

THE  
FAMILY AND ITS DUTIES,

WITH OTHER

Essays and Discourses

FOR SUNDAY READING.

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*οὔτε ἡ γνώσις ἀνευ πίστεως, οὐδ' ἡ πίστις ἀνευ γνώσεως.*

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## THE FAMILY AND ITS DUTIES.

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THE wisdom of the Divine arrangements which is seen everywhere in creation and providence is in no instance more visibly displayed than in that family life which is peculiar to man of all God's creatures. The lower animals are beneath this arrangement, in its proper sense, though something approximating to it takes place among them, and the inhabitants of heaven will be above it. (Mark xii. 16-25.) It thus appears to be a constitution peculiar to man in the present state, founded upon those emotions and necessities which now distinguish him, and adapted with consummate wisdom to promote his well-being and secure his happiness while he tabernacles upon the earth.

Of the truth of this, any one may easily satisfy himself who will consider what have been the chief sources of his virtues, whatever they are, and of his enjoyments. He will soon perceive that of these—which are the best, and, indeed, the only riches—by far the larger portion has been derived to him, directly or

indirectly, from his association with his fellow-creatures in the family. A great deal might be said to confirm this, if it were not so certain and so obvious as to require neither illustration nor proof.

Human nature has evidently been constituted with reference to this life in the family. The condition in which we come into the world, and continue for years, implies such a society without which we could not exist. Not only our physical condition, but our emotional and moral nature, our instincts and affections, and, in short, our whole constitution in all its parts, points to this arrangement, and demands it for its full development and perfection.

It is remarked that when men associate with each other without the presence of the other sex, faults not merely in manners, but in that which is deeper than manners, and out of which they spring, seldom fail to appear. The same happens, too, when women are similarly situated—only a different class of faults is apt to be produced. For the two sexes are the *complements* each of the other. Each has a certain defect which the other makes up—a tendency to excess which the other restrains ; for it is not the male alone or the female alone, but male and female together, that constitute the complete and perfect man. And with reference to the higher ends of our being, and to our spiritual nature, no less than to the lower, has all this been arranged and appointed. “They two shall be one flesh,” saith the Scripture ; and also, looking beyond time and above perishing things, the same Word declares, “Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man by the woman ; but all things are of God,” (1 Cor. xi.)

“ For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse ; could we make her as the man,  
Sweet love were slain ; his dearest bond is this—  
Not like to like, but like in difference.  
Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;  
The man be more of woman, she of man ;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,  
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words.”

TENNYSON.

As this mingling of the sexes in the family is thus in many ways beneficial to both, so also the uniting different ages in one close and habitual society serves to supply the deficiencies and to correct the faults incident to each, and thus contributes powerfully to improve the virtue and increase the happiness of all. It is remarkable, also, that people frequently relish most the society of those who seem most unlike themselves ; and it is unquestionable that they are generally most improved by intercourse with such. Now the family is an association constituted upon this principle, consisting of persons of different sexes and ages, all bound together by common interests, generating common affections. Accordingly it is a society which conduces more powerfully than any other both to curb the bad and to exercise and so strengthen the better feelings of human nature. Evidently no other contributes so much to make us happy ; and whatever serves to make us happy serves also to make us good. In this, true religion, by which I mean the doctrine of the New Testament, interpreted by reason and experience, is at issue with all forms of asceticism ; for this aims at rendering men good by rendering them miserable. Now it is not denied that some souls are made perfect

through suffering, and perhaps none can be perfected without it. But in the generality of cases the bad passions can be cured only by being allayed, the excitements to them being, as much as possible, withdrawn; as the absence of motion permits the broken limb to heal. Let us remark how admirably *a family*—the habitual living together of old and young, parents and children, brothers and sisters—is calculated to promote the highest interests of all concerned—to root out or check the vices, and to stimulate the virtues of its members.

For, as to the exercise of the affections, it is obvious that these are apt to grow to a dangerous intensity when concentrated on a single object; and, on the other hand, they are likely to be dissipated when they are left to spread out without any limits over men in general—as great rivers descending in their course into level plains form stagnant marshes in which they are lost.

When we contemplate a family, and seek to enter into the meaning and use of its peculiar constitution, we discover that it is exquisitely adapted to promote the great ends of human existence—the good, physical, moral, and spiritual, of all that compose it; and that even those of its members who may at first sight appear to live only for the rest, are indeed themselves largely partakers of the benefits they bestow.

For, regarding first the younger branches, they enjoy, in the strong instinctive tenderness of the parents, a most powerful security for that anxious and watchful care which is necessary for their subsistence and comfort. And this affection, which at first is an instinct, though one of the most powerful instincts of the human heart, is gradually ripened into

a habit ; is fortified by use, and strengthened by exercise ; and so is found equal to the new and higher demands that are successively made upon it. When we remember how many are the wants of a child—how much love, and attention, and forbearance he needs in the several stages of his progress—we shall be led to admire that wisdom and goodness of God which have made such ample provision for the performance of this delicate and difficult task, in the fatherly and motherly affections.

We may learn this from reflecting how difficult it is for any one else to fill the place of the father or the mother to a child. And when we acknowledge this, we confess the admirable adaptation of the parental feelings to the calls to be made upon them.

It is worthy of notice, also, that childhood and early youth comprehend that stage of human life in which the imitative tendency, as I may call it, is most powerful. The intellect of a child, when he first begins to observe and reflect, is almost entirely exercised in attempting to repeat what is said and done by those around him. And this is the secret of that quick acquisition of language which distinguishes children from those farther advanced in life. How beneficent a provision is it that, at the period when they are most addicted to imitation, they should have in their parents objects who are, or who should be, such as they may imitate safely and beneficially ; that He who never, in other cases, creates an appetite or a desire without providing something which is the proper object of it, has here displayed the same gracious regard to the necessities of His creatures, and the cultivation of their faculties and moral principles, both in making the child an imitative creature, and in

setting before him the parents who have the deepest interest in being worthy of his imitation ; and who are impelled by all high and holy considerations, as well affecting their child as their own future comfort and honour in connexion with him, to say and do nothing which, being copied by him, might redound to their grief and his injury or ruin.

But not to insist farther on this at present, I would rather draw your attention to the other side of the matter ; because, though no less needful to be observed, it is less considered and less understood. And hence many serious evils have arisen ; and many things have been done, under the name and with the hope of good, which the fruits they produced have shewn to be evil.

We are very apt to imagine that the family arrangement is entirely for the sake of the young,—that the children are they who are exclusively benefited,—and that, if it be disturbed or set aside, the children are the chief or the only sufferers. But indeed we shall find that the old are as much interested in this divine institution as the young, parents as much as children, and that any departure from it brings a penalty upon the parents equal to any which the children can suffer.

We hear much, and justly, of the obligations which children owe to their parents. But we often forget, or do not remark, that as the child owes much to the parent, so the parent owes much to the child ; who also has been a channel in which the all-pervading bounty of the heavenly Father has been made to flow ; the object and receiver, but also the minister of good : and every loving thought, every toil, every sacrifice, on the part of the parent, has received from day to day a return—a real and most precious reward.

Surely those persons judge very erroneously who

imagine that all the care, trouble, and money which they expend upon their children are so much capital sunk, and from which no return is to be expected till the child has grown to maturity, or at least till he has reached the years of discretion. We are very apt to reckon nothing a blessing which does not come to us in a material form ; and so we sometimes undervalue or overlook our highest privileges, because they do not address themselves to our eyes, and cannot be felt or handled by us.

To any one who reflects, it will be evident that the parent is as much the better for the child as the child is for the parent,—that infancy, childhood, youth, bestow as much on manhood, womanhood, old age, as they derive from them,—that this is an instance of that general law, that we cannot do good to others without getting good from them. In this field it is impossible to sow without reaping ; the same soil which receives the seed from the bountiful hand returns it with increase.

Every one must have remarked, that almost the strongest motives to well-doing, to honesty, sobriety, diligence, and good conduct in general, arise, with the bulk of people, from considerations connected with their families. They exert themselves, they deny themselves, they are impelled to form habits which are of the greatest value and importance both to themselves and to society, by the strong desire that their children may not want anything that is needful for their bodies or their minds,—for their present comfort and their future welfare.

We all know that the weed which encumbers and poisons man's life, and which it should be his daily task to pluck up and kill, is self-indulgence. What an

antagonist to this is a family! It is indeed the very instrument whereby we may be assisted to pierce down to the roots, and to grub up that deep-set and deadly plant.

When you remonstrate with an ill-doing father or mother, of all considerations derived from this world, you find that that tells most upon their hearts which arises from the effect their misconduct will have upon their children. "What you are doing will ruin your children—it will bring them to poverty, to shame, perhaps to crime and wretchedness in this world, and, it may be, to the ruin of soul and body in the world to come. Are you content to make yourself the instrument of undoing for ever those whom you so deeply love? Or, suppose your example *deters*, instead of seducing them, can you bear that they should feel it impossible to esteem and honour you,—that they will never be able to think of you but with shame, or to utter or hear your name without a blush?"

They who look superficially may imagine that these feelings exert but little influence. But if you examine the matter attentively, you will agree with me in saying that these are mighty influences; and though, from the nature of them, they come not very much to the surface, or obtrude themselves on careless eyes, yet they lie deep among the springs of human action, and the waters which issue therefrom bear sensibly their tinge and savour.

If the history of human thoughts were legible to us, we should doubtless find that multitudes of men, who were great in the good which they were enabled to achieve, which is the truest greatness, drew their strongest stimulants from the families God had given them; and that, on the other hand, myriads who

have lived usefully and well had been saved from vices to which they were prone by the consideration that these would involve in ruin those who were dearer to them than their own life ; and that which helps us to good, and restrains us from evil, should be reckoned by us among our very highest blessings and chief advantages.

Besides that more palpable one now mentioned, there are a thousand ways in which children are to us the ministers of good. How much do their common offspring tend to knit the hearts of parents together, and supply motives for mutual forbearance, kindness, respect ! Are they not the cement without which thousands of families would be dissolved ? Not only are they the great antidote to *selfishness*, but they are the greatest of all bonds among mankind. The world has generally forgotten how much of its security and stability it owes to those whom it is too apt to consider as a burden and an encumbrance, though of course a necessary encumbrance.

And what renewers of our existence, what fresheners of our life are children ! When all things begin to grow stale upon us, and our wearied senses ache with the repetition of the same sights and sounds, and we begin to pronounce this world a bleak and sterile promontory, and when we are tempted to steel our hearts against other men, with the same selfishness which we witness in them, and to take refuge ourselves in the same low passions with which they assail and disgust us, how delightful, how precious, to see the fresh flow of life rising around us in our children, watering and rendering verdant and fruitful again that soil which the scorching rays of time was quickly turning to barrenness and desolation—to feel the tide of

their young existence washing the old waste places and renewing their withered affections,—to behold in them divine wonder, the parent of both knowledge and worship,—to witness the charm and zest which novelty gives to their existence,—and to observe how their unsubdued intellects rush headlong upon those deep mysteries of our being, those unsolved problems and unanswerable questions which we have learnt to put away, because we have interrogated all things in vain for an answer—the sea and the earth, the heaven and the grave, having each confessed, “It is not in me!”

And let not parents imagine it is a small advantage that their children help them to understand and to perform their duties to their heavenly Father,—exhibit a daily lesson how they should feel and act in relation to Him. In their confidence toward you, in their trust in your wisdom and prudence, you see represented, as in a glass, the faith and hope you should cherish toward God. In this temper of theirs, we see set before us that great duty, which we often find so difficult, of casting all our care upon Him who careth for us, and of taking no anxious thought for our life or for the morrow, because our Father knoweth what things we have need of. From the spirit with which a child regards his parents, we may learn, better than from all the doctors, what is that spirit of sonship and adoption in which we should cry, *Abba, Father.*

I might add a great deal more to shew that those persons are in a grievous mistake who fancy that however necessary the parent may be to the child the child is not necessary or beneficial to the parent. On the contrary, parents who do their duty, and keep their eyes open, will acknowledge that they have been

repaid, day by day, for all their anxiety, labour, and pains,—that the pleasures and instruction, the incitements to good, the salutary restraints which their children have supplied, the thoughts they have suggested, the feelings they have inspired, were cheaply purchased even with the cost and care of a family,—and that children are not, as men buried in selfishness esteem, a mere tax and burden, but truly a promise and a blessing, as they have pronounced them who lived in the ages of faith,—“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord,” (Ps. cxxvii., cxxviii.)

From the same source, it is true, spring some of the deepest sorrows and the sharpest pains which man's heart knows in this world. Yet even these are not without their use and blessing. It becomes more easy to set our affection on things above when our treasures are there, the departure of whom has left this world dark to us, so that it is now a less powerful rival of that which is to come.

In most things in this world we see clearly that in a great measure our condition is under our own control; so that if we cannot alter it entirely, we may yet modify it so as to render it at least not intolerable. But no department of our life is so completely within our reach as our family life. This is, so to speak, a house of our own planning and building from its very foundation. Not to mention the partners we may have chosen—though this is the basis of the whole,

and it matters not how solid the superstructure may be if the foundation be on the sand—our children come into our keeping unconscious infants, without knowledge, experience, or habits, and who have yet to learn everything, even the use of their own faculties. The child is utterly dependent on the parent—is absolutely in his power, hangs upon his will and pleasure, almost for life itself; what he receives is what the parent gives; what he learns from the first day of his existence upon earth is what the parent teaches; his character is from the first moulded and fashioned under the parent's eye and by his hand. They are forming the future man even when they are thinking of no such thing, because, as was said before, they are his supreme authorities at the period when he is naturally under authority, and are the chief objects of his imitation during that whole period when the imitative propensity is most active in him.

Parents who are themselves wise and virtuous cannot but wish that their children should be the same. If we be sincere and earnest Christians, we shall desire that they who are so dear to us should equal, and even excel, us in their Christian attainments. Indeed, such aspirations for their offspring are not confined to those parents who are themselves exemplary Christians. Many who shew very little regard to their own spiritual welfare manifest much concern respecting that of their children, whom they thus seem to love better than themselves—desiring that their own lives should serve as beacons, and not guides, to them. This solicitude is, of course, worthy of commendation. We may only lament that such persons betray so much indifference on their own account; as also the blindness which permits them to imagine that the

regular inculcation of religious doctrines and duties will suffice to counteract the baleful effects of an irreligious example. There is probably a large class of parents who are well aware that their own religious and moral characters are by no means what they ought to be, and are not unaware of the risk their children run of being infected with the same; yet, instead of resorting to the only effectual remedy—which is obvious enough—they delude themselves with the imagination that a little extra sermonising, catechising, and drilling in the doctrines of Christianity will prove a sufficient antidote. And so the strictness of their religious teaching keeps pace with the laxity of their lives and the worldliness of their sentiments. The young cannot be exposed to a more deleterious atmosphere than this. Yet there is too much reason to apprehend that thousands of parents may have felt the incongruity of their conduct as respects themselves, without being aware of its pernicious influence upon those youthful minds, which they would direct in the ways of righteousness and peace. A thoughtful youth, or even an acute child, may soon be expected to discover that his father and mother pay very little regard in their own conduct to those lessons which they enforce upon him, and to draw conclusions very derogatory to their consistency, sincerity, and moral integrity in general; and thus he may be taught (by themselves) to distrust, and even despise, those whom, on other accounts, he has the greatest reason, and also the strongest inclination, both to love and respect. His suspicions may easily go farther—that religion is only a restraint for the young and the ignorant; that his parents are secretly without faith in Christianity; and that this religion itself

cannot be true. Thus may the poison of a secret scepticism be insinuated, which shall work the more powerfully the more strictly religious lessons and observances are forced upon him. A little earnest belief exhibited by those he looks up to would go farther to satisfy and impress him than all he is doomed to hear and to learn on the subject of religion, which, as he receives it, tends rather to doubt or unbelief than to faith.

We should all remember, and parents in particular, that religion is not, as many seem to suppose, an affair simply of understanding and memory. It is not to be learned as grammar is, or logic, or arithmetic, or geometry. In each of these cases, when the subject is understood, it is mastered and possessed; so that he who understands logic is a logician—he that understands geometry is a geometrician. The science wants no other faculty or state of mind than intellect and memory. But when you apprehend, understand, and remember ever so accurately the propositions in which the truths of the gospel are enounced, you are not therefore, to any purpose of holiness or salvation, in possession of those truths; because Christianity is an affair of the affections, the conscience, the will, and, in short, of the whole man, and not of any one power or faculty exclusively; and till it so pervade and occupy our whole nature, it has by no means wrought its perfect work in us. We are God's children, not when we have heard or admitted that there is a Being infinite, eternal, omnipotent, so called, but when we so apprehend His character, and so interpret His dealings with ourselves, and with all men, that we can trust in Him, love Him, and at least strive earnestly to obey Him,

convinced that to serve Him is our true liberty, to enjoy Him our only good. Till we have reached this we are not in the position of God's children, and are far from "the stature of the perfect man in Christ." Do not persuade yourselves that you are teaching your children much that is worth their learning, unless you are communicating (by the blessing of God) that which is the end of all knowledge, and the grand aim and use of all doctrines whatever.

Your opinions and sentiments are gradually stealing into the hearts of those young persons who sit around your tables from day to day—who take you as their standard of truth, and look up to you as their oracles. Your common talk, the notions and feelings you habitually express, are sinking into the very depths of their souls, and laying the foundation of their future characters—as the coral insect builds up in the dark abysses of the southern ocean the strong battlements of future islands and continents. These, whatever you think, are the religious lessons (or the irreligious, as the case may be) which shall be so thoroughly learned that they will never be forgotten. The seed thus sown is that which will appear and remain.

It is, therefore, vain for us to persuade ourselves that we can teach our children Christianity unless we ourselves are Christians. "The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith." The silent influence of our own character will do its work; and that influence, if evil, all our painstaking and catechising will not undo. If you would have your labour crowned with success in training your children to be good, you must take the trouble and submit to the self-denial of being good yourselves, else the labour will probably

be thrown away—perhaps worse than thrown away. None of us probably is so much impressed as we ought all to be with the conviction that our influence, whatever it may be, is chiefly the silent power of our own spirit. As a man infects another with a bodily malady, unconsciously to both, so our prevailing dispositions and mental habits infect those around without either one or the other being aware of what is going on. This it is which gives its peculiar hue and tinge to what a person says ; so that any power which his words have comes chiefly from the known character and *mind* out of which they issue ; and even the same words, in different men's mouths, are indeed different discourses, and tell almost a different tale. In like manner, the sense and meaning of your religious instruction will depend upon that construction which your spirit and life enable your children to put upon it. Whether this instruction shall profit them or condemn you, and perhaps injure them, will depend, in very great measure at least, upon the way in which you live—upon what you are.

# THE FAMILY AND ITS DUTIES.

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## II.

### PROVISION FOR CHILDREN—SCHOOL EDUCATION— SUNDAY TASKS.

EVERY parent who has any Christian principle, or even any sobriety of mind, must feel that of all the trusts which have been committed to him, his children's welfare is the most precious and sacred. Even natural feeling must suggest this; and, therefore, we may presume that parents in general are desirous to discharge their duty in this respect wisely and well. But there is too much reason to fear that many, even conscientious people, have very confused and erroneous notions on this subject, simple and familiar as it may seem; and that their anxiety to be found faithful stewards in this regard is accompanied with much perplexity as to the means by which the end may be accomplished.

I. The duty of providing for our children is that which is first suggested. As the parent is constituted the natural protector and guardian of his offspring,

so one of his most obvious duties is to see that those who have come into existence by his means shall, as far as possible, want nothing that is needful for them. Thus the first call that a family makes upon the parent is to self-denial, diligence, frugality, perseverance, forethought—that is, to form and practise the most valuable moral habits.

The direct result of such habits in the parent is to secure the maintenance required for the child; but an indirect and not less valuable result is to train the child to admire and imitate the same, by the daily exhibition of them in the parent. For as under Judaism, which was the childhood and youth of God's Church, the people were instructed rather by ceremonies than by sermons, by exhibition rather than doctrine, so it must always be with children: for them especially the eye is a less sluggish organ than the ear.

As parents should be industrious and frugal with a view to the interests of their children, and so far as their circumstances may require, so should they take thought for the morrow. Having so precious a charge, they should look, not faithlessly or hopelessly, yet with a sober regard, to probabilities—the manifold changes and chances of human life; and should so provide that the still helpless objects of their tender affection may not be left utterly destitute in the event of their own removal from this world.

This is a matter which should engage the particular attention of those parents whose means are contingent upon their own life and health; and the children of parents so circumstanced should be brought up with this habitually in view. Nothing can be more unjust or cruel than to accustom those young persons to

abundance, and even luxury and elegance, whom the death of a parent may any day plunge into penury, which is all the more ruinous that those it falls upon are altogether unprepared to cope with it, being utterly untaught and untrained either to remove the evil or to bear it.

Failure in this is now less excusable than formerly it was. Institutions abound everywhere—such as Savings Banks, Life Assurance Companies, and the like—which may both remind parents of their duty in this respect, and help them to discharge it in the easiest and most effectual manner. It is impossible to calculate the amount of misery which such institutions prevent or relieve, and the good effects in various ways which they produce not only upon the persons immediately concerned, but upon society in general. They exhibit a kind of Christian *communism*, stripped of all the fantastic and revolutionary, not to say immoral, features in which communism has generally been arrayed. A society for life assurance is an institution which tends to equalise somewhat the prosperity and adversity (in one respect at least) which fall in such different measure upon different families. The overflowing of one is by their means drained off to supply the drying up of another's streams: and so, as we read of the manna, "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." The rapid extension of such societies indicates, we may believe, a clearer perception on the part of parents of the duty which they owe to their families, and also a more general sense of its obligation.

The exhibition of a father's self-denial thus continued from year to year can hardly fail to make a

salutary impression upon the minds of those at least for whose sakes it is made. They enjoy many other proofs of his deep love to them ; but none perhaps so considerate or so resolute as this. Love shews itself here not in the crude state of an instinct, or as an untamed impulse, but matured into a principle, trained to be a habit—prompted indeed by nature, but regulated and sustained by something higher and holier.

But this, like all other duties, is to be regulated by prudence and a wise consideration of circumstances ; lest that which in itself is good should turn, through excess or misdirection, to the hurt or ruin of those whom we desire to benefit. Parents should not go about this business as if they forgot that their children have hands and heads as well as themselves ; that a gracious Providence is over them also ; and that there is neither necessity nor wisdom in their toiling like slaves, and denying themselves every comfort, in order that their children may have every luxury, and may do nothing, but may have the means, if they choose, to lead an idle, useless, or dissipated life. How many fathers in this way have laboriously sown the seeds of their children's ruin, by accumulating for them temptations which they could not withstand—as if they would do with their sons what God does sometimes with the obstinately wicked, whom “He sets in slippery places, so that they are brought down to destruction suddenly, as in a moment,” being “lifted up only that they may be cast down.”

We should consider that one of the best things we can do for our fellow-creatures is to lessen their temptations as much as we can ; and that generally he who increases our temptations, in the same degree

multiplies our transgressions. A wise and good man will, therefore, not desire for his children that they may be in circumstances which may silence every call for exertion, and in which their faculties may rust with sloth, or canker in idleness; but that they may be placed in such circumstances as may be most likely to evoke diligence, prudence, temperance, and those other virtues which, after all, are the only possessions of any essential value—the only wealth that is not poverty under a false name.

This, then, is a great duty; but, like most others, it is beset with difficulties, and, like all others, it is to be discharged with circumspection, and a due regard to proportion and to degrees.

II. The next thing to which I would direct attention is what is commonly understood by the *education* of the young. The advantage and necessity of education in the restricted sense—that is, *school* education—are now so generally felt that it may appear unnecessary to dwell upon the subject, or almost to mention it as one of the parental duties. But from the fact that people, at least in this country, are generally eager to perform their duty in this respect, it does not follow that the duty itself is well or wisely done. It requires, for instance, only a little acquaintance with the population of this country, and with the schools in which the young are taught, to become aware that a very large number of these are acquiring education, not with a view to fit them for their duties in the station in which they have been born, but as the means, if possible, of rising above this, and “getting up in the world,” as the phrase is. Of course, no one denies that a person of remarkable talents, who has

been born in a low situation, is justified in endeavouring to rise into a higher; and most men acknowledge the duty of assisting such to attain that more fitting position. But this does not excuse the folly of tens of thousands of persons of the most ordinary endowments, and of thousands whose powers are below mediocrity, struggling and jostling to get out of their proper places in the crowd of life, impelled by a silly conceit of their own talents, aided, or probably inspired, by the no less silly vanity and fond ambition of foolish parents, eager to get their children, or some one of them, pushed up to situations from which in all likelihood they will, if successful, look down upon themselves with contempt. In this way the unity and harmony of families are often destroyed. The other members are pinched and injured for the sake of one, who presently becomes ashamed of the rest; and these, in their turn, often become dissatisfied with their lot, and discontented, as if Providence, in leaving them where they were born, had overlooked and injured them; while by this violent pressure from below, the upper strata of society are perpetually disturbed and dislocated, and a widespread misery to all classes is the result. Admitting exceptions, as has been already done, education cannot be well conducted where multitudes of the young are being taught not with the view of discharging their duties in their own rank in life, but of climbing, by means of their education, out of it. It is a sad perversion when knowledge, instead of being sought for love of her, and for nobler aims, is courted merely to gratify the baser desires, being reduced, to borrow Lord Bacon's illustration, to the condition of a bondmaid for her master's gain.

Parents are sometimes deceived in this by schoolmasters as ignorant and as injudicious as themselves, who persuade the fond father and mother that their boy is a genius, because he has a retentive memory, and excels in repeating passages of the Bible and the Shorter Catechism. This has been the sole evidence of mental capacity that has sent hundreds of youths, with no sufficient preparatory education, to college, to gain, after a weary probation perhaps, situations for which they were in every way unfit, and which they held with as little honour or satisfaction to themselves as benefit to others.

School education, then, besides its general tendency to open and cultivate the mind, should have some *appropriateness* to the circumstances of the scholar, and to the sphere in which his faculties in after life are likely to be employed. It is, for example, sad to see females, even in the highest stations, consume a large portion of their youth in acquiring mere accomplishments, while more solid acquisitions are comparatively neglected; but such conduct is utterly preposterous in young women in lower stations, whose lives are to be spent in occupations for which those accomplishments supply no help, and to which—for want of leisure and opportunity—they can give no ornament; so that, amid the pressure of other cares, they are presently cast aside and forgotten. Doubtless, vanity, which exercises so large an influence upon human life in other respects, in this department also is very influential for evil. Young persons are often doomed to waste their precious years in studies for which they have neither use, taste, nor capacity—simply that they may not be behind some others who don't appear to be better *entitled* to such

accomplishments, nor better qualified for them, than they. Thus parents often sacrifice even what is dearest to them—their children's welfare—to that silly vanity which blinds men in so many other respects, and so often leads them astray.

The next remark I would offer respecting the education of the young is this—It should not be overstrained. Too much is often attempted; too many subjects are thrust upon the attention of the young; too much mental exertion is expected or enforced. It is surely unreasonable and pernicious, not to say cruel, to demand of youths of tender age as many hours of study daily as an adult person can give without fatigue or injury, at the very season when the demand (because the necessity) is so great for bodily exercise, fresh air, and recreation. Play is an essential part of a child's education; and hardly less needful, for health of mind and body, than food itself. If it be cruel to overtask men, how much more children, whose brains can no more be over-exerted with impunity than their muscles; and when an injury done to either of these at that stage can seldom be repaired by any amount of care in after life? I cannot, for my part, believe that any acquirements which are proper or salutary for the young can need all this tasking and drudgery. With proper methods, surely something less than seven, eight, or nine hours should serve for the daily confinement and mental toil of the young and rising generation! They, at least the male portion of them, will by and by be slaves sure enough; the natural result, it seems, of our modern society. But surely they should have a little respite while yet they are children; they should not be quite born

into slavery; the cruel yoke should not be put so soon, or so heavy, upon their tender necks.

Besides its cruelty and its other pernicious effects, this system of long hours and overwork often produces consequences little expected, and also too little observed. When unreasonable exactions are made upon the scholar, he is apt to lose all heart, and to fail of doing what he could easily accomplish if a moderate demand only were made upon him. His attention becomes fatigued, he is dispirited, grows listless, careless—habits which are easily formed, and which are apt to spread themselves over the whole character, and to produce a man indifferent and careless in everything. Of course, without application nothing can be acquired; but excessive impositions and long school hours, succeeded by evening work at home, are not the proper means to generate habits of attention and vigorous industry. Men, they say, can do more work in six days than in seven. Certainly youths and children will gain more both of that which is the end of education, and of education itself, by being treated mercifully, according to their tender years and their immature faculties.

For my part, I have long doubted the necessity or advantage of so very much teaching. The great men of antiquity were few or none of them scholars in our sense. The famous historians, poets, orators, statesmen of the Hellenic race knew no language but their native Greek; and the learned Romans aspired only to add to their own that one language from which their own borrowed its best materials in politics, philosophy, and poetry. They were not under the same temptation as we are to put names for things,

and words for thoughts, and to consume themselves and others hunting after the shadow of knowledge and wisdom. Hence they were hardly acquainted with that melancholy abortion of modern times—the learned fool, blown up with conceit and self-sufficiency because he has made himself acquainted with some *minutiæ* of grammatical rules, perhaps of some one ancient language ; whose productions meanwhile, in their grander features, his microscopic eye is as incapable of comprehending, as are the organs of a fly to take in the features of a landscape or the vastness of a great city. Yet others are sometimes so silly as to take such people at their own valuation, and to call him learned who has indeed learned nothing, and knows nothing as he ought to know.

“When he that is but able to express  
No sense at all in several languages  
Shall pass for learned than he that 's known  
To speak the strongest reason in his own.”

We can at least prevent Sunday being made a day of toil to our children. If men's muscles need a weekly Sabbath, their minds need it no less ; and of all minds those of overtaxed children and youths most of all. A task is not the less an exertion to the brain and a drudgery because it is a religious task ; it may be as laborious and as irksome to learn a catechism as a grammar. Religion may be made as technical and repulsive by the one as language by the other. It is strange that they who insist most upon the perpetual and universal obligation of the fourth commandment, should so many of them imagine that this is sanctified in the case of the young by toil, which is the very thing, and the only thing, that the commandment forbids.

There is no reason why Sunday, which should not be a day of labour of any kind, should be spent in idleness. Far otherwise. Religious instruction in private, as well as the public worship of God, should regularly be attended to on that day. But of all subjects, religion may best be learned without tasks or impositions, and therefore, in great degree, without labour. Whatever it may have been made, Christianity, as it lies in the pages of the New Testament, is not a technical system. The Bible, which is the most holy, is also the least technical, the most animated, entertaining, and popular of books. The narratives of the Old and the New Testaments, and especially the discourses and parables of our Saviour, will convey to the minds of the young the truest conception of the Christian religion which they can receive, and in a manner the most easy and interesting. By frequent perusal of these, the youthful mind will be more easily initiated in the principles of our holy faith than by learning off manuals of controversial divinity, which deal not so much with those things which Christ taught as with those which divines have disputed about, and which cannot possibly prove interesting to a child, because the controversies referred to are not understood or known by him, and indeed are not level to his capacity; involving, as they often do, the deepest questions in metaphysics as well as theology. These works, indeed, being in their character and object rather scientific than religious, would seem to be adapted not so much for committing to memory by children, as for study and reflection by persons of mature minds.

Sunday schools are excellent institutions, if they

be not abused. They were originally intended for those children whom their parents neglected, for the outcasts of society, in short, to perform the duty of religious teaching where the parent would not or could not perform it. But this has long ceased to be the purpose of Sunday schools. They are now filled with the children of the well-doing, decent, intelligent, religious portions of the working classes; who are themselves quite competent, perhaps not indisposed, to discharge the duty, which they have also solemnly undertaken, unless they were thus officiously relieved of it, and encouraged to neglect it, by others who, whatever their zeal or knowledge, cannot so well perform the part of religious teachers to children, simply because they are not the parents. For Christianity is the revelation of *God the Father*; and in us it is the reflection and response of that love, the mind of God's children, the spirit of adoption in which we cry, Abba, Father. Whatever tends most to generate this mind is the best and most effectual religious instruction. Perhaps parents themselves have suffered not less by this transference of their duties to others. It would have served to increase their interest both in their children and in the subject of religion itself, if Christian parents had been taught and shewn that they themselves are the proper instructors of their families, as well as their guides and examples; and that, as no others can fulfil these offices so well, so neither sloth nor diffidence can be accepted as an excuse for the non-performance. The parents also, by this means, would themselves improve in religious knowledge; for teaching, as we all know, is the most effectual way of thoroughly learning. In the Sunday school, also, the child is confined in a

heated, and often vitiated, atmosphere ; he is kept sitting, probably after attending long services in church ; the tasks of the week are resumed ; work is required, and must be ;—all which might be prevented, and the end far more effectually reached, if parents would give themselves a little trouble, have a little confidence in themselves, and not think themselves justified in devolving upon others duties which belong to themselves, which they have solemnly engaged to fulfil, and for which they are responsible in the sight of God and man. But with multitudes of parents the great popularity of the Sunday school arises from its saving them trouble, and “taking their children off their hands ;” so securing for them, perhaps, so much more time on Sundays either for loitering and idleness, or for other and even less edifying ways of disposing of the holy day.

## THE FAMILY AND ITS DUTIES.

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### III.

OBEDIENCE—TRUTHFULNESS—INDUSTRY—  
RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD.

LEST we lose ourselves in generalities, I will set down a few particular things which should engage the special attention of parents ; keeping this always in view, that wisdom, virtue, piety, goodness, are habits, customary and established states of mind ; and therefore, in seeking that either ourselves or others should be wise, virtuous, pious, good, we must remember that we are called not to perform an *act*, but a *work*—a continuous labour, which is to succeed only through manifold repetitions, till at last it becomes a second nature and part of ourselves.

The object to which we should aspire for our children, as well as for ourselves, is of course the attainment of all virtue, all goodness—“*whatsoever* things are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, laudable.” But there are some virtues out of which the others naturally spring, which are germinant and fruitful after their kind ; so that, if these be fairly planted in

the soul, the others will either spring from them as from a root, or at least will flourish under their shelter. I will particularise a few of these :—

1. The foundation of all virtue, whether historically or logically considered, is *obedience*. As we have come into the world, are what we are and where we are, through a will other than our own, so must we recognise our obligation in a sense of gratitude and of dependence, and also of duty; which demands that we conform ourselves in all respects to that will, however interpreted to us, and by whomsoever represented; so that we must “be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake,” and render an obedience that is dictated rather by conscience toward God than by fear of man.

The first form of authority which is presented to the child is that of the parent, who is for him the king, lawgiver, and judge, and much beside; in short, his Elohim—in the place of God. In the parent he beholds a superior intelligence, a higher nature, supreme authority, the incarnation and source of the law under which he is placed. And he is taught that this law is a law of love—that this authority requires him to seek his own safety, good, and happiness, which he is still too ignorant to find without its guidance. Thus is he insensibly initiated in the great lessons of humility, dependence, submission—of living out of himself and above himself—of distinguishing *will* from *inclination*—the voice of duty from the clamour of passion—the true *Ego*, the man himself, who stands apart from the passions and above them—though they dwell in the same house with him—and who directs and controls them, while they lend him their strength to do his work.

The fifth commandment belongs, as good authors hold, rather to the first table of the law than to the second. What it requires is more properly matter of religion than of morality. And this (which is also the judgment of heathen antiquity) is confirmed by St Paul, who denominates the duty owing to parents by the term "piety," (*εὐσεβείῳ*, 1 Tim. v. 4;) man being the formal and immediate, but God the essential and ultimate, object of such duty. So that he who trains his child to a right spirit of obedience, lays in him the foundations as well of all religion as of all morality. This indeed is evident and admitted; so that we need not dwell upon it, but shall rather inquire by what means the child may be so trained.

This is a difficult task for the parent no less than for the child; for before we can be qualified to rule, we must have learned to obey; and he who is to control others must have acquired the power of controlling himself. To make obedience as easy as possible, commands must be as few as possible; they must be reasonable, just, necessary, uniform; proportioned to the capacity and strength of him that receives them; and they must be enforced. Any laws or commands which want these attributes, or any of them, must, to the same extent, fail to secure obedience—at least, the willing obedience of rational creatures, whether young or old.

On the other hand, parents, by indulging caprice and wilfulness, by inconsistency in their injunctions and requirements, by demanding in the heat of temper what in cooler moments is felt by themselves to be harsh and unreasonable, and so cannot be enforced—by these, and such like faults, parents may indeed

train their children in disobedience, and in rebellion, not only against their own authority, but against all laws and every form of authority, whether human or Divine.

All this is exemplified, and also confirmed, by the manner in which the Divine Parent has dealt with man, who is His son, (Luke iii. 38.) Being created at first, not as the schoolmen dreamed, a perfect man, but only a pure and innocent child, he received from his heavenly Parent a law proportioned to the weakness of his faculties, consisting of but one precept, and that a prohibition, and not of a mental or spiritual sort, but outward and bodily—the prohibition of an act. “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Being capable of little, little is required of him ; having as yet but one talent in trust, he is required to use and account for only one. And the successive enlargements of the law, as revealed to him, indicate the gradual unfolding of his faculties, intellectual and moral, till Christ at length, by revealing the Father, unfolds to him the perfect law of love, and calls him to the service which is perfect freedom—shewing him that, having at length reached maturity, he must no longer “speak, or understand, or obey as a child,” but must attain to the stature of a perfect man in Christ ; must be animated by the love which casteth out fear, and become a law unto himself, having in him the Spirit of the Father, and the mind that was in Christ.

Obedience, then, is the fundamental lesson in which the parent has to instruct and train his child. This being well learned, all besides will be rendered easy, for this embraces the elements of the whole science

and art, as well of piety as of virtue. No family, I believe, ever prospered, and I am certain no nation ever did, in which the duty of obedience was not carefully taught to the young.

The political strength of old Rome, and the miserable political weakness of the United States of America, illustrate this on two sides. In the former, the *Paterfamilias* was a god to his children; in the other, "Honour thy father and thy mother" is hardly felt to be included among moral or religious obligations. And out of this, long ago, wise men drew the augury of that political disorganisation and anarchy which have overtaken that unhappy country.

With good reason, therefore, the duty of honouring father and mother is set in the Decalogue before all the other duties which we owe to men; not only because it lies at the foundation of them all, but is indeed an act of homage and honour rendered through men to God, the supreme and true Parent. And while the other commands are negative—mere prohibitions—this alone is positive in its form, requiring not merely abstinence from certain things, but a rendering of all those acts and dispositions which are included in "honour." \*

2. TRUTHFULNESS is a matter which cannot too early engage the parents' attention, because it is one of those habits which commence to be formed, or the contrary, so soon as a child begins to speak; and because the habit, whether of truthfulness or of falsehood, when once fairly formed, even in a young person, generally lasts as long as he lives. I do not believe that a lying man or woman ever grew out of a truthful child; and we have melancholy experience how seldom the liar is altogether cured of that sin

\* See Note, p. 88.

at any period of life. We should also be the more careful on this point, because this is not so much a separate vice or a detached sin—if indeed, strictly speaking, there could be such a thing—as the result and indication of a moral character altogether relaxed, betraying the absence of moral and religious principle in general, and therefore a far more serious matter than is popularly thought.

*Lying*, simply considered, is not a sin to which there is any temptation—to speak *what is* being of itself as easy and as pleasant as to speak *what is not*. Other passions supply the temptations to falsehood. Something that is desired may be gained—something that is disagreeable may be escaped by falsehood, which could not be by truth; hence the temptations to lying are supplied by those desires or aversions—by vanity, by spite, envy, and malignity, by avarice, by fear, and the other passions. In training any one to speak truth, therefore, you must understand that you are not initiating him in one simple act or habit of virtue or religion; but that you are training him to resist the temptations to all those passions which seek their gratification through lying. And to do this effectually, you must observe carefully his constitutional temperament and character, so as to understand what those sins are which are most likely to beset him, that you may invigorate him in the weak part. If love of approbation be his besetting peculiarity, he will be tempted to speak lies which may glorify himself, or cover his shame or dishonour. The same may be said of nations. French popular histories are full of lies, dictated by national vanity, which is the characteristic vice of that people.

In like manner, if the malevolent passions preponderate in any character, his lies will partake of the

same—they will be directed to injure the reputation or good name of those he envies or hates ; he will be an evil-speaker or slanderer, who will spit out his venom against any that happen to be more successful, more honoured, more eminent than himself. The falsehoods of such persons will take the form of spiteful and malignant lies. Again, in a character or in a population of which covetousness is a besetting sin, falsehood will be chiefly directed to the avoiding of just payments and to the getting of unjust gains, to cheating and defrauding. The moral principle, which may be sufficient to resist other temptations, here finds itself overmatched, and gives way before this powerful adversary ; which, also, in this case, is apt to gather strength from the example of others, and to grow bold, almost respectable, by the multitudes who, similarly tempted, do the same ; till at last lies of trade become almost the general morality, and he who refuses to follow a multitude in doing evil is regarded as an over-nice and a punctilious fellow, who is guilty of a great impertinence in presuming to be better than other people.

*Fear* is a grand temptation to falsehood—perhaps the most common and influential of all. It often appears so natural and so easy an expedient for escaping from a loss, a reproach, a pain, or some other hateful or hurtful thing, only to say what is not. This looks, to the tempted person, not only so simple but so effectual a means of deliverance, that, upon the whole, Fear is the most fruitful of all the mothers of lies. A nation of slaves is always a nation which lies habitually. Not to particularise European populations, look at the Chinese, Hindus, Persians, and all other Oriental nations. The Turks, they say, are an exception. If they be, there is still hope for the

Turks and for their empire, notwithstanding present appearances. Peoples speak falsehood in proportion as they live in fear; for falsehood appears the natural refuge and defence of the weak. The slave in the classical comedy is always a liar, and is expected to be so; it would be out of character for him to speak truth. The explanation is obvious—he lives in dread of the lash—he is under a dispensation of fear. A population that lacks courage, especially moral courage, also lacks truth; their *conduct*, at least, becomes much of it a lie. They are driven to appear to be what they are not, to approve, love, condemn, what they do not in their hearts approve, love, or condemn; because public opinion, or the general sentiment, would censure them if they did otherwise. Their religious profession and their outward acts are often simply falsehoods; for that is a falsehood which is spoken or done with intent to deceive.

Too severe parents, teachers, masters, or mistresses may become in their several spheres teachers of lies, and this contrary to their intention, and in opposition to their wishes. By an excessive strictness, an unreasonable severity in punishing even small faults, children, scholars, servants, are driven to the subterfuges of lying to protect themselves; and in this way persons who were desirous to train those under them to piety and virtue, have often, by lack of observation and wisdom, proved the teachers of the very vices which they themselves most abhorred, by increasing the temptations to those vices.

That they may dare to be truthful, children, boys especially, should be made by all means *brave* and *manful*. The sentiment of courage should be studiously invigorated by precept, example, and exercise. The mind of the child should be braced, so

that he may be able to resist, may even, if possible, become insensible to the chilling influence of fear. Other dangers should be made as little as possible, and should be shewn to be, even the greatest of them, little compared with the monstrous danger and huge baseness of falsehood.

Let us also teach them not to trouble themselves much with the wretched question, What will this one say, or that one think, if I act thus and thus? If it be right, and my duty, let them say and think as they please—they are not my judges or my gods; and to please Him who is both, I can offend, and I will dare to offend, displease, and scandalise every man and woman upon earth.

Let us, then, take heed that we vitiate not the health of our children's souls with the noxious vapours of fear, but rather train them to all truth and sincerity, carrying them to that higher region where they will breathe the pure atmosphere of a courageous freedom—shall have the spirit not of slaves, but of men, and free men—to whom falsehood appears the loss of all dignity, worth, and goodness.

The wise Christian parent will be careful to warn his children against even those violations of truth which are often reckoned unworthy of notice, and are sometimes rather admired as evidences of liveliness and spirit. Many people, not considered liars, can yet never state a thing exactly as it is. They can never repeat what they hear precisely as they got it. In passing through their hands, it comes out a different thing—more, less, other than it was—a little raw material of fact worked up into a finished manufacture, which cannot be identified with the original substance. How common this form of falsehood must be, is proved by the abundance of reports

and stories which are constantly in circulation in society, and which owe their monstrous existence to their passing through a number of hands, none of which allows the story to go exactly as it came, but increased, coloured, distorted, or otherwise changed. Thousands of people permit themselves to assist in this wicked work who would not tell a direct and absolute lie, or invent a false story from the foundation. Some persons, too, have such lively fancies, and are so fond of telling striking stories, that they falsify habitually. They are *poets* where they are supposed and expected to be *historians*. Some men cannot walk half-an-hour on the streets of a city without encountering as many wonderful incidents as ordinary mortals, who see only what is to be seen, meet with in half a lifetime. The deepest tragedy, set off with a proper mixture of comedy or farce, rises up before those people wherever they move. But, indeed, they see no such things as those they represent, any more than the playwright finds the scenes of his tragedies or comedies in history, chronicle, or legend. They see something—some very common-place incident, perhaps—and out of this they invent their laughable or doleful stories. Now, such productions are, in the circumstances, mere lies, being, *in their substance*, fictions passed off for facts, and with the view of being credited as facts, without that apology of enthusiasm which made Emmanuel Swedenborg style his Visions of Heaven and Hell “an account of things seen and heard.” This poetical licence would not be so much in vogue unless people in general had such a voracious appetite for excitement and amusement, and were therefore ready to forgive any one who could supply these, even at the expense of strict moral principle.

If you would form your children to pure and healthy moral characters, discourage in them all such tendencies, if ever they appear. *Romancing* may be an amusing, it is never a respectable quality; and a lively imagination needs the balance of a stronger moral sense.

Teach them also to consider such trivial matters as exactness and punctuality as instances of truth, and therefore worthy of serious regard. For everything is momentous when it becomes matter of conscience, however trifling in itself it may be. *Punctuality*, or doing things at the time when we had engaged or were reasonably expected to do them, generally includes both *truth* and *justice*, no violation of which can be a trivial matter.

Too much importance can hardly be attached to such little things as these; for life and character are as much composed of little acts and dispositions as the ocean is of drops of water, the great world of atoms, time and eternity of moments. And what is a character without truth—what is a man if he be not a true man? Whatever may be his talents, acquirements, or advantages, he is nothing worth in the sight of God or man. This original sin spreads through the whole character, and poisons the man in all respects, leaving no part of him morally sound, wholesome, or healthful. He whom we worship being the true God, requireth of us “truth in the inward parts,” simplicity, and godly sincerity, without mixture of hypocrisy or tinge of falsehood.

3. I shall add a few words on another habit which is of great consequence to be early formed—*Industry*. To shew the value of this habit, we have only to remark that very few who possess it want a competent

measure of the good things of this life ; and that, on the other hand, none who want that habit possess such competency, except by accident. For industry is generally connected with *frugality* ; each being the spirit of self-denial controlling two different temptations ; whereas *idleness* is as generally accompanied with the want of frugality. As a general rule, they who submit to the toil of getting, alone understand the value of what is so gotten ; and we generally have some regard at least to our own pains and exertions. But it is not temporal well-being alone that has so vital a connexion with this habit ; it has a higher influence, it is deeply, essentially involved in the moral and religious character itself. Accordingly, you remember that *Hogarth*, that great moral teacher, fixes upon *industry* as the first characteristic which separates the good from the bad apprentice. Industry is the beginning of a life of usefulness, prosperity, and honour, in the one—idleness of a life of sin, shame, and ruin, in the other.

Let us not imagine that industry is needful only for the labouring classes, or for those who must depend for their bread upon their own exertions. Even thus the obligation would be very extensive ; for the bulk of mankind everywhere are included in this necessity ; very few of them can live without their labour in some form or other, and those few are rather objects of pity than of admiration or envy.

Idleness, or habits of indolence, are ruinous to the bulk of mankind. Look at a population in rags, living in hunger and filth, and in want of all things necessary for the comfort, decency, not to say adornment, of human life ; and travel a few miles further north in the same country to find a population well

fed and well clothed, inhabiting comfortable cottages, and in want, of nothing that people in their station need; and ask what makes the prodigious difference between the people in the north of Ireland, and those in the south and west,—living all under the same laws, ruled by the same Government, and enjoying the same advantages,—the answer is—The one population is industrious, and the other is not so. The one systematically set themselves to subdue the earth, that rugged and obstinate, but not ungrateful adversary; for she yields rich tribute to the conqueror who brings her under his power and leads her captive; the other population, industrious only in talking and smoking, looking for the supply of their wants and the bettering of their condition to everybody but themselves, who alone can better it; in listening to interested demagogues, who tell them that Government is the author of their miseries, and that their temporal salvation must come from Government, which must feed them and clothe them and do all things else for them. Hence they have continued worse and worse for generation after generation, resenting as an insult every exhortation to take their condition into their own hands, and to help themselves; ready to rebel against Government because it did not for them what indeed Government neither should nor can do; and murdering numbers of those who were guilty of attempting, by the only practicable means, their deliverance from this miserable degradation.

The results of industry and indolence, and their attendant habits, which are thus exhibited upon a great scale, we may witness with equal distinctness in the case of individuals. The Book of Proverbs is full of this wisdom; and, considering the way in which

that part of the Old Testament deals with this and some kindred subjects, which are of vital importance to human life, I cannot help lamenting that it is no longer used as a school-book, as it formerly was. In my opinion, no part of the Old Testament is better suited for this purpose, nor even of the New Testament, unless it be the parables and discourses of our Lord.

