten, fly to God for protection. If they try to deceive, hold fast truth and integrity. If they would divert thee, say: “I am doing a great work: why should I leave it?” If they slander, say: “There is no such thing done;” or be as Jesus, “who opened not his

mouth.” If professed friends fail, still keep on the way, do the will of God, and serve him fully, even if it be alone. If darkness cover thee, ask wisdom from above. If temptations assail thee, remember Him, who was himself tempted, and knows how to pity and give thee support. Even in sorrow, go on thy way rejoicing. Perform duty cheerfully. Bear patiently. Meet disappointments with submission, and unkindness with pity towards the offender. Go just where the Captain of salvation leads, and find no fault with the way.—Follow him fully, as did Caleb, and trust him for protection, strength, success and victory. Do all, suffer all by the day, remembering the divine words: “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;” and: “As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.” Do the work of the Lord honestly, diligently, earnestly, entirely, constantly, perfectly. And when it is done at the close of the day, review. Ask: How has it been done? Finding defects, failures, remissness, mistakes, errors, sins, (“for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not,”) go to the fountain again and wash. Bewail sin. Be humble in view of infirmity. Confess faults. Apply anew to “the blood of sprinkling.” Sleep not without being cleansed. Having done all and suffered all as well as possible, say: “I am an unprofitable servant, and have done only what was my duty to do.” Close the day saying: “Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep.”

“Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep:
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.”

Am. Spectator.

Morning of Joy.

The Morning of Joy, being a Sequel to the Night of Weeping, by Rev. Horatius Bonar, is the title of a small volume of winning spiritual excellence, just published by Carter and Brothers. The following passage is taken from the chapter which speaks of “The Earnests of the Morning:”

The true morning has not yet broken; hardly does it give forth any signs of breaking, save the deeper darkness that is the sure foreteller of the dawn.

It is still night upon the earth; and “the children of the night” are going to and fro in the world’s streets, doing “the unfruitful works of darkness;” “walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries;” yielding to the “flattering lips” of the seducer, that “lieth in wait at every corner,” in “the black and dark night,” (Prov. vii. 9–21;) making “provision for the flesh,” by “living in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in strife and envying,” (Rom. xii. 13;) compassing themselves about with sparks of their own kindling, which only sadden the gloom and make us feel more truly that it is night.

It is still night to the church; a night of danger, a night of weariness, a night of weeping. Her firmament is dark and troubled.—The promise of morning is sure, and she is looking out for it with fixed and pleading eye, sore tried with the long gloom. Yet it has not arisen. It is still deferred—deferred in mercy to an unready world, to whom the ending of this night shall be the closing of hope, and the sealing of ruin, and the settling down of the infinite darkness. For “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

But though it is night, there are times, both in the saint’s own history and the church’s annals, which may be spoken of as *morning* even now. Such was the “morning” to Adam when Seth was born to him after Abel’s death. (Gen. iv. 25.) Such was the “morning” to Noah when the flood dried up, and the face of the earth was renewed. Such was the “morning” to Jacob when the tidings came to him that Joseph was yet alive. Such was the “morning” to Naomi when Ruth and Boaz wiped off the tears of widowhood, and when in her old age she “saw her seed” and “took the child and laid it in her bosom.” (Ruth iv. 16.) Such was Hannah’s “morning” when after long years of bitterness, “the Lord granted her petition,” and “she went her way and was no more sad.” (1 Sam. i. 18.) Such was the “morning” that dawned on Job when the Lord accepted him, and turned his captivity, giving him twice as much as he had before, “blessing his latter end more than his beginning.” Such was Israel’s “morning” when the Lord turned back the captivity of

Zion, “making them like men that dream,” filling “their mouth with laughter and their tongue with singing,” in the day of their deliverance from exile.

The Night is far Spent.

To the Christian, this life is, at best, a pilgrimage, and through all its course he sighs for the home of his soul. He is not dissatisfied nor unhappy—far from it; and yet he finds many things here which cast a shadow over the present, and lead him to look forward for a brighter day. The rays of the Sun of Righteousness do indeed guild the mountaintops, but the gloom of midnight rests on the dark valleys below. Millions on millions of the race are without hope and without God, wending their way to death. Of those who live where the light shines, what multitudes walk in darkness! How few will suffer themselves to be reclaimed!

The Christian’s utmost efforts to do good produce but small results. Opposition to the heavenly light meets him on every side. His own heart he cannot trust, its native tendencies set strongly toward perdition, and in the midst of darkness within and without, he is often ready to wonder where the scene shall end. He cries anxiously, Watchman, what of the night; or, O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.

Fellow-Christians, the night may be dark, you may encounter trial and disappointment, you may labour long and seem to spend your strength almost for nought, you may go with your head bowed down like a bulrush, feeling that every day is full of sin and of sorrow.—Yet press manfully on, for the morning cometh, if faithful, your redemption draweth nigh. In a little time, He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. The night is far spent: soon will the day dawn and the shadows flee away; a day without clouds, without sin, without sorrow, and with no night beyond it.—*New-York Observer.*

Twofold Expectations of Christ’s Coming.

