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ADDRESSSES

ON

THE DUTIES, DANGERS, AND SECURITIES

OF

YOUTH:

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

BY

THE HONOURABLE THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN, ESQ.

Ansel Doane
BY A. D. EDDY,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IN NEWARK, N. J.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

BY THE

HONOURABLE THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN, ESQ.

THE following pages are addressed to the most interesting department of society. The youth of our country compose that portion of our people, to which the patriot and the Christian look, with like concern, for the fulfilment of their best hopes. Whatever there may be of promise, or of alarm, in the present posture of our affairs, the responsibility for the issue, rests with the youth of this generation.

In a government founded on the public will—where the voice of the people can build up or pull down at pleasure, it is a truth of plain and fearful import, that this will must be under the regulation and control of sound and enlightened principles, or virtue will, very soon, have no defence, and vice, no check. In no age of the world has there been greater need of high moral and intellectual culture. What else shall restrain

the excesses of passion, or check the outbreaks of misrule and licentiousness? Vain will be the majesty of our laws, and unavailing their sanctions, if religion shall be despoiled of its authority, and conscience lose its influence. Let these foundations be destroyed, and the main pillars of our institutions must sink together in one general ruin; and history add another page to the sad record of departed republics.

Whatever means, then, can be applied, to form the manners—to mould the character, and purify the hearts of our youth, deserves the favour of all who love their country.

This volume may put in a fair claim to such intention. It embraces the whole range of duty, not so much by general maxims, as by particular and specific instructions, adapted to the various occasions of individual and social conduct. It is no small part of its value, that its counsels to the young are circumstantial. They follow the youth into every relation—warn him at each step, where danger threatens; point him to the temptations that cluster along his path, and persuade him to walk in that good old way, which God hath blessed from the beginning. And moreover, regarding the courtesies and proprieties of conduct, as among the incentives and safeguards to virtue, these addresses present salu-

tary lessons concerning the laws of social intercourse. Some have classed such duties, under the denomination of the minor virtues. If, by this, it was intended to detract from their importance, the injustice is as flagrant as the danger. They are essential parts of moral character; and the young man, who can habitually, and without remorse, violate the rules of good-breeding, and despise the christian precepts, that require of him to be courteous, and kind, and affable, whatever may be his pretensions, should be suspected as unsound at heart. His character wants those elements that, after all, furnish the safe tests of uprightness. Bad men, on some emergencies, may make displays of magnanimity that amaze the world. There is so much of splendour and applause about such achievements, that selfishness itself may be enlisted. But we must look at the noiseless, unpretending tenor of life, for the best indications of principle. It is not what we are occasionally, or under strong excitements, but what we are habitually, in retirement; and at the fireside, that gives the satisfactory proofs of character. The fountain from which virtue is supplied sends forth a constant stream; it flows on through sunshine and storm.

Our Saviour's test of character, referred to him, who "was faithful in that which was least;" and this justified his confidence for the rest.

If the tendency of these addresses be not wholly mistaken, they will happily conduce to the formation of a consistent moral character, on the basis of good sense and practical piety. And as such, they are commended to the youth of our country.

If it be an object of laudable desire, and endeavour to fill up the measure of our days with usefulness ; if it be the highest wisdom to walk in the fear of the Lord, to seek first his favour, and to secure those interests that will abide with us to eternity, then surely we should earnestly heed the counsels that direct us in the way to realize these rich blessings. Moreover, the peculiar character of the present crisis should encourage the publication of works like the one before us. The diffusion of knowledge, the circulation of the Scriptures, the increase and spread of religious light through the medium of the Bible class and the Sabbath school, have tended to raise the standard of thought and intelligence. Men have not only learned how to think, but have also thereby attained just estimates of their rights. A spirit of inquiry has been awakened, that is not willing to take things as granted. The public mind thirsts after illumination on its duties and privileges. Systems of religion and of government, creeds and theories, are all subjected to the trial of investigation. And by all this, the way is prepared for the best lessons that truth and virtue can furnish.

And most solemn and urgent becomes the duty of all the friends of their race, to meet this demand with the purest aliment; for if they draw back, this craving appetite will seek its supplies from any source, however deleterious. The clear indications of Divine Providence, point to the press as an effective agency by which to accomplish his gracious designs. And when infidelity is now wielding it to dreadful purpose, it behooves the friends of God and man to enlist its energies in their cause. Let every youth repair to these sources of sound and safe counsel. Let them come up to their high responsibilities. Soon they must assume the duties of religion, and the cares of government. How can they be qualified for such exalted service, unless by the wisdom that is from above.

They should be taught to feel the need of this heavenly guidance; and to urge and animate them to such course, let them remember the pilgrim fathers, who laid the foundations of our religious and political institutions. These recollections are always refreshing, and cannot be too much cherished. The tried and devoted men who planted the seeds of civil and religious liberty on these western shores, among their first services raised an altar to the Hearer of prayer. They feared God; they loved his gospel, and had fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus

Christ, to be redeemed by his blood, and renewed by his spirit.

These christian patriots loved the Sabbath. And God gave them full proof of his own promise: "them that honour me, I will honour." Where has been the nation or people since time began, whose prosperity has been equal to ours? Among the causes that should induce a doubt or fear of the stability of our blessings, no one is more flagrant or appalling, than the prevailing forgetfulness of the Lord's day. God has blessed this day from the beginning of time. Its hallowed light beams upon our world, as the gracious sign of divine benevolence; as a consecrated pillar and defence of the truth; and the nation or individual that dare despise its authority, or profane its sanctity, will, sooner or later, be made to realize its vindication, in the displeasure of God.

Connected with the responsibilities of young men, there is one reflection that can hardly be deemed unseasonable at any time. No one can read the Bible with becoming attention, and not perceive that God designs the ministry of reconciliation to be a principal agency in the salvation of the world. *The voice of the living preacher* must be lifted up in every land, before the morning of millennial glory shall dawn upon the world. And to the youth of the United States, the church, and the perishing,

now look for these living witnesses. "How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent?"

And it may be added, *how can* they be sent, if the thousands of young men in the midst of us, refuse to hear the cry for help, and draw back the shoulder from duty?

From the HON. JOSEPH C. HORNBLOWER, ESQ., Chief Justice of the State of New-Jersey.

NEWARK, *April 10th*, 1836.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:

I was not so fortunate as to hear the whole series of discourses to the young, recently delivered by you from the pulpit of the first Presbyterian church of this place. Judging, however, from such of them as it was my privilege to hear, I cannot doubt but that the publication of the entire series, in the order in which they were delivered, will be highly acceptable to the public, and no less beneficial to that interesting class of the community, for whose instruction they were specially designed. While it is undoubtedly the high calling, and paramount duty of the ministers of our holy religion, to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, by proclaiming the plain, practical, and simple doctrines and precepts of the gospel, as applicable to sinners of every age and sex, it cannot be otherwise than proper, occasionally at least, for the faithful Pastor to address himself more particularly to the younger members of his flock.

It is true, the world already abounds with publications, intended, and some of them eminently calculated to improve the young, and to guard them against the dangerous influences to which they are

peculiarly exposed, in this day of mental independence, moral innovation, and intellectual enterprise. I know, too, it is vain to hope for much success from attacks upon the prevailing sins, and fashionable vices of the day. The christian minister, and the private Christian, will not, and ought not to cease from bearing testimony against them on all reasonable and proper occasions; but, after all, the religion of the gospel is of personal and individual application. Communities, or whole classes of persons, are only moral or religious, in proportion to the number of individuals among them, who are brought under the saving and practical influence of the truth as it is in Jesus. The difficulty of making converts to Christianity, does not consist in convincing the devotees of pleasure, of the dangerous tendencies of the theatre; the destructive consequences of midnight revels, and the dissipating, if not positively sinful effects of the ball-room. It requires no more schooling, however they may affect to think otherwise, to convince the gay and fashionable, and pleasure-seeking youth of both sexes, that such scenes and amusements are unprofitable, and deleterious to health and morals, than it does to convince the intemperate, and the slaves to other gross and polluting vices, that they are pursuing a course alike destructive to their souls and bodies. They know it, and feel it by daily and sad experience. It

seems almost hopeless, therefore, to repeat the assaults that have been made on the legion of fashionable vices in the mass. They have been the subject of attack for centuries, and seem, not only to have survived the blows, but to have thrived and flourished most, even where the pulpit has been most eloquent.

The difficulty lies in the human heart—in the love of pleasure; or rather in opposition to be found in the unregenerate, whether young or old, to pure and holy living. In the absence of piety, novels and other ephemeral, and even vicious books, will be read instead of the Bible, however justly you denounce the former and commend the latter. In the absence of piety, the theatre, the ball-room, and the card-party will be frequented, instead of the closet, the prayer meeting, and the sanctuary, however eloquently you may declaim against the former, and however persuasively you may describe the rational and divine enjoyments of the latter. In short, in the absence of personal, individual, heart-felt, and genuine piety, the world, in some of its forms and fashions, will be cherished and embraced by the young, however gravely and affectionately you may warn them, or however graphically you may describe their dangers. It is, then, by making the young pious, that we must expect to win them from the sinful pleasures, or, if you please, the soul-destroying fashions and follies of the world.

It is, sir, because I thought your addresses to the young, so far as I had the happiness to hear them, were, in general, calculated to enlighten their minds upon the great subject of salvation; and, under the heavenly and subduing influence of the Divine Spirit, to render them truly and practically pious, in the gospel sense of that expression, that I was gratified to hear you had been requested to give them to the public; a request I sincerely hope you will not fail to comply with.

I am, Rev. and dear sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOS. C. HORNBLOWER.

REV. A. D. EDDY.

PREFACE.

*To the Youth of the First Church and Society of the City of Newark,
New-Jersey.*

MY YOUNG FRIENDS:—

THE following addresses were prepared and delivered without the most remote expectation that they were to be published. And it is at the repeated solicitation, which I have received from you, as well as from others more advanced in life, that I have consented to this disposal of them.

It is not from any impression of their intrinsic value, or that there is special demand at the present time, for works of this character; but rather that I may meet your wishes, from whom I have received unexpected marks of respect and kindness; and at the same time, if possible, contribute to advance that growing spirit of improvement, which I am happy to find existing among you, and which your numerous arrangements for social intercourse and intellectual elevation are fitted to cherish.

When I reflect what this city has become, under the industry, the enterprise, and the moral character of its youth, and that there are near five thousand of this class among us, most of whom are capable of contributing to advance still more the interest of this community, and who, at the same time, are exposed to the influence of those temptations which are always found increasing in populous towns; I am deeply solicitous to do all in my power, to show my interest in their prosperity, and to contribute, in every possible way, to their intellectual and moral elevation.

It is this alone which gives wise direction to the spirit of enterprise, and renders the resources of pecuniary gain subservient to useful and valuable ends.

This city, undoubtedly, owes its rapid improvement and present elevation, in no small degree, to its labouring population; and its continued advancement and future respectability must, in a great measure, depend upon preserving to this class that respect and attention to useful reading and study, together with the various means of moral influence, with which our age abounds.

It is not from the occupations of men that the invidious distinctions of life arise, but from the diversity of intellectual and moral qualities which are exhibited. If the employment in which we are en-

gaged is useful, and contributes to the good of society, nothing can disgrace us but ignorance or moral delinquency. If the great body of the people are educated, and moral, no force of wealth, no heraldry of family, and no corruption of party, can throw those into favour and power, who are ignorant, debased, and intriguing.

And there is no occupation, which is not in itself wrong and disgraceful, from which men may not rise by the force of intellect, education, and morality, to stations of commanding and honourable influence.

The facilities for improvement and elevation are so multiplied in this country, and, at the same time, the number of youth who fail to improve them, is so great, that it becomes a question of deep interest with all, what can be done to secure a more general attention to those subjects which contribute to success in life ?

To one who has become familiar with the history of youth, and specially with that of young men, it requires no reasoning, and no evidence, with which he is not possessed, to show that a large proportion of those, whose early prospects were flattering, fail of meeting the expectations of their friends, and in vast numbers are altogether lost and abandoned.

The records of ruined youth are crowded, and there are but few domestic circles, which some pain-

ful event has not invaded, if not from which some victim has been torn.

The fairest prospects have been blasted ; the highest hopes ruined ; the most ample fortunes wasted, and the loftiest minds prostrated and lost. Indeed, such has long been the character of our country, and the peculiarity of the temptations to which our youth are exposed, that to great success in human pursuits, where moral character was not above all other possessions valued, speedy and entire prostration has almost uniformly succeeded ; so that our history is but the record of rapid changes, and of sudden successions. The heirs of poverty become affluent parents ; while the offspring of the rich die poor.

An examination, though made to a very limited extent, may teach a melancholy lesson on this subject, and show the demand for efforts, to create additional and stronger securities to the safety and virtue of the young.

Twelve young men were associated and engaged in different pursuits in the same place. A few years since, but two remained—one was closing the eyes of the other. The solitary survivor, standing alone over the graves of his associates, became alarmed, and disclosed the course of their indulgence, and the cause of their disgrace and early death.

Fifteen other young men entered together upon the active duties of life, with flattering prospects, of whom, twelve have already died in disgrace, and the remaining three are fast following in their steps.

From an examination respecting labourers in four different kinds of business, the following is the result as to their character and success. Out of one hundred and fifty engaged in the same occupation, only thirty maintain a respectable character, the remaining are mostly dead or abandoned. Two-thirds of all engaged in another branch of business became in a few years dissolute and abandoned. In another, three-fourths were immoral and ruined; and, in still another branch of labour, out of thirty-four young men, only eight preserved habits of sobriety, and escaped early disgrace and death.

A continued investigation through all the departments of labour, might not give relief to the painfulness of this picture. And to one familiar with the history of young men of literary pursuits, and looking forward to the honours of professional life, the same melancholy result presents itself. No one, who has not pursued the examination, can form any idea of the failure and utter ruin which have crowded in the history of our youth. We are interested in the living, and soon forget the dead. We are drawn into society by the moral and industrious, the intelligent and pious, and seldom witness

the multitudes who are destitute of manliness and virtue, and who move in crowds through darkness and degradation, to the land of forgetfulness and silence.

It may not be impossible that our free and equalizing institutions, with all the advantages which they afford, are easily perverted and made to subserve the cause of immorality. Freedom and equality in civil rights, where the rich, educated, and virtuous in many respects, must come upon a level with the poor, the ignorant, the vicious; and who, in relation to the interests of the state have an equal voice with them, may tend, when misunderstood and abused, to create other and mistaken impressions of equality, and give to the ignorant and abandoned, that envy and arrogance which are fatal to reformation and success in life, and which contribute to constantly increasing degradation.

We cannot disguise the fact, that there are causes maturing, if not already in gloomy progress in our country, of the same character as those which preceded the Reign of Terror, and the horrors of the French Revolution. The agrarian spirit—the leveling principle—the restless, radical, and ultra movements, so fast maturing the fruits of fanaticism, are no doubtful premonitions of scenes forbidding and fatal to our peace and happiness.

It is important to secure contentedness and respectability to the labouring classes. This can be

done by the improvement of mind, and by moral culture. It is equally desirable to invest the character of literary and professional men with the charms of intellectual integrity, and the still higher adornments of religious worth. And when to our commercial and mercantile population shall be generally imparted a love of letters, and a rigid adherence to the precepts of the gospel, in the various transactions of life, then, and not till then, shall we expect that change in society which is now demanded, and that security to the rising generation, which is so devoutly desired.

The topics of consideration, which I have presented in the following addresses, are such as I have found to be most important, and as demanding attention, from my own observation for the last twenty years.

Those traits of youthful character which I have suggested, the dangers and delinquencies to which I have referred, as most injurious to reputation and the good order of society, are such as have presented themselves to my knowledge, as I have been called to mingle in the active scenes of life. And I am more and more persuaded that the failures, misfortunes, and disgrace which we witness, might have been saved by wise and judicious habits in early life.

Without a more elevated standard of morals among our youth, and more successful means of

intellectual and moral culture, many of you may be disappointed as to success in life, if not as to the prospect of ultimate and eternal good.

With the hope and earnest prayer of exciting among you continued, and increasing interest on these important subjects, I commit the following pages to your consideration, and assure you of my grateful and affectionate regard.

A. D. EDDY.

Newark, *April*, 1836.

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DUTIES OF THE YOUNG.

CHAPTER I.

In what true virtue consists.—What is essential to its attainment.—The interesting character and influence of the young.—Knowledge which it is important for them to gain.

ON an evening of extraordinary interest, when the Saviour of the world was celebrating, with his disciples, the most impressive festival of Israel, that which prefigured his own mediation and the mercies of God in our redemption, he inculcated, by his own example, the spirit of charity and holy obedience: Saying; *If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them.* Obedience to the divine precepts, is the duty and the moral dignity of man; and it is from the divine precepts alone, that we learn the securities of virtue and the value of holiness.

In the great subject of human duty, there are three things which are presented for our consideration—*Ourselves*, OUR FELLOW MEN, and OUR GOD. A proper regard for each, constitutes the whole circle of human duty, and presents the fairest specimen of human excellence. There are some men, who, professedly, to honour God, would annihilate all private considerations. There are others, who, with apparent benevolence to man, seem to suspend

all private considerations, and even all regard for God, in the more direct service of his cause, and make the honour of a public benefactor, stand in higher relief and more engaging charms than private piety or holy devotedness to God. There may be others still, so engaged in the culture of private piety, so engrossed in secluded devotion, that they almost forget that God or the world has any claims upon them for open and active engagedness. The most observing eye may mark a spotless private character, yet useless as to all the demands of this redeemed world, as an unembodied spirit above, uncommissioned on one act of mercy to mankind.