Idleness leads to innumerable sins. It supplies the occasions and opportunities of the most dangerous temptations, leaving mind and body vacant for every unrighteous passion, every debasing lust, every silly vanity, every dissipation and folly to occupy, possess, and abuse. "When the devil finds a man idle, he generally sets him to work"—in employments that are hateful to others, polluting and ruinous to the worker himself.

It is also well worthy of notice that habits of industry and useful occupation have a very close connexion with peace of mind, cheerfulness, good temper, and bodily health. There is great pleasure in the exercise of our powers, which pleasure itself is one of the stimulants to their use; and particularly in the reflection that they are used to good purpose in things laudable and beneficial, or at least innocent; whereas those powers, when unused or misapplied, revenge themselves by creating irritation and derangement in various ways, besides the reproaches of conscience, which of all things we should most tremble to bring upon ourselves.

Labour to instil these things into your children's minds. Remind them, also, and especially, that they are God's creatures, and not their own property; that their life and all their faculties—their time and oppor-

tunities and means of action—are all of them God's gifts—talents which the great Lord has committed to us to be used, improved, and accounted for; that the great day of reckoning presses—for death is always near, and judgment at hand, and God, who is both Judge and Witness, looks on by night and day; and between us and heaven or hell there is but a step, the lifting of the curtain, that we may see what is always here, though as yet we see it not.

The things which have been particularised, and some others, which will be noticed in the following pages, will be allowed by all of us to be of the deepest moment as affecting the future life and history of the young. They cannot be too anxiously cultivated. But these, and all other commendable qualities, are to be connected with, yea, based upon the authority of God, the example and precepts of our blessed Lord; they are becoming and indispensable in His disciples, and prepare us for another and higher world than this; and so they rise above the standard of mere moral virtues into Christian graces. If it be a strong recommendation that such dispositions, confirmed and become habitual, fit us to live creditably, usefully, and happily in this world,—that they cut off the more copious springs of personal, domestic, and social misery; how much more that they constitute the grand instances of obedience to our supreme Lord, our heavenly King,—that they fit us to leave the world,—that they are the appropriate evidence that we have achieved the great victory,—that we have conquered, and reign within ourselves; and so, having partaken of Christ's spirit, we are partakers also of His kingdom, and shall reign for ever with Him who was crucified.

## THE FAMILY AND ITS DUTIES.

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### IV.

#### SELFISHNESS—ITS NATURE AND CURE.

THIS is a matter of such importance that it requires a particular consideration.

1. It is much easier to understand what selfishness is than to define or describe it. A true, a chief regard to our own happiness or good is not selfishness. Every one is, and should be, to himself the first thing. God has given us to ourselves as He has given no one else to us. Selfishness is contractedness of thought, of affection, of concern, of sympathy for others. The selfish person is he who is too much engrossed with himself.

The selfish man may be neither unjust nor untrue. He may be, and often is, unstained with the grosser sins. These are bad policy, and even that would deter him from indulging them. But in business, in politics, in all his relations, he looks at men and things through the medium of his own gain, credit, ease, honour, or aggrandisement in some form: *himself* is still the terminating object in the vista—all else are means,

this is the end. Where he is at ease, as in his family, he consults his own comfort, his humour, his fancies. To these all must bow, like some stiff and fragile article, which must have room provided for it in the stowage, and around which the softer substances must be thrust in, and find place as they can.

In some grosser cases, this character will do nothing for any one but himself. The concerns of others, they are none of his business; he must mind his own affairs. The afflicted, the poor, the widows and orphans—these are words of ill omen, invented to plague him; he can hardly hear them mentioned with patience; they seem to reproach him. But sometimes selfishness is less gross and blind. It works, and gives, and helps, but still, by a round-about way, for itself. Its "eye is evil, and its whole body is full of darkness."

When he talks unrestrained it is still of himself—his business, his family, his possessions, his honours, his interests, his joys, his sorrows, his hopes, his fears. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and his heart is not big enough to contain anything but himself. He is not only his own centre, but his own circumference, beyond which he can no more travel than the planets beyond the attraction of the sun. He never flies off at a tangent into other people's good or ill—to rejoice with them that rejoice, or to weep with them that weep. This is the encaged bird; so born, bred, habituated, it knows not that it is a captive; not truly alive, it has never become truly itself,—never having escaped beyond itself into the region of love, which is the sphere of life.

We don't need generally to have the selfish man pointed out to us. He discovers himself, as, without

seeing it, the traveller knows that he is approaching a glacier, by the sudden chillness of the air; or the mariner that an iceberg is near, by a rapid fall of the thermometer. No doubt men born in the higher levels of society are elaborately taught to suppress the manifestations of selfishness, which are in bad taste and offensive, and therefore hinder a person from making himself agreeable. For politeness apes benevolence and generosity, as well as humility. But this may be—indeed, often is—only an education in a more refined and subtle selfishness; the disease being driven from the surface to prey more dangerously upon the vitals. Men learn to put on, for the intercourse of society, fine sentiments, as well as their fine manners and their fine clothes—the one as well as the other being merely a covering, put on and put off again, as may be convenient. The priest and Levite who pass by the wounded man, lying in his blood by the wayside, can talk benevolence on occasion with as much unction as any other disciples of Moses.

2. It hardly needs argument to prove that selfishness is a base and wicked state of mind. Every one may be said to be satisfied of this; for who does not detest selfishness *in others?* and who does not labour to conceal his own, if possible, even from himself? We are universally persuaded that selfishness is a miserable, a detestable character *in our neighbour*; that it is poor, mean, pitiable, denudes him of his proper humanity, freezes up all the fertilising streams of his nature, cheats him of his best joys, and of those softening and purifying sorrows which are better than joys.

This, too, we should ponder, that whatever may be

the capacities, accomplishments, or apparent virtues of any one, he cannot be loved if he be known to be selfish. He cannot receive that homage of the soul, being destitute of all participation in the godlike. He is indeed, with all his shining qualities, an insensate idol, nothing but clay,—there is no breath in him; and we can no more love him than we can love a picture, a statue, or a precious stone, because it is beautiful. Our admiration is given to many things; but we can give our love only to that which loves, or which we suppose loves, or which, at least, we esteem capable of loving: the incense of our affection, which is worship, can rise only before that to which we ascribe this soul of divinity. Such, then, is the doom of the selfish heart: it is separated, as by a wall of adamant, from that communion which is the only joy of humanity—the water of its life—the manna on which it feeds in its dreary march through the wilderness.

That which unites us to man is the same which unites us to God; for God is love, and the love of God is the instrument of Divine communion: or, perhaps, we should rather say, it is itself that communion by which all things become ours—and we are made heirs of the world, both of time and of eternity, and are enriched with the riches of God; whereas to the selfish heart, cut off both from the Divine and the human, no portion is left but itself, its own dark, cold solitude, its wretched desires, its empty fears, and its more empty hopes. Starting from self, and returning to it again, it treads for ever the same dreary round. Thus creaks on along the road to the grave the heavy-laden wain of life, till at last, un blessing and unblest, it reaches complete isolation, and dwells by itself, where it may “say to corruption, Thou art my father;

and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister." This outward condition is but the type and completion of its spiritual separation, rottenness, and death.

It may appear needless to dilate upon such topics. Who doubts either the sin or the misery of selfishness? We know it—we feel it all.

3. But is it not constitutional? Are not some men born selfish—others the opposite? Are not some families also characteristically selfish? Nay, do we not observe among children of the same parents some born open-hearted and generous, never squinting at themselves when they look at their neighbour; while others, whomsoever they look at, see only themselves, their own interests, pleasures, and advantage?

That there are characteristic tendencies in this respect as in others, sometimes more sometimes less strong, and that in families and even in races as well as in individuals, cannot be doubted. National character, as well as individual character, is founded on this.

But it by no means follows that much may not be done to foster and aggravate bad dispositions on the one hand; or, on the other, to correct or even prevent them. Thousands have grown up intensely selfish, who might not have been so, or might have been less so, if they had been otherwise managed. The disease might have been escaped, subdued, or, at least, modified. All our sins have their common root in the corruption of our nature, as our bodily diseases in our common mortality. It is the part of godly discipline to check that outgrowth, which not only springs from the root, but ministers to its vitality and power.

The treatment which the young receive is sometimes a constant stimulus to this evil state of mind ; and most of the lessons we remember in after life are those which were very early learnt. Every tyrant is selfish ; for every one around him is employed in serving, pleasing, and pampering him. What wonder if he come to think that that is their function, use, destiny ; that he is the end, they are means towards that end—tools and machines created for his use ?

Children who have over-indulgent parents, and are surrounded by servants and inferiors, are almost sure to draw like conclusions, and to feel in the same manner. The tyrant of the nursery is generated from the same seed as the tyrant of the state. Let every one do his will and live for him, and he shall soon be perfect in the evil science of self-indulgence, and in the bad art of living unto himself. Thus self-denying parents often foster in their children a character the opposite of their own. They submit to every sacrifice rather than that their children should want any indulgence. They make themselves their children's servants—their very slaves—hoping, forsooth, that the example will encourage imitation ; whereas they are establishing a *habit* of mind, which will probably prove too strong at length for any lesson or example to subdue. For virtue is not so much a lesson to be learnt by instruction as a habit to be formed by discipline, and established by frequent repetition of acts.

It is for this reason very difficult not to spoil a sickly child, or an only child ; because being so much an object of attention to others, he is ready to learn the pernicious lesson of being too much an object of attention to himself. Even long sickness, that great instru-

ment of sanctification, not seldom engenders an intense spirit of selfishness ; against which insidious distemper it becomes us to watch, lest we should become worse instead of better by the chastening of the Lord. Our medicines themselves, as well as the diseases they are designed to cure, are not unaccompanied with danger.

We cannot be taught too early that there are in the world other beings besides ourselves who feel pain and pleasure, and that their pain and pleasure are as important as ours ; that as we have some share in producing these, so we should give ourselves some concern, and take some trouble about the matter.

You that are parents should teach your children to regard others' comfort and happiness as a necessary part of their business, and *accustom them to consider you*. Let this be done as a matter of course, the propriety of which is not to be questioned. Let them have exercise in self-denial ; let them acquire the habit by daily use. Almost universally those children prove the best men and women who, instead of being made sensibly objects of attention themselves, have been required to regard, consider, and serve others. The law of God, which is the order of Divine wisdom, is "Honour thy father and thy mother." Yet fond parents often reverse the precept, and act as if it were "Honour thy son and thy daughter." But the penalty is never far off, and it falls both upon parent and child. It is dangerous to get too soon into the place of honour ; it is ruinous to the family, as well as to the state, when children rule, (Eccles. x. 16.)

Finally, we should consider, that in learning self-denial, we are learning either the whole or the chief part of the Christian religion. Our blessed Saviour,

whose life and spirit are the truest expositions of His religion, "gave Himself for us;" "though He was rich, for our sakes he became poor." He died upon the cross for us, though "the Father had given Him to have life in Himself;" and His whole history and character are summed up in that saying, "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of the Father that sent me."

*Devotion* may be hypocrisy; *prayers*, a pretence; *zeal*, mere faction and party spirit; *almsgiving*, vanity and ostentation; but the spirit of love is the spirit of God, and by that signature He marks them that are truly His.

And when we can say of any of those whose departure from this world has wrung our hearts, that they were unstained with any spot of selfishness, do we not feel assured that they were indeed born from above—angels whom we were permitted to look upon for a while—to know a little, and to love much—as they passed upward to their native heaven?

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it," (Matt. xvi. 24, 25.)

This is "Christ crucified," that "doctrine of the cross," which is the scandal and stumblingblock of all those in every age who have the form, while they deny the power, of godliness; but the glory and life of all the faithful for ever. Though Catholic superstition have turned it into a piece of wood, stone, or metal; and Protestant superstition—no less industrious, though working after another model—have

made it a dogma, not more living than the carved and molten crosses and crucifixes of the Papists ; it remains for every true disciple of Jesus Christ, of every sect, in every age and clime, the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation.

## THE FAMILY AND ITS DUTIES.

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### V.

#### FORMATION AND POWER OF HABITS.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven.”—MATT. xiii. 33.

I. THERE is an evident connexion between the different parables recorded in this chapter ; and it is probably on account of this connexion that they are here brought together, and represented in one view. They all relate to one great subject, the kingdom of God, and to one quality or attribute of that kingdom ; that it is not completed or perfected as soon as it begins to exist, but goes on from less to more ; grows, after the manner of life, from small, almost insensible beginnings, but reaches a vast magnitude, attains in the end an astonishing greatness. We must not imagine, however, that these parables are identical, because of their close resemblance. The point which the Grain of Mustard Seed sets forth, is the contrast between the beginning of the kingdom of heaven and its consummation ; the apparent insignificance of the one, the undeniable grandeur of the other. The point of *this* parable, the Leaven, is the *insensible progress* of the kingdom of God. As our Lord had spoken else-

where, (Mark iv. 26,) "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." These changes are unquestionable; our senses testify to their reality, but cannot observe or mark their actual progress. This we admit, not because we are able to see it, but only by comparison, after considerable intervals of time. So we can neither see nor hear the leaven leavening the mass of meal, any more than we can see or "hear the grass grow." Yet we presently discern that it has grown; and that the whole mass is leavened.

It tends to satisfy us that something is a Divine work, when we perceive that it is analogous to other works which are unquestionably Divine. The character which this parable assigns to the kingdom of God is analogous to all His proceedings in the kingdom of nature and of providence. And this fact, as we shall afterwards see, is full of useful instruction and of necessary warning for us.

We see that in nature all things go forth in slow, steady, and often insensible progression. The earthquake, the hurricane, the flood,—these present themselves to our minds as exceptions to the common way of the Divine working in the world; and accordingly their effects also are unlike the common effects of that operation; for these are immediately salutary and preservative, tending sensibly to protect, multiply, and comfort; whereas those others, though ultimately they conduce to the same results, are, in their immediate consequences, destructive and frightful.

In nature all growth is gradual, and, to our apprehension, very slow. The mightiest tree is the product

of a small seed, and is the work of ages. Wide valleys, so ample that nations may inhabit them, are scooped out by the gradual action of water; which also carries down the mightiest mountain masses, and deposits them in the bottom of the sea; thus preparing insensibly new islands and continents for the reception of future inhabitants. Those mighty masses of water which cover the greater part of the globe, and the volume and momentum of which far transcend human thought, how gently they sway from east to west and back again, following the course of the sun and the moon; and their sublime movements are quiet as a summer brook; we hear not deep calling unto deep. The year, too, glides round with stealthy changes. We are not plunged at once from the glory of summer into the dark horrors of frost and snow; the summer sighs out its life among the bright days of autumn, and leaves us not without many lingering glances, bequeathing to us also the rich legacy of the harvest. The day sinks gradually into night; the shades of our evenings always steal upon us, as if careful not suddenly to alarm us with the thought of night; and as it departs, so it comes: the light of the sun, to which the path of the just is likened, strikes not upon us with a blinding glare, but "it shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

How beautifully, but how slowly, does the *man* grow up out of the youth and the boy! Nor does his mind, any more than his body, acquire strength and maturity but in the course of long years. How insensibly his understanding increases! his knowledge is gathered, his experience enlarged! how slowly his conscience is awakened and acquires its perceptions and its authority! It is by use, and exercise, and

time, not by intuition, that his "senses are taught to discern both good and evil."

Growth is no less characteristic of our mental faculties than of our corporeal powers, and of our moral no less than of our intellectual capacities. We do not expect any one to be an expert mechanic, a skilful merchant, a learned lawyer, an accomplished physician, a profound scholar, a statesman worthy to be intrusted with the affairs of a people, or, in general, a really wise man in the things of this world, in a day, a month, or a year. We possess ten thousand unquestionable proofs that such acquisitions are not to be reached but through diligent application during long years; and sometimes they are to be learned only by the patient industry of a life.

We may well expect that the same mode of operation, which so prevails among the other works of God, will be found to obtain in His kingdom of grace, which is His highest, His divinest work. As in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, we observe, that, however diverse the several species may be in some respects, and though they be infinitely varied in their details, so as to adapt their organs to the varying conditions of their existence, they yet present such general resemblances, amid all this variety, as shew that they are all referable to one idea, are after all but so many copies of one type, the workmanship of one and the same almighty hand, diversified forms of one and the same infinite thought. So we may confidently expect that the Divine operation in that field of His works, which is peculiarly His kingdom, will not depart from the analogy which we remark everywhere else, but will correspond with His other works, while it goes beyond them; and that when so many other

things in the world resemble it, the kingdom of God also will be "like unto leaven." If what pretended to be the kingdom of God, had an opposite character, we should have good reason to suspect that its pretensions were false.

II. In some cases, no doubt, the kingdom of God commences so suddenly, and with such a revulsion of feeling, and produces so marked changes of outward conduct, that it may be said, contrary to the general rule, "to come with observation." A man like the apostle Paul, a Jewish zealot, bred up in hatred of all religious innovation, and in active hostility to the pretensions of Jesus of Nazareth in particular, against whose disciples he had actively carried on an unrelenting persecution, whose career also was arrested by a sensible miracle,—such a history cannot furnish a rule which must apply even to persons who have been brought up from infancy in reverence of that name which Saul of Tarsus was educated to abhor. The revulsion of feeling, of conviction, of conduct, which was inevitable in his case, should not therefore be considered as a rule for all others. We cannot be affected by a familiar thought as we are by one which is new to our bosom. Our old thoughts may, indeed, become our new convictions, and influence our life, as all convictions must ever do; but not with the same liveliness of emotion, or with such paroxysms of fear and hope, as if they had been new thoughts as well as new convictions. There are multitudes of the best people whose Christian graces were excited, for anything we can know, with the dawn of reason itself; and who, therefore, can no more particularise the date of their conversion than the period when those

virtuous feelings and habits commenced which now appear parts of themselves. In such cases—and they are so numerous as perhaps to form the rule among **really sincere Christians everywhere—the kingdom of God** has been as leaven, which gradually and silently has leavened the whole lump. Like the grass, it has grown imperceptibly, so that though a man watch night and day he shall not see it grow.

But in whatever circumstances this Divine life may be first awakened within us, it is natural and indispensable that it extend and expand itself continually more and more, till it embrace our whole nature, all we do, speak, think, intend, feel, and are. We must not satisfy ourselves with the opinion, the hope, or even the most positive assurance, that the kingdom of God is come within us, and that we are new creatures, born again of the ever-living Word. This great privilege, if we enjoy it, is not the end, but only the beginning of our Christian history. In the spiritual, as in the outward world, we are born that we may live and learn, act and enjoy: we are children not that we may remain perpetually in infantile ignorance and weakness, but may grow to the stature of perfect men; that we may go forward and not linger for ever at the gate of life. The Father of spirits bestows upon us the first blessing, that we may be capable of greater and greater without measure; not that the first should be the last, or that we should rest satisfied with that one token of His mercy and grace. It is not enough that we have faith, which is the first of Divine graces. Our duty, and our safety, and our peace, all demand that we add to faith, virtue, temperance, patience, godliness, the love of the brethren, and the love of all men. For He who has begotten

us again by the seed of the Word has created us unto good works, "which He has prepared that we should walk in them." There is no one so wise, holy, or perfect, that he can afford to rest satisfied with his present state and character, or to dispense with watchfulness, diligence, and godly fear. Even Paul accounts not himself "to have attained," or to be "already perfect." Still he must "reach forward," and "strive toward the mark." "Lest I be a cast-away:"—if such a thought may even hang upon the horizon of his mind, surely it may sometimes overshadow ours, and sober the hue of our too glaring self-confidence. If we will search we shall assuredly find that the leaven has still something to do within us, that there yet remain some corners of our mind and life which it has not pervaded or even perhaps reached.

This should teach us, among many other useful lessons, the folly of our waiting for some extraordinary interposition, whereby wonderful, almost miraculous impressions may be made upon our mind and character; as if some one great wave must come and throw us up into security at once, out of the ocean of sin in which we are wallowing and perishing. We see, however, that such wonderful things very seldom happen. They who are constantly depending upon lucky turns of the wheel of fortune, are commonly desperate people, and reckless spendthrifts. Miracles and marvels are, in their very nature, the exceptions, not the rule. Generally, men grow very good or very bad, not in a moment, or by a single leap, but gradually, by little and little. Their amazing height of wisdom and goodness, or their fearful depth of folly and degradation, are the results of a long history; they exemplify the law of growth. How carefully,

then, should we watch this growth in ourselves, and in those whom both duty and affection teach us to care for!

Very wise and needful is that common maxim, which bids us take care of our *pence*, because our *pounds* will take care of themselves. No less prudent is it in us to attend to little duties and little sins, as we esteem them; for our life, the most of it, is made up of such. A grand occasion seldom occurs; the important actions of our life, and its severe trials, are few and far between. But small affairs, like the smaller coin, are perpetually passing through our hands; in this currency the general business of our spiritual life is transacted. It, therefore, much concerns us to mark how the little duties are done; how the petty annoyances are borne by us. Is it our study to perform, and to bear even these trifles to the glory of God? to make even these almost insensible ascents, so many steps on the great ladder, which reaches from earth to heaven? Though singly they appear almost nothing, yet their number makes up for their minuteness: multiplied, they yield the grand total of life.

It is by insensible degrees that men grow thoroughly selfish, thoroughly worldly and carnal: their evil nature becomes mature and obstinate and masterful by time and habitual indulgence. By degrees no less insensible, the Divine Spirit in us is matured, and subdues our evil, gains a complete possession, and an undisputed supremacy in our hearts, till every high thought comes under subjection to the mind and law of Christ.

Religious people, at least, are generally persuaded that our greater duties, and especially the acts of

worship and devotion, should be performed in a serious and holy manner, and should be consecrated to the glory of God. It is not so easy to make us feel that even our commonest acts, and those that seem to partake least of a spiritual character, are also capable of being sanctified by holy intention, and a regard to Him upon whose bounty we are fed. Yet we must even "eat and drink to the glory of God." In sitting at our meals, conversing with our families and friends, entertaining these, or being entertained by them, pursuing our studies, or attending to our business, buying and selling, working, toiling in our various callings, however humble, we are yet doing that by which we may serve Him that made us, and has redeemed us with the precious blood of Christ his Son. Of the righteous man it is written, that not only "shall he bring forth his fruit in his season ;" but "even his leaf shall not wither." Which one of the Rabbins thus expounds :—Not only shall his graver actions be righteous and good, but even his indifferent actions, his casual words, his very relaxation and merriment, shall have in them a spirit of goodness. "This leaven shall leaven the whole lump."

III. This is God's way of proceeding in all His works, from the lowest to the highest. Sudden starts, fitful impulses, are characteristic of the ignorance, folly, and weakness of man. For man is constantly taken by surprise ; events catch him on his way, which he did not know were lurking there ; and so he makes up for his sloth or blindness, by violent and sudden efforts ; he does ill in a day the work of years. But the great Master never ceases working ; therefore He never hastes. He begins at the right moment, and at the right moment all is complete and ready.

Occasionally, indeed, a catastrophe appears to be needful in the moral as in the physical world ; but this, like vengeance, is God's strange work.

“ A flaming desolation there,  
Flames before the Thunderer's way ;  
But thy servants, Lord, revere  
The gentle changes of thy day.”

GOETHE.

The gradual, and almost insensible manner in which things proceed in this world, is pregnant with so many advantages, that we can discern in it, without difficulty, the evident traces of Divine wisdom and goodness. Yet, like all other good things in the present state, it is not without a certain mixture and shade of evil. With its manifold blessings, it brings also some considerable dangers, and some of our strongest temptations. And this is the general character of all things here below ; they are, at least to our minds, not untinged with some imperfection. The riches of their goodness appear as if charged with certain taxes, which we must pay for the possession of them ; but even this, again, tends to generate a higher good ; to raise our thoughts and aspirations to that other world, when “ that which is perfect shall have come, and that which is in part shall have passed away,” and when our wealth shall pay no tribute, for we shall be kings, reigning with Christ our Lord.

*Habit* is one of the most remarkable results and exemplifications of that great law which we have been considering. It is indeed one of the most noteworthy facts in the constitution of man ; and not of man only, but of all animals ; if, indeed, it do not descend lower than even the animal kingdom.

It is not, perhaps, easy to give a scientific definition

of *habit*; nor is it necessary, since we all know familiarly, at least in a general way, what it is; and this not only by observation, but by our own experience. We feel that it is something inseparably connected at once with our external, our intellectual, and our spiritual condition; or rather, that it is the determining circumstance in all. We are good or bad, wise or foolish, weak or strong, not because of any single act indicating goodness or badness, wisdom or folly, feebleness or power; but according as our *habits* manifest the one or the other. For an act may be an exception to the character, an excrescence upon the man; but the habit is the character of the individual in that regard; the sum of his habits is the man himself.

In a popular way, we may describe habit to be—a facility of doing, a tendency to do anything, resulting from having done it. It is the gross sum of many acts; their combined result upon the agent himself—action prolonged and matured until it become a state of the agent,—like those stupendous masses of rock which have been gradually formed of the soft bodies of very minute creatures; but now, accumulated in enormous masses, and indurated by time, they form the very pillars of the world, strong as iron, hard as adamant.

It follows from this, that the chief importance of the single act arises from its contributing to the formation of a habit. Whatever other consequences it may have, this is generally its most momentous consequence, so far as the character of the agent is concerned. For every time an act is done, the greater continually becomes the likelihood that it will be done again. It is more probable that that which has

been done three times, shall be repeated a fourth time, than it was that after the second repetition a third would occur. Which may suggest to us a valuable rule—namely, that we should consider single actions, whether of ourselves or of others, not simply in relation to their direct and immediate effects, but chiefly to their reflex influence in those habits which they contribute to form or to strengthen. When some impropriety, some act of vice or sin, has been committed by ourselves or others, we are too apt to satisfy ourselves with the thought, “It is after all a small matter: what great harm has it done?”—forgetting not only that the immediate damage which actions may appear to do is a most fallacious criterion of their culpability, but (which is the chief question) What kind of person will such actions repeated leave the doer? What sort of man would the youth become if such acts should grow into habits? In dealing with the young, and in dealing with ourselves, let us keep this perpetually before us. A single falsehood, a single act of intemperance, of deceit, of selfishness or hardheartedness, may be thought to be no mighty affair; but you start at the thought of your child becoming a hard-hearted or selfish man, a liar or a drunkard; yet what shall make him so but the repetition of those single acts? You yourselves have done the act, but you abhor the character—only do it again and again, and you are become what you abhor. To forget God in some single instance may appear nothing; to receive some great mercy without gratitude to Him; to live one day without any reverent or loving thought of that beneficent Power in whom we live and move and have our being; to retire one night to rest without prayer, the acknow-

ledgment of His mercies, the confession of our sins, without committing our bodies and souls to Him who sustains us in life, as well during our unconscious as in our waking hours ; to neglect this once or twice, it being late, and we being fatigued with our business or our pleasures, our studies or our dissipations,—What is that? God is not a hard master. To omit our devotions sometimes in the morning also, it being late, we having indulged too long in sleep, being therefore somewhat hurried, and having urgent business of importance awaiting us, what is it in such circumstances to go forth without our devotions? In cases like these, surely God will easily pardon us, will mercifully, or rather, as we may say, equitably consider our peculiar necessity. Men who shudder at the thought of living without God in the world, and dying without hope ; who feel that it is true death so to live, and the only real misery and ruin so to die,—is it not sad that they should so easily permit themselves to go on in the road which has that fearful termination! that they should contentedly glide down the stream which so soon will bury itself in that bottomless abyss? With reckless indifference, we permit the leaven of evil to work and spread, and we start at last in despair to find that the whole man is leavened.

IV. The importance of single acts may be further impressed upon us if we reflect that a single act may be, and sometimes is, the turning-point of a person's history. One instance of indulgence, or of self-restraint, may determine the character which hesitates and fluctuates between these two,—as a single grain suffices to turn the oscillating balance ; or as a streamlet

running along the ridge of a country, as if it could not decide into which of the valleys that lie on either side it should descend, may have its course finally determined by some paltry rock or single boulder which it meets in its way ; so one temptation, yielded to or resisted, may give the soul its final direction towards salvation or destruction : from henceforth the man shall turn no more, but shall go steadily forward to life or death. Indeed, in every character in which the course has not been determinedly shaped from the very beginning, there must be some crisis at which the ultimate course is fairly taken ; at which habit is so firmly established as to become the undoubted, if not also the undisputed, master. One may think of this terrible danger when one hears—as we sometimes may—two or three more resolute voices urging some hesitating or reluctant companion to accompany them to a place where they may partake of the liquid fire. In such cases the single compliance or refusal may prove the ultimate safety or final ruin of the tempted individual : this moment he wavers, but he may never waver again : on the next occasion he will probably yield without an effort, or resist without hesitation or difficulty. How easy is it, how natural it seems, to repeat sins which have been once committed ! The citadel being lost, why defend the out-works ? So plausibly reason our sloth and our treacherous lusts, those deadliest of our enemies, because they are within, and wear the mask, and speak the language of friends and allies.

It becomes us also to reflect how formidable habits are when once they are fairly established, and how difficult even the strongest wills, urged by the most powerful motives, have found it to subdue and root

out an evil habit. For habit, according to the proverb, is a second nature ; and it would appear sometimes to be even more unmanageable than the first. Sufficiently arduous is it to contend against our bad passions, evil inclinations, unruly appetites, even when they stand alone and fight in their own strength ; but how much more formidable do they become when time is granted them, and opportunity and means to fortify themselves behind the strong rampart of habit ! If we find it hard enough to cope with those adversaries, hand to hand, on the open plain, how can we expect to vanquish them when thus defended and strengthened ?

The quiet and stealthy way in which their advantage over us is gained, constitutes our greatest danger. If the existence of an evil habit were a sudden event, it would forcibly arrest our attention and deeply alarm our fears. We should leap to our feet the moment we felt the touch of the enemy, and should summon up all the strength that fear could give us to crush the deadly reptile. But all goes on so smoothly that there never appears any particular occasion for alarm ; no reason for anxiety at any one time more than at any other time. Things are no worse to-day than they were yesterday, this week, this month than last—even the lapse of a year, perhaps, has made no very alarming change for the worse. Thus our apprehensions are lulled, and the destroyer gains time to wrap our members in his deadly folds ; till at last, when he begins “to bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder,” we cry out, in the helplessness of despair, “The sorrows of death have compassed me about, and the pains of hell have taken hold upon me.”

The victim of this misery is himself almost always

the most insensible to what is going on, and the least impressed with his danger: after all about him have taken the alarm, he persists, and often perishes in his unbelief; whereas faith, if he would believe, might make him whole. So the family of a sick man sometimes cannot see what is too visible to all other eyes; for *they* stand too near to the object; *they* are too constantly present; and *their* wishes and hopes obscure their vision. What reason have we, even the best of us, to exercise watchfulness and godly fear, being surrounded with such enemies, and exposed to such perils!

On the other hand, we may receive comfort from reflecting that, if we be faithful, our great danger will become a chief means of safety, and our greatest obstacle a mighty aid. Habits of righteousness and holiness should be even more powerful than those of an opposite character, being fortified by the authority of God, the approbation of conscience, and the influence of the Spirit. Then obedience shall become our joy, and to serve God our perfect freedom,—we shall be conquerors, yea, more than conquerors, through Him who loved us, and who, by teaching us to love Him, renders all things possible; so that with St Paul we may say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.”

The mercy of God has indeed not left us to our own poor efforts. Aid from on high is promised us; Divine strength, if we will ask it. This is true; blessed be God, it is true! But let us not imagine that the work of the Spirit of God in our hearts supersedes an habitual vigilance and a painful strife. Rather it implies and necessitates both. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;” so

that a determined contest is involved in the very nature of the case.

We are not exempted from service "in the army of the Lord of hosts," because Christ is the captain of salvation ; but rather this is the very reason why we must "endure hardness as good soldiers," and study to please Him who has called us, with Him and through Him, to "fight the good fight of faith." And it is given us as a reason why we should work out our own salvation, and that with fear and trembling, that God worketh in us, both to will and to do the things that please Him. Let us bless our God and Father that, in this fearful strife upon which such issues hang, we are not left without active and tender sympathy, as well as more direct and powerful aid ; for Christ, our elder brother, was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin ; and "in that He suffered, and was tempted, He is able also to succour us when we are tempted. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need."

## THE FAMILY AND ITS DUTIES.

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### VI.

*Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live!* The way in which the good King Hezekiah received this message (Isa. xxxviii.) does not afford an example which we should closely imitate.

Instead of receiving the message with manly fortitude, not to speak of pious resignation, he begins to weep and lament. He prays, indeed, as less pious men generally do in like circumstances; for fear drives even godless people to prayer; but, to confess the truth, Hezekiah's prayer bears no small resemblance to that of the Pharisee in the parable. He reminds the Lord how good a man he had been, and how excellent a king; and he insinuates that he is hardly used in thus suffering the doom which the law had denounced against the wicked—to be cut off in the midst of their days.

But we must judge the Jewish king by his own standard, not by ours. The law, in maintaining which Hezekiah had displayed an unswerving zeal, promised temporal prosperity, and especially length of days, to those who followed the course which this king had conspicuously pursued; so that the event now an-

nounced by the prophet, and which was so painful to Hezekiah personally, might present itself to him in the yet more dreadful light of an impeachment of the faithfulness of the God of Israel, and even a falsification of the law of Moses itself. And who knows not how terrible is even the suspicion, suggested at last, that that in the faith of which we have lived, acted, suffered, is after all a mistake, a delusion! The sentence of death, accordingly, strikes the heart of the king of Judah with consternation; in this enemy he sees indeed the king of terrors—and beyond his dark shadow he sees nothing; for it is remarkable that in the thanksgiving psalm which Hezekiah composed upon his recovery, we do not find any hope or idea of a future life, or the indication of anything beyond the grave. No fitter occasion can be imagined for the expression of such a hope, had it existed; yet there is none.

To those, indeed, who, by means of types, double senses, and similar inventions, have made the Old Testament quite as clear on these subjects as the New, and who would persuade us that the Old Testament saints, by those helps, saw Christian doctrines almost as distinctly as we see them, these facts must appear very unaccountable; but to us, who believe that Judaism was “a carnal commandment,” “weak and beggarly elements,” “imposed upon the chosen people till the time of reformation,” and “the bringing in of a better hope,”—and that “life and immortality, which lay in shade, if not in darkness, before, have been brought to light by our Saviour Christ, who hath abolished death,”—to us, so instructed, all that we read of Hezekiah’s conduct on this trying occasion appears excusable, and not difficult of explanation.

That same message which caused the Hebrew monarch to tremble, weep, and pray, will one day be addressed to each of us in some form. Most men receive intelligible intimation of what is about to happen, and more particular than the great doom, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Advancing age, increasing weakness, the failure of our senses, memory, and other faculties, the progress of some disease,—these, and the like, interpret for us the sentence of our Maker and Judge, warning us that the end approaches. Since we shall all of us presently 'die and not live,' let us every one, without delay or evasion, proceed to set his house in order.

The more needful is this, because there are many that are called out of the world long before the fourscore years have been reached, or even the threescore years and ten, which sum up "the days of our years" upon earth. The vast majority of mankind die in the earlier stages of life, prematurely, as we talk; and multitudes by accidents, by unforeseen and often unlikely occurrences, and many so suddenly that death and life are separated, not by a space, but by a line—

"Before their very thought can pray,  
Their souls pass unanel'd away."

Since, then, this common doom of the creatures may fall upon us when we least expect, our safety consists in setting ourselves instantly to perform the duty, and in performing it habitually, that, our house being always in order, we may be ready to receive the grim messenger with composure, if not with welcome, whenever he shall be commissioned to enter our habitation.

*Set thine house in order.* This should be regarded

by us as one form of that grand practical maxim, that we should regard all things in the light of their issues and consequences,—should measure and estimate them all according to their end ; and that then only do we live well, when we so live as to be prepared to die well—in peace and hope—looking back without remorse, forward without dismay or anxiety. Not that our life should smell of the sepulchre, or our days be clouded with the shades and damps of night ; but that we should exercise an habitual self-inspection, —should soberly reflect and wisely calculate how we are living, according to what rules and for what ends ; that we may go in the safe paths of righteousness, and even amid the vicissitudes, trials, and miseries of this world, may be cheered with some foretaste of heavenly joy. Remembering that each of us shall give account of himself to God, and that as we sow we shall reap, it surely becomes us to consider what seed it is that we are sowing ; the more so, as we shall not only ourselves reap, but shall leave that seed to bear fruit upon the earth, either of virtue and happiness, or of sin and misery, it may be, long after we ourselves have disappeared, our influence perhaps being still felt after our very names have perished.

The command to set our house in order includes many duties as well of a worldly kind as those which are more strictly religious ; because religion, truly apprehended, regulates all our conduct, and all of it alike. Our health and prosperity, in the highest sense, depend upon the manner and spirit in which we discharge the most commonplace duties of life, no less than upon the manner in which we attend to the ordinances of religion ; and this is the more needful to be insisted on, because it is so frequently overlooked.

We may say, in general, that a person fulfils the injunction to set his house in order when he so lives as to surround his dying bed with as few distractions and anxieties as possible. In the most favourable circumstances, death is a sufficiently exciting and alarming event; it is surely, then, the dictate of wisdom not to surround our dying beds with an additional array of terrors, or to prepare thorns for our dying pillow more sharp than those which Providence has prepared,—cares, anxieties, fears, regrets now vain, self-reproaches, and remorse. We should not leave any part of the work of life to be done at death; much less should we expect to undo at death the work of life. Each day, that of death included, has its own work and its proper duties, and assuredly sufficient unto that day is the evil thereof.

“Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,” which are the elements of Christianity, the very beginnings of religious life, should not be left to be commenced till life itself upon earth is well-nigh finished. On the contrary, our whole life should be based and built up upon these; and dying should be only the completion and perfection of these “works of God.” How sad, at that solemn hour, to look back upon opportunities neglected, means wasted, duties undone, sins confirmed into habits, and life lost to all the higher ends of existence; instead of being enabled to look with humble thankfulness on a life of godliness, righteousness, and temperance; having served our Maker with sincerity, and, though not without much imperfection, having done good unto our brethren as we had opportunity, and kept our bodies in sanctification and honour, as temples of the Holy Ghost.

Besides these most vital duties, there are many others of a more commonplace kind, which may be understood to be included in setting our house in order; or rather, these general duties comprehend many details, many smaller duties,—so small that they are sometimes overlooked, or thought to be hardly worth attention.

We should keep our affairs *in order*, so that we may not entail perplexity and distress upon those who come after us. We should not involve ourselves in hazardous speculations, the failure of which would entail temporal ruin. We should not leave unprovided for any whom we have taught to depend upon us. We should, above all things, keep out of the embarrassment of *debt*,—that bottomless pit which swallows up all confidence, peace, and comfort, and often all truth, honour, and manliness. Better to live and die in the meanest circumstances than to exist under this incubus, which has pressed down thousands prematurely into their graves.

If we have justly offended any one, we should seek reconciliation, in the spirit of our blessed Lord, and in compliance with His instructions. And even should we not feel certain that our brother has received any *just* cause of offence, it is better to determine the doubt against ourselves, remembering what partial judges we are in our own cause. Repentance towards God we all acknowledge to be our duty—for Him we cannot doubt that we have offended times innumerable; but the duty of repentance in regard to one another we do not so readily admit; for it appears to be more easy to humble ourselves before our Maker than before our fellow-men, to whom we may pretend to an equality, which repentance surrenders; for the

acknowledgment of a fault, or of a wrong done to any one, is a confession of inferiority, in that regard at least—it is a humiliation which is painful. Besides, such acknowledgment often implies more than words—restitution, the compensating or making up for the injury acknowledged. So that upon the whole, repentance towards man is far more difficult than repentance towards God; and, accordingly, it is far seldomer performed. At least thousands persuade themselves that they do the latter, who do not the former—so deceiving themselves; as if, while our fellow-men demand deeds of us, our Maker should be satisfied, and is so, with mere words. It is well, however, to perceive that repentance toward our brethren and restitution, so far as may be possible, are comprehended in that repentance towards God without which there is given to us no promise of salvation; and our pretending to render this, while we evade the other, is sheer hypocrisy—or, at least, gross delusion.

The injunction to “set our house in order” suggests, among those mentioned, and many other duties, the disposal of property after the death of the proprietor. They who have property at their own disposal should make their wills in good time, while yet they have leisure to consider, and, if possible, while health continues; so that they may be saved from diseased judgments, and those unhealthy fancies which are apt to take possession of sick people’s minds; and also from the influence of interested persons, who, in the name of religion, often work upon the weakness or superstition of the dying, and tempt them, under pretence of pleasing God, to wrong their fellow-men. In the dark ages, as they are called, it was understood

that everything that was given to God, the Church, as heir-general of the Almighty, was entitled to receive. Such notions—if we may judge from frequent occurrences—do not appear to be quite extinct among ourselves at the present day.

We can hardly, indeed, expect those who have not used the mammon of unrighteousness faithfully during life to shew much fidelity, or much wisdom, in the final disposal of it. And the wills of such persons commonly betray the same sordid passions which their lives have displayed. As *avarice* and *hard-heartedness* have presided, with ruthless severity, over the accumulation, so, very generally, *vanity*, or some other passion equally selfish and mean, dictates the final destination of the hoarded treasure. Such persons, especially should listen to the solemn words, "Set thine house in order."

If you have wronged any one, make restitution (as has already been said) so far as it is now possible. Make provision for those who, by blood or other connexion, have a fair claim upon you. Let that, of which during life you have been unfaithful stewards, be applied finally, at least, to satisfy the claims of justice and mercy. Let not your fortune go to overpower, with accumulated wealth and responsibility, those who are rich already, but rather to aid and comfort those who need help, who deserve help, and who can be helped. The families, for instance, of such men as have deserved well of the public, and which might have been left rich if their parents had been less generous and liberal, have (though generally overlooked) a first claim on the attention of those who have means to dispose of in this way. By raising such above want and dependence, a man

would erect a better monument for himself than by building churches that are not needed, or hospitals, (which often do more harm than good,) to perpetuate the vanity, folly, and selfishness, as well as the name, of the founder.

Mankind are, in many cases, much more acute than they seem to be. They make shrewd guesses at the motives which have dictated people's conduct in will-making, as well as in other acts. We find it often much easier to deceive ourselves than our neighbours as to our real motives; and frequently men render themselves objects of just ridicule when they fancied they were drawing down upon themselves only admiration and applause.

*Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.* You are a singularly happy person if there be not in your case something which requires to be set in order—much to be done, much to be undone, so far as it can be undone. Well-ordered indeed is your house if it need no changes, no repairs, or improvements,—the propriety of which you now feel, and have long acknowledged, but sloth, pride, timidity, self-indulgence, have hitherto persuaded you that *to-morrow* would be a more convenient season. And so, many to-morrows have come and gone, and many years, made up of those to-morrows, have been allowed to fly over you, and still the work stands, not finished, not even begun.

*Set thine house in order; for the great Master, whose property it is, and to whom both our-selves and all our possessions belong, is presently to come and reckon with us regarding that stewardship which we have held so long, that we generally forget (to all practical purposes) that we are indeed stewards. We*

are approaching, year by year, day by day, to that dread account which the Lord, whom we would not acknowledge, whose instructions we would not receive, and to whose messengers we would not hearken, is to take both of us, and of all our doings and sayings, and even all the thoughts and intents of our hearts. "But who may abide the day of his coming; and who shall stand when he appeareth?"

In that day, however, the same Divine judgment will only be published and fully executed which is formed, pronounced, and partially executed already every day we live. Our souls are bearing stamped upon them, in ever broader characters, the sentence of that God whose law we are habitually either breaking or fulfilling. What we are doing and thinking, that we are *becoming* more and more. Upon ourselves the righteous Judge is inscribing the solemn record of our various history, making us that book of remembrance which is written before Him continually, on the opening of which we may read our doom—both what we are, and what we shall be.

Look, then, O man, at thine affairs; look attentively; look honestly; look within, as well as around thee. What dost thou behold? That which delights, or that which shocks thee?—that which thine eye dwells on with complacency, or turns from with grief and shame? If all be in disorder, if all be wrong, how merciful that God has granted thee time and space to repent—to reform what is amiss. Therefore, now at last, set thyself to the great work without a moment's delay—without a day's intermission—and give not slumber to thine eyelids till thy conscience permit thee to sleep in peace. The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. He, the just God, is drawing thee away from the edge of the pit; for He is also thy

merciful Father, and willeth not that thou shouldest perish, but rather that thou shouldest turn and live. Hear those words which His Spirit has dictated, and which are full of great truth:—"Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath: but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God," (Rom. ii.)

O man, art thou at war with God? How infatuated! how ruinous! But at the same time thou art at war with thyself; for all that is spiritual within thee, all that makes that difference between thee and an animal, is on God's side. Thou art doomed to an eternal strife, married, for better for worse, eternally to a companion that must reproach and torment thee for ever, and whose reproaches are barbed with this poison—that they are just. When, therefore, God calls thee to be reconciled to Him, He commands thee to be reconciled and at peace with thyself.

That mixed nature which we have received is a house of many mansions. Let us not live in the vaults and dungeons of our being. Let us quit the dark, unwholesome cells of the flesh. Let us go up higher, where we may see the light of life, breathe the pure and blessed air, survey the earth around us and the heaven above, and be so far on our way to the upper world.

## THE FAMILY AND ITS DUTIES.

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### VII.

#### THE SAD CONCLUSION, AND THE BLESSED HOPE.

“ All flesh is as grass ; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.”—  
1 PETER i. 24, 25.

AS we pass through life, the contradiction becomes continually more painful between our outer condition and our inner man, between the instinct of fixity or perpetuity and the daily-increasing experience of change and decay. We live in the world ; and as we live, our affections grow, expand, fix themselves, with greater and greater strength, upon perhaps an increasing number of objects. We are taught more to love our fellow-creatures by the good we discover in them, by the good they do us, and yet more, by the good we do them. Our roots fix themselves in the soil around, deeper and deeper, from year to year ; and our shoots and saplings also spring up on every side, as if to shelter us from the blast ; when, lo ! we wither as the grass, we exhale as morning dew, are gone, like our dreams,—“ Surely the people is grass.” And this is not confined to any set of men, or condi-

tion of society, but all go together in one indiscriminate throng,—rich and poor, good and bad, the wise and the unwise, the infant and the patriarch, he that hath done good and he that hath wrought evil upon the earth,—the grand army of mortality is recruited from all these alike. “All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.”

Even those who doubt whether we have a gospel or not, surely cannot doubt whether or not we need one. Observing this scene of desolation ever spreading around us, the arid desert still enclosing us more and more, we cannot but look for some refuge and deliverance, some place where we may have shelter and rest. Born of mortality, members of the family whose inheritance is sorrow, pain, disappointment, and death, we cannot possibly be reconciled to this lot. Our hearts protest against the doom which, however inevitable, is felt not to be natural; for it neither is, nor ever can be made, congenial to our feelings. Our souls and all that is within us rise up in rebellion; and though all men have tried in vain to burst this fetter, the faith still remains that it should be burst asunder, and also the hope that it will be.

This faith and hope, lying indestructible at the bottom of man's nature, are the prophecy of a Messiah to all mankind; the whole creation—travailing and groaning under the load of vanity, the yoke of sin, the bondage of corruption—hears, however indistinctly, a word which holds it up, and causes it still to endure: and though we can ill interpret this vague and dark oracle, yet are we conscious that it is a word of joy and peace, that hope is in it, that some-

how it is a promise of redemption. We see in it a gleam of light, a day-spring from on high, a gospel of salvation,—indeed, a Divine word, preached everywhere in all ages, though we cannot tell “whence it cometh or whither it goeth.”

This faith is the prophetic forerunner, preaching in the hearts of men the doctrine of repentance, going still before the face of the Lord to prepare His way,—crying with a voice that resounds through all the wide wilderness of humanity, “All flesh is grass, and all its glory is as the flower of the field: surely the people is grass.” And yet the terrific thunder of that stern message melts, ere its close, into divinest music. The frightful sentence of death carries, in its last words, the promise of an endless life. Even so,

“Night’s darkness deepens into rising day.”

Yes, the last words are not of despair. “Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, earth to earth,”—these sad sounds are not the very end. No; blessed be God!—putting off this mortal, laying this corruptible in the dust, we accept it with resignation—we bow without fear to the stroke; “being born again, (to a living hope,) not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

How deep should our thankfulness be that there is something which is abiding. While the world passeth away—while our friends and acquaintances die—while all that we loved and trusted and revered goes down in rapid succession to the dust—while our family circles are broken up, to be completed no more in this world—while the wise and the good fall like the rest before the inexorable mower—and while

we feel in ourselves the same working of mortality—how deep should be our thankfulness that there is something that does not pass away ; that there is that which remains firm amid all these agitated waves ; and that we, standing upon that immoveable rock, may also ourselves remain unshaken by all the wild agitations and startling vicissitudes of the world.

*We know man ;* we see what *he* is. “ His days are vanity ; like smoke, they consume away ;” he “ withereth like the grass of the field.” “ Trust not in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth ; he returneth to his dust : in that very day his thoughts perish.” His designs and purposes go with him to the land of forgetfulness. But we have heard his voice who burst the bands of death ; and “ by him we believe in God, that raised him from the dead, so that *our faith and hope are in God.*” And knowing “ the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,” we have eternal life, and are raised superior to despair, either on account of our brethren or ourselves.

*We know man ;* and if we knew him only, how perplexed we should be ; for, admiring, loving, pitying him, we learn from him the lesson of doubt, not of faith. He carries our thoughts and affections away with him into darkness, sending back no ray to hint whither he is gone,—what, where, how he is, or whether he is at all. His history rather teaches despair than either faith or hope ; and we ask, What after all is this perishing worm ? Excellent, yet he dies ! Knowing much, making many discoveries, reaching, or almost reaching, to wisdom, he yet knows not to cheat the sepulchre ; all his researches and discoveries

and inventions do not help him to escape what he dreads ; so that he is as mortal as "the poor beetle that he treads upon." He flatters himself that he is the image of God ; what is that God whose image he is ?

