EIGHT SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

AT GREAT ST. MARY'S,

IN THE

YEARS M.DCCC.XXX AND M.DCCC.XXXI.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A REPRINT OF

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY

ON COMMENCEMENT SUNDAY, M.DCCC.XXVI.

BY HUGH JAMES ROSE, B.D.

CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE, AND
DEAN OF BOCKING.

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M.DCCC.XXXI.

To JOSHUA WATSON, Esq.

My dear Sir,

Mr. Landor has said in one of his exquisite dedications, that it is an insult to any man to request his leave to dedicate a book to him, because it is a request to be allowed to praise or perhaps to flatter him. The principle is generally, though not universally, true. Yet in acting on it in the present case, I do not gain all the advantages which I might expect. It gives me the liberty indeed of indulging my strong feelings towards you, but it does not give me the power of expressing them. I am sensible too, that if I endeavoured to do so, the words, which to me would seem faint and unworthy, would be painful and perhaps offensive to you. I feel the same difficulty pressing on me, whether I speak as a private friend, or as a Minister of the Church of England, under a deep sense of the inestimable advantages which her cause has derived from exertions on your part, the extent and the fruits, of which

I cannot describe from zeal, from wisdom, from firmness and from munificence. Every friend of yours will join in my heartfelt prayer, that it may please God to preserve you long to us and to the Church of England. You will join heartily in the prayer that it may please Him to preserve His Church to us and to you.

Ever, my dear Sir,

Most truly and affectionately yours,

HUGH JAMES ROSE.

Trinity College,
May 10, 1831.

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* Preached also, with alterations, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, at Christ Church, Newgate, London, as the Spital Sermon for 1830.

SERMON I.

GOD'S GRACE SUFFICIENT TO SANCTIFY CORRUPTED MAN.

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2 CORINTH. XII. 9.

My grace is sufficient for thee.

'I CAN do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me[1]', is not the language of a boasting or self righteous man. It is the language of him who in his sincere and heartfelt humility declared that he counted not himself to have apprehended, but that he 'followed after, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead[2]'; it is the language of him who knew that he must maintain a perpetual warfare with evil and seducing passions, 'lest that, by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself might be a castaway[3].' This strong declaration came not from trust in himself, but from trust in God; it came from a full acceptance, and a just appreciation of the gift of God, and of the promises of the gospel. For the whole tone of the gospel is, in fact, a tone of triumph. It denounces indeed the bitterest and severest woes against sin; it

[1] Phil. iv. 13. [2] Phil. iii. 12. [3] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

sees and it proclaims the weakness and the corruption of the human heart; it is extreme and exact in requiring from that weak and corrupted heart, the practice of the highest holiness. Yet with all this in its view, with the danger of sin, and with man's propensity to sin, with the difficulties of holiness, and man's aversion from holiness full in view, the tone of the gospel is a tone of triumph. I speak not now of its triumph in recording the sacrifice of the cross, and the victory of that heavenly love which was stronger than death, or in reciting what God has done for men. I speak of its triumph in contemplating the state of man himself under the gospel, and in teaching that notwithstanding the evils of his own heart and nature, he may be not only more than conqueror over the dangers of sin and the temptations of an evil heart, but that he may perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, and may go on from strength to strength, until the day when released from the troubles of the world and the temptations of the flesh, he is called to stand before the God of Gods in Sion. I speak of the joyful sense of release from sin and death, which is written in every page of the gospel, and of victory in that struggle between a weak body and a willing spirit, which abashed and confounded the lovers of righteousness under the law.

It is this spirit of triumph which demands of death where is its sting, and of the grave where is its victory. It is this spirit which asserts that 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared

to all men[1]'; which exhorts the believer to be 'strong in the Lord and the power of his might[2]', and to be 'strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus[3]', and which prays that he may be 'strengthened with all might according to God's glorious power[4]', that he may be 'stablished in heart, unblamable in holiness before God at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints[5]'. It is this spirit, in fine, which tells the believer that he may 'live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world[6],' and that 'Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works[7].'

From the book of life then, if the book of life may be trusted, it would seem that beyond all question there is not only now no more condemnation for the believer, but that with all the sin and all the infirmity which must ever cleave to the most perfect of the sons of Adam, the gospel opens to him the certain prospect of holiness in thought and act. It undertakes to make him finally no unmeet partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, and to fit him for tasting the pure joys of that glorious state which shall be revealed to the children of God, and for contemplating with no unworthy spirit, the attributes and perfections of his creator. For there is, in the words of a great writer, 'a precept of perfection, consistent with the measures and infirmities of man. We must

[1] Titus ii. 11. [2] Eph. vi. 10. [3] 2 Tim. ii. 1.
[4] 1 Cor. i. 2. [5] 1 Thes. iii. 13. [6] Titus ii. 12.
[7] Titus ii. 14.

turn from our evil ways, leaving no sin unmortified; that is one measure of perfection, it is a perfect conversion. We must have charity; that is another perfection, it is a perfect grace. We must be ready to part with all and to die for Christ; that is perfect obedience, and the most perfect love. We must conform to the divine will in doing and suffering; that is perfect patience. We must live in all holy conversation and godliness; that is a perfect state. We must ever be going forward and growing in godliness, that so we may become perfect men in Christ. And we must persevere to the end; that is perfection, and the crown of all the rest[1].' Now it is this precept of perfection which the Christian dispensation undertakes to enable us to observe; it is to such a measure of holiness that it undertakes to enable us to attain.

But if from this picture we turn to the scene that is passing within us, and around us; if we survey our own hearts, or consider the lives of other men, we cannot but be struck with sadness at the miserable contrast between what might be and what is, and feel a melancholy curiosity to ascertain the causes of this failure and abridgement of the efficacy of the gospel system.

This is not the curiosity of the sceptic who is inclined, nor of the unbeliever who is glad, to infer falshood from failure. It is the anxious enquiry of the believer who accepts the gospel and confesses its

[1] Jeremy Taylor.

power, but who desires to know what is the peculiar fault and deficiency in himself and in others which prevent its efficacy. Nor need he disquiet himself by a long and difficult research; the answer to his difficulty may readily be found.

Christianity may be looked at in two different points of view, as it regards the world, and as it regards individuals. In the first case it is to be considered as a better rule of life, and is more or less valuable as it is more or less efficacious. A comparison of Christian and Heathen Society will at once shew that Christianity, (even as it stands in its abridged efficacy) is the most blessed boon ever bestowed on man as a social being, and that the imperfect acceptance of the gospel scheme, and the imperfect comprehension of its principle are no bar to its usefulness towards society except in degree. Not so in the case of the individual. Here too, no doubt, any acceptance of the Christian law will make men better members of society. For they cannot be blind to the fact that many sins are strictly forbidden, and that heavy threats are uttered against those who commit them. Thus the hand may be often checked and stayed in its commission of crime, and society reaps the advantage. But how fares it with the heart? Here is the whole secret and the whole difficulty. If Christianity, as it is to affect the conduct and character of man, be considered only as a better and more pure and perfect rule of life, given by a higher authority, and enforced by fuller and more awful sanctions, its difference from the systems of the Porch and the Academy is a dif-

ference only in degree. It may correct some great errors and supply some great deficiencies, it may set up a high and elevated standard of moral action, but there its merit would cease, and there its pretensions ought to cease also. Now the real superiority of Christianity considered as a guide of life, is that it not only supplies a rule, but supplies to mankind that which they want far more than a rule, the means of following one. Of what avail could it be indeed to offer the purest rule, if the being to whom it is offered, is frail and unable to act up to it? By such a law there might be a knowledge of sin, and thus the contrast between the state in which man is and that in which he ought to be, might be pressed upon his notice. But there it would leave him, guilty and miserable, oppressed with a consciousness of his own weakness and wickedness, but unable to escape from them. Or sin taking occasion by the commandment, holy, just and good as it might be, would work in him all manner of concupiscence, the evil of our nature being irritated and called forth by the opposition offered to it.

Now it is the characteristic and distinguishing feature of Christianity to present to man that which he requires, namely, the means of overcoming his frailty and corruption: and that means is the help of God's Holy Spirit given us for the sake and the merits of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. It has been said with great ingenuity and beauty[1], and in some degree with truth,

[1] By Bishop Heber in his Bampton Lectures.

that the special promise of the Comforter who was to console and compensate to the Christians for the loss of their Lord, and to lead mankind through all ages into all truth, points more distinctly to the precious and inestimable gift of Scripture. But I do not now refer to any one, or any particular promise, but to the promises of the whole gospel, and I mean that the excellence of the Christian scheme as a scheme for improving and elevating the moral condition of man consists in its more distinct offer and more abundant imparting of the grace of God's Spirit. The Jew doubtless had this, the Heathen doubtless had it, and has it still, each in his own measure and degree, 'God being with them, when they know it not[2],' but to none of them was it offered, to none was it promised, no such promise being found even in the Mosaic covenant; and so no one of them could be taught to seek it, or to rely on its blessed influence for his improvement. When we consider this, that the help of God's Holy Spirit, I mean, is the grand and distinctive mark of Christianity, as a scheme of moral improvement, it becomes obvious at once, that an imperfect acceptance of Christianity, as far as regards the raising and cleansing of the heart, is no acceptance at all; that it must be received wholly and entirely, or not at all. If we do not see, recognize, and accept the spiritual principle of Christianity, we may be washed in the waters of baptism and called by the name of our Master, we may imagine that we are endeavouring to guide our-

[2] Wordsworth.

selves by the Gospel, nay! as often as we abstain from any vice forbidden in it, we may flatter ourselves with a hope that we are making progress in our Christian calling, whereas in truth we are as far from being Christians, as the disciples of Mahomet or of Brahma. But although the value of Christianity consists in supplying to its subjects a principle of victory over sin and over death, it does not compel the acceptance of that principle. That He who can do all things, could compel the reception of any principle of improvement which He offered, need not be said. But it would seem that our Heavenly Father wills not simply the improvement of His creatures, for doubtless He could force us all into virtue, but their improvement according to certain laws and methods which still leave them free. He knoweth indeed whereof we are made, and remembereth that we are but dust; He knoweth that we cannot of ourselves work the elevation or improvement of our own sinful hearts, and accordingly He will work in us both to will and to do. But He leaves us free to accept that gracious aid to our salvation, or to reject it to our ruin.

On its reception our moral improvement, and the triumph of the Gospel scheme depend, not in part but entirely. And the reason why that scheme does not enjoy a larger portion of that triumph which it anticipates for man, and which it could ensure him, is not that, on the one hand, its promises are false and fallacious, not that it does not lay down a pure system of morals, not that it is disbelieved, not that it is renounced; but that while it is received and professed,

its grand and characteristic feature is overlooked and despised. There is not in fact, I fear, with many men, that firm faith in the truth and certainty of the peculiar assistance which the Gospel promises, and then there cannot be that earnest seeking and longing for that peculiar assistance, without which, when offered, it will either be rejected, or attain such tardy and reluctant admittance, as will make it ineffectual to good. To admit the external evidence of Christianity, to allow the excellence of its moral precepts, 'is by comparison an easy task; but to converse with Heaven[1],' to endure, as seeing him that is invisible, to live by faith, not sight, this is not easy. Yet on the one hand such converse, and such faith are required from the Christian and are essential to his character—and on the other, the promises of this viewless help and aid are written in characters so plain that he who runs may read, they so penetrate the whole Gospel system and are so indissolubly interwoven in it, that the rejection of them is a virtual rejection of the whole dispensation. But if it be asked how this grace of God is given and when it comes, the Christian teacher need not fear to express his total ignorance, and his inability to answer. He knoweth not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. It is bound by no limits of time or of occasion, it is subject in its operations to no laws discernible by the finite capacity of man. There is no time and no place where the voice of the Comforter cannot be, and is not heard. The earth with all its joys, the vault

[1] Wordsworth.

of Heaven with all its wonders, the marvels and the beauties of created nature, the infant's cry, the wife's smile, the parent's grave, the bed of sickness, the voice of God's minister, the counsel of a friend, the reproof of an enemy, wrath and mercy, sorrow and joy, shame and hope, all thoughts, all passions, all delights, whatever stirs the mortal frame, all may be vocal with God's spirit. For there is nothing in the mighty universe which can be impenetrable to that spirit, or which He cannot mould into an instrument for His blessed purposes. But the heart must be glad and ready to accept His influence, or it is given in vain. Like the countless smiles on the face of the gladsome ocean in the sunshine, before the careless eye can arrest them, they are gone. This only the Christian teacher can assert in confidence and in joy, that there never yet existed a Christian heart which sought for God's help in truth which did not find it, that never yet was that gracious promise broken, 'Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you;' that there never yet was a heart sensible of its own barrenness, on which the gentle dew of grace did not descend and make it fruitful in holiness and in every Christian grace.

To such questions the very words of Holy Writ afford an answer full of encouragement, and yet with something of reproof for the doubt which such questions imply. 'If ye being evil, give good gifts to your children, much more will your heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.' For our Father which is in heaven, though our cold and earthly hearts

believe it not, and cannot lift themselves up to see in spirit Him that is invisible to the eye of sense, loves us with a love far beyond the affection of the earthly parent for his children.

From the cradle to the grave His fatherly hand is over us to do what no earthly parent could effect, to check, to admonish, to warn, to cheer, to strengthen, and, if it be possible, to save. And we have the assurance of His Holy Word to tell us that when the warfare is accomplished, and the weakness and corruption of man are cured by the aid of grace, there is joy in the very angels which stand before the throne and behold the face of our Father which is in Heaven.

If then, my brethren, a power, that is Almighty to save, be ready and be willing to give us assistance which will enable us to effect the elevation of our moral character, the evil still existing among us, must be imputable to ourselves alone. Let us ask ourselves, then, in Christian sincerity, whether, when we look into the world, we see the lives of professing Christians so framed, as to shew their desire of God's help, and their full and perfect assurance that without it they can do nothing. We know not indeed, as has been already said, in what method it will please God to send good desires into our hearts. Nor can we enquire how far men listen to the casual, though constant, monitions of the Comforter in all the checquered scenes of life. But the use of the regular and external means of grace affords us a test, though not a perfect one, for trial and judgment of the soul in this important matter. If we rest indeed on external means and make our boast of them, we shall

doubtless too often in our weakness lose the Spirit in the letter, and the substance in the shade. But yet some of these means are so obviously right in themselves, and so obviously calculated to obtain God's blessing, that it were almost a presumption to hope for it while they are wilfully disregarded or rejected. And is not this the case, my brethren, as to a large part of these means, with too many Christians, for God forbid it should be so with all. We must not indeed suppose that the help of God's Spirit is a thing of which by these or by any means we can gain a supply which we can lay up, as in a storehouse, against the time of need. But by these means the Comforter will doubtless affect, penetrate, purify and elevate the heart, purge it of gross and sensual desires, and quicken it to a ready perception and a glad yielding up of itself to His blessed influences, howsoever and whensoever they may be sent. Let us look then to a few instances.

When we consider its immediate importance on our own hearts, and its unspeakable efficacy as a means of teaching the young at once their wants and their duties, in calling forth and in directing aright the best and holiest affections of the human heart, what can we say as to the general and miserable neglect of family prayer? What! my brethren, shall the walls of your houses echo to every name but the name of God, shall they be defiled and desecrated by the obscene sounds of envy, of slander, of passion, of lust, but never be sanctified and purified by the sweet voice of prayer? Shall that sweet voice be never heard within the walls of the home where all the tender, the purifying and ennobling

affections of the human heart are to be exercised, where parents, children, brethren, are to live and to die together? Can they who repress and put it to silence hope, that the grace of God's Spirit will animate them to the performance of all the great duties of life, or use those duties as a means for strengthening, for purifying, and for exalting the heart?

But if we pass from duties that are peculiar to one class, to those which are common to all, (common to those who are here occupied in giving or in receiving instruction, as well as to those who are engaged in the relations of domestic life,) what shall we say as to the use of private prayer? Here indeed we must speak in another strain, for the Christian teacher cannot presume to penetrate into the recesses of the chamber, or into the deeper recesses of the heart. He must admonish, not rebuke, he must counsel, not complain. Let me then counsel and admonish every one of you in particular, my brethren, to consider what has been and what is his course in this matter. Are his devotions, his communion with his God, fervent, and constant? Has he, undismayed and unchecked by the coldness, the abstraction, and the almost formalism which attend the commencement of a life of prayer, persevered in waiting on that God, on whom no humble and pious and longing heart ever waited in vain? And when the full tide of devotion has entered the channel thus prepared for it, has he hailed its coming with joy, and bathed his whole spirit in those purifying and strengthening waters?

Does he in the hour of temptation, when sorely

beset by the corruption of an evil nature and an evil world, look for strength to communion with his God in prayer? Does he, when faith is weak, and corruption strong, does he fly to his chamber for refuge from the attacks of Satan and of sin?

But connected with this great duty of Prayer are others of scarcely less weight and importance. Among them stands (perhaps the first) the use of Scripture as a Guide of Life. We must seek God and His grace in His house indeed, and on our knees, but we must seek Him too in His word. This is now the Schechinah in which His glory is visible to man, the Urim and Thummin to which he is to seek for light and guidance. Thither therefore we must go if we seek His face and say, Thy face, O Lord, will we seek in thy Word. Is this our course? Do we seek Him there in a spirit of devotion, and not of vain curiosity? do we seek for truth, not for eloquence, for holiness and not for knowledge when we go to the oracles of God? Do we seek to draw from that sacred fount of living waters, only a draught that shall clear the eyes of the understanding, and not one which shall purge away the film that clogs our moral vision? Do we approach the book of life with a tractable and childlike spirit, anxious to listen to God's voice, not our own, not to question but obey? Do we approach for daily instruction and guidance in our daily needs? Do we look to the Bible as our guide, our counsellor, and our friend; our strength in weakness, our comfort in sorrow, our joy and delight under all the varied aspects, the lights and shades of our mortal pilgrimage? Or do we look

on the reading of Scripture as an irksome duty, do we go through it as a duty, and turn from it as a duty; performing it languidly, heartlessly and cursorily, and glad when the task is accomplished? Do we accomplish the task at all? Do none of us shrink from the strong light which Scripture would throw on the darkness of our hearts, and quench the sense of shame and of evil by turning to thoughtless amusements, to secular employments, or to mere intellectual research?

But again, do we give the heart time to commune with itself? Do we remember that though we are not to renounce the world, but to live in it, yea! on that very account, so much the more do we require some seasons for retirement for self examination, for meditation on our present and our future state, our trials and our dangers, our hopes and our anticipations, the nature of our God, the promises of His Gospel, the means of grace and the hopes of glory? Can the still small voice be heard in the noise and bustle of the world? And do we seek for a solitude where its lowest whisper and gentlest suggestion may be heard? Are we still in the stillness of our chamber, and there do we commune with our heart and with its Maker?

And oh! yet more than all, let each of us ask himself how he regards the blessed communion of his Master's Body and Blood? Does he look to it with awe indeed, but with hope and joy unspeakable, knowing that there he shall find the largest portion of the graces of the Spirit, in the assured hope of pardon, in new desires, new affections, new dispositions

which will transform his mind and separate him from the world below, lift his thoughts to that which is above, adorn his soul with every Christian grace, cleanse it from every impurity and corruption, and strengthen it to immortality? Or does he fly from that high communion, soul and conscience smitten, knowing that he can bring to the altar no sacrifice worthy of it, that he cannot present soul and body to be a holy, lively, and reasonable sacrifice to the Lord of the altar, but that, if he come at all, he must bring a soul and a body alike degraded by sin, by low thoughts and base desires?

Or does he stay away in deep humility, looking to that table round which his Christian brethren meet, with an earnest longing to join their holy festival, but ashamed and afraid? But oh! thou trembling soul, fear not! To thee the gates of righteousness are open, go into them and praise the Lord[1]! Fly to His sanctuary for refuge from thy ghostly enemies, and to His altar for grace and strength and peace. The voice from that altar need not alarm thee. To the unrepentant sinner, and to the hypocrite the Church of Christ may speak the language of fear, and warn him against mocking his God by pretending to desire His help, when he desires it not. But to the penitent, the believer, the faithful, humble, Christian, what are her words of consolation and of comfort? Does she not call with her voice of love to all the weary and heavy laden to come and lay down their burden there? Does she not speak of love by which

[1] Ps. cxviii. 19.

the Father gave up the only beloved to die for the world? Does she not bid the guilty but repenting heart that doubts if that sacrifice, could be made for one so stained with guilt, remember that He came to die for sinners? Does she not bid us remember that He that died for sinners, lives for them, prays for them, offers up their prayers to the eternal Father? Does she not call upon us to lift up the heart that is cast down under the sense of sin, to give thanks, as it is meet and right to do, for the victory which has been won for us, and 'with angels and archangels and all the glorious company of Heaven, to laud and magnify' him that has conquered Death and Sin for us? But yet more, does not the Church of Christ remind us in that solemn service of the blessed purposes for which it was ordained, and tell us that we who approach with faith to that high communion shall have our bodies made pure by our Lord's body and our soul washed with His most precious blood, that we shall evermore dwell in Him and He in us?

Oh! my brethren, what promises and prospects are these! Do we hail and accept them with joy? or do we neglect and despise them? Does the voice of prayer never come from our lips? are our ears closed to the sound of the Word? is God's table spread in vain for us? in all our round of busy life, is there no hour of calm and quiet thought, of holy meditation? And then do we complain for ourselves, and complain for the world at large? do we think that the Lord's arm is shortened that it cannot save, and His ears dull that He will not hear? 'What

could God have done more that He hath not done for His vineyard'? Promises, exhortations, strivings, assistance, His Word, His Sacraments all are given. And do we think that promises, exhortations, strivings, assistance, His Word, His Sacraments, will be given in vain, and no vengeance follow? Vain thought! Be not deceived, God is not mocked! A day will come when a merciful God will shew that He is a just God: a day when we shall find no place for repentance, though, like Esau, we seek for it with tears. 'Then it will be too late to knock when the door is shut; too late to call for mercy, when it is the time for justice', too late indeed when we have passed to that state where hope never comes, where repentance is useless, and amendment impossible.

Let not this be our case, my brethren. God has endowed us either by nature or by grace, with faculties which enable us to discern and appreciate the beauty of holiness. He has set before us a sufficient rule, and a perfect pattern of all that is lovely and pure. Yet more, he has given us the means of walking by the rule, and imitating the pattern, of raising ourselves in the scale of moral beings, day by day, and year by year, till however deep or deadly the taint of our original nature, and however frail and weak our hearts may yet be, we may by patient continuance in well-doing emancipate ourselves from the foul thraldom of sin, rise into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and in our measure and degree be holy as He is holy, and perfect as He is perfect. Shall we close our eyes to the glorious vision, neglect the rule, des-

pise the pattern, reject the proffered aid, live in a low, base, and odious servitude, to corruption and sin, and never look, hope, soar heavenward? Shall we be content to resign the heavenly for the earthly, the spiritual for the animal, and all the glorious privileges of holiness and hopes of Heaven for the sordid and melancholy concernments of a passing and corrupted world? What must be the guilt and shame of rational and moral beings who have the means of improvement in their hands, and refuse or neglect to use them, who might go on in perpetual succession from one stage of improvement to another, and who yet remain through their whole lives unadvanced and unimproved, contented to creep where they might soar, and, yet worse, contented to revel with lost spirits in the foulness of sin, when they might rise with heavenly spirits, to the perfection of holiness.

These words, my younger brethren, spoken in this place, may possess little interest for you. They present no question for the understanding to discuss, no difficulty for it to solve. But if I were to think only of the progress of your understanding, I would yet say, despise not these plain and practical exhortations. Be assured that the plain and practical exhortations which point out to you the one only road to the improvement of your moral nature, point out to you also the only road to the elevation of your intellectual being. For whatever may be the acuteness, or the penetration of the understanding while the heart is yet unconverted, there is no clear discernment, no full comprehension, no firm and permanent grasp of any

great and abiding truths for any but the moral and spiritual man. 'Mysteries are revealed unto the meek', says the Son of Sirach. 'The Spirit of the Lord will not enter into a polluted soul, but he that keepeth the law, getteth the understanding thereof—and the perfection of the fear of the Lord is wisdom'.

But it is of something better and higher than the triumphs of intellect, it is of the progress of the moral being which I now speak. And I beseech you to remember what you may become even in this low world of care, and what gracious offers of help are made you by One who is equally able and desirous to confer the aid He offers. If His grace then is sufficient for us, sufficient to make us creatures worthy to know and love, and worship such a Creator, again I beseech you not to let it be offered in vain. For if year after year it is offered in vain, if year after year this culture is wasted on a barren tree and an unkindly soil, if year after year we bring forth no fruit, how long will the eternal Lord of the Vineyard endure with us? when will He issue the dread command, 'Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground'? Oh! spare us, Lord, a little while, shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer, still for a little while send forth thy light to lead, thy grace to guide us, deliver us not yet, Oh! Lord, into the bitter pains of eternal Death!

SERMON II.

MAN'S NEED OF A SANCTIFYING PURPOSE.

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1 Corinth. X. 31.

Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

In the verses immediately preceding that in which the text is written, the great Apostle has given the resolution of one of those cases of conscience about which he had obviously been consulted by his Corinthian converts. Living, as they did, in the heart of a heathen city, and surrounded by friends and neighbours still sitting in the darkness of heathenism, they must have been often exposed to much that was painful to their feelings, and might be perilous to their own peace, as well as a source of temptation and distress of mind to their Christian brethren. Had they renounced all commerce with those whose heathen practices shocked them, they must needs have gone out of the world. Yet in remaining in it, they must often have been witnesses, and, to outward appearance, not disapproving witnesses of practices op-

posed to the truth. That they who were of the contrary part and were ashamed, not having any thing to say against the godly lives of the Christians, would often seek to entrap them into practices at variance with their principles and profession, we cannot doubt; nor that, when they succeeded, the weaker brethren would be offended, and their faith perhaps shaken.

The question which gave rise to the Apostle's precept in the text affords an apt instance, and must have been one of constant recurrence. Might the Christian, with a safe conscience, purchase, or partake of any portion of the victims which had been offered up in the temple of an heathen God? The Apostle's answer was fraught at once with wisdom and love. The enlightened Christian, he said, would well know that the victim offered to an imaginary being could in no way be consecrated, nor its nature changed. To him therefore its having been used in a vain and idle form was a matter of indifference. It was still God's creature, given for man's use, and to that use it might be lawfully applied. But as recent converts of weak faith or weak minds might still have some confused notion of a virtue in the idol which they had so long worshipped, their case was to be considered; and if they were shaken or affected by the sight of practices which might appear to them, though erroneously, to imply some halting between two opinions, those practices, however innocent and harmless, were to be avoided or forsaken. The inconveniences which might arise from giving them up, would be perhaps serious, and serious offence might be given to the heathen friends of the

Christian; but that must be reckoned nothing in comparison with shaking the faith and endangering the salvation of one of those weaker brethren for whom Christ died.

Actions, in a word, indifferent in themselves, may under particular circumstances, become any thing but indifferent; and accordingly they are to be viewed not simply in themselves, but, the Apostle says in the text, according as they promote the good of men, and the salvation of souls, or, as he expresses the same meaning, the glory of God.

We may observe in passing that this decision of the Apostle is in itself of great value, as laying down a specific rule for a very large class of occasions arising in every day life. It is the rule, that where no higher principle directs us, and where the doing or refusing to do any action will have no effect either for good or evil on our own moral feelings and character, we are yet bound by the Christian law most carefully and anxiously to consider whether it will affect the moral feelings and character of the very weakest of our brethren, and to do it or abstain from it accordingly.

We may observe too that the principle on which the decision is founded is the great, all-pervading and all-controuling principle of Christianity, Self-denial: and that the decision affords no mean proof how far that principle is to be carried, and how entirely, it is to regulate our whole lives, when it teaches us that in the most trifling and ordinary actions of ordinary life we are to consider not our own wishes and convenience, but the good of our brethren.

We may add that if a brief rule of life were to be given to the Christian, perhaps none more clear and more effectual could be given than the having the glory of God ever before his view in every action. More clear, I say, because although in our weakness, we could but little discern of ourselves what would promote the glory of the great Creator, He has himself taught us in Scripture that to promote the good of man in the largest and most comprehensive sense of the words, is to promote His glory. Weighty however as this reflection is, and capable of the most profitable examination, I pass it over to day, because I wish to consider the precept in the text in a point of view more important and more profitable still. For that precept sets before us all that which we all want to direct and sanctify our lives, a great purpose, and exhorts us to the accomplishment of it. Let us pursue the thoughts to which this consideration will give rise, and earnestly beseech our Heavenly Father, who is the giver of every good gift, that the consideration may not be in vain, but that it may awaken some and confirm all.

My brethren, if there are any truths concerning ourselves, which the thoughtful heart sees written legibly on every thing around us, they are these, that we were born for a great purpose beyond the mere temporary and too often sordid concerns of our peculiar station, or calling, and that for its entire and worthy fulfilment the utmost exertion of all the wonderful faculties with which our Creator has endowed us is required. That we are so endowed, that man with all his weakness is a creature of such vast and varied powers, such pene-

tration, such perseverance, such comprehension, and that to the humblest among us are offered, in the promised aid of the spirit, such large and ample means of exalting and improving his own nature and of benefiting his brethren, would of itself be no mean proof of our proposition, when we remember that man has been so endowed by One who hath done, and can do, nothing in vain.