As intelligent, responsible, and immortal beings, we should never forget the Great Author of our existence, nor cease to adore and love him. As a subject of government, and of future retribution, made to feel deeply, to enjoy what is unspeakable, or to endure forever, man should never forget himself as a portion of the vast intelligent creation: and thrown into existence with countless crowds, like himself, whose wants, sympathies, pleasure, and honour, are bound to his own, by the necessities of life, he must not overlook the duties which he owes to his fellow men, across whose broad and countless crowds are thrown influences mutual and reciprocal, amazing and innumerable. A proper regard for our Creator, our fellow men, and ourselves, constitutes true virtue.

These leading and essential principles of character, developed as they are, through the whole registry of life, are subjects which should pre-eminently command the attention of the young.

The wise and benevolent of every age have regarded ~~this portion of~~ the community with peculiar interest, and they should be so regarded by all. There is no great revolution, however splendid and useful, or disgraceful and ruinous, which has not been effected by the nerve of their arm. When ancient institutions were overthrown, their influence was secured and debased. Modern Europe has presented one broad field of blood; on that field her sons were marshalled for conflict and victory. The power of the Turk, that had been strengthening for centuries over the weakened energies of Greece, is broken, only by the resolute and determined spirit of her young Hetaria.

Let our youth be roused; their enthusiasm enkindled, and there is nothing within the reach of human power which they might not accomplish. They have physical force, intellectual energy, and moral fortitude; a resoluteness for effort, which full knowledge of opposing interests, and the discouragements of disappointment, have not yet weakened. They explore and people new continents; subdue the wilderness, and plant the gardens of civilized life. They are the vigour of every enterprise of noble daring. There is no land by them unvisited; no sea untraversed. Already they have planted the cross on heathen shores; ascended the hills of Zion; died amid the tombs of the prophets, and though dead, yet speak.

We have too long undervalued, and our youth have too long undervalued, the power which they hold; or, rather, we have not felt how successively

that power might be made to bear on the subjects of public industry, education, and morals.

The physical and intellectual energies of the young have often been demanded and employed ; but their aid has seldom been called in when moral changes were in view. If we rightly understand the subject, and the spirit of inspiration, this is the very time when their aid should be secured, and their influence exerted. Here, at the same time, they may impart and receive permanent good. As they bring their energies to elevate and sustain public morals, they are strengthened in the principles which they seek to establish. Do we wish to increase the intelligence and confirm the morals of our youth, we should early interest them in the cause of public education and virtue, and bring them to aid directly in its support. If we would have them religious, we should make them, if possible, the very guardians of religious institutions. Thus we touch one of the strongest springs of action ; call into exercise and sustain the moral principles of our youth, and make them feel that the cause of intelligence, morality, and religion is their own.

Considering the age and the country in which we live, too much interest cannot be thrown around this portion of the community ; nor can too much labour be expended, to prepare them for the high destiny that awaits them. To them we would say, you cannot feel too deeply the responsibility of your station, and the claims of society upon you ; nor can you prize too highly the vast resources which God opens before you : while the dearest interests of a world are intrusted to your hands, you are in-

vited to become the sons and daughters of the Lord ; the heirs of his eternal kingdom. The labours and qualifications necessary to meet this responsibility, to discharge the duties of life, and to secure the great end of your creation, are subjects of infinite importance.

Knowledge of our character and relations is essential to a virtuous life. Ignorance is often a crime, and always a misfortune. Yet, on those great subjects, where nature in her broad and bright volume opens to instruct us, there is no ignorance but what carries with it the charge and fearful consequence of moral delinquency ; and they who have the clearer light of inspired truth, have stronger claims urged upon them, and must incur the most solemn responsibility. Such is human nature, that duty is forgotten, and conscious obligation to himself, his kindred, and his God, is gone from man, where the gospel is unknown, and duty is learned but slowly, even from the Bible, and when learned, and all the precepts of the Son of God are preached, still may be found in his cold and frozen bosom the principles of determined disobedience. All his knowledge of duty makes him hate it more, and while it swells his privileges and his obligations, it may only increase the measure of his guilt, and deepen the anguish of his soul forever. But for the degeneracy of man, his knowledge would be his honour and happiness ; but now, knowledge is not virtue nor religion. To spirits not on probation, knowledge is but a heavier curse, and knowledge of duty is valuable to us, only for the good it tells us how to gain ; and though embodying motives of unearthly force, to excite and urge to

action, it leaves man still free, and, in his freedom, he may, and often does, resist the whole, and close his dark and dying eye against a flood of heavenly light.

Notwithstanding the perversion of privileges and the abuse of mercies, a knowledge of the gospel which presents them, is essential to the right performance of duty. Here are lessons of instruction so extensive, so perfect, that in each department of life, every step is marked with unerring precision, and when followed as our divine Exemplar requires, a reflection of his own excellence and purity appears; virtue and religion arise, pleasurable in possession, and profitable as the tie that binds moral intelligence, in the sweet sympathies of sanctified affection, and the strength of acknowledged obligation. Such are your natures, and your associations, that there can be no rest, but eternal wakefulness of moral action and re-action, the conferring of influence and the reflection of feeling. Moral existence is made for action, and is safe and happy, only as it moves on in its destined course of light and harmony, with kindred beings of moral excellence. It is the nightly conviction, that a day is lost, that makes your pillow weary, and your bed forbidding: and the morning, that smiles in all the loveliness of May, to you, is dreary as the night of winter, when you anticipate nothing worthy to be done. The darkness of the night of death, settles in eternal gloom on souls whose day of life is lost, and hell is hopeless in unmingled endurance, from reflection on probation wasted, *While blessed are the dead who die in*

the Lord ; and heaven is happy as it is holy, from the undying remembrance of earthly fidelity.

Awake to the consciousness of your existence, it becomes your duty to inquire into all those relations, privileges, and duties, which arise from your origin, your present state, and future destiny. These throw around you an amazing interest. I have already intimated that the symmetry and value of virtue and religion, do not allow us to overlook any branch of human duty. Neither ourselves, the interests of our fellow men, nor the glory of God, are at any time to be disregarded. The design of the present work, is, to consider the duties which the youthful members of the community owe to themselves and to others, as the associated subjects of a moral government, each bound to honour the Being who made him.

CHAPTER II.

Personal Responsibilities, or duties, which the young owe themselves.—
 1. Self-Respect.—2. Self-Preservation.—3. Personal Reputation.—
 Veracity.—Regard for the Reputation of others.—Slander.—Offi-
 ciousness.—Abused Confidence.

IN calling you to a review of your *duties*, I would not have you unmindful of your degeneracy, yet I would have you feel, that, though in ruins, you stand forth as the wreck of no common creation ; you are intelligent, moral, and responsible still, and capable of restoration to a glory unequalled by man in innocence, or angels unfallen. God gave infinite value to man, by the impress of his own image ; he spoke of his still higher value when redeemed, while all the movements of this world, and the revealed realities of eternity, stamp with infinite worth your responsible immortality. No order of beings has created in heaven and on earth such amazing interest as the race of man ; and each one of you forms a constituent part of that race for whom this interest is felt, and each one of you is a partaker of that responsibility which it imposes. And if God never has, and never will overlook you, amidst the vast varieties of being ; if he numbers the hairs of your head, and watches the moments of your rest, well does it become you to regard your being, your relations, and your high responsibility.

What are the DUTIES which you owe YOURSELF ?

1. SELF-RESPECT. By *self-respect* I do not mean pride, nor the aspirations of ambition, nor any thing

kindred to these unlovely passions. Nor do I mean, that you should regard yourself as essential to the honour of the world, or the glory of God : but I do mean, that you should look upon those powers which God has given you, and upon those influences which arise from the character and circumstances of your life, and regard all these as clothing you with value to yourself, and with value to others ; viewing yourself as susceptible of ennobling influences, and capable of imparting such influences to others ; and *as such*, not to permit your nature to be debased, nor your influence to be vitiated. As youth, you should respect yourselves, not so much for what you are, as for what you may become, under the wise and gracious care of heaven. What expansion of mind you may attain along the track of life, and through ceaseless ages ! What riches of knowledge drink in from infinite wisdom ! What exalted worth and moral excellence receive from the grace of God !

You are, indeed, to have no respect for yourselves, considered in valuation as to personal moral worth ; for, of this, you are destitute : but you are to respect yourselves for those *principles* of moral being, which, united with your rational powers, so distinguish you in the rank of created existence. On these your influence, your usefulness, your happiness depend. Existence, animal and rational, and even unbounded attainments of intellectual worth, without these moral principles, would neither create nor allow the cultivation of piety.

If you have not *self-respect*, those intellectual powers and moral principles will be neglected, waste away their useless and perverted energies ; the ra-

tional and responsible soul will sink, the wreck and ruins of what was created valuable and exalted, the miserable memorial of what might have been re-
 stamped with the image of its Author, and risen on high an eternal testimony of its Author's glory.

Self-respect is not only essential to the improvement of our intellectual and moral powers, the security and culture of virtue and religion, but it is essential towards securing the respect of our fellow men, and preparing the way for valuable influence among them. Mark that man who has no respect for himself, and for your life, you cannot respect him, nor intrust any thing of interest to his care. You know he has or will become the victim of his own unhal-
 lowed passions; a prey to all the crowding and corrupting influences of a fallen world. He may for a time amuse the world, and yet the world despise him, and he early sinks useless and miserable.

Self-respect is the first successful step towards the reformation of injured character. No efforts will avail without this. This is one of the surest pledges of advancement and success in life, and it is one of the strongest barriers of protection which our Creator has thrown around us. Respect yourself, or neither God nor man will respect you. *Respect yourself*, and resolve to secure the respect of the wise and good; and as you advance in years, you will rise in life, find your associations with the intelligent and virtuous, and be stimulated to constant effort for increased worth and usefulness.

2. SELF-PRESERVATION is *an imperious duty that rests upon you.*

By this I do not mean simply, that you are bound

to preserve your safety, health, and life. *Self-preservation* I extend far beyond this. Man is complex in his nature, and complex in his character; and by self-preservation, I mean a sacred regard to all his powers and faculties, physical and moral, on which his good and the design of his existence depends.

On *self-preservation*, every thing rests, which stands connected with the value and responsibility of probation. There is something more meant than the simple pleasure of existence and instinctive love of being, when we say it is man's duty to preserve his life; for that life stands connected with reason and moral feeling, and the interests of others, while infinite and endless results are suspended on its continuance and improvement.

The duty here presented, which you owe yourself, is comprehensive, and embraces, *First*, the duty of preserving *life*.

Second, the duty of preserving *health*. Upon this, much of the value and pleasure of life depend. Neglect this, and you impair reason, relax energy, and early destroy life itself. When God has extended the number of our years to threescore and ten, the millions who are swept so early to eternity, will present a fearful array of *self-destroyers* at the judgment day. Here it becomes our duty, to suppress inordinate desire, and quench the fire of youthful passions; to avoid excessive and exhausting labours, beyond what usefulness and duty demand; to guard against habits of living, that impair native energies, cloud the mind, and vitiate moral sensibility. We must avoid such society, intercourse, and amusement; recreation and study,

and I will add, religious services, as entrench on hours which God has given for rest, and which our nature demands ; with all those extravagancies and exposures which so early spread paleness, and weakness, and disease over such multitudes of our youth, and which are peopling the grave with their millions of victims every year.

3. *Self-preservation* implies the duty of securing and preserving your *liberty*. I mean not freedom from chains, tyranny, oppression, and servitude alone, but I mean also exemption from those oppressive influences, which circumscribe and control the free use of those principles which were made for freedom of action. It is your duty to stand aloof and free from those shackles that fetter the energies of the mind, and circumscribe the independence of thought. Not that you are to throw off respect for established principles of mental investigation and research, nor with misguided impressions of intellectual freedom, falsely called "free inquiry," refuse to acknowledge your obligation to superior wisdom, and to walk by the light of higher intelligence. This is not liberty, it is not manliness ; it is presumption, licentiousness of thought and feeling, the mark of madness and folly.

By *liberty*, I also mean freedom from that foreign influence which forbids your acting from convictions of duty. There are those, over whom unhallowed example, public opinion, and fear of the world, are more powerful than the voice of reason and of conscience, combined with the force of moral obligation. They have no mind of their own, they have no

liberty ; they are often the slaves of the vain and abandoned.

By *liberty*, is implied, also, exemption from those slavish habits of life which give the desire of indulgence a governing influence, and often ultimately bind their subjects in chains of vice and misery. Exemption, too, from those powers of sin, satan, and the world, which so control reason and conscience, and war against the force of truth and the grace of God. It implies that freedom from selfishness and sin, which shall enable you to reflect upon God, a dying hour, and the opening scenes of eternity.

“ He is the freeman, whom the truth makes free :
 Who first of all the bands of satan breaks ;
 Who breaks the bands of sin ; and for his soul,
 In spite of fools, consulteth *seriously* ;
 In spite of fashion, perseveres in good ;
 In spite of wrath or poverty, upright ;
 Who does as reason, not as fancy, bids ;
 Who hears temptation sing, and yet turns not
 Aside ; sees sin bedeck her flowery bed,
 And yet will not go up ; feels at his heart
 The sword unsheathed, yet will not sell the truth ;
 Who, finally, in strong integrity
 Of soul, midst want, or riches, or disgrace,
 Uplifted calmly sits, and hears the waves
 Of stormy folly breaking at his feet ;
 Now shrill with praise, now hoarse with foul uproar,
 And both despised sincerely ; seeking this
 Alone—the approbation of his God,
 Which still, with conscience, witnesses his peace.
 This, this is freedom, such as angels use,
 And kindred to the liberty of God,
 First born of virtue ! Daughter of the skies !
 The man, the state in whom she rules is free ;
 All else are slaves of satan, sin, and death.”

III. *It is your Duty to Regard your Reputation.*

1. And as an essential element of a valuable reputation, I would place, *first*, VERACITY, a sacred regard for *truth*. “*Dice veritatem semper et exacte,*” *speaking the truth always and exactly*, is a maxim which I would have deeply engraven on the heart. I am not speaking of the influence of falsehood on society at large, but of its influence on private, personal reputation. Let the impression be made, that your character for *truth* is suspicious, and you sustain an incalculable loss. Let the charge become fixed upon you, the charge of falsehood, of easy deviation from strict veracity, of exaggerating, of miscolouring reports; I say, let this charge be fixed upon you, and you are ruined. Nothing but full confession of conscious guilt and shame, with protracted reformation, can restore you to confidence. And what is more enviable than an unsullied reputation for truth? In the varied departments of life, with all the accumulating relations and cares of this world, that man, who stands forth in unimpeached and unimpeachable veracity, is a monument of moral worth, and his reputation is more than wealth and honour. I know that there is often variation from strict veracity, where the subjects are more private, unimportant, and momentary, which may be called mere wanderings or embellishments of description. But that person who will transcend the bounds of strict veracity, at one time, will do it again and again; if he will do it on one subject of trifling character, he will, of course, do it on those of more importance, where the temptation becomes increased. If in description of facts he will exaggerate, he will

do so in other cases—he has no character remaining for truth and veracity—“*Speak the truth always and exactly.*” I would write it on my Bible, and read it daily : write it on your hearts, that it may never be forgotten.

2. The next element of a valuable reputation is *respect* for the reputation of others, which implies a character free from the spirit and habit of detraction. There is deeply embedded in our fallen nature, a tendency to slander, and to this, as youth, you are peculiarly exposed. It arises from native selfishness, and a consequent tendency to envy and rivalry. As distinction and possession, above what want demands, are chiefly relative, the more we depress others the more comparatively we are raised. Thus, this most unlovely, yet common trait of human frailty and dishonour, stands too prominent in the history of our race.

Added to all this, there is often pride of discernment in marking, and a pleasure in reading character, and also the pleasure of imparting information, even in spreading defects of character, which is of no use, but of injury to all. Thus, slander has its origin and secures its currency. But I am not speaking of its effect on others, but of the injury that falls on him who gives it rise and circulation. Do this, and your *reputation* is gone. You are feared, shunned, and despised, and this, too, in the midst of your own fraternity. There is no character more unlovely.

Nor is this all ; there is something in human nature that shows the poisonous influence of the spirit of detraction as it re-acts upon its author. The

Bible, that so brightly reveals human nature, thus writes it, "*The lying tongue hateth him that suffereth thereby.*" This is the principle. You will hate the man that you have slandered—and why? because he is the living monument of your guilt. You have injured him, and that is the reason why you will hate him, and you will seek more defects in his character to sustain your charge. Thus, this cruel and guilty habit throws poison into your own soul, and weaves into your character the elements of misery, and clouds your reputation in the eyes of the world.

Allied to the subject before us, and as injurious to the reputation I would have you to enjoy, is *officiousness in the affairs of others*, which is often a rude intrusion into the hallowed retirement of private life. I will not, however, speak of its cruel inroad on domestic peace and tranquillity; how often it disturbs and destroys the repose of the sick and infirm, of whose weakness and trials you are neither able nor appointed to judge. I will not speak of its influence on the private occupations of men, in impairing credit and abating that confidence which is due them; nor of those unhappy and unholy feelings of suspicion and jealousy, which are aroused and thrown through the public; all these belong to another place. I speak of its influence on your own private reputation. What is more harassing to your own hearts than to be prying into the secrets of others? Have you not troubles enough of your own without rolling on your arm the burden of others? Why should you perplex your own mind by winding your way into the perplexities of others? Until they ask your sympathy, your knowledge,

your advice, it will be wise for you to come not within their secrets.