Out of this labyrinth we should never escape, unless the Divinity had shone through our mortal nature in the person and history of Christ. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." "By him we believe in God, that raised him from the dead and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God."

This being so, all is well. We cannot any more doubt, fear, suspect anything. The dark clouds are rolled away from our souls ; and in the light of the divine glory, shining in Christ, we see light clearly—the light that guides our steps through life—that upholds them when we tread the dark valley—that cheers and assures our hearts when we see those entering whom we would willingly accompany, if it were given us—and enables us to look after them with comfort, and even with joy.

Yes, my brethren, believing in God, what can distress us ? Trusting in Him, what can we fear ? If He be our God, we can want nothing. Having Him we have all—more than we can desire, more than we can know : we are rich beyond our wishes, happy beyond our dreams. Boundless wisdom, power, mercy, goodness, grace, and love—all that these can bestow—all that is comprehended in the fulness of God, transmuting the very evil into good ; working out of sin, sorrow, pain, death, and all the coarse and vile materials of this earth, exquisite fabrics of heavenly quality—the garments of eternal salvation.

“All things are yours: the world, and life, and death, and things present, and things to come; all are yours, for ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” “By him ye believe in God.”

In this faith we can live. We can look upon the great sea of life weltering around us, and can feel its ups and downs without terror, or being made sick at heart by the wild confusion and terrible discord; or dreaming that this tumult wants a ruler, obeys not a law. “The Lord on high is mightier than the mighty waves of the sea.” And in the same blessed faith in which we wish to live, we will study to depart; knowing that death, which subdues us, is himself subdued; and that, though conquered, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us—that, when we die, we shall indeed be born—that our putting off the tattered garments of mortality shall be our investiture with our kingly robes; and that the steps by which we descend into the sepulchre are those by which we shall mount our thrones, “to reign in life with Christ, the first-born from the dead.”

This is that word which has been spoken to us in the name of the Lord, which we have embraced, and desire to hold fast; by which we would be comforted and reassured and strengthened to do and suffer the will of God; by which, also, we are reconciled to the painful fact that “all flesh is grass, and all its goodliness as the flower of the field.” Let it be so. Let it wither, perish, and disappear. Let its fragrance exhale—its blossom go up as dust. Life is at its root. It will spring again. The undying seed will shoot up in vigorous life where no canker will poison it, nor any blight fall upon it. “The word of the Lord endureth for ever;” “and this is the promise he hath

promised us, even eternal life." "This is the word; which by the gospel is preached unto you."

"Having this hope in you, you are purifying yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Knowing and feeling daily more deeply that the flesh is your mortal part, ye are studying to mortify it, with its affections and lusts; that these being dead, ye may be truly alive, quickened unto all holy obedience, leading a spiritual life, dwelling in the upper regions of your being, carrying the cross in hopeful and patient strength, looking, humbly waiting, for the crown; "not being conformed to this world," or making other men's notions, caprices, or vain fashions your standard, either of action or judgment; being so renewed in the spirit of your mind, that ye seek to prove that which is "good," "acceptable," "perfect," according to the mind and will of God, whose work is its own wages—whose service is perfect freedom.

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NOTE to p. 34.—In endeavouring to train a young person in the great virtue of obedience, it should never be forgotten that this is only an intermediate discipline, to which he is temporarily subjected, with a view to that period of life when he must be freed from such restraints, and be called upon to choose for himself, and to act on his own responsibility. Care must therefore be taken not to enfeeble the character by subjecting the young to a kind or extent of submission that shall interfere with the vigour and independence of their own will. As tyrants make slaves, and slaves in turn make tyrants, and as a too vigorous or active intellect in a teacher or parent sometimes overawes and discourages the mental exertion of the youthful mind, so a too rigid dominion, and especially a too great extension of the sphere of authority, or a too long continuance of it, may impair the vigour of the will, and so prevent the healthy develop-

ment of the mental and moral powers. We must prop the sapling only that eventually it may be able to stand by itself, and without support brave the storm. By way of supplementing my imperfect observations, I will here insert two or three short extracts—kindly sent me by a friend—from a valuable work :—

## NOTES FROM MADAME NECKER DE SAUSSURE'S WORK ON EDUCATION.

### SUBJECTION AND FREEDOM.

“ If in after-life the pupil is to be master of his actions, it is necessary to make him conform to two methods of treatment apparently opposed to one another ; the one, a method of subjection, to accustom him to repress his capricious desires ; the other, a method of liberty, in order that there may be formed within him an independent will. In this opposition there originates a difficulty which is seldom looked at in its full extent ; and therefore it is that few decided characters are developed, especially by those processes of education which are conducted with the greatest care, and in which the pupil is kept under the strictest surveillance.”—(Book I., chap. iv., p. 86.)

“ By the habit of obedience the pupil learns to repress his passions. By accustoming him to decide for himself in those cases where freedom of choice can be permitted, he acquires decision of character, and his will, which is not altogether left passive and unexercised, gradually acquires vigour.”—(Book I., chap. iv., p. 89.)

“ The will is generally wanting in strength. Often while incapable of fulfilling its noblest functions—that of controlling the desires of the heart—it also easily submits itself to the yoke of external influence.

“ These two kinds of weakness appear to require two opposite kinds of treatment. In order that the child may accustom himself to repress his passions, it is necessary to make him submit to an exact discipline. In order that he may learn to decide for himself, it is proper to render him in many respects independent. Nor does it seem impossible to give effect to this double system. The empire of law and the empire of liberty will subsist peaceably together, provided their respective boundaries be distinctly traced.”—(Book I., chap. vi., p. 117.)

“The problem to be resolved in the government of children is the same which presents itself in all possible government.

“The thing required to be done is always the same—to reconcile the greatest possible amount of individual liberty with the most perfect submission to law.

“The things to be avoided in order to attain this end, are orders only half given and obligations only half imposed; all sorts of insinuations and implied solicitations; the pretence of permitting a child to be master of his own conduct while you are surrounding him with a thousand restrictions.

“An atmosphere of doubt destroys energy; it relaxes the nerves of our resolves.

“When the boundaries of liberty and of duty are effaced, vague feeling of uncertainty spreads itself over all our projects, and even over our actions.

“We are continually regretting resolutions which were not formed. We are continually tempted to retrace our steps.

“To preserve the child, and afterwards the full-grown man, from this species of torment, a legitimate authority must be enforced during the first years of life, well-defined provision being also made for the free exercise of the will. Public schools, where discipline is maintained by inflexible laws, without minute individual superintendence, are, therefore, the most favourable for the development of energy.”—(Book I., chap. iv., p. 89.)

*Vide* also “Advice from a Mother to Her Son,” (p. 19.)

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

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“ Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.”—GAL. vi. 45.

WE find ourselves in the present world so associated with others that it is not easy for us to detach ourselves from them even in thought. Not only our existence came to us through others, but the condition both of our bodies and minds was determined in great measure by theirs. Not to speak of our physical frame, which is little else than a reproduction of that of our progenitors, we are more intelligent, or less so; more upright, honourable, benevolent, conscientious, or the opposite, according as our parents were distinguished by the same qualities.

This influence,—which *they* have so largely exerted upon us, that our nature and character may be said to be little more than a reflection of theirs,—has also been exerted in some degree by almost every one who has walked with us ever so short a space along the road of life. None of these has parted from us

without leaving us something, less or more, that was his. He has either drawn us within a vortex of his thoughts and feelings, or he has repelled us to a greater distance from them ; so that in neither case has he left us what he found us.

This is seen most clearly in the case of those who, being attracted to each other at first by that mysterious affinity which some souls have for others, have formed those connexions which have kept them habitually in each other's society. In such instances, the original sympathy which drew them together ripens, in the course of years, into such strength, that the soul, mind, and conscience hardly appear to remain an individual possession of each, but rather to have become, like their worldly goods, a common property.

If this takes place even in those societies, such as states and families, which are not formed for the purpose of disseminating certain ideas among the members, but for other ends, we may expect it will be found in yet greater strength in those associations, the very end and purpose of whose institution is to propagate certain thoughts, convictions, and sentiments among their members. The Christian Church, and indeed every church or religious society, is an association of this kind. Its principal aim is to diffuse the same mind among all that belong to it. Under this notion it is called not only a *house* and a *temple*, but, more emphatically, a *body*, to indicate that all its members are informed and animated by one life and spirit. This thought constantly recurs in the pages of the New Testament ; and the strongest incentives to brotherly love, kindness, goodwill, compassion, and all the other social virtues, are drawn from this

consideration, that "we are members one of another." The closeness, then, with which Christianity draws men together is one of its most beneficent peculiarities. It would make them *one*—so destroying the distance, the alienations, the separate interests, and the divided feelings which are so many effects and manifestations of sin; "reconciling," as Paul speaks, "all things in heaven and earth;" and "of this twain making one new man, or restoring peace."

But every instrument of good may become the means of evil; and the more powerful it is for good, the more powerful for evil will it prove, if it be perverted. Hence it becomes us to be specially on our guard against the abuse of such things as in their use are excellent; and to watch lest we get damage and a wound from that which was for our healing and safety.

The custom of living much in close society with our fellow-creatures has many considerable advantages. It helps much to wear away the rugged edges of the individual character, and to check waywardness of temper and impetuosity of feeling. It tends to smooth, to polish, to refine, and to civilise mankind. Particularly is this so when the female sex occupy a proper place and exercise their due influence. With these advantages, it has also some disadvantages and dangers. It tempts us to regard ourselves as members of a society rather than as each a distinct being, having each his own separate task assigned him, his own work to do, his own responsibility lying upon him, and his own reward to expect. But unless we do consider ourselves in this light, we grossly misapprehend our real position, and render ourselves incapable of fulfilling the duties which that position involves.

Each of us must prove his own work—each should rejoice in himself alone, (and not in another,) if that work has been well and worthily performed ; for a burden of duty and of reward or punishment awaits each of us individually.

Each person has so much of an individual life, that it may truly be said that the greater part of his history is unknown to his fellow-creatures. They may be acquainted, indeed, with many things that he has done, and with what he has uttered by tongue or pen ; but the thoughts thus expressed are not the whole thoughts of the man : they are not a moiety, or even a tithe, of the thoughts that have sprung up and flourished in the soul, or of the desires that have swayed it. Within the bosom of that volcano fires may smoulder and burn fiercely which find no vent to the open day, and which betray not their existence to human eye by smoke or flame, yet consume the heart that feeds them. We speak by custom ; we talk like our fellows ; we go about our business as they do ; we dress ourselves according to their fashions ; we make ourselves as like them as possible in all outward things—we seem to bare our very hearts before them ; and yet, for all this, between them and us a great gulf is fixed. Though we fancy we look to the very bottom of their souls, we can, in fact, no more see it than we can see the bottom of the ocean. Below that glancing surface lie most profound depths, which no plummet of man has ever sounded—caverns too deep for light of the sun to reach them—yet populous with life, stirring with thoughts, and strong with passions, whose hum is drowned by distance and the waters that roll above them.

A real autobiography has never yet been written,

nor ever will be. No man who sat down to tell the world what he did and thought, what he desired, hoped, feared, ever indeed told them more than a very small portion of it, and that the portion which was nearest the surface. The veil is never truly rent from top to bottom; so that the holy of holies has no light in it but that of the Divine Presence; and the high priest, who alone is privileged to enter, reports to the excluded multitude only so much of what he sees within as he himself may judge safe and proper. Thus every one is, in his own person, a type or representation of the universe, of which the Jewish tabernacle was also a representation. He has in himself a visible and an invisible world; a *sanctum* which lies patent to other men's eyes, and a *sanctum sanctorum* which is as much hidden from them as the regions of the dead—as heaven or hell.

This impenetrable obscurity of part, and the largest part, of our nature, gives a certain awfulness to man. We may look upon our brother with the same kind of awe which fills us in the contemplation of that which is vast and also obscure; so we look down, with something akin to fear, into a chasm of which the depth seems infinite, because we cannot see to the bottom.

Our isolation, even from our dearest and closest friends, is felt in all its intensity when suffering presses upon them or us, and chiefly when death comes. Then, indeed, "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy." We then perceive with a painful distinctness how wide a gulf divides us even from those who were as our own soul. They must bear their heavy burden alone. We cannot, with all our willingness, take any part of it on

our shoulder. They must go alone through the dark valley. Their enemies they must encounter single-handed for us. The stream bears them away out of our reach for all our clinging; and whether eternity itself may ever unite those whom time thus tears asunder can at the best be only matter of desire and hope. When we see them dying, then it is we feel that every one must bear his own burden; and we should also feel the duty of every one in life setting himself to do his own work.

There are several important uses to which these considerations may be turned by us. One is to save us from misjudging the conduct of our fellow-men.

It is indeed essential that we should form some opinion, and sometimes it is our duty to express a judgment respecting the conduct of others. But as we see only one side of them, as the thoughts of their hearts are hidden behind a veil which our eye cannot pierce, therefore we should not be forward to utter sentence upon them as if we saw the whole. Undoubtedly He who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men forms very different judgments regarding them from those which they form of each other.

The same considerations may save us from misjudging our neighbours in another respect; for we often misapprehend their circumstances no less than their characters and their conduct. We are sometimes tempted to wonder why some men should almost escape, as they appear to do, those afflictions and crosses which are the general lot of mankind. "They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men." So even the Psalmist thought; but it was "in his folly," as he tells us.

For this is merely a supposition of our ignorance : it is the sentence of a judge who understands not the case which he presumes to decide. If we knew the internal history of this prosperous man, (as we suppose him,) we might find that his trials have been far heavier than theirs who are reckoned the sons and daughters of affliction. An acute sensibility, or an inquisitive intellect, may impose heavier burdens than any which mere outward calamity lays upon the soul. There may be persons who, unknown to their nearest kindred, have endured more mental distress from those dark and deep questions which the bulk of people trouble themselves very little about, than others suffer from the greatest worldly misfortunes.

What we read of our Saviour has been often repeated in the history of the sons of God—"They are led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." There, with no human eye to witness, no human voice to cheer, no human sympathy to strengthen, they are doomed, in the solitude of their own hearts, to meet the tempter, and to answer his terrible questionings face to face.

Here the hardest trials of the sons of God are often experienced ; here they meet their worst disasters and win their noblest victories—"perform those deeds, alone heroic, though in secret done."

Here also they find both joys and griefs of intenser flavour than any that spring by the common highway of the world ; as Israel, God's son, found the bitter waters of Marah, and manna, the bread of angels, both of them in that great and terrible wilderness in which he was doomed so long to sojourn.

It is impossible, from a man's outward history, to say what his trials have been. There are struggles

and temptations, and joys and griefs, and these of the acutest kind, which never rise to the lips, and never present themselves to the eyes of the world. There may be many who are objects of their neighbours' envy, but whom they would rather pity, if they saw to the bottom of their souls, and could read their true history.

Let us also learn to detach ourselves in thought from those with whom we are now so intimately associated; and to consider what we are in and of ourselves; and what we individually are thinking and doing; and what each one of us has reason to expect for the future.

At present we are linked together by bonds which, however tender and strong, will all of them be loosed by death. And then we shall be arranged, not any longer according to kindred and blood, but according to a truer and deeper principle—the law of spiritual affinities, the kindred and relationship of souls. Now we are set together “according to the law of a carnal commandment;” but then we shall be “according to the power of an endless life.” And if we be wise and good to any saving purpose, we must be good and wise for ourselves. It is not enough that we may have yielded to the strong current of those graces which happened to surround us,—not setting ourselves to stem it or get out of it; we must have chosen these for ourselves, through a sense of their value and excellence; and must have wrought them out in our own persons and in our individual history. Neither will any amount of those qualities in our closest associates avail for us, if *we* are destitute of them. There is here no imputation to us of anything but that which is ours; no carrying of the credit or debt of good or

bad actions or dispositions from one account to another. The father's virtues will avail the son only so far as the son copied them and made them his own ; thus only can he inherit and enjoy them. The fruit we reap will not be that which our fathers or grandfathers, or any of our progenitors, or of our relatives or friends, happened to sow without our concurrence or even our knowledge ; but it will be the fruit of our own tillage,—the work of our own hands. "Let no man deceive you ; for whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap."

Let us, then, each for himself, work the works of God, irrespective of others, of what they may do or think—whether they do the same ; whether they applaud ; or whether they deride us. Let us do this as our part, our work which God has appointed us to do, under a sense of our responsibility to Him, and in view of the account which we shall render to Him. Let us not so identify ourselves with others as to forget that our interests and theirs are indeed distinct ; that we must be wise or foolish, saved or lost, for ourselves : for, having each received a talent which we are bound to use, "every one of us shall give account of himself unto God," and "every one of us shall bear his own burden."

He is proverbially a fool whose mind is taken up with all men's affairs but his own, and whose eyes look at all things except those which he should see—his own. Let none of us thus play the fool to our own hurt or ruin. Let us reserve a little time, of which we squander so much, to look at our own spiritual features, and to ponder our past history and our present state in the sight of Him who is as intimately present with us as our own thoughts ; and whose judg-

ment of us and of our characters will soon be our own. The little moment that is fleeting by should not absorb all our attention ; the great future surely is worth some thought and care. What is a man profited if he should please all men and displease God ; should be merry to-day and miserable for ever ; should gain the world and lose himself ? This passing world we are indeed to use and enjoy, but so that we may gain and possess a world which will neither pollute nor disappoint, nor in any way afflict us, and which will prove an eternal inheritance. So great an interest surely justifies and demands some of that anxiety and sincere earnestness which we often bestow upon very trivial matters. But this is our own business ; it is also our greatest business ; and if it be mismanaged, we are undone.

Without self-communion no character can be other than superficial and outward, wanting in depth, earnestness, and weight ; mental dissipation is the congenial soil for all the fruits of folly and vanity. The man who acts consistently and vigorously is he who has nourished certain thoughts in his soul ; " who communes with his heart upon his bed and is still ;" and temporal joys and all earthly things will look dim in his eyes who habituates himself to look intently on those things which lie above the earth and beyond time. We have other interests than those of the body and the life that dies, and more pressing questions to solve even than these :—What shall we eat and drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed ? How shall my soul be fed, so that it may live for ever ? How shall it be clothed, so that it may appear without shame before the presence of God ?

## THE DUTY OF CARING FOR THE BODY.\*

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“The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.”

—LUKE ix. 56.

THE constitution of human nature has been a subject of earnest study to thoughtful men in all ages. Like everything else, it is full of difficulty and mystery. The connexion of two elements so unlike as the intelligent conscious mind, and the gross fleshly habitation, has always appeared wonderful and perplexing; the more so, as these two seemed to act as antagonists and hindrances, rather than allies and fellow-workers, each of the other; as if they had been joined that both might be rendered at once powerless and miserable; “the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that we do not the things that we would.”

To solve the hard problem, why we should be thus distracted by the two elements of our nature propelling us in opposite directions—the one soaring to heaven, while the other drags us down to the dust of

\* This Sermon was preached in the parish church, Crathie, 11th October 1857, and was published by her Majesty's command.

the earth—innumerable attempts have been made ; dark, sometimes impious, speculations have been hazarded ; till the clouds of ignorance, agitated a while by the whirlwinds of doubt, sunk at last into the midnight of scepticism and despair, with no gleam of light to keep hope alive, or give promise of a dawn.

The Gentile sages—those men among the ancient heathen who made it their business to seek knowledge, and who professed an ardent desire for wisdom, (sincerely, no doubt, in many cases ; ) though some of them also became infatuated in their reasonings, till their foolish minds were utterly darkened,—those ancient thinkers solved the riddle by supposing that matter, no less than mind, was an eternal and independent principle, and not only essentially evil, but the ultimate root of all evil ; that the body, being matter, was both incurably corrupt itself, and the source of corruption to the soul, its companion, or rather, for the time, its prisoner ;—that the *soul* was *the man*, which, having existed before, had been temporarily immured, for some reason which could only be conjectured, within the walls of this fleshly dungeon ; and therefore the liberation and beatitude of the man, i.e., *the soul*, was to be gained by his being delivered from the defiling and degrading incubus. His duty, accordingly, was to punish, reduce, and humble the enemy ; and his final victory consisted in its total destruction ; so that he should regard the death of his body as the commencement or restoration of his proper life. This was the salvation and heaven of *the man* ; for he began to die when he was born in the flesh, and it was only when he died that he began to live.

The doctrine of a future state was not unknown to

those sages. The best of them believed in such a state, or rather they hoped for it. But the object of their aspirations was not the resuscitation and reunion of the soul and body, now purified and perfected; but only the renewed or continued life of the *soul*, happily divorced at length from that miserable alliance, whence its contamination was derived in its mortal existence. When Paul (Acts xvii.) propounded the resurrection, in the Christian sense, to the philosophers at Athens, the doctrine appeared to them so preposterous, that they could not listen to the teacher of it with gravity, but mocked him as "a setter forth of foreign dæmons."

This is the wisdom of the ancient sages. This is the doctrine of Plato, which we are taught so diligently and so painfully to read in Greek at grammar schools and colleges. Need we wonder that his famous pupil, Plotinus, "would never mention who his father or his mother was, or where he was born, or anything of that description, because he always appeared to be ashamed that he had a body?"

But why raise up again from their graves these defunct, almost forgotten, absurdities—these "follies of the wise," which, "like the faults of the good," we should bury in silence? For this reason—because, though themselves departed, they may have left a progeny of erroneous opinions and morbid feelings behind them, which still live, and still are active in working mischief. The monasticism of the ancient Church, and of the Middle Ages, is, without doubt, a genuine descendant of that "science falsely so called," though fathered upon Christianity—with which indeed it has no real affinity, as we shall see. And even among those whose religious opinions appear to stand

farthest apart from the Catholic and mediæval types, the same influence may be distinctly traced.

Having thus merely indicated the opinions which some of the wisest men among the heathens entertained regarding "the human body and its connexion with man," I shall now refer you to two other authorities, the *Holy Scriptures* and *modern science*; both of which, as we shall find, present to us a very different view of this important matter.

But some of you may feel disposed to ask this preliminary question,—Why, after being misled by ancient philosophy, should we betake ourselves to philosophy again, modern though it be? What charm is there in the word *modern*? Is not *philosophy* or *science*, man's wisdom, whether it be old or new?—whether propounded at Athens, four or five centuries before Christ, or at London, or Paris, or Edinburgh, eighteen centuries after Christ?

It is astonishing how people suffer themselves to be misled in their judgments by words. Thus, the wild hypotheses of certain men in ancient times, who did not observe or investigate nature, but imagined and dreamed, were called *science* or *philosophy*. Now, because we distrust and even smile at this, must we also repudiate the conclusions of men who patiently observe, humbly inquire, diligently experiment, cautiously conclude, being actuated by conscientious love of truth in the whole process,—must we reject the precious fruit which these men bring us from the fields of creation, because it also happens to be called *science* or *philosophy*? We feel no disposition to reject the Christian religion because gross delusions, debasing superstitions, monstrous cruelties, have sometimes been styled *religions*. St Paul denounces a

“science *falsely* so called ;” shall we, therefore, be so simple as to reject science which is justly so called ? thus fostering—under the pretence of fearing—that dangerous scepticism which will not believe that “facts of nature are the words of God.” Thus, through apprehension of infidelity, men may rush into the grossest forms of atheism ; virtually denying that the creatures are God’s creatures ; that this world is God’s dominion ; that its laws are His institutions ; that His glory shines in every part ; that His praise is re-echoed from every side ; and that man is consecrated to be a priest, to offer up all the creatures as sacrifices of praise, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, in the Holy and Eternal Spirit.

Discarding, therefore, the pernicious dreams of “science falsely so called,” let us hear what those men tell us about the human body, who “speak what they do know, and testify what they have seen.”

Instead of the body being a filthy garment, with which the soul, in its wanderings through eternity, has become accidentally invested for a short while, and which never can be purified or rendered a congenial or suitable covering for the spirit that is wrapped in it ; but which that spirit should only loathe, separate itself from, and escape out of as quickly as it can ;—we are taught by those who have most deeply studied the subject, that the body is a constituent part of human nature itself ; so that the soul without the body is no more entitled to be regarded as *man*, than is the body without the soul ;—that between these two exists a communion so intimate, however inexplicable, that all our feelings, emotions, thoughts, reasonings, memories, imaginations, and, in

short, all mental acts or states whatever, take place through the intervention and instrumentality of the nervous system—the great centre of which is the brain ; and that we have no proof that, *in our present state*, any mental act whatever can be performed except through that instrumentality. Thus, mental derangement, imbecility, loss or failure of memory, and similar phenomena in all their melancholy variety, are so many indications and effects of an impaired or a diseased condition of the nervous system. That the young apprehend and learn more quickly than the old, results from the different conditions of the brain in the two periods ; and a thousand familiar appearances are explained in the same manner.

Insanity is now regarded by physicians, that is, by men who are acquainted with the subject, as a *bodily disease*, as much as fever, rheumatism, or consumption ; and it is treated accordingly. I do not go about to prove these things, because this is not the proper place, and because they are too familiarly known to need proof. I state them only as truths regarding the constitution of our nature, which scientific investigators have revealed and demonstrated ; and the general result of which is to explode those heathen notions, which I formerly mentioned, as equally false and profane.

From the researches of men who study facts by the light of reason, let us turn to the testimony of those who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ; and we shall find “the sure word of prophecy” confirming most emphatically what the former have declared. The Holy Scriptures, then, inform us that man’s body, no less than his soul, is the work of God,

and that He made both of them "very good;" that both are alike fallen and polluted by sin, both alike redeemed by the blood of Christ, both alike subjects of sanctification by the Holy Spirit; and that the body is co-heir, with the soul, of that immortal life which is God's promise to us in His Son. No contrast can be more striking than between the language of contempt and even of hatred in which the heathen sages speak of the body, and the reverential and honourable terms used by the sacred writers on the same subject.

"Your bodies are members of Christ." "He is the Saviour of the body." "The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God." We should, therefore, "yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God." "Sin is not to reign in our mortal body." We must "glorify God in our body." We must "present our bodies, living sacrifices, holy and acceptable; which is our reasonable service." Paul prays for his converts that their "whole man—*spirit, soul, and body*—may be sanctified." What words could more expressly affirm that the essential elements of humanity are a spirit *and a material framework*—which latter is worthy of our deep regard, reverence, and affection, as part of ourselves, and part of all that we love,—as an element of that humanity which Christ our Lord has taken, and redeemed, and sanctified, and glorified? The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation distinctly sets this forth; for it is the assumption by the Divine Word of the human *body*, no less than of the human soul: as does, not less clearly, the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection; which is the reanima-

tion and glorification of both body and soul, thus shewn to be essential parts of the humanity which is restored. It is ourselves, not our filthy garments, that are to be quickened and raised up from the dust of death. The fact also, that our Saviour's miracles were almost all of them performed upon the human body—for its relief, cure, and restoration to life—certainly supplies a striking argument in proof of its dignity and worth as an essential element of human nature, and not some accidental and worthless accretion.

The union of the soul with the flesh is represented by the great heathen teacher (to whom some Christian divines have ascribed a certain measure of inspiration) as polluting and degrading. From which it naturally followed that death was the grand felicity, being the redemption of the soul from a foul captivity, her blessed divorce from a hateful union; so that now she might regain her virgin purity, and "might dwell alone by herself, both now and hereafter." But St Paul teaches us that this alliance is legitimate and holy in itself; and it is our duty to provide that it be so to us. "So ought men to love their wives even as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," (Eph. v. 28.)

It may perhaps be here objected that St Paul speaks elsewhere of the body (*σῶμα*) and the flesh (*σάρξ*) in much the same strain as the Platonists. I acknowledge that the *language* is often strikingly similar. But any one who considers the matter will

observe, (1.) That Paul constantly uses the term *flesh*, and sometimes *body*, as a metonymy for the "lusts of the flesh," (*ἐπιθυμῆαι τῆς σαρκός*), the *bodily appetites*, considered as ruling and giving their own character to the man; so rendering him *fleshly*, carnal (*σαρκικός*); not the appetite itself, but subjection to the appetite being sin. (2.) That the redemption which the Platonists sigh for is *deliverance from the body altogether, absolutely, eternally*; whereas "the adoption," which is the object of Christian hope, is "the redemption of the body" from its pollution, and consequent mortality, (Rom. viii. 23.)

In that noble passage, 2 Cor. v. 1-4, he contrasts the Platonic fancy of man's heaven being a naked, houseless soul, with the Christian hope that the earthly tenement, frail, sinful, and mortal, would be re-edified, made heavenly and glorious, cleansed from sin, and raised superior to death: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

Few passages in the New Testament have been more misunderstood and perverted than this. The true key to it, I submit, is the Platonic doctrine of the houseless, naked soul—with which Paul was familiar, as a man born and educated in Tarsus, a city famous for Greek culture, and writing to Corinthians, to

whom the same ideas were as well known as the common topics of pulpit discourse are to us.\*

Having thus seen that our bodies are really parts of ourselves, according to the teaching as well of Scripture as of science, let us now attend for a little to the duty which we owe to them. This duty arises from what the body is in itself, and what it is in relation to the soul.

"No man," says St Paul, "ever yet hated his own flesh," *i.e.*, unless he acted foolishly and wickedly—in opposition at once to his reason and his instincts. To hate, or to act as if we hated our bodies, is a daring violation of God's command—an outrage upon the nature He has given us. The royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," assumes, as its foundation and its measure, the duty of loving ourselves; the *soul* and the *body*, which constitute between

\* I have learned with surprise that some have denied the correctness of the representation here given of Plato's doctrine, and have asserted that the doctrine is indeed not Platonic, but was derived from quite other sources. But any one who will refer to the most popular of all the dialogues, "The Phædo," will find ample confirmation of what I have here asserted. The *thesis* of the dialogue is that the soul is the man, and the body no part of man; and therefore the death of the body is not the death of the man, (147, 148;) and the duty and happiness of the true philosopher is "to separate himself as much as possible from the body, and to attend to his soul,"—"to free his soul from communion with the body;" and "the philosopher's soul should despise the body and flee from it, and retire within itself." Accordingly, "we cannot hope to attain wisdom so long as encumbered with flesh;" but "when we are dead, *i.e.*, freed from the body, we shall." And he goes so far as to affirm, (*Phædo*, 33,) that they who study philosophy, "study to die; that they altogether leave the body, and desire to keep the soul by itself, and long to be free from association with that which they hated." (See *Phædo*, 23-33.) I doubt whether any Oriental mystic ever expressed that doctrine more plainly or emphatically. See also Apuleius on the Doctrine of Plato, 10; and Gray's Notes on the Phædo.

them that *self* which we should love. The soul, no doubt, is our first concern ; but the body is our second ; and in its weal that of the soul is in many ways deeply implicated.

No one needs to be told that bodily health and vigour, and length of days are blessings, legitimate objects of desire, and things to be thankful for. But what we do need to be told, and that with reiteration, is, that our own conduct has something, yea, much, to do with our attaining those things ; that these, like other blessings, are to be sought from God, not only by prayer, but by the diligent use of certain means. It is, no doubt, true that our Creator orders all things according to the counsel of His own will ; but it is no less true, on the other hand, that He, who is all-wise and merciful, appoints very few of those things which concern our happiness, without some reference to our own actions : thus leaving us room to increase our welfare, or impair it. God does not bestow salvation upon us, (which is the health of our souls,) without our being made wise and good—that is, observant of those laws which He has established, and which are conducive to that end. These are mere truisms ; yet they are the very things we are always forgetting, and for neglect of which we are so often punished.

No one is so unthinking as to deny that we can do something to promote the health and prolong the life of the body. But we should understand both that we may do a great deal, and that to do what we can, both for our own welfare and that of others, in this regard, is a matter of *strictly religious obligation*—being part of that duty which we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves. For we must glorify Him with *our body*.

The power of man to destroy himself is exemplified every day ; but, for one that is guilty of this wickedness directly, thousands perish by intemperance, bad or insufficient food, want of ventilation, noxious gases, excessive mental excitements, idleness, over-working, and the like. These paths, indeed, are often so circuitous, that people will hardly be persuaded that their "end is destruction." But that they lead down to the chambers of death as certainly as the shortest road, who does not know that ever took pains to trace them ? Who does not know, in his own experience, that ever walked in them ?

It is reckoned that *a hundred thousand persons die annually in England of preventable diseases.* In the same proportion, more than *a million and a quarter* must die annually over all Europe ; and, probably, if we consider certain customs prevailing in China and India, those great centres of population in the East, not fewer than five or six times that number must perish over the whole world.

We shudder to look upon the sanguinary track of war, as well we may : but the numbers that are slain in war are a mere fraction, compared with the countless throng of human beings that vice and ignorance are constantly tumbling into their graves. Can we think of this without horror and pity ? Our religion, the religion of mercy and charity, should prompt us to study the dreadful spectacle—*sin reigning unto death.*

Probably not fewer than four hundred thousand men were killed during the late Russian war. But during the same period ten times as many died in Europe alone from preventable diseases. The slaughter of four millions of persons, during three

years, in war against the laws of health! So appalling a fact is surely deserving the earnest attention not only of governors, politicians, and philanthropists, but of all men who profess Christianity, and especially of those who are appointed to teach it: because the laws of health, through disobedience to which such multitudes perish, are God's laws; for He not only ordained them, but He executes them impartially and universally, before our eyes and upon ourselves; and because the gospel which we are appointed to teach is the religion of Him who came into the world, "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them,"—to save them in a temporal as well as in a spiritual sense.

It is confidently maintained, by the most competent authorities, that a very large proportion of all the suffering that is now in the world is the result not of any invincible necessity,—in other words, does not arise out of the constitution of our nature itself relatively to that world in which we are placed, but from our ignorance of that constitution, or our disregard of those significant indications which are graciously conveyed to us. And this happens among all classes, to a considerable degree, but chiefly, of course, among the poorest, who, in the nature of things, are most exposed to those evils, and furthest removed from the remedy.

I am aware that some speak, and many more feel, as if this state of things were altogether irreparable; as if the constitution of society, and even the very nature of things as now existing, rendered it inevitable that that load of misery should press in its full weight upon those who, be it remembered, comprehend the vast majority of the human race. So disheartening a paradox, however, is not to be admitted without proof;

and it stands opposed not only to strong presumptions, but to many facts.

Suffering, under an all-wise Providence, has uses many and evident. It is intended to awaken us to the perception that something is wrong, that our conduct, in some respects, is a violation of God's laws in the matter out of which the suffering springs. *Pain* is God's grand ordinance of instruction, inflicted until we are either destroyed or awakened to perceive and correct what is amiss. To question this is to pretend that we are living under the despotism of a blind fate, not under the fatherly government of an all-wise, just, and benevolent God. Under such a rule, all suffering must be corrective, at least in a state of probation such as this is ; for the very notion of cruelty is pain inflicted for no purpose, or no good purpose.

Our Creator and Moral Governor is working around us everywhere ; and we are liable to be caught and crushed by the machinery in the midst of which we are placed. Is not this a call on us to examine that machinery, so that we may escape the danger ? For, no doubt, it is comprehensible by us, so far at least as our safety requires ; and, with equal certainty, we may rest assured, it is not designed to destroy or hurt, but to protect, help, and comfort us, if we will know and do what we may know and should do.

So much for *presumptions* ; now as to *facts*. We see that the sufferings alluded to can be, for they actually are, prevented, to a considerable degree, by those persons who pay sufficient attention and exercise sufficient self-denial ; that these persons escape, in whole or in part, those visitations which fall, in their full severity, upon the ignorant and self-indulgent. Companies for the assurance of life are growing rich :

that is, the persons insured live longer than was calculated on. Why? Does Providence capriciously spare those people who insure their lives? Not at all. But those classes of the community are becoming better acquainted with the proper means of preserving health, and more observant of these; and hence the average of their lives is growing gradually longer and longer. This is not accident or mystery; it is intelligible law—an example of the everlasting and universal connexion of *obedience* and *reward*. Many things occurred during the last visitation of cholera which illustrate, in the most remarkable manner, what has now been stated. On that occasion, it was found that towns, and districts of towns, and even single tenements, were exempted, in proportion as they complied with the laws of health. In London, while cholera was devastating the surrounding population, the inmates of the Model Lodging-houses were almost, or altogether, exempt. On the south side of the Thames, the mortality was more than three times greater, in proportion to the population, than that on the north side: the causes of the difference being evident.

I do not, however, maintain that any individual, or even any one class in a community, can do all that is desirable, or all that in itself is practicable. Such is the constitution of humanity that we suffer not only for our own sins, but often also for those of others. The death that came upon us all originally, from the sin of our first father, often comes to us before its time, from the sins of less remote progenitors, and even of others not so closely connected with us. Evils which have been the joint production of so many, must be cured (as far as they can be cured) by

the co-operation of many—of all orders in the community, the higher and the lower, yea, the highest and the lowest, under the common impulse of an enlightened charity, seeking the good of all, and in that finding their own.

But what I desire to impress upon you is, that all of us, even in our individual and family capacities, have a great deal in our own power in these matters; far more than our sloth and self-indulgence easily permit us to believe.

Having said so much to prove that we can do something for the temporal salvation of the body, I will now add a few words to shew that what we can do, that we should do; that God requires us to perform that which He has graciously afforded us the means of performing.

1. Because the body is His property by right of Creation, Preservation, Redemption; and therefore we can have no right to abuse it. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your body." If our bodies were our own, we might do with them what we chose; but we shall give account of our stewardship, in this regard, to Him whose they are. Indeed, this account is rendered, partly at least, even in this life.

2. Another argument shewing how deeply religion is involved in this matter, is, that without a certain amount of physical well-being, a healthy moral or religious condition is not to be expected in any population, and is extremely difficult of attainment even in individuals. Certain states of the body undeniably occasion, irritate, and inflame those appetites and inclinations which it is one great end of Christianity to repress or regulate. It is known to you all how much

our blessed Saviour insists upon meekness, long-suffering, gentleness, patience, and the like. These are among the most prominent features of His teaching, and therefore these are the characteristic graces which distinguish His genuine disciples. But these graces, which are so difficult in even the best condition of our corrupt nature, are rendered almost impossible by certain states of the nervous system. Sad experience may have caused some of you to know how dire a struggle the spirit is sometimes called to maintain against the flesh ; and that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle," than for a dyspeptic person to be gentle, meek, patient, long-suffering.

An ill-fed population are stimulated to intemperance by stings too sharp for them to resist ; and he who lives too luxuriously, and is too idle, will not easily be "holy in all manner of conversation." The body and the soul are too intimately united for either not to feel deeply the influence of the other, for good or evil.

3. Besides : our Maker requires of us a certain amount of service, *by and through our bodies*. But if we destroy the machine, how can we perform the work ? Shall we not be held responsible for the service which we might have rendered, had we not broken the instrument by which alone it could be done ?

4. We owe manifold duties *to men*, as well as to God ; and they need our service, which He does not. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is the second commandment ; and it is "great, like unto the first." We cannot, without sin, render ourselves incapable of answering those claims which our coun-

try, the Christian Church, our neighbours, friends, kindred, and families, have upon our service. The man who, by intemperance, wilful ignorance and its consequences, or otherwise, impairs his health and shortens his days, defrauds all those to whom he owes help and comfort. Thus refusing to pay a lawful debt, he is so far an unjust man.

Every one acknowledges the truth of this remark in the case of a parent who ruins his health. You condemn him as a man who has sinned heinously against his wife and children, whom he was bound by the most sacred ties to cherish and comfort, but on whom he has entailed anxiety and grief, perhaps also destitution and misery.

5. Deprived of health, we are disqualified for many duties which we owe *to ourselves* ; and we are cut off from many sources of pure and ennobling enjoyment.

Whatever hinders us from communicating happiness, so far hinders us also from attaining it ; for it is chiefly through doing that we enjoy good. We find our own felicity in seeking that of our fellow-creatures : and whatever renders us incapable of the one, so far cuts us off from the other also.

When, indeed, we are called to suffer in the course of God's providence, (as we all are, in this sinful and mortal state,) we must endeavour to suffer with patience and resignation to God's will. But we should not believe it to be God's will that we should suffer anything which we may by lawful means prevent. When we are involved in suffering, we can commonly *do* little, and we *need* much. Instead of helping others and consoling them, we need consolation and help ourselves ; and are thus doomed to increase the burdens which we would rather lighten and ease. I

do not say that there is necessarily no blessedness in this ; but it is certainly the lesser blessedness ; “ remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

We should submit to poverty and other trials with fortitude and patience, *if it be the will of God that we should be poor*. But we must exhaust the resources of honest diligence, carefulness, and frugality, before we conclude that such is God's will. Patience, which is perhaps the greatest, is also the last of the virtues, the sheet-anchor of the soul, not to be had recourse to till a tempest has fallen upon us out of heaven, and we are in extremity. Let us never preach patience, when we can point out the means which shall render patience unnecessary. The patience which endures removable evils is not acceptable—it is an insult to the Almighty ; it is not a grace of the Spirit, but one of those lusts of the flesh “ which war against the soul,” and against the body also.

After what has been said, perhaps none of you will deny that what has been insisted on is right and proper—in short, a duty. But some of you may still feel disposed to ask, Is this a religious duty ? Is it part of Christianity that we should obey these sanitary commandments, under pain of the anger of God, under pain of guilt ?

Now, let me answer—

1. That every duty is a religious duty : for to say *it is duty*, is to say *it is required by Him whose we are, and whom we are bound to obey and serve*, at all times and in all things, with all that we possess and all that we are.

2. If anything be God's will, it is for that reason our law, in whatever manner we may have discovered

that it is His will, whether it be written in a book, or signified by facts.

Supposing it were demonstrated that any institution or custom tended to generate disease in the community; for example, that marriages within certain degrees generally produced an issue deficient in bodily health and vigour; on that supposition, such marriages would be forbidden by the Almighty Governor of the world, as much as if He commissioned an archangel with a trumpet to proclaim the prohibition to the human race; or as if He sent to every person a well-authenticated letter or book, in which the prohibition was written. To doubt this is to doubt that there is a moral purpose in God's providence, or that its penalties are prohibitions; which seems to me the very essence of atheism.

3. A very great number, not to say a large proportion, of the ordinances of the Mosaic law, were designed to secure the bodily health and physical welfare of the Hebrew people, besides other and higher objects to which they also were conducive in various ways; and obedience to these ordinances was to be rewarded by the attainment of those blessings; disobedience punished by physical and temporal penalties. Whatever other rewards and punishments might be suggested by the law, none other but these are mentioned. This is unquestionable. (See Lev. xxvi., and Deut. xxviii.)

Since, then, regulations for securing the physical well-being of the people formed parts of the Jewish system, we, who acknowledge the Divine origin of that system, cannot reasonably doubt that the care of health and wise sanitary measures have a religious character, and involve a religious obligation. We

could escape this inference only by holding that the institutions of Moses were in great part not religious, but merely secular.

And how can we doubt that health and long life are precious blessings, and worth our earnest pursuit, when Moses promised these in the name of the Lord as rewards to His chosen people? The Sabbath itself was instituted for the health and relief of the body, no less than for the edification of the soul; in which merciful ordinance, slaves, and even beasts, were considered. (See Exod. xxiii. 12, and Deut. v. 13, 14.) So much is this the case, that in the Pentateuch hardly any duty connected with the Sabbath is specified but *resting*, or any purpose assigned but bodily refreshment. From which it would seem to follow, that the Sabbath is then only *sanctified*,—that is, separated to its legitimate purposes, when the rest, refreshment, health of the body, are provided for and attended to, as well as the worship of God, in public and in private.

The whole tenor of the law, and indeed of the Old Testament, is expressed in these words of Moses, "Serve the Lord your God, and he will take sickness away from the midst of thee . . . and multiply thy days," (Exod. xxiii. 25.) "If ye hearken to these judgments . . . the Lord thy God shall take from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt (which thou knewest) upon thee," (Deut. vii. 12-15.) "Let thine heart keep my commandments, for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee," (Prov. iii. 1, 2.) This surely was not all miracle. These felicities were to be wrought out, in part at least, through the operation of those common laws which govern the world

now, as they did in the days of Moses and of Solomon ; otherwise the law and history of the Old Testament could convey no lesson to us : their interest and value for us would be quite destroyed.

It is no doubt true, as well as remarkable, that the tone of the Christian Scriptures sounds different ; "prosperity," as Lord Bacon says, "being the promise of the Old Testament, adversity of the New." But we cannot admit that it is the meaning of the New Testament that a general obedience to God's laws would produce general misery in this world, when the Old Scriptures had taught us that such obedience would convert it into a paradise. Nor can we allow that the extreme misery to which the early Christians were reduced when the new faith came first into violent collision with the old superstitions is intended to represent the normal condition of Christians in all ages ; especially when we enjoy the blessed experience that we are not "killed all the day long," or "counted as the offscouring of all things," in consequence of living as Christians ; and that at this day they are not "of all men most miserable," who lead godly, righteous, and sober lives ; but that, on the contrary, this course of conduct, though it may occasion suffering, prevents incomparably more than it occasions.

Besides noticing that those persecutions themselves were violations of God's law, we cannot doubt that if the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ were generally obeyed, the community would be incomparably happier, even in this world, than it could possibly be if that religion were generally disobeyed. To deny this would be to advance a formidable objection against Christianity, as well as to set it and Judaism flatly

in opposition to each other, so proving that one of them at least is neither divine nor true.

We must not groan, neither must we either make or tolerate occasions of groaning, because the holy apostles could not, with good conscience, escape the wild beasts, the rack, and the fire. "God has provided some better thing for us." No martyrdom is acceptable to Him, or a duty in us, except that which cannot be escaped without sin. "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." It is written, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and they shall not hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain," *because* "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord."

Let us not, then, invent crosses, that we may carry them; or be weighed down with any that we may lawfully put aside. Suffering is the most evil thing in the world, sin only excepted, and therefore tolerable only so far as it is the medicine and cure of that root of all evil.

This world is indeed a valley of the shadow of death, where weeping and groans re-echo from every side. But disobedience and ignorance have made it what it is. As these diminish, sorrow and sighing, in the same proportion, will flee away; and even the king of terrors, whose dire tribute we cannot evade in this world, will exact his due at a later day. Still debarred from the garden, in the midst of which grows the tree of life, we are encouraged to subdue the thorns and briars of the wilderness, to turn the desert into a fruitful field, and in the sweat of our face to eat bread; so fighting our way back to the lost paradise, not without good hope that the flaming sword shall at length have abated its consuming fire,

and that the guardian spirits who drove us forth, not without pity, shall have received commission to welcome back the repentant exiles, that they may eat again of the tree of life—may hear the voice of God without terror—may see His face and not die.

Unless mankind shall be taught to take a conscientious interest in their bodily welfare, they will hardly be persuaded to feel that concern which they ought in the health and salvation of their souls. He cannot be expected to aspire after eternal life who has not learned to appreciate the blessing of temporal life. "He that is unfaithful in that which is least, is unfaithful also in much." Nor will he study to acquire ten talents who sets no store by that one talent which the Lord and Giver of life has already bestowed. In the order of His dispensations, God has suggested both the natural progress of ideas and the manner in which these duties are evolved. He gave us first in the law the rudiments of the doctrine of salvation, prescribing multifarious regulations for bodily purity and health, and afterwards in the gospel the mystery and perfection of the doctrine; that we might be holy both in body and soul—redeemed, sanctified, saved, in both. "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." The elements of that which is heavenly are still contained and suggested by that which is earthly—a consideration well deserving the attentive regard of those who not only acknowledge, but deplore, the slow advancement which "pure religion and undefiled" makes even in those countries in which it has been longest known, and is most generally professed.

The Platonizing Christianity which would induce men to care for their souls, by teaching them to condemn the fleshly tabernacle, is not less pernicious in its practical influence than theoretically vicious and false.

## ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE MIND.

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WHETHER there be a distinction in nature between the human soul and the human spirit? Whether reason and understanding be distinguishable? Whether the various acts of judgment, memory, imagination, are to be regarded only as so many different *states* of one simple individual substance; or whether they must be explained by supposing the existence of distinct powers or faculties in that substance? Whether ideas (or *notions*, rather) be *innate*—that is, born with us, and only unfolded by education, (which, therefore, may be defined a process of evolution;) or whether, on the contrary, all the stores of the mind have been imported from without?—These, and other kindred questions, which have deeply engaged the attention of philosophers, I am compelled to pass by with this general observation, that, though considerable light might be thrown on the topic before us, from the investigation of those other points, yet we may satisfactorily discuss this without even forming an opinion regarding any of them, or even being aware of their existence: as a person may easily be taught to use a telescope who is ignorant of the laws of the reflection

or refraction of light, according to which the telescope is constructed : or as every soldier in a regiment can shoulder arms at the word of command, whereas, perhaps, not one of them could name the muscles which that act called into operation.

The word *mind* is often used in a restricted sense ; but I shall, in this discourse, employ it in its most extensive application : not to denote any one peculiar faculty or exercise of the human soul, but that which is the subject of all those faculties—the one agent in all those exercises. I include as well the moral and imaginative powers as the intellectual in my idea of the mind.

The objects with which we are conversant present themselves to our minds principally under these three grand aspects—first, as true or false ; second, as beautiful and noble, or mean and deformed ; third, as right or wrong, good or evil. That which is conversant with the true or false is the intellectual faculty—called, in common language, indifferently, *reason* or *understanding* ; that which is employed about the beautiful or sublime is *imagination, fancy, taste* ; that which takes cognisance of the right and the wrong is *conscience*, sometimes called also *moral sense*.