Excellent and admirable too as may be the gifts bestowed on man, there is much in the constitution of man's own nature which shews that they will be given in vain, unless they are exercised, cultivated and improved, and much in the constitution of things which shows that such exercise and cultivation is provided for by the wisdom of our great Creator, a second argument of no mean force in proving that we are destined for the effectuation of great and important purposes. None of the many necessities of natural and social life can be supplied without an exercise of man's faculties in a greater or less degree, and many of them certainly require it in the very highest. When the Heathen said that the Deity gave nothing to man without severe toil, he proclaimed in other words the truth, that God in the constitution of nature has provided for the eduction and exercise of those rare endowments, wherewith he has gifted his creature. As the thoughtful and religious heart will read in this provision God's purposes towards man, so will it read them too in the misery often, and always the uneasiness which in the natural order of things, falls on those who resist those purposes, cast away the rich gifts bestowed on them, and spend the por-

tion of years alloted to them, in idle dissipation or in sloth. Some men may indeed steel themselves against the sense of their own degradation, yet even to them, the constant breaks which necessarily arise in their round of amusements, and the constant interruptions which as necessarily arise to distract their sloth, must cause a sense of weariness and uneasiness which is probably not equalled by any ordinary sources of vexation. And to all who are yet alive to a feeling of shame, what but uneasiness at the least can arise, when they see that the register of their lives presents an utter blank, when they see that they have sunk themselves in the scale of being, yea! degraded their own nature below that of the beasts that perish, to whom the precious gifts, which they have wilfully thrown away, were never offered?

Nor let us on this point neglect that proof which the analogy of nature supplies, remembering the eloquent words of one of our great Divines, that 'the whole 'world is a glass wherein we may behold our way on 'this point represented to us, that even beings void of 'reason, of sense and of life itself, are set in action to-'wards the effecting reasonable purposes; that the hea-'vens are rolling with unwearied motion; the sun and 'stars perpetually darting their influences; the earth ever 'labouring in the birth and nourishment of plants; the 'plants drawing sap and sending out fruits and seeds, 'to feed us and propagate themselves; the waters run-'ning, the seas tossing, and the winds fanning the air 'to keep the elements sweet in which we live'; in a word, that 'it is with us as with other things in

'nature, which by motion are preserved in their na-
'tive purity and perfection, their sweetness and their
'lustre, rest corrupting, debasing and defiling them,
'and that in like manner the preservation and im-
'provement of our faculties depends on their constant
'exercise.'[1]

But if it be allowed, as it must be, that man was created for some great purpose, the next and the anxious enquiry must be what that purpose is. And among those deep things a part of which we may know, we may know assuredly, by a little consideration, enough of the purpose for which we are created, for our practical guidance.

First of all we shall come to see that it must be a moral purpose for which we are created, For in speaking and thinking of this great subject we speak and we think in vain, if we do not embrace the whole family of man in our speculations. It is idle to assign as a fit object of human pursuit, any object from which a large portion of the human family are excluded. This consideration of itself, would exclude all purposes which are purely intellectual; and no others can come into competition with a moral purpose. The promotion of our own glory, the furthering our own advantage, and other purposes like these cannot be worthy of an Immortal Being, so richly endowed by a beneficent Creator.

But for intellectual purposes, they who can really exist, are few in number. Few, I mean, are gifted by nature with such faculties as enable them to pursue in-

[1] Barrow.

tellectual researches to any great extent. And of those few, how many are disabled by want of opportunity, by want of cultivation, by poverty and by infirmity. Few indeed are they so richly endowed that they can exercise their intellectual powers when their zeal is damped, their vigour diminished, and their course impeded by the weakness of the body; or when the mind is recalled from the proud flights of imagination, or the depths of abstruse research to the distracting cares of daily life, and condemned to the sufferings and the impatience of want.

Nor must it be forgotten that the wisdom of our Heavenly Father has decreed that an overwhelming proportion of his creatures should in one form or other toil as well as pray for their daily bread, and should have a large portion of their time and thoughts consumed in the practice of the business and profession to which their circumstances have consigned them. The purpose then for which man was created, must be one which can be pursued amidst the toils of active life, under the pressure of poverty, and on the bed of sickness, at home and abroad, by day and by night, by the lightsome heart of youth, and by the infirmity of age. It must be one which shall be worthy of the highest range of intellect, and yet not beyond the sphere of the lowest in its proper measure and degree. And such requirements as these cannot be satisfied by any but a moral purpose.

This conclusion indeed is confirmed and justified by considerations drawn from other sources, and chiefly by this, that no other than a moral purpose can sa-

tisfy the desires and feelings of man. For he is a being compounded of a moral and intellectual nature, and his life is no life, if both are not educed and exercised. Now it cannot be denied that in the execution of a moral purpose, the most exalted powers of the intellect may be, and often are called upon to bear their part, while the moral feelings may contribute nothing to the free range of the intellect.[1] No doubt, a gratification of the most exquisite kind may be derived from such a range of the intellectual powers. But we must not do God or man the injustice of saying that the being will be calm or at rest except for a time, if his moral feelings are allowed to run waste or to lie fallow. For a time, the heart may be kept quiet, but after a time there will arise a bitterness which will vex us in the midst of our enjoyment, there will arise earnest and restless cravings and longings after something not possessed, an uneasy and undefined, it may be, but nevertheless a constant sense of dissatisfaction with our own condition, a sense that we are not fulfilling the purposes for which we were created, nor holding that station in the rank of being for which God designed us.

I have allowed, as I am bound to do, how deep is the interest of intellectual research; I must add that I am equally conscious of its dignity and its

[1] It will not, I trust, be imagined that I mean here to maintain that the intellect will not be improved, nay! that it is not to derive its highest improvement from the improvement of the moral frame. I have endeavoured to show the contrary in several parts of these Sermons. All I mean to say here is that men may cultivate the intellect to the utter neglect of the moral frame, as in instances like Voltaire.

usefulness. But while it is pursued not in subordination to a moral purpose, but by itself and for itself, let its advocates carry its pretensions as high as they will, when weighed in the balance, it must be found wanting. It will be found wanting in that tender and affectionate recognition of the wants of our common nature, wanting in that kind sympathy with them, wanting in that lively perception of the unspeakable value of our moral dispositions and their capability of improvement, without which man is not man, without which the human character however sharpened, tempered and polished by intellectual exercise, however wide its grasp, and however subtle its penetration, wants its best charm, its connection with humanity, its tenderness and its love. I speak of intellectual research in its best and purest form, yet pursued for itself alone; how much stronger is the case against it, if alloyed, as it sometimes is, by the admission of base and selfish objects, by ambition, by the love of gain, by obedience to the call and command of the passing hour and the ignorant multitude. What do we discern here of the character and conduct of a being framed by an Immortal Creator, to be as Immortal as Himself, and endowed with vast and almost unbounded powers of improving and exalting himself and his brother men?

If we descend below this point if we take into our view any besides intellectual employments, the question becomes of yet easier resolution. Honourable as may be the pursuits of honest industry, right as may be the anxious care to provide for

our own households, and to raise ourselves and our families in the scale of civil society, can a rational and immortal being be satisfied to stop here? Can he know what God is and what man is? Can he believe that all these precious endowments of head and heart, thought and penetration, and courage and perseverance, and warm and lively affections were given to enable him to gather wealth, and having gathered it, to die? Is that a worthy employment for the rich gifts and graces which a gracious God hath showered in such rich profusion on His creatures? Shall a rational and immortal soul pass away from this scene of trial and leave no trace of its existence but the wealth which it has spent its glorious faculties in acquiring? Shall no ear bless when it hears? no eye when it sees give witness to him? no grateful tongue record that 'this is he, who in the spirit of the gospel which he professed, rescued me from the miseries of want, and the yet deeper and more deadly misery of sin'? Shall he die and leave no void behind him, no record or trace of his existence but the riches which he has collected? What is the awful warning which Scripture gives to such a man? I speak not only of that bitter reproof of his folly which it utters, when in reproaching him with setting his affections on perishing creatures, it asks of him, 'if this night his soul be required of him, whose shall all these things be'? I speak of that yet more solemn warning which reminds us of the time when we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God, and give an account of the talents committed

to us, and which bids us remember that to them who have wasted or buried these precious gifts, He, to whom that dread account is to be given, will be a Master who gathers where He has not scattered, and reaps where He has not sown.

Many moralists have been sensible of these truths, many have enforced them, many have proposed various moral purposes as worthy of human thought and attention. But they have been all deficient in some essential points. They have either been too confined in their objects and extent, and thus have failed of attracting a general sympathy, or have shown a yet worse deficiency in not ensuring the purity of the motives for attending to them. But that purpose which the Apostle proposes in the text is liable to none of these objections. It is applicable to all men and practicable at all times, sufficient to satisfy the greatest, and not above the lowest capacities. It admits into its view those gigantic plans which may embrace the whole race of man, yet looks with pleasure and satisfaction to the narrow confines of an humble village, or a sick chamber. It addresses us in short by all that can elevate, gladden and move the human heart, so that while the human heart is alive and open to the feelings of humanity, it is alive and open to this holy and blessed purpose. Lastly, it lifts us above all the contagion of selfishness, and opens our hearts and minds to those glad influences, which make our existence a blessing at once to others and to ourselves[1].

[1] There is an admirable chapter on the practical methods of pursuing the great purpose here recommended, in Tucker's Light of Nature.

Let us consider it then somewhat more closely, and before we examine the especial precepts of the Gospel on this point, let us enquire to what conclusions the general spirit of the Christian scheme and our own reason would lead us.

God is love. The arrangements of the world of nature, the professed objects of the world of grace shew forth this attribute, and declare that God desires the good, that is, the improvement and so the happiness, of his creatures. To this end the whole scheme of redemption is directed. To this end are directed the dispensations of God's providence and government in the world. The satisfaction and delight which He has appointed, should in the course of nature be the consequence of our acting in one manner, and the pain and uneasiness which He has appointed as the attendants on our acting in another, or our not acting at all, shew forth the same truth. We may read it in the adaptation of our faculties to the state of things in which we are placed, their readiness, I mean, to be moved and affected to good by the order of events and the course of nature, by the exercise of the affections, by the results of experience, and by the changes and chances of men and things around us. Thus even mute insensate things become instruments in God's hands for promoting the good of men, and furthering His great purposes. Shall man alone refuse to bend and yield himself up to the same blessed end and object? Shall he resist the stream of God's purposes, and hope that he can do so with impunity? Can there be any joy for one who is out of tone with the

whole order of things in which he lives, who is attempting to resist the course of nature, the dispensations of providence, and the revealed and declared will of God?

How God's glory, indeed, can be promoted by a being so weak as man, may at first sight perplex and confound us. It need not of course be said that we speak not of adding to God's real glory, but to that relative glory which He is said to have when His perfections are made known to the world, the hearts of His creatures turned to Him, and His desire for their improvement accomplished. Here let us beware how we fancy that we cannot promote God's purposes and glory, when He shews us that we can, let us beware how we yield to a strong temptation and listen to the suggestions of our spiritual foe, who under the guise of humility would introduce idleness, paralyse all our efforts, and lead us to that state in which he most desires to see us, a state of spiritual despondency and sloth. We know from God's word, that it is to His glory that His creatures should be improved in holiness and happiness, and should become more like to himself; that it is to His glory that all should endeavour, by His grace, to improve themselves first, and then others, and so carry on His glorious purposes; that it is to His glory that His creatures should be all animated by that purpose, and that they should be possessed by that spirit of love to one another, which makes them more like to him in one of His most lovely attributes.

To promote God's glory then, is to desire in our own persons to conform thoughts, hopes and desires

to His blessed will, and as respects others, to be animated by an active spirit of love which shall lead us to desire and promote by every legitimate means, the eternal welfare of our fellow men. I say 'an active spirit of love,' for a mere general desire to promote God's glory, without a care to do it in every action of our lives, is nothing, is far indeed from that love of God with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, which reason and revelation demand from us, which is to possess us, to occupy our thoughts and hearts, and to be pursued with the same care and eagerness as the worldling pursues the objects of avarice and ambition. And I say 'the eternal welfare' of mankind, not only because this worthily understood, will be found to comprehend all that concerns their real welfare here, whether we look to savage or civilized life, but because no lower consideration will satisfy the human heart. For pure and disinterested as, perhaps occasionally, have been the views and wishes which have looked to man's earthly good alone, they have not risen high enough to meet the wishes and longings of the better part of man. We cannot exclude God from our thoughts and be happy; we cannot exclude the grave from our thoughts and be happy. If we look to be satisfied, we must look beyond the parting to the meeting, beyond the transitory and the temporal, to the permanent and the eternal.

Knowing this then, we cannot but see the vast extent, the mighty sphere of action to which the purpose of promoting God's glory at once admits us. We see that in all the various relations of life, as

well as at all its periods, it may be effectually prosecuted. To the parent, the brother, the master, the neighbour, the friend, the servant, to all of them, this purpose is brought home, yea! to their very doors and bosoms. They are encircled and enclosed by it, the command to prosecute it is written in legible characters on every thing they see, and nothing but a stern determination to resist God's will, or an hopeless insensibility to every thing that is good, and fair, and lovely, can make them overlook it. But no less, perhaps in the ever enduring relation of rich and poor is the purpose pressed upon us, and the means of pursuing it offered. For he who rescues the ignorant and the helpless from the dangers of ignorance and the consequent dangers of sin, he who relieves the distresses and consoles the afflictions of his suffering brethren, from the love of God and a desire to promote His glory, not only shows his faith and fulfils his duty, but by holding forth a shining light before men, effectually glorifies his Father which is in heaven. No doubt right motives are sometimes suspected and often not duly appreciated. But looking to the whole effect produced by systematic benevolence on Christian principles, we must see that it produces ultimately a strong sense of the excellence of the dispensation, and turns the heart of man to Him who is its Author. And the same would unquestionably be the effect of the practice of other Christian duties, on this great Christian principle of promoting God's glory. We should for example, not only improve our own hearts by the resolute and undeviating practice of self-denial, of for-

giveness, and of humility, but we should 'adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,' and ultimately impress on mankind the great value of the religion which enjoins these practices, and thus promote God's glory, by extending his kingdom.

And who cannot understand and feel this simple principle of action? Is there any one so humble in mind, in station or in opportunities, that he cannot show forth the loveliness of Christian conduct, and so show forth the brightness of God's glory, to a parent, a child, a neighbour? And who is there so exalted in mind and station, and so rich in opportunities that this purpose will not employ them all? Is there anything indeed which can touch the affections, anything which can captivate the imagination, anything which can exercise the intellect, which this purpose does not comprehend? The arrangement of schemes for carrying the light of civilization and the light of the Gospel to the remotest ends of the world, and the devising such plans as may rescue the wretched from the ignorance and misery which oppress and defile the soul, and may raise them from almost the level of the animal creation to the enjoyment and dignity of a spiritual and intellectual existence, are the legitimate offspring of devotion to this great purpose. Nor is its power less in a more humble, yet not less hallowed, sphere, in promoting the practice of the ordinary, but momentous, duties of social and domestic life. What besides can so certainly lead to the bringing every word and thought into subjection to the law of Christ, that a weaker brother may not be offended, to the holding forth the light

of the Gospel in our lives to our dependents and neighbours, to the ready and cheerful relief of suffering, to the patient watching by the bed of death. Wherever man is, there may we promote God's glory, for there may we display the graces of the Gospel, in the kindly interchange of good offices; and wherever are want, and ignorance, and wretchedness, there especially may we carry into effect this great purpose, by relieving the one and instructing the other.

Is it not indeed clear to every one who will look at man's nature and station, that all about him is provided and adapted for the execution of this purpose, that in a yet higher sense than the philosopher, we may say, that 'determined by instinct to society, and endowed with innumerable principles which have a reference to our fellow creatures, we are placed by the condition of our birth in that element, where alone the perfection and happiness of our nature are to be found[1]?'

What, indeed, besides this can we desire, what purpose more noble, more ennobling, and more elevating can we imagine? If we justly admire and love the single hearted man, who can be so single hearted as he who feeling his high destiny, warmly embraces and warmly pursues this great purpose of his creation? Must not this blot out from the book of his remembrance all lesser and meaner purposes, and day by day and year by year more absorb and engross the soul? Must not this of necessity banish every petty and selfish thought, and nerving and steeling the soul against the entrance

[1] Dugald Stewart's Philosophy of the active Powers of Man.

of every base desire, lead it along the rugged yet not fearful road of duty, of self-denial and self-sacrifice, till it be brought to a nearer resemblance with its God?

But again, for our own happiness, what can be so desirable as to have a worthy object to which and by which to direct and guide ourselves? If we really feel that we have such an object and are in truth possessed by it, what is there which can so much cheer, and animate and strengthen the heart in all the varied and checquered scenes of life, in the disappointments of our own personal hopes, and the loss of our own affections, as the bright unfading prospect of a holy and blessed object of desire and interest, which can be blasted by no disappointment, and which triumphs over change, and chance, and time, and death?

If, then, this purpose will at once employ the understanding and satisfy the affections, if it is suited to all men and all times, if it will purify and ennoble those who embrace it, if it will add to their joy, and comfort their sorrow, what more need be said to persuade you to embrace it? God knows we want such a purpose. The waste of precious time and precious talents, and the yet more lamentable waste of kind affections which we witness day by day, the mean selfishness which seems but too often to grow with the growth of prosperity, and with the successful prosecution of worldly ends, proclaim that to live without a purpose, and to live without a worthy purpose, are conditions alike fatal to man, fatal to his happiness and fatal to his eternal welfare.

This only, I think, need be added, that the purpose which reason thus recommends, the word of God enjoins, telling us as regards ourselves that 'herein is our Father glorified, if we bear much fruit,' and enjoining as regards others, that we 'let our light shine before men, that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven,' that 'whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God.' But I stand not upon single texts. For what else did our great Pattern and Lord bear all that He bore in life and death, why did He live in want and shame, why did He die on the cross, but to promote the good of man and the glory of God? and what else does all Scripture call upon us with a mighty voice to do, but to follow after His steps, and for the good of man and the glory of God, to deny ourselves, to repress every evil wish and thought, to toil, and watch, and pray, to live, in a word, and, if need be, to die?

To this glorious object then, my brethren, let us all direct our hearts and thoughts, and 'whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God.' More especially let the exhortation be directed to the young, for they at least are not yet the slaves of avarice, or ambition, their eyes are not yet fascinated to some fatal object from which it wants more than an enchanter's power to rescue them. Some among you, my younger brethren, there are whom it has pleased God so richly to endow with worldly gifts, that you are free from the necessity of entering on those occupations which engross the time and thoughts of other men. To how many has this good gift of God proved a curse, be-

cause they had neither a great and glorious purpose to direct and sanctify their lives, nor the substitute of daily and urgent calls on their time and thoughts! Not being pre-occupied either with absolute or relative good, they fell, from their own natural cravings after action, an easy prey to him who goeth about seeking to do mischief and to destroy souls, verifying too often, on this side, that awful saying, 'How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God.' But the riches which have thus too often proved a curse to their possessor, may assuredly prove a blessing to himself as well as others, if he remembers that from possessing them he is more able, and if more able, more bound to pursue the great purpose of man's life, the promoting the glory of God. This purpose will rescue him from the evils, the degradations and the dangers of a life of sloth and idleness, will cast a splendour round his path, will worthily employ all his thoughts, gifts and graces; and leading him, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, to cut off even a right hand and pluck out a right eye for the glory of God and the good of men, will lead him too along the path which his Master trod before him, from a cross below to a crown above.

If there were no God in heaven, and no life beyond the grave, yet how base and sordid would it be to let our intellect and our affections wither away for want of exercise, to wish no good, to do no good, to waste three or four score years, and then to die as we have lived, and leave no void behind us. But now, not how base and sordid, but how guilty and how dan-

gerous so to live, for one who has to give an account, an account to a God who has so richly endowed him, a God who has marked out a course and prescribed a purpose, a God, who to the world's eye takes up where He lays not down, who gathers where He has not strewn, a God who will not endure to see a single talent unemployed.

Some of you again there are, on whom the lavish hand of a bountiful Creator has bestowed the rich gifts of genius, the ten talents of lofty mental endowments. Enjoy your gift with trembling, for as yours may be the best and highest, so yours too may be the worst and the lowest of all lots. You most of all may promote God's glory, widen your Saviour's kingdom, and bless your brethren. If you fail, if all your rich gifts are bestowed on earth and earthly things, and earthly acquirements, if you, so specially called to God's service, leave it to strangers to return and give glory to God, if to you 'youth has been past and manhood has come, and genius has been given and knowledge won in vain[1],' what can be your lot in that great solemn account of our several talents which we must one day give at the judgment-seat of Christ? Alas! how many are there of those who have won, by powers given for better purposes, the brightest triumphs in the world, who will lay down a dishonoured head in a dishonoured grave, because the triumphs were won for themselves, not for others, for man, not for God, for time, not for eternity. Well!

[1] Wordsworth.

if in that grave they could rest for ever! for woe indeed to that man to whom God's cause was especially committed, and by whom it has been betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born!

But if there are some here so richly endowed with the gifts of fortune, there are many too, very many of you, my younger brethren, whose lot will be a lot of obscurity. No success, no fame, no honours await you. You may see some of your companions the first and the foremost in the world's gallant show, the theme of every tongue, and the envy of every heart, while you are to live and to die unknown. Be it so! If you set forth on your obscure and humble path in the strength of this good purpose, and in the light of faith and love, if you persevere in it in a spirit of love and of duty, your lowly life will be as purely bright in His eyes who alone can judge what glory is, as the career of the warrior and the statesman; and your estate will be one which conquerors might envy, and kings bow down to it. You may return to your lowly dwelling at the close of every calm and solitary day, forgotten by all but Him, you may perhaps have holden communion with but one brother man, yet more lowly than yourself. Yet He who knoweth all things, may know that you have endeavoured to heal the broken-hearted, to instruct the ignorant, to make the vile man liberal; He may know that to that poor brother you have spoken or acted in a spirit of love, in an earnest desire to make him sensible of the beauty of Christian charity, and to promote God's glory by bringing him more

and more within the pale of Christ's Church on earth, and so to prepare another worshipper for that Church in heaven. And then you may go to your rest in the blessed certainty, that that cup of cold water given in your Master's name and spirit was not given in vain; that you have acted up to the dignity of your nature and the purposes of your Creator; that you are a fellow worker together with Him in that grand scheme which was begun ere the world's foundations were laid, and will be completed only when they are committed unto dust. Seeing then, my brethren, that we have such glorious prospects and promises, let us all, the high and the humble alike, pray for grace that we may be enabled to give ourselves, our thoughts and hearts to this great purpose, and 'glorify God with our bodies and spirits, which are His.'

SERMON III.

EFFECTS OF SENSUALITY ON THE MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL FRAME.

TITUS I. 15, 16.

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

WELL and truly has it been said that the Christian scheme is no formal and technical system of moral or metaphysical philosophy, and that it was not sent by its Author to lead mankind to any speculative or scientific truth, to give them perfect light as to the nature of the human mind, or to draw out in a formal array the active and moral powers of man. Deep as is the interest of such enquiries, and profitable very often the pursuit of them, this assuredly is not the object of Scripture. Yet, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged, that there are scattered hints of the deepest interest on these very subjects, words that perhaps speak only to the thoughtful and the wise, but yet such as are found by the thoughtful and the wise

to anticipate them in their profoundest conclusions, and so to convince them that He who died for them on the cross had a nature which would make such a sacrifice effectual, that He was of a truth man's Maker, for that He knew what was in man. There is one subject especially of perhaps the very first importance in surveying the moral and intellectual powers of man, I mean the operation of the moral condition on the intellect, on which we find very many hints and suggestions conveyed in the Scriptures. The words of the text afford a very striking instance of these suggestions, and the theme is one of such fearful importance that I propose to pursue it to-day.

The Spirit of God has here set before us a representation of the effects of sensuality on the whole frame of man, moral and intellectual, on the whole course, plan, and purpose of his life below, a representation so profound and so awful, that with its simple brevity it may supersede whole treatises on Ethics, and convey to all who will listen to it the most useful and most alarming warning. There is no occasion for us to make any vain attempts to fill up the Apostle's meaning. We have only to listen, to follow, and to endeavour to comprehend the full force of his words.

I do not judge it necessary now to enquire against whom the words of the Apostle were in the first instance directed, for the lesson which they give is of universal application. And the lesson is this: not only that 'sin is exceeding sinful,' that it is 'enmity with God,' and will banish us from his presence in that world to which we are hastening, but that sensual sin is the utter

destruction of the whole frame of man. As the heart is corrupted, every object presented to it from without nourishes its corruption; and within, the understanding is darkened, the conscience perverted, the man is separated from his God, his affections are debased, he becomes wholly depraved, and is lost to every purpose for which he was created. The poison steals silently on till it has turned the whole mass of blood into corruption; the canker spreads till root and trunk and branches and leaves and fruit are all blighted and blasted, till 'scent and beauty both are gone,' and the withered tree presents its broken and naked branches to the fury of the elements, and uselessly cumbers the ground.

Let us look, if we can with steady eyes, on this shocking picture; let us listen, in fear but in firmness, to the several parts of that awful sentence which the Holy Spirit hath pronounced by his Apostle upon sin, remembering too that there is another part of that sentence not pronounced here, not revealed except in dim and awful figure, that the full draught from the cup of trembling is to be drunk hereafter, that the more awful infliction of God's wrath against sin, if indeed more awful may be, is reserved to another day and another abode.

And what is the first penalty denounced against the impure and the sensual? "To them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure." Nothing is pure! What a sentence! Yet it is fulfilled to the letter. When the eye of the body is jaundiced, it invests every thing with the hue of disease; and so

it is with the soul when defiled with the disease of sin. For however evil and corrupt the world around us is, it is still God's world, and still bears in every part the clear and authentic stamp of its Creator and His attributes. Give yourselves to the guidance of God's holy Spirit, and be led by Him to purity, and you will find purity every where. But if you have given yourself over to the dominion of an unclean spirit, the good is spread around you with a lavish hand in vain. You will leave the rich banquet prepared for you to feed on garbage, and the gold will wither to dross and ashes at your defiling touch. As this is still God's world, and God is too strong for man, and good too strong for evil, there is and ever will be in the polluted heart a sense of disquiet and discontent, a want of harmony with the ruling and controuling Spirit of the Universe, with all that is around it and above it; and in a bitter sense of this disquiet it will turn with eager anxiety to thoughts and employments fitted to its state and its desires. There will be no sympathy with what is pure and excellent, and without such sympathy you will be unable to apprehend it. It matters not how, or where the polluted heart is placed; for the source has been poisoned, and every stream which it sends forth will be poisoned like itself.

In conversation, the sensualist, instead of reaping innocent pleasure and instruction, will anxiously seek to turn all that is said into the foul channel of his own thoughts. In the calm and tranquil pleasures of home he can have no delight, they must be dull and tasteless to him; and he would 'fain scare with wild-

fire light, The sacred nuptial hall[1].' From the playful gestures of childhood and the lightsome mirth of innocent youth he must turn away, while he has any feeling of shame left, for the contrast between what he might be and what he is must be too bitter to dwell on. In a deep sense of bitterness at his own degradation, he will seize with unholy pleasure on all that is faulty and base in the character of others, and close his eyes to all that is noble and exalted. He will be quick to discern, and fond to dilate on the weakness of humanity, but he cannot appreciate its strength or its excellence. His eye will be unable, or slow to perceive the sublime and the imaginative in art, but will at once catch and fasten on the low, the ridiculous, the hateful, and the loathsome. And as in art, so in nature. The diseased eye will wander over the rich and infinite store of simple pleasures there provided for the improvement and the happiness of man, and will turn away till it finds something that suits its own polluted taste; and there it will revel, lost and dead to the grandeur, the beauty, and the harmony which surround it.

But this is the general outline of the picture. Let us look at its component parts. 'Even the mind and the conscience of the impure are defiled.'

First, the mind is defiled. Not only does it lose the power of discerning and appreciating what is excellent, and lovely, and fair, but we see at once how necessarily sin must in other respects deny the understanding its proper exercise, and thus weaken and lower its powers. Sin will not allow the understanding to

[1] Keble.

rest long on, or apply itself fully to, any great truths. The evidences of the Gospel, the attributes of God, the graces of Christianity, the moral habits of the soul, these, we know but too well, are no subjects for a sinful heart to dwell on with pleasure. Yet, where besides in the range of human knowledge can we find subjects of thought so fit to exercise and elevate the mind of man?

But even where sin does not forbid all consideration, it sends us to consideration with an earnest desire to find one side of the question true; and thus denies to the understanding the healthy exercise of its powers: 'God,' in the awful language of the Apostle, 'sends such men a strong delusion that they should believe a lie.' But neither is this all. Sensuality not only prevents us from exercising our mental powers at all, or freely, but wastes and enfeebles the powers themselves. Never dwelling on any objects long, or on worthy objects at all, the mind loses the power of concentrating itself, and after a time would apply itself to serious thought in vain. It was the observation of a great heathen philosopher, that 'impurity had a peculiar tendency to cloud the intellect, debase our notions, enfeeble our reason, and weaken our discourse[1].' And a popular

[1] Aristotle. The following testimony to the effect of sensuality on a particular temperament deserves attention, especially when it is considered that it comes not from a moralist or divine, but from Rousseau.

'J'ai toujours vu que les jeunes gens corrumpus de bonne heure, et livrés aux femmes et à la débauche, etoient inhumains et cruels; la fougue du temperament les rendoit impatiens, vindicatifs, furieux; leur imagination pleine d'un seul objèt, se refusoit à tout le reste; ils ne connoissoient ni pitiè ni miséricorde; ils auroient sacrifié pere, mere, et l'univers entier, au moindre de leurs plaisirs.' EMILE, *Livre* IV. (*Œuvres* IV. p. 376.)

ethical writer of modern times has said that 'it destroys the intellectual powers and the moral sensibilities, and produces a languor and depression of mind which is the completion of human misery[1].' A long farewell then to all noble thoughts, all lofty views, all steady purposes, all moral courage, all holy hopes of glorifying God and doing good to man! And welcome, with guilt and shame, the coarse desire, the coarse thought, the coarse word, the mean purpose, the unstable will, the coward eye and the coward heart!