In the gospel it is made the property of a good and faithful servant, that he waiteth for his master’s coming, and prepareth all things in readiness for it. And this is opposed to the wicked and slothful servant, that doeth clean otherwise. But you will say, “Is this the property of the elect and faithful? Do not ungodly men and sinners believe the coming of Christ, and that He shall come to judge the quick and the dead? Do they not even profess this faith, ‘We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge?’” I answer, There is a twofold expectation of Christ’s return to judgment. One, an expectation with desire, and with earnest longing: the expectation of the faithful that their Lord, their gracious Redeemer, their loving Husband, shall come.—Therefore every faithful soul cannot but wait upon Him: as a faithful servant that hath done his work, longeth for his master’s coming home, that he may give account of his faithfulness, and may be acceptable to his master for his faithful service that he has been by grace enabled to do in his master’s absence, and receive his master’s gracious remuneration.

But there is another expectation of Christ to come; that is, not with desire, but with horror, and dread, and fear, out of guiltiness of conscience. This is the expectation of a malefactor in the jail; he waits and looks for the coming of the Judge to pass sentence on him, and so be dragged to execution. Thus wicked men expect Christ, and thus wicked angels expect him. But the expectation of the Godly is with love, and desire, and hope: an expectation, not of a severe Judge, but of a loving Husband, and of a faithful Master that hath promised a recompense to the service of believers, even the least and lowest; if it be only a cup of cold water given in his name. The expectation meant in the Gospel, is proper to believers.—*Dr. D. Featly.*

The Christian Church.

The period of her greatest glory was when her members exhibited the highest degree of personal piety, holy zeal, brotherly love, and firm adherence to the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel. They were not ashamed of Christ nor of his cause. They exhibited in their holy life and fervent spirit, the christian character. Their lovely tempers, their unison of sentiment, and their undissembled affection for each other, commended the religion of Jesus, and constrained even their enemies to say, “See how these christians love one another.” They highly valued each other’s society, hence they often met together for pious

conversation, and social prayer. The temporal and spiritual welfare of each other lay near their hearts; and their interests were sweetly blended and knit together in love. Nor must we forget their respect and love towards those who had the rule over them in the Lord.—“They highly esteemed them in love for their work’s sake.” They valued a gospel ministry, and embraced every opportunity to hear the word preached, even at the hazard of their lives. Thus they were living epistles of the truth, seen and read of all men. They were sparkling stars in the christian’s hemisphere, shining with heavenly light, in a world of moral darkness: yea, they were like so many suns beaming with resplendent glory in the firmament of the christian church. Let us contrast our state with theirs; and ah, how is the gold become dim; how is the fine gold changed!

“Lord revive us,
All our help must come from thee.”

Baptist Reporter.

Divine Forgiveness.

Many persons think that because they have been such great sinners God will not forgive them. But they should remember that his ways are not our ways. Are you willing to be saved in God’s way? Go then, and cast yourself at the feet of Jesus, and say with a departed saint, “Lord, I adore thee as my Saviour, thou didst die for my sins, and I commit my all to thee. Wash me in thy blood; wash not my feet only, but my hands and my head. Thy gospel I embrace. All that thou discoverest let me believe; all that thou teachest let me learn. Thy example I would follow. All that thou lovest let me love; all that thou hatest let me hate; and all that thou commandest, let my faith, working by love, urge me to obey. Be thou my all; thy death and righteousness, my hope; thy life, my pattern; thy word, my rule; thy glory, my aim; thy love, my heaven.” Go thus, as he did, and you will hear a voice speaking to your soul the cheering words, “Thy sins which were many, are all forgiven thee.”—*Ib.*

The Power of God.

We are guilty, and were not mercy as mighty to save, as justice is to punish, we must perish. We are depraved, and were not grace as powerful to renew and sanctify, as mercy is to pardon, even mercy could not fit us for heaven. Were not divine holiness omnipotent, it could not multiply nor restore its own image upon fallen souls, for the soul is averse to sanctification. Even divine love, if not omnipotent, could never have carried its point in winning the human heart, nor in harmonizing all the claims of love and justice, with the exercise of rich mercy and free grace to sinners.—*Philip.*

Trust in God.

I could write down twenty cases when I wished God had done otherwise than he did; but which I now see, had I my own will, would have led to extensive mischief. The life of a Christian is a life of paradoxes. He must lay hold on God; he must follow hard after him; he must determine not to let him go. And yet you must learn to let God alone. Quietness before God is one of the most difficult of all Christian graces—to sit where he places us; to be what he would have us be, and this as long as he pleases.—*Anon.*

The Love of Christ.

How little of the sea can a child carry in his hand! as little do I take away of my great sea, the boundless love of Christ. My Lord Jesus is kinder to me than ever he was. It pleaseth him to dine and sup with his afflicted prisoner. The King feasteth me, and his spikenard casteth a sweet smell. Put Christ’s love to the trial, and throw all your burdens upon it, and then it will appear love indeed. We employ not his love, and therefore we know it not.—*Rutherford.*

The Bible.

I have regularly and attentively read the holy scriptures, and am of opinion that this volume (independent of its divine origin) contains more sublimity and beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books in any age or language.—*Sir William Jones.* Tertullian saith, I adore the fulness of the scriptures, in them the truths are scattered like so many pearls, we must search as for a vein of silver, this precious book, is our Magna Charta for heaven.