The cultivation of the mind includes whatever has the effect of enlarging and invigorating it in these and all its other faculties or exercises, and of delivering them from those trammels and impediments which hinder their free and beneficial action ; so that the imagination shall be a prolific mother of healthful and well-favoured thoughts ; the understanding an acute and jealous guardian, lest any illegitimate notions be received into the family and cherished there as truths ; and the conscience, sitting a severe and in-

corruptible judge, impartially pronouncing sentence on all the mental offspring, and inexorably carrying his judgments into effect, unseduced by his handmaids the passions, entreating him to spare their foster children.

We not unfrequently observe minds having some one faculty or more in great strength, while the others are little developed. Some men grow all to understanding, some all to imagination. The former see all objects through the glass of logic, the latter look at everything through the medium of poetry. The one are hard and dry trees, bearing no blossoms, and even their fruit, though not unwholesome, wants juice and flavour; the others run all to flowers and essences, perfuming the air and regaling the senses, but they yield little fruit, and that too pungent to be nutritious. These are cases of monstrosity as much as those bodies, one member of which has grown great and strong at the expense of the rest, all of which its increase has dwarfed and ruined.

Cases may also be found in which the conscience, not satisfied with asserting his claims to a constitutional monarchy, has raised himself to absolute dominion in the soul. Instead of governing the other faculties, he has sought to slay them, like those eastern despots who fancy they do not sit securely on their thrones till they have murdered their kindred. It is, indeed, necessary that we should be acutely alive to the right and the wrong in all subjects in which these qualities exist; but it is not desirable that we should see nothing in them but the right or wrong. In short, as the perfection of the human body consists not in the strength and energy of any one member or sense, but in the health and activity of all; and as the

highest idea of a civil government is not realised by the exclusive development of any one element of polity, but by such a combination of them all as shall, to the greatest extent possible, neutralise the deleterious effects which each displays when acting uncombined with countervailing elements; so the perfection of the mind, and the point to which its cultivation should be directed, is to educate, strengthen, and regulate whatever is in the mind—implanted there by that “manifold wisdom” whose provisions are neither stinted nor inadequate, on the one hand, nor superfluous, on the other. Thus accomplished, the man is *ενδυσάμενος τὴν πανοπλίαν*—clad in panoply—prepared to discharge the high offices to which humanity is called in relation both to the sensible and to the spiritual world.

Cultivation of the mind is the result of well-directed exercise, those objects being presented which are calculated to excite its various capacities, and by the pursuit of which the capacities themselves are beneficially employed. We can hardly account it wise, however, to exert either the mental or the bodily powers in those employments which furnish exercise indeed, but yield no further advantage, when so many labours present themselves which minister a double fruit, first in him that labours in them, and then in the things themselves in which he labours. He that *walks* to preserve health does well. He that *digs* does better; for in this case the labour itself is productive and profitable, which in the former it is not. So it is better that the mental powers should be employed on even the most barren subjects than that they should be idle: but when the world is full of pregnant truths, valuable both in themselves and in

the further possessions to which they lead, it is surely not wise to expend our energies on those which in themselves are utterly valueless. The student of chess gets mental exercise—which in and of itself is good—but he gets nothing further; the knowledge thus acquired being of no use either absolutely or instrumentally: whereas the student of mathematics and the student of history, *besides* mental employment, obtain a key, the one to all the physical sciences, that is, to the whole material world, the other to humanity itself. Thus the labour, which in the former case terminates in itself, in the other opens up the great store-houses of nature, and makes us free of all the riches of the world.

Few perhaps would maintain that our minds do not require any particular discipline in order to qualify us for discharging those functions to which, as members of society, and as subjects of the moral government of our invisible Sovereign, all men are called. But many of the most prevalent and pernicious errors are never avowed, much less defended in words, as the most powerful agents in nature manifest themselves only by their effects. Millions of persons shew that the only education of their inner man which they hold to be desirable, consists in that acquaintance with the alphabet of knowledge obtained at school, and which has (unfortunately) engrossed the name of education; and in that skill in their particular trades or professions which may secure success in them, and through them the means of subsistence. But that this does not deserve to be styled “the cultivation of the mind” will instantly be admitted, if we consider that this knowledge concerns

man chiefly not *as a man*, but *as an animal*,\* pressed with certain corporeal necessities ; and therefore it only puts him on a level with the inferior creatures, which are taught the methods of supplying their wants by blind irresistible instincts. Man's mind cannot surely be said to be cultivated, when it is so instructed as to enable him to supply only his lowest wants, and to act suitably only in his lowest relations.

Few possessions of much real value come into our hands by accident. No man ever was a skilful architect, or physician, or carpenter, by chance. What is said of poets—*Poeta nascitur, non fit*—must here be reversed ; these gifts being not bestowed by nature, but acquired by industry. And the knowledge of those sciences and arts which are profounder and more intricate in themselves, and which more deeply concern us, is not granted on easier terms. Not even the lowest organ in the body, not a muscle or a sense, can perform its function without having undergone a lengthened and elaborate process of instruction. The hand, the ear, the eye, must each be trained and taught ; and though we may be unconscious of this education, it has as really been received as that was by which we learned to read or to write. If, then, even the meanest corporeal senses (if anything which is part of us should be called mean) demand an appropriate education, without which they would prove rather encumbrances to the individual than his scouts and messengers, by which he keeps up his

\* “*Per humanam actionem intelligimus non quemvis motum a facultatibus hominis procedentem ; sed illum duntaxat, qui provenit ac dirigitur ab iis facultatibus, quas humano generi prae brutis Creator O. M. attribuit,*” etc.—*Puffend. de Officio Hom.*, lib. i., cap. 1, 2.

communication with the external world, shall we suppose that the noblest capacities of man's spirit are alone independent of all training and culture—that they only are incapable of expansion and refinement—that, in the whole territory of human nature, this is the only field which promises to reward the tillage with no fruit?

Addison's celebrated comparison of the human soul without cultivation to a block of marble in the quarry, though beautiful and striking, falls below the case. For the process of polishing only *displayed* those spots and veins which were *in the substance* as much before it was hewn and dressed as afterwards. Whereas cultivation performs for the mind the same office which heat and moisture discharge in relation to the vegetable seed, or food and exercise to the animal organisation; to which, though they absolutely impart no new organ, they enlarge and strengthen all, and permit some to develop themselves, which had no existence except in germ.\* It is an inadequate comprehension of our position and our relations which shelters the delusion that our faculties are then sufficiently disciplined and expanded, when they qualify us to fulfil our vocation, as creatures beset with certain corporeal necessities. We have other problems to solve than these—What shall we eat? what shall we drink? wherewithal shall we be clothed? Our personal wants, our domestic ties, even our social relations, address not to us those questions which touch our interests most vitally. Man has also relations to the universe, to the sum of

\* "Homines autem mens discendo alitur, et cogitando semper aliquid aut anquirat aut agit, videndique et audiendi delectatione ducitur."  
—*Cic. de Offic.*

visible things which surrounds him and to that higher world, regarding which our senses bring no information, but in which we must seek the archetypes or *ideas* of whatever of the perfect, good, or fair, is found, though dimly represented, in this; which, as wise men have persuaded themselves, was created with such analogy to that, as both to suggest to the inquiring spirit those higher forms of beauty and goodness, and to aid it somewhat in apprehending these. Yes. Man, the animal formed out of the dust of the ground, that eats and sleeps, is born and dies, is also "the image of God"—"a ray of the divinity,"\* to whom even the structure of his body intimates that he was formed to look above that earth to which he is chained. A mediator and a priest, he stands between God and His other terrestrial works, consecrated to present them in sacrifice; for they are full of praises, which they cannot themselves offer. And that man has not apprehended his highest calling, who knows not that he is anointed with the holy oil of reason and speech, to express the sense of all things here below; to *say* that which all the creatures mean, and to render those works of God vocal which naturally are dumb. But how shall he fulfil his vocation as a priest, offering up his works to God as sacrifices of praise continually, who is all unconscious of that manifold wisdom, goodness, and power, from which they all originated, and which they all reveal? And how can these be known, if they are not carefully observed and diligently studied? "Jehovah is a God that hideth himself," as well in nature, and the moral constitution and government of the world, as in the dispensation of Divine mercy unfolded in the

\* Plato.

Bible. In that, as well as in this, the truth is spoken in parables—it is revealed in mystery ; so that they who have no ear to hear are nothing the wiser. The shekinah blazes indeed in both ; but it is either a pillar of fire or a pillar of cloud, according to the position from which we view it.

I. The objects to be proposed in the cultivation of the intellectual powers are chiefly these : First, *Knowledge*, acquaintance with facts and principles, that is, with particular and general truths ; as also, the power of retaining this, which power is called Memory, the store-house or treasury of the mind ; and, secondly, *Judgment*, the faculty of estimating correctly whatever is presented.

The caution formerly given may here be repeated, lest the intellectual vessel be upset, too much ballast being thrown to one side or the other, the mind becoming either a depository of unarranged, unmanageable knowledge, mere lumber, of which the possessor understands not the value, and which he can turn to no account in the way of utility or pleasure ; or a naked uninformed judgment. The former of these states is an intellectual gluttony, craving for knowledge, which is swallowed ravenously, but is never digested or transmuted into the substance of the mind, of which it only feeds the peccant humours.

“ Who reads incessantly, and to his reading brings not  
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,  
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,  
Deep read in books, but shallow in himself.”\*

The latter state is not less to be dreaded, when the mind grows to a naked judgment, acute and active,

\* Milton.

but unfurnished—destitute of the materials, without an abundant supply of which, our decisions are likely to be as erroneous as if the judgment itself were weak, or even more so; for more false opinions and of greater consequence arise from a too narrow comprehension of facts, than from a mistaken estimate of those which are observed:—as a tower is exposed to no less danger of falling if it stand on a basis too narrow or insecure, than if the building itself be infirm. And while Passion and Interest beget many prejudices, Ignorance is the parent of more; who, besides her own numerous family, shelters and rears all the offspring of her two sisters. No acuteness or vigour of judgment can deliver an ignorant mind from danger of the most hurtful prejudices; whereas, in many cases, the very extension of our knowledge inevitably and instantaneously dispels those prejudices, which are the night of the soul, and which fly before the first beams of the rising truth, which is her sun—the ghosts and spectres of the mind also, whose habitation is darkness, not being permitted to abide the crowing of the cock.

“The flocking shadows pale  
Troop to th’ infernal jail,  
Each fetter’d ghost slips to his several cave.”\*

To prevent both these evils, it is necessary we mingle as great an acquaintance as may be with other men’s thoughts, with as great an exercise as possible of our own. In order to be very profitable, reading and reflection should be united. Either without the other will fail of obtaining the great end which should be had in view. A mere swallower of books is no more likely to become wise than is a glutton to be healthy

\* Milton.

or strong. Information is not knowledge, much less is it wisdom—any more than food is chyle or blood. We must exercise reflection upon facts—information must be digested. Then only is it turned into that knowledge which is the vital fluid of man's spirit, and from which wisdom draws her nourishment.\* On the other hand, to prevent them preying upon themselves and corroding their own vitals, men's minds, especially those that are energetic and active, should be furnished with a copious supply of wholesome nourishment derived from books, in which we must read much if we would be mentally healthy and vigorous.

You will not suppose that by *much reading*, I mean the running over many books. This is not so much reading as dissipation: and instead of concentrating and training the intellectual faculty, that habit tends, beyond most others, to emasculate the understanding, both indisposing and disqualifying it for those severer exercises of attention and reflection, from which its health and expansion arise. An ancient author has well distinguished between "much reading" and "the reading of many books." † And certainly he who has so read one good book, as to have impressed the facts contained in it on his memory; as to have fully comprehended the reasonings; as not only to have followed his author in what he has expressed, but also to have pursued to some distance those manifold cogitations implied in his discourse, or which it naturally suggests to a meditative spirit;—(for an

\* "Sumenti cibum, et non digerenti, perniciosum est ei. Cibus siquidem indigestus, et qui bonam non habet decoctionem, malos generat humores et corrumpit corpus et non nutrit."—*Bernard*.

† "Legere multum potius quam multa."—*Pliny*.

author should be valued not so much according to what he *has thought for us* as to what he *has enabled us to think*; and the highest value of the best writers lies rather in what they *suggest* than in what they teach; for their books drain off only the *surface-water* of their conceptions, the more copious and purer streams sinking beneath; so that none, without digging deep, shall find those wells of living water;)—he, I say, who has thus thoroughly mastered and appropriated one good author has made a greater step in the path of self-improvement than if he had devoured the contents of a whole library, without reflection, or attempting to ponder, judge, or retain what he read. For in this case the mind is passive—in the former it is active: and it is an unfailing principle, that power and skill arise not from *passivity* but from *action*. A child who has been taught to stand, or to take three steps by himself, has made a greater progress towards the art of walking than if he had been carried over the whole globe.

I am aware of the folly of prescribing any one method as applicable universally. The infinite variety of circumstances, tastes, and talents forbids such hedging up of the path to knowledge; and genius commonly, by a certain happy divination, discovers for herself the way that shall conduct her most directly to the point proposed. Yet, as genius is not a universal or even a common gift; and as even when present she is not an infallible directrix; when, also, we see so much industry misapplied, as we sometimes do—so much labour bestowed in the unfruitful weaving of a Penelope's web; when men read much yet know little, or little that is worth the knowing—can talk but not judge—argue but not reason—are

better able to defend any position than to discern what positions ought to be defended; when their minds are so ill stored, and so undisciplined, that self-communion affords them no pleasure and no profit,—so that they are driven to seek society without, however worthless; when men are so unstable as to be tossed about from one opinion to another continually, not knowing what to believe or what to reject—ending perhaps in that melancholy unfixeness which knows not whether to believe anything; surely it becomes a duty to warn all against that dissipation, of which these miserable mental diseases are the natural result. If you wish to know nothing, to do nothing, to be nothing, you will permit your fancy to rove whithersoever it wills, that is, you will indulge in mental dissipation. “He that sows the wind will reap the whirlwind.” He only that ploughs and sows within enclosures will find a harvest to reap. Labour bestowed upon the wilderness or the common is lost. And he that has little time to apply to the cultivation of his understanding should be doubly solicitous lest any fraction of that little should be wasted, but that all of it should be concentrated and husbanded.

The first and most necessary preparation for making advancement in knowledge is *the habit of attention*, or the power and custom of keeping one’s mind fixedly and continuously directed to the matter before it, to the exclusion, for the time, of all other thoughts. This, to persons of active and fruitful imagination especially, is a most difficult attainment: hence, they are often outstripped in the race of knowledge by others of far inferior powers, to whom the very slowness of their parts presented less formidable obstacles in acquiring the habit of attention.

To generate and strengthen this power, nothing conduces more than the study of geometry ; which therefore should be pursued, at least to some extent, by all who have the opportunity. For though all the particular propositions should afterwards be effaced from the memory, the seeds will probably have been sown of a habit which can perish only with the mind itself. All studies demanding a close application of thought have the same tendency, though none, I think, in the same degree as that I have mentioned ; which has this further recommendation, that it appeals to the understanding exclusively—the passions having here no liberty of speech. But you may exercise and improve the habit of attention, in the common employments of life, as well as in studies expressly engaged in for that purpose. Whatever is before you, endeavour to make *it* for the time, as long as is necessary, the object of your undivided thoughts. This is the great secret of acquiring intellectual opulence, as well as of success in the business of this world. He that does one thing at once, commonly does many things, and each well. Sir Isaac Newton professed that he was conscious of no superiority to ordinary men in any respect except in the power of continuous attention. He could keep his mind fixed on one point till he discerned what he sought.

He that thinks it necessary to have a formed or final opinion on every question, yea, on every important question, will often be compelled to profess what he has not investigated ; and, if he be honest, to retract his professions ; which can never be done but at a considerable expense of reputation. It is the part of a wise, as well as of an honest and truth-loving man, to hold his judgment in suspense till he has well

examined : and such a person will regard it as equally an offence against candour and rectitude to arrive at a decision after having heard what can be said only on one side of a disputed point, as if a jury should return a verdict before they had listened to both the parties. Yet this is the sort of investigation which satisfies a large proportion of mankind, even in regard to most important matters. They form their opinions first, as passion, interest, or authority dictates ; and, ever after, their ears are open only to those who defend that which they have chosen to believe. How else shall we explain the remarkable fact that opinions are often found as hereditary in families as features or diseases ? A sentiment descends through many generations from father to son like a wart or scrofula.

This unfortunate and highly censurable proceeding is one great spring of heats and factions—for men almost always maintain with more keenness and passion what they have received from authority than what they have examined for themselves, and of the grounds of which they feel assured.

It is not only a part of prudence, but is essentially involved in the maintaining a pure conscience, that we exercise caution and deliberation in forming and avowing opinions which, when once professed, the pride of consistency, and the shame of confessing an error, may drive us pertinaciously to adhere to, notwithstanding many secret misgivings. By a premature avowal of opinions also, persons often connect themselves with parties, and pledge themselves to a course of conduct which corrupt and degrade their moral sense ; for no situation can be conceived more miserable, as few are more debasing, than for one

who is dubious and lukewarm in a cause to have linked himself with those who are forward and zealous, being troubled with no doubts or hesitations.

The truths of mathematical science are supported by an evidence that has no degrees of strength, and admits of no contradiction ; so that to question them would betray a defect of understanding. But in metaphysics, morals, politics, theology, and many other sciences, the evidence which supports the different positions varies in degree from the highest moral demonstration down to the lowest probability, where the weight of arguments on both sides appears so nearly equal, that the inclination of the beam either way is scarcely to be discerned. The former are *truths* or *verities*, the latter *opinions* or *probabilities*. Between these two, as there is an immense difference—not in themselves, indeed, or absolutely, every proposition whatever being either true or false, but in the kind and amount of their evidence—so there should exist in our minds a clear distinction between the two. For our several judgments should bear a certain proportion to the amount of evidence which supports them ; and to pronounce positively where the reasons are weak, is as much an infirmity of the judgment as to hesitate when the proofs are strong.

It is of consequence to distinguish between *verities* and *opinions*, also, because the greater number of controversies respect not the former but the latter. And it is a sad illustration of the weakness of our understandings and the strength of our passions, that the fiercest contests often turn upon the most tenebrious points ; the heat and the light, being inversely as each other ; and parties often hate each other the more intensely the minuter and dimmer are the

grounds which separate them. But surely we ought neither to wonder much nor to feel very angry if, where the road is intricate and the light dim, some persons wander a little out of the way. And we ought not to consider him who cannot see the point of a hair as decidedly blind as another who cannot distinguish a house from a tree. Our not perceiving the difference of the two cases would prove that our own blindness was greater than that of either.

We must also learn to separate between those *logomachies* of which the world is full, (but which require for their settlement little more than that the disputants would suffer themselves so far to cool as to explain what it is each party really means,) as also those questions which are mere curiosities, not worth determining either way ;—it is important to separate in our minds between *these*, and such differences of sentiment as are of grave moment in themselves or pregnant with consequences whether for good or evil. A wise man—no less than a wise nation—will not go to war without asking not only whether he have truth and right on his side, but also whether the subject in dispute will repay the expense of the warfare. A barren rock in the midst of the ocean should not summon the world to arms.

Nothing more disqualifies for the attainment of truth in all those questions in the solution of which our highest interests are most deeply concerned, than that party spirit to which, from the nature of our institutions and other circumstances, we are so greatly exposed at present in this country, and of which only the most conscientious and vigilant self-inspection can keep us free—nor even this without aid-sought from Him who is the truth. Almost every opinion forms

a party, which has, or thinks it has, an interest in maintaining it; and this calls up an opposing party, which fancies it has an opposite interest. And so all leaders find more followers than the truth, whose party is commonly the smallest. For nearly all turn either suitors or advocates in the cause, and almost nobody is left to serve as jury.

I may here be permitted to remark the danger, especially to young and ardent minds, of indulging much in the reading of controversial books, or of otherwise suffering yourselves to breathe yet more freely a controversial atmosphere. Controversies, I am aware, are by many held to be the great means of discovering and diffusing truth. For my own part, I cannot assent to this opinion without very great limitations; for it is not easy to conceive how that which so fiercely excites the passions should help the judgment in drawing those conclusions which she cannot draw accurately without calmness and deliberation. Probably it will also be found in fact that controversies have commonly shut more eyes than they opened, and that those which they shut once were closed for ever. Disputations and heats between communities and parties have generally the same consequences as debates between individuals,—each of the disputants leaves off more closely wedded to his former sentiment than he was when the argument commenced, the rude shaking which his notions suffered having only caused them to strike their roots more deeply in his mind. And they who profit at all are such as keep themselves so far aloof as to be without the influence of the epidemic; it being as difficult for a mind suffered freely to breathe that *miasma* to remain unfevered and cool as for our

bodies to continue in health living where a pestilence rages.\*

Not to speak of the tendency of a large proportion of controversial books to inflame the passions, to corrupt the taste, and to generate rather anger and hatred, than that *love* which is, after all, the only medium through which the pure rays of truth can enter the "eyes of our understanding;" such books furnish, with rare exceptions, the driest and least pleasing of all reading, as well as the least instructive. For, as Mr Coleridge has somewhere well observed, "Most controversies are only the contest of half truths."† And no writers commonly build the truth so far from the perpendicular as controversialists do, who cannot afford to look fully and broadly at the truth, being constrained to squint perpetually aside towards *the cause* which they are engaged to maintain.

The weakest minds are in greatest danger from this influence, as the least healthy bodies are most liable to be attacked by epidemic diseases. "When

\* "The multiplying of books and writings," and speeches, "*pro and con*, and the pursuing of arguments with heat and opposition, doth rather *lengthen* than *decide* controversies; and instead of destroying the old, begetteth new ones."—*Bishop Sanderson's Judgment in one View.*

Would to God that what is here expressed by one of the greatest men that ever adorned the Church had been better understood and more deeply felt. How much safer in that case had the interests of truth itself been, not to speak of charity, without which even truth is a possession of no great worth.

† "Nulla falsa doctrina est, quae non aliquid veri permisceat."—*August. Evang. Quaest.*

"Docemus nullam sectam fuisse tam deviam, nec philosophorum quemquam tam inanem, qui non viderit aliquid ex vero. Sed dum contradicendi studio insaniunt, dum sua etiam falsa defendunt, aliorum etiam vera subvertunt."—*Lact. vii. 7.*

a man," to use the words of Bishop Sanderson, "is very earnest, but withal very shallow, readeth much and heareth much, and thinketh that he knoweth much, but hath not the judgment to sever truth from falsehood, nor to discern between a sound argument and a captious fallacy."

Besides the danger of dogmatism and bigotry, there is an opposite mischief arising from the same source, yet greater even than this, and which I feel confident has been experienced in innumerable instances. An individual hearing how much may be said on both sides of most questions, and how many reasons, apparently of almost equal strength, may be urged in favour of opposite conclusions, conceives a doubt whether there be in nature any distinction between truth and error—begins to suspect that truth may be only the sentiment of the majority—or to despair, at least, of his ability to find it under such an accumulation of opinions; and so he gradually collapses into a scepticism which regards all beliefs with equal indifference—the man hardly knowing what he believes, or whether he believes anything. Mr Pope has intimated that this was his own state of mind in regard to the respective claims of the Romish and Protestant Churches. And it is said of the great theologian, Tostatus, that he had heard and read so many opinions, that at last, when he came to die, he did not know what to believe, or whether to believe anything. "In multitudine controversiarum non habuit quod crederet."

With reason, therefore, Lord Bacon classes controversies among the *diseases of learning*. "For, like as many solid substances in nature do putrify and corrupt into worms, so it is the property of good and

sound knowledge to putrify and dissolve into a number of subtile, idle, and, as I may say, vermiculate (wormy) questions, which have indeed a kind of quickness and life of spirit, but no soundness of matter or goodness of quality. Wherefore it is not possible but this quality of knowledge must fall under popular contempt, the people being apt to contemn truth upon occasion of controversies and altercations, and to think *they* are all out of the way which never meet."

It will probably be found in the history of the human mind, that an age, distinguished for its addictedness to questions and controversies, has been generally succeeded by another equally remarkable for a sceptical spirit, and for a contempt of the subjects themselves, however important, with which those disputations were connected.

We are as much under obligation to yield our understandings to truth, as our affections to goodness, or our wills to rectitude; and he is a rebel against the law of his moral being who has suffered any cause to be dearer to him than that of truth. Truth, no less than goodness, is every man's interest, how much soever the passions may deny it. He that labours to deceive himself or others is only industrious in perpetrating a fraud upon the common fund of happiness, his own and theirs. Such a one is to be detested as the vilest of swindlers, because what he purloins is the most valuable of property. He is worse than the forger of base coin; for he adulterates the currency of thought, he vitiates the exchange of mind. We are bound to be of but one party, "of the truth," "children of light," — *Μόνῃ θυτέον τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.*

To this end purity of mind is so essential, that without it the highest form of truth, or real knowledge, cannot be attained on those subjects which concern us most. "While we lodge any filthy vice in us, this will be perpetually twisting itself into the thread of our finest spun speculations ; it will be continually climbing up into the bed of reason, and defile it. There is a benumbing spirit, a congealing vapour, that ariseth from sin and vice, that will stupify the senses of the soul. This is that venomous *solanum*, that deadly nightshade, that drives its cold poison into the understandings of men."\* On the other hand, to quote the words of our great philosopher, "*Veritas and bonitas, truth and goodness, differ but as the seal and the print ; for truth prints goodness, and they be the clouds of error which descend in the storms of passions and perturbations.*"†

It is useful for us also to remember, that even in the most favourable circumstances, we can acquire the knowledge of but few things, and of these few imperfectly. It is little of the kingdom of knowledge that ever was conquered or possessed by one mind; a universal monarchy being permitted to any one of the sons of men no more over the intellectual than over the political world. And while we should entertain a just sense of our own mental infirmities and fallibility, and a deferential and candid consideration for the opinions of other men, we should also reflect that even in those cases in which we maintain the truth, our opponents may be less in the wrong than we. For he who has a right temper with a wrong opinion is less in the wrong than he who has an

\* John Smith, of Cambridge, "True Way of Divine Knowledge."

† "Advancement of Learning," book i.

erroneous judgment with humility, candour, and charity.

We must beware of idolizing knowledge itself, as if it were the final and grand attainment at which we should aim. It may be loved and desired too much, which proves it is not the chief good ; for *that* cannot be either admired or pursued in excess.\* There is a lust of knowledge, as well as a lust of wealth and of power, and it has introduced many sins into the world besides the first. "Wisdom consisteth not in knowing many things, nor even in knowing them thoroughly, but in chosing and in following what conduces the most certainly to our lasting happiness and true glory. And this wisdom cometh from above."† We may know much, and yet know nothing as we ought. Knowledge which ministers to vanity is not more salutary than food given to one who is in a fever, whose distemper it feeds. There is a knowledge that puffeth up, making its possessor vapoury and fantastical ; whereas charity edifieth, it buildeth up the soul in true wisdom and substantial happiness. "If any man love God, the same is made to know by him." "The greatest error of all the rest," says Lord Bacon, "is the mistaking or misplacing of the last or farthest end of knowledge ; for men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge, sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite ; sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight ; sometimes for orna-

\* "Scientiam alterius rei gratiâ homines appetunt, non propter ipsam. Quis enim scire contentus est, non expertus aliquem fructum scientiæ? Artes ideo discuntur, ut exercentur, exercentur autem vel ad subsidia vitæ, vel ad voluptatem, vel ad gloriam. Non est igitur summum bonum, quod non propter se expetitur."—*Lact. Instit.*, iii., viii.

† Landor, "Imaginary Conversations," "Bacon and Hooker."

ment and reputation ; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction ; and most times for lucre and profession ; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason . . . . for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate : that knowledge may not be as a courtesan, for pleasure and vanity only, or as a bond-woman, to acquire and gain to her master's use, but as a spouse for generation, fruit, and comfort."\*

"There are some," says St Bernard, "who would gain knowledge for the mere sake of knowing, which is a base curiosity ; some would know in order that they themselves may be known, which is a base vanity ; and some would have knowledge that they may sell it, that they may gain by their power of talk money or honours, which is a base greed. But some also desire knowledge that they may edify others, and this is charity ; and some that they may edify themselves, and this is prudence."†

III. Imagination is the creative power or exercise of the mind. She unites the forms of nature in new combinations according to her own will. Fancy is her younger sister and handmaid, who builds no stately palaces or solemn temples—these rise under the plastic hand of her elder sister—but she crowns all things with garlands, and renders them fragrant

\* "Advancement of Learning," book i.

† "Sunt namque qui scire volunt eo fine tantum, ut sciant ; et turpis curiositas est. Et sunt qui scire volunt, ut sciatur ipsi, et turpis vanitas est. . . . Et sunt item qui scire volunt, ut scientiam suam vendant, verbi causâ pro pecunia pro honoribus ; et turpis questus est. Sed sunt quoque qui scire volunt, ut edificent ; et caritas est. Et item qui scire volunt, ut edificentur, et prudentia est."—*Ber., Ser. xxxvi., in Cantica.*

with her own perfumes, and sheds on them her richest light. A mind rather addicted to decorate what is old, than shewing capacity to produce new forms of thought, is distinguished for fancy, not for imagination. Imagination is an architect,—fancy is a painter and gilder. Imagination causes the marble to breathe, and fancy crowns it with chaplets of flowers. Taste, again, is the imaginative faculty in the critical attitude; she then sits in the chair of judgment, appreciating and relishing (or the contrary) the productions of the imagination.

To those persons who think the culture of this power is little other than a work of vanity, I would reply, that it is an element in that mental constitution with which our all-wise and gracious Creator has endowed us, and we may not suffer the talent to rust, or suppose we are innocent though we bury it. It has been given us, and this is reason sufficient why it should be used and improved. Nor have I any apprehension that considerate persons will dissent when I take much higher grounds, and affirm that the imagination is not only a source of high and pure pleasure, but a grand instrument of progress and amelioration; and that, not only in reference to the condition of man on this earth, but also in connexion with his highest relations and prospects as an heir of immortality.

The understanding seizes only those grosser forms of truth which are revealed to us in this twilight of our "obscure sojourn." Imagination dilates the eye of the mind, to collect and concentrate those few rays of light which descend to us from a higher sphere, glimmering through the thick intervening clouds,

whose skirts they fringe with glory. The imagination it is that stretches forth her hand to grasp those ideas of the infinite, the eternal, the perfect, of which terrestrial things, instead of embodying the forms, are rather negations and opposites. That homely fare which nourishes the understanding cannot please or satisfy her; neither will she patiently trudge with understanding upon the ground; but, having angel's wings, she soars even to the third heaven; neither is there any depth towards which her adventurous pinion will not descend; and she feeds on manna, her nourishment is angels' food. Hence poets have generally been esteemed a higher type of men; and in the conceptions and languages of ancient nations they are identified with prophets, to whose eye the material veil is rent, so that they see the visions of God.\*

The triumphs of the understanding itself are more intimately connected with the exercise of the imagination than has often been observed or acknowledged; for though she does not herself subdue the provinces of science, she indicates their position, and as a pioneer she opens up the roads by which the powers of Understanding march to their victory. When Newton wrote, indignantly, "hypotheses non fingo," he did not mean to deny that the Copernican system, till he demonstrated it, was an hypothesis, or that imagination first suggested what reason afterwards confirmed. For if understanding be the ballast of the soul, and conscience the helm, imagination is the sail, without which there may be steadiness and

\* "Perque omnia secula fama,  
Se quid habent veri vatum prasagia, vivam."—*Ovid. Met.*, xv.

safety, but little speed, and no adventurous voyages across the wilderness of unnavigated oceans to add new worlds to the old kingdoms of knowledge.

It is the union of the *ideal* with the *actual* which rescues this from its intrinsic meanness, and gives it elevation and dignity ; and that individual, that people, that generation, will be found commonplace in their whole sentiments, and devoid of high and generous aspirations, in whom imagination is a repressed or uncultivated faculty. In the men of the Elizabethan age, we remark a certain grandeur and loftiness of mind, which is sought in vain in more modern times. Bacon, Shakspeare, Hooker, and Raleigh have had no successors ; for while in particular exercises of mind they have been outdone, in the high pitch and full tone of their faculties they have no representatives in these later ages. Such a work as the "Advancement of Learning," or "The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity," can never again be expected to appear in the English language, any more than the flowers of spring are to be looked for among the yellow leaves of autumn. Perhaps we shall not much err if we attribute this difference principally to the larger scope which the condition of the world in those times gave to the imagination. Something then remained to be discovered—all was not yet laid open ; "the unknown" yet had an empire, which now it has not, either in earth or sky : the compass and the telescope had not then unfolded all ; but every day they brought home some new marvel which set men's minds agaze with wonder and delight. Poetry was the natural expression of those emotions ; and, accordingly, it was the study and the solace of all, and its production, in its highest forms,

was the attainment of not a few. It was the age of Shakspeare and Spenser. And the superfluous imaginations, which poetry did not drain off, found vent for themselves in ideal commonwealths and new forms of society, in the creation of Utopias, and Arcadias, and Oceanas; and even Bacon, the uprooter of one philosophy and the planter of another, had inclination to commence that new Atlantis, "The model of a college, instituted for the interpretation of nature and the producing of marvellous works for the benefit of men,"\* which, alas, he did not live to finish! The strong infusion of imagination is one of the elements which give to the writings of that extraordinary person so exquisite a relish. For the weight and importance of those truths which he propounded are not more remarkable than is the splendour of the vehicle in which he conveys them to the mind of his reader. His pages are not more richly fraught with "reasons which are the pillars of a discourse," than with "illustrations which are its windows."† So that, in perusing his writings the same perplexity is created as in viewing those masterpieces of architecture in which strength seems as much consulted as if beauty had not entered into the mind of the designer, and beauty as much as if no regard had been had to stability. For this reason Bacon's views were both more extended and juster than other men's, who commonly look at objects through one eye of the mind alone—either understanding or imagination—and so behold in them exclusively either the naked matter of fact or the poetry; whereas it was given him to use both eyes, and so to comprehend both the science and the

\* Rawley's Preface.

† T. Fuller's "Holy State."

poetry, and by being neither simply a poet nor merely a philosopher, he was more and greater than either.

But we shall indicate the highest function of the imagination, when we say it has a most important office to perform in relation to the moral and religious character, being inseparably connected with that sentiment of veneration and that emotion of love which between them constitute so large a part of a devout and spiritual state of mind. The imagination is closely allied to the passions, so that poetry is their natural language. And it may be suggested as an historical question, Whether intense devotional feelings were ever found, in fact, to possess a mind deficient in the imaginative powers? My own recollection does not supply such an example, and I can hardly conceive it to exist. When we turn to the sacred volume itself, we find the flame of devotion burn most intensely in those writers who had naturally most of the poetical temperament. Of all the penmen of the Old Testament, David and Isaiah are, by many degrees, both the most fervent and the most poetical. To them were given the wings of the seraphim, not without "a live coal from off the altar," (Isa. vi. 2, 3.)

On the other hand, there appears in those who cultivate the understanding chiefly, a manifest tendency either to scepticism on religious subjects, or to a cold and low form of religion. This fact none will deny who has much observed the state of mind very general among persons addicted exclusively to mathematical studies, or those physical studies which have a close affinity with the former. And it has often been attempted to be explained, by supposing that

those sciences revealed to their cultivators something which appeared to be adverse to Revelation. I submit that that suggested above is a truer solution. For as the higher part of religion does not address itself to the understanding, which it transcends, so they who cultivate the understanding alone unfit and indispose themselves for receiving those higher mysteries.

Holding these opinions, I regard the painter, the architect, the musician, and above all, the poet, as much more than ministers to our gratification. Their office is infinitely higher than this. They are the educators of the human imagination. With the philosopher and the divine, they are fellow-workers in the cultivation and improvement of mankind, helping together to raise men out of the grossness and meanness of the *actual*, into the dignity and glory of the ideal. And if any one contributes to diffuse a taste for these arts, whether by excellent productions in any of them, or by drawing attention to those already existing, or by rendering these more accessible, or in whatever other mode, I feel impelled to regard him as a public benefactor. He augments the fund of innocent and ennobling pleasures, and in no small degree he smooths the path to virtue. Those also who are labouring in the higher fields of human culture owe him obligations which are for the most part too dimly perceived and too reluctantly acknowledged.

IV. The third division into which, at the commencement, we distributed the powers of the mind, is *Conscience* or *Moral Sense*.

I do not inquire what may be the *vinculum* or connexion between reason and conscience, whether they

be separate faculties of the mind, or whether they be the same power exercised on different objects. This at least is certain, that while the possession of *understanding*, of which the inferior animals partake in different degrees, does not infer the presence of conscience, of which those creatures are all of them wholly destitute, no being, so far as our experience or information extends, is endowed with the gift of *reason*, without partaking also of conscience; so that all *rational* beings are also *moral* beings, and conversely, all *moral* beings are also *rational*. Nor can we conceive a disjunction of these two in nature, as reason seems to involve liberty, will, and responsibility, (that is, moral agency,) as inevitably, on the one hand, as these appear to imply reason, on the other.

By the exercise of the conscience man recognises himself as the subject of a law which comprehends all rational natures, of which the origin is buried in the depths of eternity, which can no more be changed than God its author can be mutable, of whose will it is the expression, as it is the image of His character and the instrument of His goodness—a law which we cannot invalidate, modify, or repeal, from the obligation of which no human power can absolve us; for it borrows none of its authority from human laws, though it lends them all their force,—a law which is one and the same immutably to all the nations and generations of men; which is written on a substance more enduring than brass or marble, even the immortal mind itself, its inviolable depository; and to which, as each one is constrained to acknowledge himself amenable, so each carries an expositor and judge of it within himself.

Through the conscience we behold that which is

the most august aspect of the Divine nature and the noblest attribute of our own ; and in yielding subjection to a law of which God's own character is the prototype and His will the sanction, we acknowledge our closest relation to Him and our highest dignity. Resistance to that law which speaks through the conscience is, therefore, as much rebellion against human nature as against the Divine government ; for we cannot violate the will of our Maker without trampling on the noblest part of ourselves, and this, whatever else we may suffer, is our heaviest penalty.\*

In thus describing the conscience, you will understand that we are speaking of its *capacity* and *proper office*, not of its actual performance in all cases. For, as the savage who venerates in the clouds the forms of those spirits he worships, and in the moanings of the wind hears the voices of his ancestors, has within him that same faculty by which Newton demonstrated the theory of the solar system ; so, though every man has conscience, it frequently lies buried and apparently dead ; and it demands in all cases an appropriate education, in order to its acquiring its full acuteness and strength, no less than the understanding does, or any other mental power. The Hindu who drowns his aged parent in the streams of the sacred Gunga—the American Indian who leaves him to perish with hunger in the woods—the Polynesian who destroys his children—the Malagasy who poisons his friend with a noxious herb, has, each of them, a conscience as much as we have, though perverted and darkened. Of its existence, indeed, those very acts are evidence ; for he commits them under a sense of obligation to a superior Power, to whose being he

\* Cic. De. Repub., iii.

thus pays homage, though he greatly errs as to His nature, and grossly misinterprets His will.\* And to infer, (as some have done,) from a disagreement among different nations as to what is right and wrong in some cases, that there is no such thing as a universal moral law binding on them, or no such faculty as a common conscience, the discernor and judge of that law in the bosoms of all, is as monstrous a conclusion as if we should contend that there is no such faculty as human understanding, because different nations and different ages have in some cases held opposite propositions to be truth.

But if these facts rather demonstrate than disprove the existence of conscience, they shew in the clearest manner the necessity of its culture and illumination. For, as not the understanding, but the *cultivated understanding* is our sufficient guide to the discovery of truth; as not the hand, but the hand *trained and practised*, is the instrument by which Art works out all her wonders; so Conscience, who will place himself at the helm of man's life as his rightful station, will not steer him safely, unless instructed both in the dangers of this dark and stormy deep, and in the art of observing those celestial signs which indicate his position and his course on the terrestrial sphere; for men must be guided in this life, as sailors on the ocean, by light from Heaven.†

\* "Ex tot generibus nullum est animal, præter hominem, quod habeat notitiam aliquam Dei. Ipsisque in hominibus nulla gens est neque tam immansueta, neque tam fera, quæ non, etiamsi ignoret qualem Deum haberi deceat, tamen habendum sciat. Ex quo efficitur, ut is agnoscat Deum, qui, unde ortus sit, quasi recordetur."—*Cic.*

† "Eâdem namque ratione hanc vitæ viam quæri oportet, quâ in alto iter navibus quæritur; quæ nisi aliquid cœli lumen observent, incertis cursibus vagantur."—*Lact. de Vero Cultu, viii.*

And here let me urge on you the diligent study of the sacred oracles. I am deeply persuaded that no other book contains so much that is calculated to enlarge the understanding ; none presents so much of that higher truth which is the appropriate object of *the reason*, (as contradistinguished from the understanding ;) none so exalts the imagination ; for it half lifts the veil from the invisible world, and it half reveals the mystery of the universe both of God and of man. But I shall indicate that which is the more appropriate office of the Bible, when I say it is the chart of the conscience, the great repository of its laws, of which it contains the principles and their exemplification, with all their solemn sanctions. The Bible is throughout an appeal to the conscience, whom God summons as His witness in the soul, and through whom, if at all, the Divine will is to receive attention or obedience from any of us. For between God and our lower nature there is no common ground. It has nothing spiritual or divine in it ; so that that controversy cannot be commenced through it, the success of which would prove the extinction of its usurped authority. But the Divine Spirit finds in the conscience a certain principle whence to proceed, *α τὸ θεῖον*, something divine ; and on this, as its fulcrum, is fixed the lever by which the whole man is to be turned round, or converted from the unnatural position in which he stands as a sinner. We should, therefore, read the Bible as a continuous appeal to our conscience by the Lord of it, and as the great means of quickening its perceptions and invigorating its authority.

But while I thus hold up the book of God to you as the great instrument for educating the conscience,

I am far from agreeing with those who judge that no subsidiary aid is desirable or to be sought for this purpose. They who hold this opinion appear to me to forget that God, in the Scriptures as elsewhere, speaks to men as creatures endowed with rational and moral faculties, which it is His purpose not to supersede, but to instruct and stimulate. The New Testament is a book of principles; and when it prescribes rules, these are for the most part of a general character, as we might expect they should be. It enjoins duties, without strictly defining them, or marking those limitations which one virtue imposes on another. It requires justice and mercy, but does not pretend to teach in every case what justice or mercy is, or to inform us where the one should yield to the other. It forbids lying, but leaves us to find for ourselves what constitutes a lie; neither does it explain that a person may lie while speaking a literal truth. Subjection to rulers, to parents, to husbands, to masters, is peremptorily enjoined under the heaviest sanctions, no other limitation to this subjection being specified than this, that in yielding it we do not rebel against the supreme authority; and even this grand limitation itself, though always understood, is in many cases not expressed. Our Lord's divine sermon on the mount, the most striking and popular moral discourse that ever was addressed to men, is also the profoundest and most pregnant. But while it contains the essence and principles of all morality, being, in fact, a new and spiritual edition of the Decalogue, there is hardly one of its clauses that was intended by its divine Author to be obeyed in the naked and unrestrained sense in which, for the sake of brevity and impres-

sion, they are recorded, (Matt. v. 34-37, 39-42; vi. 19, 25, 34; vii. 1.) Hence the utility of *casuistry*, or the application of the great principles of Christian morality to particular cases—a science which (though it has been brought into disrepute by the misconduct of those who employed it as an instrument rather of evading than of applying the Christian law—and instead of helping men in their real perplexities, having been abused to fill their imaginations with conjunctures and crimes that never actually occur) is yet, in its legitimate province, of great and evident utility, yea, of absolute and indispensable necessity in some form of it, and as such, it has been insisted on and commended by the greatest and wisest men.

I may be permitted here to lament that this most important subject should have received so little attention as it has done during the last century and a half, whether in the chairs of our universities, or in our theological literature, or even in the pulpit itself. To whatever extent the doctrines of Christianity require or admit illustration, its morality admits it much more, and affords a field incomparably wider. In relation to the former, indeed, we can do little more than state them; our attempts to harmonise them are often precarious, and in making deductions from them we tread on slippery ground; for these are heavenly things, of which we can know and should speak only what we have heard. But as to the practical part of the gospel, the case is quite otherwise; for here, being supplied with the principle, we may carry it out through the whole scheme of our life—through all the acts of every day. We can, under the guidance of an enlightened conscience, apply it in ten thousand particulars. Nor can I help thinking

that if more diligence had been bestowed in this field, the fruit would have been abundant and precious. "Sin," says Bacon, whose merits as a divine are no less than as a philosopher, though in the former character his fame is less—"Sin," says he, "moveth either to the right hand or to the left, either in imposing restraint where God granteth liberty, or in taking liberty where God imposeth restraint. Wherefore," he adds, "I much commend the deducing of the law of God to cases of conscience; for that I take to be a breaking and not exhibiting whole of the bread of life."\*

Thomas Fuller the witty historian, and wise as witty, in similar terms gives this as one mark of "the good minister." "He doth not only move the bread of life and toss it up and down in generalities, but also breaks it into particular directions, drawing it down to cases of conscience, that a man may be warranted in his particular actions, whether they be lawful or not. And he teacheth people their lawful liberty, as well as their restraints and prohibitions; for amongst men it is as ill taken to turn back favours as to disobey commands."†

For promoting the education of the conscience, I would, therefore, strongly recommend such books as treat of Christian morals. Discussions regarding the essence of virtue, or the ultimate foundations of morals, may appear dry and unprofitable enough. Whether it be resolved into *utility* or the *fitness* of things, or *beauty*, or *sympathy*, or into all or none of these, will not much trouble any one who remembers

\* "Advancement of Learning," book i.; also "Of Church Controversies," near the end.

† Holy State—"The Good Minister."

that it has its great *subjectum* in the nature of God, and becomes a law to us, because of His will clearly intimated to us to that effect. But the application of this law to all the variety of men's relations and actions is a most profitable and pleasant, as well as necessary exercise of the mind.

He that has his understanding less expanded, his imagination less elevated than he might, suffers a deprivation—he loses pure and lofty pleasures which he might enjoy. But we cannot neglect to cultivate the conscience without guilt and danger; for, while the former is as clothing, comfortable or ornamental, the latter is our armour, without which we cannot fight in safety the battle to which we are called.

Thus have I offered a few observations on a subject which, to discuss it satisfactorily, would require, not a single lecture, but a whole course. I am convinced myself, and I desire to impress the conviction on you, that the cultivation of those mental powers which our Creator has bestowed upon us is at once an imperative duty and a prolific source of enjoyment. Surely it is pleasant, and not unprofitable, to look with an intelligent eye on the works of the Infinite Intelligence, to discern those laws to which all the great phenomena of nature are referable, so reducing innumerable and apparently unconnected, or even contradictory facts to some few principles, thus giving to the universe in our apprehensions that simplicity, and order, and unity which it has in itself, and in the mind of its inscrutable Architect.

Should we not be pleased, as we must be profited, to learn the grave lessons of history, whose voice echoes to us solemnly from the depths of ages, telling us the long sad story of man's crimes and sorrows,

and shewing us that by the same road he wandered from God and from peace, and all his oft-repeated but unsuccessful efforts to find his way back? Who is not charmed and elevated while he listens to the strains of poetic inspiration, the dictate of that *mens divinius* which, spurning the actual world and its grovelling population, creates for itself other and grander worlds, in which it embodies its own loftier ideas, and peoples them with inhabitants surpassing us as much in happiness as in virtue. If truth, seen through the understanding—that is, science—be useful and excellent, no less so is poetry, which is truth beheld through the medium of the imagination, the organ of a form of truth as real as the former, though different and higher.

And when, in this every-day life, we must associate with mortals, pressed down like ourselves with those vulgar but inevitable cares which debase our common humanity, shall we hold it no privilege to have access to the great council of poets, legislators, historians, philosophers, who are the oracles of all time, the teachers of all generations; to whom we may introduce ourselves without presumption; who will communicate to us all they know, or as much of it as we can receive, without reserve and without reward; who will speak to us when we wish, and be silent at our bidding; and who, having themselves “shuffled off this mortal coil,” with the passions that inhered in it, exist now in the form of unalloyed wisdom? An august assemblage even than this invites us—“the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of martyrs,” who have delivered, and do still deliver to men the message of God as they were taught it by His uner-

ring Spirit. "For ye are come to an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and God the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant,"—"the everlasting Father's eternal Word, following whom we shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And while others wander in devious paths, pursuing that which an irrepressible instinct impels all to seek, we, following this guidance, shall know that we are on the way to eternal habitations; the eye of our conscience shall be purged of its film, so that, as gods, we shall know good and evil, and "the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Mental cultivation is evidently a matter of vast moment, being indeed the improvement of the man himself, for the mind is the man; and for attaining that measure of it which is needful, opportunity can hardly be wanting to any who are not wanting to themselves. He never can want time who knows the art of redeeming it. The hours daily spent in society by a large portion of mankind would more than suffice for all the purposes of mental culture, without which society itself affords little pleasure and no profit; for the commerce of minds can then only be profitable when there is capital to trade upon, and articles of value and utility to be exchanged.

If this business is ever to be accomplished, it should be early begun. The habit of mental discipline and self-cultivation should be early imbibed. Habits soon begin to establish themselves, and the habit of mental sloth and contented ignorance as soon as any. Seek even in the dawn of your life to rise above that "swinish philosophy" which proposes no problems

for solution but these—"What shall we eat, what shall we drink?" It is natural and easy in after years to build on foundations already laid, but hard and rare then to lay new foundations.