How this debasement of the intellect is effected, we, in our ignorance of the mysterious connection between the moral and intellectual frame, may fail to understand. That it is effected the melancholy experience of all ages has testified, and has thus borne witness to the just judgment of God on sin, to the 'mighty working of Him who is able to subdue all things to himself,' and who has so ordered the moral and intellectual frame of man, that the sinner loses those high endowments which he makes himself unfit to enjoy or use, and thus receives 'that recompense of his error, which is meet.'

But next, the conscience is defiled. Conscience is that light which, though not sufficient to lead us into all good, is sent to warn us against evil. And well has it been said that he, in whom this light is dimmed or extinguished, is in spiritual things as helpless and as lost as the blind man is in natural things, that he 'can neither see the way to happiness and how then can he choose it? nor yet to destruction, and how then should he avoid it? For where there is no sense of

[1] D. Stewart, Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers.

things, there can be no distinction; and where there is no distinction, there can be no choice[1].'

It is to this melancholy condition then, that sin seeks to bring us by all the arts which its Author can devise for our destruction. 'Woe unto them,' says God's Holy Spirit, by the mouth of the prophet, 'that call evil good and good evil; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter,' that represent sin and holiness as matters of indifference, determined by human law or human opinion, but not eternally and essentially different from each other. Now this deceit which evil men practice on others they practice at last on themselves, and thus pervert their own consciences, rob themselves of that light which God gave them to lead them away from sin to holiness, and close up that channel through which while it is clean and pure, God's Holy Spirit speaks to the heart of man. While the conscience gives testimony against sin, the heart is uneasy in sinning, and men cannot bear the torment of perpetual self-condemnation. They therefore will not use the faculties which God has given them, nor allow 'their ears to hear, their eyes to see, or their mind to think of the evil they do[1].'

But as it is with the mind, so is it with the conscience. We cannot entirely see how or why the conscience should be darkened or destroyed by sin. But we know that it is so, we know that one great sin will stun and paralyze the conscience to such a degree, that we are left for a time as it were blind and in-

[1] South.

sensible, and that, if we recover through God's grace from such a state, yet the habit of sinning takes away finally all sense of sin, and at last extinguishes that blessed light which God gave us for our help and guidance[1]. The conscience no longer warns us against sin or condemns us for sin, and we 'blind to our serious loss[2],' please ourselves with believing that as we feel no reproach, we commit no sin. Then what is given us for our help, becomes in fact our ruin. Then the light which is within us indeed becomes darkness, and then is fulfilled that awful word, 'If the light that is within thee becomes darkness, how great is that darkness!' how utter, how hopeless!

But look at the picture again, for the Master's hand hath put in a deeper shadow still. 'They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him.'

They profess that they know God, but they falsely profess it. They are yet able, no doubt, to assent to the truth that there is a God. Like the devils they believe, and like the devils perhaps they tremble, as well they may. But know God they do not and cannot, for to know God is to know what is most high, and pure, and lovely, and He can be known only by a nature which in kind, however faintly and dimly, resembles His. 'Flame touches flame and combines into splendour and glory[3],' but before it can so combine, it must find a nature like its own.

And so 'in works they deny Him.' To deny God in works is to shew no sense of His glorious attri-

[1] South. [2] Wordsworth. [3] Jer. Taylor.

butes in our lives and conduct, no fear of His power, no love of His goodness. What else could be expected when the understanding is dim and the conscience dark, when men no longer discern between good and evil, and are no longer heart smitten at the absence of the one or the presence of the other? What else can be expected, I say, for even in his best estate what can man do by himself, or how can he bring forth fruit unto holiness except by the help of God's Holy Spirit, given for the sake of Him that died for us, and in return to prayer? But can these lost men pray, these slaves of passion and of sin? Shall they with foul lips utter the foul thoughts of a foul heart to that God in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and who charges the Angels with folly? and what but foul thoughts have they to offer? Can blessing and cursing proceed out of the same mouth, the sensual thought, and the pure prayer? Can they commune with their own hearts in their chambers, and be still, when the heart is not still, when the passions are loud and stormy?

But if the heart is robbed of its only strength, if it cannot commune with the heart's Lord in prayer and meditation, how can it chuse but sin? how chuse but in works deny that God whom in works it has never known, whose existence as a cold abstraction of the understanding it may admit, but whose purity, and mercy and love it has never loved and adored? how can it chuse, I say, but sin and die?

And is there more and worse behind? Yes, for now comes on a stage of the disease more fearful and

appalling yet. The sensualist becomes 'abominable and disobedient,' comes to love sin with all his heart, and soul, and strength, and mind.

Now that every check which nature or grace could supply is gone, the affections and will as well as the understanding, and the conscience, must be delivered up helpless and spell-bound to the full and endless dominion of impurity. There might be shame before, there might be some lurking sense of degradation, some voice within which said, however faint the accents, 'The good that I would I do not, but the evil that 'I would not, that I do. Oh! wretched man that I 'am, who shall deliver me from the body of this 'death.' But now, in this fatal stage and state of sin, all is over, now the struggle is ended, now will and affections as well as understanding and conscience are depraved. Now comes the strong and irresistible love, the passionate pursuit of vice, and the surrender of the whole being to vile affections and pleasures. The whole spirit is steeped and overwhelmed in vice, the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, and these wretched beings sink into that state of which the Apostle speaks elsewhere, that 'being alienated from the life of God and past feeling, they give themselves up to work all uncleanness with greediness.' What can we add to these fearful words? How paint a more lost estate of man, than this, that he should be living without God in the world, past feeling, past sorrow, or hope, or joy, or shame, or fear, or love, except as they regard his own base selfishness? that he should not only sin, and yield to temptation, in fear and trembling,

and shame, but in joy? not be sought by vice, but seek it with greedy affection?

Let us go on then and view the catastrophe of this sad tragedy, and now that we have seen how 'lust when it hath conceived, hath brought forth sin,' let us see too how 'sin when it is accomplished bringeth forth death,' not that death with Christ, by which we are freed from sin, but death unto God, the death of all that yet remained in us of His image and by His grace would have been supplied and perfected into the glorious image of Himself again, the death, the final, hopeless extinction of purity, and dignity, and love, the utter and final failure and destruction of all the purposes for which man was created.

'Unto every good work,' says the Apostle, the defiled sensualist becomes 'reprobate,' that is, useless and unfit for it.

Man was created in the image of God, and when he had lost it, he was redeemed by the sacrifice of the cross, that that image might be renewed in him, that he might again become, as far as man can become, like God, like Him in holiness, like Him in wisdom, and like Him in love.

But when all the provisions made in nature and in grace for this wonderful transformation, checks and warnings and aids and influences and admonitions, are slighted, when the vision and the faculty by which they should have been discerned and recognized are dimmed and darkened, when the book of nature, and the book of grace are spread in vain before eyes that at first will not, and at last cannot read them, then

the kind purpose of God to man is finally frustrate and made of none effect. For man becomes to every good work and purpose, and most of all, to that great work and purpose of life, the correction of his own heart, useless. Then holy influences, and a Saviour and a Gospel, and the world and life and time have been given in vain, no good has been done, no good can be hoped for, and like a barren tree, the man is good for nothing but to be cut down and cast into the fire.

'If any man defile the temple of God' with impurity, says the Apostle, 'him will God destroy.' And lo! the work is accomplished. All in nature and in grace impure, no healthful pleasures left, the understanding, the conscience, the affections depraved, the heart separate from God, a greedy love of sin, and an utter and hopeless deadness to all the great purposes for which life was given. What yet remains to be destroyed? what yet remains of the fearful threat to be accomplished? What but the natural and necessary result of all this, the last draught of the cup of trembling, the fulfilment of that pregnant and terrible saying, 'everlasting destruction from the presence of God,' from the abode of love, from the light of heaven?

Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, my younger brethren, we persuade men. We do not speak to you on the score of expediency, nor tell you that vice will ruin your hopes in life, your health, your fortune and your reputation. But knowing God's just judgement on sin, knowing that he has so ordered our nature that sin at first defiles and at last destroys it,

we would fain persuade you to cast away the works of darkness, and 'glorify God in your bodies and spirits which are His.' We speak as unto wise men, judge ye what we say.

But we would not leave you here, we would set the fair side of the picture as well as the foul, blessing as well as cursing, the mercy as well as the terrors of the Lord, before you.

So we remind you of the good gift of God to them who in a spirit of love to Him who died for them, and in humble reliance on His sacrifice and His promises, have given themselves up to the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, have been regenerated, and are constantly renewed by it. To them, 'to the pure, all things are pure.' God, who has so created man that vice in the natural order of things brings on ruin and destruction of all that is fair and lovely, has so created man too, that on that holiness to which under the Gospel dispensation man, by the free grace of God, may attain, there shall follow, as a condition and law of man's nature, happiness and enjoyment. True, the world is an evil world, it is full of change, and full of death, and full of sadness. And yet worse, it is full of sin, and the heart, the corrupted heart of man is like it, and full of sin too. Yet in the midst of the desert there are numberless green spots where the water springs, and the tree blossoms; there is a never ending flow of enjoyment provided by a gracious God for all the pure in heart. 'All their thoughts now flowing clear, from a clear Fountain flowing,' they 'look round and seek for good, and find the

good they seek[1].' For there is good every where for the heart that can taste, and beauty for the eye that can discern it. God's hand is visible to the refined perception of purity, where the gross vision of the sensual will pass it unobserved. Yea! the whole complex of human life, the whole checquered scene of human passions, and human virtues, and human woes, the pure regard with tranquil and unaverted eyes, untainted by the evil it presents, and so reaping from it those precious lessons of instruction which a wise Creator provided that it should teach to the pure and thoughtful heart. For they have obtained the glorious habit by which 'sense is made subservient still to moral purposes, auxiliar to divine[1].'

'To the pure,' then, 'all things are pure.' In the midst of an evil world, the fair face of nature, the calm and tranquil joys of domestic life, the deathless products of genius, the works of the poet, the painter and the sage, the interchange of thought in society, and its indulgence in solitude, and holy friendship and faithful, fervent love, these are all pure to the pure; pure sources of joy and gladness to the unpolluted heart. And yet more and higher than all, there come to them joys which the defiled and the unbeliever can never know. To them and them alone belongs the antepast of heaven, the heavenly joy of contemplation and prayer. The pure in heart can think with ever-kindling and ever-growing love of the purity, the goodness and the love of God; and soar-

[1] Wordsworth.

ing on seraph wings, can anticipate, as far as mortal frailty may, the time when faith shall expire in certainty, and hope in joy. The pure in heart alone can in some sort understand, adore and love the might and majesty of that pure love which offered itself as a sacrifice for sinful man on the Cross, for they alone are free from those base and polluting and defiling passions which render the heart callous to the sufferings and joys of others, and concenter every thought and wish and hope in self. Their's is indeed the vision and the faculty divine. They look into the life of things. That transformation of their nature into the perfect image of God is begun on earth, which is to be completed in heaven; and they will be changed from glory to glory until they see God as he is.

But how and when shall man, frail and corrupt by nature, attain to such purity, and then to such promises? Not by his own strength assuredly, nor by any strength but that which was won for him by the sacrifice of the Cross, the strength which will cheer the desponding and despairing heart, strengthen the feeble knees, and raise up the hands that hang down; the help of God's Holy Spirit, holy and making holy, purifying as well as pure. It is He and He alone that can create a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us. If we will not slight and grieve and quench Him, it is He that hath promised to make our hearts His temple, and that has told us that holiness becometh His house for ever.

And when shall the glorious work be commenced? Oh! say not that youth is stormy, and that the age

of passion comes in clouds and tempests. Listen to the tribute which one great spirit of this age has paid to another, speaking not of a self-righteous man or a mere moralist, but recording of one who has ever lived in the light of Christian faith and piety, that he 'passed from the innocence of youth to virtue, not only free from all vicious habit, but unstained by any act of intemperance or the degradations akin to intemperance.' Well has he added that 'it is not easy to estimate the effects which, by God's grace, the example of a young man as highly distinguished for strict purity of disposition and conduct as well as for intellectual powers may produce on those of the same age and pursuits as himself. Others learn to feel as degrading, what they before knew to be wrong, and to know that an opposite conduct which they might otherwise chuse to consider as the easy virtue of cold and selfish prudence, may be combined with the noblest emotions and views, the most disinterested and imaginative[1],' as it assuredly arises from the highest source, from love to God, and from a sense of the inestimable worth and value of that nature, which however corrupted now, was at first created, was then redeemed, and is yet sanctified by God Himself.

But not only may its sanctification be effected in the season of youth, but that is the fittest and most appropriate season. It is for no other reason that the wise man so earnestly urges upon us that we should 'remember our Creator in the days of our youth.' It is not

[1] Coleridge in his Biographia Literaria, speaking of Southey.

because we then most want the comfort which such a remembrance brings. Far, very far from it. More yea! far more in the trials, and sufferings and disappointments of manhood, or in the feebleness of age, does man require for his own sake the soul sustaining comfort of God's presence and love. It is because, however deep and deadly the taint of sin in our nature, it has not yet established those habits of actual sin, which, as we have seen, debase, defile and at last destroy that nature, which God desires to see made like His own. Rash, and thoughtless, and presuming youth is, but yet what Christian can look on the youth of others, or look back on his own almost without regret? Steadier and firmer purposes may have come on with manhood, but yet alas! for man in manhood, if he has gone forth without faith in a Saviour and without the help of God's Holy Spirit, to mix himself with the world, and to learn suspicion, hatred, avarice, to be led by expediency, to sully his nature with habits of sin? Can he then remember his Creator, and learn of God's Holy Spirit the purity which ought to be his? When getting and spending lay waste all our powers, cold will be our devotion, ill shall we then learn, if then we are first to learn, to remember Him for whom we feel no love nor adoration, and whose purity and glory our polluted nature can so ill understand.

But pass this busy season, and all its corrupting business and pleasures, will the heart be more open to its Creator, if we wait till the feebleness of age and infirmity comes on? when all is become insipid and uninteresting, when day brings no joy and night

no rest, when the senses are dim, the body decayed, and the mind enfeebled by the course of nature, and we have wasted all our powers in impurity, can we then begin to remember that Being whose glory we can never worthily comprehend in the strength of all our powers, never duly embrace in the very warmth of our young love and joy? Vain and hopeless expectation. If we would remember God as we ought, and learn to love him as we ought, and, through that remembrance and love, become pure as we ought, we must remember Him in the days of our youth, when the young heart finding on earth not enough to occupy and exercise its overflowing love, will rise with delight to that Being whose perfections alike justify and satisfy the most ardent emotion. The seed will be sown on no unfruitful or barren soil. God will visit with his most gracious influences the young heart that turns to Him. He will so exalt and purify your affections, that sin shall not sully his workmanship, nor bring on that fearful state where nothing is pure. He will lead you safe through the dangers and afflictions of manhood, and through the infirmities and uneasiness of decline. In the last sad hour of life He shall be the comfort of your parting spirit, in a higher world your exceeding and eternal reward.

For there 'the pure in heart,' and only they 'shall see their God.'

SERMON IV.

COMFORTS OF RELIGION TO THE BELIEVER.

JOHN XVI. 32.

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

I HAVE endeavoured in the preceding Discourses[1] to set before you some important features of the Gospel scheme. I first shewed, that the aids and assistances of God's Holy Spirit won for man by the sacrifice of the cross, restore to him, what his corrupted nature had lost, the power of rising to a high degree of moral perfection. I afterwards pointed out how, on the one hand, the word of God calls on man, thus restored and re-endowed, to use his regained powers for their appropriate and worthy purposes, the glory of God and the good of man, how, on the other, the same word threatens, that if, instead of being consecrated to this their only and legitimate purpose, they are dedicated to the service of sin, they will have been restored

[1] This was the last Sermon of the course of 1830.

in vain, and only to be involved in another, an utter and final destruction.

To day, in closing my addresses to you, I would rest on that other feature of our blessed religion on which in a deep sense of his need and weakness, frail, suffering, mortal man must desire most of all to rest, the consolations which it offers to them who truly accept it. The words of the text are well adapted to lead us to this contemplation.

There is something, I think, inexpressibly touching in these simple words, when we remember the relation between the speaker and those whom he addressed. They had given up all for him, they had heard his words of might and obeyed his call, they had seen his deeds of power and had owned that the hand of God was in them, they loved their Master and were loved of him. And now they were told by one in whom they knew that the spirit of wisdom and prophecy dwelt, who could not err and would not deceive, that notwithstanding all they had done and all they had suffered, notwithstanding the strong ties of love by which they were bound to this beloved and glorious Master, they would desert him in his hour of need, that when his foes seemed too mighty for him, when he was to be seized and reviled and insulted and slain, self and selfish fear would prevail for a time over love, and they would leave their Friend, their Master, their gracious Instructor, their kind Lord alone and helpless to his enemies. Alas! the weakness of our frail and corrupted nature, when even love, that very passion which was given that self might be annulled, is con-

quered by self, and a base and slavish fear stands in the place of the love which should be stronger than death. How often indeed in daily life do we see such base passions, yea! far baser drive out that love of Christ which should triumph over all! How often do we see men even ashamed of their Saviour, and yielding to sin, because they are afraid to meet the scorn or the ridicule of the enemies of the cross. They are scattered every man to his own, to his own baseness and his own sin, and desert that holy cause and that holy Saviour for whom they should count it a precious and a happy thing to shed their heart's blood.

But, my brethren, these words, wherein the kind Master foretold the sad and shameful parting of his followers from him in his time of need, are not sad and touching only, for they contain a care for the sorrow they bring. Though earthly friends and earthly help would fail him, yet he was not to go through the sad scenes of suffering and trial alone. The Father was to be with him, to comfort and cheer him in that mighty agony in the garden, when the traitor kissed him, when the soldier seized, the priest reviled, the people clamoured, and the judge condemned. Yea! the comforts of the Father's presence would lead him to the foot of the cross, and only leave him in that arduous and bitter struggle which he must go through by his own strength, for without its agony and its bitterness man could not be redeemed.

We cannot then read these words as they apply to our Lord without having our thoughts led to the misery

and the woe which for our sakes he endured; to the mightiness of that struggle for which he required the presence and the aid and the comfort of the everlasting Father.

But I would to day consider these words as spoken by Christ, not of his own case, but of every true believer in his holy name. For by every one of such believers may they be uttered with the same truth, and the same cheering confidence of help and assistance as they were spoken by Christ Jesus himself. By every one of such believers, I say, but by none besides.

This surely is a theme of no mean interest to all. For though we must own with joy and thankfulness that God's world in which he has placed us is a good world, and full of good, yet its good consists not in an exemption from evil, but in a triumph over it through a pure spirit, and holy faith and love. I need not stay to give a formal proof, that in one sense 'man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards,' to temporal trouble, that is, nor that such trouble is enough to crush and break a heart that has nothing to depend on but itself. Need I speak of adversity, of poverty, of reproach, of temptation, of oppression? or where these come not, need I speak of that which comes to all, of change and chance and time and death? or of their overwhelming and overpowering weight on the self dependent spirit? Who knows not this? and who knows not too (for God has told us) that He who ordained that troubles should fall on man, sends them for trial and judgment

of the soul, sends them as one of the means of grace to perfect the faith and purify the soul of those who use them aright. For it is by the fire that the gold is tried and purified, and that must indeed be a bright and heavenly soul which has no dross for the fire of affliction to cleanse and drive away. Troubles then will come as thick as the autumn leaves, and they come for trial? Then comes the question, How are they to be endured? how can the weakness of man bear up under the fiery trial, how bear it with fortitude and resignation, how come out of the fire exalted and improved?

There can be no certainty, I say, that such patient submission can be shewn except by the true believer, such comfort be felt except by him, such improvement derived except by him. Other men may be tried by affliction, but will not always be improved. Sometimes indeed, when the hand of God has been heavy on the sinner, he feels the justice of the punishment and the kindness of the warning. He comes forth from the house of mourning a better man, and can say with the Psalmist, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted,' and 'before I was troubled I went wrong, but now have I kept thy word!' But too often the punishment and the warning are thrown away. When we remember indeed how obstinate a resistance sin presents to all the means of grace, whence, humanly speaking, should improvement come to the hardened sinner from troubles? Does he think he deserves them? Does he know the value of heavenly above earthly things, and so can he bear in patience that

which while it afflicts the body, cleanses the soul? Does he own the frailty and corruption of his nature, and so does he submit in patience to the remedy for his disease? If sickness comes upon him, does he know what blessed use may be made of it for quiet thought and prayer and praise? If worldly losses come on him, and he sees those around him succeeding where he has failed, does not this too often make his temper more violent, more worldly and more devilish than it was before, because he knows not how to receive the dispensations of God, and use them, as they were meant, for his own good, or to reap the peaceable fruit of righteousness from the seed that is sown in tribulation and tears. In good truth, is he not alone? Has he any constant or soul cheering communion with his Maker and his God? Does he look on Him as a kind Father in whose hands he can trust himself with the blessed certainty that God will make all things work for his good, that God loveth and pitieth him even as a father loves and pities his own children?

No! my dear brethren, the believer is indeed the only one who can always bear affliction in patience, yea! with comfort, and hope, and joy, the only one who can commit himself as unto a faithful Creator for joy or sorrow, certain and sure that what He wills, be it joy or be it sorrow, is best, and that if it be sorrow, in that sorrow he is not alone, for his Father is with him. And why is this? We need only look to the course of a true believer's life to see how this holy comfort has sprung up in his soul, how he, in a word, is not alone. For the believer has begun his course

in recognizing and confessing the corruption and sinfulness of his own nature, and in bewailing that frailty and sin which beset man's path by day and night, and separate him from his God. He has occupied himself in dwelling with holy love and joy on all the glory and beauty of the nature of his God, and the fondest and devoutest wish and prayer of his heart is to make himself day by day more or more like unto God, more and more fit to hold communion with the great Father of Spirits, to be the friend and the Child of God. And that fond prayer hath been registered on high and answered by the full and plentiful out-pouring of the gifts of the Spirit; for Jesus that is gone up on high sits at the right hand of God to offer up the prayers of His people to the Eternal, and obtains for them that help which in time of need they require. So day by day the believer is brought nigher and nigher to God; his prayer is day by day more frequent, more earnest, more happy, more blessed; and day by day the power of the Spirit subdues the power of Satan within him, and pride, and envy, and lust, and covetousness give place to meekness, and love, and purity, and charity. Thus he is brought to be 'a child of God,' to feel that he has 'the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit' ever dwelling with him, and to cry out in the Spirit of a Son of God, when troubles press upon him, 'Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.' What indeed are the troubles that can then break down the believer's heart, or separate him from his high privilege

and birth-right? Bitter indeed are the pangs that he may be called on to undergo, but he knows that a Father's hand is in them, that 'though in a little wrath He may seem to hide His face from us for a moment, yet with everlasting kindness will He have mercy on us,' that the troubles he endures are sent to root out the still remaining evils of his nature, or to try his patience, to teach him his weakness, and to detach him more and more from every earthly hold.

What! thou poor widow, is it indeed thine only Son that this much people is conducting to the silent grave of his father? Have the mother's throe, the mother's care, the mother's love, the mother's prayer been all in vain? Have all thine anxious care and culture been wasted on a cankered bud? Art thou indeed left childless, friendless, and alone to pass through a few solitary years of helpless and unregarded infirmity? No! thou art not alone! that meek look, that patient eye, answer, 'Every earthly hope is gone, but yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.' By the fire of affliction indeed He will try and purify me, but by the comforts of His grace He cheers and soothes my troubled spirit. My Saviour says unto me, Weep not, He fills up the dreary void in my aching heart, and makes me know and feel that He will give me, 'a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters, even an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.'

What! thou poor sufferer, art thou condemned to wear away long years on a bed of sickness and of suffering, to see the world's gallant shew passing by,

and be a stranger to its joy, to see thy young companions rich in the world's good and the world's joy, the proud husband, the happy father, the honoured and beloved of all, while that narrow room and woeful bed witness from year to year thy solitary anguish? Art thou left alone by gay companions and an unheeding world? Yea! but thou art not alone, thy God is with thee[1], 'faith keeps her midnight watch with thee, smiling on woe,' prayer heals, thought cheers, the word elevates and exalts, 'the pale eye glows with joy wild health can never know,' every feature speaks in silence a Christian's faith and hope, and when at last the trial is over, the warfare accomplished and grace gives way to glory, angels shall waft the patient spirit from that bed of anguish to an heavenly home 'not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,' and joyful as it is eternal!

What, thou servant of God! is thy course through a vain world full of woe and struggle? Doth passion lure, doth temptation assail, are foes clamorous and friends cold and careless? Is thy name made a byword for the sake of the cross? Art thou reproached by one for thy zeal, by another for thy coldness? Do some hate, some contemn, some vilify, some reproach, and more turn away in cold indifference from thy message? Yea! so it hath been, and so it shall be! A vain and evil world will of a surety treat the frail and corrupt servant as it treated the glorious Master, or at best they will leave thee alone. But

[1] Keble.

thou of all men art not alone! thy Father is with thee! it is thy Saviour's word, 'Lo! I am with thee always!' and in devotion to his service, in the earnest, though the frail endeavour, to win and save souls, to do God's work in the world, but above all, in His gracious presence and sustaining aid, His blessing and His love, there are joys which the world could neither give nor take away. 'He blesses and thou shalt be blest!'

Yes! my brethren, wherever the believer is, however severe his trials, however bitter his grief, there God is with him to comfort, to cheer and to bless. This is the lot which He offers to them that offer their hearts to Him. Will you then reject His rich gifts and graces? Will you go forth into the world to meet its troubles and its afflictions with your own strength? Or do you hope the common doom of man will be reversed for you? Shall health give you constant joy, riches supply you with unending comforts, shall death spare your friends, your kindred, and your children, and all the world conspire to smooth your path and to save you from the woes and difficulties which press on the common life of man? Vain hope! the troubles will come. Can you endure them alone? Will you not come forth from them with broken hopes, blasted happiness and an exasperated temper? Will they not encrease the evil of your nature, while they encrease the misery of your lot, and make you ten-fold more the children of Satan than before, by the murmuring spirit of discontent which they implant?

But if it is vain to hope that we can go through the troubles that await us without God, it is as vain to hope that we can derive any comfort from Him, if we never turn to Him, but when the hour of trial comes. If we are strangers to our Father, aliens from our friend, strangers to His nature, His spirit, His works and His word, what comfort can we hope from Him in the hour of need? Days and months and years must pass before we can enter into free communion with man, and do we hope that we can at once have free communion with the blessed spirit of God, that He will at once impart the joys and comforts of heaven to souls that are earthly and sensual, because they cry out to Him when they find that 'vain is the help of man?' Blessed indeed be His name, the fire may at last purify, but long and grievous must be the ordeal, long must the sinner contend with his own hard and selfish heart, long strive in vain to free himself from the ignorance in which sin has bound him, long doubt and well nigh despair whether the grace of God can ever visit, or His comfort cheer a heart so stained with sin. No, if we would be the friends of God and have his present help in trouble, if we would avoid the agony of despair of His grace in union with our worldly troubles, we must become His friends betimes, we must labour by grace to make our souls fit temples for His Holy Spirit, and to drive away all the evil passions of a corrupt nature. His goodness and His glory must be our morning theme and our evening meditation, and daily must we strive more and more to fashion ourselves after the Divine image, to nourish all holy tempers, to

make our immortal souls our chief object, and to assist in doing God's work in the world by promoting His glory and winning souls to Him.

Blessed, thrice blessed, if by so giving up ourselves to the guidance of God's word and spirit, we become the friends and children of God. For then when the storms of life burst upon us, we have a refuge, a shelter, and a home, we have a friend to whom we can go with the blessed certainty of having every trouble hushed and every tear dried. When earthly friends are scattered to their own and leave us alone, yet we are not alone, for He is with us. We may speak to Him as dear children, and say, 'Doubtless, thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not.' 'Though father and mother forsake us, thou wilt take us up.' 'The mother may forget her sucking child[1], and have no compassion on the fruit of her womb,' but thou canst never forget thine own, thou canst never leave them alone. Thou wilt guide them with thy counsel, and after that receive them into glory. Thou wilt lead them by the green pastures and refresh their weary souls with the waters of comfort. In life thou wilt be their friend, in death their portion for ever.

[1] Isaiah xlix. 15.

SERMON V.

THE LOVE OF REPUTATION.

ST. MATTHEW XXVI. 13.

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, which this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

THE Bible profits him who habitually resorts to it, as his instructor, his guide, his councillor and friend, as we are all bound to do, not only by what it does, but by what it does not bring before him. Other books too often bring before us at every moment the world and the world's law. They seek to urge and to restrain us by motives which address themselves to our passions, our interests and our temporal hopes and fears. They speak to us of honour and independence, and dignity, and accumulation of fortune for our families, and of maintaining our station in society. But in the book of God these are sounds unknown. In passing from many worldly studies to the study of that book, we seem to pass from a scene of blood and guile, to the happy isles of which the Poet dreamt, from the heat and noise and turmoil of a crowded street to the

unbroken calm of the lake or the valley, from the dark, murky, clogged and sickening atmosphere of a vast capital, to drink in the sweet and healthful gale that breathes from the mountain's breast, or expatiate on the liquid æther that plays on its brow. We pass at once, as it were, to another world. And there have been times, I suppose, in every man's life, when after being more than usually wearied, worn and distracted with the struggles and contests of the world, and detained by them from his usual recourse to the book of life, he has heard on the holy day of rest in the house of God the sound of His word coming forth from the calm voice of his minister, and has then proved its marvellous and sovereign efficacy, its power, at first perhaps, almost to oppress and subdue the wearied spirit by the very force of contrast, but then its heavenly power to heal, and strengthen and calm and cheer.

It is not only that He who speaks in the Bible speaks with authority, and with that dignity and power which man's mind cannot fail to recognise, and which in its better moods, it hails with joy unspeakable. It is not only that He speaks as never man spake, but that He speaks of other and better and higher and holier things than man speaks, that He urges by purer motives, forbids by more lofty views of duty, and removes us from the constant sense of struggle and guile, to have our conversation, if not yet in heaven, yet in purity and peace.