An officious inquiry into the affairs of others is calculated to create the spirit and the habit of censoriousness and detraction. You can never *officiously* inquire into the private arrangement of others, without impairing reputation and forfeiting friendship.

As a general rule, I would say, know nothing, inquire not at all, say nothing about the private, domestic, or the more restricted professional habits of men, where you have no personal responsibility; and even where you have, be cautious how this responsibility is met, lest you impair your own reputation. *Be not busy bodies in other men's matters*, was a wise remark, written for your instruction in the word of God.

I have not been speaking of a habit which has no existence. It prevails every where; you are all exposed to it; and you know it is charged upon us as a national characteristic. Possess this trait of character, and you are an unwelcome visitor at every house. You are dreaded by all. No one feels safe from the inspection of your eye, and the profuse disclosure of your lips; and what a reputation! You soon throw yourself on an eternal quarantine, from the respect and confidence of all who respect themselves, and wish to guard their private interests from the public gaze. Unless you are the guardians of the manners and habits of more private life, or those manners and habits bear directly on the public morals, it would be wise for you to know nothing about them; and even when they do, it will

be wise for you to inquire, how shall that influence be corrected, and whose duty does it become to arrest it? I have extended my remarks upon this point, which, though it may now seem unimportant to you, is connected with many endeared interests, and by it much of private character and friendship is often sacrificed forever.

There is another subject which I wish to present, and it is not that of officiousness, nor of slander, and yet it is somewhat allied to both. It is the disposition and habit of seizing the remarks of free and unsuspecting conversation; throwing them into new forms, and, under the profession of friendship, perhaps the requirement of secrecy, carrying them to persons and families of whom these free and unsuspecting observations were made. There is, and always will be, too much freedom of observation and remarks in the society of men, even respecting their own friends. We are all defective, and liable to err; and when we must all form our own opinion, and with more or less freedom express it, there is great forbearance demanded in social life, as well as much watchfulness as to what we say. With all our clashing opinions and conduct, we cannot expect that all will see and feel alike, and it is natural to make the constantly recurring events, habits, and manners of a social community, subjects of social review; perhaps of free, and sometimes severe remark. A habit which is by no means to be commended, in its indiscriminate indulgence, yet which will, from the nature of society, to some extent exist. The habit I have in view, is the abuse of this freedom of remark, criticism, perhaps stricture, or even direct

censure of personal character and conduct, by carrying it home to the individual concerned. This is generally done in testimony of friendship, as an expression of interest in our behalf, to let us know how careful our informants have been of our reputation; and generally they will tell us how they supported us when impeached, when, perhaps, they were the very persons to present us as subjects of censure; and thus they will early seize the opportunity to secure our minds in their favour, at the expense, perhaps, of our best friends, who spoke of us freely, but with the kindest feelings, and in language, too, from its character and connexions, wholly diverse from the shade it assumes in coming from its officious depository. By this habit you will be regarded with distrust, and soon become an unsafe and suspicious witness of ordinary conversation. You take upon yourself the hazardous responsibility of being the interpreter and reporter of free and unsuspecting intercourse; you easily form the habit of officious tattling, and busy yourself with the private feelings of others, which serve only to harass your own. And you gain no esteem, no confidence, no friendship, from those to whom you carry these free and unguarded expressions. You will be regarded, not as a friendly messenger of welcome and of profitable intelligence, but it will be said at once, that if you will bring such information you will also carry back the same, if you have it in your power. Thus you lose the confidence you vainly sought to gain, and of all the losers of each and every party, you lose the most. I had rather speak with injudicious freedom, or have my name

presented with censure, than to be the messenger that bears it. Whatever be that freedom of remark or censure, be it mere stricture or downright defamation, who wishes to be the messenger of petty or malignant slander? Both would fall harmless and die, were it not for pretended friends to emblazon it abroad, and harrow up suspicion, unholy and revengeful passion, in the bosom, that had been calm and undisturbed without it. We are not perfect, and we should not expect universal commendation. This you must not anticipate. But this I would have you desire, to regard all mankind as your friends, and cherish no suspicion of the sincerity of that friendship. This I would strongly desire; and never wish to have poured into my ear, to pain my heart and check the freedom of my intercourse and usefulness, whatever may have been said or done in an unguarded moment, or what may have been thought or expressed of me, perhaps with the kindest feelings, if not of general approbation and esteem. I would say, then, know all men as friends, and be an unsuspecting friend of all; and I would say, too, with feeling, and would enforce it on your consideration, never repeat to others what you have heard against them,

CHAPTER III.

Personal obligation or duties, which the young owe themselves, continued.—Industry essential to respectability and virtue.—Temperance.—Freedom from Profaneness and Vulgarity.—Practical Benevolence.—Respect for Religion, and reverence for the Bible.

The habit of industrious application to some useful employment, is essential to a valuable reputation. The duty of securing such a reputation is still further to be urged upon you. The requirement of industry, came not so much as a curse, as to render the curse tolerable. Industry, if it may not be classed among the virtues, is, nevertheless, one of the most effectual preservatives of virtue, contentedness, health, and prosperity: while idleness, is the ruin of all earthly enjoyment. An idle man has no enjoyment, but as he sleeps like the brute and buries in oblivion the thought of useless existence. Nothing presents more clear and accumulating evidence of complicated mischief, suspicion, and rapid ruin of character, than the want of useful employment; no leading and commanding object of interest and action to arouse, stimulate, and ennoble the physical and moral powers of man. Wickedness may command respect from the wisdom of its plans, and the energy of its action, and become fearfully sublime in the wide range of its desolation; but he that is unemployed, unengaged in some active pursuit, in the eyes of all men, must be despised. I would say to every youth, whatever may be your resources,

and whatever your prospects, have something useful to do, and always be engaged with energy. To be respected, be industrious.

In this connexion, I would mention, as an essential element of a valuable reputation, *personal dignity*. Avoid a trifling, childish character. A youth given to folly degrades his reason, and prostrates his mind; and while he may amuse the thoughtless and the vain, he forfeits the respect of the wise and the good. There are, indeed, principles of pleasurable emotion in the soul, and there is a cheerfulness that adorns the purest walks of christian virtue; while the loud laugh, levity, and trifling, impairs the reputation of any youth for wisdom and piety, and is inconsistent with that decorum which belongs to educated and refined society. There is a dignity of deportment, that good sense, education, refinement, and true religion demand; and he outrages all, who carries into his youth and advancing years, that trifling and levity that belongs only to his childhood.

Habits of Temperance are essential to a *valuable reputation*. To appeal to such as are already abandoned to the indulgence of intemperate desires, would generally be in vain. They have already lost respect for themselves, and become indifferent to the opinion of others. I would impress on your minds the value of strict temperance not only, but the duty of interest and co-operation in the cause of reform. In this day of light, of bold and expansive plans for the universal remedy of intemperance, to stand neutral, is extremely suspicious; to look with cold indifference is doubly so; to question the policy

and to frown on the efforts of others ; to indulge at all in habits leading on this most fatal scourge, fixes a reputation which no intelligent and virtuous youth can be willing to bear. To trifle with this subject, is to trifle with misery in its most appalling forms, and with death in its widest desolation ; and presents a fearful prospect of ultimately falling a victim to its ravages. You ought not, and you cannot, be insensible to the claims of the world upon you ; and neither would we have you insensible to the honour you may gain by becoming the guardians of its prosperity. Before you, are your infirm and dying fathers ; behind you, is rising an infant generation : while you are to lay the one in the grave, you are to form the character and guide the footsteps of the other. The *state*, with its heavy burdens, is rolled upon your arm, and on your shoulders the *church* rests the *ark* of her precious covenants. Such is your situation, and such your influence, that you may, with habits of sobriety and hearts of benevolence, revolutionize and remodel the world. Copying the virtues of your fathers, enlightened and blessed of heaven, you may suspend the darkness and degradation of your race, and conduct the next generation to all that is lovely and exalted. Deny not yourselves the honourable reputation which you may acquire, by becoming the defence of your country, from the strongest and most insidious of her foes. While on one side is sinking away the debased, abandoned, and lost ; on the other, rising an infant generation, in freshness and beauty, countless as the stars, let the great army of our youth rise between, *a rock of salvation.*

And in this connexion, allow me to remind you of the influence of *profaneness*, in the destruction of character. I have but to mention this, and both the christian and the gentleman will shrink from the reputation it must give. Let it be remembered by every youth, one word of profaneness from your lips, and your reputation is tarnished, and so far you link yourself with degradation and guilt. A profane man is an object of suspicion and dread. A profane youth, a candidate for ruin.

Associated with profaneness, there is a species of *vulgar wit, of gross and unchaste remark*, common to places of public resort, and too often found in the more private walks of life. It leads to associations impure and debasing. To secure a chaste and untarnished reputation, let your conversation and your conduct be marked with purity. Avoid those reflections and associations; the indulgence of romance and reading which so often discloses and conducts to those scenes, on which youthful, above all, female delicacy, should never look, and cannot look and remain unsullied.

As another security of a valuable reputation, *cultivate the spirit and lead the life of practical benevolence*. I mean that charity which loves, and cannot but be loved; that blesses, and is doubly blessed. A selfish, contracted, avaricious disposition, with no public benevolence of action, where God has given the ability, such a character is placed with thieves, drunkards, and murderers, in the Bible, and stamped with meanness and disgrace by public sentiment universally. Nature, in her rich and unbounded profusion, preaches benevolence, and man,

in the infinite multiplicity of his wants, demands it: and he who has not the spirit and the habits of benevolence, has not and cannot gain that reputation which all must prize and should desire. A man of unyielding avarice, whose hoarded wealth no pressing want can gain, whatever he may be besides, has a most unlovely character in the eyes of all men; while he whose known benevolence leads every solicitor of charity to his door, enjoys a reputation worth more than gold, and a pleasure pure and more ennobling than wealth can buy.

“Of all God made upright,
And in their nostrils breathed a living soul,
Most fallen, most prone, most earthly, most debased,
Of all that sold eternity for Time,
None bargained on so easy terms with Death.
Illustrious fool! nay, most inhuman wretch!
He sat among his bags, and with a look
Which hell might be ashamed of, drove the poor
Away unalmsed, and midst abundance died,
Sorest of evils! died of utter want.”

The influence of education and intelligence will be reserved for future consideration.

Respect for religion and reverence for the Bible, are *pre-eminently essential to a valuable reputation.* There is often a want of reverence for the Bible and the scenes there developed, among those of mature years, more often among the young, at which good sense and piety revolt. Nothing but atheism can respect that man who does not respect and reverence the word of God. And shall it ever be said, that while the Mussulman will bind the Koran to his bosom, and the Pagan press the Shaster to his bosom, the Christian, and he who in Christian lands

was born, shall trifle with the gospel of his Saviour, or sport with the sublime and awful teachings of his God and judge?

“Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!
Star of eternity! the only star
By which the bark of man can navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely.”

Your reverence for the Bible should be followed with *respect* for that solemn subject of personal interest, which it so affectionately presses upon you. Let your character be what it may, from your heart you despise the man who dare oppose and ridicule the subject of true religion. He may be your associate, you may even encourage his depravity, yet you despise him still. There is nothing which so sinks the man in public and in private estimation, as disrespect or opposition to the subject of genuine piety. With such a character, we expect the most unlovely features to be blended. There is too much in consistent piety, that ennobles and commands the admiration of the world, to allow reproach to be cast upon it with safety. Nor is this all; you are a rational and responsible being, and here are found those vast and enduring subjects that stand connected with your rational and responsible immortality. And can you be wise and wisely respected, with no personal regard for the Being that made you, the *object* of your creation, and the endless realities which lie before you? Neglect these, and are you wise? Leave these neglected, and are you not strangely deranged? Will you not bear the Charge, and justly too, of folly, of madness, and of

crime? What will man, angels, and God, say of you? To have lived and lost the great *object* of life, and forfeited eternal glory! Is it wise, is it safe, is it honourable? With such a reputation would you wish to live? With such a character would you die? With such a character can you endure the coming scenes of the judgment and its endless issues?

CHAPTER IV.

Personal obligation, or Duties which the Young owe themselves, continued.—1. To seek and secure happiness in the way prescribed by infinite wisdom.—2. To become acquainted with truth and duty, and to have moral and religious principles established.—3. To be constantly improving.—4. To avoid an excessive desire for wealth.—5. To avoid extravagance and a restless desire for society.

It has been remarked, that man is the maker of his own fortune. And while the Pagan refers his failure and affliction to the influence of blind fatality, the Christian may attribute too much to the arrangement of Providence, and refer the failure of his hopes and the wasting of his happiness to the sovereign pleasure of God, rather than to his own improvidence. Under this impression he may seek, as he imagines, pious resignation, rather than renew his exertions to repair his hopes and restore his loss. While it is the dictate, both of reason and religion, to recognise the overruling providence of God, in all the events of life, it is our imperious duty, to make that life subservient to the great ends for which it was given. This is no more our duty than it is our happiness. There are many who so entirely mistake both the nature and the claims of religion, that they would make it to consist in painful austerities and in reluctant sacrifices. But if we have rightly judged, virtue and religion are designed to make us happy, not only in the hopes of future blessedness which it imparts, but also in the new as-

pect and value which are given to all the possessions and relations of life.

“ Religion does not censure or exclude
 Unnumbered pleasures, harmlessly pursued,
 To study, culture, and with artful toil,
 To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil ;
 To give dissimilar, yet fruitful lands
 The grain, or herb, or plant, that each demands ;
 To cherish virtue in an humble state,
 And share the joys your bounty may create ;
 To mark the matchless workings of the p^{ow}’r,
 That shuts within its seed the future flow’r ;
 * * * * *
 To teach the canvas innocent deceit,
 Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet.
 These, these are arts pursu’d without a crime,
 That leave no stain upon the wing of Time.”

The Bible, most assuredly, urges virtue and holiness upon us, by this strong motive, the love of personal enjoyment ; and I have no hesitation in urging upon you the duty of regarding *your individual happiness*. It is an imperious duty which you owe yourself. The principles of our nature exhibit peculiar susceptibilities for enjoyment and undying aspirations for its attainment ; while God has presented objects innumerable to impart pleasurable emotions to every faculty of our being. He would seem to court and brighten the eye by the ten thousand beauties thrown around us : charm and enchain the ear by unnumbered sounds of sweetest melody, and in the rich profusion of his bounty, meet and satisfy each earthly want, and give *pleasure* in meeting its necessity. It would appear that God had consulted man’s happiness in every thing, and especially in those unnumbered sympathies of soul, that fit him

for social life and the employment of an intelligent being. If your Creator, in nature, in providence, and in grace, would make sensitive creation happy, and in this happiness reflect his own glory; it is your privilege and duty to elevate and refine your pleasures, in strict accordance with the economy and providence of God. Your enjoyment in this world lies, indeed, within prescribed bounds, for it is essential to your own happiness, that you secure the pleasure of others. Happiness here, has also its prescribed methods of attainment, and it is your duty and your privilege to seek and secure its advancement, in the way and within the limits prescribed by infinite wisdom; and in fact, the misery of man lies in seeking pleasure in methods vain and forbidden, and beyond those bounds where pleasure never lies. It is your misery and your guilt, that you close those ten thousand avenues of pleasurable emotion which God has formed and furnished with a rich supply for innocent indulgence.

If God would make you happy, it is a duty you owe both to him and to yourself, to reap rich and permanent enjoyment. Self-love is not selfishness, and it will be no impeachment of the benevolence of piety, that man in his purest and holiest state loved and sought enjoyment. And I would have you feel that the burdens beneath which you groan, and the anxieties of your hearts reflect upon the purity of your character, as well as upon the benevolence of God. You owe it to him—you owe it to yourself, to tread in those paths which are pleasantness and peace. I would impress upon you the duty of resolving on being *happy*—even here; amid all the clouds and storms of life, *resolve to be happy*, not

in cold indifference to sorrow, in philosophic apathy, but in virtuous living, in benevolent desires, in calm submission to the will of God, and in the hope of that rest which remaineth for his people. Let the anxieties of life, the pressure of its cares, the deep gloom that may settle upon your heart, and the bondage of fear, all remind you of error and of guilt. Let it turn your eye and your footsteps back to God, and bind your heart to him, in keeping whose commandments there is great reward. Think not that you are offending God, in securing happiness, in that path his wisdom points out before you. It is your duty. And if miserable here, and lost hereafter, you are self-injured and self-destroyed.

Another duty which you owe yourself, is to become acquainted with truth and your relative obligations; to have your moral and religious principles fixed, and your rules of action settled. There is, indeed, a proper and laudable freedom of mind, holding ourselves prepared for new impressions of truth and duty; but this is not that mistaken policy, falsely called liberal and rational thinking; but it is what may exist, and does exist with fixed and immutable principles of moral obligation. There are grand and leading principles of truth upon which all useful investigation depends. Ultimate facts, facts which we find existing and original; the data upon which we plant our feet; from which we start in all our useful investigations. These are what I mean by principles of immutable truth and duty. On these you should not be wavering and unsettled, but firm and immoveable. Why do you ask? Because they are not subjects of human decision; not of reasoning, but of faith, of implicit confidence. As

an intelligent and moral being, much more as a sinner, you are always in danger of error and obliquity in life, and as the guardian of your own mind, morals, and habits, it is your duty to secure yourself in the permanent belief of truth, and in the path of unerring rectitude. These are demanded at every step, and you are a debtor to yourself, if you secure them not. These lost, you live in eternal insolvency, and forever charge upon your own stupidity your infinite loss. Fixed principles of truth and duty are the grand preservatives of life, for they are always at hand to settle questions of doubt. To these you may recur, not as to your own opinions, but as to fixed principles, and feel secure. By leaving these unstudied and unsettled, you are thrown unsuspecting, and susceptible on the broad and ever agitated sea of questions and conflict, with nothing to guide and control. And though you may start cheerful and confident, you are soon wrecked and ruined.