Genius is a noble gift ; even talents, though an endowment of another sort, are admirable. It is, therefore, not wonderful that whatever serves to develop and perfect these endowments should be highly valued and earnestly pursued. We may, however, well doubt whether these intellectual powers, and that which ministers to their cultivation, are not too much esteemed in comparison of some other endowments and acquisitions. Notwithstanding all the admiration of *cleverness*, and all the ambition to be, or to be esteemed, *clever*, which characterises the time, no person should shut his eyes to this obvious fact, that however able and accomplished intellectually a person may be, he cannot be respected, trusted, or loved, and can accomplish very little, without certain other endowments of a far less brilliant kind, and to which men in general accord far less applause. And it is not very uncommon for men of splendid abilities and amazing acquirements, to want all that regard from their fellows which a wise man most values. Who does not know such characters, at least, from a distance—men who amaze the world by their powers, but who have no might, no influence upon events, but are mere bubbles upon the surges of time, whom all may see, but none regards ; and who probably are even more dissatisfied with themselves than the world is with them.

On the other hand, nothing is more common than to witness persons of ordinary talents and moderate acquisitions, who perform their part in life so well,

that they enjoy what is a far higher tribute than admiration—the respect and approbation of all who know them—and, what is infinitely better even than this, their own approval, and peace in their own hearts ; those other elements of their nature being better cultivated and constituted, on which mainly depend the character of a man and the course of his history in the world.

Some dispositions, some passions, some habits will nullify any conceivable talents and any amount of knowledge, as they very often have done ; so that he who had received even the largest amount of the great Master's property in charge, had eventually no increase, no fruit. There have been many learned fools, who knew everything that was needless, useless, away from the business of life and the affairs of the world in which they lived. Many others had a wisdom which had no control over their conduct, nor any connexion with their lives ; who had noble understandings and rich memories, but no will—sails, but no rudder : so that, as Buckingham wrote of Charles II., "They never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one."

However little these qualities may be considered in education, none of us is insensible to their value in those with whom we familiarly associate, or who have the power to affect our comfort or happiness. In a husband or a wife, in a child or a parent, in a friend, a servant, or a master ; in those whom we should choose as our partners in business, or our associates in any pursuit ; in short, in forming any close connexion whatever with our fellow-men—we are well aware that mere knowledge, or acquirement in that kind, forms but a small item in our account of

desirable qualities. We want, in the first place, a person of truth and integrity, pure in heart, kind, affectionate, unselfish ; who has the high art of self-control, and can subdue and regulate his passions, so that he is not carried by them headlong whithersoever they impel him. We want, in short, in all such cases, a man of moral principle, with whom conscience is a reality and a power in the soul, and not one of those eloquent discourses with whom it is a favourite figure of speech—"Sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

These, after all, are the things which bind men to each other, render them useful and precious to their fellows, make them objects of trust and esteem to one another, and so help them forward in every honourable and useful pursuit. And any knowledge, acquirement, or skill, which does not rest upon these as its foundation, is a house built upon the sand.

Nor should we forget how much the wholesomeness of a man's moral nature helps the infirmities of his intellect. When his passions are regulated, and his heart is pure, his understanding gets fair play—it is left to look at the object through a pure medium, and so even the weak eye discerns with wonderful distinctness and accuracy ; whereas, the mists and clouds which furious passions raise, shall prevent even the strongest mental vision from seeing clearly, or judging rightly. As in religion, love is the organ of Divine illumination, so in matters of this world, moral integrity and sobriety of mind are a better guarantee for wisely judging and acting, than the most splendid talents without these.

These things should be considered in education, not less than those other matters which too often

seem well-nigh to engross the whole attention ; for they are in and of themselves right, noble, precious, and indispensable, and this should be recommendation enough ; but they no less contribute to every worthy object even for this world, than any other qualities or accomplishments whatever. Indeed, this moral education may be said to imply, or at least to secure the other ; for it will prompt to faithful diligence in cultivating all our powers, so that the great Lord may find not one of them either wasted or buried. Let us teach the young, not only to love the good, and to respect the upright, but to *admire* them also ; and to repudiate all greatness which wants these qualities, as indeed imposition—having the garb, but wanting the true soul of greatness.

## THE USE AND ABUSE OF THIS WORLD.

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“ And they that use this world as not abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth away.”—1 COR. vii. 31.

WE are told in the first chapter of Genesis, that after the creation of the world was finished, “ God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.” But St Paul tells us, (Rom. viii. 20,) that “ the creation was made subject to vanity ;” and, derived from these words, an opinion has prevailed long and widely in the Christian Church, that everything was deranged and spoiled through the fall of our first parents ; so that what was good before has become evil through their sin. I shall quote a few passages from one of John Wesley’s sermons, (Sermon lx. : “ God’s Approbation of His Works,”) in which these opinions are expressed and illustrated. To shew how good everything was at first, and how evil it has become, Wesley writes as follows :—

“ The earth,” says he, “ when first created was good ; the whole surface of it was beautiful in a high degree. And every part was fertile as well as beautiful ; it was nowhere deformed by rough and rugged

rocks; it did not shock the view with horrid precipices, huge chasms, or dreary caverns; with deep, impassable morasses."

Wesley holds it a moot point whether mountains are the effects of sin.

"There were no agitations," he says, "within the bounds of the globe, no violent convulsions, no concussions of the earth, no earthquakes; but all was unmoved as the pillars of heaven."

From the prediction contained in the book of Revelation, that when all things are restored "there will be no more sea," he holds it probable that "there was no external sea in the paradisaical earth until the great deep burst the barriers which were originally appointed for it." And in answer to the objection that the ocean serves by navigation and commerce to connect nations, Wesley replies, that in the state of innocence, either "every country produced whatever was requisite for the necessities and comfort of its inhabitants; or, man being then equal to the angels, was able to convey himself at his pleasure to any given distance." He does not, however, pretend to quote any passage of Scripture to prove that Adam had wings before the fall, or that he was punished for his transgression by the loss of them.

The derangement thus occasioned was not confined to the earth. The atmosphere and the heavenly bodies also partook of it. "The element of the air was then always serene and always friendly to man. It contained no frightful meteors, no poisonous exhalations. There were no tempests, but only cool and gentle breezes, fanning both man and beast, and wafting the fragrant odours on their silent wings. The sun, the fountain of fire, was situated at the most

exact distance from the earth, so as to yield a sufficient quantity of heat (neither too little nor too much) to every part of it. There was no violent winter, or sultry summer; no extreme either of heat or cold." "There were no impetuous currents of air, no tempestuous winds, no furious hail, no torrents of rain, no rolling thunders or forked lightnings. One perennial spring was perpetually smiling over the whole surface of the earth."

As to vegetables, "some of them were adapted to particular climates or particular exposures, while those of more general use (as wheat in particular) were not confined to one country. But among all these there were no weeds or useless plants that encumbered the ground. Much less were there any poisonous ones, tending to hurt any one creature: but everything was salutary in its kind, suitable to the gracious design of its great Creator."

The animal creation, according to this authority, has suffered a no less disastrous revolution. Though much puzzled with the existence of monsters, whether of the land or of the water, Mr Wesley determines "that in the state of innocence, neither bird nor beast, reptile or insect, attempted to devour or in any wise hurt one another, but all were peaceful and quiet. Indeed," says he, "such is the miserably disordered state of the world at present, that innumerable creatures can no otherwise preserve their lives than by destroying others. But in the beginning it was not so. The paradisaical earth afforded a sufficiency of food for all its inhabitants, so that none of them had any need or temptation to prey upon each other. The spider was then as harmless as the fly; while

the reptiles and the birds of prey of every kind were equally harmless."

"Such was the state of the creation, according to the scanty ideas we can now form concerning it, when its great Author pronounced it very good." And this doctrine Mr Wesley considers very precious, because it affords a complete refutation of all objections against nature and Providence as now constituted. "Here," he says, "is a firm foundation laid on which we may stand and answer all the cavils of minute philosophers; all the objections which 'vain men who would be wise' make to the goodness or wisdom of God in the creation. All these are grounded upon an entire mistake—viz., that the world is now in the same state it was at the beginning. Upon this supposition, they plausibly build abundance of objections. But all these fall to the ground when we observe that this supposition cannot be admitted. The world at the beginning was in a totally different state." "God Almighty, whether you know it or not, did not make it as it is now. He himself made it better—unspeakably better—than it is at present. He made it without any blemish—yea, without any defect. He made not death in the animal creation, neither its harbingers sin and pain; but after man had eaten of the tree of knowledge, a whole army of evils, totally unknown till then, broke in upon rebel man and all other creatures, and overspread the face of the earth." "By his apostasy from God, man threw himself not only from God, but likewise the whole creation, which was intimately connected with him into disorder, misery, and death."

Wesley is so confident both as to the scriptural

truth and the orthodoxy of these doctrines, that he thinks "every sensible infidel should be ashamed of denying them ;" and he denounces a writer, who had ventured to speak a word in defence of God's work of creation, as "a downright hypocrite, who personated a Christian so well, that many thought he was one."

We must not suppose that, in holding such opinions, the venerable founder of Methodism was foolish "above all other men" that have spoken in the name of Christ. On the contrary, he could support his notions by many great names ; multitudes of authorities, both ancient and revered, had so believed and taught. From the time of Chrysostom and even of Irenæus, the same notions substantially had prevailed in the Christian Church ; nor are they without advocates even at the present day. One of the writers of the "Aids to Faith," lately a Dean, now a Bishop of the Church of England, in a work recently published, informs his readers that man's "sin has cast this shade on creation, and drawn the bar sinister across the broad shield of the handiwork of God." Dr Ellicott thinks that Irenæus and the Greek fathers were right in interpreting Rom. viii. 20, 21 as we have seen John Wesley did ; and that the "creature which was made subject to vanity" is "the whole creation,—animate and inanimate, which stands in any degree of relation to man"—including, of course, not only the animal, but the whole vegetable kingdom, and even stocks and stones—all of which "stand in some degree of relation to man." In exposition of this mystery, the author just named discourses as follows :—"It is not said that the creation was subjected to death or corruption, though both lie involved in the expression, but to something *more frightfully*

*generic*—to something almost worse than non-existence—to purposelessness—to an inability to realise its natural tendencies, and the ends for which it was called into being—to baffled endeavour and mocked expectation—to a blossoming and not bearing fruit—a pursuing and not attaining—yea, and as the analogies of the language of the original express—to a searching and never finding.”\*

Surely men, to whom not only their high position in the Church, but their unquestionable learning, gives authority, take upon themselves a terrible responsibility, especially in so sceptical a time as the present, when they propound, as the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, doctrines with which every fact observed in nature, and the whole tenor of the Old Testament, are manifestly at variance—which science, the more it is cultivated, refutes and exposes always with clearer demonstration,—and which can plead no evidence in its support in the New Testament itself, except a dubious interpretation of one obscure and much-controverted text. That the *human race* has been rendered corrupt and mortal by the sin of Adam, Christians believe on the authority of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, which tell us that, by that primeval transgression, “*death passed upon all men, for all (men) have sinned,*” (Rom. v. 12 ;) but surely we may demand stronger evidence than the mere assertion of divines, however numerous, learned, or orthodox, before we admit the amazing propositions that the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms were created immortal; and that worms and flies, spiders, toads,

\* *The Destiny of the Creature, &c.* By C. G. Ellicott, B.D., Dean of Exeter, and Professor of Divinity, King’s College, London. Second Edition.

and mosquitoes, as well as trees, which afford us timber for manifold uses, and the corn which furnishes so large a portion of our food, and even the grass of the field, upon which those animals subsist, the bodies of which form also part of our nourishment—have all been denuded of their immortality by the sin of the first parents of the human race, and would all have continued immortal but for the fall of Adam. When divines instruct us that such opinions have the sanction of the Christian religion, instead of supplying us with “aids to faith,” they put before us, whatever they may intend, formidable temptations to unbelief. For no person who has even a superficial acquaintance with what science has revealed of the constitution of the world, or appreciates the arguments which have been drawn from thence in demonstration of the Divine power, wisdom, and goodness, can ever receive those representations as correct. These all proceed upon a complete denial and falsification of those arguments; so that piety, no less than reason, would forbid us to accept a religion which so taught. But it is no new thing in the history of Christianity for men of unquestionable piety to assail religion, in their blind zeal, with weapons far more dangerous than any which its professed enemies employed against it. If John Wesley’s picture were indeed the teaching of our Lord and His apostles, the question of the truth of the Christian religion would be for ever determined in the minds of all intelligent and considerate men. For it would sanction a view of nature, which cannot any longer be accepted as consistent with facts, and would involve consequences which appear essentially profane or even atheistical. Let us consider

for a moment some of the consequences which the notions in question involve. (I.) They are in flat contradiction to the whole strain of the Old Testament Scriptures, and to many particular passages. The Hebrew prophets inform us that in the beginning God created "all things very good," and they never hint that any of the creatures at a subsequent period became evil, except man; or mortal, or subject to vanity, except that creature that was made in the image of God, and who alone was, on that account, capable of obedience and of sin. Instead of betraying any suspicion that the other works of God had been ruined, defiled, or changed by man's transgression, or by any other cause, the Hebrew writers perpetually celebrate God's glory as still and for ever radiant in His works. "The heavens," so they say, "declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork:" from day to day, and from night to night, they preach the same solemn sermon in the ear of man's reason. "Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth; they continue this day according to thine ordinances—for all are thy servants." "The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever; the Lord shall rejoice in his works." Any one who will peruse those magnificent odes, styled the Hallelujah Psalms, which conclude the Psalter, will acknowledge that, if they had been written for the express purpose, they could not more emphatically have rebuked those crude errors respecting the creation, which we have inherited, with many other superstitions, from the dark ages.

"Let us doubt not," says Bishop Ellicott, "that the sin of man brought all the ruin that we can now trace, both in nature and creation." But the Old

Testament, like modern science, discerns no ruin in any creature but in man himself. It finds no derangement disorder, or other evil, except in him and his works who is the only subject upon earth of the Divine law.

(2.) It would follow as a natural consequence from the same premises, that there had been virtually a new creation, subsequent to that recorded in the book of Genesis, through which everything changed the nature which it had originally received, acquired new properties and an altered condition, and became, in short, in a bad sense, "a new creature." For the devil, by means of man's sin, having revolutionised, corrupted, and ruined the whole world, this can no longer be considered as God's work : it is now more properly his who put the last hand to it, and whose impress it now everywhere bears. It has become Satan's world rather than God's ; his kingdom and dominion, from which he has extruded the rightful sovereign, whose property he has seized, and in whose stead he reigns : so that it would not be an impious assumption, but the expression of a fact, to call the prince of darkness "the god of this world." If teachings which carry such inferences came from other quarters, we should shudder at them, and denounce them as the boldest blasphemies.

Besides all this, it is too late now to dispute whether death was first introduced among the lower creatures by means of man's sin, or through the instrumentality of man in any way. For the crust of the earth shews that, thousands of ages before man existed, death reigned over the creatures as he does now, and always will, so long as they retain their present nature, and the world its actual constitution. And this holds not only respecting those species and

genera which had disappeared before man was created, but equally in regard to those which, though they co-exist with man upon the earth, long preceded him in the period of their creation. A great deal of the present surface of the globe consists of the debris of dead animals—rocks and mountains and islands are so composed, by a process which has reached through unnumbered centuries, or, for aught we can tell, millenniums. Here, as in many other instances, science has contributed an invaluable service to religion, by silencing vain speculations regarding physical facts, which the Bible was dragged in to sanction, but respecting which indeed it either said nothing, or nothing that should be considered as any part of the Christian religion.

(3.) If such representations were well founded, the natural and only legitimate conclusion would be *aceticism* in theory and practice. We must not talk of *moderation* or *temperance* in regard to that which is defiled, profane, and in itself evil. The children of light must have no communication, less or more, with that which belongs to the kingdom of darkness, and which, being itself impure, must contaminate us if we remain in contact with it. "Touch not, taste not, handle not," must be the Christian law, and the universal dictate, as well of Christian principle as of Christian prudence. We can no longer listen even to an apostle, when he admonishes us "to use the world as not abusing it;" because the world being essentially evil, every kind and degree of use is an abuse and a defilement. We should strip ourselves of its possessions, should renounce its pleasures and enjoyments of every form and in every degree; we should refuse its honours, shun its business, avoid or

dissolve its relations ; its duties, as men perversely call them, we should turn away from as sin, vanity, or at least temptations to vanity and sin. Pascal, the great and poor Pascal, was fearful of being betrayed into a pleasing sensation, jealous lest any sight or sound, or the food which he ate, should cheat him into even a momentary feeling of satisfaction. If the world in which man now has his habitation be in that condition in which so many Christian teachers have asserted it is, Pascal, and all the multitudes of Christians who from the third century have thought and acted like him, were unquestionably right ; their mode of life was the irresistible conclusion from those premises.

(4) But that the *theory* is utterly a mistake, may be inferred from this—that the practice which it implies is not only an error, but, indeed, an impossibility. We have ensconced ourselves in a monastery, or we have buried ourselves in a solitary cell ; and we imagine that we have left the world, and have got out of the city of destruction, hearkening to the great oracle, “Touch not, taste not, handle not.” But, alas, we are in and of the world after all. We still eat its food, drink of its streams, walk upon the common pavement of the earth, under the same great overhanging canopy. We are cheered by the common light, and breathe the same air with those whom we have left. We walk and work by the rays of the one great lamp, are fed and clothed, lodged and warmed—if we still condescend to accept such comfort—by the labour of men and the bounty of nature ; in short, are fed at the common table, and are members of the great household, though between them and us we have set up a screen to conceal the

fact. We are in the world still ; in its environs and purlieus, if not in the very heart of the city of destruction. The things we touch, taste, handle, look upon, are all things of the world—all covered with the leprosy. To be consistent, we must go a little further on the same road—to the grave : if this world be all polluted, as pertaining to the kingdom of darkness, we have but one deliverer, and that is *death*—the King of terrors is our only redeemer.

(5.) These opinions have a mythological origin, and a poetical character. They have the authority of no inspiration, unless it be that of Apollo and the Muses, whose priests have sung in ancient Greece of a golden age, which they placed in the infancy of the world, and in the distant past ; whereas, the God-taught seers of the Bible place it in the future, when “that which is perfect shall have come,” and when man, having now passed through all the stages of his long and painful education, shall no longer speak or think or understand as a child ; but, “ being made perfect,” shall enter upon his glorious inheritance as the son of God. Wesley naively confesses that his chief authority for the transmutation of the creatures is “ that truly excellent poem, Milton’s ‘ Paradise Lost.’ ” And certainly by none else, not even by Dante himself, have heathen fables and classic mythology been so daringly grafted upon scriptural statements as by our great poet in that wondrous creation of his. The genius of its author has been shewn in this, that his fictions have become doctrines in the minds of a large proportion of his countrymen ; who have taken his poetry for their theology, and have preached and believed it, as if it were indeed the dictate of the Holy Ghost. The overpowering blaze of the poet’s

imagination has served to conceal the hideous incongruity, not to say the grotesque absurdity, of many of his combinations, which are like the idol of Ashdod—

“Dagon his name, sea monster, upward man,  
And downward fish ;”

but which have no more authority from the Scriptures than those metaphysical discussions, which we find in the same poem, between the persons of the Godhead regarding providence and redemption, predestination and free-will :—

“In quibbles angels and archangels join ;  
And God the Father turns a school-divine.”

It is indeed deplorable, and also amazing, to hear Christian doctors blaspheme the works of God, and denounce that as evil which He has pronounced, and which our own reason, so far as it is instructed, pronounces, “Very good.” The world, in its present state, is regarded by such men as evil in and of itself, and not good in and of itself, though evil to creatures like us who have ourselves become evil ; whereas, all the evil that is in the world is only man’s evil—man’s work, not God’s ; for nothing is out of order but man’s mind and his deeds ; and if these were rectified all would be right again, and the sons of God might renew their ancient songs, and again shout for joy as they did at the first creation. “O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches :” “and they continue this day according to thine ordinances : for they all are thy servants.”

All things were right at first, and all, with but one exception, are no less right and good still. The con-

stitution of nature in earth and heaven, in the air and in the sea, the animals, and plants, and minerals, the sun and moon and all the stars of light, the atmosphere and the seasons, night and day, seed-time and harvest, sunshine and storm, cold and heat ; the withering frosts of the arctic circle, and the scorching suns of the tropics—all is well ; even the hurricane, the earthquake, and the pestilence ; “ fire and hail, snow and vapours, and the stormy wind, fulfil his word.” These are not demons which man’s sin suddenly called into being, and brought in *ex improviso* upon the stage. They, too, are parts of the grand system, and, like all the rest, messengers of mercy. “ He hath also established them for ever and ever ; he hath made a decree which they cannot pass.”

As nature, so providence is good, and only good ; the working, no less than the construction, of the sublime machine is perfect, with reference to its great ends. No doubt, among all sentient creatures is diffused what appears to our first impressions—that is, to our ignorance—*evil*. The two hideous monsters, Pain and Death, are everywhere apparently desolating the creatures, tormenting them, and mowing them down without cessation, mercy, or discrimination. But this constitution, the more closely we examine it, appears always with clearer evidence to be dictated by infinite wisdom and goodness ; and its reversal, in those particulars in which it was supposed by our ignorance to be evil, would entail, not the perfection of the creatures in their several kinds, but their hurt, and finally their destruction. For pain is not the enemy, but the friend and guardian of all sentient nature ; and to the lower animals death is the de-

velopment of the sphere of life, the means of extended enjoyment.

Among mankind themselves, the constitution of society, the outward framework, as we may call it, of human life, is good. As adapted to our actual capacities, emotions, and wants, it bears the manifest stamp of a Father's hand. The family is good for all concerned; so are the relations of master and servant, of high and low, of rich and poor—the gradations of intellect, the variety of capacities and powers, of tastes, and feelings, and impulses. Good also are the manifold associations of men, and love, and friendship, and mutual dependence, and the need and capacity of mutual help. And wealth is good if wisely used, and poverty if it be well and wisely borne—the one affording the means of improving ourselves, and comforting by various beneficence our brethren; the other being the school of patience, fortitude, and the sterner virtues. In like manner, the institution of civil government is good: it does much for us, even in its least perfect forms, and it represents to us much more, prevents innumerable mischiefs, and secures manifold advantages, besides its holding up continually before our mind's eye the suggestion of that august authority, and that beneficent rule, which the eternal Father exercises over us all; to be under which is a blessing; to be loyal and obedient to which is to be perfectly blessed.

It is good, also, that an appropriate sphere has been provided in which we may exercise our various powers and faculties, and that we should exercise these powers and faculties in that sphere. It is good that men till the ground, and sow and reap; that they spin and weave, build and plant, pursue science

and cultivate the arts, and study all those things whereby they may improve and adorn the habitation in which the great Proprietor has placed us as His tenants,—should make it as much as may be safe, commodious, and pleasant,—should pursue trade and commerce, and so supply each other's mutual wants, the excess of one redressing another's deficiency, as gravitation perpetually, with silent but irresistible force, adjusts the level of the great deep.

We should, therefore, *use this world*, because in itself it is not evil, but good—the world of nature and providence, and the machinery of human life and society,—all these are divine ordinances to us, and creatures of God. “But every creature of God is good, and to be received with thanksgiving of them that believe and know the truth,” and who, accordingly, refuse to call that evil which man, through his sin and folly, may have perverted, so as to render it impure to him, and an instrument of evil both to himself and others. As every sense with which man is endowed has its appropriate object in external nature, so that great and complex system, which we style “the world,” is adapted in all its parts to the various intellectual, moral, emotional, and corporeal capacities with which man is endowed. We conclude with certainty, that He who created the one also implanted the other; because the one fits into, implies, and requires the other, and without the other would be a delusion and a contradiction; as the eye would be without the existence of light, or the construction of the ear without the vibratory properties of the atmosphere. In like manner, if there were no family life among mankind, some of our appetites, and many of our emotions, would be inexplicable,

because useless encumbrances ; and even, perhaps, tormenting and dangerous.

By a disastrous political revolution on the other side of the Atlantic, we see at present in our land huge buildings standing gloomy and silent through want of the raw material for the manufacture of which they were erected. Looking into their internal structure, (even though we knew nothing of their actual history,) we should infer without hesitation the existence of cotton, and should divine its nature and qualities. What the complex machinery of the cotton-mill would be without the existence of cotton, that man—a far more complicated, delicate, wonderful, and perfect machine—would be, if we exclude the supposition of the world which surrounds him, or if we suppose that world as now existing not to be the work of his Creator, adapted to his uses, designed and calculated to promote his improvement and his happiness. Such monstrous fancies render both the world and man himself inexplicable and contradictory.

Geologists tell us, that previous to the human period in the history of this globe, there were no flowers upon its surface. The megatheriums, the dinotheriums, the monstrous lizards, and the other palæozoic creatures had no senses for the beautiful forms, splendid colours, and delicate odours of these sweet ornaments of the present earth. But with man they appear, because man has been endowed to appreciate and enjoy them ; and having given him the sense, his bountiful Father provides that which ministers to its gratification. And so universally, the faculty and its object are alike the work of God, and both alike good.

Therefore, we must use the world, because it com-

prehends all the opportunities and means of doing and receiving good, which position, wealth, acquirements may have given us. It is the sum of the talents which the invisible Proprietor may have endowed us with, and which we may not throw away, or even allow to lie unused, under pain of His high displeasure. This is the guilt of that "wicked and slothful servant," who did not squander or riotously abuse, but merely "hid his lord's money," failing to employ and improve his one talent. Some men abuse God's gifts, applying them to unlawful purposes, and perverting them as means of mischief and sin; others, from timidity, sloth, irresolution, self-indulgence, and sometimes from want of due consideration and a proper appreciation of their means and advantages, fail to use them; they neither do nor enjoy the good which Providence has put within their reach. They are like a tribe of savages perishing, through want of all things, in a rich and fertile region which they are too slothful and too ignorant to cultivate; but which, in the hands of skilful industry, would plentifully supply the wants of a hundred times as many human beings as now starve upon its surface. We should use the world because it is good in itself, and affords the means of attaining a higher good than itself. If itself were evil, we should be forbidden to use it; the very use in that case would be an abuse.

We abuse the world when we pursue those things as ends, which are indeed only means; and when in pursuit of the means, we forget, disregard, or condemn those ends which give to the means their principal value and importance: when we seek riches, honours, knowledge, power, fame, or any other such

talent, either for its own sake, or for the sake of other things that are mean, carnal, worldly, or temporary. So doing, we "labour for the meat that perisheth, not for that which endureth unto everlasting life."

An all-wise and beneficent Creator has surrounded us with a multifarious and complicated instrumentality, which comprehends most of those things which minister to our gratification and support, and, at the same time, exercise us with temptations and moral discipline. Now, as these things are constituted for special ends, or for our good in general, we must, in the use and enjoyment of them, keep these ends and this good steadily in view ; else Paul's experience will be ours—"the command which was ordained unto life, we shall find to be unto death:" and the staff which was put into our hands to guide and uphold our steps, by our unskilful management of it will cause us to stumble and fall. Enthralled by wonder and admiration of the beautiful forms into which they have been sculptured, we are in perpetual danger of making gods of those stones which have been placed in our way, that we might serve ourselves of them as stepping-stones in crossing the stream of Time ; wickedly forgetting that these are dumb and dead things, placed there not to detain us or sink us into idolaters, but only to help us over the dangerous flood ; while at the same time they awaken and educate that sense of beauty which will have its true objects revealed in that "beauty of holiness" which lies above the visible sphere. Alas ! how often have we turned the grace of God into licentiousness, making that which is good, evil to us, perverting it to purposes of self-indulgence, unrighteousness, and ungodliness ; our deeds and thoughts, if not our lives, say-

ing—"We are our own; who is lord over us?" So that, having paid the quit-rent of a few prayers, or some pious exclamations, we have proceeded to dispose of the Lord's property as if it were ours—like the sensual Pharisee, who begins his feast with the solemn formality of a long grace, and then, as if he had thus obtained licence from Heaven, proceeds to gluttony and drunkenness. Ah! can we say, on a retrospect of our past lives, that we have used, but not abused, this world?—that we have neither been dishonest nor yet slothful stewards of the manifold grace of God? That which was intrusted to us, have we remembered whose it was, for what purpose, and in whose service it should be employed—even His who would at last take account of our stewardship? "The fashion of this world passeth away:" and we do but pervert and misuse everything in it if we treat that which is perishing as if it were "an enduring substance."

Some men have been so absorbed in the world to come, as to be incapacitated for discharging the business of this present life: which is an enthusiastic error and a sad delusion, though not common at any time, and seldom of long continuance. But, on the other hand, it would appear to be very common, even in Christian countries, for men to be so engrossed with the things that perish in the using, as to have no time nor any thoughts to bestow on those things that are unseen and eternal;—which is a melancholy pitch of carnality and worldliness. The one forgets that the road to heaven lies through this world, and therefore he must observe this world heedfully, that he may be safe: the other considers not whither that path conducts which he treads so laboriously; and

therefore "he walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth." The first stumbles, because he is guilty of the sublime mistake of looking too high—for even the light which led astray was light from heaven ; the second quite misses his way, because he looks no higher than his feet. But it is possible to avoid both errors ; at the same time seeing distinctly what is immediately before us, so that we may not stumble, and yet so casting an eye upon distant objects, that we shall also know to what point our journey tends. Heaven and earth may both of them be regarded, and may both be seen in their true relations ; and so earth will conduct to heaven. We shall neither fall into pits, as stargazers do, nor shall we for ever gyrate round and round the weary circuit of this barren moor, for want of that guidance which the celestial signs afford.

## THE VANITY OF THIS LIFE.

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“The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities ; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun ?”—ECCLES. i. 1-3.

THEY are not only the foolish and the wicked who are heard to complain of the unsatisfactoriness of the present world. A man distinguished not only for his prodigious learning, and his eminent virtues, but for his amazing application, of which he has left monuments of, perhaps, more permanent value than any scholar of the seventeenth century, is said to have closed his splendid career with the exclamation, “*Perdidi vitam laboriose nihil agendo.*” The case of Hugo Grotius is by no means singular. They who, to other men’s eyes, appear to have been most virtuous and most useful in their generation, are often those who feel the least satisfied in the retrospect of their past lives.

As life proceeds, our hopes for this world are generally more and more falsified, our schemes of happiness crossed and broken more and more ; it cannot appear wonderful that the increasing experience of

this should depress and fret even those worldly men who are not quite infatuated with worldliness. Their unrest is the just punishment of the feelings they have indulged, and the ends they have pursued. We expect that vanity should afflict their hearts, since vanity has directed their lives. But we are taken by surprise when we hear similar feelings avowed by those who appear to have lived virtuously, and even piously.

When, at the end of the day, we look back at the manner in which we have spent it, we commonly feel as if we could spend it better if we had it again to dispose of; and yet the places we have gone to, the acts we have done, the business which has filled up the hours, the subjects with which our thoughts have been occupied, were all of them probably plain matters of duty, none of which could have been refused or neglected without incurring the rebukes of conscience. All this admitted, the retrospect wants the satisfaction which we had taught ourselves to look for. Still we conclude the day and the year with an uneasy consciousness that time again has cheated us, that he has got through our hands without our having subjected him to the service which he should have rendered us. The sound of his wings disturbs us as he flies out of our reach, and carries our life away with him into the regions of eternity.

This is worth a little consideration. If such feelings as those alluded to be part of that burden which He who fashioned us has laid upon humanity, let us, having satisfied ourselves of this, learn to bear the load with resignation, at least without complaint; but our serious study will probably teach us that "vanity," in its worst form and deepest meaning,

has been inscribed upon human life by the finger of man rather than of God ; and that we are even more guilty than miserable in dragging this chain after us in all the stages of our journey through this world.

It is a maxim among lawyers, that for every wrong the law has a remedy. It is a maxim certainly better founded, that the Father of spirits has provided and indicated a remedy for every evil, disorder, mischief in our spiritual estate. This we may assume as an axiom in religion ; and a true religion will authenticate its claims by suggesting those remedies. A religion which does not this, wants no other refutation—it stands condemned, as would a system of medicine by which nobody was ever cured.

We seem warranted to conclude that satisfaction, peace, and joy are not merely to be hoped for in heaven, but are attainable in the present world ; because every one has naturally a confident expectation of finding them here ; and the Christian Scriptures (not to speak of the Jewish) do unquestionably recognise that expectation as legitimate, and distinctly promise its fulfilment upon certain conditions. These two facts are undoubted. Let us, then, under their guidance endeavour to advance a step further.

It is evident that the doing of our duty must so far, at least, give us satisfaction ; because the doing otherwise would have brought upon us self-reproach, the consciousness of having avoided which must itself afford pleasure. Yet, though the things we have done were so plainly our duty that not to have done them would have been wrong, both in our own judgment and in that of other men,—it does not follow that we can refrain from uttering upon ourselves and

these our works—and justly too—the sad doom :  
Vanity of vanity : all is vanity !

Viewing all these things together, there can, I suppose, remain no doubt that our distaste of our past lives—even if outwardly virtuous—arises from the temper, the motives, the spirit, which have dictated them. We feel that our lives have not therefore been well spent, because we have restrained our deeds within the bounds of moral rules. What we have done was that which was our duty ; and yet we have not done well. Our actions and even our words may have in general been such as they ought ; but it does not follow that we are therefore servants of God, or doers of His will. Noble deeds may proceed from base motives ; and men may be decent, sober, or just, from the meanest calculations of self-interest. Honesty is not the only virtue which is acknowledged to be the best policy ; in most other instances as well, temporal profit may be looked to as a sufficient reward ; and so, upon this selfish foundation, the whole structure of a reputable character may be built. Useful and commendable habits may have sprung from a root of pure selfishness ; the subject may be no more godly than if there were not a God to be pleased or offended. Now, we cannot suppose that God can ever reward or be pleased with that which is done with no reference to His will, or that we can ever serve God in anything which has not been done with intention to serve Him. However we may conduct ourselves, if our conduct was not meant as service to Him, we must not expect to enjoy His approbation ; and it would be a blessed discovery, could we make it, that His approbation, and nothing else, can ever satisfy the heart of man. The

possession of every earthly good without this will only burden or agitate the soul. It is the Divine approval alone, re-echoed in the conscience, that can calm the storm within, and put the wild chaos to flight, establishing the kingdom of heaven, the blessed empire of order, peace, and joy. If they be not cultivated with that aim, even our virtues will not bring us peace : we shall get the temporal reward—nothing more.

When, therefore, looking back upon our past history, we exclaim in bitterness of soul—Vanity all, and vexation of spirit, we do indeed confess a truth, the reason of which should be almost as evident to us as the sad fact itself. We have eaten and drunk, and our bodily appetites alone have been satisfied. So it would not have been, if we had eaten and drunk to the glory of God ; for, in that case, our souls also would have been filled with good. We have toiled and laboured ; but we have “ spent our strength for nought, and in vain ; ” our labour has brought us no rest ; our toil has been crowned with no opulence or satisfaction. So it would not have been, unless we had laboured only for the meat that perisheth. Had “ fervour of spirit ” been mingled with “ diligence in business,” a Sabbath of the soul would have remained to soothe our souls after the week of our earthly toil. We have denied ourselves, perhaps, and yet have felt none of the dignity or strength which self-victory gives. And why ? Because our self-denial, like our other virtues, has been worldly. The world has promised us a larger indulgence eventually if we would relinquish a smaller indulgence for the present ; and on these terms we have denied ourselves, and have had our reward. But no part of that reward, what-

ever it was, came from God ; for no part of the self-denial was undergone to please Him, or because He required this at our hands. And thus our whole life sinks down into dust and ashes. We lead an earthly life, not that heavenly life which Christians should lead upon the earth. The world has well-nigh absorbed our whole being : eternity and heaven, the soul and God, are become to us little better than words, which we utter as a spell to keep away the devil, or when death draws near. If we would even endeavour to render to God that loving self-denial which He has so wonderfully manifested to us, and so become partakers of the Divine Spirit, and have the mind of Christ in us, all this would be reversed : for then, instead of our present emptiness, we should partake of the fulness of His beatitude : our "communion would be with the Father and with his Son," in the last as in the first. The doom of vanity would then be reversed. We should find a residuum of good at the bottom of all earthly things, however paltry themselves may seem. Though, like delusive phantoms, they come and go, they would never vanish without leaving some precious, some enduring gift behind them. In many ways is our heavenly Father drawing us to these thoughts and feelings ; by none more than by the various afflictions which beset us in the present world. By the wounding of our hearts He would heal their distempers : by taking away, He would give us our true and only inheritance. He cuts the cables of our earthly hopes, that we may be driven to the true anchorage, and may find safety and calm in the eternal harbour of souls.

## THE WISE NUMBERING OF OUR DAYS.

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“ So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”—Ps. xc. 12.

OUR folly is most commonly seen in permitting the present world virtually to absorb our minds, so as to shut out any serious thought of a future state. It sometimes happens, however, that men fall into the opposite error, and both feel and act as if this world were in no respect worth caring for,—as if it were some wrecked vessel, some sinking ship, with which our only concern is to get well out of it—the sooner the better. Certainly, compared with that life which Christians hope for, this world is nothing ; its affairs and interests, its joys and sorrows, are altogether contemptible. When to this we add, that in this world we are but too much inclined to sin, are constantly surrounded with temptations, and exposed to various afflictions, and that we hold all that we most love and value by the most uncertain tenure—it may appear not unnatural that we should listen to those who exhort us to transfer ourselves in mind to the future world ; so becoming virtually denizens of that,

and dead to this, even while we live. This state of feeling must have largely influenced the first converts to Christianity at Jerusalem, when, by selling their possessions and goods, they shewed that they renounced all interest in the present world, under the overwhelming persuasion of Christ's immediate return from above, to destroy the world and establish the kingdom of heaven. Impelled by a like enthusiasm, thousands of the holiest men and women, from the fourth century downwards, forsook the ordinary duties and enjoyments of human life, and crowded into monasteries; the discipline of which—perpetual prayers and other spiritual exercises, vigils, fasts, and various mortifications—was studiously adapted to turn the thoughts away from the polluted vanity which had been relinquished, towards the undefiled and eternal rest of faithful souls. The fruits of this system have long ago demonstrated that it was a terrible mistake, and proceeded upon a profound misconception, both of human nature and of the Christian religion; though, like all errors whatever that have widely prevailed, it enclosed some great elements of truth. For, while it recognised the immeasurable superiority of eternity to time, it failed to acknowledge the inseparable relation in which time stands to eternity, and the connexion which exists between the duties of the present world and the felicity of the world to come. And, therefore, that discipline could never prepare men to die, because it could not teach or enable them to live.

There are some subjects regarding which inquiry helps us very little—in which our deepest meditations leave us nothing the wiser. Gaze we ever so intently upon the darkness, it remains darkness still. Of death

we can know nothing, but that it is the end of this earthly life. Our curiosity here is rewarded by no increase of knowledge. It is evidently not the purpose of Scripture to reveal to us anything on this subject, except the grand retributions which await us—the blessedness of the good, the misery of the wicked. The Spirit studiously hides from us all that might rather gratify our curiosity than purify our hearts and control our consciences. Lazarus, “awakened from his four days’ sleep,” has nothing to tell of the mysterious road which he had twice travelled. And Paul, though caught up into paradise, and rapt even to the third heaven, only hears “unspeakable words, which man may not utter.” Nor is Christ himself more communicative. Heaven and hell are set forth to our view chiefly in connexion with the judgment of God upon those different characters by which, even now, men are divided from each other, and belong to two worlds—the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

However much we may try to do so, we cannot realise the act of dying ; and no man can be prepared to die till death comes, or can possess during life the feelings appropriate to the hour of dissolution ; as none of us has to-day the grace and strength which will be required for to-morrow’s duties, trials, and temptations. God will grant to His servants, when the occasion arrives, that strength which will then be needful. In like manner, we cannot in this world realise our condition, or anticipate our thoughts in the world to come.

This inability should warn us of the uselessness, and even the hurt, of those curious speculations regarding the state of the dead, which so much occupy

the thoughts of pious people who are endowed with a lively fancy and a keen sensibility. Our departed brethren, like ourselves, are in the hand of a just and merciful God. We can know no more ; let us be thankful that we have been taught so much.

The great subject should not be surveyed by us with an anxious curiosity, or be made a stimulus to morbid sentiment. We should rather study to keep alive in our minds a habitual recollection, a serious consciousness, of the sublime realities which hang like majestic clouds upon the horizon of our history, but whose dark folds all our eager gazing will never enable us to penetrate ; and we should rather use our eyes in picking our way over the narrow, rugged, and dangerous path which conducts to that obscure region ; which will clear up when we enter it, not before.

The righteous will, at death, cease from all his miseries : he will enter into an ineffable rest, to be consummated in glory at the resurrection ; while the condition of the wicked will, like his character, be a terrific contrast. These simple, but momentous facts, comprehend the sum of our knowledge on this subject : and these, lying like ballast at the bottom of our souls, should keep us upright and steady as we steer our course through the wild waves and howling tempests of this dangerous voyage. The thought of our latter end should, indeed, be spread over our whole life, yet so that we shall act and speak, enjoy and suffer, as persons who are alive to all the interests and duties, to all the good and evil of the present world ; so that we shall not carry about with us the unwholesome damps of the sepulchre, but shall breathe the cheerful air of the living world ; and in-

stead of being paralysed by having "numbered our days," shall rather be nerved by this reckoning to meet present struggles and temptations.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor, it is said, was in use to compose his sermons with a human skull placed before him. They would have been better still had his eye rested upon a human countenance flushed with vigorous health: for though, by very contrast, it might suggest decay and whisper dissolution, yet, lighted up with intelligence and beaming with affection, it is truly prophetic, not of death, but life—of life which shall surmount dissolution, and whose shadow death is not.

If we attend to our duty in this respect, influenced by the motives which should prompt, and the great example which should guide us, we shall find that we are insensibly initiated into the mystery of dying, and gradually schooled in the secret of the future life. If we "bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus," "the life also of Jesus will be manifested in our bodies;" so that death and life will both of them work in us at the same time—the lower still generating the higher. The reason why we have so little assurance of that life which is promised us, is, that we have so little experience of the death that is enjoined us. For every act of self-denial, every instance in which, out of regard to the will of God and the example of Christ, we sacrifice a lower inclination to a higher interest, cuts through another of those "attachments" which bind us to the body, and so renders the final separation the less severe. The more we exercise ourselves in this great discipline of daily dying, the less shall we start and tremble when the king of terrors at last stands before us face to face. This

final encounter will prove but one exertion more of our habitual discipline, the closing act of our daily work ; and the hope in which we die will be only the last and brightest gleam of that in which we have lived.

The Jews longed for a Messiah who should live and subdue the nations, and rule, and make them rule, over the human race : but God sent them One who exhibited a far nobler spectacle, though they could not see it, and won before their eyes a far harder conquest :—a Messiah who subdued and triumphed over everything in human nature that should be subject, and reigned in the true royalty of man ; the Spirit of God enthroned in a human soul in all the majesty of wisdom, love, and power. This was the legitimate foundation of a general and real conquest, of universal empire and an eternal kingdom. Would to God that we would acknowledge this Christ as our Master and Lord by attempting, in His spirit, the great work which He accomplished ; and not prove ourselves worse than even the blinded Jews, by crucifying His Spirit and refusing His yoke, while we confess and glory in His name, and boast that we are His disciples—not acknowledging the Christ of God all this time, but a vanity of our own—worshipping an idol which we have made after the likeness of our own miserable selves. We should then discover, at the same time, the possibility and the blessedness of “bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus ;” and thus the life also of Jesus would be manifested in us : for day by day we should learn the science and art of living, and, with that, the discipline and lesson of dying finally, and should be de-

livered from that bondage, through fear of death, by which so many of us are all our lifetime enfeebled and paralysed, oppressed and enslaved.

The Old Testament leaves us looking, if not despairingly, at least anxiously, into the grave, wondering whether any one will at last ascend out of it to assure us that it is not what it seems—a bottomless pit. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope, by his resurrection from the dead.” So that His doctrine is the gospel of salvation, the promise of immortality, the assurance of the abolition of death. Let us not, then, stand by the sepulchre either terrified or uncertain, but go to our work as those who are risen with Christ. Let the abolition of death now begin. Let sin, the fruitful mother of all the brood of mortality, be crucified through the Cross, die through the death, be buried in the grave, of our suffering and dying Lord ; that, upon the strong wings of faith and hope, we may rise with him, not only out of his grave to this lightsome and living world, but may ascend above this, and partake of his heavenly and Divine life—our conversation being in heaven, our life being hid with Christ in God, and we waiting not for a new life, but only for the development and open manifestation of that which already stirs within us.

Alas, alas! we believe the good news, and yet are not glad ; in the midst of our triumphs we are sorrowful ; we weep having received the kingdom. Do we, indeed, believe, or only fancy that we believe, or at best, wish to believe ? If ye had faith even as a grain of mustard-seed, it would not be so. This seed, how-

ever small, would grow if it were truly alive : it would spread till it overshadowed all the weeds of our earthly passions, as well as all the brushwood of our anxieties, doubts, and fears. It is meet surely that we pray, as the disciples did—"Lord, increase our faith."

## THE PROFIT OF GODLINESS.

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ST Paul tells us (1 Tim. iv. 8) that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Certainly the gospel has no tendency to secure prosperity in this world, if by this we mean high advancement and great wealth. For neither does it hold out these things as the rewards of obedience, nor does it tolerate those passions which tend most to secure them. Ambition and covetousness it condemns unsparingly, as "lusts which are not of the Father, but of the world;" and the graces which it labours to implant and foster are such as greatly obstruct their possessor in the race for riches and honours; so that the consistent Christian is likely to be outrun by others who are not encumbered with the impediments which he feels, or loaded with the weights which he carries. The great ones of this world have often mounted their thrones, not only over the dead bodies of their rivals, but over the remains of their own virtue. Justice, mercy, truth must all be unsparingly sacrificed that they may reach their bad eminence.

Covetousness also, which is the chief builder of so

many huge fortunes, Christianity denounces as not only an evil itself, but "the root of all evil;" and in nothing does it labour more than to cast out this decent and plausible, but most malignant, demon; which often keeps men poor under cover of making them rich; and, tempting them to defraud others of the dues which justice and mercy claim, teaches them effectually to cheat themselves; so that, in the midst of superfluous store, they are indeed no richer than those who envy their treasures.

Christianity also makes men curious in matters of conscience, and scrupulous respecting right and wrong. Their "senses are exercised" by its lessons, so that they "discern both good and evil;" which the moral perceptions of others are too blunt to discover. Thus advantages must be sacrificed by them which others seize; losses must be incurred by them which others escape. "He that doeth righteousness," as the prophet speaks, "maketh himself a prey." It is not in these respects that "godliness hath the promise of the life that now is."

But if Christianity checks the passions which tend to worldly aggrandisement, it checks those also which produce want, misery, and ruin. Godliness, which cures ambition and covetousness, cures also negligence, sloth, wasteful and vain expense, dissipation, luxury, and riot, and those "many hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition," even in a worldly sense. That religion which inspires truth, justice, temperance, frugality, prudence, self-denial, cannot but mightily help toward so much temporal prosperity as our happiness needs, or our wisdom seeks; for those virtues not only secure the esteem and confidence of others, and so dispose them to help

us, but they constitute a character which enables us to help ourselves. So that, on the whole, Christianity tends to restrain those excesses of fortune which surround men with the strongest temptations, and to place them in that golden mean, which the wisest men have celebrated as most propitious to virtue.

But if godliness be profitable to us, we should see that it make us also profitable to others. This is the real possession of our possessions, the profit of all our gains, and that without which our riches do not make us rich—namely, that we use and enjoy all “as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” “Others may teach how riches may be brought in; godliness alone shews us how they may be laid out.” The duties of piety are far more popular than those of charity, because the former are much less expensive. To hear a sermon, or to pray, is cheap; not so to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and be “merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful.” The New Testament has hardly any frugal maxims; not that these are needless, but that it was foreseen we should not want many teachers of that thrifty wisdom; but it is full of exhortations to liberality and generosity, against which our selfishness is always struggling.

“Now, as Homer is wont to tell us, when he speaks of rivers and mountains, that men indeed call them thus and thus, but the gods have other names for them: so you must know that hitherto we have spoken of profit and gain, as men are wont to like of it; we will now speak of it in a sense that God and holy saints are wont to use. For, besides this first, there is a second profit of godliness, by which it doth reflect upon the former. Care and industry, without godliness, brings in the things of the world upon us,

but in this case we cannot call them profits. 'What profit is it for a man to gain the whole world, and to lose his own soul?' (Mark viii. 36.) Godliness it is, therefore, that makes even profit itself profitable. For the true profit is the enjoying, using, and bestowing of them; and this alone doth piety teach. So that piety serves not only as a bailiff to bring them in, but as an instructor, to teach us how to lay them out. For it is a greater part of wisdom wisely to dispend them when we have them, than to get them at the first."

"The world, I know, makes it profit enough to have it; but this other profit that comes by expense and laying it out, it can hardly be brought to learn. Many there are that can be content to hear that godliness is profitable to them, but that godliness should make them profitable to others, that it should cost them anything, this they cannot endure to hear."

"Beloved, we that have the oversight of you in Christ, are witnesses of your labour of frequenting of prayers, of hearing, of thirsting after sermons; all this is but a piety nothing expensive; you are very free of it, because it costs you nothing; but we would be very glad, and should give up our account with much more joy, might we but understand a little more of that part of piety which consists in bestowing of these good blessings which godliness, I doubt not, hath gained you."

"To use them that they may stead us in our last and greatest extremities, with them to purchase us friends that shall receive us into their eternal tabernacles, this, indeed, is to make true profit of them, and this is performed by godliness alone."\*

\* J. Hales, vol. iii., p. 55, &c.

Finally, godliness not only teaches us to use profitably what we possess ; but if we possess nothing, it can teach us to get profit and use of that also—" both how to abound and how to be empty, how to be full and how to suffer need." By curing envy and impatience, by inspiring resignation, contentment, hope, it makes men rich in the midst of poverty ; " having nothing, they possess all things." The scanty meal, seasoned with these wholesome graces, shall be found better to satisfy, and more to nourish, than the superfluity of those who riot among the bounties of Providence with no thankfulness to God or sympathy for man.