Yet on a nearer view, we discern that He whose blessed prerogative it is to educe evil from good, has

not resigned its exercise in dealing with the passions of man by the Gospel, any more than in ruling the events which those passions produce, that He seeks not to destroy but to controul, to temper, and to guide, that while He leaves the three measures of meal unaltered in their nature, He introduces a heavenly leaven, which by slow degrees will leaven the whole lump.

There are some Christians indeed, who seem to think that their religion is valuable exactly in proportion as it teaches them to renounce all human feelings, and to escape from what they call or consider the defilement of human sympathies, and that they approach to heaven only in proportion as they renounce the earth. But this, I think, is not the religion of the Gospel. Its principle is not extirpation but correction. The various faculties and passions which have been implanted in man by his Maker, have not been implanted in vain. The passions which in their excess destroy, in their due and foreseen exercise, save. A curse when uncorrected, they are a blessing when under the guidance of the law which God prescribes for them. Even anger, which at first sight may seem to address itself least to our acceptance and kindly regard, is, as has been shown by the great philosophical Divine[1] of the last century, a necessary ingredient in the moral character of man, without which it would be wanting to some of its most important aims and objects, and unable to accomplish some of the best services which God expects, and which,

[1] Bishop Butler.

by the grace offered to us through the Gospel, He enables us to offer to Him.

It would probably be found indeed on a fair and full survey of the passions of the human heart on the one hand, and of the Gospel on the other, that even if not expressly named or referred to, there are yet provided in the sacred pages, rules sufficiently clear and explicit to teach us how far every one of the passions implanted in the human heart is to be checked, how far it may be and is to be used as a motive to Christian exertion and Christian holiness. Such a rule, I think, is provided in the text for our instruction and guidance in reference to a principle which has no mean power by nature over the human heart, the love of reputation. There is not, perhaps, any other passage in the New Testament[1] which refers to it so distinctly, there is not at all events any other passage, I believe, which speaks of handing down any action to posterity. If the apostle must needs glory, he glories not of those marvellous qualities of mind and heart which have made him the wonder of posterity, but of his infirmities, his perils, his toils, his sufferings; and even then he bitterly complains that he was compelled thus to cut off occasion from them who sought it, and to justify himself and his brethren. Even that great deed which is to be talked of for ever, and which the angels beheld with wonder, is spoken of, as regards the future, by its effects alone. We, then, who believe that all scripture is written for our guidance, and must there-

[1] See however 2 Cor. iii. 8. and 3 John i. 2. though these form no exception to the remark.

fore in a deep sense of its preciousness, listen to every word with attention and awe, yea! gather up as it were, the crumbs under the table, cannot surely pass by these remarkable words, in our speculations on the admissibility of this principle of action.

Of its existence and its powerful efficacy in man's unregenerate nature, as a fact, we cannot doubt. It will be our business to day, taking the text as our guide, to enquire how far the Gospel requires it to be modified and altered, and then how far it can be used as an instrument for working our own good and the good of other men.

Let us look for a moment to the substance of the text and the matter which it contains. When Mary had washed our Lord's feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head, and had poured over Him the most costly and precious ointment, our Lord on finding that these proofs of her love had called forth the censure of some of his followers, shewed His sense of her feelings and of theirs, by declaring that 'wheresoever this Gospel should be preached through the whole world, there this woman's deed should be told also.'

Now what was this only deed which the Gospel undertakes to hand down to everlasting fame? Was it a display of genius, of wisdom, or of learning? Was it an heroic act of courage or of self devotion? Was it the triumph of the warrior or the statesman? No! it was none of these; it was a simple act of faith and love! It was a pure and genuine exercise of those heavenly graces, by the exercise of which the human soul is to regenerate itself, and to bring itself back into commu-

nion with God, and in the prosecution of those high objects, to become a source of infinite blessings to mankind. These are the objects for which man lives under the Gospel covenant, these are the objects which that covenant and its Author seek to promote. And He has chosen to commend this deed to everlasting remembrance, we may believe, because the spirit which it evinces especially tends to promote them. The spirit, I say, for the act itself conferred no signal benefit on mankind, either present or future, either directly or by consequence. That spirit was a spirit of faith and love, and we need not stay to prove that a spirit of faith and love to God, ever manifests itself in active love to man, nay! is the only real and the only permanent foundation of such love, and that thus, both as it concerns the individual in whom it is found and mankind at large, it is the spirit which is to effect God's purpose in the moral world.

The Gospel then, if we read its intention aright, judges that spirit worthy of immortality, which tends to promote the good of man, or if we dare not judge of the intentions of the Author of good, we may at least trace the effects of His works and of His direction of man. How often, since He declared that 'what this woman had done should be told for a memorial of her,' how often has the faithful heart dwelt on her simple deed with sympathy and joy, and the sinful heart with shame and remorse, and conviction of sin, and penitential sorrow! She wiped His feet with her hair, when she had bathed them with her tears. She gave her most precious substance to pay a short and perishing

tribute of honour to her Redeemer. She thought no sacrifice too great for Him, and no service too vile for her, to shew how she was given up in soul and spirit to the anxious desire to show at once her repentance and her love! Oh! how often in every age, when the anxious and fearful heart has bent its thoughts on the grave and the life beyond the grave, and has sighed for the spirit that is to bear it up through the one, and to fit it for the other; when it is struggling with hope and fear, sinking under the remembrance of sin and of the penalty for sin, and longing with the returning prodigal, to go to a Father, to an offended, a pardoning, a merciful God, how often has it recognized in Mary's spirit, the spirit struggling within. How often has it been encouraged, by finding the acceptance which she gained, to imitate her example, and in the retirement of the closet, like her to cast itself at the Redeemer's feet, and give itself up to Him? How often too did that faithful penitent, when she had heard with wonder that wherever the everlasting Gospel was preached, her lowly name was to be told with praise, how often did she reflect with humble delight, as she wended on her pilgrimage to the grave, that her example should be profitable to many a Christian, many a sinner, and many a penitent?

But when we know what spirit is approved by the great Author of Christianity, and know that He has pronounced a deed which displayed a genuine indeed, but an obscure and lowly, instance of it, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance, we may surely say that they who in Christian humility know

that such a spirit has been wrought by God's grace in them, may look without presumption and without sin, to a lasting record of the deeds which evince it, nay! that they may be urged on to a more active exercise of the spirit itself, by the hope of such a permanent memorial. We shall find that the Gospel in driving out the love of self, has robbed the thirst for praise of all its power to defile and degrade. This blessed leaven has changed its nature, and has transformed it from a selfish thirst for selfish enjoyment, into a pure and earnest desire to connect ourselves with all mankind by the sacred tie of love, by rejoicing with them that rejoice, by weeping with them that weep, and to receive from them in return for our love, a love like ours, an appreciation of our earnest and hearty desire to aid, and cheer, and accompany them on their way to everlasting peace. Thus what by nature is an evil passion, by grace may be made an invaluable instrument to excite us to active exertion in the cause of man and God.

Let us look at this important subject a little more narrowly.

The love of reputation either present or posthumous, if not chastised and modified by the Gospel, can not only not be admitted, but must be utterly refused and rejected as a principle of action, for it is incredibly mischievous in itself, and is entirely at variance with the principles enforced by the Gospel. It is in truth, while uncontrouled, only one form of that self-idolatry which the Gospel seeks to expel from the

heart of man. It partakes of all its evils, and it adds some which are peculiar to itself. Like all other forms of the worship of self, to self it postpones every consideration, moral and divine. To self, it sacrifices honour, generosity, and justice. To self, it sacrifices the good of kindred, and neighbourhood, and country, and mankind. But all this is done, in a greater or less degree, every day and every hour, by the disciples of selfishness under every form, by the sensualist or by the covetous. But the slave of reputation adds to the other vices of his school, the hateful vices of fraud and falsehood. Vanity is gratified as much by a false as by a true reputation, and to the vain man, a false has this advantage above a true reputation for any excellent virtue, that it is gained far more easily, at a less expence of time and of exertion. Thus the love of reputation at once introduces a connexion with fraud and falsehood, a carelessness and a desertion of truth. And where these have come, nothing bad has not come. So that it is not without reason that the great philosopher and statesman of the last generation, said that 'when full grown, vanity is the worst of all vices, and the occasional mimick of them all; that it makes the whole man false; that it leaves nothing sincere or trustworthy about him; that his best qualities are perverted and poisoned by it, and operate exactly as the worst; that its disciples exist by every thing which is spurious, fictitious and false; by every thing which takes the man from his house, and sets him on a stage; which makes him up an artificial

creature with painted theatrick sentiments fit to be seen by the glare of candle light, and formed to be contemplated at a due distance[1].'

This our own reason and a due attention to our own nature, would teach us. But how is the lesson enforced, in how much louder accents of condemnation is vanity reproved, when we listen to the voice of the Gospel, and hear its condemnation of those who 'do their good works to be seen of men.' When we learn from that sacred voice, that humility is the basis of the Christian system, we know that it is the deep and firm foundation of all real virtue. We know that with the untempered thirst for human praise comes, if not the conviction of deserving it, yet the entire forgetfulness of our utter unworthiness, a sense, a deep and sincere sense of which, is the motive which at once leads us to seek a Redeemer, and disposes us to a practical acceptance of his work, a deep and sincere sense of which is the only instrument for enabling us to judge of ourselves, of others, and of mankind at large, and of giving us those just views which are the best part of human knowledge.

We know from our Saviour's own words, that even a true belief in Him cannot co-exist with the despotic sway of a thirst for praise, that the very spring and source of truth, is perverted and poisoned by it. 'How can ye believe,' He asks, 'who seek for honour from one another, and seek not the honour that cometh of God only?' And the same sacred page itself affords very soon after, an instance in illustration of that

[1] Burke.

spirit which our Lord notices here, when it records the practical disbelief of those, who, while they could not but own that Jesus was the Son of God, would not confess Him before men because they feared expulsion from the synagogue, 'for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.'

But we must go much further than this, and again, on the joint testimony of reason, experience and revelation, proclaim that human praise is not only never to be made the motive of our actions, but that we are, as often as necessity arises, to set aside all appeal or reference to human judgment.

The experience of past ages, and of our own, proves to us, by evidence that cannot be shaken, how often mankind have been forward and clamorous to condemn the good and cherish the evil, to reject with scorn all that tended to their own advantage and improvement, and foster their own ruin; to receive their worst foes into their bosom and destroy their best and wisest friends. And reason teaches us not to wonder at this sad lesson of history. It shews us that at a given time, and for a time, even society on its largest scale, will and must, by the sad necessity of its nature, act like the individuals of which it is the aggregate. It will consequently be liable to the same passion, influenced by the same selfishness, and led away by the same delusions. Empirics will possess the same power to cheat and deceive and misguide and abuse the public mind, as they have to betray the individual. Public opinion is therefore but too often not the verdict of the wise and the good, but the stupid and barbarous outcry of the

ignorant led on by the crafty, to malign and vilify and destroy all that is in reality most holy and healthful; the malignant and brutal and cowardly 'Away with him,' in answer to the calm question, 'What evil hath he done.' In many cases, if such an arbiter is to have any weight with us, it must be with exceptions and allowances which refine it to nothing, it must be when it has had time for reflexion and time for detection, it must be on an appeal from its mad drunkenness to its repentant sobriety. And if our reason teaches us that even the general voice, with all the contending elements and checks and controuls which form it, is so little fitted to command our respect, or excite our desires for its approbation, still less can the judgment of any of those small portions and divisions of it with which alone it is the common lot of common men to be concerned, and which are without the checks and balances by which some portion of truth may be inserted into the public opinion, or some of its malignity extracted. Still more falsely than that false and fallible oracle will they deliver the dictates of truth, and consequently still more danger will there be in taking their voice as our guide of life, and in allowing it to come into even a momentary competition with that higher and more perfect rule which has been given to us for our guidance. Conscience informed and directed by Scripture in a word never can mislead us. Public opinion or human judgment has misled thousands, and may and will mislead thousands still. So say reason and experience. And so saith Scripture, speaking by the apostle, when knowing how he was

misrepresented and misjudged by his children in the faith, he referred himself from their fallible tribunal to the unerring and eternal tribunal of the everlasting and omniscient God, and told them that 'It was a very small thing with him that he should be judged of them, or of man's judgment at all.'

But if reason guided by revelation and revelation itself, speak so strongly and so expressly in condemnation of our seeking the praise of man, and referring ourselves to man's judgment, do they condemn too all connexion of ourselves and our deeds with other men and other times? The text, we see, speaks another language, and the general tenor of revelation also guides our reason to another conclusion. See first how nature speaks. The bonds of love to place, and country and kind, and the desire to be remembered and beloved, are things set deep by the great husbandman in the soil of the human heart. The 'church-bells of our home,' the 'fragrance of our old paternal fields[1]' dwell in our remembrance, and influence us to good to the latest hour of our lives. We cannot put down the fulness of our hearts, nor restrain the sigh or the tear of melancholy pleasure, when we find ourselves remembered with kindness and love by the friends and companions of our earlier days, the remnants of a generation almost passed away, the frail and fading records of other hopes, other prospects, other joys, other sorrows and other years. And widely indeed do we err, if we imagine that the joy with which the heart leaps forth to meet the tribute of deserved praise is always the

[1] Keble.

exultation of selfishness or of vanity. Sometimes indeed it is so beyond all question and beyond all defence. But look at the heart which is under the controul of the Gospel, and which has struggled on for years under obloquy, misrepresentation and undeserved calumny, in the hour when the truth and its suffering, its patient suffering and perseverance are known at last. Look at it when they who have been perhaps the first to do injustice, come heart and conscience-struck the first to offer a cheerful, though a tardy, justice, when they come with that mixture of shame and pride and sorrow and love, which such ill-doing and such repentance bring forth, and the heart hails the welcome tribute of kindness and praise, and then say, whether this is vanity and selfishness? No! it is love! The genial current that has been long frozen up in the warm heart, gushes forth at last and offers with joy its glad stream to all who will share it. Repressed, beaten back, scorned and despised, love retreated within the hiding place and fastness of the heart, 'till the indignation was overpast,' and when it is overpast, comes forth with rejoicings that cannot be uttered, to offer its benefits, and blessings to all the brethren of our common Father. Had the storm of calumny and hatred continued to beat, the heart which had long been breaking, might have broken at last, but it would 'still have loved, though prest with ill[1],' and still struggled on even in death to do good to its slanderers. And that same unconquerable spirit of love now expatiates with joy in a more genial climate, and an element more adapted to its nature.

[1] Cowper.

Shall we malign it, reject it and brand it with the name of selfish thirst for praise, and so do despite to the Spirit of Grace, and deny His power to improve the human heart, and turn what was a source of evil into a spring of good? No! here we take our stand, and assert that the desire to be remembered for good, is the original passion of the human heart, implanted there by God for the best and most holy purposes, depraved by the influence of evil in our corrupted nature, into a base and defiling thirst for praise, and corrected by the Gospel into a healthful and blessed motive again.

The leading desire of man, it can never be repeated too often, ought to be a desire to promote the glory of God by working good to man. Yes! if man is to come at last to the haven of rest, he must set forth on his pilgrimage to it with his eye set upon the glory of God as his object, and with the love of man as his guiding and animating principle. By God's grace operating to produce these two great united, and almost synonymous cares of God's glory and man's good, the love of self will be effectually excluded from all evil operation. We shall seek not our own glory but our Makers, not our own good but that of our brethren. We shall yield ourselves up as ready and glad pupils to the teaching of that Gospel which contemplates all mankind as one vast brotherhood, and desire to kindle the feelings of brotherhood among those who compose it. We shall feel every day as we become more deeply imbued with this heavenly doctrine, that it bears us up above the common sorrows of the world, enables

us to struggle against common difficulties, gives us a wider and more comprehensive view of the real relations of things, and while it enables us in some degree to apprehend the designs of man's Maker for man, disposes us to think it our chief happiness and chief glory, to become fellow workers with Him. Love then fills the heart, animates the courage, supplies the thoughts, calms the fever of the spirit, sweetens the temper, and allays the sorrows, of man.

But for the full exercise of this spirit of love, we must look beyond to-day and to-morrow. There is not, for the good and happiness of mankind, and for its progress, in my judgement, a more important practical principle for a Christian to recognize than that which induces him, not indeed to overlook the present time, but to look also beyond the narrow limits of his own abiding time on earth. No one who has been versed at all in the practical details of human life, who has been called on to bear his part in conferring moral benefits on his brethren and in rescuing them from moral evils, can have failed to notice with a bitter pang, the slow and laborious struggle of good against evil, the small uncertain and unsteady gain, the fearful overbalance of loss, the sunshine glancing on the shady place but for an instant and leaving it to its hopeless darkness again, the days and months and years which pass away in all the sickness of deferred hope, or the spiritless languor of disappointment. It is true philosophy alone which discerns in the passing sunshine the dawning of a better and brighter light, which knows that a slow and laborious progress is the only progress which it has pleased the Author of all good to allow

to good. A false philosophy ignorant of truth, ignorant of human nature, and blind to divine wisdom, but quick to discern evil and impatient to correct it, denounces all evil, and in its ignorance would destroy every system which contains it, because in its ignorance it believes that human systems can exist without evil. In ignorance yet more hopeless, it believes that it can call into actual and sudden existence the fair fabrics of virtue and happiness which the imagination presents. Having outraged all the feelings of man, broken and burst asunder at once all the ties of love and kindness and duty which, though imperfect, yet hold man to man, and having failed, as it must, to fabricate any new ones, having done much and perhaps irreparable evil and no good, it sinks into deserved contempt, or resigns the task of benefiting mankind in a hopelessness generated by its own incapacity alone.

It is Christian philosophy alone which dictates contentment to the decree of God, and it is Christian love alone which at once quickens the eye to discern and to hail the dim and doubtful tokens that indicate the progress, and enables the heart to bear up against the wearing struggle with disappointment, and, contented with the day of small things, to watch and wait a little while, to anticipate the good it does not see, and to die in faith, 'not having received the promise' indeed, but knowing that 'He is faithful which promised.' But Christian love does this, teaches this hard lesson, and is in deed and not in word, the parent of universal philanthropy. It carries man beyond the day and the hour, beyond the limits of his little life,

and unites him in spirit with those children of his Father who are to be, when he is not, to rejoice in their joy, their happiness and their comforts, and to seek to provide for those glorious objects. Without such forward looking thoughts, it were in vain to talk of any active or energetic spirit of Christian love. If we look only to our own time and place, and seek to exercise it there only, the heart will sometimes sink under disappointment, sometimes be thrown back on itself by the savage rejection of the benefits it desires to bestow, it will be crushed and broken. But when from the dark present it can look forward to the joyous and sunny future, it is refreshed, comforted, and sustained. It feels a lively gratitude to the Divine Author of good, for the human comfort as well as the heavenly strength which He imparts, and it goes on its way, its dim, dark, and perilous way, rejoicing, and knowing that though 'it soweth now in pain and care[1],' the seed is not sown on the rock or the way side, but the harvest time of love will come in its due season.

If the power of the Gospel then hath implanted in us this Spirit of ardent, of enduring, and of patient love, as it hath assuredly at the same time expelled all sinful love of self from our hearts, we need not any longer fear to yield obedience to that natural and powerful impulse, which leads us to wish that, indissolubly knit with the good which we may have done or desired, the record of our humble efforts for the cause of God and the good of man may go down to future days. It is a principle of action which is re-

[1] Southey.

cognized by the Holy Apostle, when he bids believers to 'shine like lights in the world,' and by our Lord himself, when He says, 'let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

Of the strength of that feeling no one who knows human nature can doubt. 'Men,' says a well known[1] ethical writer, 'have voluntarily thrown away life to acquire after death a renown which they could no longer enjoy. Their imagination in the mean time, anticipated that fame which was in future ages to be bestowed upon them. Those applauses which they were never to hear, rung in their ears; the thoughts of that admiration whose effects they were never to feel, played about their hearts, banished from their breasts the strongest of all natural fear, and transported them to perform actions which seem almost beyond the reach of human nature.'

These words while they truly express the power of this passion over the human mind, imply a measure of no undeserved contempt for the objects to which it is commonly directed, while it is the ruling passion. But where the heart is Christian, and its ruling desire a desire to promote God's cause in the world, there this passion is checked, controuled, and made secondary though active. Then men no longer undertake what is great or praiseworthy in order that they may be praised; but being led, (through God's grace) by their love for Him, to a course of patient, lofty, self-devoting exertion for His creatures, they do not spurn

[1] A. Smith, Theory of Moral Sent. Vol. 1. Pt. iii. Chap. 2.

their human nature and human feelings, they do not desire to rise above the purer and better parts of their humanity, but anticipate with righteous pleasure, the love which perhaps in their own, perhaps only in future times will be bestowed on them, and the kind sympathies which will be felt by the heart which hears of their sorrows, their struggles, their victory, long after the sorrows are hushed to rest, the struggles over and the victory accomplished.

As we believe such an indulgence of human feeling to be pure, so we are sure that its power is great for good. So hallowed and purified, the desire to be remembered becomes an aid of no mean force in rooting out selfishness. It takes us off from our own narrow walk, and our own petty interests, it gives us a deeper and more affectionate interest in the welfare of all God's creatures, a warmer and more lively desire to become instruments in effecting His gracious purposes, and in carrying on His cause.

We are in truth all parts of the great family of God, and are bound to look backward and forward, backward to the efforts which our fathers have made for us, forward to those who are our children in Christ, and for whom we are to exert ourselves in this our generation. We are to love the memories of them who have toiled and bled for us, and to look forward with natural pleasure to the love which shall be felt for our names by those for whom we shall toil, and endure, and deny ourselves. God our Father hath set these feelings in our hearts, and hath given them unspeakable power over us.

No man who has examined the workings of his own heart, or even attended to its involuntary emotions, can doubt the immense influence which the records of the thoughts, and hopes, and struggles of the wise and good have had over his own life. How strong, how irresistible are the feelings with which we peruse the page that records the faith, the courage, the constancy, the life and the death of the Martyrs of our own church and country. These glorious records, these records which tell us what others have dared, and done, and suffered for us, for our sake, and to transmit to us the blessings which they had in trust for us, these are the sacred ties which link man to man, and age to age, and which prevent us from going on in a selfish isolation, and a perverse belief that others have been as selfish as we are. By making us know and feel that there never yet has been wanting a supply of men, who, under God's grace, were ready, at the expence of any toil and suffering, to hand down his gifts to them who were to come after, they become a means in His hand to shame us from our selfishness, and cheer us on to a glorious course of Christian exertion[1]. We hang in breathless emotion over every word of these records, our hearts burning within us, we feel that for a good man, like these, some would peradventure even dare to die, and we lay down the sad but glorious record with a sigh indeed for human suffering, but with an exulting certainty that even the poor and frail spirit of man, if it walks in faith and humility with its God, is strengthened by His spirit

[1] See a very pleasing passage on this point, in Mr. Evans's delightful volume called the Rectory of Valehead.

till it rises superior to the weakness of humanity, till it can look with a constant eye on suffering, till it can triumph over chance, and change, and time, and death.

Is there one here, my brethren, who hath a spirit meet for such high communion, and who hath not communed in spirit with those sainted men who once trod our streets, and once breathed the air which we breathe, who in the calm and stillness of this school of learning (now granted by a kind providence to us, and by us, if we will, to be used through God's grace, for the strengthening, and purifying of our hearts drank in their intellectual and spiritual life, learned the true faith of Christ, learned that in that faith are hid all the best treasures of true knowledge, and learned that therefore for that faith, as it was their duty, so it was to become their firm, deliberate, and constant resolve to die? Is there one here who hath not in spirit followed our holy martyrs to the stake? Does not our heart go with Bradford when sending his exhortations to those whom he loved and to whom he had preached the word of God? Did he not tell them that it was one of his express purposes that they might hear of his sealing his doctrine with his blood, and assure them that if they are constant in the faith, his spirit will rejoice with them and for them in the trials that await them? Do we not hear Ridley utter his passionate farewell to this his cherished seat, and, while he calls on the walls and trees of his college to bear witness to his diligent study of God's word, express his thankfulness for the profit which he had thus felt all his lifetime ever after, his confidence that he should carry

the sweet savour thereof to heaven, and his passionate and earnest prayer, that a hearty zeal for God's word may ever abide in that, his chosen and cherished home, so long as the world shall endure?

Yes! though dead, these holy men yet speak. Their spirit breathes around and within the Christian in suffering and sorrow. They speak to the prisoner in the dungeon and to the victim on the scaffold. Ask not if they did this to be known. They knew that their Christian courage would be known, and their Christian example followed. They say in a voice that will be heard, 'Christ our Saviour hath been to us a comforter in life 'and death. He bad us bear our cross for His sake, but 'He hath borne it for us. He hath comforted us with 'the glad thoughts that these our sufferings will be 'profitable to Him and to His, and that in ages yet 'to come, the suffering Christian will through grace 'be encouraged and enabled to suffer more boldly and 'more patiently when he thinks of us.'

And what is the practical inference to be drawn from these considerations? For you, my younger brethren, it is no unimportant inference, for you, who are now deeply occupied in a struggle for distinction here. The time is shortly to come when you are to enter on that wide and busy and toilsome scene, to the preparation for which so many years of human life are bestowed. You are to chuse the principles which are to guide you through it, to guide you through it either in doubt and disquiet of spirit, or in calm and unhesitating confidence and peace. Do not, I beseech you, set forth on that pilgrimage with so perilous an error as

the supposition, that the excitements, which may be necessary or useful to spur the informed character to the exertion by which it is to be formed, are to be taken as the guide of life. Listen not even to that lofty voice which would persuade you that the love of fame, even if not a legitimate, is not a guilty motive to action, that the thirst for praise, is an infirmity of noble minds, and the last which they lay aside. It is an infirmity which if uncontrouled by the Gospel, will, like every form of selfishness, degrade a noble to a base mind, keep it under the low and enslaving thraldom of a deference to public opinion, and finally introduce it to fraud and imposture.

Lay aside then, I beseech you, the thirst for human praise. Be assured that the one only principle of action which will neither mislead you in your days of happiness, nor fail you in your days of trial, which alone will give you a permanent and enduring impulse towards lofty and noble actions, towards the display of all those qualities which make men worthy to be loved and had in honour, and give them the love and honour of which they are worthy, is the hearty desire to direct all your actions to the glory of God. Pray to God the giver of all good, to form and nourish and strengthen that desire in your hearts, and to make it the guide of your life. If under its guidance you are pursuing a course of glorious and Christian exertion, for God's glory and man's good, then fearlessly indulge in the grateful anticipation that you may be remembered with love and gratitude by them who come after, that they who may never see you may bless

your name, and be cheered by your example to deeds like yours, that when your bodies are buried in peace, and you have accomplished your earthly and arduous warfare, your names may live for evermore.

Or if His wisdom shall place you in a lowly condition, yet rejoice that His grace will enable you every day to follow Mary in spirit, and every day to work in a spirit which, whether it may gain everlasting remembrance or not, hath been pronounced by your Saviour to be worthy of it when he said, 'Wheresoever 'this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, 'there shall also this, which this woman hath done, 'be told for a memorial of her.'

SERMON VI.

THE DUTY OF OPPOSING EVIL.

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1 Corinth. XVI. 13, 14.

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with Charity.

I purpose not, my brethren, this day to undertake so needless a task as to set before a Christian audience, the necessity of charity to the Christian character. I purpose not to undertake so impossible a task, as worthily to commend the dignity and excellence of this Christian grace. A needlesss task, beyond all doubt, it must be, to show to Christian men their great need of that which is the sum and substance of Christianity as a rule of life, without which Christianity, as a rule of life, would be a sound without a meaning, 'without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God.' And an impossible task it would indeed be, worthily to commend that heavenly grace, in the exercise of which the Son of Man left the glory in which He had been from everlasting; which, embodied in Him, in Him found its worthy and

its proper seat and throne; and to which, there embodied, every Christian heart in every age has looked as its bright exemplar, directed thither by the voice of Apostles, and Evangelists, and Saints, and Martyrs. Nay! though I had the tongue of men and of angels, how could the tongue of men or of angels set forth the excellence of charity, in words that go more to the heart and dwell there more abidingly than those marvellous words of the great Apostle, which we have heard this day[1]. Who does not listen when he commends to every heart the heavenly grace 'that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,' when he teaches us that it is a more excellent way, a more desirable possession than those miraculous gifts which were bestowed on the infant church, more precious than prophecy, more enduring than knowledge? How often, when we obey the godly motions of the Spirit of the Father and the Son in our heart, and by His gentle guidance are led along the Christian path that leads to peace, do we hear these words sounding in our ears, and feel them strengthening our feeble desires? How often, alas! when we have resisted God's Spirit, does their gentle language reprove us for every breach of charity in word, or thought, or deed.

If these precious words of the Apostle are not only engraven, as they ought to be, on our memories, but if, by prayer for the help of God's Spirit, these dictates of His heavenly wisdom are grafted in our hearts, we shall be provided with an effectual safeguard

[1] Quinquagesima Sunday.

against those evil passions which disturb the peace of society and destroy our own. We shall have a sufficient pledge that that inheritance of the earth, that enjoyment, if not of perfect peace in this world, yet of a larger share of it than the unchristian temper can ever attain, which is promised to the meek in heart, shall be ours below; and that that richer inheritance of God's presence and favour which is reserved for those who thirst after His Spirit, shall be ours in eternity. But we must take care lest that Spirit of evil which is ever striving to pervert the best gifts of God, and best endowments of man, and (through the sophistries which can be practised on the understanding) to bring forth evil from good, should use even this blessed and heavenly temper, as a means for advancing the unrighteous cause. The true Christian perhaps, cannot be misled or deceived on this important point. But that class of half Christians, of which too large a share of the so called Christian world consists, may be, and but too often is deceived. The vicious find that 'imposture of words' which is so fearful a weapon in their hands in other cases, a most useful helper in this. By means of that fatal imposture they hope to insinuate toleration of vice, both in theory and practice into the place of Christian gentleness towards the evil, and to put the claims of the persevering and the repentant sinner to Christian regard, on the same grounds. With toleration of vice, they are aware that there comes as a necessary consequence, a coldness and indifference about truth and about holiness.