There is no necessity for the lamentable diversity of opinion, instability of sentiment, and harassing uncertainties that crowd around you. It all arises from neglecting first and immutable principles. And with the word of God before you, with creation and providence to fortify the divinity of its origin, and the applicability of its precepts, you are false to your own best interests, to your own reputation for judgment and discretion, if you do not become early established in your principles of truth and duty.

It is also your duty to be continually advancing on these fixed principles of truth and moral obligation. Forever active in the character of your being, in

thought and feeling, are you to remain on the same spot, or to travel in the same unbroken circle? Are you not bound to advance, to improve, to drink richer draughts of heavenly wisdom, and lay broader plans for useful action? Will you live to-day, as you have lived; know no more, and do no more? An intelligent and moral being, destined for eternal progression, and make no advancement! Under all the enkindling inspirations of truth, and the imposing march of providence, make no improvement! Is this wise? As a responsible being, is it safe? Is it just to yourself? I ask, not in reference to piety, which demands unceasing progress, and unceasing toil for perfection in righteousness; but I ask in reference to every pursuit in life, proper and profitable for man. Does not duty to yourself demand constant and rapid advancement? Any youth not in the march of improvement, sinks in value, and forfeits that high regard which every man of honourable feeling ought to claim. Think not of settling in the occupation you may have chosen, of gaining your education, of having secured your profession, and then merely to float along with the mass of society. The professed student should never live without application; the professed labourer without industrious toil; the professed christian philanthropist without aspirations and efforts for holiness and an expanded sphere of charitable action. Every man, in that department which he has selected, in justice to himself, is bound to advance and improve. This, is what makes truth so enchanting in its constant developments; brightens and strengthens the energies of life, and renders most sacred the un-

numbered ties of moral obligation which bind us to society and to God. It keeps us from lassitude and torpor of mind and moral feeling; from that sinking, misanthropic wretchedness and barrenness of virtue and spiritual life, which are alike destructive of our happiness here, and of our prospects for the future.

While I would impress upon you the duty of constant engagedness in some valuable pursuit or useful study; the duty of reducing to constant practice the principles of truth and of obligation, *I would at the same time caution you against an excessive desire of becoming rich.* This is the error of our country, and peculiarly the error of our age. It is fearfully arresting our improvement, both in intellect and morals. Wealth is more highly valued and more ardently sought, than mental elevation and moral greatness; and its inordinate desire is the almost entire destruction of personal enjoyment and of social usefulness. Wealth even in its most ample resources, imparts neither mind nor moral goodness. "Riches do not always make rich." Do not flatter yourselves that the restless desire for wealth, is the same as habits of industrious application to useful labour or professional engagements. If you will analyse the passion, you will find that it has its foundation in the pride of the human heart; in the envious spirit of rivalry; in the cruel propensity to rule and oppress. It is a painful passion. You know not now, how it robs life of its sweetest pleasures; the mind, of its repose and profitable reflection; the heart, of its benevolent and pleasurable sensibility:—how it endangers honesty; strengthens envy and

rivalry ; and, at last, brings those miserable passions of *avarice*, whose preyings on the soul are death.

“On its altar is sacrificed ease, peace,
 Truth, faith, integrity ; good conscience, friends,
 Love, charity, benevolence, and all
 The sweet and tender sympathies of life ;
 And to complete the horrid, murderous rite,
 And signalize their folly, men offer up
 Their souls and an eternity of bliss
 To gain them—— what ? an hour of dreaming joy ;
 A feverish hour that hasteth to be done,
 And ends in bitterness of wo——”

It is this passion of which I speak, that is arresting so early the study and improvement of our youth, rendering them restless and impatient, and hurrying them into the active pursuits of life, where are required mental resources and strength of integrity, which all the years of youth should have been employed in acquiring by useful study, by mental and moral discipline ; and which, when acquired, will carry up into every department of life, an influence which is more than wealth ; which will adorn the man of every calling, and which, if directed to that end, will give him, in a country like ours, all the wealth he can rationally desire, and teach him how to employ it wisely. He that *hasteth* to be rich, is not wise. Broad schemes of worldly wealth, too early and injudiciously laid, are filling our world with poverty, crime, and misery. While the *first* and *leading* object of your heart is *wealth*, let me assure you, *my young friend*, your life will not be dignified, virtuous, nor happy.

I would not have you, on the other hand, overlook or undervalue the means of improvement and

usefulness, which the possession of wealth will give you. I would not even check your eager pursuit for worldly gain, when you have become fitted by education and moral character, for its safe and wise direction: I would equally dissuade you from *entire indifference to its attainment*, and from *habits of extravagance in its expenditure*. The pride of show, the splendour of living, the pampering of vitiated passion, are as much the errors of our age, as the ruling and the restless desire of gaining the means of their indulgence: and the history of multitudes may be written in one brief record; a passionate resolution to be rich, splendid ignorance, profligate extravagance, undignified poverty, and a disgraceful end.

While it is your privilege and duty to acquire riches, for the purpose of practical benevolence, to which I have already urged you, it is equally a duty to yourself to suppress that pride of life, and profuse extravagance, which so painfully marks the history of our age. I mean those lavish expenditures, which return no substantial good to you, and which impart no such benefit to others, as will leave you the privilege of pleasurable reflection. A change may await you. Let not the day of misfortune point you back to that wasteful profusion, which hastened on your ruin. Prepare not for those unavailing regrets, and painful reproaches; painful, because just and unavailing. Extravagance may induce all this, and with it, the misery of those habits which demand indulgence, and which your misfortune and bankruptcy deny. Not only so, but you may be doomed to meet the just reproaches of that community on whose earnings you so extra-

vagantly lived ; and pained by *widows' wants*, which you have caused ; and stand at last by all condemned, for want of providence and honesty.

Let this be your principle ; do that ; indulge so far and no farther : so live and so appear, if otherwise consistent, as shall most contribute to success in honest and laudable pursuit, and give you the widest range of influence in doing good. All beyond this, call it extravagance, or what you please, will stand a proof of vanity and pride, and pass to your discredit.

I have but one brief consideration more to lay before you at present, as an imperious duty that you owe yourself. *Avoid a restless desire for society.* Have your hours for retirement, silence, study, and reflection. It was no unwise injunction of a dying father to a profligate son, to spend each day, *one hour, alone.* And it was no unmeaning declaration of Thomas à Kempis to an inquirer :

O, where is peace ? for thou its paths hath trod ?
In poverty, in silence, and with God.

And a greater than he, has said. *Commune with thine own heart and be still.*

“ A soul serene, and equally retir'd
From objects too much dreaded or desir'd,
Safe from the clamors of perverse dispute,
At least, is friendly to *the great pursuit.*”

CHAPTER V.

Personal obligations or duties which the young owe themselves, continued.—1. Respect for public opinion.—What is implied in respect for public opinion.—2. The duty and importance of selecting proper associates.—3. The duty of being prepared, for the vicissitudes of life.

To secure the respect of others, and to be useful in life, you must cherish proper *respect for public opinion*. This is a duty which you owe *yourself*. I here introduce a subject, which is often improperly understood. By respect for public opinion, I do not mean that you should, of necessity, adopt it, and be borne away before it, but that you should have regard to it and act in view of it. Nothing will be more destructive to your influence and usefulness, than to become indifferent to public opinion and to act irrespective of that opinion. Your object, as a member of the vast community, is, or should be, to derive all the good you can, and to impart all that salutary influence which lies within your power. You hear it often said of some—and it is said and heard too, perhaps, with commendation—“they are perfectly indifferent to public opinion—have no regard for what others think or say—they are original characters—have dignity and fortitude enough to stand alone.” I can never hear such remarks without recurring to those two sound maxims, which you all may have met: “He that thinks the world can live without him, is unwise, and he who thinks that he can live without the world,

is a fool." An original character! independent! no respect for the opinions and habits of others! then flee society, retire from the companionship of man; you are wholly unworthy their respect, and worse than useless. You may live on their indulgence, and at their expense, but in no way contribute to the public good.

Do you ask, what is proper respect for public opinion? I reply, it is not necessarily to suppose that public sentiment is correct. It is not blindly to sanction what it would advocate. Nor is it to fall in with public opinion and comply with its long established habits of feeling and action. It is not to court, flatter, and obsequiously caress, each and every department of life. It is not to adopt the maxim of false politeness, and make yourself at home and on a level with every one you meet, and every circle into which you fall.

There is a certain undignified obsequiousness, a condescension to weakness and sin, to gain and enjoy public favour, which good sense and enlightened policy abhor. That this ranges far and wide, and too often influences the conduct of public political men, is too obvious to deny. Over these, scurrility and prostituted sentiment have unlimited control. This is indeed respect for public sentiment, but the contrary of that which I would enjoy.

There is another submission to public sentiment to which I would allude. A disposition to allow public evils to exist, from the fear of arousing popular indignation in attempting their correction.— These evils abound among us; the depraved and abandoned feast and fatten like vampires, on the

blood of virtue, and we make an annual sacrifice to these cannibals, in the ruined habits, blasted fortunes, and lost souls of many a youth that might otherwise have adorned society and blessed the world. This is not respect for public opinion, it is a slavish fear of the influence and malignity of degraded and worthless men, united, perhaps, with the dread of incurring the imputation of becoming the officious conservator of other men's morals and prosperity. Under this false respect for public sentiment, evils are left to grow, and spread, and fasten themselves on the bosom of the community, which ought to arouse the indignation of every virtuous citizen, and prompt to remedial efforts from all.

Respect for public opinion does not imply that you should make no efforts to alter and improve it. It is not perfect and changeless. But respect for public sentiment, when correct, does demand a conformity to it, on your part, when such conformity does not involve the sacrifice or dereliction of principle. Do not, for the sake of private opinion, or the pride of consistency, tenaciously cling to your own opinion and pursue your own way, because they are *your own*, when harmony with public feeling and action would be no other sacrifice for you than your own views and customs. Opposing others and rejecting their sentiments, when principle and virtue does not demand it, is unwise and undignified. In this changing world, changes do not imply instability and fickleness of character, but more often a becoming regard for public improvement, and an evidence of our own advancement in knowledge.

Respect for public opinion, implies that we do not overlook its existing character, in all our efforts to influence and improve society. We must study the character of public sentiment, and meet it in the way, best calculated to improve it, if wrong. Sometimes that sentiment is such, that a bold stroke may be given and an amazing change be wrought in an hour. More often, it is such, that we must act through remote and unsuspected channels, and bring our influence, to bear with modest and mild sway over more distant evils, that we may ultimately reach and remedy the disease, that preys on the vitals of the community. It is one of the uniform principles of Providence, that great moral causes and changes are gradual in their growth, and generally slow in reaching maturity, in proportion to the importance and permanence of their character.

Respect for public opinion implies, that we should not do unnecessary *violence* to public feeling. There is much improvement lost and many valuable revolutions defeated forever, by an utter disregard of the finer feelings of men, as well as of their ignorance, interests, and long-settled habits of thought and action. We often attempt too much and accomplish nothing ; but a miserable and ruinous reaction ensues, and the very evils which we sought to remedy, recoil upon us with double power.

As youth, just rising, to assume the control of the public interests, you will be required to influence and lead its opinions. You are not to take it for granted that these are in all respects right, and of course will continue so, and to yield yourselves up to their sway. This, though too common, is not the

respect for public sentiment which is due from you. It is not respect for yourselves, but a guilty sacrifice of private judgment and character to the vitiated propensities and habits of men. As citizens of a country, whose hope and safety is in virtue and intelligence; much more, as Christians, you ought to see public opinion correct and sustained in enlightened, holy, and dignified elevation, and give to it the sanction and support of intellectual eminence and moral purity.

I hope that you understand what I mean by *respect for public opinion*. It is such an accommodation to the views and habits of men; such a regard for their feelings and interests, that you may gain their confidence, do them the most good, and most powerfully aid in correcting and sustaining pure the public sentiment on all subjects of interest and duty.

It may be proper for me in this connection to remind you of another duty which you owe yourself, *in the selection of your associates in life*. Let them be such, and only such, as will add to your reputation and usefulness. Make them the vicious, the idle, the profligate, and impure, and though an angel yourself, you soon sink to their level, and participate in all the guilt and meanness of their character, and serve but to enchain them in the bondage of their loved corruption. We are not, in our best state, so free from moral contamination that we can breathe the air of guilt and pollution, and not soon embed, within the soul of virtue itself, the disease of disgrace and death. Let the idle, the vicious, the impure, and profane, be seen as welcome visitors at your home, or as your accustomed associates, and

by the immutable laws of affinity and moral influence, you will not only be viewed by others as they are viewed, but you will soon become what they are, vicious, idle, profane, and impure. I would bar and drive from my door and society such a man, as I would expel a pestilence. You are more safe with the robber prowling around your dwelling than with such. Your virtue, purity, peace, reputation, and religion, are all gone, if your associates are not good.

A conscientious regard to this duty, will render an additional suggestion respecting the love of games, wholly unnecessary. An indulgence in these, ought not to be expected in an age distinguished for refinement and the rich sources of intellectual improvement. The associations to which they will lead you, their uniform and degrading influence, invitiating sensibility and destroying time, are such, that the slightest allusion to them, in this place, is all that is needed. As beings of thought and feeling, accountable for time and destined to eternity, you will not waste probation, and thus incur the frown of God.

The last duty which I would impress upon you, is, *to be prepared against all possible vicissitudes*. You live in a world of changes, and each is leading on that infinitely momentous change, that fixes your eternal state immutable forever. Here is a duty that presses upon you. Be prepared for changes. If not, when they come, and come they will, your composure is gone, your fortitude lost, your spirit broken, the man sinks to a child, and the Christian is obscured in the weakness of desertion and the

misery of unbelief. Thus, in a moment, one solitary revolution may blast your happiness and reputation, and leave you a mere wreck of mental and moral being, incapable of repair and unfit for action, in any future effort of usefulness or duty.

What, if from want of industry, you are unfitted to labour, when the changes and the chances of life have stripped you of support, and like the unjust steward, you can neither dig nor beg? Have you not injured yourself? What, if when placed where mental energy, intellectual force, and resources are demanded, you are found deficient? Who must be reproached? Who, accused of neglected duty, but yourself? If void of moral honesty, when trust would, but cannot be reposed; if in the hour of need, by indulgence of intemperate desires, you find your frame weakened and wasted; your mind enfeebled and impaired; your character and credit gone—a wretched bankrupt in body, mind, morals, and estate, yourself becomes the greatest *creditor*—the greatest SUFFERER. And if friends desert you then, you have no friend in God! Sickness invades, and lays your outward frame in the dust, no inward man to rise in renovated energy on its ruins. When death, with untried pains and terrors, and eternity spreads its changeless scenes! O! to be unprepared! What robbery, cruel robbery, of thine own eternal good! Endless reproaches shall thy lost spirit give, and that pure sense of just revenge, God in thy creation gave the soul, shall react upon itself, the worm that never dies; and with this, the sad reflection, that your blasted reputation and blighting influence still live and will live forever, and two

worlds claim, as their possession, and pass their sentence on your character. The one will write your epitaph here, the other your destiny hereafter. Your eternal spirit shall review the one and anticipate the other in the endurance of a just and righteous retribution.

CHAPTER VI.

On the social *constitution* and MUTUAL DEPENDENCE, laying the foundation for the best interests and happiness of man, at the same time exposing him to danger when abused and perverted.

IT is one of the brightest ornaments of virtue, and chief excellences of religion, that no private duties can be enforced which are inconsistent with extended and universal good: none, but what in their full recognition, contribute to social and general prosperity. Let all men rightly regard, and properly meet their private obligations, and social and universal peace are secured.

You will not forget, that true virtue and religion is the cheerful discharge of duty to our God, to each other, and to ourselves. Having presented those obligations, under which you are laid, to secure your individual interests, I would call your attention to your social relations, to those unnumbered ties of mutual and reciprocal obligation, which are thrown around you.

THE FIRST GRAND PRINCIPLE *to which I would allude, is that article of your constitution which utterly forbids the possibility of secluded and restricted influence.* Such is your constitution, and such the arrangements of Providence, that man cannot, if he would, retire and secure his happiness in the shades of the recluse. Let him attempt it, and from his solitary retreat, he sends out a silent and a sickening influence, and while he pretends to despise the social

constitution, he shows the most convincing proof of its value. And though he would boast of his independence, he is driven from his solitude, by wants which his own hand cannot supply, even from the riches that Providence may have poured around him. There is more in the social constitution, than we are accustomed to imagine. This is one of the first strong elements of our nature, and upon it endless and amazing interests rest. You know that the Bible is full of it; and did you ever think how the analogies of nature, exemplify and enforce this elementary principle of Inspiration?

