

THE DIGNITY OF THE CHURCH.

BY J. E. FDR.

The church of Christ needs to be elevated in the grandeur and universality of her plans of benevolence. The spectator who occupies the mountain top, has a more extensive and commanding prospect than he who dwells at its base. In like manner should the Christians of our day ascend into the "Mount of Vision," that they may survey the wide moral landscape, and take the dimensions of the whole mighty territory which they are summoned to invade and conquer. While remaining at a low point, we are apt to confine our aims and efforts within a narrow circle, and to think little of the far-spreading fields which distance and interposing heights shut out from our view. It is therefore necessary that we should obtain a loftier post of observation, whence our eye may range over a broader compass, and where we may enlarge our calculations in proportion to the enterprise to be achieved. Planting our feet on the bright eminence which has been described, let us throw our glance over the immense regions that lie beneath, stretching away in illimitable perspective. A world is before us, with all its peopled continents, its crowded millions, its darkness and woe. Upon the boundless expanse, guilt and death, with raven wings, "sit brooding." Here close at hand, we see our own favored country,—where the free word of God, proscribed or trammelled in all other lands, has found its refuge, and wrought its most signal results—sinking into the gulf of degeneracy; menaced with the fearful domination of the Man of Sin; sapped and convulsed by giant vices; its rulers, politicians, and its insane population casting off the laws of Jehovah; while the church is at ease, her sentinels asleep, and the beacon lights burning dimly on her towers. Yonder we see Europe, the proud home of art and civilization—one half of it shrouded in the blackness of Papal night, and the other, a solitary kingdom excepted, covered with the huge corpse of a dead Protestantism, and its monstrous emanation, a baptized infidelity. And even in that single nation where vital Christianity still lives, we witness a concerted and vigorous attempt to pollute or destroy it, and substitute in its room the exploded mummeries of a darker age. On this side, we behold Africa,—wroged bleeding Africa—sitting in the dust, and mantled with one wide pall of barbarism. We see her vast interior thronged with savage hords, scarce raised above the level of the brute, and given up to the most degraded idolatry. We see the slave ship hovering on her coast, and hear the clanking of her fetters, the shrieks of children, the shouts of rapine and violence, echoing along her plundered shores. And then far in the dim and ancient East,—the hoary cradle of the world—we look on the unnumbered myriads of Asia, plunged in heathenism, a prey to debasing passions, strangers to hope and hurrying blindly into the abyss. Everywhere we perceive the presence and the power of that relentless enemy of God and man, whose throne is on the high places of the earth, and whose trophies are murdered souls. We see Romanism deluding its countless votaries; Paganism enthraling two-thirds of our species, and the fell imposture of Mahomet blasting the fairest portions of the globe, and even lifting its foul crescent above the hallowed scenes which the Redeemer trod. We see government, laws, society, both in lands benighted and civilized, constructed on principles alien to the Gospel; and the spirit of ungodliness diffused through all ranks and classes of mankind; while the few who cleave to the cause of truth and Heaven, are in comparison, but as the three bands of Gideon to the dense host of the Midianites, or as the lonely spots of verdure that gem an otherwise unbroken desert. Such is the spectacle which from the "high mountain" presents itself below and around us. The work which we are called to accomplish, is the moral renovation of this entire extent of sin and misery, its complete subjection to the authority of Christ, and its universal transformation into beauty and holiness. Not a corner of it is to be left unreclaimed; not a dark recess forgotten; not a remote isle of the sea unevangelized; not a wanderer of the wilderness unilluminated; not a solitary child of Adam unblessed with the tidings of peace and pardon. Over all, the loveliness and purity of Eden are again to return.—Over all, Christ is to reign, and to reign through the instrumentality of his people.—Here, then, let us stand and devise our plans and form our resolves, with a vigor and scope

commensurate with the greatness of the undertaking which devolves upon us. To this all viewing height, let the whole church come up, and estimate the task to be performed, the evils to be removed, the obstacles to be encountered, and lay out her schemes of effort with an amplitude that shall embrace the world.—*Am. paper.*

CHRIST THE JOY OF HIS PEOPLE.

