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GEMS OF POETRY.

THE USES OF ADVERSITY.

The heart must be rent by the rude blast of anguish,
Its portals unloosed by adversity's hand,
Ere the jewels, that now in obscurity languish,
May shine like the dew-drops that gild the lone strand.

GOD IN EVERYTHING.

There is a tongue in every leaf—
A voice in every rill;—
A voice that speaketh everywhere,
In flood and fire, through earth and air!
A tongue that's never still!

DEATH TO THE RIGHTEOUS.

It matters little at what hour of the day
The righteous fall asleep—death cannot come
To him untimely who is fit to die—
The less of this cold world, the more of
heaven;
The briefer life, the earlier immortality.

ENTHUSIASM IN A GOOD CAUSE.

He was enthusiastic too;
Now whether this were false or true,
Or good or bad, must be referred
To the fixed meaning of the word.
If to be warm and wisely zealous,
Be what is meant, then plainly tell us,
Did not the state of things require
The ardor of this heavenly fire?

THE GREAT CONQUEROR.

The glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings;
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

INFLUENCE OF INFANT BAPTISM.

The following sound views we copy from an article which appeared in the Christian Review, in reference to "the Great Awakening," in the time of Whitfield, Edwards, &c. The Puritans landed on these shores, a body of professed Christians. All were members of churches; and all who had arrived at adult age believed themselves to be, in the language of the Scriptures, "renewed in the spirit of their minds." The church and the state,—the church not in name only, but in reality, and the civil society, for the first time on earth, in this strict sense—consisted of the same persons. Every freeman was believed to be a valid church-member. The assembly of the citizens for public business had nothing to do but appoint another moderator, and open another book of records, and they were a church, met for the transaction of ecclesiastical business. It is not surprising, that, under these circumstances, they lost sight of the wide, the actual difference by which these meetings were separated. We need not wonder that these same men did not perceive that, acting in these two different capacities, their powers, their authority, and their limitations were widely dissimilar. Men are slow to perceive the distinctions of principle, specially when they are rendered obscure by convenient, visible arrangements, which overspread and seem to obliterate them. There were, by consequence, important principles overlooked in the fundamental laws of the Puritan polity. Here were men of real piety, proper and veritable members of the church. They had a right to govern each other according to the laws of the New Testa-

ment, in things merely ecclesiastical. Here were the same men, members of civil society, having power to govern each other, in things civil only, in accordance with the social laws of man. The principles by which they were to be governed in these two relations, were exceedingly unlike. But, so long as precisely the same persons were both the legislators and the subjects under both forms of government, no practical inconvenience was felt, and none was apprehended. They therefore formed their civil polity on the principle of the union of Church and State. They allowed no man to hold office, or to exercise the right of suffrage, unless he were a Christian upon a credible profession of his faith. This was the original notion of our Puritan forefathers. But, so monstrous a theoretical error cannot long exist in practice, without discovering its mischievous fallacy. It was soon found that there were many citizens who gave no evidence of piety, and who were too honest to make profession, which their own consciousness would testify to be hypocrisy. It seemed manifestly unjust to exclude them from the right of citizenship. They were from among the best families of the colony, men of high integrity, sound discretion, and large possessions. Their number was rapidly increasing, and it was manifest that the government could not be carried on successfully, if they were excluded. What then must be done? The principle on which the colonies were established must be abandoned, and all men of suitable social qualifications, admitted members of the body politic; or else the doors of the church must be opened wide enough to admit to its fellowship all those who were entitled to the rights of citizenship. The latter alternative was, of course, adopted. The church has always been made the victim, when worldly policy has demanded a sacrifice as a peace-offering. Persons were admitted as members in part, if they were of upright life; the sacrament of the Lord's supper was considered a means of grace, and thus, very soon, every respectable citizen became a member of the Puritan church. The result of all this may be easily told.—The church visible was composed of men who had no conviction of their relations to God, who knew nothing of true repentance, or of faith in Christ. Christianity became a matter of forms and observances. The ministry sank to the level of the people. Experimental piety ceased to be insisted on as a qualification for the clerical office. The great doctrines of the reformation were rarely exhibited. Sermons became pleasant essays on questions of ethics, or manners, or things in general. The church and the world were no longer divided by any perceptible line. Any respectable man might become a member of the church, if he chose; and he of course chose it, that so he might become entitled to the privileges of citizenship. To this state had Puritanism arrived at the time of Edwards. It seemed as though vital religion had fled hither to the wilderness of America, to find a grave, instead of a joyous and ever-enduring home. We do not say, of course, that such a condition of things was universal. By no means. In the hour of the deepest declension of Israel, God had reserved to himself "seven thousand men, who had not bowed the knee to Baal." Thus it is always. God, in the darkest day of formalism, does not leave himself without a witness. There were, at this very time, among the Puritans, men of thorough piety, of vast learning, of unquestioned love to the cause of true religion. We speak merely of the general fact, and the obvious course of things. These excellent men were sadly biassed and hampered by the error of their fundamental principle. Commencing with false admissions, they could not act with