But godliness has also the promise of the life which is to come. This is that " enduring substance" which it holds out, and which transcends not only all present experience, but all our present hopes and imaginings :—its very shadow is more substantial than the substance of worldliness.

## F A I T H.

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THE words of our Lord to Thomas, (John xx. 29)—“Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed ; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed ;”—these words have often been taken to imply that God is pleased with men according as they believe on insufficient evidence ; as if it were almost a matter of necessity to believe where the evidence was conclusive, and, therefore, no token of docility or proof of faith ; whereas to receive as proof what was not unquestionable, displayed the docility of a little child.

However, we should remember that it is not “in understanding, but in malice,” that we are commanded to “be children ;” and that we are exhorted “to prove all things,” without exception. Besides, if he be blessed who is willing to accept insufficient evidence, the more insufficient the evidence is, the more blessed must he be who receives it : and more blessed still must he be who believes without evidence ; but, most of all, he who believes against evidence. This, the natural conclusion from the premises, was Tertullian’s triumph of faith : but it is, at the same time, the triumph of absurdity and contradiction.

That ancient father—and the multitudes in all ages who sympathised with his notion—discerned how great a part of Christianity self-denial is. But they sadly misapprehended the *self* which was to be denied. And accordingly they often taught, and also practised, the mortification of the spirit, because they knew it was a duty to crucify the flesh. To do violence to our reason, that we may receive what claims to be the Word of God, is to extinguish the light we have, under pretence of seeing other light ; (for reason is itself also the Word of God ;) or to put out our eyes, that we may enjoy the benefit of telescopes or microscopes, as if these could profit the blind.

No doubt, reason has led many men astray : so has Scripture ; so has tradition : and without reason, Scripture and tradition would lead all men astray—as without reason, Scripture could neither be authenticated, nor understood, nor applied, nor in any manner be used. The telescope or the microscope is nothing without the eye. It would be our duty to mortify our “carnal reason,” if we had any such : but as we have not received two reasons, but simply one, to crucify it, is to kill the life of the soul, to put out the eye of the mind, and to denude us of that which renders man capable either of truth or of goodness.

It is not less wicked to exhort any one to believe otherwise than according to his reason, than to urge him to act in opposition to his conscience. No doubt our understandings are darkened, as our consciences are perverted, through sin. But regeneration does not emancipate us from the guidance of our understandings or the authority of our consciences ; it

rather restores these powers to their rightful supremacy, by freeing them from the influence of those appetites and passions by which they were enslaved : so that the man becomes not less but far more a reasonable creature than he was before : he is rendered, by his new birth, capable of offering "a reasonable service to the Father of lights, who hath begotten him again by the word of truth." These higher faculties are the *organs* by which the Spirit of God exerts His influence upon the human soul—whether as a Spirit of truth or of righteousness. "He *convinces* the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment." Now, we well know through what faculty it is that *conviction* is produced. A person who thinks it a sin to exercise his reason, can no more be *convinced* than one of the lower animals, which are destitute of the faculty.

It is also to be remembered that our Lord appealed to the unrenewed understanding, or "carnal reason," of the Jews, when He addressed to them such questions as the following—"Why of your own selves judge ye not what is right?" And again: "If I speak the truth, why do ye not believe me?" St Paul also makes no scruple to remind the Christians at Corinth that "even nature itself teaches" certain things connected with Christian conduct. Indeed, they who go about, in the supposed interest of Faith, to depreciate the powers and the authority of Reason, only labour to undermine the foundations of Faith itself: for undoubtedly all genuine religious faith assumes as its basis the authority of reason: to deny which is infidelity, to question it scepticism, however evangelical may be the language in which the doubt or denial may be couched.

To pretend that reason is a dangerous gift, is to reflect upon the wisdom of the great Master, who knows that if we were faithful, we should be safe ; and to imitate the slothful timidity of the wicked servant, who went and buried the talent he had received.

If we repudiate our reason, what shall we acknowledge as our guide ? Shall we follow our passions, our fancies, our worldly interests, or shall we commit ourselves to chance ? A man's eyes may not always suffice to guide him in the intricate ways of this world : but he must not put them out under pretence of their imperfection.

Our Saviour pronounces them "blessed" who, not having seen Him risen from the dead, yet had believed ;—not that particular fact, which no one before had believed or anticipated—(so much so, that the disciples could not even imagine what it could mean) —but the general doctrine of a resurrection and the life immortal. This was to acknowledge the justice of God and the moral nature of man. If the saints of old were blessed in believing this, they must have possessed sufficient evidence, without the attestation of Christ's resurrection.

Indeed, it is not a little remarkable that St Paul, instead of confirming the doctrine of a resurrection of the dead by the fact of Christ's rising again, as he does generally in common with the other apostles, sometimes reverses this order of ideas, and reasons from the doctrine to the fact, maintaining that they may well admit the particular example who hold the general truth. "If there be no resurrection of the dead," he says, "then is Christ not risen : what we have preached, and ye have believed, is vain," (1 Cor. xv. 13.) And this is not a singular instance.

We are so accustomed to appeal to the miracles recorded in Scripture, as to suggest that the doctrines of Christianity have not an evidence of their own : and yet those miracles, however demonstrative to those who witnessed them, are nothing more than report and human testimony to us. Yet we ought to feel that the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables of Christ carry in themselves a witness which justifies and demands our faith, though we had never heard of any miracles being performed by Him that spake them. On the other hand, had the doctrines of Christianity been trifling, foolish, immoral, impious, contradictory, it would have been our duty to reject them, even though, instead of having miracles reported from distant ages, we had seen them with our own eyes. Our reason and conscience should protect us against the illusions of other men's senses or our own. There are some things which no outward testimony should induce us to believe. To deny this is to deny that the *character* of a religion can furnish any evidence of its truth.

“Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed!” We hold it credible that Christ rose from the dead; for we consider it credible that after this life there is another. God has not done with any of us, good or bad, when we have crept out of this mortal coil into the dust. The wicked have not got beyond the reach of their Maker ; nor have the sublime virtues of the righteous, nurtured in storms, been cut down at last only to rot in oblivion in the dust.

This conviction must be well founded ; for it is the faith of the good, the wise, the righteous, the holy, and of all these most in their best moments. It is the faith of the pure in heart, who have granted to

them the vision of the invisible,—who see God. Destroy this faith, and our being becomes contemptible, our actions ridiculous, human life a pitiful farce—not the less so for its sorrows and miseries ; wisdom shrinks to cunning, virtue to a fantastic conceit ; nothing great remains in human nature, nothing elevating in human life ; and history becomes a paltry riddle, not worth solving or considering.

Surely we may accept it as little less than a demonstration of a future life,—that without the hope of it we cannot perform our duties, or sustain our trials, or be or do what we ought, in the present. By this faith only can we be saved. And surely that which we must believe in the interest of virtue and happiness, cannot be false ; we never can be saved by the belief of that which is not the truth. To believe that a life of virtue and holiness and peace can have no foundation but a faith and hope that are absolute delusions, appears harder than to believe all the mysteries of the gospel.

When the sun sinks below the horizon, resigning the world to darkness, experience or instinct has implanted the conviction that night shall again be dispelled by the rising of the sun, whose absence makes night. With no less assurance let us commit ourselves and our friends to the darkness of death, assured that the day-spring from on high shall break in due time upon the world, that “ this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life.”

## H O P E.

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WE live in the future rather than in the present; than which nothing can at first sight appear more unreasonable. Yet the present is a moment; the future is all our existence that is yet to come—it is eternity.

Christianity is the religion of hope, because it is the religion of faith. By manifesting God, it inspires man with confidence for the present, and joyful expectation for the future. “The Lord reigneth; let the earth be glad.” Faith speaks, and hope is the echo of her voice.

It has been said that the writings of Cicero may be searched in vain for a single expression indicating hope for mankind,—their progress, improvement, or happiness. Regret for the past, resignation for the present—between these two that great soul oscillates perpetually. Nor is the reason obscure. The philosophic Roman, like his heathen contemporaries, had no hope, because he had no God. Who could but despair of the future voyage, when there appeared to be no pilot, or helm, or chart; when chance, the winds, and the waves, seemed to be the only rulers?

The biblical writers, from the first to the last of them, are animated by intense hopefulness; for, be-

lieving in a wise, just, and benevolent God, they felt assured that out of the wildest confusion and the darkest misery He would eventually make light and order arise. They could not sorrow as others who had no hope ; neither could they in any respect feel as these did. All things were made new to them by the revelation of the unseen and the future ; by which they were born again and made indeed new creatures.

When Christianity is called *gospel*, it is set forth as the religion of hope.

The particular objects of hope might, and, no doubt, did, differ greatly at different times. The possession of the Land of Promise, the redemption from Egypt, the return from the captivity, the coming of the Messiah,—all these were at different periods the future blessings for which the children of God hoped : as the second coming of Christ, and our own resurrection and reunion with our departed friends, are the events to which we look forward with trembling expectation. But in this respect all the saints are united,—that they all hope *in God*, and are animated to act and to suffer for a while, by a promise which they feel assured He has given. “ Their faith and hope are in God.”

The possession of temporal prosperity did for the ancient Jews what it never fails to do for thoughtful and good men. The lower blessing excites first the idea, then the desire, and finally the hope of a higher, of which the other becomes at once the exponent and the pledge. Good things possessed are ever to the wise, types and promises of yet better things to come. “ After Joshua had given them the rest ” which was promised, we find the chosen people taught to sigh for “ a rest which yet remaineth for the people of God.” “ Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual,

but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." The promise is fulfilled first in its carnal, last in its spiritual form. God's gifts rise in a beautiful order, as we are educated to appreciate them, and are prepared to receive them.

Is not the melting away of all our earthly hopes a perpetual call to set our affection on things above, and to look for that better substance, of which the prophetic word, without and within, testifies that it endures for ever? Our worldly disappointments should not extinguish our hope, but should rather feed its holy flame.

We read backward the dull lesson of heathen wisdom—

"Immortalia ne speres, monet annus et alium,  
Quæ rapit hora diem;"

and among the dust and rubbish of perishing time we gather up the gold of immortality. As some bewildered navigator, sailing over the expanse of an unknown ocean in quest of undiscovered continents, observes ever and anon clouds upon the horizon, which take the shape of islands or promontories, but as he approaches they melt into thin air, leaving still the same blank circumference of water; but on he steers, impelled by the favouring breeze, till at last there rise before his joyful sight the clear outline of mountains, the green earth, waving forests, glancing streams, and the habitations of men, and he finds a safe harbour where at last he may drop his anchor and furl his weary sail; thus, let us refuse to be discouraged, though shadows flit and vapours melt before us. Still, hope maketh not ashamed. In due time we shall reap, if we faint not.

Blessed thought!—that we shall see the great

controversy decided between good and evil—that fierce battle ended in which we also fought, receiving painful wounds—the grand battle of death and life. At last we are conquerors, and march in triumph with Him that loved us. At last we are free! The chain is broken that bound our spirits! Doubt and fear can enslave us no more; they are passed away with sin and death, whose ministers they are. We shall serve God for ever with that service which is perfect freedom, for it flows from perfect love; without regrets, repentance, or any other grief; for ever united with those from whom separation had the bitterness of death,—our parents, our children, and those who were not only one flesh with us, but one spirit also. We shall see them again, all purified, all perfected; their infirmities washed away, their graces all more radiant, beautified in body and soul, and breathing in both the fragrance of immortality.

As to this present world, we are nothing, and can be nothing :

“Pulvis et umbra.”

This is the epitaph of the best of us—

“A little dust ;  
A fitting ghost.”

But in hope “we are raised up, and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ;” are not only permitted to serve, but exalted to reign as princes and sons of God, in the eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit has ever been a spirit of prophecy; and the spirit of prophecy is evermore a spirit of hope. This will not permit us to remain in our graves, shut up under the power of death. It preaches a resurrection; it reveals both a millennium and a

heaven; an immovable kingdom, as well for the individual as for the race: it unfolds new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness; and with righteousness, her blessed sisters, peace and love.

Thus all the biblical prophecies end. Each apocalypse sends down the new Jerusalem out of heaven; an eternal city "built for the perfected spirits of the just:" the same which every holy heart has been building from the foundation of the world; often, indeed, hardly conscious what it was doing, yet impelled so to labour, for this was one of the works which the Father had given it to do.

We see that our actions do not die with ourselves in this world, but we leave them, as a legacy of joy or sorrow, to those that come after us. And, doubtless, as they survive in their consequences for others, so they will also for ourselves. Elsewhere we shall meet them again. This ever-foreboding heart, which God has made to beat in our bosom, is no doubt the witness of the judgment and the world to come, giving us timely warning to be ready.

May the great voice be heard in our inmost hearts; may it give solemnity to our thoughts, sobriety to our feelings, purity and simplicity, earnestness and consistency to our lives; that when the day at last comes which all the good have hoped for, and most of the bad have feared, it may prove to us a day of redemption, and the birthday of our immortal life!

## PURGATORY.

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IF we compare our present spiritual condition with that in which we shall be qualified to see God, and to find our heaven in communion with Him, we shall feel that, in order to this, we must be subjected to some grand process of purification, by which not only shall some filthiness be washed off our character, but certain foul elements and base mixtures shall be burnt out of them.

The Roman Church teaches that this needful cleansing will be accomplished after death, when the faithful shall be subjected, each according to the degree of his defilement when he left this world, to a certain purgatorial fire, which shall perfectly separate from the saint all the remains of sin, and shall render him fit to appear among holy spirits in the presence of God.

In this doctrine itself there appears nothing incredible or absurd : it was rejected by the Protestants simply as wanting scriptural evidence, or as conflicting with certain doctrines there taught, and especially because of its connexion with the gainful traffic of the Church.

This figment of the Papists must appear both less

gross and less pernicious than are some which many Protestants have conceived ; who, however, have not had the consistency to ripen them into formal dogmas. For surely it is not so absurd to believe that our souls shall have their sanctification completed after death, as to imagine that this will be effected by death itself ;—as if death were some river through which we are dragged in passing from this world to the next, and, however filthy we may be when we plunge in, we cannot but be washed clean before we emerge on the further bank. Whereas death is nothing, and can do nothing. The thought of it, indeed, the pains and afflictions which precede it may, by the grace of God, do much ; but these are the work of life, not of death, and are all of them included in our “day of grace” and “the time of our visitation.” It would be much less preposterous to hold that men may be perfected in holiness by sleep than by death.

If we may not expect a purgatory hereafter, surely we should be the more earnest that the great, difficult, and indispensable work of purification be accomplished in the present life, which is granted us for this very purpose, and when we possess all the means that are necessary, and all the motives that can inspire earnest diligence in the use of them. The fire of affliction, the fire of conscience, the fire of the Spirit,—these are the purgatory which God has provided for consuming our dross, that our “faith, which is more precious than gold, may be found unto glory and praise at the appearing of Christ,” and we ourselves may be “vessels unto honour, sanctified and fit for the Master’s use.”

They who hope for heaven without this, dream that heaven is some outward and material thing—a

place, not a state or character :—as if “flesh and blood might inherit the kingdom of God,” or “corruption inherit incorruption.” Such men are far worse deceived than the Papist ; for he acknowledges that he needs a purgatory, and he is willing to endure certain terrible flames, if so be he may be delivered from that hell which burns and tortures eternally wherever sin reigns.

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## TRANSUBSTANTIATION, AND THE MASS.

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THIS is one of the most astounding doctrines that ever gained credit, or was propounded among mankind :—not that bread should, by some mystic words, be changed into flesh and blood, but that, remaining bread, it should be believed to be flesh and blood. To believe on insufficient evidence, or even without evidence, is too common to excite surprise ; but to believe against evidence, when this is the evidence of our senses, is either the sublimity of faith, or the deepest debasement of credulity.

We have here exemplified the consequences of abjuring reason in regard to religious faith. Rationalism, though much cried down, as if it were both impious and dangerous, is, indeed, our only safeguard against the most monstrous errors in the interpretation of Scripture. The whole Protestant community has taken refuge in rationalism against the wild dogmas of the Roman Church, and also in some other cases,—however anxious to disclaim it in general,—as if it were profane to set the spirit above the letter. For that the same substance cannot be bread to the

senses, while, in its essential nature, it is flesh and blood; that that bread and wine which Christ first consecrated, neither could be, nor could by the disciples be understood to be, literally His body, since His body had not then been broken, and they saw it actually before them; that the doctrine, besides asserting a perpetual miracle, involves also an apparent impossibility, imputing that omnipresence to body, which can be an attribute only of spirit—placing Christ's body, which is in heaven, at the same time upon the earth, and in all places upon the earth through all ages, since His crucifixion;—these, and many similar objections, are all *rationalistic*, and neither have, nor can have, any cogency with those who set the letter above the spirit. These men do not start at a miracle; they are not scared by a contradiction; *impossibility* they consider as merely the exercise and proof of faith; as that consistent anti-rationalist of the ancient Church, Tertullian, expressed it, *Credo quia impossibile est*. The Protestants, though eager to disclaim the imputation, are, as the Romanists rightly contend, rationalists *in this case* and in some others, though they repudiate the principle in regard to most doctrines.

It is curious to observe how the different sects in the Christian Church bandy about this odious charge of rationalising. The orthodox Protestants habitually reproach their heterodox brethren with this crime. The Catholics advance the same charge against all Protestants—whose distinctive principle, they contend, is *rationalistic*, as setting reason above tradition and the authority of the Church, if not above Scripture itself. But the Greek Church maintains that the Roman Church itself set the example to all others,

and that the *Pope is the first rationalist*; whose addition of *filioque* to the Creed was not only an error and a heresy, but an error dictated by the pride of human reason.

It does not suit the purposes of controversy to define terms, or to ascertain exactly what is the subject of dispute. A general word, which may mean several different things, answers much better the ends of raising a prejudice, and frightening ignorant, weak, and superstitious people.

But surely there is a rationalism that is sober, legitimate, and necessary, as well as a rationalism that is presumptuous and profane. We may contend that reason has much to do with our religion, without maintaining that our religion is out and out a matter of reason, or denying that there are many doctrines of Christianity which are not in any sense matters of reason,—inasmuch as our understandings could neither have discovered them at first, nor can comprehend them now that they are revealed. We may assert the authority of reason within its own sphere, without pretending that its sphere is universal or infinite, which would be to assert its own infinitude.

How few doctrines can plead such apparently emphatic testimonies as transubstantiation appears to receive from the following texts:—1 Cor. x. 16, xi. 24–29; Luke xxii. 19, 20; John vi. 48–57. And yet, if they were twice as many, and ten times as emphatic, we should without hesitation reject the doctrine of transubstantiation, on the rationalistic principle that no testimony, whether of Scripture or of any other authority, can establish what is absurd, contradictory, impossible, or contrary to fact.

It has been said that this tenet had its origin in the

high-flown declamation of the Greek fathers, which the Latin Christians understood literally, according to the more materialistic character of the Western intellect ; so that the Greek rhetoric became the Latin faith. And it is a curious confirmation of this, that the Greek Church has never professed this tenet. Whatever there may be in this, we cannot enough admire the docility of the nations and generations who suffered themselves thus to believe against the protest of their senses.

Supposing transubstantiation established as a fact, it would remain surrounded with insuperable difficulties. That the receiving by the body of a certain kind of meat should produce effects upon its health, strength, life, might even sanctify it or preserve it from death, at least through disease, is conceivable ; but how any sort of material food should possess qualities which could illuminate or purify the soul, or redeem it from corruption, is not only inconceivable, but incredible ; beyond miraculous, being contradictory and impossible, unless body be spirit, or spirit be body. The nourishment and the medicine of the body must be something material. A like necessity requires that the spiritual part of our nature should be fed and healed by food and medicine that are spiritual. We cannot sustain the fleshly tabernacle with thoughts, however solid, or cure its distempers by doctrines, however wholesome. No more can *sin*, which is the sickness of the spirit, be remedied by any meat which we can masticate, swallow, or digest, by the corporeal organs. To say this may be done, is to deny the distinction of body and spirit.

How pleasant to have our sins cured, and their consequences averted, by eating a meal ! A little

bread and wine—a wafer—certain mystic words having been uttered by a priest, shall have power to cleanse the conscience, heal sin, and defy death! How wonderful, and how pleasant, if only it be true. And yet the priest can furnish no other example of his miraculous powers except this, which we must take on his own word, against the testimony, not only of our understanding, but of our senses.

That such a tenet should have been the faith of Europe for more than a thousand years, and should to this day continue to be the faith of so large a portion of it, seems to prove that scepticism is not the most prevailing infirmity of the human mind.

Yet the Papist confesses that his salvation depends upon his receiving Christ, and being united with Him. Let us not deny or overlook the blessed truth itself, while we reject the gross and material way in which others conceive of it. A far more intimate union with our Lord is promised us than if we could literally “eat His flesh and drink His blood.” “The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that He speaks they are spirit and life.” With our fellow-men we have closer ties than those of blood. Those who think our thoughts, share our sentiments, see with our eyes, love our loves, and hate our hates, whose minds are mirrors of our own—these are our nearest kin; and even the members of our families themselves become one with us chiefly through this mental union. If this be wanting, our outward nearness makes us only the more painfully sensible of our real separation.

We must receive Christ *into our souls*, knowing and believing His word, rejoicing in His promises, yield-

ing ourselves to His commands, having our souls pervaded and penetrated with His love. His Spirit thus dwelling in our hearts, the mind of Christ abiding in us, we shall walk in His steps by an impulse from within, and be transformed more and more into His likeness in our whole character. His commands will not appear grievous, because it is His Spirit that quickens us ; and even the sharpest sufferings will be tolerable, because, in bearing them, we are " crucified with Christ."

The life of Christ thus becomes our life ; not some physical bodily life, but that life in God, under the power of the Divine Spirit, which He lived. Faith, hope, charity, patience, self-denial, meekness, gentleness, kindness, truth, purity, fortitude, courage, zeal,—these godlike qualities make us the kindred of God and of all His family, and chiefly of Him who is His first-born and well-beloved Son. Thus we know that we are sons and heirs of God, by the consciousness of His eternal life.

And thus is performed that great sacrifice of which the Mass is a representation and a caricature ; the priest pretending to offer up to God the consecrated sacrament as the body and blood of Christ.

But they who have the Spirit and life of Christ in them, and so are incorporated with Him, and made members of His body, do, indeed, " present their bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, which is their reasonable service." Being, by the anointing of the Holy Ghost, consecrated members of the great hierarchy, and so become "an holy priesthood," they "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ," whose body is daily thus offered in sacrifice

through these His members ; and as He, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, so they "rejoice in their sufferings for the brethren, and fill up what is behind in the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, which is the Church."

By the closest of human relations two persons (husband and wife) are made one flesh ; but " he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

## THE AUTUMN.

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THE changes of the seasons, which are the sources of so much interest and pleasure to us, are also full of utility to all the creatures inhabiting the earth. The great circuit of the earth round the sun produces many of the same appearances as the daily revolution of the earth upon itself, and has many similarly kind and wise provisions. Summer is the noon-tide of the year, spring its morning, autumn its evening, and winter its night ; and during this night of the year most of the vegetable tribes, and some of the animals, sleep, and gather strength from that repose for new life and growth.

Between ourselves, too, and the objects of external nature, resemblances exist, so many and so obvious, that they suggest themselves to every one. Like the day and the year, we have our morning and our evening, our noon and our night, our springing and our fading time ; our season of life, activity, and strength, and our appointed period of cold inaction and dark oblivion.

Of all the seasons, autumn is the most suggestive ; and it may not be an unprofitable employment of our time to put into form some of those impressions

which an October or a November day is apt to suggest.

Now the fields are swept. The verdure of spring, the luxuriance of summer, the rich abundance of harvest, have alike disappeared. The good grain has been gathered into the garner, and the weeds are collected to be burned. That which was sown in the ground has been rendered up by the faithful soil; the husbandman has had his seed, which he scattered upon the ground, restored to him, the same in kind, and increased in quantity, in proportion to the goodness of the land he cultivated, and the manner in which it was cultivated. God has done His part: He has made His sun to shine, and His rain to descend, and commanded His blessing; so that the crop has depended chiefly on the knowledge and diligence of the husbandman. As he ploughed, and sowed, and cultivated, so has he reaped.

Thus has it been with all the generations of men that have been before us,—they have already fallen before the sickle of death, and are now laid up in a garner of life, or bound in bundles for the fire. They, too, have disappeared from the ground which once they occupied—on which they grew and flourished and displayed their qualities, good or bad; they are gone, cut down, gathered in; the place that knew them knows them no more. The great Husbandman gave them, while here, the means of growth and fertility. The sweet influences of heaven were not withholden from them: “The true light which is come into the world to enlighten every man” shed His beams upon them also. Nothing was wanting but their own willingness, their own co-operation, their own obedience to the heavenly command to bring

forth fruit. "What," says God, "could I have done more to my vineyard than I have done in it?" But *their* harvest is past, *their* summer is ended; and they are awaiting that judgment of God which brings to light all the hidden things of darkness, and "makes manifest the counsels of the heart."

How solemn this thought should be to us, who are now going through the various stages of that course which they have finished, who are running the race which they have run! Their maturity in goodness or wickedness was not attained without continual growth in the one or the other. As neither the cedar nor the bramble attains its full development and perfection in a day or a month, so they become trees of righteousness or vines of Sodom only after much culture and long-continued increase in evil or good.

When we now look upon the trees, we find their rich green foliage changed to its yellow tints. Our path is strewn with dead and withered leaves, separated from their parent tree, and rapidly undergoing the process of decomposition, being resolved again into their elements. Cast down from their glory and beauty, deprived of all the freshness of their young life, they lie, scattered and dishonoured, trodden in the earth by the foot of every passenger, whirled about by every wind.

In this striking transformation, what do we see but the emblem and foreshadow of our own history, of the transformations that have passed or are passing upon ourselves! They who are still young, by beholding this sight, may be learning that their "May of life will turn into the sear and yellow leaf," and that at a period so near, that its approach will probably surprise themselves: while those who have

reached this point already, witness their own condition strikingly represented. Still hanging upon the tree of life, they are conscious that that process of decay is fast going on, which is drying up their verdure and preparing them for dropping upon the earth and mingling with the clods of the valley.

The time when men are most apt to forget their latter end, is during the middle of life. During some five-and-twenty or thirty years, but little apparent change takes place in the condition of the body, at least of robust persons; while the change that does take place is so gradual as to be almost imperceptible; and to those who see us from day to day it is quite imperceptible. That is the time, also, during which men are most actively employed in the business of this world, most deeply engrossed with its cares and anxieties. It is their summer-time,—the season of vigour and exertion,—the secure middle, as we are tempted to consider it, removed at a safe distance from both extremes. We promise ourselves that we shall linger long in our journey over this temperate zone of our existence, where we feel safe alike from the torrid heats of youth which we have left behind, and the biting frosts of that benumbing region which lies before us, whose icy summits glitter upon the horizon, low at first, but shooting up higher and higher daily into the sky, as we reluctantly draw nearer to their frozen confines.

To men so situated and so tempted, the words are spoken, "We all do fade as a leaf." The season of the year illustrates and enforces what the voice of inspiration has addressed to us. Those leaves are rapidly falling now which were green and life-like a very short time ago. A few weeks have sufficed to

work all this change in their appearance and their condition. *Then*, they were enclosed securely within the domain of life; now they are within the region and kingdom of death. For life and death, like day and night, still divide the world between them—they always cut the universe into two hemispheres; and the one is perpetually expelling and superseding the other. But even during the *summer*, when no decay was visible, it was yet *preparing*. Life did not then stand still, though its progress was insensible, So with the man at thirty, forty, fifty years of age. Things are not standing still; his yellow leaf is preparing without cessation. Though he may forget, time and death do not forget their work. The stream runs down not the less though he may sleep upon its bosom. Such persons, therefore, should not imagine that their period of life is unseasonable, or too early for counting their days with that prudent arithmetic which shall teach them to “apply their hearts unto wisdom.” Quite the contrary. They of all men need most the hint which an autumn day supplies. They too, though still green, are fading like the leaf. And if the future, if the soul, if eternity, if God, if death, and judgment, and immortality be regarded by them as autumn thoughts, and so, inappropriate and out of place in their summer-time, they are miserably miscalculating, and grossly deceiving themselves. For not only are change, decay, and dissolution gradually and certainly drawing nearer, whatever our age may be, but there is this difference between *our* lot and that of the leaves—they commonly last a certain definite time. They wither, indeed, and drop when autumn comes; but till then they hang upon the tree and live: whereas all seasons are our autumn in this

respect, that at all ages human beings fall. The day of death is to us absolutely uncertain and unknown. It is possible that our leaf, which must fade when the term of threescore years and ten is finished, may lose its bloom at an earlier season. For death, who gathers in the last remnants of his crop at that late day, is busily reaping it through all the year. Men die at all ages ; a large proportion of the human race never advance beyond infancy ; childhood and youth cut off a vast proportion ; through all the stages of manhood the inexorable pursuer overtakes and strikes down his victims ; and before the last stage is reached, only a few stragglers survive. So that, while the autumn and its falling leaves warn us of what is before us, they do not assure us that our time to fade shall be so distant. For, in human life, the sun goes down while yet it is day ; and the harvest arrives at all seasons of life.

A circumstance which helps to delude us is this, that the *decay* of humanity is much less in our view than are its life and vigour. Our streets and churches, and places of business and resort, are all crowded with persons in health. In this way, health and life are continually before our eyes. We meet, we converse, we transact business, we enjoy social relaxation, with persons in health ; whereas the old and feeble, the diseased and the dying, are all withdrawn from public view—they are hidden in the silent chambers of private houses, or in the wards of hospitals and infirmaries. In this way we are deceived as to the amount of suffering and actual decay that is always going on in the community. For though this is never great in proportion to the amount of health—though the *sick* are never a great many compared with those

who are well, yet, regarded by themselves, they are a vast multitude. Any one will remark this who visits a street from house to house. Every here and there he finds a diseased or dying person, or an invalid who cannot take his part in the business of life. Also, when any one has a pretty extensive acquaintance, how rapidly do intimations of deaths and funerals pour in! They seem to rain sometimes, as the autumn leaves pour down from the branches when shaken by the breeze. But though these appearances interrupt it, yet the illusion is strong which is created by the sight of only the living and the vigorous everywhere. *They* only are visible before our eyes. In this way the tide of life, being constantly replenished, appears always full; those streams which are withdrawn being received into the hidden caverns of the earth, and so seen no more. Though men are always dying, yet man always lives. This gradual withdrawal of men from this world, though evidently a beneficial and necessary arrangement in many respects, has thus a tendency to deaden our feeling of the certainty and nearness of our own fading and failing.

Autumn is thus a melancholy season. There is something sombre and pensive about it. Sadness steals upon us from its falling leaves, bared branches, and whistling winds. This is the impression which Nature's great sermon leaves even upon thoughtless people. An analogy is suggested which they are not seeking; a lecture is read them which they are not anxious to hear; serious admonition is whispered into their ear, though they would rather shut it out.

But there is nothing in these thoughts to make us unhappy, though there is much in them to render us

sober-minded and serious. When the solemn shades of evening close around us, we console ourselves with the thought that this is not the reign of darkness re-established, or the return "of chaos and old night;" for these friendly shadows are the heralds of the morning, and shall presently usher in the glorious beams of a new day. So we remember that the fading of autumn and the bleak sterility of winter are but harbingers of a new life; when the bare trunks will clothe themselves in a fresh vegetation, and out of this silence—when the great pause and interlude of Nature shall be passed—the voice of spring will again burst forth in a full chorus of exuberant life: thus, when all the seared leaves of our mortality have been blown away and hidden in the dust, we who have been planted in the likeness of Christ's death shall rise in the likeness of His resurrection—shall be animated with a perfect, a deathless, an eternal life.

Let us not, then, stand appalled by the pains and diseases, the separations and the dissolution, which are before us. Let us look across the dark valley; and we shall see that which will not prompt us to cry, "Our light afflictions are but for a moment."

But if our iniquities, like the wind, shall carry us away, this will be our unspeakable misery, because it will be our own fault,—a fault and a misery which God does not doom us to, but calls us and commands us to escape.

We are not left to the suggestions of nature or the apprehensions of our own trembling hearts. One calls to us from beyond the grave. He has given to us exceeding great and gracious promises, that in these "we might be made partakers of the divine

nature," and be delivered from all the power of corruption, both in soul and body.

O blessed Christ! who hast spoken aloud our dumb thought in the clear tones of thy heavenly voice, and made our ardent desire a Divine promise, our trembling hope a triumphant faith, live thou ever in our grateful love; reign in our hearts; as Thou livest and reignest in the glory of the Father, world without end. Amen.

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## ON DOING GOOD WITHOUT SEEK- ING TO PROMOTE SECTARIAN INTERESTS.\*

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“As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”—GAL. vi. 10.

THIS most momentous injunction suggests three distinct thoughts to our minds,—1st, That the doing of good is consistent with and required by our Christian profession. 2d, That all men, without distinction, are proper objects of this doing of good, though some have a preferable claim ; and, 3dly, That we cannot always choose the circumstances in which we shall exercise this our Christian vocation of well-doing, but must seize those opportunities and occasions which, in the course of God's providence, may be presented to us. So that if we cannot do all the good we would,

\* The following sermon was preached on Sunday, the 8th January 1854, at the request of the “Protestant Religious Instruction Committee of the United Industrial School,” when a collection was made in aid of the fund for the religious instruction of the Protestant pupils of the school. I am induced to give it a place in this volume, not only because of the importance of its general theme, but because of its bearing upon the great subject of Unsectarian National Education.

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we may do all the good we can; and if not in the way we should prefer, at least in the way that is practicable.

You perceive, then, that this short text comprehends a great code of Christian morals: and well would it have been for the Christian Church and for the world, if it had received that attention and called forth that obedience which it so eminently deserves.

“Let *us* do good.” Why *us*? Because we are Christians. And who are Christians, that such conduct should be becoming and necessary in them? They are children of God; and because children, therefore followers, *i.e.*, imitators of God. Now, He is good, even to the unthankful and evil. They are disciples of Jesus Christ; and *He* is good. The Son of God is like the Father. “The Father worketh hitherto,” as Jesus told the Jews, “and *I* work.” And so He proved He was “the Son of the Father.” He not only did good, but this was His only work upon the earth. “He went about to do good; it was His meat and His drink.” How, then, should we disgrace that holy name by which we are called; how should we prove against ourselves that we are not disciples of Jesus Christ in anything but profession; that our religion amounts merely to an empty repetition of Christ’s words, but not to any participation of Christ’s spirit, if we refuse to perform this, which is the grand business and sure test of His disciples? For is it not written, “If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His” disciples? Let none of us, then, be so inconsistent as to profess Christianity while we cherish not a disposition to do good. Let none so grossly delude himself as to think that such religion is anything better than “the righteousness of the

scribes and Pharisees,"—none of the possessors of which "shall enter into the kingdom of God." For whatever else of Christianity you may have, you have indeed nothing, if you want this disposition, purpose, principle. No person, I suppose, who reads the words of our Lord with any attention, will doubt this. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." "And this is His command, that *we love one another.*" His law is fulfilled in one word, even this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The apostle Paul was truly teaching in the spirit of his Master and our Master, when he reminded the Galatians, that, because they were Christians, they were bound to exercise the holy and spiritual priesthood of doing good. Therefore he says, "let *us* do good:" because we are a spiritual priesthood, anointed "to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." "Wherefore to do good and to bestow forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Thus far we encounter no difficulty; for on these points all Christians are agreed *in opinion* at least, however much we may fail to manifest our faith by our works. Neither is there any Christian who will deny that every man whom we come in contact with, every one whom we may help or hurt, is "our neighbour." The parable of the good Samaritan has illustrated this doctrine with a vividness which will render it for ever impossible for any Christian to *profess* at least the exploded morality, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and *hate thine enemy*;" or to put the question, "*Who is my neighbour?*" Being agreed, therefore, respecting the two great points—That we as Christians are bound to do good; and who they are to whom we should do it—the matter which requires

our particular consideration is, *What is the good* we are bound to do to those persons? This is a very grave matter, and sometimes not a very plain matter. Accordingly, half the controversies which exist among us regard this very question, Whether some particular plan or scheme of acting be a doing of good or not? One party affirms, another denies, that the particular circumstances present an *opportunity* of accomplishing the Christian duty of *doing good*.

I would here remark, by the way, that such a precept as this is a distinct indication that, for being qualified to perform the duty of a Christian, a man must be an *observing, inquiring, reasoning* creature. For the New Testament, containing no list of *good things*, nor any definition of those *opportunities* which we are to embrace for the doing of those things, implies that these grave points we must determine for ourselves, in the exercise of our reason, enlightened by God's Spirit. It is indeed true, as the prophet exclaims, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good!" but only in the general—only the *principle* of the thing. The particular applications of that principle—the detail of good deeds, and especially the good things which may be proper for *us* to attempt in our special circumstances—all this is left for ourselves to judge of. For which purpose we should have "our senses exercised to discern both good and evil." And, accordingly, Christians are continually described by the apostles as "children of light"—"of the day"—"illuminated"—"taught of God," the Infinite Reason. And it is a most remarkable contrast, and very significant, that while many of our religious teachers warn us against the exercise of our reason in religious matters, as if this were some daring impiety,

seeking to terrify us by calling this faculty our "carnal reason," as if we had two reasons, a carnal and a spiritual,—the writers of the New Testament, on the contrary, blame their converts because they would *not* reason,—because they would be led by the ears, would follow men who were supported by authority, and not by truth; and so would adhere to false opinions and vain customs, which are not commandments of God, but doctrines of men,—superstitions, not religion. "Brethren, be not children in understanding; nevertheless, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." "I speak as to *wise men*, judge ye what I say." "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." "Put to proof all things, and hold fast *that which is good*," being approved. We cannot dispense with the exercise of our reason here. Of all possible subjects this demands it most, because it is the most momentous, and error regarding it is the most fatal. Christian duty is not an outward routine, but a spiritual and reasonable service.

What is it, then, to do good to men? It is to promote that which is their good. Now, *their happiness is their good*. I don't say their *present enjoyment* or their *gratification*,—for this frequently is their greatest danger; but their *happiness*, *i.e.*, their well-being, looking at the sum of their capacities as sentient, reasonable, moral, and spiritual beings,—beings whose conduct and character in this short life will determine their condition in a future life. Every deed, therefore, which tends to diminish the sum of misery in the world, or to increase the sum of happiness that is in it, is a *good deed*. And this circumstance may be taken as a criterion whether any deed be good or not. Having that tendency it is good; having an

opposite it is bad. It is a good deed to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the destitute and afflicted: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye clothed me;" "forasmuch as ye did it to the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me." But not only do we know that such actions are good, because our Lord has enjoined them on His followers, and practised them most illustriously Himself, but we see *why* He enjoined such acts on us—because hunger, thirst, nakedness, destitution, are such tremendous evils, that the very thought of them is enough to drive men to desperation and distraction.

How does it appear that these are evils of such magnitude? Because hunger, thirst, nakedness, produce the acutest pain, the most cutting anguish. Think of a man pining with hunger, shivering with cold, half-clothed, with no fire to warm his stiffened limbs; think of such a man who, feeling the wolfish famine tearing his own vitals, beholds the same misery in the despairing looks of his more delicate wife, and hears it in the cries of their helpless children! Is it good to feed these hungry persons? Certainly; because it will diminish somewhat the total amount of misery in the world.

But this hunger and nakedness are not only evils in their immediate physical effects; they are even greater evils in their more remote and moral consequences. They are the strongest temptations to intemperance, lying, theft, robbery, and the utter profligacy which despair prompts to. So long as people are half-fed and half-clothed, they will be drunkards, in spite of all that ministers, physicians, and temperance societies can say or do. In such a

condition, the craving for the stimulus of alcohol is in effect irresistible. For as intemperance produces hunger and nakedness, so do these, by a fatal reaction, produce intemperance. In so far, therefore, as you can feed the hungry and clothe the naked, you not only prevent the direct pain which those conditions imply, but you prevent—you take away—temptations, which are almost irresistible, to the commission of sins—to the formation of habits which are the parents of yet worse sufferings, even the total ruin of the person in body and soul.

It is our duty, then, as Christians, yea, as *men*, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked! This is a good work, and as we have opportunity let us do it.

But perhaps we are running too fast. Here is a hungry man; here is a starving family. You and I witness the painful sight; and we find that we can relieve them by uniting our means, but not alone. Should we not, then, before we commence feeding and clothing these people, inquire whether they be of our religious creed, or at least whether they be willing to receive instruction in it, so as to become proselytes to our religion? Human nature and the Christian religion alike repel the wretched scruple. "They are men, and they are miserable; and that is claim sufficient on those who also themselves are men, and may be miserable." This is the retort of the human heart to that pitiful objection: and does not Christ sanction it, when He says—"Inasmuch as ye did it *to the least of these, my brethren*, [the most ignorant, the most erring, the most vile,] ye did it unto me."

Well, but granting this, should we not, before uniting to feed these hungry and clothe these naked

people—should not you and I, before proceeding to do this as a Christian duty, ascertain whether we two agree in our opinions respecting the Christian religion—whether our conception of Christian doctrine and Christian duty be the same? For it may turn out that we are of different sects, yea, of hostile creeds,—that my church denounces yours as an association of idolaters, while yours condemns mine as a nest of heretics. Now, it fortunately happens that our points of disagreement do not concern the particular duty which we propose to perform—the feeding of the hungry and the clothing of the naked. We both believe in the precept, “Let us do good unto all men.” On this point, at least, we are sound and orthodox in each other’s opinion. It would seem, therefore, the dictate of the plainest sense, that we should act together so long as we are agreed, reserving our separation—if it must come—for those cases in which we have different views of what is required of us. Is this a mere dictate of common sense? What mean, then, these words of St Paul, “Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things?” Does this instruct us to co-operate as much as we can, or as little?

It is, then, our duty to perform these acts of mercy, as we find opportunity. But the duty is not easy; to perform it effectually is most difficult. Why? Because a person having been fed, presently becomes hungry again. Those wants recur perpetually; and as we cannot continually repeat our beneficence, if we bestow it in such a way as to make the objects of it dependent upon us, we teach them to be beggars,—we initiate and bribe them into poverty, and all the ills which follow it. Thus the alms of the monasteries in the

Middle Ages, thus the unreformed English poor-law, created the poverty and fostered the beggary they were designed to cure : for both held out to idleness and dissipation a certain prospect of relief from the consequences of these vices ; so that, in both cases, the cure was found to exasperate the disorder. While, therefore, we relieve destitution ; while we feed the hungry and clothe the naked, we shall perform these acts effectually and beneficially only in proportion as we dispose and enable them to feed and clothe themselves. "For," the Scripture has told us, "if any many will not work, neither should he eat." We must not, therefore, so enable him to eat that his sloth or his intemperance, or any other of his vices, may find shelter under our bounty. There can be no doubt that the general causes of extreme poverty are idleness, drunkenness, recklessness,—want of forethought and of self-denial. Exceptions there are ; but these causes produce the mischief in the vast majority of cases. Our charity, therefore, will not reach its end, unless it serve to diminish at least these destructive habits.

If, then, we do a good thing when we give a meal to a hungry man, we should surely do a much better thing if we could enable that man to earn a meal for himself ; to feed and clothe himself and his family by honest industry and thrift. In this way our Saviour's precept, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, would receive at our hands a far more full and complete obedience ; for thus we should contribute, not only to remove the evils of destitution, but also those deeper and more deplorable evils of which destitution is one of the fruits. It is obviously a far greater act of benevolence to cure an evil habit, than merely to

mitigate, and that temporarily, one of the pains which that habit has produced, and which it will and must produce again, so long as it is indulged ; as it would be a greater benefit to a sick man to cure his disease than merely to allay, for a few hours, the pain it gives him ;—with the certainty that our application will only bring back the symptoms, made worse by our tampering. And if so great a blessing awaits those who feed the hungry and clothe the naked, how great must their beatitude be who cut off at their very source these dark streams of human woe ; who help to turn vice and profligacy into moral integrity, frugality, industry ? to plant virtuous and religious habits in that soil which before was cumbered with the poisonous weeds of sin and wretchedness, of shame and despair ? “ Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul alive, and shall cover a multitude of sins.”

This most beneficent of Christian efforts is, however, found to be also one of the most difficult. For the power of habit having passed into a proverb all the world over, the strength of those habits which we are now considering, is such, that to break them or correct them in adult persons is found to be hopeless, or nearly hopeless. What, then, is to be done ? We must direct our efforts towards that portion of the destitute population whom the power of habit has not yet riveted in evil ; who are still capable both of learning something and of unlearning something ; who, if already wicked, are not yet so confirmed in wickedness, but that they may, by the blessing of God on judicious management, be reclaimed from that

fatal career in which they have made already a precocious progress. This has led all wise men who labour for the amelioration of society, to direct their attention especially to the young, as affording the best promise of securing the great end most effectually.

This perception has led to the establishment of *Ragged Schools*. The streets of all towns, and particularly of large cities, swarm with poor, half-starved children, driven out by their parents or others to get money by begging, stealing, or any means they can ; and who are thus, at an early age, compelled to learn the bad arts of deceit, lying, and all manner of dishonesty ; pinched with hunger and cold, urged by blows, surrounded by bad companions abroad, who initiate and encourage them in vice, and receiving at home—if their miserable dens may be called by that name—an education in pollution and sin. Every one must have remarked the peculiar look of these children,—revealing most painfully the shocking discipline they are subjected to. And there is not, I think, in the world a more distressing spectacle. From this class, accordingly, as might be expected, is derived the great mass of the criminals who are at war with society, and with whom society is at war. They fill our jails and our houses of correction,—they people our penal colonies, and they provide its victims for the gallows. It cannot be otherwise. Thus trained in childhood and youth, they can grow to nothing but pickpockets, thieves, burglars—they cannot but become the pests and terror of society. If, therefore, our *humanity* do not prompt us to attempt some remedy of this grievous evil, our *fear* at least should urge us to avert, if we can, so great a danger.

It is, then, as I said, the design of such institutions as that whose claims I now wish to bring before you, to apply a remedy to this terrible evil,—this lamentable state of things. They take the neglected, famishing child off the streets. They supply him with very plain but wholesome food. They keep him out of the way of mischief and temptation. They set him to work,—both his head and his hands. They teach him to read, to write, to count,—to know something of common things and the world around him. They inspire him with the ideas of *truth*, *duty*, and *decency*, of all which he was quite destitute. He learns here *cleanliness*, *order*, *obedience*. That he may be able to shift for himself when he grows up and leaves the school, he is taught a trade,—some of those common occupations by which men can almost always contrive to gain a livelihood, who are industrious and frugal. Are these small effects? Is it nothing to have thus transformed the little wolfish, starving beggar-boy into an honest man and an industrious citizen?

But some one will ask, Do the children in this school not receive a religious education? Now, suppose I should answer, “No; they do not receive any religious education further than has just been stated;” do you think it is not an immense step towards a religious education, that a person has been taught to read, and so is qualified to read the Bible, which we Protestants say contains the whole Christian religion? If this be no part of a religious education, strictly speaking, it is at least a great help towards it, and an indispensable qualification. Again, *cleanliness* is no part of a religious education, strictly speaking; yet wise men and pious have insisted that cleanliness is next to godliness, and is at least *half a virtue*. Truth-

speaking, also, unless I mistake, is part of Christianity; for we are told, "Lie not one to another;" "Speak every man truth with his neighbour." *Obedience*, in like manner, is a Christian virtue, and, as such, is solemnly enjoined in the New Testament; for there children are charged to obey their parents, wives their husbands, servants their masters, and, in general, all of us those who are invested with lawful authority over us. Finally, *honesty* and *industry* are among the requirements of our holy faith, which charges us to be "not slothful in business;"—"let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands, the thing which is good." I ask, then, Whether children who have learned these lessons have learned no part of Christianity? whether in these acquirements (if they have made them) they have not acquired some elements at least of religious and Christian education; especially when, at the same time, they have been carefully instructed, from day to day, that they are the creatures of God, who is almighty, just, wise, and good,—who preserves them, and sees them continually,—to whom they are responsible for all their conduct,—whose favour is their life, His displeasure their destruction? Without having received any special religious instruction, they would, I presume, in these general ideas and in those habits, have acquired a very momentous part of a Christian education.

The branches or subjects now mentioned, most people would perhaps class under the general description of *secular education*. It is an opinion which seems to prevail very generally, that secular education, without religious education, would prove not only *useless* but *pernicious*. This opinion is constantly repeated;

but it has never been established by any proof, so far as I have heard. Till it be proved, I shall take the liberty to question the soundness of that opinion,—to pronounce it false, chimerical, childish, contrary to all reason, inconsistent with all fact and experience. This subject I cannot discuss at present. I shall only stop to remark, that we may understand secular education to comprehend that knowledge of the works of God and of the works of man, which we possess apart from revelation; and I should like to know which of these it is, the understanding of which, the contemplation of which, exercises a depraving effect upon the human mind? Is it the heavens, which declare the glory of God—or the earth, which is full of His riches? Is it our own bodies, which are fearfully and wonderfully made by Him? Is it history, that solemn voice sounding throughout all ages and all climes which is now, and has ever been to mankind, the living witness that God not only exists but reigns,—that He is a ruler whose righteous laws cannot be violated without entailing tremendous penalties, whoever the transgressor may be? Which of these departments of secular education is it that is to do the mischief that is so perilous? I hold that religious education should be united with secular, because man has eternal interests as well as temporal; but I hold, also, that secular education is *good* so far as it goes—that it is *profitable* so far as it goes, and that the possession of it is incomparably better and safer for all parties than the want of it; and, therefore, if any impediment should prevent our communicating a strictly Christian education, it would be our duty to give a secular education; because this would prove beneficial, so far as it went. And I shall hold this opinion until some

reason to the contrary shall be produced, which, so far as I have observed, has not yet been done.