There is nothing recorded here but what has some semblance, almost its counterpart around us; so that the eye may read, as actual in illustration, the very principles that inspiration has taught. The social constitution and mutual dependence, are always illustrated in nature and Providence. There are no worlds, and no natural elements, but *act* and *REACT* upon each other. While sustained by the same unseen power, they aid in mutual regulation. So bound by mutual and reciprocal dependence, is this great universe of nature, that, as one faint and solitary star shall drop from the sky, the great sun itself is moved, and the whole creation of worlds feels the shock. Descend from those spheres that know no change, but in ceaseless order, and mark this same principle of social and dependent life in the variegated productions of nature that adorn our globe. The mountain is crowned with lofty oaks, its declivities adorned with cedars, while the fragile willows weep at its base. The lilies cluster in our meadows, and violets bloom together. There is

mutual dependence of species in inanimate nature, all over the world; so that not one blade of grass springs forth, not a flower blooms, no fruit ripens, not a tree spreads, but you anticipate its species clustering around it. The same is seen in every department of the kingdom of animal nature, where are arrangement and classification, while the grand principle of social and dependent life, is in each and every species, fully, and often tenderly illustrated, from the winged insects of the air, the herds that feed on the plain, and the leviathans that play amid the icy mountains of the northern sea.

From this general principle, illustrated in nature, and peculiarly applicable to your own species, arises your obligation as intelligent and moral beings, and upon it, rests the whole structure of human society, even in its religious and holy communities. God, by your nature, has bound you together. You are dependent upon each other, and you are acting upon each other, with prodigious and permanent influence. There is not one man among us, however, high or low, rich or poor, weak or mighty, who, for one solitary day, is independent of the community. He may feast on his redundancy, but the weary hand of the labourer supplies it. He may repose in lordly consequence, and yet his ear listens, and is charmed or pained by the slightest breath of popular opinion, that reaches his splendid retirement. So, there is no one among us who does not have his share of influence, and may see its reflected lines of virtue or vice, living and lasting as the human soul.

The SECOND general principle, if I may call it such, I wish you to regard, is the certainty of the

appropriation of this mutual dependence and social being, to purposes of good or evil.

Your intellectual or moral energies are in unbroken wakefulness, in ceaseless activity; and under that grand principle which is before us, the principle of social life and of mutual dependence, within each and every department of life, you are starting new springs of influence, creating and causing more and more happiness or misery, more good or evil, every hour. From that universal and unceasing dependence which leaves exempted no man in life, arises the power and opportunity to aid and encourage honest and laudable industry, and to show the amiable virtues of kindness and condescension. Thus, each man may exhibit virtues peculiar to the sphere in which he acts, and from that vast division of labour, which this state of mutual dependence demands, every man may find some department suited to his faculties and habits. Yet, from the pride, folly, and sin of human nature, this principle of dependence is often abused and converted to an engine of evil. From this, when perverted and abused, arise the broad divisions of life, engendering haughty distance and oppression on the one hand; envy, discontent, revenge, or servility, on the other. And it is doubtful which class is most productive of good or evil, or which ultimately bears the heaviest burden of actual and permanent oppression.

The same is true in regard to the social principle. It results in good or evil, on a broader scale than had otherwise arisen. There is a countenance, a support, a stimulus to energy and action, by the

congregated sympathies, passions, and powers of men, which had slept unknown, but for the force of the social principle. So much does this contribute to virtue or vice, happiness or misery, that in all our conceptions, we at once associate intelligent and moral beings, clustering together in the enjoyment of good or endurance of evil, till heaven itself is formed in our minds, one vast assemblage of angels and redeemed men, and hell is roused to its enkindlings of anguish by its crowded millions of fallen spirits and abandoned souls. In the result of this social affinity, there arises an accumulation of strength, by concert and concentration, to accomplish purposes of good or evil, that otherwise would never be attempted.

Hence the hazard and ruin of virtue in crowded masses of irreligious men, which so soon turn the debased portions of our cities and crowded towns to receptacles of all unrighteousness. It is this that makes our places of public resort, so profane, intemperate, and vulgar. Virtue in a crowd of guilty men, is never safe; and vice, in all its horrid forms, springs as by cultivation. Scarce any congregations are safe, where some object of virtue has not caused the assembly. Man, by the law of his being, must have good and laudable objects in view, or he is at once engaged in evil. Hence the maxim of virtue and safety: "always have something good to do."—Losing sight of this wise maxim, almost all the valuable associations of our earth, from time to time, have fallen degenerate, debased, and ultimately subverted the cause they were at first designed and adapted to promote and benefit.

National festivities, with their various arrangements of civil and religious service, under the theocracy of Israel, became an offence to God, and a curse to the people. And with all the light that five thousand years has shed on the world, with the entire change of our religious economy, there are those, who see not yet the folly of ecclesiastical festivals, beyond what the simplicity of the Gospel allows: and the Gospel recognises none but the Sabbath, and such occasional services as add to the value of this *day*.

National anniversaries, rising as the grateful expression to God, for civil mercies, with all the propriety and patriotic glow of their origin, have early become converted to extravagance, bacchanalian revels, intemperance, and debauchery; while each recurring day must meet the sacrifice of an hundred lives.

It is thus the patriarchal circle, that called in the numerous offspring, as olive plants around the parental board, has been made to subserve the extravagance of fashion, ruinous indulgence, and early death. And I will add, too, it was once, that the very assemblage of professed disciples, at the table of Christ, perverted that sacred scene to purposes of festivity and feasting.

There is nothing that can save fallen and imperfect men from speedy degeneracy, but having constantly in view, some virtuous and ennobling design: some good to be secured. Man must have his eye on virtue, or he is at once in vice: starting on errands of good, or he has already accomplished evil.

Nor should we overlook, that it is from this same social principle, that families, societies, and

congregated men, may secure such an amount of good, and so widely influence the world. Break up these, and one half of our happiness and usefulness is gone in a moment. There is a kindling of sympathy in doing good, as in evil; a stimulus and concentration of energy in the cause of virtue, as in deeds of darkness. Union is strength, in each and every department of life; and hence, one solitary family, well arranged in the order and beauty of religious life, stands a strong barrier to the vicious propensities of a whole community; and its door closed against the wicked and abandoned, is a reproof to guilt, and to all who regard not virtue. A church, in her solemn assemblies, for the high and sacred purpose of advancing in knowledge and holiness, is not only the ornament, but the safety of a people.

Hence, associations for benevolent efforts, are fast filling the world with the grace of God in Jesus Christ, while isolated and individual exertion, has left it in sin for ages. The congregated hosts of God's elected sons, shall gain an everlasting triumph in the fast approaching conflict, the great battle of the Lord Almighty; and heaven become as transcendent in glory as in holiness, from the thousand times ten thousand, which no man can number, who shall surround the throne of God and the Lamb.

I would have you improve this subject, by a serious consideration of your incessant action, for good or evil, for sin or holiness, for heaven or hell. Your private character is breathed through all the walks in which you move, and you stamp the features of

your immortal nature deep on unsuspecting souls. Thus you fast weave into your eternal destiny the elements of joy or sorrow.

Will you not then consider and re-examine your character, your conduct, your employment, your influence? See what you should correct, and what you should do, to make mankind better and happier; and thus impart to the community a more lovely aspect for peace, virtue, enjoyment, and religion?

There is criminal indifference to the great truths and realities of moral influence, which must be broken. There is vice, which might and must be checked. There are associations, in which some of you may be engaged, where your highest interests are concerned, which you are bound to see dissolved. You are responsible, not only for the evil you may cause, but also for that which you might prevent. You are not enough awake to the nature and dangerous tendency of sin and those associations of life, to which you and those coming after you are exposed. Your silence and unexerted influence to break these associations, sanction their continuance, and you behold multitudes going down to the grave beneath a frightful accumulation of evils, which you have it in your power to prevent.

The city and the country are both alike swept as by a pestilence. Giant wickedness is rising and reigning with unblushing effrontery, borrowing their sanction from foreign degeneracy and lordly debasement, and stimulating their energies by the fair fruits of our young and beautiful country. The high places of our land, are becoming despoiled of their

primitive dignity; the robe of state is losing its infallible testimony for excellence; and those halls which once were proud of their congregated intelligence and virtue, the splendour of their eloquence, the glory of their promise and their hopes, are already convulsed by party conflict; marred and debased by the low scurrility of party invective. A government of law is calling back her promise of protection: shorn of the majesty of her statutes, she has already failed to redeem her pledges. Licentiousness, arrogant from the relaxed state of public morals and insubordination, kindling the base and brutal fires of envy, revenge, and plunder, has challenged the arm of justice, mocked the power of moral right, laid the ban of fiendlike proscription on personal liberty, driven the jurist from the bar, laid the sanctuaries of God in ruins, and loudly proclaimed through crowded cities, *your laws are powerless and your safety ended*. A nation, long proud and at peace, now trembles for her honour and her life; not from foreign violence, but from domestic degeneracy, popular insubordination and licentiousness. And where is there hope? Where the promise of security? *In our YOUTH alone*. In their intelligence, their virtue, their united resolution, to repair what is broken, to restore sullied dignity, and to defend the legacy of their fathers, bought by blood and bequeathed by prayer. This duty, this honour, devolves on *you*.

CHAPTER VII.

On the relation of children to parents, and the duties which that relation imposes.—1. Filial obedience. Whence this duty arises, and what it implies.—2. Filial affection and gratitude.

FROM the principles of social and dependent nature, spring all our relative duties here on earth. And when we remember how endlessly diversified those relations are; how, in countless directions, we send out pleasure or pain, that at once, in other souls, rouse new and still more fruitful sources of joy or sorrow, to act on other and more numerous spirits, their opening new fountains of joyous or of grievous influence, there is no calculation of man's power of doing good or evil at every breath; good or evil, which eternity alone can estimate.

Look at your relations. Parent and child—brother and sister—husband and wife—master and servant—employed and the employer—guardian and the protected—teacher and the instructed—the subject and the ruler—with those countless relations of friendship and interest, that rise and run through social life; each claiming new and peculiar duties; each admitting and rousing new and peculiar influences for good or evil.

As an extended illustration of these various connexions, and the duties which they involve, would

be more tedious than profitable, I shall confine myself only to those branches which I consider most for present benefit, glancing, perhaps, at some others, and leaving them for private reflection.

I have said, that one great branch of religion lay in the proper discharge of duties which we owe to our fellow-men. These duties grow out of the relations which we hold to them—relations which God in the constitution of nature has formed, and such as may arise from the circumstances of life.

The FIRST, and perhaps most interesting of all our natural relations, is that which we hold to our earthly PARENTAGE.

Unconscious mouths are slept away on the bosom of maternal tenderness, alike ignorant of the pains and watchings, the tears and cares, that infant being and unnumbered wants create. The first relation you hold is here. The first knowledge you have, is of parental goodness. The first earthly claims rise here. And none who have never felt a mother's watchful, sleepless tenderness, nor a father's anxious care, can know any thing of these imperious claims, and what sacred duties they impose.

As here is your first relation, the first commandment of God which speaks of our earthly duties, respects the duties of children to parents. *Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

While there is a species of love, which we are to cherish towards all the world; that kind charity which thinketh no evil—that benevolence which would do good to all men, as we have opportunity; there are affections more tender and strong, consistent with

these, and which rise far superior and come nearer home ; and in all their private claims, entrench not at all on the social system, and abridge not at all our offices of kindness to others. It was a beautiful declaration of ethics, “ that heaven has adapted the vividness of our affections to our power of being beneficial ; the love being most lively in those moral connexions in which the opportunities of usefulness are most frequent, and capable of being most accurately applied in relation to the peculiar wants of him who is to be benefitted.”* And no relation has God made so near, so tender, and so affecting, on which so much of human usefulness and earthly happiness depends.

“ Who framed a whole, the whole to bless,
On mutual wants, built mutual happiness ;—
So from the first, eternal order ran,
And creature linked to creature, man to man.”

Here lies the foundation of human society ; and man gives promise of future good, as he early respects the duties of his filial state.

I shall briefly allude, and in a very partial manner, to some of the duties which children owe their parents. These arise from the dominion and necessary authority of parents, and from their unwearied kindness.

The *FIRST duty is that of FILIAL OBEDIENCE.* You are cast from the hand of your Creator, on the arm of parental care, the most helpless,

* Brown's Philosophy.

the most dependent of all creatures; and from this very feebleness and helplessness, must be obedient. Your life depends on yielding to parental authority; and when from the waywardness of fallen nature, that supremacy becomes restraint, sometimes painful coercion, the filial duty to obey is still imperious. You have neither the wisdom, experience, nor power, to make your way in safety, where maturer years should guide and guard.

At first, obedience must from necessity be entire, and afterwards vary from this, only as circumstances may demand, from parental infirmity, or the distance at which you become removed from that salutary advice and wholesome restraint, which it is alike your duty and your interest to regard.

The foundation of this obedience, lies indeed in nature, arising from the necessary exercise of parental authority, yet it should, in its voluntary exercise, be prompted by love, and continued by growing respect and confidence. We ought not to be compelled to consider filial love and continued respect as *duties* to be urged upon us. I had rather, in honour to our nature, and respect for our education and religious culture, regard these as certain—as almost incorporated with our being: for to one who had not these deeply imbedded in his soul, I should address all motives to obedience in vain. In such a soul, there can be no kind sympathies left to arouse and direct.

Filial obedience implies *an early regard for parental pleasure*. This virtue consists, not in yielding to absolute force, not in complying, where resistance

would be violence to prescribed rules of domestic order: but it lies, in foreseeing and finding happiness in acting in accordance with parental pleasure, and in not arousing parental anxiety, by asking that indulgence which the desire of a parent's heart would deny.

Were I to present filial obedience in its most perfect form and most engaging features, and to which I would stimulate you all to aim, it should be that beautiful example "that leaves not the parent the power to know that it is required to govern—that by anticipated obedience, take away the prerogative to command."

I would say to every child, learn what parental pleasure is, and meet it unexpressed. Never be guilty of taxing the utmost limit of indulgence, and of labouring to widen the bounds of gratification. In all cases of doubtful duty, virtue will incline you to extend the sphere of implicit obedience, rather than to narrow its bounds. By this filial obedience, you add virtue and dignity to yourself, and reflect a dignity on those that bore you: while want of this obedience, shows with conclusive evidence, that you neither love, respect, nor value father nor mother, and thus show a destitution of natural and moral principle. And you roam from home like the brute, from whom the attachment of instinct has died away, and cast back upon the spot where you were nurtured, reproach and contempt. You disgrace your origin, and boldly declare, there is not virtue and dignity enough to respect. You declare, rather, that you have not virtue and sense enough to estimate and respect either.

I would not confine filial obedience to infancy nor childhood ; nor do I feel myself as addressing children in infancy. There is a species of filial obedience on which my mind is fixed, that is co-existent with parental being and parental memory. There is something extremely unlovely, unkind, and disrespectful, in that young man, who, starting from his father's home, and all the tender movings of a mother's heart, and *there*, leaving his last respect for parental authority. Though he has gone to build a home of his own, rather than feel and act like a prisoner that has fled control, I would see him go out with hesitancy and tears, not so much from choice as from duty, and often return, with gratitude and affection, to cherish and continue a mother's love, and ask, in filial and affectionate submission still, a father's counsel. Next to the sublimities of true religion, there is nothing more ennobling and virtuous.

And she, who seems most happy in new found attachments, and hastens, as in untold pleasure, from a mother's tender heart and last embrace, is unfit to be a wife, and unworthy to have a friend.

There are no virtues left in those youth who carry not to the very graves of their father and mother, love and respect for their authority, and who make not the memory of their pleasure to live and reign over them, when they are dead.

I urge this subject, not from those considerations with which it is usually enforced. For myself, I feel that there is danger, in this day of enterprise and hazardous experiment, of starting too early on our independent way, and throwing off too soon, the

salutary restraints of parental admonition and parental power, and of feeling that we have outstripped the wisdom of age. You will pardon me when I say that there is among us, too much of a disposition to turn from the wisdom and experience of age, and to attempt a new and nobler course than our fathers have trod. If this arose from a loftier spirit of enterprise, from more skill and energy in planning and in executing, and held out fairer prospects of speedy and ultimate success, with all the dangers that attend it, I would not throw in one solitary check. But who are prepared to claim more enterprise than laid out the country you inherit? Where are wiser men in council—bolder and safer in executing valuable purposes, than those whom we succeed? Take what department you will, pecuniary prudence, intellectual sagacity, civil policy, or political honesty, who is prepared to come forward and claim superiority of rank? For one, and I place myself in the wide range of this condemnatory declaration, I honestly believe that we have degenerated, in many of the most valuable principles of intellectual and moral worth, and lost immensely by so eagerly thrusting off our fathers, to assume their responsibility, and reap those honours which maturer wisdom claims, and to bear those burdens a stronger arm cannot sustain. I would say, above all, let us value and respect mature wisdom; profit more by the experience of others; regard parental authority, and cheerfully walk in paths which our fathers so wisely and so safely trod; and by whose wisdom were framed those salutary institutions under which we live. In all your ways, though in distant and

dignified elevation from parental home, look back again and again, and if you have any thing virtuous and noble in you, you will find it strengthened by grateful recollections of the spot where its foundation was laid. *Honour thy father and thy mother, by bowing to their commanding influence, even to your graves.* Thus shall you be loved and lamented by filial affection, when you are dead.