Before we examine their claims or the reply which is to be made to them, let us turn our thoughts to two or three truths of extreme importance to our right conduct in this matter. In the first place, the charity which thinketh no evil, is compelled to know much evil. Though it will ever controul the suspicion of evil, though, under the same feelings, it will overlook much which really exists, yet in its pilgrimage through the world, the knowledge and conviction of great and terrible evil is forced on the Christian. He may receive it with unfeigned reluctance and sorrow, he may resist it as long as resistance is possible, but at length it can be resisted no more.

But that is not all. This is not a world where our only business is to speculate and contemplate the character and condition of man. The Christian cannot, when this conviction of evil is forced on him, retire to his chamber to mourn over it. He is often brought into actual contact with vice and the vicious, and is compelled to act with them, or against them. What is to be his conduct then? And what does Charity require of him? She prescribes a duty, beyond all question, a peremptory duty towards the sinner as well as towards the Christian. But the friends of evil would deceive us as to its nature. It is here that they try to gain their advantage, and to procure a toleration of evil by that imposture of words of which I speak. It is here that the Christian feels, beyond all question, that the Scripture, in describing life as a warfare, speaks but too truly. It is indeed a war-

fare, where there must be not only passive endurance of evil, but active exertion against it, where duties of the highest and most sacred nature call for that exertion, and command us not to let the storm break over us, but to prepare ourselves to meet and overcome its violence.

The friend of evil calls on the Christian to be charitable. And charitable beyond all question he is bound to be. The Christian is not to regard even evil itself with the fiery malignity of a fiend. But the question is, what is the meaning of the word charitable here, and what the line of conduct which it imposes. Does this great Christian duty of charity forbid the firm, determined, bold and avowed adherence to right principles and right opinions, and the firm, determined, bold and avowed opposition to evil? Is the Christian, by the duty of charity, commanded to tolerate or countenance the vicious in act and the evil in thought? is he forbidden by that Eternal duty to condemn them, nay! indignantly to condemn them? Is he, as a simple instance, to hold the same line of conduct to the hardened as to the wavering sinner? Is he forbidden, as another, to renounce all intercourse, if need require, with evil men? In that suspended intercourse, is it to be inferred that Charity is dead, and that the Christian has ceased to regard with charity those whose society he thus forsakes, and whose practices he plainly and strongly condemns?

He would doubtless, under all circumstances, be bound to watch his own heart narrowly, and to take care that the delusion which he dreaded should not overtake him under another shape here, that he should not,

under the disguise of a hatred for vice, give way to malignity. But is he to keep up this warfare, this watching? does charity allow and does higher duty command him to pursue it, command him to go through this warfare, and thus, as it were, to cast his anchor and bear all the buffeting of the waves, that he may keep his station and not be carried away by the ebbing or the flowing tide?

This is indeed an important question, and there was never a time when it was of more importance that it should be rightly resolved than the present. In an advanced state of civilization, a certain degree of apathy is the necessary result of the prevailing habits of life and feelings, a certain dislike to active exertion, a certain repugnance to the assertion of principles which may involve trouble or contention, and of course a certain willingness to find out an available reason and excuse for that which inclination dictates. Nor must we lay out of the account a certain degree of dislike to the trouble necessarily entailed by every attempt to gain accurate knowledge of the truth, by every research and enquiry which are to settle with precision the boundaries of right and wrong. Without enquiring, however, whether such a spirit exists in a greater degree now than at any former time, we may at all events assert, without fear of contradiction, that it exists in a very great degree; and we may appeal in proof of our assertion, to the calmness with which the most momentous truths are questioned, and the most monstrous opinions advanced, and the equal calmness with which such opinions are received. The ques-

tion then is indeed an important one; and we must take good heed that we do not allow our understandings to be cheated, nor ourselves tricked into an assent to what is evil either in theory or practice.

In considering the question we may observe generally, that the laws of charity, as well as every other rule given in the Gospel, were given by God, as far as man is concerned with their import, for the furtherance of the cause of holiness. Where any difficulty occurs in interpreting them, where opposing duties appear to meet, and it is difficult to settle their respective confines, that difficulty is best removed by looking, as far as our frail understandings can, to the effect which any given line of conduct is likely to have on this general object of the Author of the universe. If, therefore, we are in doubt where charity is to stop, the ready and clear reply is, that it ceases to be a Christian grace when it encourages evil. If the withholding severe rebuke and exposure should encourage vice, although no doubt other considerations may rightly influence us to withhold it, it is not charity which commands us to be silent. Nay! if charity is concerned at all on such occasions, she must command us to speak, however severely, if severity will check vice, for she loves not the perishing body, but the undying soul. Her's is, indeed, real love, because it looks to eternity.

Such thoughts, it need hardly be said, go in no degree to defend or even palliate the anything but Catholic practice of the Roman Church, which, on a false view of charity, on the ground, I mean, of pro-

viding for the eternal good of the soul, subjects the body to restraint or to torture. 'Put up the sword in his place, for they that use the sword shall perish by the sword.' But we speak only of the sword of the Spirit. We speak not of the severity of force which shall compel an unwilling and so an useless assent without, but of the severity of reproof, or of argument, which shall work conviction within. And such severity, we maintain, may be the offspring of true and sincere Christian charity.

Such, however, are not the views, and such is not the language of the friends and advocates of evil. It is their interest to avoid or disarm opposition to their cause, and thus to enable it to advance unperceived, to sink its roots deep, but in silence; and in silence to grow and spread and rear itself to heaven. 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.' Open opposition, which detects and denounces evil, which shows its real character and strips it of every disguise, is what it most dreads. One great means then, by which it seeks to disarm and avoid such opposition, is by an artful appeal to the virtue of charity. It represents it as a solemn ordinance of God on every Christian, that he should not condemn others. Trusting to the despotic power of maxims, however ill applied, over the human heart, it perpetually repeats that each of us stands or falls to his own Master, and thus seeks to persuade men, not only that each of us is free to pursue his own course, whether evil or good, but that no one has a right, under any

circumstances, to pass censure on another's proceedings.

It is, indeed, a great point for the cause of vice, that it should not be censured, that evil men should be left to their own Master, that they should be freely admitted and received by the good, and that the voice of human blame should never be lifted up against them. For while the vicious are freely received by the Christian, not only do others judge from his conduct that the near approach to vice is not contagious nor dangerous, but, from constant intercourse with it, that strong barrier, that solemn distinction between virtue and vice, which it is of such essential importance to preserve, is broken down in his own mind, and the eternal difference between right and wrong is wholly frittered away. How few indeed are there who cannot remember with regret the evil which they have received at some period or other of their lives, from listening to the unreproved conversation, in which the most sacred moral ties were insulted, the most sacred Christian truths questioned or derided! How many are there who must remember with regret the evil they have done to their own souls, by continuing their commerce and intercourse with men who allowed themselves in practices forbidden by the laws of God and even of man, and who exerted all the fascinations of their talents and manners, to keep within their circle those of higher characters and purer practice than themselves! And how are 'such men aided in their wishes by the common-place temptations which act on common-place minds. It is singular and rigorous and precise and puritanical to condemn; it

shews a proper knowledge of the world to admit what the world tolerates, and what will in the world always be done. So the man of the world abstains from the bad taste and folly, as he calls it, of objecting to sin, because it is common. Then it is easy to tolerate, it is troublesome to resist: and so indolence sends in her adhesion. It wants no courage to acquiesce, it wants manliness to condemn, and so cowardice comes in too. It may expose us to anger and to failure of our hopes and prospects of advantage, to disapprove of those on whom they may depend, while such persons will reward us for our sanction by fulfilling our hopes and going beyond them. So selfishness bids us silence our remonstrance and hush the cry of conscience.

And thus evil has many friends and many defenders. They even, who will not openly defend her, will do their best by weakening her opponents; they will insinuate, that the remonstrance was, at all events, injudicious in time, in place, in manner or in matter; and they will thus cast a shade over its wisdom, which, with the worldly wise, is more fatal to it than proving it to be unchristian would.

That, in the painful, difficult and dangerous task of reproving vice, the Christian is bound to provide, by every means in his power, that beyond the offence given by the very fact of the reproof, none should be given from want of judgment, of caution, of kindness, or of charity, all this is truth itself, and woe be to the Christian who forgets it. But woe to him, too, who forgets that it is the Christian's duty to withstand in the evil day. Woe to him who would seek to stay

the righteous hand and arm that are lifted up on the Lord's side, and to hint or sneer away all the merit and all the advantage of that bold condemnation of vice, that righteous opposition to sin, which he dares not imitate.

Let us, however, leave the question of morals, and see how the same means are applied to favour the cause of evil, by obtaining a favourable hearing for the most mischievous opinions. A favourable hearing, I say, for a hearing must be given to all opinions which are expressed with decency. But the object is to ward off the sentence and silence the voice of severe, but just, condemnation on opinions subversive of every Christian principle, to deprive, in short, one set of men of the right of speaking against what they believe to be evil, and to secure to others the right of speaking for it. There are several engines put to work to effect this object. Again we hear a loud outcry for what is called charitable judgment, and (as if the things were identical) for kind, and friendly, and Christian feelings towards all men. Then comes the artful attempt to confound calm condemnation of principles, with bitter hatred of persons. They who cannot bring their consciences, and will not consequently bring their tongues to approve of what is evil, or to let it pass without raising their warning voice against it, are reviled as if their bosoms were possessed with all the furious passions of malignant fiends, and are holden up to scorn and hatred for bigotry and intolerance. By such means two objects are gained. The timid will be frightened into silence, and the bold will speak in vain

to those who are already prejudiced against them, and who will stop their ears, charm they never so wisely.

But a third and yet more effectual way of effecting this great object is the constant declaration that men's opinions have nothing to do with their conduct and that there can consequently be no reason for being vehement against mere speculative opinions. That in some cases the heart has corrected the errors of the understanding, that the feelings of humanity have sometimes been roused to assert their own insulted majesty, and by a process of more power than mere reasoning have palsied the hand in its perpetration of acts which the misled understanding dictated, is true. That, in some cases again, speculation has not amounted to conviction, and that such farther examination, as must have been used, before principles could be reduced to practice, would have shown their falshood, that some timid tempers would not dare to act up to their own belief, all this is true also. But that, in the main, men's conduct is the result of their opinions, is a belief which is dictated by everything which we know of the human mind, justified by the experience of all ages, and especially proved by the history of all great movements or convulsions of nations. And to teach the contrary belief, is to teach a most pernicious and dangerous falshood, well adapted to favour the progress of evil. When we are in the habit of hearing from those with whom we live, or of reading in their writings, the expression of the most mischievous opinions unreproved, our strong sense of their evil, by the common laws of human thought and human life, wears

away, and with it, wears away too by necessary consequence, our strong sense of the truth and the good of the opposite opinions. We cannot long continue to feel strong and vehement regard for opinions which we hear daily treated with scorn or hatred by our daily associates or in our daily reading, and our belief in which we are almost condemned to suppress, lest the expression of it should seem the virtual condemnation of different opinions, and so should be deemed to savour of intolerance and bigotry. Our love for our old opinions is shaken, and if we never adopt those of our opponents, we have lost all confidence in our own. To such a temper of mind it soon comes to appear an impossibility that any truth, which can give offence, should be necessary to be spoken. Such a temper hears with fear and with repugnance the simple, strong words of a great light of our church. 'If for necessary truth's sake only, any man will be offended, nay take, nay snatch at that offence which is not given, I know no fence for that. 'Tis truth, and I must tell it, 'tis the Gospel and I must preach it. And far safer it is in this case to bear anger from men than a woe from God. When the foundations of faith are shaken, be it by superstition or profaneness, he that puts not to his hand as firmly as he can to support them, is too weary and hath more care of himself than of the cause of Christ.[1]' Such a temper views with repugnance every one who dares to enquire and gain a comprehensive view of any subject of importance, and then to act temperately indeed and calmly, and kindly, but fir

[1] Laud.

and consistently. Such a temper forgets or will not remember that there is no charity in tolerating with patience what we do not know, that there can be no charity where there is no choice, and no choice where there is no knowledge. It would avoid the comprehensive knowledge, because it would avoid the odium of the consistent conduct. Such a temper would stigmatize, as morose in morals, the decided rejection of intercourse with the vicious and the profligate, and as unchristian in religion, the firm declaration of adherence to that faith and that discipline, which it blames no one for venturing to impugn and assail. Such a temper listens with patience and calmness, which it calls the results of Christian charity, to any opinions however monstrous in morals, in religion, or in politics, and receives with a complacent smile doctrines which, in other days, men of clearer views and firmer love of truth would have heard with shuddering amazement.

What follows? There follows as a necessary consequence, one of the most unhealthy and calamitous conditions of the human heart and the human understanding. The understanding can never under such circumstances do justice to itself. There is a perpetual balancing, a perpetual halting between two opinions, without a decided belief, or decided judgement in favour of either. Nothing is supposed to be fixed or certain in religion or morals, but good and evil are represented as mere names, without any thing answering to them in reality, and not as unchangeable, abiding things, marked and sealed for ever by the hand of the everlasting God. Then there soon comes

on a habit of wavering, and a habit of indulging in perplexed and perplexing lines of thought, to serve almost as an excuse for the inaction of the active powers. Those habits daily increase and deprive the mind, at last, of that faculty which, however cautiously it is to be exercised, is in truth the crowning faculty of all, the faculty, I mean, of forming a judgement, and giving our voice, sometimes no doubt, (frail and fallible as we are,) our wrong and erring voice, but still our sincere, our honest, our earnest voice, for what we believe to be the truth.

But yet worse is the state of the heart. Where there is no choice, there is no love, there is no resting place for the affections, there is no object, no sacred Idea set up in the heart on which it may exercise its passionate longings for love. It can form none of those habits of affection, through which the Author of good unquestionably intended that the best faculties of man should be brought out, his perseverance, his endurance, his courage. All these will be frozen up in this general frost of the soul.

In this state, a man will neither dare nor endure, because he does not love. He cannot be valiant for the truth, for he knows not what is truth, or knowing, he has no love for it. And for what he loves not, do we believe that he will go forth to struggle, to endure, to dare, and, if need be, to resist even unto death? Was it in this cold and hateful spirit that the apostle and the martyr have gone forth in every age? Was it in this spirit that they poured forth their groans, their tears, and their blood, leaving to

us an unperishable record of the power of love and of truth, an eternal testimony of the might of the gospel principle of 'faith working by love,' an eternal sentence against those who live and die, loving nothing and believing nothing?

It is on this point especially that, as there is danger, so there should be fear and precaution. It would seem an harsh and an unchristian thing to call the Christian so loudly and so strongly to any opposition; it would seem as if passive endurance rather than active courage were the virtue of the gospel. But first it is to be remembered that the opposition which is demanded of the Christian, is to be offered by him in gentleness, in kindness, in charity, nay! in earnest good will to the persons of those whose practice and whose opinions he condemns. And then it is a great truth that, without calm but decided resistance to evil when we are brought into contact with it, there cannot long be any active, zealous, earnest love for good. If the bitter seem sweet, the deception will soon go farther and the sweet will seem bitter. If we have heard with patience, yea, repeated the evil report on the good land, because we have no zeal to enquire, or no courage to endure the toil and the danger which are wanting to enter, we shall never dare, with Joshua and Caleb, to speak well of the land of promise to ears that are not disposed to listen. There cannot, in a word, be in the same heart a complacent admittance of what is false in theory and base in practice, of what opposes itself to the eternal law of God, with any pure, and fervent love of that law and of its Author. He therefore who permits himself

to consort with sin and not reprove it, to hear dangerous falshood and not oppose it, must prepare himself too to expect a gradual lowering of all that, under God's grace, and by the help of his Spirit, there might be of good in his heart, a carelessness of all that is lovely, and lofty, and good.

So far we have described the case of those who, setting forth in life with a belief in the existence of good and a love for it, are persuaded by the arts of the evil to renounce it, and to sink into a miserable indifference. But there is another class, of more powerful minds than these, which yet arrives at the same or even a worse condition of the understanding and the affections. How many young men of the higher classes does one see in the present day, who have been brought up in the bosom of luxury, and carelessness, and unbelief, with every advantage, but the advantage of religion, and who are consequently sent forth into life with every accomplishment, but the great accomplishment of loving what is excellent and worthy of love. Some of them, indeed, have not even the wild dream of the perfectibility of society to make such amends as it can, for their utter disbelief in the exercise of any Christian grace, or the existence of any Christian principle in man. Such unhappy beings are not perverted by the friends of evil, but pervert themselves, and finish that ruin which the wicked carelessness of unbelieving parents has begun. Living not in the wholesome element of love to give tone, and vigour, and health to the mind, the whole frame becomes morbid. They have a miserable and revolting pleasure in arguing both sides of

questions, not as a mere feat of ingenuity, but to show that there is no more truth on one side than the other, to expose, in a word, the falshood of both, to show that there is no real truth and no abiding good in the universe. Thus having nothing to venerate without, and believing that their superior wisdom has enabled them to see the falshood of all that others respect, they acquire, with an overweaning value for themselves, a hateful contempt for all men and all things. It is so wretched to hear such men speaking, as they speak, of all that is lofty and fair, defiling, like Harpies, all that comes within the reach of their foul and fatal touch, that the healthful mind would turn from them with instinctive loathings, if a holier spirit did not teach it to regard them with inexpressible pity. Well indeed do they deserve pity who, if they have any guide of life at all, cannot, by their moral condition, have any higher guide than expediency, who having condemned themselves to live without the joy of love in the world, and wilfully blinded themselves to the great source and spring of love, and joy, and to all his workings round them, receive the recompense that is meet for their error, live the joyless life of contempt, and lose all power at last of understanding or attaining to any thing that is excellent. That is indeed the certain recompense of their error, of the error of all who persuade themselves, or are persuaded by others to be indifferent to good and evil.

Is there anything strange in this doctrine? What say the voice of Nature, and the voice of Revelation on this momentous matter? Is indifference the dic-

tate of either of those sacred voices? Does either of them recommend it to our choice, and bid us survey all that passes round us in the world of nature, of intellect, of morals, and of man, without any interest beyond that of curiosity, and witness the struggles of good and evil with the same calm indifference as we should watch the operations of the insects which we trample beneath our feet? No! truly! It is a different lesson which is taught us by the emotions which the God of Nature has planted in the bosom of man, with relation to place, and kind, and country. The parents of our infancy, the home of our childhood, the companions of our early, happy, years (the lost perhaps now, or the dead), the walls within whose sacred shelter we learned the lessons which have been the guide and comfort of our lives, the hour in which the name of Father first sounded on the glad expectant ear, the holy precinct where we have laid the dust of them who were before us, or who have gone before us, and holy friendship, and faithful love, all teach a different lesson from this. These are all feelings which were implanted by the God of Nature not only to bind man to man, but to fulfil the higher purpose of bracing the nerves to endure toil, to brave danger, to act greatly and greatly to suffer, in fulfilment of the duties which these feelings impose, or in defence and maintenance of the holy ties to which they relate, in furtherance, in a word, of the holy cause of good, the cause of God and of man. They bid us in that sacred cause to quit us like men, to be bold, to be strong, to be valiant for the truth. 'These

are the maxims, this the piety' which they teach. 'And God and Nature say that it is just[1].'

And what says revelation? Does the sacred voice of scripture speak anywhere, I say not, of compromise with evil, but of calm toleration of evil, of philosophic indifference as to the existence and prevalence of good and evil? I read a different language in every page. Every page speaks the language of decided, of open, and of eternal hostility towards evil in every shape, evil in thought as well as evil in act, and prescribes to us too a strict and unbending line of duty in word and thought, and act, towards it. Listen to its uncompromising language. 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, or what communion hath light with darkness? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.' 'Now have I written unto you, not to keep company, if any man, that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat!'

Let us not be wearied and outraged, when we produce these scripture authorities, by idle tales of the wretched fanaticism on the one hand, which would either erect itself as a judge in those secret cases where God and God alone can judge, or apply to matters of indifference that rule which scripture applies to real evil and real good alone. This is the abuse

[1] Wordsworth.

and not the use of the scripture principle. Nor on the other hand let any one confound the Christian with the unchristian temper, and impute to malice what is the result of obedience to the will of God. The Christian's obedience to that will is, through grace, universal, and while he refuses to keep company with the vicious, he never forgets (for if he did forget, he would forget Christ too) that the same Spirit which has charged him to do so, has charged him too that in this sad state of separation he is not 'to count the vicious as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother.'

But farther still. Does not Scripture every where command us to confess before men and angels the name of Christ, adding that awful warning, that whoso shall be ashamed of Him before men, whoso shall be ashamed to declare for Him, for Christian thinking, for Christian living, and for Christian truth, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, before the angels of heaven. Never, oh! never shall that base, and sordid, and earth-born spirit enter the bright abode of Seraph, of Saint, of Martyr, never behold the awful presence of God. Nay! does the Scripture which thus commands man to speak for the truth, content itself with his words, and then leave him to act as he will, to see the stream of evil rushing past him, and make no effort to shut the floodgate and stem the torrent. Listen again! 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor princes, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to

come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!'

And if Scripture thus speaks, how did they, from whose lips Scripture came forth, act? What are the dictates, the silent eloquence, of their lives and their deaths? Do we gather thence that it is a foolish and a vain thing, and uncharitable, and unchristian to act and to suffer, to live and to die for the righteous cause, to be given up, heart, and soul, and thought to it? What says the Holy Prophet? Did he fall down and worship Baal, when, thinking that not only were the altars torn down and the prophets slain, but that, with them, every worshipper too had perished, he uttered that piercing complaint, 'Behold I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away?' What says the Holy Apostle? When 'no man stood with him but all forsook him,' did he give up the cause? Nay! he 'kept the faith,' and knew that 'the Lord would stand with him' and strengthen him. What above all saith the Author and finisher of our faith? When He, by His eternal wisdom, knew the bitterness of the cup of trembling to be so terrible, that if it had been possible for man to be redeemed by any struggle less fearful, He would have desired that it should pass away from Him, did He not drink of that cup of unspeakable anguish for our sake? Does He not from His silent cross, speak with a voice with which human voice never spake, and command us to take up our cross, and offer as far as our little power reaches, like him to suffer for the cause of good, of man, of God?

From whatever cause then they may proceed, whether from ignorance which dictates the semblance of charity, from carelessness as to the distinction between good and evil both in the abstract or in individuals, from a fear of the reproachful names of intolerance and bigotry, feelings like these are not charity. Well indeed has it been said, 'That those persons should tolerate all opinions, who think none to be of estimation, is a matter of small merit. Equal neglect is not impartial kindness. The species of benevolence which arises from contempt, is not true charity[1].' In a word it is indifference, and from indifference cometh no good thing! Come anything but that! Come the wild dreams of superstition, come the savage excesses of the enthusiast, come the stern rigours of the fanatic, which with all their evils, still leave the heart something to love and reverence, still leave it unabated trust in good and the Author of good, but come not the withering, palsying, hand of indifference upon the Christian's heart! Where that flourishes and abounds, nothing else will, for it dries up every source of fertility, the gushing spring of human affections, the gentle dew of grace from heaven. There will be no love, no love of man, no love of God. There will be no shame, no sense of sin, no fear of punishment, no gratitude for deliverance, no love of the deliverer, no zeal for His Gospel, no desire and no readiness to act or to suffer for it, or for the good of man.

Be wiser ye, my brethren. Be assured that as your first, and last, and greatest duty in this world,

[1] Burke.

is to glorify God, so the only way in which you can glorify Him effectually is by promoting His cause, the cause of godliness, of truth, of right, of virtue. Be assured that you can never promote that cause unless you set yourselves with all your talents, all your hearts and minds, accurately to know what godliness, and truth, and right, and virtue are, and what they require of you, unless you love them, unless you are ready to act and to suffer for them. To you much is given, from you much will be required. On some of you nature hath poured forth her choicest gifts. To all, a fostering care, and time, and opportunities are given to enable you to mature and fit for God's service, whatever talents He has given. And, far above these earthly advantages, to all there has been vouchsafed a knowledge of God's saving grace, an offer of God's assisting and enlightening Spirit, to enable you 'to shine like lights in the world.' Much has indeed been given! To whom then if not to you, is your Master to look for the promotion of that cause which by man's care and courage, under His grace, is to be promoted? To whom, if not to you, are godliness, and truth, and right, and virtue, to look for support and succour? Whither shall these illustrious suppliants turn for the aid which they require, if you reject their suit, and how shall that rejection be excused before the judgment seat of God? If from indolence you neglect to know the truth and to recognize its heavy claims on you, if, knowing, you are indifferent and careless in discharging them, if, in a spirit of false philosophy, you behold in calm contempt the struggle between good

and evil, if from the fear of reproach you dare not be valiant for the truth, and with manly vigour resist and repress evil, if, in a word, you never come to that age when you shall learn to 'refuse the evil and chuse the good,' what can be your comfort on earth, or your hope in heaven? When weighed in the balance, you will be found wanting, wanting in the best and the brightest, wanting to that cause for which a Saviour lived, wanting to that cause for which a Saviour died, wanting to the cause of man, wanting to the cause of God.

Be not deceived then, deceive not your ownselves. Believe not that indifference is charity. Believe not that Christ Jesus, when He calls on you to love your brethren, calls on you to behold with calmness, with patience, and with indifference, the progress of evil. Far other is His call, far other His exhortation. He bids you by His apostle, 'go forth to the warfare;' He bids you for that warfare, 'put on the whole armour of God, to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.' That good fight must indeed be fought in charity. If the heathen knew that it was his best wisdom to join gentleness to firmness of purpose, how much more must it be your bounden duty, as the disciples of Jesus Christ, to be kind though firm, gentle though bold, patient though strong, to quit you indeed like men, but 'to do all with charity,' to show your good will, as brethren and heirs of the same sin and corruption, to those whose thoughts you cannot approve, and whose deeds you must oppose; yea! to win them to you and to Christ, by the ornament of

a quiet though courageous spirit. So only can you be Christ's faithful soldier and servant, for His servant must not strive. So only can you look to Him in whom alone is strength and victory, to give you the victory over evil, the victory in His cause. So only may you hope, when the fight is fought, the warfare accomplished, the victory won, to have a spirit meet for His presence, who died for sinners though the foe of sin, and to receive the crown reserved for them that love Him at that day.

SERMON VII.

EFFECTS OF BELIEF ON THE MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL FRAME.

St. John XIV. 22, 23.

Judas saith unto him, (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

There were many times, of a surety, when, as it seems to us, our Lord might have said to His followers, as once He did say, 'How is it that ye do not understand?' This case in the text was one where such surprise might well be felt. Ere He left them to go 'to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God,' He wished to tell them of the great comfort which would be sent to them from on high, and to teach them that He should ever thereafter be with His own in all ages of the world, to comfort, to guide, to teach and to bless. That He their meek and lowly Lord, was in the Father and the Father in Him, these were tidings of great joy. But He told them what, for them and their happiness, were greater things than even

these. He told them that the Spirit of the Father and the Son would be with His, would abide with them for ever, and that if the branches were joined to the true vine by the tie of love, they should know of a truth that His life was theirs. He told them that, by the strength wherewith the heart of the believer should be strengthened, and the hope by which it should stand, and the wisdom, and the might, and the victory which it should have in a world which could not see nor comprehend such marvellous light, believers should know to their comfort that not only was He in the Father but they in Him. They should know that right dear in the sight of the everlasting Father were the saints and servants of His Son, and that they that love Him shall be loved of His Father, and He will love them, and by all these glorious tokens will manifest himself to them. But though to them, to whom He spake, the first fruits of these great promises were to be given, they were yet earthly, they understood not. They dreamt, it would seem, of some strange and marvellous way in which their bodily eye should again see their great Master, while He was hid from the eyes of other men. 'How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us and not to the world?' But He stopt not then to rebuke, but went on to renew the great promises He had made, and to shew them the way, the way of love, by which these promises were to be attained.

And since these glad and glorious promises are made to every child of God and every follower of His dear Son, let us, my brethren, consider them to-day to our comfort. To our comfort shall I say, or to

our ruin, utter and hopeless? For utter and hopeless indeed must be our ruin, if to us such promises are made and such light is given in vain.

But before we gladden (or must I say, awe) our souls with the full view of these promises, let us look at the conditions and cautions with which they are made, let us be clear to whom and to whom alone our Master has made them. His words are, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words,' and they set before us at once the two needful parts of a Christian life, and warn us against two of the great rocks on which the Christian is too apt to make shipwreck. They lead the eye and the thoughts at once to the heart within, and the hand without. They speak of the seed, love, and of the fruit, holiness. 'If a man love me, he will keep my words.' Not only do they say that in vain shall we cry 'Lord, Lord,' while our heart is far from Him, but far more than this. They say that 'he that loveth not, knoweth not God.' And they add that he must not only feel this love to God, but he must show it. 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen,' it were but a vain thought for such an one to believe that 'he loves God whom he hath not seen!' How, in what way of life, whether in the world, or in the cloister, we are to fulfil the law of love, to tame the unruly evils of our heart, to pluck out the right eye, to take up our cross, to deny ourselves, and to follow our betrayed and slain Master, that He tells us not. But howsoever and wheresoever, we must keep these and all His commandments. We must keep them, because unless we keep His words, we love Him not;

unless we keep His words, we shall never see that God, whom we do not love; unless we keep His words, unless, by His grace we act as well as feel, and go through the fell struggle between flesh and spirit, the hidden process of delivering this marvellous compound of body and soul, of sense and spirit from the body of sin, cannot be accomplished.