The covenant engagements of Jesus, his very name, his incarnation, his blood, his promises, his work, and intercession, all seem to say to us "Rejoice evermore." They have introduced grand, solid ground for joy; and heart-felt pleasure is connected with faith and love. This is a transport that is better experienced than described; for when God lifts up the light of his countenance upon a soul that soul has more joy than the men of the world have, when their corn, and wine, and oil increase; strangers intermeddle not with this joy, they know nothing of it; it entirely surpasses their understanding. Saints themselves cannot tell it half, they have not language to express it, they cannot convey proper views of it to others; for it is unspeakable, being excited by a participation of God's unspeakable gift; it is full of glory. There is a rejoicing in iniquity, an evil and a scandalous triumph; but the joy now alluded to makes the subject of it appear truly honourable in the eyes of angels, good men, and God; it is a pleasure that maketh not ashamed, that leaves no sting behind, for it is substantial; whilst the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment "and the laughter of fools is like the crackling of thorns under a pot." This holy sensation, increasing more and more, is the beginning, the pledge, the presage of eternal happiness; it is glory begun below; it is a kind of first fruits of the new life, which we shall pluck from heavenly trees in the kingdom of glory above. The saints can tell something of the happiness of the world of spirits, by the bliss which a discovery of divine love causes in their souls, even in the midst of the greatest calamities. Such was the rapture which Peter, James, and John felt when in the mount of transfiguration, with the Son of God! and far greater will be the rapture of the glorified spirits round the throne of God and of the Lamb forever.

"That mount, how bright, those forms how fair!
'Tis good to dwell forever there;
Come death, dear envoy of my God,
And bear me to that blest abode."

Oh, let us never forget that Christ Jesus is the proper, the appointed, the only object of religious joy. Whatever the Christian rejoices in! must have some connection with him. Are the promises the matter of his rejoicing? These were all made by him, are all ratified, "are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us." Is it any spiritual blessing? It comes to us only through his mediation. Oh, then, Christians, "joy in God, by whom you have now received the atonement;" "rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven!" "rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" let your heavenly inheritance be the matter of your triumph, "though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations." While the rich man glories in his riches, and the mighty man in his might, do you rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven. "Declare his works with rejoicings; go to God your exceeding joy; with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation; shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart; joy in God, the God of salvation; finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice. So shall the Lord your God rejoice over you with singing, yea, rest in his love." *Rev. Thomas Spencer.*

BRAINERD ON HIS DEATH-BED.

"After he became in so low a state that he ceased to have any prospect of recovery, his mind was peculiarly carried with earnest concern for the prosperity of the Church of God on earth, which seemed very manifestly to arise from a pure disinterested love to Christ, and desire of his glory. The prosperity of Zion was a theme he dwelt on, and spake much of, and more and more the nearer death approached. He told me when near his end, that 'he never, in all his life, had his mind so led forth in desires and earnest prayers for the flourishing of Christ's kingdom on earth, as since he was brought so exceedingly low at Boston.' He seemed much to wonder that there appeared no more of a disposition in

ministers and people to pray for the flourishing of religion through the world; and particularly, he several times expressed his wonder, that there appeared no more forwardness to comply with the proposal lately made from Scotland, for united extraordinary prayer among God's people for the coming of Christ's kingdom; and sent it as his dying advice to his own congregation, that they should practise agreeable to that proposal. But a little before his death he said to me, as I came into his room, 'My thoughts are employed on the old dear theme—the prosperity of God's Church on earth. As I waked out of sleep,' said he, 'I was led to cry out for the pouring out of God's Spirit, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, which the dear Redeemer did and suffered so much for. It is that especially makes me long for it.' But a few days before his death he desired us to sing a psalm that was concerning the prosperity of Zion, which he signified his mind was engaged in the thoughts of, and desires after, above all things; and at his desire we sung a part of the hundred and second Psalm. And when we had done, though he was then so low that he could scarcely speak, he so exerted himself that he made a prayer very audibly, wherein, besides praying for those present, and for his own congregation, he earnestly prayed for the reviving and flourishing of religion in the world."—*Pres. Edwards.*

NEGLECT NOT THE BIBLE.

It is surprising to notice how this sacred book is neglected by sinful men. The votaries of taste and fashion will spend their days and nights poring over the morbid pages of sensual and fictitious narrative; yet if their God were to ask them if they had read the Book which He sent them from heaven, where would they look? How could they say that they had never read the precious book throughout? Wherever you go, learn not of those. Take your Bible in your hand; make it the companion of your way. In the thirsty desert of this world it will supply you with the water of life; in the darkness of doubt and apprehension it will cast a gleam of heaven over your path; in the struggle of temptation and the hour of affliction it will lift up the voice of warning, encouragement and comfort. Never let the Bible be by you unperused. It is the only helm that can guide you through the ocean of life, and bring you safely to the immortal shores. It is the only star that leads the wandering seaman by the rocks and breakers and fiery tempests of utter destruction, and points him a way to the heights of everlasting blessedness. The Bible contains the only food that can satisfy the hungerings of the soul; it presents us with the only laver in which we can wash ourselves white and be clean; it alone tells us of the garments that are worn in the courts of heaven; it is from the Bible alone that we learn to prepare a torch to conduct our footsteps through the valley of the shadow of death; and it is the Bible alone which can introduce us at last to the glories of immortality.—*Robert Pollok.*

AN ACT OF CHARITY IS NEVER THROWN AWAY.