consistent energy. Taking the church as they found it, and as they supposed that of right it ought to be, they could not but conform themselves to its condition. We need no stronger proof of all this than the fact, that Dr. Stoddard, of Northampton, the predecessor and grandfather of Jonathan Edwards, was himself the great defender of this very laxity of church discipline, to which we have been alluding. And here we must ask leave to speak, as Burke once said, "with the freedom of history, and we hope without offence." There is one cause of this wide-spread declension, which Mr. Tracy has not observed. We believe it to be Infant Baptism. Concerning the tendency of this institution to produce such an effect, we ask leave to offer a few cursory suggestions. The essential element of the prosperity of the Christian Church is its holiness, its piety, its penitence, and faith in the Redeemer.—It is composed of a peculiar people. It is a nation of priests. It is designed to be the light of the world; and the more brilliantly this light shines amidst the surrounding darkness, the more commanding will be its influence, and the more rapid its extension. The only qualification to membership of this church, is personal religion; the renunciation of sin; sincere love to God, honest obedience to all his commandments, and reliance for acceptance, not on our own works, but on the righteousness of Christ. He who has these tempers of heart, is a child of God; or, which is precisely the same thing, is a member of that Church which is "the body of Christ." The sole qualification of membership is a moral qualification. "They are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The true theory of a church is, that it is a body composed of precisely such persons and no other. True, we are unable, in all cases, to detect hypocrisy. The apostles themselves were sometimes deceived in the character of their converts. But this is no reason why we should abandon our principle. Because we cannot render the church as pure as we might wish, this is no reason why we should neglect the care of its purity altogether. We are sometimes deceived by counterfeit coin; but this, surely, is no reason why we should take indiscriminately every coin that is offered to us, and thus render spurious money the general rule, instead of the exception. Now, if this be so, it is evident that the purity, the power, the efficiency of the Christian church will depend on the principles which she adopts in the admission of members to her communion. So long as membership is made to depend solely on moral qualification, faith in Christ, and a right temper of heart towards God manifested in a correspondent conduct, the church will be "a light of the world, a city set upon a hill." As soon as any other qualification is blended with the moral qualification, so soon as a man may be admitted to the communion of saints for any other reason than that he is really a child of God and an heir of heaven; just so soon will the church and the world become inseparably commingled.—Her light will burn dimly, and it will in the end become extinguished. We say, extinguished. For where two sorts of qualifications are admitted, the one involving a change of heart, and the other depending upon something disconnected with it, the latter mode of admission will, in the end, inevitably predominate. Men are desirous of entering heaven by any other means than by holiness of heart. The church is considered the gate of heaven. Such it ought to be. If they can enter the church, they generally consider themselves safe; and if they can enter it with-

out forsaking their sins, they prefer this mode to any other. Now this is precisely the place where infant baptism comes in, and furnishes a qualification for membership aside from holiness of heart. Before he knows the distinctions of right and wrong, the child is admitted to an ordinance of the Christian church. He has been baptized into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. By almost all who practise this ordinance, he is considered to be, at least, in a more salvable state than those who have not been thus consecrated. He is under special covenant with God. By far the greater part, however, of the Pædobaptist churches in Christendom believe that some special grace is actually communicated in baptism, that the "child is received into the congregation of Christ's flock," is "regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church." Now when this is believed and carried out into practice, its effect upon the purity of the Christian society must be manifest. Its tendency is inevitably to a national, or at least, to an hereditary church. It renders membership dependent, not on spirituality of life, but on the accident of birth, and the performance of an ordinance, at a time when the human being himself has not yet received a single moral impression. It by no means abates the force of these considerations, to be told that many Protestant churches do not believe in baptismal regeneration, or baptismal grace. We ask, why then do they profess it? Or, we ask again for a scriptural and explicit account of the meaning of infant baptism. Where is it taught?—What does it signify? To whom is it to be administered? What change does it effect in the relations of the subject? We must be allowed to express an opinion, that if it really means any thing whatsoever, that thing, be it more or less, will be found to have precisely the effect which we have ascribed to it; to open a door of admission to the Christian church, aside from the qualification of holiness of heart. Such we believe to have been its tendency in the Romish, the Greek, the Armenian, the Lutheran churches, the established Church of Great Britain, and in our own Puritan churches of New-England.* We are far from saying that the churches which renounce the baptism of infants are pure from error of doctrine, or even in practice. All we claim for them is that they are free from this source of error and impurity. They may err from fanaticism, or formalism; but they have not adopted this source of error as one of their principles of action. This we claim for them, and no more. * We are gratified to perceive that the Rev. Dr. Baird, a most intelligent and competent witness, in his late work on "Religion in America"—a book, by the way, which we take this opportunity strongly to commend,—holds sentiments on this subject similar to our own. He ascribes the change from the Calvinism of the Puritans to the Unitarianism of their descendants to this very cause. In chapter 3, book vii. under the head, "Unitarianism," page 273, we find the following passage:—"The system" (that of making church-membership a condition of citizenship) "appears to have been adopted in 1648, with a degree of unanimity; but, as the number of unconverted adults increased, both by immigration, and by the growing up of children without piety, there was an increasing dissatisfaction with it. By the year 1662, such a change of opinions had been wrought, that what was called the 'half-way covenant' was introduced by a recommendation of the General Synod. Accordingly to this new system, persons baptized in infancy were to be considered members of the church to which their parents belonged, though they were not to be admitted to the Lord's table without evidence of regeneration.—Such persons, on arriving at maturity, understanding the doctrine of faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto, not scandalous in life, and