II. *The other comprehensive duty which you owe to parents, is kindness and love, filial affection and gratitude.* There is a tender ministry in offices of kindness, in which, virtue is never more lovely, embodying a sense of gratitude, calling to mind the long past favours of parental care, and giving the highest excellence and commendation to the most important and charming scene that this earth can present. “How delightful is the spectacle when amid all the temptations of youth and beauty, we witness some kind and gentle heart that gives to the couch of the feeble, and perhaps of the thankless and repining, those hours which others find too short for the successive gayeties with which an evening can be filled; and that prefers to the smile of universal admiration, the single smile of enjoyment, which, after many efforts, has, at last, been kindled on one solitary cheek.”*

After all the kindness we can feel and express—after all the care we can bestow on the wants and weakness of our infirm and aged parents, we never can return one half of that which we have so liberal-

* Brown's Philosophy.

ly received. For with all the wants and weakness of infirmity and age, they never can lie so helpless on our arm as we have rested on theirs, nor press upon our hearts, with that untold solicitude, with which they watched our infant days. Yet, with this kindness and care, we have made the most acceptable return we can render, and nothing is more grateful to the infirmities of age; and nothing more effectually commands the admiration of the world. "The hero of heathen poetry, is made most noble, in bearing his aged father from the burning city. And what can be more unkind and unlovely than a son or daughter unkind, and showing negligence to an aged father or mother. And how beautiful a scene was exhibited in the palace of Pharaoh, when Joseph, the prime minister of state, led in a poor old shepherd to the presence of the king, and before all the lords of the Egyptian court, introduced the decrepit and care-worn pilgrim as his father. Who, after looking at this, will be ashamed of a parent, because clad in the garb of poverty? What a glory did that one act draw around the brow of Joseph? The lustre of the golden chain, that hung from his neck, was dim compared with the brightness of this deed, and the chariot in which he rode, in imperial pomp, before the people, raised him not so high as that eminence he held when he stood before the monarch of Egypt, with the patriarch of Canaan leaning on his arm."*

I cannot do any thing like justice to this subject,

* James' Family Monitor.

and I will leave it for your private consideration, with the outlines of a chapter on its importance from the author of the "Family Monitor, or Help to Domestic Happiness," a work of recent origin, which should be read, and read often, by every member of every family.

Bringing to mind the sacredness of this relation, he enjoins love and respect, with a free effort to do all in our power to please and make our parents happy—to desire their company and their good opinion. Next, we should reverence and obey them. Consult them in all cases of private and personal interest, and imitate their good example, and, above all things, always treat them with *kindness*. As motives to these sacred duties, he adds: Observe how they are enjoined in the Bible. How they impart pleasures to their infirm and aged subjects. How they promote, not only their happiness, but your own pleasure, reputation, and interest; and, as adds Dr. Dwight—no small measure of prosperity seems ordinarily interwoven with a course of filial piety. The comfort which it causes parents, the harmony which it produces in families, the peace which it yields to the conscience. To these it adds the approbation of all—a lasting reputation. Beyond this it associates itself with temperance, moderation, and sobriety, which give a solid foundation for health and long life. And these are not all its blessings. I do not say, that miracles are wrought for its reward; neither will I say, that purer gales breathe to preserve its health; nor that softer suns arise, or more timely rains descend, to mature its harvests; nor that more propitious winds blow to waft its ships in safety.

But I will say, that on the tide of providence, multiplied blessings are borne into its possession, at seasons when they were unexpected, in ways unforeseen, and by means unprovided, which are often of high importance; which, altogether, constitute a rich proportion of prosperity; and which, usually, are not found by persons of contrary character. At the same time, those who act well as children, almost, of course, act well as men and women; and thus have taken, without design, the scion of happiness from the parent-stock and grafted it upon other stems, which bear fruit abundantly to themselves. Here, in the language of poetry,

“It revives and bears
A train of blessings for their heirs.”

It is also never to be forgotten, that filial piety, if derived from an evangelical source, is entitled to the peculiar favour of God in the present world, and to the everlasting blessings of the world to come.

“*Honour thy father and mother.*” Here stands the first command with promise; a promise to what? *filial respect*—a duty which both nature and interest enjoins. From whom? God himself, who holds all nature and grace tributary to his truth and love. And what is promised? *Length of days in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* A life replete with every needed good. By heaven’s unerring hand the pathway of your prosperity is drawn, and you are pointed to the riches of earth and the glories of heaven.

CHAPTER VIII.

On the relation of brothers and sisters.—Its effects on parental reputation and happiness.—1. Duties of this relation.—2. To cultivate the fraternal affections, and to promote each other's happiness.—3. Mutual respect and effort for each other's improvement.—4. Kind attentions.—5. Special and distinct duties of brothers.

I HAVE often read with peculiar admiration, the remark of Seneca, that "*it is not a blessing to live merely, but to live well.*" "Life in itself," he adds, "if life without wisdom be a blessing, it is a blessing that is common to me with the meanest reptiles; and he who gave me nothing more than life, gave me only what a fly or a worm may boast. If, in the love and hope of virtue, I have employed that life which my parents conferred on me, in studies that were to render me more noble in the sight of heaven, I have paid back to them more than I have received. My father gave me to myself rude and ignorant: I have given him a son of whom it may delight him to be the father."*

If a heathen philosopher could say, "*to live merely is not a blessing, but to live well,*" how much more should you advance on the principles of such a philosopher, in rendering yourself noble in the sight of heaven? **TO LIVE WELL**, should be your high and holy ambition. *To live well*, is to live for others, for God, and for eternity.

* Seneca De Beneficiis.

I have spoken of the happiness and honour which you may confer upon your parents, by a life of intelligence and virtue. And I know of no lovelier scene on earth, than the fraternal circle around the bed of the aged patriarch, giving to his last hours the consolation of their mutual endearment, and receiving from his lips the last benediction. Here are the fruits of his life, the joys of his heart, and the hopes of his eternity, as reflecting the blessing of God upon his labours, and disclosing the promise of heaven, when the resurrection shall restore these dissolving, yet endeared relations.

The beauty of the domestic constitution is never more clearly seen, and the perfection of parental and filial excellence more delightfully presented, than in the harmony of the fraternal society. That parental influence and discipline cannot be radically defective, where the fraternal obligations are discharged and peace reigns among the heirs of the same natures and the same home. Here is the sunshine and summer of domestic happiness, the very harvest of earthly enjoyment, and the most engaging spectacle of the social economy, save that tender scene, which closes, like a summer day, the parental journey under the care and kindness, the watchings and support of filial love. These are like the autumn clouds upon the evening sky, spreading their roseate hues of beauty and of grandeur, where sinks and dies away the setting sun, as in a bed of glory.

Charity, peace, and friendship, are no where so amiable and engaging, as among those "whom one roof has continued to shelter through life, and whose

ashes are afterwards to mingle in the same sepulchre." This was the sentiment of the Roman orator, and more beautiful still is the language of the Christian poet.

"How pleasant 'tis to see
Kindred and friends agree;
Each in their proper station move,
And each fulfil his part
With sympathizing heart,
In all the cares of life and love.

"Like fruitful showers of rain,
That water all the plain,
Descending from the neighbouring hills,
Such streams of pleasure roll,
Through every friendly soul,
Where love, like heavenly dew distils."

The subject to which I direct your attention is the duties of *brothers and sisters*.

I. *The FIRST and most obvious duty, is to cultivate the fraternal affections, and to promote each other's happiness.* The peace and mutual pleasure of the inmates of the same home, and children of the same family, cannot be too much studied, nor is any labour too great to secure them. This is a sacred duty. Indifference to the interest and pleasure of those so near you, whose very form and features are but a reflection of your own, is melancholy proof of a selfish spirit, and the want of every virtuous and noble feeling. Through days and years, you are, of necessity, mingled together; and the amount of peace and joy, or of discord and sorrow which this union creates, is almost incalculable. And what is more becoming, more lovely, than the union of

those little hands, and the mingling of those young hearts, who have been cradled on the same bosom, and are still sheltered by the same roof? And what so honourable and engaging in after life, as brothers and sisters still affectionately united; most interested in each other's peace, and most happy in each other's pleasure; who, to the love of nature, instinct, and the nursery, have added the stronger and sacred bond of matured affection, and whose honour, and happiness, and safety, lie in continuing and strengthening it in riper years?

There is something always affecting in parental care and in filial *love*, and yet there is an indescribable interest thrown around *fraternal* affection, which often surpasses both, and which borrows from both a peculiar sacredness. As parental care must soon cease, and filial love find its objects no more on earth, the fraternal relation, where mutual peace and happiness are studied, exhibits the fruits of the one, and leaves a broad and beautiful sphere for the exercise of the other. And whoever beheld a family where this peace and happiness were sought, without an assurance of its continued prosperity and blessing, when parents shall be no more: and though left tender and young, in their mutual love, the parental blessing lives, and smiles the mercy of God. Let brothers and sisters study peace, and promote, as their own, each other's happiness, and so live, that their purest and highest enjoyment shall be found in each other's society.

There is more than language can describe, in

brothers treading, hand in hand, the path of life, and a sister resting in confidence on a brother's smiles, and leaning for protection on a brother's care.

“As arm in arm the forest rose on high,
A lesson gave of brotherly regard;
And on the mountain brow exposed,
Bearing the blast alone—the ancient oak
Stood, lifting high his mighty arm, and still
To courage in distress, exhorted loud.”

Nor should this interest and love be permitted to die away in after years; it should be cultivated with increased care, as new and more distant relations are formed, and fears, perhaps, begin to rise, that your love and interest may become estranged from those whose happiness is in your hands. That sister is unworthy a husband's confidence, who can erase from her heart the warm and affectionate remembrance of brothers left at home; and that brother is a brute, who in a husband's love, can forget a sister's want and tenderness.

In these separations, which must occur in life, do not lose; nor fail to express, mutual and continued remembrance. Forget not that you are brothers and sisters still, and that with all the connexions you may form on earth, you can form no more of these. Often exchange the kind expressions of continued interest and affection. Pledge and extend aid and relief where they are needed, and carry even to your graves, the tender remembrance, that you are *members one of another*. United by nature, be united by grace in the sympathies of a sanctified and spiritual fraternity.

Thus you promote mutual happiness, and show to the world that you are susceptible of benevolent and virtuous emotions. Where there are brothers and sisters, it is melancholy to see them always separate and alone ; it shows a want of the finer feelings of our nature, and of those delicate and affectionate sensibilities, which are the surest pledges of future dignity and decorum. All this may now appear unimportant, yet the eye of an intelligent community here reads more of character and prospects than you can imagine. One of the finest writers on domestic happiness and the fraternal duties, says : “ Seek your happiness in each other’s society.”

“ What can the brother find in the circle of dissipation, or amongst the votaries of pleasure, to be compared with this ? What can a sister find, amidst the concert of sweet sounds, that has music for the soul, compared with this domestic harmony ? Or, in the glitter and fashionable confusion, and mazy dance, compared with those pure, calm, sequestered joys, which are found at the fireside of a happy family ? What can the theatre yield, that is comparable with this ?”*

“ O, evenings, worthy of the gods, exclaimed
 The Sabine bard ; O, evenings, I reply,
 More to be prized and coveted than yours,
 As more illumined and with nobler truths,
 That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy :
 Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks
 That idleness has ever yet contrived
 To fill the void of an unfurnished brain ;
 To palliate dulness, and give time a shove.”

* James’ Family Monitor.

There can be no spot more sweet, profitable, and enchanting, than that domestic circle, where wise and affectionate parents witness the fruit of their labours, and the result of their pains, in the love and interest to make happy, which pervade the hearts and actuate the lives of brothers and sisters. They now most amply repay for the labour and the care bestowed, and give the pledge of mutual love and protection, when parental kindness and care shall be suspended by death.

II. *Mutual respect should always be cherished and manifested by brothers and sisters.* There should not be the formality of ordinary and ceremonious intercourse; and yet there should be no approximation to vulgar and degrading address. While there should be freedom from the "cautious timidity of suspicion," and the coarseness of indelicacy and rudeness, there should be the "politeness of good manners, blended with the tenderness of love."

Mutual obligation should be felt for each other's improvement, not in the follies of fashionable life, but in those engaging manners of modest and refined deportment; that intellectual richness, and those resources of useful knowledge, which raise and expand, far above the gay throng of fashionable pleasure; and which give the pledge of substantial value and useful action, when the season of youthful gayety and dissipation shall pass away.

Kind attentions, those nameless and countless offices and tokens of regard and affection, which at the same time manifest and elicit the best feelings of the soul, should never be forgotten. Mark that young man with suspicious jealousy, who is happier

any where than at home, and who seems more joyful with others than his own sisters, and prefers any other to lean upon his arm, than her, whom, as an orphan daughter, he is bound to protect. The kind feelings of a brother's heart, are a stranger to his bosom; the nobler feelings of a man he never knew. And he who will cast forgotten, a sister, from his kind regards and tender care, will as soon throw from his affections and support the wife of his youth.

And she who finds no pleasure in the circle of home, nor in the smiles of paternal fondness, loves not most a brother's company, may have the sprightliness and cheerfulness of virtuous affection, and may bloom in all the beauty of her sex, yet her bosom is as cold and sterile as the snow-drift, of every finer feeling, and her heart will be an eternal stranger to pure and permanent affection. She who cherishes not a sister's love, warm and active, has not the virtues that can be prized and trusted in a wife or mother.

There are *duties* peculiarly appropriate to *brothers*, which demand a special and distinct notice. You should remember that your sisters are frail, tender, and susceptible, and generally, *unsuspecting*. And they are most happy, because they are unsuspecting, and hence they are most exposed to danger. They are too affectionate and confiding to suspect, and too late in learning the meanness, the baseness, and duplicity to which they may be exposed, as well as the degrading and beastly passions with which our sex are often cursed. The first they know, is, from a husband's lips or a

husband's baseness, known too late to defend and save them.

Shall I say, then, acquaint them with all that is low, impure, and vulgar, profane and intemperate, degrading and debauched, in the habits of men? To this I hardly know what to say. Should it be done, it would, or ought to convulse many a splendid circle. And yet they should not be left wholly ignorant of it. They should be so far informed of its existence, as to be guarded against its influence.

It is the imperious duty of a brother to stand aloof in personal purity and private worth, and guard a sister's interest as his own, turning her eye, her every step, and, above all, her heart from that society where intelligence, virtue, and purity, are unknown. It is your duty to be yourself intelligent, virtuous, and pure, lest your sisters cease to despise that in others which they see in you. Then spurn from your society those whom you know as idle, profane, and impure, and seek to rid society of these invaders of innocence and worth. Say not, there are no such to be found obtruding themselves into the walks of virtuous society. There are such, and their numbers are fearfully great. You are bound to drive them from you, not simply as you regard your own good, but more specially as the wakeful guardians of a sister's safety, happiness, and honour. Let them never find an introduction to your home, nor in society, presume to approach one so near and dear to you, as a sister should be. Those you invite beneath your father's roof, your sisters must and

will respect, and kindly receive, for your sake if not for theirs, and in that necessary attention and respect, may open the way for unhallowed influence and ultimate ruin. And she who once adorned the highest circle of her sex, becomes disappointed, disheartened, and ruined, perhaps a wretched vagrant, lost to virtue and to hope. This is not the suggestion of fancy, but the record of fact repeated again and again. In no way contribute to those acquaintances, associations, and alliances, where want of industry, intelligence, and moral worth, gives such fearful evidence of early disappointment and ultimate disgrace. Guard your homes, the pure circle of paternal interest and affection, from the inroad of unprincipled young men. By all that is sacred in a brother's honour; by the virtue, and the eternal good of your sisters, I call upon you to rid society of abandoned men. Give them no introduction to those whom you are bound to protect. Go, even beyond your home, and do good to all the tender and unprotected. Think of the thousands who have fallen, rather been torn from the heights of society, early to die in the depths of misery and guilt: some from the splendid walks of intellect and fashion, and even from the house of peace and holiness. Above all things, do not compromise a brother's character, by sustaining or countenancing those whose baseness prolongs that trade of robbery from the ranks of innocence and virtue, which, were it half told, would exceed the horrors of the slave trade, for its numbers, and outweigh it for its misery; and which, in defiance of in-

telligent virtue, and the denouncements of the word of God, is bearing before it millions of victims.

It should be your study and your pleasure to make your sisters love *home and useful recreations*; and to stimulate them in their pursuit of *useful knowledge*, become yourself the companion of their evening hours—tell them all you know: thus give them a love for learning; and hand in hand with you, they will pass onward in the path of pleasure and of duty. There will arise a refinement of feeling, and an elevation of pleasure, which no resort beside can give. Here the cares of more extended responsibility cannot intrude, while all may be so pure and ennobling, that it needs only the adornment of piety to impart perfection. Thus shall your sisters become your equals and your pride; by their virtue, their intelligence, and loveliness, illustrate the wisdom and virtue of that fraternity which has blessed them.

These duties are attended with corresponding obligations on the part of sisters. To them, I would say, be kind, amiable, affectionate, and attentive to your brothers. Always welcome their return to your common home with unaffected pleasure. Let them see and feel that their happiness is identified with yours—their prosperity and advancement your study and delight. Make them love modesty, intelligence, and virtue, by presenting that deportment of retiring delicacy, which unsuspected gains control; that knowledge, which unconscious, cannot but instruct; that sterling virtue, which frowns in silent

dignity, and makes the lewd and lawless tremble and retire.