A young man, by name Eugene A—, clerk with a rich merchant, at a salary of twelve hundred francs a year, recently came into an inheritance in a very unexpected way, and under some curious circumstances. Eugene, in going to his counting-house each morning at nine o'clock, generally followed the same route, and thus was in the habit of meeting, daily, at the same spot, an old beggar, whose venerable aspect had made a strong impression on him, and to whom he every week gave his modest alms. The beggar and the young man, without ever having spoken together, had formed an acquaintance with each other. One day last winter, towards the end of the month, which means, being interpreted, that the golden tide in Eugene's purse was running very low, our young friend, after having given to the old beggar his last sous, saw a poor woman, coming towards him, carrying her child pressed in her arms, which stretched its little hand towards him. His first movement was to thrust his hand in his pocket, but he found nothing; to refuse relief was distressing, more especially after the expectation of aid excited by his motions. Eugene instantly took from his pocket the small loaf of bread, which constituted his usual morning repast, and thrusting it into the hands of the poor woman hastened away, never dreaming that he had gained an income of eight hundred francs. In effect, the old beg-

gar has just died, leaving a sum of fifteen thousand francs, and a will, by which he appoints Eugene A— his sole legatee, stating, that on the day on which he had seen the young man give his small loaf to the poor woman, he had determined to leave all he was worth to him who knew so well how to practice charity.—The name of the old man was Jerome S—. He died in the hospital, leaving no relatives.

THE DANGER OF PROSPERITY.

As long as the waters of persecution are upon the earth, so long we dwell in the ark; but when the land is dry, the dove itself will be tempted to a wandering course of life, and never return to the house of her safety.

Many are not able to suffer and endure prosperity: it is like the light of the sun to a weak eye—glorious indeed in itself, but not proportioned to such an instrument.

In the tomb of Tarentia certain lamps burned under ground many ages together: but as soon as ever they were brought into the air, and saw a brighter light, they went out, never to be rekindled. So long as we are in the retirement of sorrow, of want, of fear, of sickness or of any other sad accident, we are burning and shining lamps; but when God comes with his mercy, with his forbearance, and lifts us up from the gates of death, and carries us abroad in the open air, so that we converse with prosperity and temptation we go out in darkness; and we cannot be preserved in heat and light, but by still dwelling in the regions of sorrow.

CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT INDULGE ANGER.

There is a carelessness with some in regard to the minor offences against Christian character. If they do nothing that offends the church, and lays them liable to discipline, they imagine themselves getting on pretty well. One writer compares the Christian's character to polished steel. It may be tarnished and have its lustre destroyed by large spots of rust, or by an assemblage of small ones.—Some great offence is a broad spot, and a number of small imperfections make an assemblage of small specks, which destroy its brightness and beauty. Anger is the besetting sin of many. They make little or no effort to subdue or control their passions. The Bible declareth that he who ruleth his spirit is better than he who taketh a city. Why not be a conqueror then? and a great conqueror too? How much peace is lost by letting anger rule. How tormenting are unkind and malevolent feelings towards others. How inconsistent with the Christian profession. That excellent writer, John Angel James, says:—"A sour, ill-natured Christian, is like a lamb with a dog's head, a dove with a vulture's beak,—a rose with leaves of nettles." Rather a bad appearing concern.

Anger can be laid aside. Grace triumphs in those who deny themselves. Preserve the Christian temper and spirit. So shall peace, love and joy be felt, and others see that the good profession that has been made is something more than an empty name.—*Exeter News Letter.*

MATERIAL FOR THOUGHT.

Humility increases our true greatness. *Deem every day of your life a page in your history.*

Deep rivers move with silent majesty; shallow brooks are noisy.

We increase our wealth when we lessen our desires.

Get justly, distribute cheerfully, and live contentedly.

Give your tongue more holidays than your hands or eyes.

Of all the pleasures those are the most valuable which lie in the mind.

It is easier to believe an ill report than to inquire into the truth thereof.

Negligence is the rust of the soul, that corrodes her best resolution.

Where reason rules, appetite obeys; where appetite commands, the pocket pays.

The truly noble mind has no resentments.

Trust not the man who promises with an oath.

Mediocrity can talk, it is for genius to observe.

Learning, like a river, beginneth in a little stream.

Adversity borrows its sharpest sting from our own impatience.