The children attending this school, however, receive all of them a *religious education*—strictly and formally *religious*. All of them read the Holy Scriptures daily; but each child is instructed in that form of Christianity which is professed by the parent. Roman Catholic children are taught the Roman Catholic religion, by Roman Catholic teachers, and from funds contributed by Roman Catholics; while children, whose parents profess to be Protestants, or whose parents' religion is unknown, are trained up in the religion of the Church of Scotland, as being the established form of the Protestant religion in this country. This mode of proceeding—instructing all the children together and by the same teachers, in common education, and separating them to receive their religious education from persons professing their own faith—is founded on this, that the institution is *not a missionary establishment for the conversion of Roman Catholics*, nor has it *any ecclesiastical or sectarian character*. It is established for a special and definite purpose—to remedy a particular evil, namely, to reclaim destitute, neglected, and vicious children, and make them, if possible, virtuous and useful members of society; and, therefore, it attempts to do what the parents of these children should have done, *and what they would have done, had they been consistent professors of their several creeds, whether Romanist or Protestant*.

Perhaps some of you may think this is too much liberality—that the directors of this school should refuse to feed, clothe, or teach these outcasts, unless they will consent to be taught the Protestant religion.

Let me put a case which may help to clear up this point. The greater number of our Scottish nobility are members of the Church of England: now, let us suppose that some of them, zealous to convert the Presbyterian peasantry on their estates to the Episcopal faith and worship, should build schools, employ teachers, and should offer the children gratuitous education, with food occasionally, and even clothing, on condition that the parents permitted the children to be taught the Church of England Catechism, to attend the Episcopal worship, and, in short, to be trained up as Episcopalians. I do not assert that any of our nobility act in this way; I put the case hypothetically; and I ask you, Whether you would consider it a fair and generous method of proselytising, for wealth and influence thus *to bribe* poverty and dependence? I anticipate from you a unanimous verdict, that such a proceeding, if adopted by any Duke or Duchess, any Earl or Countess, would be *disgraceful*. Well, if this be your verdict, it settles the case before us; for this is exactly parallel. Let us not, then, practise, in regard to others, what we should resent if practised towards the members of our own Church, or those who profess our own faith.

Thus the managers of this institution think they comply with the precept of the text, "As they have opportunity, they do good *unto all children*, of whatever religion, sect, or country, but especially to those who are of the household of their own faith." The Protestant children are taught the Protestant religion—they read daily the authorized version of the Bible; they are taught the Shorter Catechism. On Sundays they attend the Parish Church, and are, besides, carefully instructed in the principles of Christianity ac-

ording to the Church of Scotland. And, in short, instead of being banished from this school, there is more religious education here than in the schools which are professedly based upon it; for example, the Heriot Foundation Schools, or the Parish Schools themselves. There cannot, therefore, be a greater mistake, I will not say a grosser calumny, than to represent this as an institution from which religion is excluded. It is for the carrying on of the religious education of these Protestant children that the collection is made here to-day. You are not asked to contribute for communicating any religious doctrine but that which yourselves profess. In regard to this, therefore, there can be no scruple, nor any difficulty. And I do hope that the amount of your contributions for this important object will shew the liberality of your feelings on this whole subject, and will demonstrate that you are not to be deterred from doing what you see to be right, by any of those silly cries which bigotry teaches its disciples to use instead of reasons. This institution has the interests of no sect or party in view; it seeks simply *to do good, as it has opportunity*, to all men and all children. And its success already has been such as affords us reason to bless God. During the six years it has been in operation, one hundred and eight boys and eighty-nine girls,—one hundred and ninety-seven children in all,—have obtained situations through their connexion with it, and have been qualified, as we hope and believe, to fill these situations creditably and usefully. What a momentous result! Two hundred young persons on the road to usefulness, respectability, and happiness, who, but for this school, would, in all likelihood, have been, without exception, rushing down

that road to ruin on which it found and arrested them; and many of them having, long ere now, reached its fatal termination.\*

Other institutions, you are aware, exist, which have the same object in view. With these the managers and friends of the United Industrial School have no quarrel. There is ample room, work enough, and too much, for all. We have no wish to impede others in carrying out their own ideas, though we dissent from some of these. What we protest against is, that those who differ from us should represent this as an irre-

\* At the last general meeting, (December 31, 1862,) the Noble Chairman, in his opening address, shewed that the same results had continued to attend the institution during the eight years that had elapsed since the statement in the text was made :—

“The conduct in after life,” said Lord Dunfermline, “of the children taught in the school was the testing proof whether the principles which they had endeavoured to inspire them with had really taken root; and the results of the school in this respect had been highly satisfactory. Owing to the active and intelligent exertions of their superintendent, a return had been obtained of the conduct of the great proportion of the pupils who had passed from the school into the world at large. Nearly one thousand pupils had passed through the school during the fifteen years it had been in operation; and a return, embracing 950 of these, had been obtained. From that return, it appeared that, of the 950 children who had gone out from the school since 1847, the date of its establishment, 798 were maintaining “good” and “very good” characters, 12 doubtful ones, and 45 bad ones. He wished he could have omitted the last item altogether; but still, considering the numbers and the proportions, he thought that the results were as satisfactory as could have been expected. (Applause.) The same return shewed that the total earnings of the boys who had left the school since 1847 amounted to £10,920, os. 6½d. per annum, and that of the girls to £1552, 16s., making altogether a total sum of £12,472, 16s. 6½d. (Applause.) Now, when he considered the origin of these children, and the scenes from which they originally came, he thought it must be satisfactory to them all to feel, that they had contributed towards putting forth into the world so many honest, laborious, moral, and religious subjects of her Majesty.”

ligious, or *unreligious* seminary. This, we say, is a gross calumny, and one which any person can refute who will take the trouble to visit the school. And this I seriously advise you to do. Instead of trusting to what others say, its advocates or its enemies, go and judge for yourselves. And if you find it is doing a good work in a right way, do you lend it a helping hand and a sympathising heart. Ask God for His blessing, and put your shoulder to the wheel.

Having so long detained you, I shall only add—1st, That, seeing so many of our fellow-creatures so miserably situated, our gratitude should be excited that God has provided some better thing for us,—that we have been born in happier circumstances, of parents who both were able to provide for our bodily wants, and were disposed to train us in the way we should go; and, 2dly, Let not our comforts, our prosperity, our superiority, harden our hearts. In the wise providence of God much evil is permitted; but no evil is altogether evil; it always tends to generate *some* good: and the poverty, the miseries, even the sins of our fellow-men, should furnish to us lessons of humility, sympathy, and pity; and should not only excite, but exercise our active benevolence, should train us in that charity which is the greatest of Christian graces, —the end of the commandment,—the bond of perfectness,—the fulfilling of the law.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, most merciful and gracious, look down, in Thy great compassion, on all the creatures Thou hast made; upon the poor and destitute, the widows and orphans, the ignorant, the profligate, and those for whose soul no man careth, and upon all who are

wandering in the fatal paths of sin and death. Let the groaning of the prisoner, let the cry of the miserable, enter into thine ears, O Lord of Sabaoth ! Deliver the oppressed from him that spoileth him, and save the afflicted people. Arise, O God ! for judgment, and save all the meek of the earth. Our eyes fail, waiting for Thy salvation. Now, at length, let Thy kingdom come, and let Thy will be done ; for Thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.

We thank Thee, that Thou, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed, hast put it into the hearts of Thy servants to go after the lost sheep, and to bring them back to Thy fold ; to deliver the outcast and perishing lambs from that roaring lion which goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

May their labours be blest of Thee, O Lord, who hast commanded us to be merciful as Thou art merciful, and to do good, as we have opportunity, unto all men. May we be followers of Thee, as dear children, and walk in love as Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice well-pleasing to God ; and who came into the world to seek and save that which was lost. Also to do good and to make others share in Thy bounty to us, we would not forget, knowing that with such sacrifices Thou art well pleased.

Grant unto us remission of all our sins, our negligences and ignorances ; and accept us and our services, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

# ON THE LAWFULNESS OF WAR;

BEING AN ANSWER TO THE DOCTRINES OF THE  
PEACE SOCIETY.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE following sermon was preached on the occasion of the National Fast, April 26, 1854, on account of the war against Russia. The Peace Society was then extremely turbulent and noisy; so that it might be said of its members what Cowper said of the Whigs of his day, "They talk of peace till they disturb the state." The organ of the Peace Society contained an elaborate review of the sermon immediately after its publication; but as it appeared to me that none of the principal positions here maintained was either overturned or shaken, or indeed almost touched, by this or any other reply, I have not thought it necessary to notice them further. The question, indeed, here considered, resolves itself into those differences of opinion on certain points in regard to which the Society of Friends, or Quakers, are at issue with nearly all other Christians, at least of modern times.

The subject of this discourse has acquired a fresh interest from the vehement discussions contained in

Mr Kinglake's eloquent and entertaining book, lately published, "The Invasion of the Crimea." Mr Kinglake sets himself to prove that that invasion was a blunder, and the war a crime, because the objects aimed at could all of them have been accomplished, perhaps more effectually, by the public opinion of Europe expressing itself in the joint remonstrance of the four Powers—who were cordially united—in condemning the policy of Russia, and in protesting against her designs upon Turkey, as indicated by her occupation of the Principalities. If this representation be just, a grave responsibility lies upon the British government, and indeed upon all who, in however humble a sphere, expressed approbation of the Russian war. Indeed, the guilt must devolve upon the whole British empire, with the exception of a very small party, for never was the national sentiment so unanimous or so decided in favour of any war.

And yet Mr Kinglake—whose great object it is in his first volume to censure France and Great Britain for entering into a separate alliance, and so detaching themselves from Austria and Prussia—makes it quite evident, by his own statements and reasonings, that by the joint action of the four Powers, the object in view could never have been attained, if that object were anything further than merely compelling Russia to recross the Pruth. For the moment this was attained, and Austria had secured her own southern frontier by the occupation of Wallachia with her own troops, she, and Prussia with her, refused to take another step against Nicholas; who, indeed, had attained, by family alliance and personal influence, such sway over both the emperor of Austria and the king of Prussia, that their movements against him, so

far as they did move, may be reasonably conjectured to have been extorted by the national opinion of their own subjects, the authority of their own ministers, and their public obligations to the other European states, in opposition to their own personal feelings. Accordingly, the moment a pretext was afforded, (by the Russians withdrawing behind the Pruth,) those feelings prevailed; and it was found, by the two Western states, impossible to induce the government of Austria or of Prussia to proceed further in checking the Russian power.

They and their subjects were probably well pleased that the thing should be done; and they consoled themselves for the want of any share in the honour of saving Europe from a great danger, by the comfortable experience which they had of escaping from heavy burdens and great sacrifices of various kinds, which others undertook for the common cause. The public spirit of the two western Powers surely merits a different appreciation from that which this author has accorded to it.

Upon the whole, we cannot think it justifiable or wise to write history in the bitterest vein of satire: nor can we believe that Mr Kinglake's volumes are calculated to promote any interest which sound politicians or good citizens are concerned for. It is vain, if not hypocritical, to denounce war, if we labour to diffuse or inflame those dispositions out of which wars spring. We cannot think that wise and good men will feel grateful to Mr Kinglake for these sketches, clever, piquant, and eloquent as they are.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.”—MATT. v. 38-42.

FROM such texts as this, certain parties of Christians, both in the ancient and modern Church, have concluded that the practice of war is absolutely forbidden to the followers of Jesus Christ in all circumstances whatever. That our Lord forbids such wars as proceed from ambition, revenge, avarice, lust of glory, or of dominion, is plain : for He forbids these passions themselves, and, of course, all deeds whatever which spring from them, wars among the rest. But that He prohibits His disciples from engaging in war, whatever the circumstances may be in which they find themselves placed, is at the least a hard saying. And, before accepting so startling a doctrine, it becomes us to look narrowly into the matter to satisfy ourselves that such really is the teaching of Jesus Christ, and not the weak comment of His sincere indeed, and well-meaning, but enthusiastic disciples.

Though it be certain and evident that public wars, like private contentions, having their source in the corruption of man's heart, are both the solemn witnesses against that corruption and its fearful chastisement ; yet it does not follow from this that in order to create such struggle both the parties should be involved in the guilt of cherishing the evil passions out of which the struggle arose. The maxim indeed holds good both in public and private, that in quarrels

there are commonly faults on both sides ; and when quarrels are long continued, this holds almost universally. But it will not follow from this that in such cases there is not a right and a wrong side ; or that justice is not with one of the parties : so that an impartial spectator, acquainted with the circumstances, shall, without hesitation, pronounce him innocent of contention and the other guilty.

The question then is, Does it become the duty of the innocent party to permit, in every case, the aggressor to work out the dictates of his evil passions, his lust of power, of wealth, of revenge, without opposition—the opposition of persuasion and remonstrance, and, if these fail, the opposition of force ? They who would persuade us that the gospel inculcates the doctrine of non-resistance, would have us believe that such is our duty ; but surely so startling a view of human duty, and one which appears so perilous to the welfare, not to say the existence of human society, must be shewn to have very strong foundations before we can be expected to admit its truth.

Accordingly, they who teach us that we are prohibited as Christians from engaging in war in any circumstances, or under any pretext whatever, put the question to this issue. The New Testament, they say, peremptorily and distinctly, instructs us so to act ; and, therefore, we must, out of regard to that authority, turn a deaf ear to every consideration which might move us to pursue a different line of conduct. “ Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.” “ Resist not evil.” “ Recompense to no man evil for evil.” “ See that none render evil for evil to any man, but ever

follow that which is good, both among yourselves and among all men." "If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." This is the summary of passages given in a pamphlet by the secretary of the Peace Society, and which has been circulated in Edinburgh during the last few days. The pamphlet is entitled "Defensive War," and seems to be regarded as a very successful vindication of the doctrine it expounds, as on the top of it is printed this advertisement, "*Please to read this and give it away.*" I am glad this pamphlet has been kindly sent me by the members of the Peace Society, as it presents a compendious view of their opinions, hinders misapprehensions and misrepresentations of the views we argue against, and, in short, saves us from refuting what no one holds, and so beating the air. I will, accordingly, endeavour to give as candid and plain a refutation of the positions laid down in this tract as I can; which, it appears to me, is very easily done.

In the first place, then, of the passages cited, there is only one which has any bearing on the question here before us—"Resist not evil." The other three passages forbid revenge and retaliation. Now all Christians who know anything of their religion, are agreed that all acts of revenge and retaliation, as such, are contrary to the spirit and letter of the gospel, whether such acts proceed from individuals or nations. That temper is forbidden, and with it, all its fruits and manifestations. This is not the question here. The last passage (1 Peter ii. 20) contains an admonition to domestic slaves, (*οἰκέται,*) who, having assumed the profession of the gospel, were thereby rendered more obnoxious to their heathen or Jewish masters. Now, surely this conduct, which was proper to persons in

the melancholy condition of slaves, under a law which allowed them no rights, either of property or person, may not have been designed to furnish a rule of universal application to all Christians, however different their circumstances might be ; and much less for Christian nations, in their transactions with other nations, whether Christian or not. Accordingly, we don't find St Peter giving any such admonition to the free part of the Christian community, as that they should submit to any person who chose to beat or buffet them, much less to Christian masters to submit, if their slaves should proceed to inflict upon *them* the cruelties which the law permitted them to practise upon their bondmen. In the fourth chapter, indeed, St Peter exhorts all Christians to arm themselves with *innocence, prudence, and patience* ; these he instructs them will prove a strong defence against the power which the heathen magistrates exercised under the authority of the law, and against those calumnies which both heathens and Jews uttered against the believers, without any restraint of law. The principle in both cases is the same—there existing no legal defence or any means of redressing the wrongs they were exposed to, they should bear these as inevitable evils in this world, under the power of faith in God, and hope of the better world which He had promised. But patience is the *ultima ratio*—a remedy which has place only when others fail. When evils attack us, it is a virtue to endure them, only after we have used all lawful means to have them cured. The wise Christian, for instance, who is in poverty, exercises patience indeed, so long as the evil lasts ; but he employs diligence, thrift, prudence, and prayer, that he may need the virtue of patience in this regard as short a while

as possible. And so with all other similar calamities. "If the will of God be so," he bears them patiently ; but he never will allow himself to believe that the will of God is so, till he has exhausted those means of cure which are not forbidden in the Divine law. On the contrary, the very acuteness of his sufferings he construes as the urgent argument of the Divine providence, to use 'all means, not unlawful, to rid himself of his pains. And, to talk of submission to evils which may be lawfully, and can be easily remedied, is to preach not gospel to us, but sloth, stagnation, and despair.

Of the five passages quoted, therefore, four at least have no application to the point at issue. It is added, indeed, that "a considerable part of the New Testament" consists of "passages which bear directly and unequivocally on the point before us." If so, it is unfortunate that some of these pertinent texts had not been quoted. In the meantime, we may be permitted to suspect that a writer, who has plainly mistaken the drift of at least four out of the five passages he has produced, may have erred respecting the real meaning of those others which, he says, exist in such abundance. The cause, then, must depend upon the strength of the single passage, "Resist not evil," &c.

Now, I shall not attempt any minute criticism of this passage, as the words here lie before us. I shall only ask you to observe these two things :—

1. That, since this precept is put as the Christian contrast to the Jewish law of retaliation in kind, (Exod. xxi. 24, 25 ; Deut. xix. 16-22,) we may fairly conjecture that it was not intended by our Lord to bear that wide application which is imagined, but simply to prohibit those feelings of revenge, and that practice

of retaliation, flowing from it, which have always so strongly possessed Oriental nations, and which were so deeply embedded in the minds and manners of the ancient Hebrews, that the *lex talionis* was, like other customs, permitted to them in the Mosaic code, *for the hardness of their hearts.*

2. It is probable that the prohibition, "Resist not evil," should not be understood by us without some modification, because the other prohibitions connected with it, though equally absolute in form, must be taken with those limitations which a regard to our own interests and the benefit of others suggest. Indeed, all the cases proposed in the 39th, 40th, 41st, and 42d verses, as particular exemplifications of the general precept, "Resist not evil," must evidently be so accepted, unless we would maintain that our Saviour directs us to act in such a manner as would destroy the individual and ruin society. Can we persuade ourselves that we are required to invite personal injury by what is said in the 39th verse? unjust lawsuits by what is said in verse 40? oppression and lawless exaction by what is said in verse 41? or that Christianity imposes on us the duty of giving to every one who asks, and lending to every one who would borrow, without any consideration of our own circumstances and those of the person who makes the demand, as also of the probable effects of such giving and lending on him, ourselves, and others? I should like to inquire whether the members of the Peace Society, and others who teach the doctrine of absolute non-resistance, are so consistent to that principle of interpretation which they apply to the text, "Resist not evil," as to feel themselves bound to give to him that asketh universally, and to lend without exception

to him that wishes to borrow. It is notorious that a large proportion of the members of the Peace Society, and of the Society of Friends or Quakers, are in very affluent circumstances. We rejoice that they are so. We therefore conclude with certainty, that they either do not adopt the literal sense of *giving to him that asks, and lending to him that would borrow*; or, they conceal their faith on this point. For if it were generally known that any sect so believed and so acted, the members of it could not possibly retain anything to themselves. The multitude of those who would rather beg than work, and rather borrow than repay, being so great, no man who felt himself bound to yield to such demands whenever made, could possess any property. And yet the professors of the doctrine of non-resistance do possess property; which shews either that they have not adopted the precept in the 42d verse without limitation, or that they have not made their light shine before men.

A proof that the Quakers do not hold the 42d verse to contain an absolute precept is afforded by their proceeding in regard to ecclesiastical taxes. They refuse, as is well known, to pay these for conscience' sake. They do not, therefore, consider themselves bound to give to him that asketh in all circumstances; for here is a man who not only asks but demands, and that under the authority of law—and yet the party who pleads for the literal and unqualified obligation of Christ's words, "Resist not evil," replies, "I will not give; but you may take if you please." Thus an inconsistency of the grossest kind is committed; the officers of law are allowed to seize what they choose without opposition, because Christ said, "Resist not evil;" and yet their legal demand is

refused, though Christ said in the same passage, "Give to him that asketh thee."

The only two answers I can imagine to this are the following:—First, that our Lord's words refer to the demands of charity, not of pretended legal obligation. This I answer in the very words of the Peace Society, to those who put a similar construction on the text, "Resist not evil." "Who told you, my brother, that these precepts were not to be strictly and literally interpreted?" "If you can produce any intimation of that sort, any hint or suggestion, however slender or remote, from the language of our Saviour or His apostles, to warrant this assertion, I will throw up my case."—*Defensive War*, p. 4

The other reply, which may be imagined, is, that other duties are here also to be regarded, such as that of protesting for liberty of conscience against ecclesiastical exactions and oppressions. But this, I submit, would be to relinquish that principle of strict interpretation and literal obedience which is maintained as the ground of the whole argument against war, and every form of resistance to wrong.

I take the liberty of soliciting the attention of those who now proclaim the doctrine of non-resistance, conceiving it to be inculcated in plain terms by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to the fact which cannot be disputed, that our Lord in the Gospel requires the sale of our possessions and the bestowal of them in alms, (Luke xii. 33, 34, and Matt. xix. 21,) that He prohibits the acquisition of property, or the laying up of money, (Matt. vi. 19-21,) that He forbids all forethought and provision regarding the necessities of the body and the affairs of this world, (Matt. vi. 24-34;) finally, that St Paul has forbidden resistance to civil

magistrates, (Rom. xiii.,) in terms as stringent, as unlimited, and as absolute as any that are employed respecting the matter now before us. I cannot help therefore expressing surprise that those who have felt themselves so strictly bound by the literal sense of the texts regarding resistance and war, should have permitted themselves so liberal an interpretation of those other no less stringent precepts respecting worldly prudence, getting money and growing rich ; in all which those respectable communities who hold the doctrine of non-resistance are generally acknowledged to be not inferior to other Christians. It is certainly not consistent that they who feel themselves under so strict a bondage to the letter in respect to the one class of passages, should allow themselves so free a use of the spirit in respect to the other class.

Another consideration I desire to submit to those who, not content with holding the doctrine of non-resistance, are zealously employing themselves in preaching that all wars whatever are immoral and wicked, and the men who engage in them worthy of being detested as cut-throats and butchers, is this—Whether it appears likely that a doctrine, which *confessedly* cannot be reconciled to common sense, or made to commend itself to the human understanding and conscience—a doctrine which would subvert all law and order everywhere—which would make the bad strong and the good weak—which would deliver virtue bound into the hands of triumphant wickedness—which would render the worst men masters in every community, and the most ignorant, savage, and ambitious nations lords of the earth ; whether a doctrine which necessarily and even obviously involves such consequences should be conceived to have been really

inculcated by Him "who is in the bosom of the Father," the Eternal Word of the all-wise and righteous God, and who came into the world to introduce order and establish peace, by rendering all men obedient to that law which is indeed glorious in its mercy but terrible in its sanctions and tremendous in its penalties? Can a sober-minded Christian allow himself to believe that that is a doctrine of Jesus Christ which, if acted on, (as it should be if it have that character,) would make the emperor of Russia master of all Europe—and swallow up the liberty, the civilisation, the Christianity of all its peoples in that gulf of despotism, ignorance, superstition, cruelty and wrong, from which they have been so slowly and so painfully redeemed? These consequences no doubt will be denied. I shall, therefore, set myself to shew that they are inevitable.

If the principle of non-resistance be sound, it must be so universally—not only in the case of war, but of all legislation, all police, all judicial proceeding, all scholastic and domestic discipline—because it is pleaded on the ground that resistance to evil is *absolutely* forbidden by the Master whose authority we acknowledge when we profess to be Christians. If, therefore, by that precept of our Lord we are prohibited from waging war even in self-defence, we must be equally so from enacting penal laws, building jails or houses of correction, and from employing judges, magistrates, policemen, or other officers of justice—from not only executing criminals, but transporting, confining, or otherwise punishing them; for by all these means the community physically and forcibly resists the evil which the criminal has shewn that he is disposed to commit. For it is not pre-

tended that our Saviour singles out the case of defensive war for prohibition; but defensive war is thought to be forbidden because Christ lays down a principle of action for His disciples which includes it. The advocates of this strange notion indeed admit that it may be necessary to employ coercion and restraint for our own protection; \* but in this admission they plainly are unfaithful to their creed; for surely "restraint and coercion" are forms of *resistance to evil*. And no difference in principle can be pointed out between taking away the natural life of a criminal by hanging him, and taking away his civil life, by immuring him in a prison, or enslaving him in a distant colony. This admission, which common sense has extorted, is a manifest giving up of the whole argument. For, while they urge that the duty of non-resistance is universally obligatory on all Christians, regarding all actions, public and private, they at the same moment introduce, quite arbitrarily, two most important exceptions — one regarding persons, the other regarding things. "Coercion and restraint" they admit, may be employed by the magistrate in the ordinary discharge of his duty, and even by private individuals, in certain conjunctures.

It may be interesting, and is fair, to let these reasoners state their case in their own words. In the following quotation the secretary of the Peace Society speaks in the person of an objector to his doctrine:—

"Let me put you a question," says this objector, "which will bring your principle to a test. Suppose a ruffian and a robber were to break into my house at night, with murderous designs against me and my family, and I saw that the only chance I had of pre-

serving my own life and theirs, was by putting him to death, do you mean to say that it is my duty to suffer myself and my children to be murdered, rather than employ the only effectual means of defence which lies within my power, by taking away the life of this midnight marauder? I feel no disposition at all to shirk or evade this question.

“In the case then of being assailed by a robber or assassin, which forms your hypothesis, there are three things you can do:—

“1. You may employ moral influence, by an appeal to the reason, and the feelings, and the conscience of the aggressor.

“2. Or, in the second place, you may seek safety in flight.

“3. Or, in the third place, you may employ physical restraint and coercion, in so far as to prevent the infliction of injury by your assailant. Peace principles, as far as I understand them, do not forbid the use of such means, if in the use of them the inviolability of human life is respected. I believe that positive restraint thus imposed upon one who invades the life and liberty of another, may be not only duly admitted, but required by the law of benevolence, for the well-being of the aggressor himself. But this resistance must not go to the extent of such violence as would endanger life, for no one, according to my judgment, has a right to take life, but He who gave it.

“But suppose it will be said, after exhausting all these expedients, or where they are impracticable, there is no alternative left for me, but to kill or be killed. What ought I to do then?—Do?—die, like a true Christian man—die, rather than commit a crime,

die a martyr's death, in vindication of your principles." —Pp. 6, 8, 9.

"A martyr's death!" May God deliver us from being martyrs at all! But if we must enjoy this dreadful honour, may we be martyrs in defence of truth and righteousness, not of ridiculous paradoxes and wild delusions. Just let us consider for a moment the result of the conduct recommended in this quotation.

By inquiring into the results of action, I do not in the least commit myself to the doctrine of *expediency*, as popularly understood; *i. e.*, the permitting ourselves to depart from moral rules in particular cases, because of the supposed exigency of those cases; but, on the other hand, without asserting that their opposite tendencies to produce happiness or misery is the ground of moral distinction in actions, as good or bad—which, however, many of the soundest thinkers have maintained—we surely cannot be wrong in concluding, that those principles of action which, if generally carried out, would prove destructive to the individual and to society, cannot be right; and that those principles cannot be wrong which, in their general tendency, promote security, order, and peace. Without saying that virtue or vice in actions *consists* in their respective tendencies, we may surely maintain that a consideration of their tendencies may help us to discover what actions are virtuous, and what vicious.

Let us, then, for a moment, ask what would the result be of acting on the non-resistance theory in the case of a midnight murderer?

Yielding to the instinct of human nature, which every law in the world has sanctioned, you kill the

ruffian who designed to kill you, your wife, and your children. It is a dreadful necessity; but one which the man himself created, and for which he is responsible, not you. He has lost his life; but it was forfeited, by the crime, to the laws of his country. Nothing, therefore, has been taken from him except that which the public was bound to deprive him of, if the crime had been accomplished. What, then, is the result on the whole? This—six or seven innocent, perhaps valuable, lives have been saved, and one life has been lost which already was due to public justice. But what would the result be of the other course? You cannot dissuade the murderer from his purpose; he will not let you bind him; and now you can do nothing but “die like a true Christian—die a martyr’s death in vindication of your principles.” The consequence is, that six or seven innocent persons lose their lives; and the murderer loses his life on the scaffold. By the one course of proceeding one guilty man alone dies; by the other, one guilty man dies and six or seven innocent persons also die.

If a tiger or a serpent were to get into your house, what would you do? Why should a man, acting like a tiger or a serpent, be treated differently? It seems we must not take away man’s life because God gave it, and He only should take it away. But God gave the serpent his life, and the tiger his, and man can restore it no more than he can the life of a man: and yet we should think we did a good deed, if, seeing a tiger or a serpent about to spring upon a man, we shot him dead. But it seems a man, violating the dictates of reason and conscience, must, in imitating the beasts, enjoy an immunity which is not granted

to them, when they innocently yield to those instincts which are their only guides.

That it is absolutely unlawful to take away human life is, like the doctrine of non-resistance, attempted to be drawn from the New Testament. Both alike are silly crotchets, which are no more sanctioned by Scripture than by common sense, and which no person will believe who gives himself liberty to think for himself, or to consider the general scope and intention of the Scripture, instead of dwelling on particular detached expressions.

If we inquire what the general tendency on society would be of the doctrine of non-resistance, we shall find that it would encourage violence and wrong : that it could be nothing but an invitation to the wicked to outrage the helplessness of the good. It amounts to nothing less than this, that as criminal laws are in opposition to Christian principles, so human society would be better secured without those laws than by their operation. For, as was said before, if the notion that non-resistance is forbidden in the New Testament be correct, every kind and degree of resistance is forbidden equally there ; which is to say, that laws against crime are unlawful ; because laws without penalties are not laws, and penalties without force and compulsion are impossible.

It may be said, Christianity does not teach us to go to war, or to enact penal laws, or to hang or transport criminals, or to resist by force those who would take away our property or our lives. I reply, Christianity does not teach us to do a thousand actions which yet are very necessary and proper to be done in the judgment of all men. You eat your victuals, put on clothes, bolt your doors, bar your windows, and perform habi-

tually a hundred actions, which, being essential to your health, comfort, and security, you recognise as duties, but for which you neither find nor seek any authority or sanction in the New Testament : for this book was not designed as a universal rubric for all kinds of human actions, but as an authoritative exposition of certain great religious truths. It does not pretend to tell us what all men may easily learn from the use of reason, from the exercise of conscience, from daily experience. Our Lord and His apostles presume that the people they address have some measure of common sense, and that they will retain and use this vulgar faculty regarding ordinary matters.

The New Testament contains no hint that subjects, wives, children, servants, should make resistance, whatever atrocities rulers, husbands, parents, or masters, may commit. Shall we, therefore, not only revive the exploded doctrine of passive obedience, but extend the preposterous dogma to all these relations? Christianity, indeed, enjoins obedience and submission ; but, addressing reasonable men, it presumes they will find out the needful exceptions to its general rules, and will not push these, which are meant for the conservation of society, to a length which would be mischievous or destructive.

There is an argument which I am desirous to allude to before leaving this part of the discourse :—

“There is,” says the writer formerly referred to, “one other objection which I have reserved to the last, because I consider it incomparably the most serious and formidable which we have to encounter—an objection, behind which many entrench themselves, as an impregnable fortress, after all the other out-works of defence have been freely surrendered.

“ The form which it first generally assumes is something like this, That God has interwoven with the constitution of man’s nature an instinct of self-preservation, and that, as the resistance even unto death of those who assail us, may sometimes be necessary to the preservation of life, we cannot do wrong in following these primitive impulses even thus far, as they are implanted within us by our Maker himself. Now, it must be observed in the first place, that this argument proceeds on an assumption which it is most dangerous to admit, namely, that a man is at liberty to follow his instincts as a sufficient and authoritative law of his nature. Now reflect for a moment where such a principle as this would lead, if it be unconditionally maintained. What extremity of wickedness, what atrocity of crime, may not be vindicated on the same ground? You cannot be unaware, that this is precisely the ground taken by those who surrender themselves to the most boundless indulgence of their passions, who riot and welter in every species of profligacy and licentiousness, on the plea that they are only following the instincts and propensities of their nature. And if we, for purposes of convenience, and in order to evade the force of a plain Christian law, take our position on such a principle as that, by what means can we succeed, and, indeed, with what face can we attempt to dislodge those who have taken the same position for purposes of open and unblushing vice? But I utterly deny that man is to look to his physical instincts as the law of his being. Are not reason and conscience expressly given him in order to govern his propensities? And was not Christianity given him, in order to instruct reason and regulate conscience? In fact, are not all the restraints of

law, morality, and religion, so many checks on these original impulses and tendencies of man's nature, without which checks, it is clear, society could not exist for a day? On this subject, I ask permission to introduce a short extract from the writings of the greatest moral philosopher that England ever produced—I mean Bishop Butler.

“‘Mankind have various instincts and principles of action, as brute creatures have. Brutes obey these instincts or principles of action, according to certain rules—suppose the constitution of their body, and the objects around them. Brutes in action, according to these rules, act suitably to their whole nature. Mankind also, in acting thus, *would* act suitably to their whole nature, if no more were to be said of man's nature than what has been now said, if that, as it is a *true*, were also a *complete*, adequate account of our nature. But that is *not* a complete account of *man's* nature—somewhat further must be brought in to give us an adequate notion of it, namely, that another principle of action, that is, conscience or reflection, is to be found there, and that this, compared with the rest, as they all stand together in the nature of man, plainly bears upon it marks of authority over all the rest, and claims the absolute direction of them all to allow or forbid their gratification.’

“Now, we go one step further than Bishop Butler, and maintain, not only that God has given to reason and conscience a supremacy over all instincts and propensities, in the constitution of man's nature, but that He has also subordinated reason and conscience themselves, to the authority of that divine law revealed by our Saviour, ‘bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.’”—Pp. 1-3.

To this I reply,—

1. Regarding the Scriptures.—I deny that God has “subordinated reason and conscience to the divine law,” in any sense except that in which He requires reason to be subject to that which is perceived to be truth, and conscience to that which is apprehended to be duty. For the design of Revelation is not to *supersede* reason, but to enlighten it; not to set conscience aside, but to instruct it, so that these powers shall continue as they were before, the guides and rulers of man’s life, only now better qualified to perform their high function. But it is the established practice of those who would have us believe absurdities, to set up the letter of Scripture as a substitute for that which it was meant, not to supersede, but direct. Reasoning thus, why do not the members of the Peace Society believe Transubstantiation? It is more distinctly taught in the *letter* of Scripture than Non-resistance.

2. Touching the indulgence of our passions, and yielding to our instincts, it is true that this must be regulated, not by the impulses of those passions and appetites themselves, but by reason and conscience taught and guided by the Divine Word. If we *thus* indulge them, our conduct is dutiful, or at least innocent; if, in that other manner, it is the proceeding of an animal, and therefore sin in a man. But what I desire you will particularly notice is this, that all the appetites and instincts of human nature may not only be indulged innocently, but their indulgence is absolutely necessary to the preservation of the individual or the continuation of the race. Drunkenness is a sin—it is the indulgence of the appetite of *thirst*, without the regulation of reason and conscience. But the

appetite of thirst itself is part of the indispensable furniture of the human constitution, and without its gratification the individual would perish. The same may be said of hunger, of the sexual appetite, and of every appetite, passion, and instinct of human nature. Their misdirection and abuse are sins; but they themselves, so far from being sins, are the natural weapons without which the individual and the race could not be preserved.

It is admitted that the instinct of self-preservation is part of human nature, as of all natures whatever, and that the irascible passions are closely associated with that instinct, if not parts of it. Now, whatever sins may have been connected with that instinct,—whatever crimes may have resulted from the indulgence of those passions,—to hold that the instincts and passions themselves are sinful—that it is unlawful to indulge them in any circumstances whatever—is not only a paradox in itself, and a blasphemy against human nature, but an imputation on the wisdom and goodness of God, who has implanted these indestructibly in the constitution of man.

The non-resistance argument rests on the assumption that these instincts are not only sins in their abuse, but sins in themselves. But the contrary is evident from three things—First, Because we can clearly distinguish the sinful abuse from the innocent and beneficial use; Second, Because those passions appeared in that human nature which was without sin. *Jesus was angry*, (Mark iii. 3;) and Third, Because the advocates of non-resistance themselves concede this; for they allow it is lawful not only to flee for safety, but to use “restraint and coercion in certain circumstances.” Now this is to indulge the

instinct of self-preservation. But if a propensity is sometimes to be indulged it cannot be sinful in itself; because to yield to a sinful propensity is always sinful.

That war is one of the greatest evils which can afflict humanity, is too evident either to require proof on one side, or to admit of denial on the other. It springs from the worst passions, occasions the greatest crimes, and inflicts the widest misery. No human language can exaggerate the sufferings which it has brought upon mankind—no human mind can comprehend them : and therefore a depth of criminality attaches to those who are chargeable with creating war, compared with which the guilt of an ordinary malefactor is trivial. This is generally admitted ; indeed it requires no proof but such as the history of every war furnishes in melancholy abundance.

Neither can it be doubted, that a very large proportion of the most sanguinary wars have been, in every point of view, unjustifiable in all the parties engaged in them ; for they resulted from prejudice, hatred, jealousy, revenge, cupidity on one side, conflicting with similar dispositions on the opposite. All this is admitted ; but this is not the question at issue. It is quite a different question, namely, Whether of all possible evils war be the greatest ? or, Whether there be not some possessions so valuable, that in order to acquire or retain them, we are justified in waging war—accepting even this horrible catastrophe as the less of two evils ? That such cases may occur, we can surely imagine ; that such wars have actually been waged, it would be a very violent paradox to deny.

The great king invaded Greece with those countless hosts which drank up rivers. Was it a sin in the

Greeks to resist him? His motives were lust of dominion and spite: the light of liberty, which he and his predecessors had extinguished on the coast of Ionia, offended his eyes as it glimmered from afar in the bay of Corinth, and under the brows of Hymettus. Was it wrong in the Athenian and Spartan states to repel this invasion by force of arms, when they knew that its success would not only imply the enslavement and slaughter of the whole Greek population, but the extinction of philosophy, science, and freedom everywhere? Was the preservation of Greece, the eye of the world, and of Athens, the eye of Greece, not worth a war; not worth the battles of Salamis, Marathon, and Thermopylæ?

Are the Jews to be condemned for taking up arms to resist Antiochus Epiphanes, who would suppress their religion, and compel them to adopt heathen superstitions? Finally, I should like to know whether it was an ungodly enterprise in Charles Martel, when the Moslem hordes, having poured through the passes of the Pyrenees, were occupying the south of France in hundreds of thousands, he met them with the collected strength of his Frankish chivalry, and, after seven days' fighting, gave them that tremendous overthrow which they never recovered—which checked the progress of the Mohammedan conquests westward, and in all probability saved Europe and Christianity from the dominion of the Saracens and the faith of the Koran? But for that battle—certainly without a defensive war—Europe would then have been subjected to Mohammedan domination, and Christianity would either have been extirpated, or its few professors would have been spoiled and trodden under foot. The

blessings of law, order, liberty, security, civilisation, were all of them, in God's providence, rendered possible to Europe by the event of one great battle. Was it a sin in Charles Martel and his iron-handed, lion-hearted Germans, to fight that battle? Let *us* not say so, who have escaped so many evils by the blood they shed in that tremendous struggle. I believe that that was a holy war—holy in its object, as blessed in its results. And I think they who denounce such wars, and vilify those who perilled or lost their lives in them, are little worthy of the blessings which have been purchased for them at so dear a cost.

So, it appears to me, that that in which this country and France are now engaged against Russia, is a holy war—if the justice of the cause, if the greatness of the danger, if the magnitude of the interests at stake can render any war holy. And I am of opinion that our statesmen will find it much easier to justify, in the eyes of God and man, their having at length entered upon hostilities than their having so long delayed. Let us not deceive ourselves. The contest with Russia is a struggle for all that Europe ought to value—not only constitutional government, liberty, order, but religion itself. In the nature of things, according to a law which is universal in its operation, the principles and policy which regulate that empire must, sooner or later, bring it into conflict with those nations which are animated by contrary ideas, and guided by an opposite policy. This conflict may be delayed; either party or both parties may temporise, but the work is to be done; the antagonistic elements must have their collision sooner or

later, unless knowledge and civilisation shall in the interval penetrate the hordes of the Russian population, of which, at present, there is no probability.

For look at the case. The government of that empire has a settled design and scheme for the conquest of Europe. No fact, in political history, is better ascertained or can be substantiated by clearer proofs. Accordingly, the history of Russia for the last hundred years, is a series of aggressions on all her neighbours—Persia, Turkey, Poland, Sweden, Norway, Circassia, everywhere has she encroached, everywhere has she succeeded in possessing herself of what did not belong to her. These encroachments have been effected sometimes by force, often by fraud and bribery, but they have been incessantly pursued, and hitherto with uninterrupted success.

It is worth while to consider for a moment, the means which are possessed for advancing this nefarious enterprise, and the results of its success everywhere. As to the latter, it is to suppress all liberty and independence, both personal and national, within the conquered territories; for the Czar is the champion of absolutism, civil and religious; and in his dominions there is but one will—his own; there no man has rights, and one only argument is employed, that is the bayonet. As a consequence, falsehood and bribery are matters of course, and essential elements in the system. Such are the results to any territory of its acquirement by Russia.

Now, look at the means for attaining that success. The combination appears to me to be truly alarming. In the first place, there is the natural pressure of population from the ungenial steppes of the north-east, by which Europe has already been not only

threatened, but overwhelmed ; and not only Europe, but China, India, and Asia Minor. From this population has proceeded the original impulse which has created most of those terrible movements of nations that have desolated the fairest portions of the earth. And still that population continues essentially unchanged in its tendencies and circumstances, but now impelled to war by additional motives. Fierce, war-like, barbarous, and restless as of old, these nations are now also fanatical, and are united under the dominion of an absolute government, which has a definite policy, and is fettered neither by conscientious scruples nor constitutional restraints. Few combinations can be more perilous than unscrupulous ambition practising upon unreasoning superstition. The manifestos of the Czar to his own subjects reveal this ominous combination. "He loves peace," he assures them, "and he seeks it ; but his wars are the wars of God. They are to extirpate heathenism and heresy, and extend the orthodox faith."

I cannot help expressing my wonder that they who are continually proclaiming the progress and danger of Popery, do not see that the danger of the Russian orthodoxy is far greater. The old priest at Rome exists by sufferance. He has no troops, no money, no power. His allies are cold, embarrassed, disunited. He himself declares that his affairs are all but desperate. But here is the Russian autocrat, the head of a church equally superstitious, and, if possible, more intolerant than that of Rome, with a population of sixty millions, united in a fanatical zeal to propagate, under his guidance, their orthodox faith. Surely this is that cloud which now threatens Europe, unspeakably more than Popery ; which, if

now formidable at all, is so chiefly by the great fear which so much speaking about it seems to betray. In short, I regard the present war as a struggle, an inevitable struggle, against the ascendancy of despotism, superstition, and lawless violence in Europe. In this light it appears to me a sacred though painful duty ; and I should not like in this place to express the contempt I feel for those who, in Parliament or elsewhere, have laboured to throw odium upon the Government of this country for assuming a hostile position toward Russia—a position from which they were evidently most averse ; but into which they were driven, not only by the sacredness of treaties, but by a just apprehension that the most vital interests of Europe and the world were imperilled. In this course they are supported by the conscience of all right-thinking men. A unanimity, unexampled in the history of our country, and amazing in a community which has so much to lose by war, has demanded this course, and is the most powerful argument of its righteousness and necessity.

It is indeed a remarkable anomaly, that that Government, whose ambition, injustice, and treachery have rendered peace impossible, should find its only apologists in those men who deny the lawfulness of all wars ; that the disturber of peace should have none bold enough to defend him but members of the Peace Society. We think their doctrines unfounded and foolish ; but we are more perplexed by their conduct than even by their principles. We should expect that those who are the loudest in denouncing war, would be the first to denounce those who force war upon the reluctant nations. But it is not so. The

aggressor is excused, the victims are blamed, by the Apostles of Peace !

Permit me to mention two things which should not pass without reprehension. One is the attempt to represent our assisting the Porte as our upholding of the Mohammedan faith. This is shameful. They who so talk know very well that Great Britain and France take part with Turkey, not because it is Mohammedan, but because it is wronged, and because we are bound by solemn treaties to prevent such wrong. We send our fleets and armies, not because we have any favour for the Koran, but because we have regard to treaties, to oaths, to justice; and we abjure the doctrine that faith is not to be kept with heretics or infidels; and, finally, because, in our neighbour's danger at hand, we discern our own afar off, and therefore we consider it more politic to fight the battle away from our own doors, than to leave it to be fought by ourselves or our children on our own thresholds. Such selfish disregard of our neighbour's wrongs might well be punished by this retribution.

The other indecency, which I cannot help noticing, is that of representing the profession of a soldier or sailor as little better than the trade of brigands or cut-throats. It is very well for us to stand securely behind the rampart of their bodies, and to vilify those to whose heroism we owe our security. No doubt, their courage and skill have often been employed in unworthy services, their lives thrown away in compassing questionable, and even nefarious, ends. But theirs was not the responsibility or the guilt. When men put their lives at the service of their country, that country must bear the blame, if it abuse so

sacred a trust. Remembering how many men in those professions have exhibited the noblest virtues, especially a sublime superiority to that fear which enslaves the common soul; how high their sense of duty—how deep their devotion to their country's cause—we shall, notwithstanding the weak outcries of enthusiasm, still regard as heroes “those who at Marathon and Leuctra bled;” we will pronounce them men who have deserved well of the world—worthy of gratitude—of admiration—of undying renown; we will think their self-devotion an example which we should imitate. *Dulce et decorum pro patria mori*. But these are heathen sentiments. Does the New Testament ever commend warriors, or conquerors, or them that took the sword even in self-defence? It does most emphatically. “But time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Japhtha, and David.” Who were they? Mighty warriors; captains of the armies of Israel; servants of the Lord of hosts;—“who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” They so fought and conquered *by faith*, under the Old Testament; and St Paul celebrates them and their deeds, under the New.

What is more:—Are not our Christian life and struggle set forth under this very image? Christ is the “Captain of our salvation;” and we are called to be “good soldiers of Jesus Christ.” Can we imagine that such a metaphor would have been used, if the profession of a soldier had been unlawful under the Gospel? We may feel, I think, quite certain, that if all wars were forbidden by the Christian dis-

pensation, this sacred writer would not have employed such an illustration as this.

I believe that this war is one of those which are just, necessary, and inevitable, unless we would betray the dearest interests of other nations as well as our own. It is a war of great ideas and interests—the conflict of barbarism and civilisation—of liberty and constitutional government with despotism and superstition—the old contest repeated—light and darkness struggling together in the womb of Time. May God prosper the righteous cause! May He give wisdom to our rulers—skill, heroism, and success to our sailors and soldiers! May it be brought speedily to a prosperous issue! May lawless ambition be effectually restrained: and may this and every lawless enterprise only hasten the overthrow of that despotism which they are intended to promote! And may that kingdom be hastened, which is first righteousness, and then *peace!* May God uphold the constitutional throne of our gracious Queen, and the national liberties which repose under its shadow! And may the despots of Europe learn how much more august and secure is that monarchy which has law and affection for its pillars, than those thrones can ever be which stand upon broken pledges and violated rights, though guarded by the most powerful armies and the most vigilant police!

When we behold invasions and war begin again to desolate the earth, after we had permitted ourselves to hope that the human race was at length delivered from such crimes and miseries, our faith is apt to fail, and despair to put into our hearts the question of unbelief, “Where is the promise of His coming, for all things continue as they were from the foundation of

the world?" But one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise. The new heavens shall appear, and the new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness. The earth shall yet be full of the knowledge of the Lord, and then they shall no longer hurt or destroy.

Let us, then, even all the members of the Christian Church, which is the great Peace Society of God's own institution, labour in faith and hope to spread abroad through all the earth that Gospel which alone can secure solid, universal peace ; because it only can subdue those evil passions from which all the "wars and fightings" have come that have afflicted the world and disgraced humanity.

## NATIONAL EDUCATION.\*

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THIS is at present, and has been for some years past, *the great question*. Innumerable tongues and pens, I am aware, are now, and have been long, engaged upon the mighty theme ; and furious is the contradiction, dire the confusion, that prevail. Countless workmen are toiling to rear up this tower, all unanimous in the conviction that it may and should reach to heaven ; but “the Lord has looked down upon the children of men and the tower which they builded, and has confounded their language, so that they did not understand one another’s speech.”

Perhaps we may read this as a warning, that those monuments which we pile up, at whatever cost, to private feelings or sectarian interest, are, after all, monuments to our dishonour and shame, and contribute to our eventual dispersion and confusion ; while

\* The following observations formed the substance of the concluding address at the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, April 1856, some pages of introductory matter being omitted. I have thought it may be useful, notwithstanding that several of the topics have been already touched upon, to draw attention again to some views of this all-important subject, which many public men appear habitually to forget, or rather refuse to look at, under the pressure apparently of ecclesiastical influences.

that which is based upon impartial justice, and is cemented by genuine charity, is alone honourable and glorious at last, stands erect for ever, an imperishable trophy, when all the works of selfishness are trodden in the dust. The infinite discussions, resolutions, bills, petitions, and protests on the subject of education, which late years have brought forth, suggest forcibly the builders at Babel and the confusion of tongues.