Make your brothers happy at home, without the aid of those blighting amusements, which neither instruct nor improve, but which suspend thought, destroy sensibility, and endanger virtue. Let me add, what has been seen true, in lamentable experience, cause your brothers to love the card table of the drawing-room, and they will soon desert you, for the resorts of open and destructive gaming, and return no more, but to reflect on your error, and to reveal their own degeneracy. Learn what recreations are safe at home, by following out the natural associations which they hold abroad, and avoid all such, as in their legitimate and ultimate influence, may impair that modesty and virtue, which you prize in domestic life.

Show an interest in learning what your brothers know and may have to tell you. Make them love to read and learn; by thus giving a charm and usefulness to constantly increasing knowledge. Render their hours of recreation so pleasant and profitable, that recreation shall endear your society to them, and give the charm of mutual refinement to mental and moral feeling. Be so virtuous, modest, amiable, and intelligent with them, that they never can admire and love where these unsullied ornaments of your sex are unknown.

Be constant in your offices of kindness, and when they are sick and afflicted, be with them and more than kind. Thus you inspire them with respect and love for yourself, and command their admiration for

your sex : and thus, too, you throw around them restraints, and enchain them by that influence which it is alike their interest and pleasure to regard.

As sisters, you are bound to treat young men with utter abhorrence whom you know as unworthy your brother's society, and hazardous to his character. Never oblige him to accommodate you with that society which may injure him.

When at home, let it be known that you prize a brother's society ; and when abroad, that his company is the best, and that you had rather lean upon his arm for protection, than on a stranger's gallantry. And when he shall leave you for his studies or for life, follow him still with love, and all the expressions of a sister's grateful and affectionate remembrance. Let him know and feel, that in his heart you have a treasure still, and in his new found home, more than an interest. And if called to go yourself, so leave your father's and your brother's home, that you may carry and continue a brother's love. While separate, and as often as you meet, cherish and strengthen those fraternal affections, which are the brightest ornament of domestic life, and the sanctified symbol of future glory.

CHAPTER IX.

On the duties of the young in forming and sustaining the interest and reputation of the community.—1. The immense influence which they exert.—2. Their obligation to use that influence for the good of others.—The necessity of disunion and separate communities in past ages.—The remingling of the human family under the Gospel and the advance of society.—The increased necessity of intelligence and moral influence—with obligations to secure and employ it.

WHILE the word of God is so splendid and sublime in its doctrines and disclosures, as to enchain and overwhelm the most expanded mind, making angels to adore and tremble, at the same time it touches the most secret springs of the human heart, goes into the deep and silent recesses of human sympathy, and arranges, as with the hand of care and love, the smallest trifle that can influence the opening sensibilities of a child. And it is this, on the one hand, which ennobles its sublimity, and on the other, endears it to the soul. Thus it resembles its great Author, who is not only the mighty Sovereign of the world, encircled in the glories of eternal and uncreated majesty; but also that kind and parental being, always with each and every one of his creatures, however low, young, and despised. He lays his hand as much beneath the new-born infant's head, and wipes away the tear from the orphan's eye, as he guards his throne amid the cherubim and hosts of light. The sun, he rolls in glory, and directs the falling of a drop of dew.

“ He gives its lustre to the insects' wings,
And wheels his throne upon the rolling winds.”

A right view, not only of this majesty and power, but of his diversified and minute care of distant and more diminutive creation, is happily calculated to inspire adoration for God and the gospel, and to secure love and confidence in the one, and an abiding interest in the other.

This view of the gospel, shows that it has something suited to us at all times ; that in the richness of its resources it comes home to our character and circumstances, and is able to meet our constant and returning wants. We have not to look away towards it, as distant and spiritual mysteries, but the kingdom of God is with us, and comes home to our hearts and lives, and speaks some salutary lesson to each sojourner below.

I have made these remarks, to remind you that the gospel is suited to your situation and circumstances, whatever they may be, and to every period of your life.

We have considered the relation of brothers and sisters, with such special privileges and obligations as arise from that relation ; and also the duties of the filial state. My design is now, to consider the duties of brothers and sisters, not in relation to each other, but as the youthful members of society. *Those obligations which devolve upon the young, towards forming and sustaining the still higher character and interest of man.*

I. The *first point of consideration*, to which I would call your attention, *is that immense amount of influence which the young exert for the benefit or the injury of the whole community.*

They form a generation of the most buoyant, active, and energetic character; so stand between two other generations, that while they transmit or conceal the excellencies or defects of those who are dying away, they almost entirely mould the character and destiny of those who are rising into life. The youthful generation are, in fact, the depositaries of the aged, and the almoners of the young. On you it depends, to decide what of the virtues and excellencies, or defects and errors, of the more aged, shall be transmitted to the generation which is to come after you. What you borrow from your fathers and incorporate into your character, will, in new and impressive forms, be brought to bear on the more youthful than yourselves. What you are, those who come after you will be, as to the essential features of moral feeling and moral character. While it is a fearful legacy which you inherit, when rightly received, it is an invaluable blessing, and the rich means which God has put into your hands, of doing good and preparing for heaven.

SECONDLY. *I wish to enforce the obligation under which you are all laid, to see this increasing influence well and widely directed.* Never allow yourself to feel or to say, that you have no influence. You never lived, and never can live, without it. It springs constantly and powerfully from your very being; and every hour you are drawing the deep line of everlasting character, on souls around you. Man gives not half so clear and decided his form and his features to his offspring, as he transmits the features and feelings of his mind.

What influence, I ask, shall this be ; for 'good or evil, for happiness or misery, for heaven or hell ? This is the point I wish you to consider.

I have already dwelt at length on the duties which, as individuals, you owe to yourself. The grounds upon which these duties were urged, implies obligation to regard and seek the same honour and happiness in others, which we are bound to regard for ourselves. While there may be no selfishness, in the proper acceptation of that term, in seeking and securing our own good, there is nothing *but* selfishness, where the same motive, which led us to seek our private good, does not incline us to promote the good of others also.

God had some wise and benevolent design in forming our social constitution. He acts on no principle but of love. This constitution of social feeling ; these principles of active and extensive influence, from the wise and benevolent character of God, could not have been given, but for the advancement of human happiness ; to improve and bless those with whom you live. Certainly they were not given for evil. Their Author, whose great design is to bless, and their subjects, whose desires are all for happiness, hold you responsible for all that power of doing good, which, from your nature and relation, is intrusted to your hands. Transmit light or darkness, good or evil, from your fathers over upon the infant race, you ever must ; and which shall it be ? There is in man, and it is peculiarly so in the young, a susceptibility of improvement. He is capable, by the aids of foreign influence, and from the constant

development of his own resources, to advance rapidly in knowledge and in virtue. There is not only room for improvement, but a strong desire for it, where the powers and principles of nature are kept alive and in action. Let these powers sleep, or be unwisely active, and every thing in man is rapidly rushing to deeper disgrace and ruin. And it can scarcely be conceived, to what extent of bold and brutish depravity human nature will proceed.

It is obviously our duty to seize these principles, arouse and wisely direct them. To my mind, this appears to be the chief reason for our social constitution, and for our continuance here on earth.

There is one thought I wish here to introduce. That mankind are depraved, inconceivably wicked, there is no room for doubt. How has this immense mass of moral, intelligent, and responsible beings been governed in this world, so that, with all these elements of sin, they have not continually preyed upon each other, and waged the mutual war of depredation and blood? Such restrictions have been imposed as partially to accomplish this object. These restrictions have been the breaking up of the human family into separate and distinct communities, and throwing in between them such high, strong, and impenetrable barriers, as to forbid, and effectually prevent, social intercourse. Mountains divide, seas separate, unkindred languages, diversified manners, distinct and local interests, partialities and jealousies, have all been employed to keep mankind asunder, that they might not, in congregated masses, press each other, in cruelty, to death. You have but to

refer to the confusion of tongues at Babel, and the wide dispersion of the human race, to see the confirmation of these remarks.

And you may have observed, that the most fruitful sources of evil, both in the natural and moral world, are also, when rightly regarded and employed, the most fruitful sources of good. The very means of creating evil, may be the means of securing the most permanent benefits.

I have said that it was the confusion of languages, and the wide dispersion of the human family, by which God governed the race of man for thousands of years. But what in modern times do we see? Not the confusion of languages, but the mingling of all into one. Foreign and barbarous tongues are soon known. The Bible now speaks in almost every language, and you may reach and influence every soul on the face of the globe. Social intercourse is rapid and universal. Oceans are traversed, deserts explored, and all, with rapidity and ease incredible, but for successful experiment. The whole human family may be said to be brought together again. Mind acts upon mind. The coruscations of intellect mingle and brighten. Heart meets heart, and the energies of a world are awake, and the awakened energies of a world are concentrated. All those principles and powers are in close and powerful action, which, from the depravity of man, required God to confound their speech, and drive them asunder.

The question now to be settled, is, what will be the result of these same principles and powers, in

the hands of the present generations of men, so immeasurably increased, from the miserable herd that crowded around the tower of Babel? And it is a momentous question. This reunion of human mind, and hearts, and hands; this concentration of efforts and influence, is soon to be productive of immense good, or incalculable evil. That it is for good, I would seize the hope that prophecy imparts, and that providence sometimes faintly inspires. That it is for evil, there are some dark lines of inspiration, and many a dreary scene of providence to make us fear. Will mankind feel their obligation to live for virtue and religion? Will they seize these powerful auxiliaries, and enter with a vigorous hand and a virtuous heart into this broad field of moral interest and influence? Shall the intercourse of the world be that of intelligence, virtue, and religion? Such is the reunion and remingling of the great human family; the open and active sympathies of all mankind, that an amazing result of intellectual and moral causes, must soon appear in those momentous effects which will settle the destiny of unnumbered millions, for time and eternity.

From these clear and unavoidable deductions, I would press the obligation upon every youth, to look, with personal interest, upon the aspect of the world; and I would call upon you to bring your influence on the side of intelligence, virtue, and religion. Uninterested and inactive you cannot stand. The mighty ocean of mind is agitated, and broad, deep, and rapid are the currents of moral feeling and action, and high roll the billows of this heaving sea.

In view, then, of your own personal responsibility, the best good of the community, and the salvation of a world, will you not aid directly and efficiently in the cause of intelligence, virtue, and religion?

Society is, or ever should be, progressive in knowledge and virtue. Why should we recede in the scale of excellence, know less, do less, enjoy less, than those who have gone before us? Shall we to-day, bring to no useful end the lessons of previous study; bury the new talents intrusted to our care? I ask, is it not a most melancholy and disgraceful reflection upon every youth, to tread in a path inferior in wisdom, worth, and moral influence, to that in which his ancestors were seen to move? What! will you degenerate in a day like this? Know no more—know less—do no more—do less, than they who have gone before you? While science, literature, and religion, are so brightly shedding their glories around you; while facilities unparalleled are before you, will you allow it to be said that you know no more, and do no more good than the generation which is passing away? See what they have done, and escape their follies and defects. See what they have done, and emulate their bright example. See what they have done, and surpass a hundred fold, their worth, and lead the way to nobler and to brighter deeds of intellectual worth and moral goodness.

This, as youth, you ought to do and may do. You have facilities which those before you never knew, or knew but to create them for you, when too late to employ them themselves. They explored the

land for you to go in and possess it. They have swept away the wilderness and planted the fields for you to reap. They have wrought out the materials and the means of doing good, and left them for you to employ. A broad field opens for your benevolent action, which they were only permitted to explore. Now, will you enjoy, in inglorious, guilty ease, the fruits of their hard labour, and waste the facilities of their successful toils? Where is the youth, who contemplates what benevolence has done, what human ignorance and guilt demand, and will not be aroused to effort in the cause of God and eternal life? Above all, where is the youth in this land, who can look on what has been done by those who have gone before him, and not be stimulated to do still more?

CHAPTER X.

The duties which the young owe to the community, and their obligations to advance the best interests of society.—By increasing its intelligence.—The relative value of intellectual attainments.—Liable to perversion.—What they have enabled man to accomplish when rightly directed.—Peculiarly needed at the present time.—In danger of being undervalued and neglected.—From reliance on facilities, rather than on application and mutual discipline.—Excessive desire for wealth.—Light literature.

WHEN we contemplate the result of any enterprise, it is with approbation or reproof for those who have engaged in it. If the result is valuable, the effort that secured it is virtuous and honourable; if degrading and ruinous, the expenditure and toil that achieved it, are low and disgraceful. In the failure of anticipated results, we are in danger of dishonouring the adventurer, whatever were his motives, or the object which prompted exertion. While successful rebellion is a splendid revolution, defeat is treason. Yet failure in a virtuous cause is more honourable, than full success of unrighteous achievements.

As the last witness to the declaration of our independence died, we followed him to the grave with almost unmingled respect and veneration. And not for his private virtues alone, nor for his intellectual elevation, but for his actual participation of interest, life, and fortune in that enterprise, which more than fifty years have crowned with splendid results. The periling of his all, was moral fortitude, as well as

political wisdom ; and the glory of the issue, is the sanction of his judgment and his virtue.

I bring this illustration, to remind you how valuable or ruinous results react on moral character, and often stamp with greatness or with meanness, with wisdom or with folly, the character of those who achieved them.

You are yet to witness, and you are yet to participate in the grand results, the consummation of more than a kingdom or a world ; in the grand results of intellectual and moral character ; the consummation of the universal government of God over all intelligent and immortal beings ; the results of which shall be endless and immutable ; yourselves responsible parties in the achievement, and undying subjects of its issues.

You cannot be unmindful, or if unmindful, you cannot be ignorant of this result, as developed in the word of God. Nor would we have you for a moment lose the deep conviction, that present character and conduct are fast settling the result as to your souls. The thought I would here enforce, is the probable, and, indeed, the necessary reflections of your own mind, and the just award, that all intelligent beings will pass to you as the final result of your *life*, shall be settled by the verdict of the judgment. As you, and as others will view its virtue and its value *then*, so would we have you estimate it now. We would have you associate all your powers and facilities, all your privileges and duties, not with the low and unstable objects of sensuality, but with intellect and immortality. In the pursuits of this world, simply for its possessions and enjoyments, there is

something as far beneath the dignity and destiny of your being, as it is contrary to the demands of virtue, and the law of God. The duties, which, as active and influential members of the community, you are bound to discharge, respect pre-eminently another and a higher state of being: a state of being, where thought and feeling shall assume the government of the soul, unlimited in its expansion, and unclouded in its sensibility.

You will not forget the train of thought with which this subject was introduced—your necessary influence for good or evil—your facilities for extended benevolence, and the account awaiting you at the bar of public sentiment and at the judgment.

My object at present is to point you to some of the methods by which you may advance the interests of society at large.

FIRST, by increasing its intelligence.

I would place intellectual excellence where God has placed it, as one of the brightest elements of man's original creation, and one of the brilliant reflections of divine glory. I would press the importance of its attainment on every one. I know the mind of man became dark as his heart was degenerate; and it is equally true, that, as the heart is repaired from its ruins, the intellect becomes restored from its darkness and degradation. And the resuscitation and culture of intellect in man, is like the toil of his animal frame, converted by mediatorial mercy from a curse to one of the richest sources of enjoyment, as well as one of the strongest securities to virtue. We have too long overlooked the aid, which public

virtue and evangelical piety may borrow from enlightened and vigorous intellect. How an enlarged and well balanced mind adorns and ennobles man in every department of life. There is no occupation in which education may not be useful, and immediately applied to purposes of private good and the public interest. We have, indeed, often seen minds richly stored, lofty and splendid, yet cold as a northern star; others, fired by mad ambition, fitful, blazing, and terrific, as the ill-foreboding meteor, till the whole hemisphere of mind was lighted to a blaze, and the whole world bewildered and guided to infidelity and death. Yet after all, mental richness, liberal and expanded views, are among heaven's inestimable gifts, and to cultivate the mind, one of the chief duties of man on earth. The perversion and abuse of intelligence, with its ruinous influence when perverted and abused, prove nothing against its value; but, on the contrary, show its exalted worth, when wisely secured and rightly directed. There are no means, nor facilities for usefulness and virtue, but what are liable to perversion and abuse, and may be made to yield wide and durable evils. The gospel and the means of grace are pre-eminently such; so is intelligence: yet who would neglect either?

We should, on the other hand, mark what enlightened and liberal views have accomplished in the world. What individuals have achieved by the force of intellect: how, unaided by fortune, unpatronized by favour, and almost unknown while living, they have started an influence which hallows, endears,

and brightens their memory, raising them in intellectual glory, as the future guides of man. These men, though for a time unseen and unfelt, in the silent majesty of mind, rule the world, and leave the impress of their greatness on the imperishable monuments of its true dignity. Enlightened mind is influence: sanctified intellect is the glory and the safety of man; and as these are undervalued and die away, every important institution is endangered, and the safety of a nation is invaded. I would have you review this world's history, and see how men of intelligence have brightened and blessed their country and the world. How they have intimidated the pride of power; overturned long established cruelty and oppression; and achieved those splendid revolutions which have blessed, and are still blessing the world. How it was the force of mind, aided indeed by moral principle, which laid out your own country, and even in its youth, has made it the admiration of all lands. It was general intelligence, rightly directed, that made this wilderness a garden; and it is general intelligence, still rightly directed, which must preserve the bloom and beauty of our country. And we wish our youth not to be deceived on this subject, nor to pride themselves on securities and aids to advancement and honour, which they might enjoy, but do not improve.