Thus are we warned, first, against the cold heartless obedience to the letter of the law, which while it makes a show of serving God, allows, in truth, the eye to be bent on the world and the world alone. This profiteth nothing, for we must love Him. And we are warned, next, against the fond dreams of the mystic, who thinks that all the mighty process of our second birth and our renewing, can be effected deep in the recess of the mind and heart. This too, like the other profiteth nothing, for we must keep His commandments. It is to them then that both love God and keep His commandments, that the great promise is made, that 'God will manifest Himself unto them and not unto the world'.

Whatever may be the full meaning of these promises, they are to be something of which the world will take no note, or will not have the means of judging. The Christian is to go on his way rejoicing or sorrowing, as it may seem to the worldly eye, like other men. The common storms of life are of a surety to beat on him as much as on the worldly man, the storms of want, and woe, and sickness, and fraud, and hatred, and slander. Yet with all this, his lot must be one very unlike that of the worldly man. For

'God manifests Himself unto him, and not unto the world.'

Before we try to recall to our thoughts some of the endless ways in which the promise is fulfilled, let us remember that the first thing of all is, that this very love of Christ, this keeping of His commandments, is the fruit of the Spirit, is a pledge that God's Spirit as promised by His Son, is indeed working in our hearts, casting out from them all the evil by which they are turned away from God and from joy, taming unholy passion, humbling pride, and soothing anger. Without this, we are nothing; without this, vain were all we know, and all we do, vain were preaching, and vain were faith also!

Remember then, that in all we say, we go upon this one thing, that the ground stone is laid in our hearts, by the teaching and strengthening of the Spirit, lifting us from the dust, strengthening the weak hands, confirming the feeble knees, and leading us on, in a sense of our adoption into the privileges of children, and in a child-like spirit, to cry 'Abba, Father[1],' to know our Father which is in heaven, to be loved by Him, and to desire His love.

In speaking of the promises made to Christians, to what should the follower of 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world,' first look, but to that hope of pardon, without which, life has nothing to give which can comfort or cheer? That man indeed may not know or not remember that his

[1] Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6.

own heart is by nature full of sin, that sin is exceeding sinful, and that God is so holy, that He chargeth the holy angels with folly is true. True it is too that knowing and remembering these great truths, they may be dead in his heart; that they may seem to him as if they were of no more concern to him and his being, than any of the great truths that Science may show us deep in the earth or aloft in the sky; that he may never feel that, if sin be indeed so hateful to the source of all good, he must himself remain for ever an accursed thing, away from light, away from joy, away from God. But why do we speak of one who is alive in only half his being, who, however acute and powerful his understanding, however well he may have trained and tutored that part of him which is alive, yet, more wretched than the hero of old, drags about with him, a dead half of himself?

But when he that sleepeth, he that hath not been taught from early youth, by God's grace speaking through the gentle parent, the steady minister, the holy church, to know the evil and danger of sin, awakes at last, when he sees how the great truth of the everlasting hatred between good and evil touches him, how full of danger it is to him, how big with misery, then indeed he begins to feel what is the burthen of unpardoned sin. Then indeed he begins to cry out, 'Oh! miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death'? Then there is a hand-writing on the wall everywhere without, 'a doomsday sentence written on the heart[1]' within, a still small voice repeat-

[1] Cowper.

ing 'those awful syllables sin, death, and hell[1]', ever heard in the chamber and at the feast, heard in the busy and the idle hour, troubling the thought by day and infesting the dream by night, taking harmony from music and joy from the feast. Then is life one long sickness in which no change of time or of place can give us rest or cheat our disease. 'Then we feel the same sadness everywhere, and slight the season and the scene[1].' That arrow of death will stick in the side that it has pierced, and how can the stricken deer chuse but go weep?

But 'there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus!' He hath taken from death its proper sting, from sin its deadly powers over man. There is the triumph, and the glory, and the victory of the cross of Christ. It was not so much to tell us of the unity of God, or of a future life, that Christ came into the world, as to do that of which no other religion ever made its boast, to preach deliverance to the captive, to the miserable trembling thrall of guilt and fear; to say to him, even him, 'Go forth; for thou art free and safe.'

Yes! pardoned sin is the motto of Christ's banner, pardoned sin is the joyful proclamation which he commands His ministers to make to all His people. Where that is not, of what avail is any joy? Where that is, of what concern is any sorrow, or any fear? Will you offer jewels to the heart-broken mother, to dry the tears that are falling over the death-bed of her child? Of what avail, indeed, can earthly joys and

[1] Cowper.

sorrows be to the perishing unperishing soul that sees before it the second death, everlasting destruction from the presence of God?

But there is indeed, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. They that travail and are heavy laden with the burthen of sin and sorrow, may go to him and find rest for their souls. Yes! believers may find rest, each to his own soul, because he may find assurance that Christ who died for all sinners, died for him. 'Each through God's grace may make his calling and election sure, each may get the seal and earnest of salvation, each may know the peace of conscience, each may feel the joy of the Holy Ghost[1].' There are no vain promises, no presuming words, for what I say, I say unto them that love Him, and keep His commandments. 'Hereby,' says the Apostle, 'we know that we know Him,' know Him, that is to be our Redeemer, 'if we keep His commandments.' A holy, godly, life is the only ground for assurance, for that hope that maketh not ashamed[2], but it is a ground, an anchor of the soul, stedfast and sure. By that means, the Spirit of God assures us to our comfort and joy that ours is a true and living faith, and that in the strength of that faith we may hope to see God. While there is faith and love in the heart, and while they produce their fruit in the life, we need fear nothing, no worldly foes, and no devilish foes, neither the wrath of man, nor the wiles of Satan. 'If I be of this note, said a holy servant of Christ Jesus, who shall make a separation between me and my God? I know in whom

[1] Mede, Disc. L. [2] Rom. v. 5.

I have trusted, I am not ignorant whose precious blood hath been shed for me, I have a Shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power; unto Him I commit myself[1].' Well may believers commit themselves to that Shepherd, for He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God through Him. Well may they love Him who is not only able to save, but in the gift of His Spirit gives them an earnest of His gracious goodness. Well may they own that thus, above all, God manifests Himself to them and not to the world.

But godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come, and God in His goodness hath prepared a rich store of joy for the hearts that love Him in the world that surrounds them. Not only is the heart to be raised from the dust by the promise of pardon and peace, but when it is so raised, behold, in this new condition of being, old things are passed away, old sorrows and old fears, and all things are become new. There are new joys, new hopes, new views. It is harder now to say where the Christian shall not find God manifesting himself than where he shall, harder now to say where there is sorrow than where there is joy.

First of all[2], nor first only, but first and last, and chiefest, and embracing in itself all other good,

[1] Hooker.

[2] I would refer the Reader, to Dugald Stewart's Philosophy of the active Powers, Vol. II. Book iii. Chap. 11. Sect. iii. Part 11, for a proof that the statement in the text is fully borne out by the judgment of those who consider the matter not in a religious, but a moral, point of view. Mr. Stewart has there shown, with great beauty, that the knowledge of God and his attributes is not forced on the thoughtless, but is reserved for the considerate and right minded.

is that enjoyment of God's presence, and of communion with him, which is the reward and right of the Christian. No created good ever can or ever does satisfy the mind of man. Created good is limited, and so not fit to satisfy that mind which desires after all being, and all good. If we sound creation to its deep for what will satisfy man, the deep will answer, it is not in me. But in God it is. He is the spring of everlasting blessedness, the center of everlasting rest and all the springs of our happiness are in him[1]. 'No powers can go beyond their object,' as a heavenly minded writer has well said, 'but their highest and last perfection is to obtain it, and exercise themselves upon it. And God being that universal good which is the natural object of the will, as it cannot be satisfied with any thing short of Him, so 'tis plain that it cannot aspire after any thing beyond Him, but, must center and rest in Him[1]' It is St. Austin who says, 'Thou hast made us for Thyself, and so our heart has no rest, till it rests on Thee.'

Hear the words of the holy psalmist, who knew if ever man knew, the joy of God's presence: 'My God, thou art my God, early will I seek Thee, my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh also longeth for Thee, in a dry and barren land, where no water is. Thus have I looked for Thee in holiness, that I might see Thy power and glory. For Thy loving kindness is better than the life itself, my lips shall praise Thee, My soul shall be satisfied, even as it were with marrow and fatness, when my mouth praiseth Thee with joyful lips.

[1] Norris on Christian Prudence, p. 154.

Have I not remembered Thee in my bed, and thought upon Thee when I was waking? Because Thou hast been my helper, therefore under the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice.'

It were far beyond my feeble tongue to tell of that joy which the lowly, humble, and pure heart of the Christian, led by the spirit of God, feels in the glad communings which it is his happy lot to hold with his Maker, or to set before you the awful joy of a Christian's prayer. Enough for me to tell you, that this is his lot, this is his high privilege, his joy in which the stranger intermeddleth not. Enough to say that this turning of the heart to God, turns it away from worldly things, and thus gives it peace. Enough to say, that God thus manifests Himself to the Christian, whose heart is directed towards Him, by giving him that peace and fulfilment of the anxious longings of the soul after good, which the unchristian temper seeks in the world and in worldly things, walking in a vain shadow, and disquieting itself in vain. Enough for me to say, that in that lifting up of the hands, and hearts, and thoughts, in prayer, the Christian finds all that he needs and desires for his comfort and support. He carries to the throne of God his wants, his woes, and every fond wish of his heart for all whom he loves, and whom he desires, fruitlessly desires in his own strength, to benefit and to bless.

Having thus surrendered himself, and his, up wholly to God, he gets from his chosen and beloved Master, all that he requires for his earthly pilgrimage. He gains, in a word, the power of throwing off self,

the sense of not being his own, but God's, of not being in his own care, but God's, of not thinking his own thoughts, but God's, of not seeking his own glory, but glorifying God with his body and spirit, which are God's. He gets the blessed assurance that his gracious Father will never desert him in the hour when sin besets, when temptation lures, when difficulty assails; that 'in the great things which concern his peace, he shall not be left to the uncertain directions of his own judgment[1].'

But though here there is enough to satisfy, and though we have now that which can alone satisfy, the anxious cravings of the immortal spirit, yet still we serve a bountiful Master who is never weary of well-doing to them that love Him. His Spirit sustains, His care meets us at every hour of our lives, at every place of our sojourning, in every part and portion of the universe which He has created. He has so made that universe that when the heart of man is satisfied with him, it can turn to other things, and reap from every part of creation an endless store of blessing and innocent pleasure. It can turn to the 'humble growth of mother Earth, her tears and mirth, her humblest mirth and tears[2].'

Then comes a pure source of enjoyment, another way in which God manifests Himself to the heart that loves Him. 'The whole frame of the universe', said an ancient Philosopher, 'is full of the goodness of God.' 'He made all nature beauty to the eye and music to

[1] South. [2] Wordsworth.

the ear.' But when the heart is 'waxed gross with sin,' then the eye is dim that it cannot see the beauty, and the ear heavy that it cannot hear the music. 'There is darkness and sorrow in the land, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof[1].' The feast indeed is spread, and the King sends forth and call us, even us the maimed and the halt and the blind, to that rich board. But the guests want the wedding garment. Nature unfolds the treasures of 'her infinite book of secrecy' before us in vain, till the euphrasy and rue of love 'have touch'd the visual nerve,' till we have drawn from the well of life the drops that will 'pierce even to the inmost seat of mental light[2],' take off the veil from our hearts, make them able to embrace 'all the bright things in earth and air,' make us conscious of One not seen before, but ever near, yea! alive to the presence of the Omnipresent. Our iniquities no more separate between us and Him, but we see the glory of the Lord and the excelling of our God. Then indeed blessed are our eyes, for they can see, and our ears for they can hear. Then we see the plenteousness of His goodness in the stores of joy which he has provided on every side for the heart that can feel, and of beauty for the eye that can discern it.

Science has told us that in the world of sense there are sounds which by some ears cannot be heard, and far more true is this in the world of Spirit. The dull cold ear of sin cannot hear the strain of joy and thanksgiving, not loud but deep and full and everlasting, which the world sends up to Him that made it. It can admit

[1] Isaiah v. 30. [2] Milton.

only the cry of suffering, and evil, and would fain believe that even now 'the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain.' But when it is cleansed and freed from all the bars that closed its avenues, then the low sweet tones of Nature's music fall not upon it any longer in vain. Yea! then not only is there music to the ear and beauty to the eye that seeks for it, but in the bounty of God to them that love him, 'he shall find who seeks not, and to them that do not ask, large measure'[1] of the joy and love and beauty which God hath spread with open and prodigal hands over the universe 'shall be dealt.' So that the loving heart of the Christian shall 'adore and worship when he knows it not, pious beyond the intention of his thought, devout above the meaning of his will[1].'

Nor is it only in the sight of outward Nature, that the lowly Christian hearts shall feel God manifesting Himself to them. In every part and portion of their existence, and in every thing within the range of the mind and heart, they shall feel that a Father's eye is on them, and that His hand is dealing forth joy to them. When the heart of Science is thus kindled, how joyful are her studies, how manifold, how endless! How pure, how calm, the pleasures of art addressing themselves now to a chastened, reformed and exalted sense of beauty! How enticing the converse of man! How precious the wisdom of age! How cheerful the sallies of youth! How blessed and holy the endearments of affection, and of friendship[2].

[1] Wordsworth.

[2] I might perhaps have pointed out here that sin seeks support in Society, and from enticing others to Sin. Godliness suffices itself. It has no fear of singularity or shame (South in Rom. i. 32.)

But[1] let us next consider the great promises which are made to the Christian as to his mind, its opening, and its growth. He who knows what is in man, must know best how to take care for these great things. That he desires to take care for them, and to make all wise as well as holy, who dares to doubt, when he beholds what gifts He hath given to all, 'Reason, and with that reason, smiles and tears, imagination, freedom in the will, conscience to guide and check, and death to be foretasted, immortality presumed[2].' Yea! in these great gifts, the rich and the poor meet together. The Lord is the Maker of them all. They have the same powers, the same hopes and the same fears to guide them; the same grave to receive them. What can dissolve this brotherhood, or make us believe that God seeks to bestow on one class any enduring or important gifts which may not belong to all? No! he hath desired of a surety to take care in every case for the well being and the well doing of that soul which is to live for ever, for its going on in all its parts and powers to their fulness and ripeness. All things for it and its good that we ask in prayer believing, he hath promised to grant; which promise He for His part, will most surely keep and perform.

But how, say the worldly wise, how does He keep it to the hewer of wood and the drawer of water? And they make answer to themselves, that knowledge is power, and that without it no good can come to man.

[1] On this part read Taylor's Via Intelligentiæ, and his Apples of Sodom. Pt. ii. § 1. Coleridge's Aids to Ref. p. 183. (1st. ed.) Mede's Disc. L.

[2] Wordsworth.

They think that the lifting up of man from the dust, the freeing him from the company of those too frequent and sad guests of want, ignorance and sin, can be brought about only by opening the understanding, yea! that the second birth of man, and the turning of the whole being from sin and Satan, to holiness and to God, will then follow. 'This is their foolishness, and their posterity praise their saying.' But God shews us a more excellent way than the foolishness of their wisdom can devise. 'If a man will do my will,' saith our Lord, 'he shall know of the doctrine whether I speak of God or myself.' It is not the understanding which is to mend the heart, but the heart which is to clear the understanding. This is God's especial gift to them that love Him, this is His more excellent way. He that said 'the Gospel was to be preached to the poor,' said all in that. For what is told and taught in the Gospel concerns eternity, and the soul's good in eternity, its growth, its ripening in all its fulness, all its richness, all its beauty. This growth and ripening then of all the best and highest powers of the soul, is for the poor as well as for the rich, and must therefore be brought about in some other way than by means of the understanding.

But how is this? What is the word of power by which this is done, and to what part of man's nature does the Great Husbandman apply Himself? That word tells no truths that concern the understanding only. It tells men, rich and poor alike, of their high birth and high lot hereafter. It tells them of a glorious being made by God, of a sad inroad of sin, of a blessed atonement, of

a Saviour whose love is beyond money and beyond price. It teaches them what before they knew not, wise or foolish, rich or poor, how rightly to love and to worship the great Maker, the great spring of light, and love, and truth. It opens to them the right, and the way to hold glad communing with him. It gives them the promise of the help of that ever living and all informing Spirit, who knoweth the deep things of God, to direct and guide them, yea! to lead them into all truth, that Spirit without whose help all man's strivings after goodness and after truth, however earnest, are vain. And the Spirit that casts out sin, lays the ground stone of all real knowledge, of high and holy things. For sin is the great cause of ignorance. While the mind is blinded by sin and passion, the light of truth cannot come in; while the storm of sin is blowing and raging around us, the gentle voice of truth, which is a delicate thing, is drowned by the strife and noise. It is only when we are free from such storms, and still, and at peace, that we can get true knowledge, that we can hear the voice of that charmer, and let her sweet sounds enter into the depths of our minds.

But this goes much farther. The spirit of God dwelling in the heart not only keeps from the Christian all the hinderances to his getting true knowledge, but helps him by the same means to get it[1]. And, finally, by checking

[1] 'By preventing the rank vapours that steam up from the corrupt heart, Christianity restores the intellect likewise to its natural clearness. By relieving the mind from the distractions and importunities of the unruly passions, she improves the quality of the understanding, while at the same time, she presents for its contemplation, objects so great and bright as cannot but enlarge the organ by which they are contemplated.' Coleridge's Reflections, p. 183

all the evil in our nature, and putting in more high and holy desires, the Spirit brings us by degrees to be more like unto God. Then is made good that word of the Psalmist, 'When I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.' For in God the source and spring of all truth and all knowledge, are hid all the treasures of both; and in knowing Him, in knowing, as far as weak frail man ever can know the height, and length, and breadth, and depth of Him and His ways, we have the knowledge which is most subtle, most distant, most difficult, the knowledge best fitted for man in his highest earthly estate, and best fitted to raise him yet higher.

Well may man be satisfied with such knowledge; and such knowledge he cannot have till he is like God, for we know only that which we are. 'So far as our 'life reaches, so far we understand, and feel, and know, 'and no farther. All after this is only the play of our 'imagination, amusing itself with the dead pictures of its own ideas[1].'

Even thus, then, we cannot but see that God manifests Himself to the Christian and not to the world; that the best Christian may be the wisest man, however the world may deem of him; and that he may have, from his Christian holiness, a mind more capable of apprehending remote and difficult truths than the proudest disciple of more intellectual cultivation. There is no careful Minister of God's word, I am sure, who does not know how true that saying is, 'the natural man discerneth not the truth of the Spirit, for they are

[1] Wm. Law, Spirit of Prayer.

spiritually discerned,' who has not found in his ministry among his flock, men wanting, it may be, the very rudiments of what we call knowledge, rude, perhaps, and uncouth in speech, who nevertheless in delicate consciousness of the great and awful truths revealed to us concerning God and man, in wide views of the love and the power of God, in the possession, in a word, of great and sublime and remote truths, far exceeded not only their superiors in worldly station, but those who boast themselves the most of their worldly knowledge. 'The one' as a great writer says, 'understands 'by nature, the other by grace; the one by human 'learning, the other by divine; the one reads the 'Scripture without, the other within; the one under-'stands as a Son of Man, the other as a Son of God; 'the one by the proportions of the world, the other by 'the measures of the Spirit. He that should go about 'to speak of, and understand the mysterious Trinity, 'by words and names of man's invention, may amuse 'himself and talk of something, he knows not what. 'But he that feels the power of the Father, to whom 'the Son is made wisdom, and righteousness, and sancti-'fication, and redemption, he in whose heart the love 'of the Spirit is spread, he that feels the mightiness 'of the Father begetting him to a new life, the wisdom 'of the Son building him up in a most holy faith, 'and the love of the Spirit making him like unto God, 'he feels this unintelligible mystery and sees with his 'heart what his tongue can never express, and his humble 'prayer never prove[1].'

[1] Jeremy Taylor.

Nor is this all. For it is a great privilege of the Christian to be guided by the Spirit of God to a right and just value of the different parts of knowledge. He is enabled by his love of holiness, and his sense of its being the one thing needful, to discern what is wise and good and really precious from what is idle and useless and contentious, so as not to labour in things of no avail and unprofitable. It is a great privilege too, to be kept partly by the same feelings, and partly by the deep sense of being in the hands of One ever watchful for our good, from searching too long and too often into things too hard for us, to be preserved from the torment of 'questions vainly curious, and doubts impossible to be solved.'

Passing from these higher themes, let us now look to daily life and practice, and see how God manifests himself there in the superior happiness which he gives to Christians, and how in the sense of His presence and Spirit, He gives them a peace which passeth all understanding. Let us look first at the difference between the Christian and the worldly man, as to their forward-looking thoughts. The worldly man is for ever contriving some scheme for his own good, and taken up for ever with vexing guesses and fears about the morrow, with doubtful and hard reckonings of the many chances of good and evil. With him it is for ever, 'What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed?' or, 'Soul, hast thou goods enough laid up for the morrow?' But why all this? Why should he have more fears and doubts than the Christian, when it is only the truth that the

Christian is open to all the storms of life, to want and woe, and sickness and death as well as he? It is because he has no one simple rule of life to go by, no trust, no faith. He feels as if left to himself to make head against all the evil round him, as if all were left to his own thoughts and his own wisdom, as if God were not with him, and would take no care for him, and had given him no rule to guide him. So he is doubtful and careful and wavering and afraid, seeking for rest and finding none. Now the Christian has on every occasion a rule of life, plain at least if not easy, and this is his happiness. He knows too who gave it, knows in whom he has trusted, and trusts in him without a shade of fear. So though he is open to want and woe and sickness and death, yet he has no doubt what to do under them. His simple creed is, let the morrow take thought for the things of itself, this is my duty to-day. And so he acts boldly, without wavering, without change of plan, and without fear, and finds his reward in the absence of all the doubts and fears of the worldly, in the peace which escapes from the eager search of those who use every means, every power of body and of mind, to find and to grasp it. This is the great peace of them who love God's law, the perfect peace of them whose mind is stayed on Him. Let us remember that this arises from the Christian's undoubting belief in an overruling and ever watchful providence of God, a belief that the very hairs of his head are numbered, and that not a sparrow falls to the ground without his 'Heavenly Father,' a belief that the God, who watches over all,

watches over him. Let us remember that the worldly man laughs at the notion of a particular providence as unphilosophical, that it is not dreamt of indeed in his philosophy, but is regarded as the idle tale of Priestcraft, or the fable of Superstition. And in this difference, this blessed and comforting difference of creed, or, if the worldly man pleases, of philosophy, let us remember that God manifests himself to his own, and gives them peace, not as the world giveth.

Need I add that he that lives in this light of God's presence, and that has this sense of God watching over him, is ever contented with his lot, a lot that comes not from the lap of blind chance, but from the kind judgment of a kind Father, seeing and knowing far better than we can what is best for us? Need I add, that here too we must see, if we think for a moment of the wretched discontent, the strivings, the anxiety of the worldly man to be anything but what he is, that God manifests Himself to His own, and not to the world?

Yet once more look at a striking instance where God so manifests Himself, and gives to His own a peace which none but His own enjoy. How often surely has every man been heart stricken at finding that his unkind judgment was wrong, where a kind and Christian spirit would have led him right! How often, surely, have we all been heart stricken at our own wrong suspicions and surmises! What betrayed the understanding here but the unchristian heart? What would have led it right but a Gospel Spirit? Who

but the meek, in this sense, inherit the earth? Does not God here especially make good His promise, and manifest Himself to His own? Who but the Christians are saved from the error of unjust judgment, from the self torment of unkind thoughts? The wisdom which one might learn from men of the world, or from books of the world, from the 'maxims,' for example, 'and moral[1] reflections' of the courtier, if it deserved to be called by so holy a name as wisdom, would be bought at a dear price. If, by listening to it, we learn to suspect and be on our guard against every one, if we learn to believe that every one has some selfish and mean plan in view, we learn at the same time to be thoroughly miserable. What joy can life have for one who has learned this lesson? for one who must live alone, and in a world of his own? No! ignorance would be bliss, if this were wisdom, and God would manifest Himself to His own by keeping them without such wisdom as this. Better, oh! far better would it be, to have a child-like simpleness and a child-like love, to make the goodness we did not really find, still to kindle into joy and love at believing we had found it, by this heavenly alchemy to change the dross to gold, and in this belief to go on, tricked if you will, and laughed at, and scorned by the worldly wise, but happy, and godly, and loving God, and loving good, to the grave. But this is not wisdom, it is as false in fact, as it would be heart-breaking. Bad as man is, he is yet man and not a

[1] See an excellent chapter on this point and on Rochefocauld, in D. Stewart on the Active and Moral Powers of Man.

fiend. Broken though God's image be, it is not all blotted out and gone. Nay! why talk we of this? We are not under the law but under grace, where to every one is offered the renewing Spirit of God, which shall form His image within us again. It is wisdom therefore and not folly[1] to look for God and traces of Him everywhere, and to seek in every heart though frail, and feeble, and sinful still, for the proof that God's offers have not been made in vain. It is the surface only which the worldly wise can skim, it is the Christian wise man who alone can look into the depth of things. Leave then, to the worldly wise, his sad and saddening wisdom; leave him to find a base and evil ground for every noble, and kind, and generous deed; let him believe that every man is base, and mean, and selfish, that man is not above but below the brutes that perish; leave him to his shallow wisdom, and let him reap its fruits, its rightful fruits, in ignorance of truth, and ignorance of God, in a selfish lonely life, in a suspicious soured temper. Let the Christian in another spirit and in deeper and truer wisdom, seek for good everywhere, and he will find the good he seeks. And in his joy at finding it, in the peace that comes of believing that we are surrounded by good, and in the just, and right, and true judgment of men and things which belong to him, let him confess that here God manifests Himself to him and not to the world.

[1] See a remarkable passage in Wordsworth's Convention of Cintra on commonplace Statesmen's Knowledge of the World.

Finally, God will manifest Himself to His own in the decline of life, and in its close. It is a sad thing to see an old man that is a sinner, one that has all his life been quenching the Spirit of God, and doing despite to it, one that has been all his life shutting up his heart against the gentle inroads of grace, one that has all his life been hardening his heart and treasuring to himself woe and wrath, to see him stand in his honourable grey hairs, unhonoured and alone, a thing on which the gentle dew of heaven now never lights, which the free and glad strivings of the Spirit now never visit and quicken. It is a sad thing to see such an one waiting for his set time, not like the shock of corn in its ripeness, but like a withered and blasted tree tottering to its fall. It is a piteous thing too to see a worldly old man, come to that season when there is no pleasure more in his poor and only pleasures, when the feeble and palsied limbs can ply no more in their wonted tasks, their toil, their hurry, their business, when he is past all the uses of earth, and has not made himself fit for any other.

And if this is sad to see, what is it to feel? What shall be the thoughts of the sinful and the worldly old man, as day after day, yea! hour after hour, brings them nearer to the sad house appointed for all living? What shall soothe the wearied spirit, what strengthen it to bear the feebleness of body, the pangs of infirmity, the decay of nature, the struggle of death? What shall employ the long vacant hours? What busy interest and cheer the vacant thoughts? Fear must

come to one, but hope that comes to all, comes not to either.

But this is not so with the Christian old man. Broken, worn, feeble, fast sinking to the grave in body, bruised, it might seem, with all the wrath of God without, he has all the peace of God within. Desires, fears, passions, have all died away, and in the deep calm of his soul, he hears the voice of the Lord God speaking to him. He hath known in part only yet, as yet he hath seen only 'through a glass darkly.' And he desires the day when he shall know as he is known, and shall see face to face. He looks at the grave and gate of death, with that fear indeed which man's corrupted nature must ever feel at the thought of that fell struggle, but he knows that the gate of death is to him the gate to life, the gate to knowledge, and the gate to rest. His word then is, 'I would not live alway,' for the corruptible body weigheth down the mind and keeps it from the full vision of that glory that shall be, the full enjoyment of that rest which is reserved for the people of God. And so he passes the short time of his sojourning here in calm hope, and possesses his soul in patience. The Saviour that hath cheered and comforted him for so many years, leaves him not neither forsakes him in the day of his decline and the hour of his death, but leads him by gentle and easy steps, in the sense of God's comforting presence, to his end. Once again, ere he departs, he desires to partake of that high communion of his Saviour's body and blood, which has been his best comfort and best strength below, and there indeed he feels God manifesting Him-

self to his soul, renewing all His promises, now near at hand to be fulfilled, strengthening him against the hour of death, and freeing him from the fear of judgment. 'I have waited, Oh Lord,' he says as he expires, 'for thy salvation! I fear no evil now, for Thou art with me! Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.'

SERMON VIII.

FRUITLESS REPENTANCE.

Hebrews XII. 17.

For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears[1].

The account, which the Scripture gives of Esau, conveys a solemn warning to a class of characters which a kind heart cannot see without affection, nor a Christian heart without regret. It is not to the mere sensualist that it conveys any lesson of instruction; for, though Esau was certainly too much under the dominion of his passions, a sensualist becomes utterly selfish, and

[1] There is some dispute as to the right method of construing the last clause of the text. M'Knight conceives that as αὐτὴν cannot refer to τόπος it must refer to εὐλογία, and that the meaning is, 'though he sought for the blessing with tears.' Raphelius again thinks that μετανοία refers to a change of purpose in Isaac, not Esau. I have no doubt that the obvious sense in our version is the right one; and that though αὐτὴν certainly cannot refer to τόπος, yet by an usage very common in far better Greek, it refers loosely to the phrase τόπος μετανοίας, keeping to the gender of the more important word. By a reference, indeed, to Parkhurst, it will be seen that there are many instances where μετανοία is used for τόπος μετανοίας. I only mention this to justify the sense in which I have taken the expression.

that was not Esau's case. It is to a class of men sometimes, though not very justly, described as the enemies of no one so much as of themselves. It is, in short, to the frank, the kind, the generous and the brave, the better and more lovely specimens of this world's produce, that the example of Esau applies, and tells them that it is not enough to be frank and kind, and generous and brave; that, though this may indeed charm all hearts and draw all eyes, this is not enough; that these are not the seeds of an immortal harvest; that there is one thing needful which they have not yet got, and for which alone the eye of God will look when they stand before his throne. It tells us, in a word, that the thoughtless happy enjoyment of natural affections and worldly goods, without applying them to the higher purposes for which they were given, that the burying the talents committed to us, and not using them for the honour of God and the service of his Christ, is an abuse of a sacred and awful trust, and that after a long time it may be, but after a time, the Lord of those servants will come to reckon with them.