At the risk of increasing this confusion, we must yet speak. Though our tongues may have produced a Babel, we must still use them ; and if we cannot make ourselves quite intelligible to each other at first, we must make signs and gesticulate, till we find out at last what meaning lies under all this jargon ; for surely some meaning lies under it. Nay, all good men mean the same thing, if they could but understand each other. But we sadly want the gift of the interpretation.

Some progress has, however, been made, and we should be thankful for it. The controversy whether or not the people should be educated, is now settled. All men are agreed that the policeman and the jail, the treadmill and the hulks, Botany Bay and the gallows, having failed grossly, and the animal continuing fierce, intractable, and, what is worse, dangerous and expensive — having been rendered more cunning, but not less savage, by the rough handling he has got—we are all unanimous in the opinion that Education should now be called in, this being the only keeper that is likely to manage or tame the wild creature. This unanimity is a great step, even though we have yet much to learn. The people then should be, must be, educated. This is desirable—a duty, a

necessity. But who are the people? The people is everybody—every member of the community—every part or limb of the great body politic belongs to and constitutes part of the people, on whom devolve certain duties and responsibilities, and to whom do also belong certain rights and privileges, dependent upon the former. Assuming, then, that the education of the people means the education of every individual within the realm, whatever his station in life may be, I shall say a few words in answer to these two questions:—1st, What must be taught the people, in order to their being educated? and, 2d, Who should teach them this? or rather, Under whose superintendence and control should this education be communicated?

The education which the people require is generally regarded as their being so instructed that they shall be able to read and write, shall know something of arithmetic, and perhaps grammar and geography, and be able to repeat the Catechism. This is, I think, the standard to which, in the judgment of a very large portion of the public, education for the body of the people should be conformed; and they would, without hesitation, style that an educated population which had been raised to that measure of attainment. Indeed, the admirers of things as they are, insist on calling the population of our own country *educated*, though masses of them fall very far short of that standard.

Far be it from me to deny that those now specified are very necessary, very useful, very important acquisitions. I wish we could congratulate ourselves on the possession of them by all our countrymen and countrywomen. It is deplorable to find that in England thirty-one per cent. of the men, and forty-four per cent. of the women married, are unable to write their

names. You will not understand me to depreciate these acquisitions when I venture to affirm that we must look at the matter more comprehensively, and must attempt a great deal more, if we expect to see an educated population.

When is a people educated? When it is so *instructed* and so *trained* as to be qualified to perform that part which Providence has assigned it. When is an individual educated? When he is so instructed and so trained as to be qualified (according to the measure of his individual capacity) to fulfil the several duties which devolve upon him in his particular sphere.

According to this conception of it, education will differ widely in different cases—both because of the differing capacities of individuals, and of the differing spheres in which those capacities are to be exercised; yet it will differ much less than it will agree in all cases; as that which all men have in common is much more than that which is peculiar to each.

The substantial conditions of human nature, accordingly, are the same in all; and so, by far the most weighty elements in the education of any one man are those which are also by far the most weighty in the education of every other man.

It is impossible even to form an idea what any education is, that is worthy of the name, without considering the conditions of our existence in the present world, and the duties which arise out of those conditions. Let us ask, then, what creatures those are whom we would educate? Each of them has a body which brings him in contact with the powers of nature and the external world. He is a member of a family; he must gain his livelihood by some calling; he is a

member of a civil society, and is subject to its laws ; finally, he has certain moral and spiritual relations to his fellow-men, and to God the author of his being, the Father of spirits, and the judge of all his conduct. Education must contemplate all that the man is, all that he has to do as a man—else you will make a tool, frame a machine, not educate a man. To discuss even the points now mentioned would require volumes ; let me make a remark or two on a few of them.

In the first place, we bring a body with us into the world. This is the animal we ride upon into that arena in which we must fight—an animal, however, which is part of ourselves. By it we must act ; through it we must suffer. It is the medium of our communication with the external world ; the organ of thought and emotion, of knowledge, of pleasure, of pain ; the seat of appetite. Its condition is destined to affect, and that deeply, not only our enjoyment, but our virtue. As a body is not the attribute of any one rank or class of men, it would seem to follow that every individual of both sexes should be instructed in the value and nature of this great talent ; shewn how to use it, and keep it from harm as much as may be ; as also, how it may be misapplied, abused, ruined ; and the terrible penalties which must follow such abuse ; and all this should be taught as matter of duty and of religious duty. When, however, we speak of teaching such things as these, we are met with the objection that this knowledge is much too refined and recondite for common people. Only, I would remind ladies and gentlemen, that ploughmen, sailors, carpenters, servant-maids, and even scavengers and sweeps, have bodies—human bodies as well as they—

that those bodies may be in health or sickness, may be preserved or destroyed—that pain is an evil to a poor man as well as to a rich one, and disease a much greater evil. I conclude, on the whole, that since every man in the community has a body, every one should be made so far acquainted with it as to comprehend the more simple and essential means of promoting its wellbeing, and avoiding its hurt.

Here it is necessary I should state more specifically what kind of instruction I refer to. I do not mean such general precepts as that we should avoid damp feet, cold drafts, eating and drinking too much, and the like. Such general rules make little impression, especially upon young people, and are of very little use to them, because they neither understand the facts, nor comprehend the principles upon which the rules are founded. We must teach them the structure and functions of the different parts of the body, and the relations and reciprocal influence of its various organs, such as the heart, lungs, stomach, skin, brain, &c.; because it is on the preservation of a proportional action in each that health depends; and we cannot know the influence of our habits and of external objects, such as cold, damp, heat, food, &c., on these organs, individually and reciprocally, without knowing their structures, functions, and relations; and this knowledge is obtained by studying anatomy and physiology, and their application to health.

The possibility of rendering these subjects intelligible and even deeply interesting to young persons, as well as to the mass of the people, is no longer a question. It has been demonstrated by the Lectures which Dr Hodgson has delivered to the Heriot Boys, the Pupil Teachers, and others, during this winter and the last.

Let us hope that this good impulse given to the cause of rational and useful education will not be lost ; and especially, that Government will appreciate the utility and necessity of this branch of knowledge, and will extend it universally.

No community in which this kind of instruction is not generally diffused, can be justly considered as possessing even the elements of education. For this knowledge, besides its immediate connexion with the preservation of health and the prolongation of life, has also most intimate relations with the moral and religious interests of men. It teaches them to regulate their conduct in many personal and domestic respects, so as to avoid or diminish certain formidable temptations, and to promote mental by increasing bodily health. If people universally saw how much their own comfort and wellbeing, and those of their offspring, depended upon the way they treat their bodies—and how many of their own miseries, and those of their children, and of their children's children, result from opposite ways of acting—we might expect a very great amelioration of many of our most common sufferings, and a great increase both in the virtue and happiness of mankind.

Yet, strange to say, this first, this fundamental knowledge is taught in very few schools. With great difficulty it has been introduced in a few instances ; and in other cases the attempt has actually been made and failed—the wise men opining that it was more important a boy should know that the Latin nouns *collis* and *orbis* are masculine, and the Greek nouns *ὄδος* and *νήσος* feminine, or how men wore their togas who have been rotten in the dust some 2000 years, or accented a syllable which nobody has spoken almost as long,

than how their own living bodies are formed and sustained—how they digest, breathe, and perform their other marvellous functions—by what treatment they are injured, and the consequences—what connexion temperance, sobriety, and self-denial have with health, happiness and long life !

Even in our colleges, the ingenuous youth are left without any attempt being made to initiate them in this science, or to induce them to practise its lessons. Nor is there in any university in the kingdom, so far as I know, provision made for the physical training and exercise of the students. They are left, in ignorance and thoughtlessness, to violate all the conditions of health to any extent they please ; and hundreds of them pay the penalty in carrying their useless knowledge and their vain distinctions to a premature grave—literally “ perishing for lack of knowledge ”—while they have been consuming themselves in the pursuit of knowledge. It appears most amazing that we should tolerate and perpetuate this deplorable folly, or should suffer any system of public or national education to be organised which does not remember that the subjects of education have each a body whose welfare is to be consulted. Will the time never come when parents will see that no education which their children can require demands pale faces and anxious looks?—that bone and muscle require development as well as understanding and memory—and that the hand, the eye, and the limbs need education and daily exercise no less than the mental powers ?

Every human being has a body—therefore every human being should be taught those things which concern its welfare. *Somatology* is an essential part of every man’s education.

Man is placed in the midst of a physical universe, composed of matter in various forms, acted on by various influences, regulated by certain laws. The better he understands these, the better is he prepared to avail himself of them, and to avoid the mischiefs in which ignorance would involve him. In that great laboratory of nature in which every human being finds himself, he is both agent and subject, the matter and the workman, and also the tool, though he uses other things also as his tools and instruments. It will depend upon his knowledge chiefly whether he be lord of those powers or their slave—whether they drag him on a helpless victim, or he yoke them to his chariot, and triumphantly guide them whithersoever he will. Every man, whatever his condition, is destined to work amid the tremendous wheels of nature, which fly round for ever with resistless speed; and as this machinery cannot be screened off or boxed in, they who are not so instructed as to know the danger and guard against it, must be caught and crushed. How many poor creatures are continually sacrificed to such ignorance it is sad to think. “The people perish for lack of knowledge.”

I might, in the next place, remind you that, as every person is born into a family, so there are a certain instruction and training, connected with this relation, which are indispensable parts of his education. First, the fundamental virtue of obedience is here learned, if it be learned at all: reverence and affection are here cultivated, faith in his parents supplying the first rudiments of the great lesson—faith in God. This is the school of those virtues and those habits which form the substance of the worthy character, and the ornaments of the refined character. The elements

of the social virtues are here imparted, wherever else they may be practised; and religious impressions, wherever they may manifest themselves afterwards, are first sown in this holy ground. At the fireside, around the family board, the young acquire the feelings, tastes, habits which after-life does little more than develop or confirm. Good manners, courtesy, are learned here, if they be learned at all. On this momentous subject much might be usefully said. I shall, however, only stop to make two remarks. One is, that many parents are so unreasonable as to expect that the schoolmaster should perform their work, and feel disappointed that he does not teach what they leave untaught; or does not undo what they themselves have done. The other is, that every mode of bringing up the young which interferes with family life or supersedes it, is a sacriligious violence done to a divine institution, and is a conspicuous example of human ignorance, folly, and conceit. Such schemes, instead of purifying and refining mankind, tend to demoralise them; they weaken the holiest ties which bind human beings together, and they foster powerfully that selfishness from which they spring. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Man has wants and powers, and he must exert these powers to supply those wants. This he does by practising various trades, professions, callings, by means of which are produced food, clothing, shelter, and the multifarious things which minister to the sustenance, comfort, and adornment of human life. That skill he gains by a special professional education, and it constitutes his craft. But there may be many things, needful for them to know who practise any

particular craft, which the master of it does not teach, and which the apprentice will not learn from his fellow-craftsmen; and yet this knowledge may so deeply concern him, that the want of it may be ruinous. A master mason does not teach his apprentice what will be the effects upon his lungs of the continued hewing of sandstone; nor does a needle-grinder initiate his pupil into the danger of steel-dust and the remedy. A youth who learns in a factory to spin cotton or to print calico, does not learn there the laws of demand and supply, the causes which determine wages, the effects of combinations, strikes, and the like; yet his notions, and those of his fellows, on these momentous points, will determine them to act; and if they act amiss, they and their employers, and the business on which both depend, may all be ruined together, as has taken place many times.

There is, in fact, connected with almost every business, beside the art or practical skill which is learned in the workshop, factory, counting-house, a certain science also which is almost never taught, and seldom thought of there, but which is absolutely necessary for the right direction and regulation of the art, and the want of which cannot exist generally among the members of any trade or calling without danger, and even certain detriment, to those engaged in it.

We are born members of the great body politic, with certain rights and obligations, subject to laws, for the violation of which neither ignorance nor obscurity is admitted as a justification. Is it not a strange thing that some acquaintance with that political constitution under which we all live should not be considered indispensable to every individual; and

that such instruction should form no part of even the most extensive and elaborate systems of general education? Years are consumed in making young men acquainted with the history, literature, and laws of two or three ancient states; but of the history and literature of their own nation, of the laws under which they are living, they are taught systematically nothing at all; as if the constitution of the Roman Senate concerned an inhabitant of Great Britain more than that of the British Parliament; or as if it were more essential that he should know the forms of judicial proceeding in the Athenian Agora or in the Roman Forum than in those courts by which our own property, reputation, and lives are disposed of. Do not understand me as casting any slur upon classical learning; in its own place I estimate it highly. Yet it does appear very strange that a youth should be left to pick up, as he can, an acquaintance with the literature, history, laws, and constitution of that country which is his world, while years should be consumed in cramming him with information regarding states and nations which have disappeared centuries or millenniums ago, and whose affairs and institutions have no immediate or perceptible bearing upon any of his interests, duties, or employments. If youth should be instructed in any history, it surely should be that of which they themselves form a part; if they should be made acquainted with any laws or any political constitution, surely those under which they themselves live deserve the preference; if they should be initiated in any literature, common sense seems to demand that it should be that which expresses the mind, and has formed the character of their own countrymen. The maxim which descended from

Heaven—"Know thyself"—appears to suggest the preference of this home education—this domestic knowledge—to all other. Charity begins at home; so, I submit, should education. Our acquirements should radiate from this centre outwards; for if we commence at the furthest bound and most distant circumference of knowledge, there is danger we may die before we arrive at that centre where all our own duties and interests are situated.

Had I not already occupied so much of your time, I should now have spoken of two additional branches of education, which indeed are the most vital of all—I mean moral and religious. These are very complex and very wide subjects, both of them. I may, I hope, without offence, make this remark, that notwithstanding all the machinery for imparting moral and religious instruction, we are forced to acknowledge, when we look upon society, and witness the exposures which are incessantly made—the adulterations and evasions, the petty rogueries, the atrocious villanies, the brutal violence, which are constantly brought to light—that there must be, after all, either a great deficiency in the quantity of moral and religious instruction, or, what is more probable, some glaring defect in its quality. If the right thing were taught rightly, we might expect that the records of our criminal and bankruptcy courts, and the whole social history of our people, would be very different from what unfortunately they now are. We have higher authority than probability for expecting that, "if a child be trained up in the way he should go, when old he will not depart from it." Admitting exceptions, this is the rule. But when we see crowds of persons who have received the best education which

the public provides, or which parents can hear of, shewing, in their dealings, no regard to the dictates of morality or the precepts of religion, we are tempted to suspect that something must be very wrong in the moral and religious instruction and training of such persons. "By their fruits ye shall know them." This is the infallible criterion for testing not only doctrines and men, but all systems. If they produce, on the whole, good fruits, they are themselves good; if bad fruits, they are themselves bad; if they fail to produce good fruits, they are useless.

If we consider religion not as one of many powers which divide among them the territory of human life and action, but as an all-comprehending influence from which nothing that man does, speaks, thinks, can lawfully be exempted—which has to do with everything, however small or secular it may in some respects be—we shall, perhaps, be brought to conclude that of all branches of education this is that to which least justice is done, even in those systems of education which are professedly founded upon it, and that reformations, which are needed everywhere, are needed here most of all.

When we speak of national education, or of any system of education, we naturally think of those elements of knowledge which are proper to be communicated in schools; because it is with these the public is more immediately concerned, and over these alone the public has any direct control. It would seem, therefore, that all those things which men need to know to fit them for the common duties of life, but which they are not taught in the course of acquiring their several callings, or within the domestic sphere, should be comprehended in the list of things proper

and necessary to be taught in schools—for the family is also a school, so is the workshop; but by the school we mean specifically that place of instruction where that is taught which every one needs to know, and which cannot be so conveniently or so effectually communicated in the family or the workshop. According to its very idea, therefore, it is merely supplemental or preparatory, and does not profess to do the whole work of education, but only a limited part of it, and this varying according to circumstances. These considerations, though obvious enough, have been too little attended to by those who have discussed systems of instruction for the people. The propriety of teaching girls domestic economy in school will be shewn if it can be proved that they are not generally taught it at home. And this, I take it, is the only argument or justification for introducing religion as a formal branch of instruction in schools, that the people are generally disinclined, or negligent, or unqualified, to teach their children religion; and that the instruction they receive in church (if they attend church) is not suited to the capacities of the young: for few, I think, would contend that if parents perform their part, and the clergy perform their part, there would be any necessity to employ the schoolmaster in the same work, or any advantage in doing so.

If it be judged necessary to attempt this, it must be done at such times, and under such regulations, as shall compromise the rights of no one, and shall respect the conscientious opinions and scruples of all. We must recognise the right of the parent to determine absolutely in what form of religious doctrine his child shall be instructed, or whether he shall receive in connexion with the school, any religious instruc-

tion at all. The difficulties connected with this matter are, however, so great, that the practical result would probably be, that the teaching of religion would be left to the different churches, whose proper business it is, and above all to parents. If the cessation of such teaching in schools should have the effect (which probably it would have) of stimulating parents and churches to a more earnest performance of their duty, incalculable benefit would result to all parties.

Having, in this imperfect way, spoken of the *matter* of education, or the things which should be taught, I should next have considered the question—To whom does it belong to communicate that part of education which it is proper to communicate in schools? There are *three* answers to this question—1. This business belongs to any one who chooses to undertake it. I shall say nothing to refute this theory, hoping it is sufficiently exposed when it is nakedly propounded. The second answer is, that the duty devolves upon the State; the third, that it belongs to the Church. Besides the advocates of these two simple propositions, there is a third and a very powerful section of educationists who hold that the State should educate the people by and through the Church. This being interpreted, means that the Church should perform the work according to its own ideas (not to say for its own purposes), and that the State should furnish to the Church the necessary funds. This last conception has the merit of great simplicity. It is the doctrine of spiritual independence extended to matters educational. Some of our statesmen who have felt themselves called upon to take a lead on the subject of national education, are seen to steer their course dubiously and painfully among these different answers

to the great question, being evidently rather drifted onward by the currents of opinion and by presumed expediency, than guided by any enlarged theory, or indeed by any theory at all. I regret to say that the speeches, in Parliament and elsewhere, of those by whose views Government has of late years been guided, and is likely still to be, do not inspire much hope of enlightened legislation regarding public or national education; because they do not seem to indicate that the question is understood. Whenever a person comprehends a subject, he rises to simplicity. Simplicity is the attribute of thorough comprehension; but the speeches in Parliament of those who are dealing with this matter and their general proceedings, appear to me to demonstrate that they are destitute of any theory, and are adopting make-shifts, stop-gaps, and, in short, are under the trammels of a short-sighted expediency which will spend much money, work much confusion, and at last (we may hope) will find grace to acknowledge it knew neither what was to be done, nor how.

We must presume that Her Majesty's present Government, and the Governments which preceded it since public action was taken by them in education, adhere to the notion that national education should be, or must be, carried on mainly through the Church or Churches—for their grants to the schools of all denominations mean this, if they mean anything. And they seem inclined to go on in the same course. I shall conclude with a remark or two on this way of proceeding.

1. My first objection is one of principle. The Christian Church is an organisation for teaching religion—the Christian religion. It has no qualification,

call, or authority to teach anything else—not arithmetic, geography, grammar, any more than masonry, carpentry, weaving, painting, or sculpture. And this applies to directing or superintending education as much as to the immediate communication of it. However much these duties may belong to Christian men, they do not, in any way, belong to the Christian Church as such; and, in so far as she undertakes them, she transgresses her proper function.

2. Education by the Church means, in this connexion, nothing but education by the clergy; education controlled and directed by them according to their peculiar and professional views and feelings. Is the propriety of this self-evident? Do the people desire this? Are they prepared to submit to it? In conducting the education of a people in religion, it is natural and proper that the clergy should have much to say; but happily they are not now the only persons who understand reading and writing, arithmetic and geography. The sciences of physiology, social economy, and others, whose introduction into schools is seen by all intelligent men to be indispensable, are much better understood by members of other professions than by ministers of the gospel. Why, then, should the better qualified classes be excluded, that all authority may be engrossed by the worse qualified class? Is it to please the clergy, especially of the Church of England, that Governments act thus? We should “please all men for their good to edification,” as St Paul teaches. But we should not please any one to his hurt, or to the hurt of others. And we always hurt a man when we devolve upon him duties he is not qualified to perform, or bestow privileges which belong to others. The people are a more numer-

ous body than the clergy; and it is of some consequence to please them also in a matter in which they have so deep an interest as the teaching of their children.

3. It is pleaded that, as religion extends to all the departments of education, therefore the Church should superintend all departments—*i. e.*, the clergy should. But I object, that the clergyman is not religion, nor is religion the clergyman. He is not necessarily even the impersonation or expression of true Christianity. He may be rather the impersonation of narrow-mindedness, intolerance, bigotry, sectarianism. This is no bare possibility. The largest charity must admit that it has been often realised. And saying so, I do not libel the members of my own profession; I only acknowledge that we are men like our neighbours—certainly, no worse—and, as certainly, not so much better or wiser, that the State should treat us as if we were superior to the common infirmities.

It is very true, and very important truth, that the whole work of teaching children and youth should be carried on in a religious spirit. But this is only saying that teaching should be done, as all other things should be done. We should do all that we do, even eat and drink, “to the glory of God.” Shoemakers and tailors, smiths and carpenters, masons and plasterers, and craftsmen of every sort, should perform the operations of their several callings in a religious spirit. So should merchants traffic, physicians treat their patients, advocates plead, and judges weigh and determine. All should be done in a religious spirit, “to the glory of God.” But we do not from these admitted premises draw the practical conclusion that, therefore, the bishop of the diocese should exercise a

general superintendence of all farming, manufacturing, and other operations within the same; or that the Presbytery of the bounds should be empowered to visit all places where trades are carried on, or business is transacted, or should be armed with a commission to exercise an inspection over the civil courts, lest advocates should overstep the limits of forensic propriety, or judges transgress the bounds of law. I submit for the consideration of those wise men and statesmen, who habitually confound the two things, that the influence of religion and the superintendence of the clergy are not one and the same thing, but two things, so distinct and separate, that the presence of either is quite compatible with the absence of the other.

4. I shall offer only another observation on this subject. The various churches or sects (for in one respect they are all churches, and in another they are all sects) are labouring to promote education, some with greater zeal, others with less. It would be uncharitable to doubt that all of them are desirous to promote education, according to their own ideas of it. But this cannot be overlooked that, with all of them, education is such instruction as shall dispose those who receive it to embrace or adhere to the church or sect which supplies it. It does not even profess to be such education as shall either dispose or qualify the youth for judging which among all the sects is the best, or, if you like it better, which of all the churches is the true church, or the truest church; but it regards education as one, and the most powerful means of proselytism. Under ecclesiastical management, the schoolmaster is just the minister with modifications; and the value of the school is its tendency to serve as

a *seminarium ecclesiæ*—a feeder for the church or chapel. The interest which churches or sects take in education is naturally, and even necessarily, a sectarian or church interest. This is what they seldom say, but always mean. Nor can it be otherwise. In saying this, I express neither blame nor wonder. On the contrary, as I have said, acting thus, sects or churches act according to their nature. If sects support or manage schools, they will always manage them with a view to their interests as sects. But what I wonder at and venture to blame is, that any Government should make itself a party to such action—should stimulate this process by grants of public money to all parties who profess to teach any sort of religion—should thus recognise in an indirect and irregular manner, religious opinions which are not recognised in any direct or legitimate manner—and should aggrieve the conscience of the subject by compelling him to support and propagate doctrines which he privately considers erroneous, and it may be pernicious, and which are unknown to the law and constitution of the realm. This can be considered as little less than the surreptitious introduction of a new religious establishment.

This certainly is a strange mode of proceeding; but it would appear that it is to be persevered in, and even extended. Believing that it is radically unsound in theory, I cannot doubt that its practical effects will prove unsatisfactory—and I feel confident that anything deserving the name of National School Education, will never be attained in this way.

National Education is a national business. Every person who has a child to educate has an immediate, and every person, without exception, has a very deep

interest in it—and therefore the superintendence or direction of it belongs of right to no one class or profession whatever, but to all classes and all professions; and it will never be well or satisfactorily done till all classes take a hearty interest in it; and that they never will do till they are all admitted to co-operate actively in the work.

I will only add, that no system of National Education can be satisfactory, or should be tolerated, which does not in the clearest manner recognise the rights of parents in the matter of religious instruction, and give the fullest scope for the exercise of those rights. To do otherwise is to oppress, insult, and persecute; it is to take away a right which God gave.

## A HOMILY FOR THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR 1848.

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It is impossible to conclude a year of our lives without regret. We cannot feel ourselves standing on the boundary line which separates it from another stage of our journey, without many thoughts and feelings of a sad and painful nature. We feel as if we were stepping out of a country in which we had long travelled, and entering another where we might perhaps not fare so well, and where at least we know not what may befall us. We fancy ourselves taking leave of a friend who has shared our good and evil three hundred and sixty-five days; of a fellow-pilgrim who has trode with us, all that time, the rough and smooth places of our mortal journey; has shared with us the sunshine and storm, the cold and the heat, and is now to leave us, and plunge into that gulph which yawns for us also.

It is natural for us to cling to all things with which we have been long or intimately connected, even though they may have been to us scenes, and even causes much more of evil than of good, of sorrow rather than of gladness. We leave with pain the *house*

which has sheltered us for years, even though it may have witnessed our bitterest griefs: and we see a servant go out of our door not without regret, even though he may have been, while we had him, among our greatest crosses. Our regret is heightened into pain and sorrow, if what we thus lose has been one of our comforts and blessings.

These feelings, however, do not arise from the accident of our companion, or what we have been accustomed to, having proved to us a source of good or of evil, but from the mere circumstance of its having been associated with us a certain length of time. It is this which has, according to the laws of our mental constitution, made our thoughts and feelings entwine themselves around it in a thousand folds, as the ivy clings to the tree or the wall which happens to be nearest. So we take leave of the departing year *mournfully*, not because it has been a prosperous or a calamitous one to us, but because it has been so long our companion; because it and we have been fellow-travellers in the same journey, fellow-soldiers in the same campaign—who have looked so often in each other's faces, and seen each other near so long. This it is which makes the word "farewell" sound so dreary, that we are now to lose one who has been with us many a day, so that a sense of loneliness and desolation steals over us.

. It may be useful for us to cast our eyes back for a few minutes on the year which is so near its close; and no doubt it will, if we study it attentively, yield us some useful lessons, both of a public and of a private kind.

I am well aware of the propensity of the human mind to exaggerate whatever is at hand, in compari-

son of that which is absent or distant. Yet making all reasonable allowances for this strong tendency, which is the source of so many delusions and mistakes, I do not think there can be any great error in asserting, that a year more fruitful in great and striking events has not occurred since the commencement of the Christian era. The multitude of those events; their remarkable character; their wide diffusion; their novelty in some important respects; their unexpected occurrence;—all these features give to those events a character almost unique and unprecedented.

In Italy, we have seen civil and political reform emanating from a *Pope*; and an impetus given to revolution all over Europe by that power which always till now has most dreaded and withstood all reforms and changes; being indeed itself founded on prescription. We have seen that Pope expelled from his palace and his capital in November, by his subjects who had hailed him as father of his country, and almost worshipped him in May. The flight of Popes from Rome, and rebellions of the Romans against Popes, are no new things in history: but a rebellion against a Pope who pursued the course of the present is new; and, indeed, the course taken by this individual is unprecedented in the history of the Papacy.

France presents, if possible, a more eventful history than even Rome. A king who had helped to dethrone his predecessor and relative, himself dethroned and expelled, with all his house, in February, by his subjects, who erect a republic, against which they rebel in June, and are shot down in thousands, and banished by those who had a chief hand in inciting them to revolt. In November we have seen them

discarding virtually that republic, and exalting to supremacy the heir of the late Emperor, who may probably *end* the year with a monarchy, as it began. These events, so sudden, so startling, so amazing for their extent and importance, would have seemed too improbable for the wildest fiction—and yet they are facts.

The history of Germany is, if possible, more amazing than that of France, and much more out of all keeping with its previous character. Within a few months we have seen the capitals of Germany in the hands of mobs and deluged with blood; the oldest sovereignty of Europe shaken to its foundation; the Representative of the old Roman Empire flying from his capital, and surrendering his crown, in imitation of his brother of Bavaria; the Austrian Empire shaken almost in pieces, rebellion tearing its provinces from it, from Lombardy on one side, to Hungary on the other; and the whole system of things in Germany, the structure of ages, demolished as in a moment; and the most despotic sovereigns outbidding each other in the extent of the concessions which they are offering to democratic demands—voluntarily proposing constitutions more democratic than democracy itself had dared to hope for or to mention.

Our own country has not escaped disorder. But, blessed be God, the power of the seditious proved signally disproportioned to their will; and their attempts only seemed to call forth the spontaneous loyalty of the great body of the people. In Ireland, we have witnessed a Rebellion, the seeds of which had been industriously sown for many years, reach its maturity at last: and a movement which seemed to be national, and which, it was feared, the whole

strength of the British Empire might not succeed in quelling, put down by a few policemen, with an ease which has turned the Rebellion itself and all its authors into ridicule.

And now enters the Pestilence to conclude this frightful drama ; and his black curtain is falling terrifically over all the varied and incredible scenes of this wondrous year.

The first sentiment, surely, which should arise in our hearts, when we consider these things, is gratitude to Almighty God, the Ruler among the nations, for His great mercy to us as a people, as families, and as individuals. Our cities have not been the scenes of bloody battles—as Milan, Madrid, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin, have been. Our property, our liberties, and our lives, have not been at the mercy of lawless mobs. The dominion of law and order has been maintained. Revolution has not ruined thousands of wealthy families, and starved myriads of poor ones, as has been the case elsewhere. We sit under our own vine and fig-tree, none making us afraid ; our institutions enjoying, as they well may, the intelligent and hearty approval of the great body of the people. And the pestilence which walketh in darkness, and the destruction which wasteth at noon-day, have not yet come nigh unto us. We are still written among the living.

Let us acknowledge these mercies with humble gratitude to God, our heavenly Father, from whom all our blessings come.

There are, however, great lessons to be learned from these events. In them, unless I mistake, we may perceive manifest traces of that retributive justice which so often displays itself in the history of

nations, and affords lessons which individuals may legibly read ; though nations themselves appear incapable of understanding them.

In order to comprehend these, we need to observe the *character* of these convulsions, and also the peoples among which they have occurred.

As to their *character*, then, they differ essentially from all foregoing revolutions. In times past, rebellions arose from religious causes ; or they were the risings of populations against foreign or domestic oppressors, real or supposed ; or they were the resistance of one party in the state to another party. But the rebellions we have now witnessed, at least in France, in Germany, and elsewhere, are the risings up of the lowest orders of the people against all the upper orders. And in this the peculiarity of these movements is very striking, that they are not directed against this or that form of government, or this or that abuse of authority, but against government and authority themselves, in every form.

The object of attack is rule or government, called by whatever name. No doubt many have permitted themselves to aid in those revolutionary proceedings, who were not conscious of the intention to abolish, if possible, government, property marriage: but the strength of the party all over the Continent was undoubtedly actuated by such designs: the prime movers were everywhere, or generally, communists or socialists ; men not only destitute of religious and moral principles, but ostentatiously professing atheism in many instances. So that, if we examine the character of these revolutions, I mean of the men who have been the secret springs and soul of them,—for the real authors of all revolutions are very few,—we

shall find that they were men who warred not against any abuse, or corruption of government, or religion, but against all the institutions of society, and all the duties of religion. Rebellion is always an evil, but it has had an element of good in it, when its object was to resist wrong and falsehood, and to establish truth and right. But the success of *these* rebellions must have been the utter overthrow of society in the countries where they took place.

The state of opinion and feeling out of which the late continental tumults arose, is a much more serious matter than are the tumults themselves—however serious these may have been. The slaughter at Vienna, and at Paris, however appalling, is yet less terrific than the thought, that so many myriads of working men had imbibed doctrines which would dissolve society at once, and would render every one more wretched than the most wretched of themselves. In point of peril, therefore, we have seen no revolutionary movement to compare with these. Their frightful heavings shew in what a state of irreligion, vice, and brutal ignorance whole masses of the population of the great Continental cities must be.

The question now presents itself, how this condition of matters originated? Who is principally to blame for it? It is a fact, which universal history confirms, that the worst opinions and the darkest theories flourish most in those countries in which the free expression of opinion is most restrained. The readiest way to make men rebels and anarchists is to take away the liberty of writing and speaking concerning the measures of government; as the surest method of rendering them sceptics is to prevent them discuss-

ing the great subject of religion. Infidelity flourishes no where so well as under the shadow of an Inquisition; and disaffection ripens so fast in no soil as where men's every deed, word, and almost thought, are under the espionage of a prying police. These dispositions develop themselves and strengthen in exact proportion to the efforts which are made to keep them down or root them out. Particularly is this the case when the freedom of thought and of speech is curtailed or taken away. For men, who cannot cheerfully consent to the incarceration of their bodies, can much less submit to the imprisonment of their souls:—they feel it a yet greater outrage that their minds should be put in chains, that their opinions and convictions should be laid in irons, that they should be hindered from knowing what is to be known, believing what appears to them to be true, and professing what is believed.

They who persist in treating men as if they were children, shall find that they have made them to resemble children only in their want of power to restrain their passions, and to govern their conduct. And those governments which have presumed to engage the minds of their subjects, have generally discovered to their own cost, that they have turned the man into a wild beast, who only watches an opportunity of tearing his keeper in pieces. Mobs and rebellions are the periodic scourges of despotisms in all quarters of the world, and in all ages, in Rome ancient and modern, in Turkey, and Spain, and every where else. And what an exhibition of the state of those priest-ridden and police-ridden Continental populations! Where rational Liberty durst not utter a syllable, behold myriads of preachers of full-blown

anarchy! Where Heresy durst not whisper her doubts, you may hear Atheism proclaiming her blasphemies, with applause, from the house-tops. The catastrophe is horrible, but it might have been expected: they whom it has overthrown or scattered, prepared the combustibles which have exploded to their destruction. If we comprehended the whole facts more completely, we should, no doubt, see more distinctly, what yet is not obscure, that the Continental governments, which have been and are now the great sufferers from the convulsions of Europe, have also been the great sinners. Yes, the judgment of God is according to truth—As we sow we shall reap. “The effect of righteousness is peace;” of injustice, trouble and distress. “Say ye to the wicked, It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his ways shall be given him.”

The immediate effects of those wonderful changes which we have been called to witness during this year, are, no doubt, very calamitous. But, without being visionary or over-sanguine, we may confidently anticipate that, after the confusions, consequent on all great changes, have subsided, these revolutions will issue in a great improvement in the state of the Continental population in regard both to civil and religious freedom. The press can hardly again be forbidden to publish the truth, and to discuss public questions, above all, the great questions relating to religion. Freedom of conscience, we may hope, is won not only in name, but in fact and substance. And if so, it is cheaply purchased by all that has happened, or is likely to happen. In the wise and holy government of God, we see that while the wicked are punished, and are made to read their sins in their chastise-

ments, yet good is still brought out of the evil, and from the darkness of the past, light springs forth to guide man along his future way.

But there have been other histories going forward during this year than those of the great world—than those of nations and empires. Our family histories too, and our personal histories, have not stood still; and these, though insignificant when compared with the others, are both more interesting and more momentous to *us*. And as we naturally survey our worldly affairs, and so far settle them, at the close of the year; so it is most useful and necessary that we should also look into our moral and spiritual concerns. For if it be blameable to neglect what is going on in the world without, it is ruinous to be ignorant of what has happened, and is now passing in the world within our breasts. An acquaintance with our own moral history is so needful for each of us, that all real virtue and all true religion are connected with it, and indeed are impossible without it.

Now the inward spiritual state of each of us may not unaptly be compared to the condition of the different nations of the world. One man's soul is lying in the torpor of death, his passions are exercising an absolutely despotic authority over him. The voice of reason is silenced; conscience is thrown into prison; all the higher and purer principles of his nature are disfranchised: this is the withering despotism of sin—such is the man *dead in his trespasses*.

Another man's soul is in rebellion. There, reason and conscience are neither dead nor dumb; but their authority is disputed, their commands are disobeyed. The passions form a faction so powerful as constantly

to resist and break the law: and the man is kept in everlasting tumult and distraction by the contention of the opposing principles at war within him. "What he does he allows not; what he would, that he does not: when he would do good, evil is present: A law in his members wars against the law of his mind, and brings him into captivity," constraining him to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me!"

In the soul of a third is experienced "the peace of God that passeth all understanding." For there the law of God is recognised as the supreme rule, and God himself as the supreme authority. The interpreters of that law, Reason and Conscience, here sit in the highest seats, their rightful place; and all the inferior passions, propensities, and appetites listen to their voice, and do their bidding, and by serving, aid the commonweal, which they subvert and ruin when they command. This man "walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes him free from the law of sin and death."

There is as great a contrast between the spiritual state of these three persons, as there is between the outward condition of a nation, free, enlightened, prosperous; where the laws are just, the people loyal, orderly, and happy, the government strong and respected, where Righteousness has made the crooked straight and the rough places plain, so that Peace rides triumphantly through it everywhere; and the state of another nation, where tyranny has created disaffection, and disaffection has called forth a sterner tyranny—where laws, bad in themselves, are yet worse administered; so that terror, distrust, and

hatred separate the governor from the governed, and set one class of the community against another, till at length the smouldering fires burst out in a volcano of rebellion, and the lava of popular fury buries all things under its fiery tide.

When we look at a kingdom in rebellion, we are awe-stricken. A wide-spread conflagration or flood is not so terrible. But what think you of a soul in anarchy; rebel against God; mutinous against the better part of itself; torn with intestine war and the struggles of factions, whose feud is implacable and deadly? And when, from the end of the year we look forth on the condition of the kingdoms of this world, is it not becoming that we should turn our eyes inward, and see what may be the condition of that little but not insignificant kingdom which lies within our own breasts? All external objects and events should suggest the spiritual to us, of which indeed they are types and symbols. How, then, is thy soul, O man? Is it lying now in the despotism of moral death; all that is true and right, all that is pure and good, benumbed, prostrate? Or is thy nature in active hostility, the one part against the other? the high against the low, the right against the wrong, the true against the hollow and the false; and thou enduring the ceaseless horrors of this seat of war? Or, is the kingdom within thy breast a province indeed of the kingdom of God, where His high law has obtained the complete ascendant, and where His peace descends like the dew of summer, to refresh all things?

*It is the end of the year. We have minded our business.* But have you considered what your chief business is? *It is the end of the year. We have toiled*

*and been frugal.* But have you remembered what that work is which God sent you to do, and that he is a prodigal who lays not up for eternity, and makes no provision for the world to come? *It is the end of the year; and we, while it passed, have observed the Sabbath, attended church, said our prayers, read our Bible.* But have you learned that *this* is the Christian Sabbath, to cease from your own works as God did from His? that the *word* you have heard in church will condemn you if you have not been doers of it? that your *prayers* will rise up in judgment against you, if you have not striven to *live* as you *prayed*? and that the Bible, which you boast is the religion of Protestants, will only aggravate your guilt, if you have not sought to learn from it what may be the mind and will of God—instead of taking this on trust from men, whom you acknowledge to be fallible, who may deceive you, and may themselves be deceived? You have given to the poor during the year that is near its end; you have been zealous for religion; you have preached and exhorted! Have you remembered that though you gave all your goods to feed the poor; though you spoke with the tongues of angels; though you gave your body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth you nothing?

“Since the year commenced I am one year nearer to my grave,”—may each of us say,—“one year nearer to eternity, and the presence of my Judge! Am I nearer to heaven, or to hell? Am I a wiser, a juster, a holier man? Have I more faith, more love to God and to man, than I had on the last day of December, 1847? Am I less worldly? Is my affection more set on things above? Am I more superior to this world, its prosperity and adversity, its good and evil? Are

my patience, my fortitude, my temperance, my meekness, increased? Do I delight more in communion with God, in prayer, and meditation on divine things? Is my hope more sure and confident; my peace and joy in God greater? Am I, in short, discharging better the grand work of life; and am I better prepared to leave it for another and higher life?

These are thoughts, with which it is profitable to question our hearts at this season, and, indeed, at all seasons. May God teach us what we are, and make us what we ought to be, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## THE PERISHING AND THE IM- PERISHABLE.

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“The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”—I JOHN ii. 17.

To a person in health how real this world appears! The things which engage his hands, his eyes, his thoughts, gradually impress themselves upon his mind as the great, perhaps the only realities.

But when affliction comes; when they are taken from us (perhaps suddenly) whose love was our dearest possession, and their society our best solace and our purest joy; or when Disease shuts up in his dungeons; or when that grand inquisitor Pain puts us on the rack, and questions us what we have been doing in the world, and what manner of men we are; and, most of all, when Death comes so near that we behold the countenance, and feel the very touch of the king of terrors—then, how is all this changed! The objects which we thought so real and abiding seem now to melt into mists and shadows, as the sun draws up into the invisible air the clouds which hung dark and massive in the morning sky.

What a stamp of solidity and perpetuity sen-

sible things have in our apprehension! We look upon the world that now is—its cities and palaces, its monuments of labour and art, its commerce, its literature, its science, its various institutions, its politics, its great questions, its mighty struggles,—and we can hardly persuade ourselves that this grand total rests not upon some firmer foundation than the moving sands of time. “Surely,” we say in our hearts, “that which stands before us in its sublime grandeur is not the world that passeth away.”

Yet when we look into history—that little museum in which are preserved some few specimens and remnants that have been saved from the great sepulchre of oblivion, which has entombed so many ages and generations,—we learn that that which we admire is not the only world that men have deemed sure and stable. Those buried nations and peoples, on which, and on their works and all their thoughts and interests, the worm and forgetfulness have preyed for centuries and even millenniums,—they also were surrounded by a world which appeared to them so stable that they might lean upon it. Once Nineveh and Babylon, Nisibis and Susa, Thebes and Memphis, Petra and Tadmor in the wilderness, were not heaps of undistinguishable ruins: they presented something more than a few broken columns and ruined arches, or rows of sepulchres, to interest the zealous curiosity of antiquaries from far-distant lands. Those cities were mighty capitals, each the heart of a great body politic, whose members, even to the extremities, felt the pulse of their life. Those halls which have so many ages been, according to the sure word of prophecy, “the habitations of the dragon, the bittern, and the owl,” were once the resort of the wise and the

great. The "doleful creatures of the wilderness" have there succeeded the lords of the world, whose pride said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will be like the Most High."

Rome was not always a wreck and a shadow: rather she was that mighty substance which cast her own baleful shadow over the world, and blighted half the earth with her dark oppression. Need we wonder that her children, recalling her old traditions, and seeing her gradually embrace all the world they knew of, within her outstretched arms—witnessing the millions of her population, and the glory and riches which all "kindreds, and nations, and tongues, and peoples," were compelled to bring and lay at her feet—should glorify her as not only the mistress and queen of the world, but "the eternal city," whose dominion was destined to defy time, and whose Cæsars claimed kindred with the immortal gods, and were themselves gods, to whose divinities altars were built and sacrifices offered? How terribly solid and enduring did that Roman power appear, as well to those whom its "feet of iron" stamped to dust, as to those who wielded its sceptre! Yet "how hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! He that smote the peoples with a perpetual stroke, who ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted and none hindereth! Hell from beneath is moved to meet thee at thy coming. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! The worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee."

Even within the compass of a single lifetime, how striking is the illustration which the solemn fact receives! Not only the history of the aggregate man,

but even that of a single individual sets it forth. Those who remember the early years of the present century will recollect what momentous events then occupied men's minds; with what startling rapidity they succeeded each other; how deeply certain great actors had fixed the attention of the world, which watched their motions with breathless eagerness, as men would the course of some destructive meteor in the sky, none knowing upon whose head next its vengeful force would fall. People's minds were so engrossed with those things, that they seemed to suppose nothing else could be thought of or talked of while time endured. But that world, "with the lust thereof," has passed away: it is already sunk below our horizon, and in half a century, is quite out of sight. We talk of it no more, nor think of it, except when books recall it, as they recall the incursions of the Goths and Franks, or the Moslem invasion, or the Crusades. Buonaparte stands upon the same shelf with Alexander the Great, Hannibal, or Julius Cæsar. Our present world, flat and commonplace as it may be, has quite obliterated for us that which went before, with all its greater actors and more striking events. The world passeth away and its fashions with it: man's thoughts are vanity: surely the people is grass.

What has become of that which was our world so lately? Where are our own past lives—the little joys and griefs of childhood, the troubles and pleasures of the schoolboy, the fervid impulses, the golden dreams, the generous aspirings, the high hopes of youth; the ambition to be something better in our generation than mere consumers of the fruits of the earth, mere moving, respiring, digesting machines, that shall sleep

and wake, put our clothes on and off a certain number of times, and then be clothed with mortality, and sink, like the other creatures that have moved upon the surface of the earth, into the bosom of the common mother? And where are they who were then the world to us—the father's affectionate authority and manly solicitude, the mother's watchful love and tender, unsleeping care, our companions also in those first stages of life's journey, the sharers of that care and love, the sharers in all that we suffered and enjoyed, in all that we did and thought?

And as the world passeth away, so does its lust. For though the passions which agitate the hearts of men are substantially the same from one generation to another, "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" still forming a complete catalogue of all that is "of the world, and not of the Father;" though men's follies and sins at all times may be summed up under these three great heads, and are comprehended within these ample limits, yet how various and ever-changing are the particular ways in which the children of men busy themselves in seeking the gratification of those passions. We see this strikingly in what is called *fashion*, the principle of which is always the same in all countries and at all times, being uniformly the result and manifestation of "the lust of the eyes and the pride of life:" but how manifold are its forms, how ever changing are the modes of its exhibition! It pleases itself for a moment with each new experiment, till, finding this as empty as the former, it pronounces it worthless and shocking, breaks it, casts it away, tramples on it, as a child treats his toy when it is guilty of being no longer new. How ridiculous and even monstrous do

the *modes* of past generations appear even to those who are themselves animated by the same spirit that produced those grotesque follies! We fancy that we are free from the vanity, because we are seeking its gratification in some other way, which appears rational only because it is common. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof."

But He that is gracious and merciful, our most righteous and loving Father in heaven, has made provision for satisfying every instinct and desire that is truly part of that nature which He hath given us. He has not put within our hearts any craving or thirst only to mock and torment us; but each has a purpose and a use. We were not created by Him to exemplify the misery of the fabled Tantalus, eternally thirsting for water which still eludes the parched lips. Each of us indeed feels that he is endowed with the instinct of immortality: we all pant for perpetuity for stability, for an eternal life, conscious that whatever wants this is nothing, or rather is so much the more an instrument of suffering to us the more valuable it is in itself, being only a precious possession that it may become an irreparable loss. And we grasp wildly at outward and material things, as if they could abide with us or sustain us, forgetting that nothing can be firmer than is the foundation on which it stands, and that which is earthly cannot be more stable than earth; and when falling leaves, setting suns, the dying year, when grey hairs and tottering steps, when nature from all sides preaches her solemn sermon of change and dissolution, we are alarmed or rendered melancholy, as if our portion were stolen from us, and this world were our inheritance, and we had never heard a gospel of immortality.

Whereas that which our eyes look upon is only the veil which must be rent from top to bottom, that we may behold the holy of holies ;—a thick and coarse covering which must be lifted up that our spirits may discern the true nature, and understand the real meaning, of that which lies beneath, and which this material curtain hides from our view. “For this is the promise he hath promised us, even eternal life.” We are heirs of God : we are joint heirs with Christ, of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away, and which is reserved in heaven for those that are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto the salvation which is about to be revealed.” “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof ; but *he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.*”

This is the solution which Faith gives to the question which has puzzled man’s reason from the first, and has pressed like an incubus upon his heart. The voice that speaketh from heaven reveals the mystery which has darkened the earth, since the day when man first became a sinner against God—“He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” Let the words sink into our ears, let them be engraven on our hearts. Let us carry them forth with us into the world, and they will disarm its temptations, preserve us from its pollutions, and dispel for ever its illusions. Let these words go with us to our daily tasks, and they will lighten and sweeten these, telling us that if we perform these tasks as the will of God, we are working for eternity, and building upon the rock. Let these words be present with us also in our trials and sufferings, and they will instruct us to weigh those evils in true balances, and so we shall discover

that they are "light afflictions, and but for a moment." Let them whisper in our ear when we bend over the deathbeds and the graves of our dearest friends. Let them speak to our souls when we ourselves enter the dark valley; and they will make it to be no valley of the shadow of death to us; for in the midst of dissolution and the perishing of our outward man, we shall be conscious of the presence of an inward and eternal life, derived to us through faith in Him "who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification," and connecting us indissolubly with the eternal world and the Father of spirits, so giving us a foretaste of endless and unspeakable joy. But the great question for us is, whether we ourselves are, through faith, thus united with that spiritual and eternal world. "Dost thou believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God?" is a question which each of us may profitably address to himself. Do we indeed endeavour to study the words, copy the example, imbibe the spirit, walk in the steps of that great Forerunner, who lived and suffered upon earth that He might fulfil the will of God, and who now sits at the right hand of the Father, to certify us that we are safe and blessed in following Him; shewing us that he who doeth the will of God, though he may seem most forlorn and wretched, though he may be hated, maligned, and persecuted even unto death, though he may endure every form of outward evil, and be "numbered with the transgressors," yet still is a Son and Heir of God—he abideth for ever.

Let us, therefore, turn our eyes away from this scene of vanities, this land of shadows and of death. The sons of God have an inheritance, though here they have nothing. They have a country and a city,

though in this world they be pilgrims and strangers. Though father and mother, and brother and sister forsake us, and all the tender ties of life be torn asunder, we have a Brother who has gone to prepare a place for us in the mansions of Him who is our Father and His Father, our God and His God, and who has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." We need no more: this is enough.

THE END.

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

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