Esau is introduced to us as a man carried away through his whole life by his feelings, whether to good or evil, and following the bent of his wildest wishes. To gratify the mere appetite of a moment, he sold his birthright to his crafty brother, or, as the Scripture says, 'despised his birthright;' that is to say, showed his utter carelessness of the high privileges which he knew that God had attached to it. That transaction fixes his character at once, and shows us the element

in which it was entirely wanting. He was contented, in short, like too many men, to live without God in the world. His marriage with the daughter of a profane and ungodly race, was a marriage of passion, and the source, as the Scripture says, of deep grief to his parents. He has appeared before us to day, however, not as the sinful, but as the injured, the deeply injured person. It is a miserable picture which the lesson of the day presents to us, a mother and a son combining to deceive and injure a brother and a dying father. They succeeded no doubt; but they reaped bitter fruits from their success. The curse was on the mother, who had called it on her own head, and who lost that which she most desired, the company of her darling son. He too had a curse and not a blessing, as he foreboded, for he lived for years in exile and fear; and afterwards suffered in his own family a series of misery, turbulence, and disaster, more bitter than he had brought unto his father's house; so that he might truly as well as deservedly say, in his old age, that evil had been the days of the years of his mortal pilgrimage. Contrasted with him the character of Esau stands forth in its fairest light, and one might almost think that it was in the mind of the inspired writer to contrast them: and to teach us that even weighed in this favourable balance Esau's character was found wanting, that although kindness and generosity shine forth in bright colours by the side of craft and guile, they are yet wholly insufficient in the sight of God. But however that may be, even in this transaction Esau showed forth his characteristic mixture of good

and evil. Without a moment's hesitation, he resolved to kill his brother in revenge for the injury he had received from him, and yet, in kindness to his dying father's feelings, to abstain from this act of violence till the aged eyes were closed in peace. All the traits of his life afterwards mentioned are strongly in his favour. What, indeed, could be more kind, or generous, or lovely, than his frank forgiveness of his brother, when years had passed away and the brothers met again? What more touching than to find that the last time that he is noticed to us, the last time, as far as we know, that the brothers met was when Esau sealed Jacob's pardon at their father's grave? These things, speaking so strongly to our feelings as they do, and connected, as they are, with the striking fact that all this kindness of nature was unable to recall to Esau the blessing which he had profanely rejected, seem expressly mentioned and brought to our notice, to teach us that such qualities as he possessed, however lovely, are yet quite insufficient. They teach us that though this ought to be done, there is something yet far higher and better which an immortal being ought not to leave undone; that when it hath been left undone, when the kind generous nature is left unsanctified by the working of God's Holy Spirit, and blindly follows the impulses of passion or of nature, it neglects opportunities which can never be recalled, and inflicts evils which can never be cured, alike upon others and upon itself, upon its peace on earth, and upon its hopes in heaven[1].

[1] I would beg to refer the reader to a Sermon on the character of Esau, in the Volume lately published by Mr. Millar, to whom I rejoice to have this opportunity of offering the humble tribute of my respectful admiration, and of

But that part of Esau's history which is more especially referred to in the text, enforces not on one class of men, but on all, a lesson which all, alas! want. It tells them that, while God in his mercy offers to us all the means of acquiring all the real blessings of this life, and, yet more, of sharing in the inestimable blessing of Redemption through Jesus Christ, in the means of grace, and the hope of glory, all this is offered for a time, and that if we neglect the things which belong unto our peace in this their day, they will afterwards be hid from our eyes. When we would inherit the blessings which we rejected in earlier days, we shall ourselves be rejected, and shall find no place for repentance, though we may seek for it carefully with tears. It tells us too not only of goods lost, but of evils incurred from which nothing can save us; and seems to say to us in the solemn and impressive language of our great philosophical divine, that certain miseries naturally follow imprudence and wilfulness. Sometimes after the actions are forgot, these miseries come, not by degrees, but suddenly, with violence and at once. Things take their destined course, and the misery inevitably follows at its appointed time. Habits contracted even in youth, are often utter ruin. Men's real happiness or misery often depends on the manner in which they pass their youth. In many cases, the natural course of things affords us opportunities of advantage at certain times which we cannot procure

of my gratitude for the pleasure which I have derived from the frequent perusal of his truly Christian and philosophic Bampton Lectures. He sees the character of Esau in a point of view less favourable than I do.

when we will, nor even recall the opportunities if we have neglected them. And finally, if, during youth, men, like Esau, are indocile and self-willed, they suffer in their future life for want of those acquirements which they neglected the natural season of attaining, and find that there is a certain bound to imprudence, which being transgressed, there remains no place for repentance in the natural course of things[1].

How curious is it to look at the life of man with this regard! How singular is the contrast presented between that part of his lot which he does not chuse for himself, and that which he does! To the worldly eye at least how uncertain the one, to the eye even of faith how certain the other! How changing then, in one sense, how changeless in another man's whole being. Yea! how far even beyond the grave does this thought carry us! For how little and valueless is the one, after the hour of death, of what fearful, lasting, changeless import the other!

Let us consider a few instances in which we may clearly see that there is no place for repentance of the lot we choose for ourselves, even though we seek for it with tears. And learning thence the fearful consequences of our choice, let those of us who have not yet made it, pray to Him, of whom alone comes all power and strength to think or choose or act as we ought, to give us grace in the day of our trial, that we may not store up for ourselves in this world the bitter sting of unavailing sorrow, nor the fearful doom that awaits the sinner in his own place, in the

[1] See Bishop Butler.

place which he has chosen for himself, in the unchanging mansions beyond the grave.

Among the lessons of experience, there is none which we are longer in learning than that which explains the unavoidable consequences of even our most trifling actions. It seems, indeed, so easy till we know nothing of the practical workings of things, to recall a trifling step, and so much must, in reasoning, appear to be within our own power, that we are at a loss to understand why this is not so in practise. We confound, I suppose, what is impossible in the nature of things, with what becomes, in common parlance, impossible, from its extreme difficulty or improbability under the present constitution of man. We do some act, so trifling that we can hardly conceive that it can have any consequence. If, indeed, it seemed likely to have any evil effects, we might, as far as the nature of things goes, do away with them at once. But either we do not foresee any such effects, or the evil is so small, that our dislike to trouble, or to appear unstable and inconsistent, prevails, and we leave it. Another actor appears on the scene, and approves or blames. Following the common course of our nature, we accept the praise, or defend ourselves against the blame, and then the thing is sealed for ever. The new actor on the scene introduces it to the notice of more: its importance becomes more developed every day; and by that almost mysterious interlinking of things with one another, which is the law of human society, it weaves itself in with new interests, like a budding tree puts forth every day new shoots and new leaves, strengthens itself by throwing its tendrils round every object within its reach, and sends

at once its roots deep into the earth, and its head aloft to the sky. We overlook its workings for a time; for a time we look at them with carelessness; and then regard them with an almost stupid wonder that such things can have grown up disregarded within our reach, before our eyes, or below our feet, and we cry out with the Apostle, "Behold! how great a matter a little fire kindleth."

All this time, what impossibility was there at any given moment, in the nature of things, to stop the whole? None, assuredly; but there was all the time what amounted to an impossibility, in the certainty that men will almost always, under similar circumstances, act nearly alike, and that under all circumstances, the dislike of trouble, and the fear of reproach, will produce their due and destined effect, according to the laws which God has laid down for the progress and well-being of human things.

It was under feelings like these probably that the wise man has advised us 'to leave off contention before it be meddled with,' and has reminded us that the beginnings of strife are like the letting out of waters. The floodgates might have been kept down, but when they are once up, it is beyond human wisdom and human might to stay the force and the course of the torrent. The slander, for example, which we utter carelessly and without enquiry to-day, is to-morrow beyond all recall. We might have suppressed the fire while it was in one place—but it is far beyond us to move from point to point, and trample on every particular spark. So one or other of them smoulders on and breaks out at last into a destructive

fire. The slander has been carried on from tongue to tongue, till a few hours or a few days have roused a feeling of indignation, or hatred, or scorn, or silent suspicion, of which we may never know, or which, if we did, we could never cure. And so the victim of our slander may live on in misery, robbed of his good name, or his enjoyments, or of his place in society, or he may die heart-broken under the injuries of a false reproach, set afloat by us. We may hear of his misery when we can do nothing to relieve it, and find no place for repentance of the evil we have done, though we seek for it with tears.

Where again shall we find a place for repenting of the evil which our evil example has done[1]? If others have learned from us to scoff at religion, or to be careless about it; if they have learned from us to believe that sensuality is a venial sin; if they have learned from us to glory in avowing it, in talking of it, in defiling themselves and others with defiling conversation, what shall we do? what can we do to make up to them for the fearful evil which we have done to their souls? When we come to repent ourselves, if, by God's grace, we ever do repent, and are regenerated by His Spirit unto holiness, they may be absent beyond our powers to trace, hardened beyond our powers to retrieve, or already gone to those unseen

[1] The interesting account of Struensee's conversion by Dr. Münter gives a striking picture of the misery occasioned by the remembrance of the evil done by bad example. To Struensee, indeed, the suffering it caused was a blessing. When his heart seemed hardened on other points, his misery on this was extreme; and of this Münter took advantage, and, by God's blessing, led him to a sincere repentance.

abodes where the spirit is to await its final doom. And if this thought is a solemn one for all men, and all times, and all places, I think it is a thought especially solemn for those who meet here. Pass a few years onwards, and many of you who are now enjoying together the inexpressible happiness of a young and warm friendship, and of intercourse the most free and familiar, will part to meet no more. It is a sad and saddening catalogue which even at an early period of our progress to the grave we are compelled to write of the ravages of death. It is a sad and saddening thought to remember how many the cold grave now holds of the kind hearts and warm hands which we once took to our own, how few of those who hailed our outset, could be collected round us now, how few are left to rejoice at our success, or to comfort us in our failures. Others of you, however, will meet again, but oh! how changed! changed by success, or sorrow, or want, or sickness; changed most of all by sin! If there be one of you who, by God's grace, through the prevailing prayer of the Great Intercessor, shall be enabled to overcome sin, and to renew himself again after the image of God, what will be his anguish when he shall see the friend of his early and happy years, hardened in habits of sin and selfishness, which he learned from him, when he shall hear him indulge in a low and loathsome avowal of profligacy, the taste for which he imbibed from him; when he shall hear him openly avow the disbelief in a crucified Master, and the disbelief in the eternal distinction between right and wrong, which he learned from him, in the days when he too, in his fancied wisdom, saw the folly and fraud of religion,

or of priestcraft, as he called it, when he too was the enlightened disciple, as he then thought, of some miserable, base, and selfish system of expediency, or of some system more debasing and more polluting still. What will be the bitterness of his anguish, when he shall hear that the friend of his youth hath sunk ere the prime and pride of manhood into a grave dug for him by his own vices, and shall know that from that early grave there shall go up a cry of blood against the early tempter, the seducer, the destroyer of body and soul, a cry which that destroyer, though repentant, must know, deserves to be registered against him in heaven?

It is a fearful thing, indeed, to remember how powerful man is to do evil, how powerless to cure it. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, under the clear remembrance that you will find no place for repentance of the evils done by your evil example, though you seek for it carefully with tears, 'let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.'

The lapse of time again touches us in another and very tender point, by taking away from us all place for repentance there. By the law of our being, the parent is to descend to the grave before his child. What shall be his thought, who has caused, or hastened his father's descent thither, disappointed all his fond hopes and expectations, thrown away time, and character, and opportunities, broken the kind heart, and sent the grey hairs in sorrow to the grave? I fear that this happens oftener than we are willing to

allow. We do not think of it unless some particular and sudden event follows some outrageous sin. We forget the intimate and exquisite connexion of mind and body, forget how surely, though it may not be suddenly, the frail body is borne down by the suffering mind; how unconquerably, but too often, true grief 'defies all counsel, all redress, but that which ends all counsel.' But however that may be, I am sure that there is no grief so bitter and so utterly without remedy in this world as a parent's grief for the unworthiness of his child. A child, 'more than all other gifts, brings with it forward looking thoughts[1],' and, by a kind law of the ever kind Author of Nature, supplies man with an unfailing motive to cheerful exertion, to activity, and to human interest, in those years when otherwise, as far as the world is concerned, 'there is indeed no pleasure in them;' and it is no mean instrument in God's hand for carrying on our thoughts and hopes beyond the grave. When this holy source of pleasure is tainted, when this staff of feeble age is broken away, life has no more to give that can comfort or cheer, and death in this point supplies not its wonted comfort, for the broken heart cannot buoy itself up with the hope of re-union in that world where sin may not come. What is a Christian child's death compared with that? It may be bitter to see the grave close on the young and the beloved, but it closes on the young and the beloved with a hope, yea! with a certainty. The flower hath faded for a time, but it will rise to light and life in a happier climate and a

[1] Wordsworth.

more kindly soil. In that sure and certain hope the Christian father can render up the child whom the Lord gave him, for he renders him up to the Lord again, to His everlasting arms, who will take him when father and mother must forsake him. 'My son,' he can say, 'because thy heart was wise, even in this sad hour my heart rejoiceth, even mine. Yea! even in this sad hour, I have a refuge and a resting place, even thy mercy, my God and my King, and thy everlasting covenant.' But with what hope, what cheerful thought, can that desolate old man assuage his sorrows, when he goes down to the grave himself leaving behind him a sinful, profligate, or even a careless and unchristian son? And with what emotions shall that son see his father's body committed to the grave, earth to earth, dust to dust, and remember by what long and slow processes of daily and hourly anguish, the suffering body and patient spirit were broken and brought to this sad consummation? His tears may descend indeed on that sad grave, but he cannot recall past years, lost opportunities, disappointed hopes; there is no place for repentance, though he seek for it carefully with tears. Yet stay them not, for they are gracious drops! it would be a hopeless heart that did not melt now! and, through God's grace, this bitter, late, and in some sort fruitless repentance, may be the beginning of better things, the first fruits of a richer harvest, of a repentance not to be repented of!

There may not be many cases of such deep and fearful suffering as this, but numberless beyond a doubt are the instances in which we inflict bitter and

undeserved pain on those among whom we live, and are prevented by their absence or death from ever atoning to them for the evil we have done, or even easing our own hearts and consciences, by expressing to them our sorrow, and entreating their forgiveness.

There is another long list of cases, too, in which our neglect of opportunities entails evils without remedy on ourselves and others. 'If the husbandman lets his seed-time pass without sowing, the whole year is lost to him without recovery[1].' In other words, if we lose the opportunities offered to us of improving our hearts and minds in the leisure of youth, we can never do that work in the hurry of practical life, when we are to act and not to learn, and the necessary consequence will be that we shall but imperfectly discharge the solemn duties which we owe to man and to God, and imperfectly fill that place which He has assigned to us.

How often again shall we fruitlessly deplore our carelessness in not taking the occasions of doing good which once offered themselves, but will never offer themselves again, a reflection of especial importance, and too often of unspeakable bitterness to every minister of God's word, and to every instructor of the young. A word in due time, a little care, a little kindness, would have recalled a sinner, and saved a soul. But time and the hour are allowed to pass by, the sinner is not converted, and perishes in his sin, God is not glorified, His kingdom not filled. And so we fulfil the Apostle's word, 'to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.'

[1] Bishop Butler.

But let us come nearer home, and from considering the cureless evils which our sin may inflict on others, look at the equally cureless difficulties and dangers which we throw in our own path. Not to speak now of the evils beyond cure which sin brings on the character, the fortune, the health, (for these are in truth minor evils) let us remember that the greatest enemy to the reception of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the practice of sin. There is a resistance, a natural hindrance to God's Spirit, no doubt, in the evil nature of a corrupt heart. But the guilt and the evil of original sin are one thing, and the mischief and defilement of habitual sin are another. There is hindrance enough from the one, but that hindrance is unspeakably and immeasurably increased by the other.

Of habits of sin, indeed, of habitual thoughts of sin, habitual remembrances of sin, we may truly say that there is no place for repentance, though we seek for it carefully and with tears. I mean not, God forbid that I should mean, that habits of sin cannot be overcome by God's grace, but I mean that their existence, when they do exist, is an evil, a fearful addition to the weight of sin, which so easily besets us even before. Deliverance from them is not to be had with a wish or a thought. It cannot be had except by paying its full price in painful and wearisome struggles, in frequent failures, in the fear of failures more frequent still, and above all, in the dreadful fear of the penalties of final failure, if our work be cut short, and we die while our hearts are yet the slaves of sin[1].

[1] 'As if danger of falling into hell, and fear of the Divine anger, and many

In a word, we have travelled far and wide from the right path, and before we can regain it, every step of error must be retrod, in a weariness of spirit, and hopelessness beyond description. We have learned to love sin, we must learn not to love it; sin is become a second nature; that nature must be rooted out: we have dimmed our eyes and blunted our hearing by sin; and the eye and the ear must be cleansed, before it can see God, or know what holiness is. The Ethiopian must change his skin, and the leopard his spots. The foul heart must be cleansed, and the spirit must come again like the spirit of a little child, before we can receive the kingdom of God in the only spirit in which it can be received, the spirit of little children. This work we have made for ourselves. This work must be done if we would enter the kingdom of God. There is no place for repentance of our folly and wickedness, but the evil must be borne and cured by the help of that God with whom nothing is impossible. And this is to be done, if it be ever done, in the hurry and business of manhood, or in the feebleness and fears of age.

The thoughts suggested by the effects of sinful habits lead us on to a consideration of a yet more

many desires of the Divine judgments, and a lasting sorrow, and a perpetual labour, and a never ceasing trembling, and a troubled conscience, and a sorrowful spirit were fit things to be desired or hoped for. Repentance is a duty full of fears, and sorrow, and labour, a vexation to the spirit, an afflictive, penal, and primitive duty, a duty which suffers for sin and labours for grace, which abides and suffers little images of hell in the way to heaven; and though it be the only way to felicity, yet it is beset with thorns and daggers of sufferance, and with rocks and mountains of duty.' Jer. Taylor's Invalidity of a late Repentance.

appalling nature, to a yet more fearful sense in which the threat that there shall be no place for repentance though we seek for it with tears, may be fulfilled. I do not now speak only of the final doom of sinners, although the words are eminently and fearfully true of that. We are inclined indeed in our weakness and our self-deceit to look to God's promises rather than His threats, forgetting that if we had little reason to fear the threat, we should have as little reason to trust the promises[1]: forgetting that, in the final separation, that one word 'separate,' implies a truth awful beyond our lips to utter, beyond our hearts adequately to feel. But however we may forget or be blind, or blind ourselves, it is indeed but too true, if the Bible is true, that there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin for them who tread under foot the blood of the covenant, but 'a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation[2];' that 'a day cometh when a merciful God will shew that He is a just God, when it will be too late to knock when the door is shut, too late to cry for mercy when it is the time for justice[3];' that one day indeed 'the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from

[1] The sinner hopes 'that heaven is to be had for a sigh, or a short prayer, and yet hell shall not be consequent to the affections, and labours, and hellish services of a whole life; he goes on and cares not, he hopes without a promise and refuses to believe all the threatenings of God, but believing he shall have a mercy for which he never had a Revelation.' Jer. Taylor, Apples of Sodom, Part II. § 1.

[2] Heb. x. 27.

[3] Commination Service.

the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power[1].' But however true and however fearful, I speak not now of that.

Neither do I speak of another truth as fearful; the truth, I mean, that if even He could forget that He is a just God, and could say to the sinner yet in his sin those blessed words, 'Neither do I condemn thee,' yet the sinner hath condemned himself. For of what avail were it to offer heaven and heavenly joy to one who is earthly and carnal, the pleasures of the saint to the sinner, the pleasures of the soul to the slave of the body? What communion hath darkness with light? Even in this lower state, where in the purest joys of the purest saint, there is so much of earth, so much of sin, does the sinner desire those pure joys? does he not despise them? could he comprehend them? And if not, where shall he learn the lesson, where get the vision and the faculty divine? Shall he learn that lesson in the dark chamber of the grave, which he could not or would not learn in the day of grace, and the time of trial? Behold! there is no wisdom in the grave; but, as the tree falls, so it must lie. With the tempers and dispositions which we carry to the grave we shall rise again and stand before God. The unholy shall be unholy still, and shall receive the recompense meet for unholiness in banishment from those pure joys which he has made himself unfit to understand or to enjoy.

But even of this necessary and fearful consequence of sin, I speak not now, but of a truth which to the

[1] 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9.

human soul and human feelings here below is almost more awful still, that not only after that day of life which we esteem the day of trial is over, but long too before the soul hath passed to the world of spirits, its final doom may perhaps often be everlastingly and unchangeably fixed. So in another and more dreadful sense, there may be no place for repentance, because that miserable soul cannot seek for the blessing, cannot shed the tears of repentance, but is hopelessly hardened in sin.

Not that God shuts the gate of mercy against any that can and do really repent. Not that man may presume to pass upon any sinful brother the sentence that he is beyond repentance; but that it is of a surety but too true, that such is man, and such is man's mind, that when delays, and warnings, and checks, and opportunities, have been long and often given and given in vain, the heart, to say all at once, is at last hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Often quenched, often grieved, often resisted, the spirit of grace will knock at the hard heart as long as his gentle call is answered, however feebly, as long as his gentle voice is heard. But at length all is finished. The ordinary calls of grace are made in vain to the hardened heart. The night is come in which no man can work; the conscience becomes, in the terrible language of Holy Writ, seared as it were with a red hot iron. The heart is as cold as the grave, and as hard as the marble above it. It is dead in sin; and to address remonstrance or warning to it now is, in fact, to seek the living among the dead.

It is of such a soul that God, speaking by the wise man, says: 'I called and you refused. I stretched out my hand and no man regarded. Ye set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproofs. I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh, when fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.'

These terrible words cannot surely be used of any to whom the door to pardon is yet open, but of those of whom the Lord, that sees all things, sees as He saw of Pharaoh in old times, that all hope is gone; that they have so abused all His rich gifts, so utterly and hopelessly sunk and brutalized and defiled the precious souls entrusted to them, that for them not mercy, but repentance is impossible, that those lost souls can never awake for a moment to a sense of their sad estate, so as to send forth an exceeding bitter cry like Esau, 'Hast thou no blessing for me, oh! my father,' or even to confess in the full and overpowering sense of their helpless and hopeless degradation that for them the accepted time is past, and the day of salvation gone.

These things, my brethren, are so plain, so old and common, so obvious to every mind, that you will wonder that I should choose to speak of them in this place. Yea, verily! old and common they are, old and common it is for man to sin, old and common for man to die in his sins, old and common for man in his sins to perish. So these things are never out of

place wherever and by whomsoever they are spoken; whether spoken by the minister of God to the humble and the ignorant, or spoken in these seats of learning. Perhaps, indeed, in one respect they have their peculiar fitness, their peculiar uses here. When the mind and thoughts are perpetually engaged in pursuits which in themselves are honourable, beneficial to others and to our own intellectual frame, but many of which have at least no direct tendency to the increase either of faith or of holiness, these very advantages and benefits become fatal means of keeping up the deception which the heart of man ever desires to practice on itself. We have the approbation of our own hearts as to the nature of our pursuits, and we forget that in such matters measure is every thing; that what is right in one measure may be sinful and ruinous in another. The natural dislike which the natural corruption of the heart begets, to a full and faithful and searching examination of our spiritual state, to a candid and impartial 'Trial and Judgment of the Soul,' is strengthened and fostered by the conviction that we are bestowing our time and talents on purposes worthy of rational beings, and that consequently examination is not required. And so we may cry Peace when there is no Peace, and journey on under the influence of delusion, unconscious of sin and danger, unconscious of our own state, unrepentant and unregenerate, to the grave. Our toils and labours may have promoted civil and social improvement; they may have advanced the comforts or civilization of our country; we may leave a name behind us which men may mention with

regard and respect; and yet all in vain! The toil and labour may have been bestowed in gaining acquirements soon to be of no account, in learning a language not used, or gathering up a coin not current in that state to which we are soon to pass.

Literature and learning and science, and the free interchange of thought, and the free collision of intellect, and the love of intellectual truth, these are indeed precious possessions, names sacred and venerable beyond my feeble powers to express. Yet there is one name, one word on which the thoughts of man should dwell with yet greater earnestness and deeper anxiety. The grave! The stilly region whither all are bound! The grave! The house appointed for all living. The dark and silent house into which are to descend all the thoughts and hopes of man, and whence all the thoughts and hopes connected with earth are to rise no more. The house where eloquence shall be dumb, learning useless, and science without her objects! Of what avail shall learning and eloquence and science be there, or in the state beyond? of what profit these bright jewels without that brighter jewel, 'the pearl of great price?' And that pearl is holiness, not learning, faith, not science.

Let us not disguise it from ourselves that however alluring may be the prospects which intellectual research may present to us, we have one only object, one only indispensable business, committed to us by our Heavenly Father, the care of our souls. All besides is accidental, that alone essential. All besides is partial, is for the favoured few, that alone is uni-

versal, for every son of Adam that hath been or is or shall be. The circumstances of birth and opportunity may close up the path to intellectual progress, and in such cases, intellectual progress will not be required; but the path to holiness, if it be narrow, is open to all; and if there be few that find it, the few are confined to no class, or colour, or country.

Faith then and its genuine fruit holiness will be required of every man, high or humble, learned or unlearned alike, and that requirement will level all the fancied differences which the pride of intellect, unsanctified by a direction towards higher things, and by a longing after them, or by Christian humility and holiness, may have set up. To the proud thoughts and proud boastings of such wisdom God utters two simple words of reproof for which that wisdom can find no answer: 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' And again: 'Thou art troubled about many things, but one thing is needful.' And that one thing is not a learned but a regenerate heart. If there be any, then, who are pursuing the 'many things' at the expense of the one, the lesser object at the expense of the greater, pursuing what is in itself right and praiseworthy and fit to be pursued, beyond its due measure and degree, let them turn to the plain and simple record of Scripture which I have set before them, and learn that they too are of a surety storing up for themselves a bitter (perhaps like Esau's, a fruitless) repentance. Let them learn that if to-day, 'while it is yet called to day,' they turn a deaf ear to the invitations of the Gospel, and the calls of the Spirit,

it is but too likely that hereafter, when they would inherit the blessing they may be rejected. It will be of little avail to say that they did not, like Esau, sell their birth-right for a slavish appetite, or that the price of their souls was not the gratification of a brutal passion, or that they did not slight the message and call of the Great King for the common and vulgar objects of gain, for the farm, or the yoke of oxen, or the merchandize. They have sold a better and higher birth-right than Esau's, the Christian's birth-right, and have been contented to take the perishing things of time for the unfading goods of eternity.

To them then, to all, let the exhortation be given to 'seek the Lord while he may be found; to call upon him while he is near;' to throw themselves at the foot of the cross, and casting away all over anxiety for earthly wisdom, go to that Saviour who is made not wisdom only, but righteousness and sanctification and redemption to them that seek him. Let them remember that now, and perhaps now only, is the accepted time, now only the day of salvation; let them pray, that even in this their day, they may know the things that belong to their peace, before they are hid from their eyes; let them pray, while it is yet their day, to their Father in heaven, to give them a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within them, before that heart shall cease to beat, and that spirit be summoned to the judgment-seat of Christ.

THE TENDENCY

OF

PREVALENT OPINIONS ABOUT KNOWLEDGE CONSIDERED.

SECOND EDITION.

TO THE REVEREND

CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, D.D.

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE,

THE

TRUE AND ARDENT FRIEND

OF RELIGION AND OF LITERATURE,

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE

IS INSCRIBED

WITH SENTIMENTS OF THE STRONGEST RESPECT

FOR HIS PUBLIC PRINCIPLES,

AND OF UNAFFECTED REGARD FOR HIS PRIVATE CHARACTER.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author of the following Sermon would not have deemed it necessary to trouble the reader with any Prefatory remak, had he not found from private conversation, that his meaning on one point has been misunderstood. He takes this occasion of declaring, what will indeed be clear from mere perusal of the Sermon, that nothing could be farther from his intention than the presuming to offer any objection to the pursuit of Mathematical Science. Considered as an engine of education, no man can doubt its signal power to educe and exercise some of the most valuable faculties of the human mind. It ought, however, to be always remembered, that when viewed in that light, this cultivation and exercise of the intellect are its main objects, and that the results of the pursuit, however valuable in themselves, are in this view only of secondary importance.

One word may perhaps be added without impropriety, as to the sentiments expressed in the Sermon with reference to Experimental Philosophy. None but a madman can be blind to its advantages in some respects, or can wish that it should be neglected or undervalued; but the object in the present day

is to exalt it above other pursuits, to make it the exclusive object, to force it on the attention of all, and to devote to it minds capable of far better and higher things. These are honors to which it has no pretensions from any sort of service which it can render to man's intellect, or his higher interests, they are honors likely to do extensive mischief, by misleading and misdirecting the young and the ardent, and every man who foresees the evil is bound in conscience to utter his earnest, though it should be his feeble protestation, against it.

In conclusion, it must be said that the following Discourse considers only which of two given paths leads most to intellectual and moral elevation; but it by no means asserts that the improvement of the intellect is the requisite condition of the moral amelioration of mankind. Christianity certainly reverses the order, when it teaches that they who would understand the doctrine of God, must do his will.

SERMON IX.

THE TENDENCY OF PREVALENT OPINIONS ABOUT KNOWLEDGE CONSIDERED.

ECCLES. III. 2.

No man can find out the work, which God maketh, from the beginning to the end.

IN estimating the actual state of Religion, in any country or period, and enquiring how it was produced, it too often happens that attention is addressed only to causes of direct operation. Direct errors in belief obtain instant notice and regard, and meet with instant refutation at our hands, while others are entirely overlooked because their influence is only indirect, although, perhaps, far more dangerous than that of a single error of faith. For in this latter case, the principles of belief may be untainted though erroneously exerted, while in the other, although the canker is not obvious to the eye, the fruit may be poisoned to the core.

An obvious instance of the justice of this remark presents itself, in the influence exercised over our modes of thinking on religious matters, by the prevalent notions as to knowledge and intellect. The confession

may, perhaps, be painful to him who considers Religion with the honor due to her, but it cannot be denied, that, practically, men's method of regarding Religion is too much influenced by their modes of thinking on other subjects. The case indeed is really this, that although man consists of an higher and a lower part, and is, in fact, the denizen of a spiritual and a sensual world, although in the order of truth, the higher should ever give the law and the rule to the lower, and the sensual ever give place to the spiritual, yet the lower and the sensual have this great advantage, that they are perpetually pressed on our notice, that they must gain our attention, that in this everyday world they will be heard. And this advantage is abused till they gain the dominion, and the higher part is either neglected, or, if it gain regard, is judged by the laws, and subjected to the influence of the lower constituents of man. Thus it is that men are guided too often in their Religious Creed by their habits of thinking on the daily occupations of their minds or bodies, and thus mightily important, therefore, does it become, that even on minor matters there should be a due regulation of the mind, and that no false or partial habits of thinking or judging on subjects perhaps intrinsically of little importance, should betray us into errors in that which is most important of all.

In looking to the state of things in our own days, we must not indeed forget that it is ever the propensity of man to judge with harshness of the age and men among whom he lives, and to proclaim and lament the faults which his constant and heedful observation

discovers, forgetting that other ages too had their especial vices and errors, and forgetting 'in the excellence of what remains the large overbalance of worthlessness which has been swept away.' Yet the force of this obvious truth must never be allowed to deter the reasonable enquirer from a steady examination of the leading principles of thought and action which, whether for weal or woe, direct the age in which it is his fortune to live.

Now that in every age the accumulation of wealth and the increase of power have obtained far more than their due share of attention, is beyond question; and it is equally beyond question that in the present age, these objects are pursued on a more gigantic scale than at any former period, and obtain more, far more exclusive attention. In every former period there was at least some countervailing influence which had powerful hold on the minds of mankind. But with us the spirit of Religious enthusiasm, except in the lowest and most disgusting form, the spirit of Chivalry, the spirit of elevated Philosophy which counteracts any excessive attachment to temporal and personal objects, by pre-occupying the intellect and the affections with permanent, universal, and eternal truths, all in short which tended to raise man from the earth, is departed to give place to the spirit of accumulation. To this every other passion bows. From this every pursuit takes its tone and its colour, and, what is most melancholy of all, it is obviously desired to render even knowledge and education subservient to this ruling passion, and to estimate them only in propor-

tion as they tend to increase man's sway over the material universe, to render it tributary to him, and thus increase his stock of wealth and power. That such a state of things is eminently unfavourable to Religion would be clear from mere reasonable considerations, and the facts of the case establish the point, I fear, still farther. Thus much at least can hardly be denied, that although there is undoubtedly a bustling external activity prevalent in the world with respect to Religious objects, there is not the same degree of spiritual and meditative Religion which other ages have possessed. The contrary opinion, it must be remembered, can derive little support from any appeal to the state of public morals, even if that state were likely to give the desired answer. For although vital Religion is no doubt the best amender of men's practice, we must not forget that prudential considerations are also most powerful in their effect on the conduct, and it may perhaps be true that a prudential morality, and a sort of heartless and lifeless decency of conduct, necessary as they are to the well-being of society, and to the prosecution of schemes of interest, flourish in no small degree amongst us, while that Religion which elevates man above this lower sphere of action, its concerns and interests, spiritualizes the being and guides and animates it to the prospect of an higher and more developed state, is too much cast aside and forgotten. In the belief then that very erroneous methods of thinking with respect to knowledge and education, resulting from our devotedness to the accumulation of wealth, have greatly contributed to

produce this tone of Religious feeling amongst us, let us shortly examine the prevalent opinions on these important points, especially as to their objects, their value, and their probable progress.

First of all then, wherever inordinate thirst for wealth exists, it is reasonable to suppose that the knowledge which will be the most highly prized, will be that which most contributes to its increase. And accordingly it is beyond all question, that of far, very far the greater portion of that knowledge, for which men at present labor, the only object is its immediate utility, and the return which it will make. This is entirely a question of facts, and they are so positive as to admit of no contradiction. The Country which once within a few years produced and gloried in a More, a Norris, a Cudworth, and a Stillingfleet, must blush to confess that she can hardly name among all her sons more than a single Metaphysical or Ethical Student; that scholarship of the higher class possesses only a bare and a dubious existence; that pure Literature shares the same neglect; and that every department of intellectual research which requires time and thought and patience, without offering a prospect of immediate advantage, is rejected with a vehemence of anger, and branded as visionary. On the other hand, the grand object of pursuit is the knowledge of the material Universe, as tending most directly to add to the conveniences and comforts of life, and to bestow immediate reward on those whose sagacity leads them to discovery themselves, or to profit by the discoveries of others. Here then is at once a striking dif-

ference between the present and past ages, and a difference in no way favourable to our own. When it was said indeed in former times, for the maxim has passed away, that knowledge was to be valued for its own sake, little more was meant than an absolute denial of the belief entertained among ourselves, that it is to be valued only by its immediate utility. And that denial was founded on worthy views of human nature, its objects and its destiny. Coming into the world in a state of helpless weakness of body, and with a mind which, however endowed, is as yet undeveloped, it is the law of man's being, that by a mighty process of cultivation in a world of sense, the most wonderful and noble powers should be educed, and a being of infinite worth and dignity, though in many respects frail and imperfect, called, as it were, into an existence which is to last for ever. But it is the law of this being also, that whatsoever imperfection it can conquer, whatsoever perfection it can attain, the one can be conquered, and the other attained only by a slow and gradual process, by a developement of the whole being, and by maintaining the harmony and due relation of the several faculties with which it is endowed. We may perhaps force a little immature produce by the strong excitement of immediate reward, but if we desire that man should attain his glory, we must remember that like the plant, his flowering time is only once in his life, when years of thought, of study, of careful and patient cultivation directed to that end alone, have expanded all his powers, and enabled him to send forth his blossom in perfectness of beauty.

Again, we may cultivate one faculty to the exclusion of the rest, and we may perhaps attain the specific end for which the care and cultivation was bestowed, but we shall not have the being Man in his glory, but a part only, and that part in an unnatural state. Now it needs no argument to shew that all knowledge which looks only to immediate utility and present reward, must sacrifice all to those objects, must cultivate the faculties only partially, and must lose sight entirely of the great end, the improvement of the being.

But still farther: it is a law of our nature, that truth on all great and important subjects, should be attained only by much labour, many struggles and many difficulties, and should be only slowly and gradually recognized. Snatches and fragments of truth we may attain rapidly, but not a fixedness and unity of view, such as is alone worthy of an intellectual being, and alone can conduce either to his improvement or his happiness. When the metaphysician tells us that, we know only what we are, he re-echoes in fact the words of our Lord, that to understand his doctrine we must do his will. We cannot indeed comprehend any great truths with which we do not stand in constant relation, which have not grown with our growth, which have not melted into our being, and which do not form a part of it. Meditation and thought are in short absolutely and indispensably necessary to elevation, 'to the absolute possession of the individual mind, and to a consistency and harmony of the Being within itself, which no outward agency can reach to disturb or to impair.' How entirely opposed to such a state

is that produced by making immediate utility our object, a state to which meditation must be a stranger, and which must be engaged in a constant and feverish activity of unmeaning exertion, and guided by partial and imperfect knowledge!

Let us, my brethren, who have a real and unfeigned belief that we are made by a God, and that by Him we are to be judged hereafter, and rewarded or punished, let us, I say, not hold these principles as mere dead letters, but act upon them, and give proof of our persuasion that the interests and advantages of time are not to be compared with those of Eternity. Let us shew, that we are guided in our thoughts and pursuits by a reference to that state in which we are to exist hereafter, that it is our earnest desire so to bestow our labor, and so to use the world as to improve our being to the highest pitch for its future destiny, and that in comparison of this end, we despise and contemn all immediate utility and present reward. And let the modern Philosophers too remember, that the very person, to whom they look as their master, himself re-echoes our opinion, when he says, that 'our proper employment lies in those enquiries, and in that sort of knowledge which is most suited to our natural capacities, and carries in it our greatest interest, that is, the condition of our eternal state[1].' It is true, indeed, that in this lower world we cannot be wholly insensible to the rewards which it offers, but in the words of one of the wisest and best men of our own day, "these must be only an auxiliatory motive, and

[1] Locke. Book IV. Chap. xii. Sect. 11.

never the principal or originating force." They must never come into comparison with that great end, the improvement of our being.

This it is, which is the real end and object of knowledge, and by this is its value to be ascertained, not by the false and debasing standard which is now erected, for that is the second point to which we are to address ourselves. It is, in fact, almost of necessity that a false view of the objects of knowledge, should lead to a false standard of its value. And the standard of that knowledge, which has immediate utility and present reward for its object, will obviously be public opinion. Accordingly we find it unblushingly confessed in the greater part of the writings of the day which allude to the subject, more especially with reference to legitimate views of education, that some classes of knowledge are to be renounced because they find no favour in the eyes of the public, others to be cultivated because they enjoy public esteem. As if the steps which are to educate and form a moral and intellectual, a spiritual and eternal being, to his high destiny, were to be dictated by a thing of ignorance, of vulgarity, of passion, and of prejudice, or rather, as if the mean and despicable advocates of such views were unable to believe that man is a being of lofty destinies, unable to view any thing except through the medium of the market, unable to believe that there is any real value in that for which no gold is paid, and no preferment nor promotion offered.

If there be, as we contend, no legitimate object of knowledge, but the improvement of our intellectual

and moral being with reference to its ultimate destiny, so neither is there any other standard of value for knowledge than the degree in which it promotes that improvement. So the real value of knowledge must be determined by the real value of the objects to which it relates. That which concerns temporary convenience and luxury and wealth, that which relates to a perishing body and a perishing world, can never be put into comparison with what regards the higher and nobler part of our nature, which is to endure when the material universe shall have passed away. That is the best and fittest knowledge for us which most strengthens the intellect, most elevates the views, and most purifies the heart. He who desires this knowledge, sees that there are many, very many things which tend to produce the effects he desires, and yet which promise neither immediate advantage nor reputation; that there are many studies which tend to purify the taste, many to strengthen the faculties, many to teach the mind by experience of the past, many to elevate it by prospect of the future, which yet at present offer to him who pursues them only a prospect of solitary, unremitting, unrewarded labour, neglect and scorn. Yet he feels that 'the countenance of this enduring knowledge continues to appear as bright and as beautiful in his eyes, that no haze bedims it, no cloud has passed over,' and hidden that light which is reflected on it from a future indeed and a distant, but an eternal, state of glory. On that light, his thoughts and his hopes are fixed, and he pursues his lofty object, careless about the clamour of daily life,

the applause or the censure of an ignorant world, and about the reward, which, though it may make him greater and richer in time, bears no promise of fruit beyond it. He can lift up his views, he can extend them beyond the day and the morrow, and look forward with patient and undisturbed expectation to a fuller harvest of joy! And where can such a picture be more appropriately presented than in a place whose records furnish so many noble counterparts? Of the many, let us take a single instance, and look with reverence to two illustrious contemporaries[1], contented for the sake of true knowledge, to renounce the most brilliant offers of worldly advancement, and within the walls of the same fortunate college, to devote to a happy tranquillity, to a contented humbleness of state and fortune, and to the unremitting, and (in worldly language) the unrewarded pursuit of intellectual and moral elevation, the energies of their mighty minds, and the stores of their extended learning. The man of science may scoff at the names of Henry More and of Mede, and at their gross ignorance of all he knows; and doubtless they are as much below his contempt as they are above it. They could not arrange all the products of the material world in their scientific order, they could not use the tools of the laboratory, nor the engines of the mechanist; but who would lessen the dignity of man and of his intellect by comparing

[1] Joseph Mede died in his rooms at Christ's, in 1638, aged 52, having lived two thirds of his time in College. Henry More, born in 1614, entered at Christ's in 1631, and died in 1675. Mede refused the Provostship of Trinity College, Dublin; More, the Deaneries of Christ Church and St. Patrick's, Dublin, two Irish Bishopricks, and an English one.

their elevated views, their thoughtful hearts, their exquisite conceptions, their gentle desires, and their Christian peace, with the million facts, the hurry, the fever, and the impatience of the experimentalist and the discoverer?

It is in a deep rooted confidence and persuasion of the truth of these principles, that we would make our earnest appeal for the revival, or, if that word may not be used, for an increased attention to literature, alike as an engine of education, and as the pursuit of more advanced and mature years. Neglected and despised as it is in comparison with its favoured competitor, how far more does it deserve the notice bestowed on her. It is not partial in its cultivation of the intellect, but tends at once to correct the taste, to strengthen the judgment, to instruct us in the wisdom of men better and wiser than ourselves, to exercise the reasoning faculties on subjects which demand and deserve their attention, and to show them the boundaries imposed on them by providence. It is literature which fits and prepares us best of all for the examination of those moral and intellectual truths, which are not only the worthiest exercise of our reason, but most concern our future destiny; and it is literature alone assuredly, which leads the young Divine into the schools of Theology, qualified to benefit either himself or others.

Of the rival pursuit, without at all presuming to disparage it when confined to its due sphere, we may yet ask, not harshly, nor confidently[1], but doubtingly,

[1] I would wish however to refer the reader to a passage, printed at the end of this volume, in which a different opinion is stated, the opinion I mean, that the

what beneficial effects it produces on the mind, how far the faculties are strengthened by the accumulation or even by the arrangement of facts, and whether it tends in any degree to render the mind more susceptible of elevated knowledge, or more capable of discerning between truth and falshood. Without wishing to assert what Malebranche has however asserted, that those branches of knowledge which depend especially on the memory, are liable to render their possessors arrogant, because they are most producible on every occasion to the public eye, without wishing to assert what a greater than Malebranche, the ever memorable Bishop Butler, has asserted with him, that however highly these things are to be valued as objects of curiosity, they still are objects of curiosity, and of a passing interest only to a moral being, we may yet venture to ask whether the habits superinduced by this study, by the anxious search after novelty, by the feverish restlessness of discovery, by the constant rejection of present belief in favour of new views, and above all by the entire externality of the study, are desirable. We may ask whether they are likely to lead to the

the inductive or classifying Spirit is best attained by the study of Natural Philosophy. It is written by one, from whom it is as painful as I feel it to be presumptuous in me to differ, by William Whewell, a name, which, if life be granted, will one day stand among the highest of our English Worthies. Let him forgive me, if in a deep sense of the uncertainty of human life and human prospects, I cannot refrain from taking even this unworthy occasion of testifying how every year of friendship with him increases his claims to respect and regard, and from saying how the reverence, which his great powers and acquirements command, is lost in affectionate admiration of the yet nobler qualities of a heart, to which every thing base is a stranger, and which is familiar with every thing that is lofty and fair.

patient meditation, and the calm undisturbed thought which alone can do justice to the faculties bestowed on man, and alone can lead to truth, and to that patient acquiescence in imperfect knowledge, which in a state of faith and of trial, must be required of an imperfect being, or whether on the contrary, when so exclusively cultivated, they are not far more likely to lead their possessor, like the imprisoned bird, to beat with fretful impatience against barriers which he can neither penetrate nor surmount[1]!

I cannot quit this part of my subject without uttering a final protest on moral grounds against making present reward the object, and public opinion the arbiter of the value of knowledge. For such opinions can only tend to degrade and debase mankind, to reduce them on all occasions to mere calculators of profit and loss, and under the influence of such mean and selfish principles to make them blind and insensible

[1] 'In many parts of Europe,' says a great Poet and Philosopher, '(and especially in our own country), men have been pressing forward, for 'some time, in a path which has betrayed by its fruitfulness; furnishing 'them constant employment for picking up things about their feet, while 'thoughts were perishing in their minds. While Mechanic Arts, Manufac-'tures, Agriculture, Commerce, and all those products of knowledge which 'are confined to gross, definite, and tangible objects, have, with the aid of 'Experimental Philosophy, been every day putting on more brilliant colours; 'the splendour of the imagination has been fading; sensibility, which was 'formerly a generous nursling of rude nature, has been chased from its ancient 'range in the wide dominion of patriotism and religion with the weapons 'of derision by a shadow calling itself Good Sense; and calculations of pre-'sumptuous Expediency, groping its way among partial and temporary 'consequences, have been substituted for the dictates of paramount and 'infallible Conscience, the supreme embracer of consequences; lifeless and 'circumspect Decencies have banished the graceful negligence and unsuspicious 'dignity of Virtue.' (Concerning the relations of Great Britain, Spain and Portugal, &c. by William Wordsworth, p. 164.)

to the dictates of immutable principle and eternal truth.

But, last of all, there is a strange error made in the expectations formed as to the progress of knowledge and of intellect. It would seem that they who have observed what great effects are undoubtedly produced by adopting practical measures in worldly affairs, and directing themselves to present utility, have by some singular process induced themselves to entertain the same opinions as to the nature and prospects of the human intellect. Though not professing in words any belief in its perfectibility, they obviously recognize the doctrine in practice, and express the wildest opinions on the subject. They clearly think that if the labour of thought can be abridged, the intellect will make a proportionate progress, and whoever has attended to the language of a few of the leading publications which seek to direct the public taste and form the public views of education, is aware that they unquestionably speak of intellect, its improvements, and its progress, in the same language which they apply to any other commodity within the sphere of political economy. The demand for any species of knowledge, and any degree of improvement of mind will create a supply, and a human being of specific qualifications and requisites can be built up like a house when there is any reason to suppose that a price can be obtained for it. On these principles, the miserable supposition, namely, of sufficient inducements, and the probable increase of facilities, they build their hopes of the progress of the human intellect, and gravely

assert that men, under every imaginable disadvantage of want of education and of leisure, may, through certain short roads and improved methods of training, become capable of comprehending the essays of the philosopher, and they set no bounds to the progress of the mind under more favourable circumstances.

And these are not the dreams of hearts just opening to hope, 'flushed with the consciousness of strength, and exulting in destined achievements, this is not that almost involuntary hope and desire and longing of noble hearts,' not that ever-springing and heart-cheering faith in a tendency to improvement in the species, arising from a desire for that improvement, and an ardent love of the species itself. There is no man who has taught himself the fallacy of those hopes, who does not sigh as he resigns them himself, and as he inculcates their resignation on others, even though he perceives that 'it is not necessary in order to satisfy the calmer desires of nature, or to reconcile us to the economy of Providence, that there should be always a continuous advance of what is of highest worth.' But there is no regret experienced in checking the rash hopes of mean but presumptuous minds, building on false foundations a super-structure which is only destined for a short continuance. There can be no regret in endeavouring to check hopes which call man off from the pursuit of eternal and permanent truth, to a transitory existence, and divert his thoughts from the calm and constant remembrance of his future and higher destiny. And assuredly those hopes are checked alike when they are examined by the ken of real rea-

son, and by experience. First of all we see that from the nature and laws of the intellect, and from the short continuance of human life, such hopes are almost necessarily fallacious. When we once admit indeed the existence of a God, and the continuance of the soul's existence to eternity, these two considerations at once impress a character of comparative insignificance on all that does not concern these great matters, and on all that can be done in the way of 'result attained' in this world. I deny not, God forbid I should deny, the might, the glory, the magnificence of this earthly frame; I reverence in prostrate humility, and I delight to contemplate, as far as I am able, the wonderful wisdom which created, which regulates, and which preserves it; but still I feel that these are but parts, the least parts of his ways, and so that the highest improvement of which our nature is susceptible is not to be sought from them, that the thunder of his power is not here, that there is something within us which pants for, and which speaks to us of a closer tie, a more intimate communion, a more amazing knowledge than this earthly state will afford. I can discern in the moral government of the world, enough to convince me of the goodness and justice of the world's great Governor, but I know that there are mysteries in it, to the solution of which that human wisdom which is familiar with all the remotest problems of science has made no approach. In this acknowledged feebleness and failure I am compelled to recognize the tokens of imperfection, and to look for the aftertime, when to the wisdom that was earthly, and is made

heavenly, these higher and deeper problems shall be solved, a prospect which seems implied in the immortality of man, under the power of a wise, a just, and an holy God. Again, I examine the highest knowledge that ever revealed itself to the aspiring and elevated minds of the greatest and truest philosophers, and I see that in all that concerns the enduring interests, the nature, the endowments, and the powers of the species, it was mere dust in the balance. Yet this insignificance of their real knowledge, might not perhaps be owing to any want of inherent power, but to the limitations which nature has herself placed to its acquisition, the shortness, namely, of life here, and that extreme slowness with which the mind acquires familiarity with important truths. The so-called philosopher of a sister country may indeed speak of an unbounded prospect of intellectual improvement to future ages, from the provisions which, as he judges, are made by nature to facilitate and abridge the process of study, by improvement in language, and by the more comprehensive classification of facts, which present in one age, in an elementary form, the subjects of remote and abstruse speculations in preceding times. But if he really sought to transfer what is true of physical science to moral truth, if he really believed that our superior facilities for becoming acquainted with the objects of sense, add in the remotest degree to our faculties for comprehending spiritual and intellectual matters, if in fine, he believed that any discoveries, any royal road can supersede that process which nature has marked out, of laborious, slow, and difficult reception,

and of entire and perfect examination, he would have established little more than one point, the value, namely, of his own speculations on the human mind, and the character of his own philosophical researches. He does not however venture to appeal in confirmation of his assertion to any other quarter than that of mathematical science, no inference from which on such a subject can be fairly extended beyond the sphere of the science itself.

If reason then furnishes us with no well founded expectation of any remarkable progress of the species, but rather suggests many reasons in opposition to the hope, it remains only to enquire whether experience confirms or contradicts the verdict of reason. May we not venture to enquire whether a comparison of past ages with the present leaves us any especial grounds of boasting on this point? Amidst all the acquisitions of art, and increased knowledge of objects of sense, amidst the unceasing variation or progress of the modes of exertion of the human mind, all which is readily allowed, who shall say that loftier knowledge has increased, who shall assert that either in individuals or in nations 'there is enshrined more of the divinity of intellect in our days than in preceding ones.' Let us not impose on ourselves because we see a scanty measure of information, applicable only to the purposes of daily life, or conversant with the material universe, more generally diffused, let us not mock ourselves and reason by a miserable jargon, and by calling ourselves an enlightened age, and an enlightened people, but let us ask ourselves the plain question, whether there

is greater attention paid now to the subjects which most thoroughly exercise the mind, whether there is a greater degree of real thought and manly energy exercised, than in the age and country of a Plato or a Bacon, or whether the simple difference is not this, that a stock not larger is spread over a wider surface. The sciolist who could correct numberless errors of these illustrious men, must remember that this superiority has not even a tendency to diminish the infinite difference between their minds and his, and that it is not the accurate knowledge of facts, it is not knowledge itself, but the process by which it is attained, the discipline, the exercise, the perseverance, the developement of the various faculties, which elevate the mind of man.

The only mark of progress in the species discoverable, is to be found in God's dealings with mankind, for there is reason to believe that he sought to prepare them gradually, through successive ages, for the coming of the Saviour, that he now governs them by a spiritual rule, and not, as in former ages, by a carnal and temporal one; but this, be it remembered, is a gift bestowed, is wholly unconnected with man's own efforts, and holds out no prospect and no promise to them.

If then neither reason indulges us with the hope of any remarkable progress, and experience teaches us the same truth, surely the resulting lesson derived from these considerations must be, that not any result attainable by intellectual efforts, but the discipline derived from them, is that which demands our attention, and that our efforts are not to be directed to any

progress of the species here, but to the formation and discipline of individual minds with reference to their future developement and destiny, a result indeed of unspeakable importance in directing our views of education, a result which inevitably leads us to a comparative indifference as to the knowledge now so much in vogue, when measured with those studies which elevate, invigorate and purify the faculties themselves.

Nor let it be said that we desire to check the kindling hopes and the aspiring desires of the human mind, and chill its fond and fervent efforts for improvement. On the contrary we desire only to shew how its perfection is to be promoted, and to turn its attention from fanciful and fallacious hopes, to hopes which are as certain as God's promises are true. We desire only to shew that knowledge cannot be poured into the mind like a fluid mechanically transfused from one vessel to another, and that we can make no progress to loftier knowledge except by a proportionate elevation of the being, and a general developement of the faculties which a good and gracious Providence has bestowed. In pursuance of this belief we seek to shew that this earthly scene is only the scene for their developement and exercise, and that its obvious and numberless imperfections necessarily prevent it from completing the object for which the developement is desired. And so we seek to check man's admiration of the meagre and unsatisfying knowledge he can gain below, and to prevent all the debasing and mischievous effects which an overvalue for it must inevitably produce, to direct him to aim at a general developement

of all his faculties with reference to their great end, and so to point his earnest expectation to another, a better, and a higher state of existence, where darkness shall be changed into light, and our glimmerings of truth for certainty, where knowledge shall be universal and not partial, where all the secrets of nature and of providence shall be laid open to the improved and elevated intellect. It is there that the philosophical believer and the pious but humble Christian will meet, for the one does not look with more earnest love to God as the author of goodness, than the other reveres Him as the fountain, the source, and the one great, only, object of knowledge, in whom all things live and move and are, in whom center all the mysteries of the universe, and who alone is light and truth. To know Him is to have the only knowledge, that knowledge to which man in his highest spirit of contemplation most fondly aspires; and He hath promised that to them who seek him aright there shall arise a dayspring of light and of knowledge. They shall know him, here indeed imperfectly, but when this universe shall have crumbled into dust, and all the knowledge of it shall be passed away and forgotten, He shall shine forth to his own people in his own glory, and they shall see him as He is.

Passage from Professor WHEWELL'S *pamphlet, referred to, in the note, page* 196.

'I think most highly of the tenor of our present 'education. No one feels more deeply than I do that 'the object and functions of the two English Uni-'versities are of a peculiar nature, and such as to 'separate them very widely from institutions bearing 'the same name in other places. No one would think 'the evil more fatal and ruinous to the best interests 'of the country, if there should be any tendency to 'divest them of their present valuable and characteristic 'reference to the wants and relations of the English 'social system, and to substitute instead, any arrange-'ment dictated by theoretical generalities. No one is 'more thoroughly convinced, that the cherished studies 'of the place, the exact study of the best classical 'authors, and that of portions of mathematical science, 'ought ever to be the leading elements of a liberal 'education; and I am most fully persuaded that the 'rejection of this kind of education, and the substitution 'for it of a mere knowledge of experimental physics or 'theoretical politics and morals, would be attended, in 'a single generation, with a more striking and lament-'able retrogradation in the habits of thought and in-'tellectual character of cultivated Englishmen, than 'has yet occurred in any country. I hold it thus 'to be in us a sacred and indispensable duty to transmit 'to our successors, as we have received from former ages, 'the impression of that culture of the human intellect 'and imagination, which has been going on from the

'earliest ages of Greece to the present day; and to 'which the most resolute advocates of the philosophy 'of material phenomena and of palpable utility owe 'the habits of abstraction and deduction which they love 'to exercise.

'But though I think thus of the elements of our 'present system, I conceive that there is still something 'which we are most seriously called upon to provide. No 'system of education can at the present day be considered 'as sufficient or satisfactory, from which the Natural 'Sciences are excluded. They form a body of human 'knowledge worthy to stand by the side of classical 'literature and mathematical speculation, being in their 'details as varied and striking as the products of imagina-'tion, and in their principles as rigorous and symmetrical 'as the sciences of quantity. They have for two cen-'turies been perpetually becoming more conspicuous 'and more important, as most attractive and worthy 'employments of the speculative powers of man; and 'have now grown into the possession of a vast direct 'and indirect influence upon the habits of thinking 'of all persons of any degree of cultivation. In this 'manner the Natural Sciences, (without taking into 'account their professional necessity and practical use) 'have an efficacy in forming the intellectual character 'of the present generation, as indisputable as the deep 'and powerful effect which has been, through the medi-'ation of ages, produced by the literature of Greece 'and Rome. The time appears to be arrived, when 'no one can be considered as fully deserving the cha-'racter of a liberally educated man, who has received

'no impression from the prevalence of such studies. 'Nor would it be creditable to the character of our 'education here, that persons should go forth from 'among us, as having passed through the preparation 'which we can give, who have not not imbibed some 'such interest in the progress of the Natural Sciences, 'some such perception of the views and principles in-'volved in these branches of knowledge, as they will 'elsewhere find to be universally diffused among men 'of cultivated minds and literary habits. However 'well the habits of abstraction and inference may have 'been fixed and exalted by severer studies, however 'successfully a taste for the graces of composition and 'the philosophy of language may have been fostered, the 'additional element of the inductive and classifying 'spirit will be looked for in the well-educated man, and 'ought to be here infused. It is therefore a duty 'incumbent upon us not to acquiesce in any radical 'deficiency in the means of conveying knowledge of 'this kind. We must look upon the communication 'of such knowledge as an essential part of our system; 'and we must, I conceive, make the character of this 'branch of instruction agree, as far as it is carried, 'with that which prevails in our long established studies 'of philology and mathematics: that is, it should be 'accurate and systematic enough for the most diligent 'and profound students; in the view that its influence 'upon others, as well as upon those, may be unexcep-'tionably sound and beneficial.'