There is much said, and proudly said, about the growing intelligence of the world, and the peculiar intelligence of our country. We are too boastful of the rank we hold. Scarce a fraction of the world is raised from mental debasement. And is it not a fact,

that our own country is not, comparatively, as enlightened and intellectually distinguished, as it once was? And does it not now present fearful evidences of growing indifference to its intellectual and moral culture? I know this may appear strange, and you may question its truth. You may point to our multiplied institutions of learning; to those endless productions of mind thrown daily from the press; and the facilities for learning brought almost to every door. Still the inquiry may be urged upon us, *is education rising*—is intelligence advancing—does it possess that relative and commanding influence to which it is entitled? Is it taking the lead, and holding in high and imperious control the interest and destinies of the country? It once did so—but does it now? You read of the time, when the Puritans, exiled on these wilderness shores, laid the foundations of your country, and laid them in intelligence and holiness. Next to their Bible and their sanctuary, they valued their *school room*, and at once devised their Universities of learning on a basis, that Europe, with the advance of centuries, could but admire. Every thing was then held subservient to intellectual and moral excellence. Pride of party, personal ambition, pecuniary gain, and lordly luxury, did not, and could not, eclipse the brightness, nor outweigh the value of intellectual eminence and moral dignity. Your fathers framed a government of law, most consistent with the rights of man, and bequeathed to their children a legacy richer than hereditary dignity of titles and estate; the *legacy* of its preservation; the rich facilities for intellectual improvement, and the bright

example of moral worth. Moral and intellectual culture they united, and the wisest assemblage of statesmen, reflected as much their own wisdom and honour, as the glory of God, in that sanction which they gave to the wisdom of inspiration, and the safety they implored by fasting and prayer. And is there no departure from this high ground? Is there no receding from that respect which once was given to intellectual eminence and to moral worth? Do we not see the rising and the advance of an agrarian principle; of a mad and reckless radicalism; a wide and almost universal murmur of discontent; a demand for that levelling system, which would reduce alike the dignity of intellect, the security of virtue, and the right of possession, to the dictates of unbridled licentiousness? And is there no gloomy apprehension to be borrowed from that supercilious courting of this agrarian spirit; this strong desire for popular favour; this yielding up of law and government; the unmanly prostration of civil rights and personal freedom to the bold demand of levelling authority?

What has this to do with the subject before us? Much, in every point of view. This exhibits a lowering of respect for intelligence, a proof of mental and moral degeneracy abroad among the people, not only, but it presents a melancholy proof that the leaders of party, and the high authorities of the land, no longer move in that brilliant and independent sphere of intellectual and moral dignity, which is alike un-reached, unassailed, and uninfluenced, by the low and sordid principles of personal ambition. It shows that intelligence and moral worth are not the

only securities of political elevation, nor demanded as the legitimate and accepted pledges for fidelity and success, in the enactment and administration of law. It shows that intelligence and moral worth are not the all-commanding principles of the people; for no intelligent people that are free, will ever raise over them uneducated men. The dying away of intelligence in the assemblies and senates of a free nation; the lowering of its public standard for merit and trust; the departing of courtesy and decorum, and of unsullied dignity from legislative halls; the weakening of the arm of authority and the loose decisions of justice, are clear and fatal marks of wasting intelligence among the people, and of a rapid return of that prostituted public sentiment, which threatens to erect on the ruins of *law*, the ruthless sway of private *will*.*

* As allusion has been made to the regard which the fathers of our country paid to the subjects of education and religion, I would introduce in this place, the evidence of that regard. Reference is often made to what was felt by them in relation to these subjects; but it is not to be expected that many of our youth would be fully acquainted with the facts in the case, as they actually occurred; and as a change so great and so fearful has taken place, it would be well for us to be reminded often of the characters and views of our forefathers.

On the Journals of Congress, "Sept. 11th, 1777," is the following resolution:—

"Ordered, &c. * * * * that the use of the Bible is so universal, and its importance so great, that your committee refer the above to the consideration of Congress; and if Congress shall not think it expedient to order the importation of types and paper, the committee recommend, that Congress will order the committee of commerce to import 20,000 Bibles from Holland, Scotland, and elsewhere, into the different ports of the United States. Whereupon, it was moved, that the committee of commerce be directed to import 20,000 copies of the Bible, &c."

In 1782, when, in consequence of the war, it was difficult to import Bibles, the subject of printing the Holy Scriptures was again brought

It was the wise remark of the late Emperor of France, that "*after all it is education that makes men.*" Pre-eminently is it true, that education is

before Congress. The result was a vote of Congress recommending the edition of Robert Aiken, of Philadelphia, in the following language:— "The United States, in Congress assembled, highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking, as subservient to the interests of religion, and being satisfied of the care and accuracy in the execution of the work, recommend this edition to the inhabitants of the United States." Let this fact live and be told to every youth, that elevation of rank and office, when intelligent and virtuous, reveres and commends the Word of God.

The fathers of our country had equal reverence for the institutions of religion, and acknowledged their obligations to its Holy Author. In March 14th, 1776, we find the following:—

"In times of impending calamity and distress, &c. * * * * * it becomes the duty of these, hitherto free and happy colonies, with true penitence of heart and the most reverent devotion, publicly, to acknowledge the overruling providence of God, to confess and deplore our offences against Him, and to supplicate His interposition for averting the threatened danger, and prospering our strenuous efforts in the cause of freedom, virtue, and posterity. * * * * * Desirous, at the same time, to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God's superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely in all their lawful enterprise on His aid and direction, do earnestly recommend, that Friday, 17th of May next, be observed by said colonies, as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer. That we may, with united hearts, confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and by a sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease His righteous displeasure, and through the merits and mediation of JESUS CHRIST, obtain His pardon and forgiveness, &c. &c. * * * * * And it is recommended to all Christians, of all denominations, to assemble for public worship, and abstain from servile labour, on the said day."

In December 11th, 1776, only about six months after the above recommendation, we find the following resolution:—"Resolved that it be recommended to all the United States, as soon as possible, to appoint a day of solemn fasting and prayer, to implore of Almighty God the forgiveness of the many sins prevailing among all ranks, and to beg the countenance and assistance of His providence in the prosecution of the present just and necessary war.

"The Congress do also, in the most earnest manner, recommend to all the members of the United States, particularly the officers, civil and military, under them, the exercise of repentance and reformation; and

essential to fit men both to govern and to be governed. That improvement of mind—those enlarged views, which reading, study, and reflection alone

further, to require of them the strict observation of the articles of war, and particularly, that part of the said articles which forbids profane swearing and all immorality, of which, all such officers are desired to take notice."

March 7th, 1778.—"Resolved, that it be recommended to the United States of America, to set apart Wednesday, the 22d of April next, to be observed as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that at one time, and with one voice, the inhabitants may acknowledge the righteous dispensation of Divine Providence, and confess their iniquities and transgressions for which the land mourneth; that they may implore the mercy and forgiveness of God, and beseech Him that vice, profanity, extortion, and every evil may be done away, and that we may be a reformed and happy people," &c. &c.

March 10th, 1781.—"The United States, in Congress assembled, agreed to the following proclamation. "At all times, it is our duty to acknowledge the overruling Providence of the Great Governor of the universe, and devoutly to implore His divine favour and protection. But in the hour of calamity and impending danger, when by fire and the sword, by the savages of the wilderness, and by our own domestics, a vindictive enemy pursues a war of rapine and devastation, with unrelenting fury; we are peculiarly excited, with true penitence of heart, to prostrate ourselves before our Great CREATOR, and fervently to supplicate His gracious interposition for our deliverance. The United States, in Congress assembled, therefore, do earnestly recommend, that Thursday, the 3d of May next, be observed as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may, with united hearts, confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease His righteous displeasure, and, through the merits of our blessed SAVIOUR, obtain pardon and forgiveness; that it please Him to inspire our rulers with incorruptible integrity, and to direct and prosper their councils; to inspire all our citizens with a fervent and disinterested love of their country, and to preserve and strengthen the Union, &c. &c. And it is recommended to all the people of these States, that they assemble for public worship, and abstain from labour on said day."

March 19th, 1782, we find the following truly evangelical record:— "The goodness of the Supreme Being to all His rational creatures demands their acknowledgment of gratitude and love; His absolute government of this world, dictates, that it is the interest of every nation and people, ardently to supplicate His favour, and to implore His protection.

can give, are the best securities to contentedness and improvement in private life ; and as they enable us to judge of the nature and value of civil rights and

“When the lusts of dominion and lawless ambition excite arbitrary power to invade the rights, or endeavour to wrest from a people their sacred and invaluable privileges, and compels them, in defence of the same, to encounter all the horrors and calamities of a bloody and uncertain war, then is that people loudly called upon to fly unto that God for protection, who hears the cries of the distressed, and will not turn a deaf ear to the supplications of the oppressed.

“The United States, in Congress assembled, therefore, taking into consideration our present situation, our multiplied transgressions of the holy laws of our God, and His past acts of kindness and goodness towards us, which we ought to receive with liveliest gratitude, think it their indispensable duty to call upon the several States, to set apart the last Thursday of April next, as a day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer ; that our joint supplications may then ascend to the throne of the Ruler of the universe, beseeching Him to diffuse a spirit of universal reformation among all ranks and degrees of our citizens, and make us a holy, so we may be a happy people. * * * * * That the religion of our *Divine Redeemer*, with all its benign influence, may cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.”

The character of respect and reverence for God and religion, manifested in the above records, was not created by the perilous circumstances in which the country was placed, but it was the result of just conceptions of God and our relations to Him. Our fathers were equally mindful of their obligation for Divine favours, and with equal cheerfulness returned thanks for His goodness.

We find the following Proclamation recorded, November 1, 1777.

“Forasmuch as it is the indispensable duty of all men to adore the superintending providence of Almighty God, to acknowledge with gratitude their obligations to Him for benefits received, and to implore such further blessings as they stand in need of ; and it having pleased Him in His abundant mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable bounties of His common providence, but also smile upon us, as in the prosecution of a just and necessary war, for the defence and establishment of our inalienable rights and liberties ; particularly in that He has been pleased in so great a measure to prosper the means used for the support of our troops, and to crown our arms with most signal success : it is therefore recommended to the Legislative and Executive powers of these United States, to set apart the 18th day of December next, for solemn Thanksgiving and Praise : that with one heart and one voice, the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts, and

securities, they prepare us to intrust their keeping to those, and to those only, who, from their intelligence and worth, are entitled to confidence and trust.

consecrate themselves to the service of their divine Benefactor; and together with their sincere acknowledgment and offerings, they may join the penitent confession of their many sins, whereby they have forfeited every favour, and their humble and fervent supplications that it may please God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, mercifully to forgive and to blot them out of remembrance: that it may please Him graciously to afford his blessing on the government of these States respectively, and prosper the public councils of the Whole; to inspire our commanders, both by land and sea, and all under them, with that wisdom and fortitude which may render them fit instruments under the providence of Almighty God, to secure for these United States the greatest of all blessings, independence and peace: that it may please Him to prosper the trade and manufactures of the people, and the labour of the husbandmen, that our land may yield its increase: to make schools and seminaries of education, so necessary for cultivating the principles of true liberty, virtue, and piety, under his maturing hand, and to prosper the means of religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that kingdom which consisteth in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And it is further recommended, that servile labour, and such recreation as may be unbecoming the purpose of this appointment, be omitted on so solemn an occasion."

November 17, 1778, a similar day was appointed by a proclamation breathing the same spirit.

The following interesting circumstance occurred October 24, 1781. "A letter from General Washington, giving information of the reduction of the British Army under the command of Earl Cornwallis, on the 19th inst.

"Whereupon, on motion of Mr. Randolph,

"Resolved, That Congress will, at 2 o'clock this day, go in procession to the Dutch Lutheran Church, and return thanks to Almighty God for crowning the allied arms of the United States and France with success, by the surrender of the whole British Army under the command of Earl Cornwallis."

"September 13, 1781. Resolved, That Thursday, 13th day of December next, be observed as a day of public Thanksgiving, throughout the United States."

A full and an affecting proclamation accompanied this resolution.

October 11, 1782. After enumerating the many blessings of providence during the year, Congress in their proclamation appointing a day of Thanksgiving, add: "do hereby recommend to the inhabitants of

These, too, are essential to guard from the re-actings of those gloomy and superstitious elements of depravity, which have so long chained the mind and the heart in captivity, and which are now in vigorous exertion to bring on to us the reign of spiritual despotism. That breaking asunder of kindred bonds—throwing aside of established principles—bold resolution for experiments, under the arrogant title of improvement—novelties in science, literature, legislation, and religion; this restless radicalism and fearless ultraism, which have already assumed the blighting features of “fanaticism,” are fast walking over the landmark of wisdom, virtue, and safety, which the wisest and best men of two continents had drawn, and which their practical utility for centuries had sanctioned.

This is not the exaggeration of morbid sensitiveness, nor the gloomy fears of an extravagant fancy. It is the legitimate result of sober reflection borrowed from the experience of the past. What the ultimate results will be, if no redeeming power is applied, does not want the aid of prophecy to foresee.

There is a redeeming power, and it lies in the hands of the young to see it applied. It is such a correction of the popular sentiment, as shall make

these in general to observe, and request the several States to interpose their authority in enforcing and commanding the observation of Thursday, 28th of November next, as a day of solemn Thanksgiving to God for all his mercies; and they do further recommend to all ranks, to testify their gratitude to God for his goodness, by a cheerful obedience to his laws, and by promoting, *each in his station, and by his influence, the practice of true and undefiled religion, which is the great foundation of public prosperity and national happiness.*”

intellectual excellence, and the diffusion of useful knowledge, more valuable and more valued, than the adornments of fashion and the pride of wealth; that shall seek out and elevate worth and liberal sentiments, and make the attainment of office and honour, the result of intelligence, of enlarged views and moral honesty; that shall frown on obtrusive ignorance and vain glory, and shall put to silence the cavillings of sceptical philosophy, and extinguish the enkindlings of agrarian licentiousness. This may be done, for it has been done. And when the youth of our country shall be made to think more of intellectual honours, and prize higher the intellectual pleasures; pursue more ardently, and diffuse more widely the resources of useful knowledge, it will be done again, and until then it will not be done. And if this is not done, it is not in the possibility of moral influence; it is not within the reach of most ardent hope, to create the belief, that our country is destined long to survive the shocks of ignorance, infidelity, and licentiousness. General intelligence, under the conservative influence of moral principle, is the only security which remains to us; and it is not for you to rest in the belief of safety, and felicitate yourselves on the actual improvement of intellectual resources, but you should be deeply affected by the fact, long overlooked, that this increase bears no proportion to the demand which is made upon us, by the still more rapid increase of an ignorant and vicious population; a population unlike the legitimate descendants of your fathers, whose first nurturings were those of intellect and moral feeling,

but a population whose aspirations of mind were stifled in the cradle, and whose moral constitution was poisoned by the ailments of lust—all of whose native and ennobling principles are prostrate and blasted, almost beyond the power of redemption.

There is a demand now for the cultivation of intellect, and for the exercise of its moral influence, beyond what was ever before known. It must be higher in its attainments, and it must be rapid and efficient in its application. It must not only rise and shine, but it must move forward, like the pillar and cloud of Israel, with guiding and controlling energy. It must, in the dignity of age, ascend again the high places of trust, and ennoble the decisions of law and justice. It must speak in the commanding voice of legislative dignity—it must invest, with new honour, our ecclesiastical councils—it must pervade the walks of private life—give to wealth its splendour, and to luxury its sweetness—to domestic scenes its chaste adornings, and to the nursery, the enkindling hopes of a nation's elevation. *Mind and moral worth* must be made the capital of our country—the conservative principles, which must be woven through all its complicated arrangements, and give a dignity, a charm, and security to our possessions and our hopes.

It may not be improper to allude to some of the causes which have contributed, and which may still contribute to lessen the value, which a free people ought ever to place on its intellectual resources, and the efforts which ought to be made to increase general intelligence.

FIRST: There is, at the present time, false pride

of our intellectual advantages, and a reliance upon facilities for education, rather than laborious efforts for its attainment.

We have the richest advantages, the most ample facilities, and as bright examples of intellectual eminence, as any nation, ancient or modern. Examples, too, from every class of society; men, who, by the force of their own genius, and reliance on their own efforts, have arisen from the obscurest walks of life, to intellectual eminence, leading in the useful arts, adorning alike the bar, the senate, and the chair of state; giving dignity to the pulpit and the diplomacy of nations, and spreading a charm over all the departments of literature and science. Under their influence and example, the labouring classes have been raised; dignity, rather than disgrace, attached to honest and daily toil, by the intelligence which may be gained, and the path which it opens before the humblest labourer, to the attainment of wealth, and the honours of office and trust.

As they who have gone before us have learned, from their own experience, the value and the blessings of education and general intelligence, they laid the foundation for most ample advantages to those who should succeed them.

And a question of deep interest arises; are the youth of our country sufficiently stimulated by their example, and industrious in improving their facilities for intellectual attainments? Is it not true, that while opportunities for gaining general knowledge are a thousand fold more rich, varied, and extensive; industrious application, close study, elaborate investigation, are in danger of being

greatly neglected? Does not the present generation rely rather on the attainments of others, than upon their own researches? Are they not contented with the fields already explored, rather than advancing on the experiments and resources of their predecessors? And from this unhappy feature of the age, is there not a growing indifference to the stores of literature and science already before us, and the public mind fast becoming incompetent to appreciate and improve these rich treasures of national wealth and honour, as well as of individual dignity and personal happiness? There are, indeed, many bright stars adorning our hemisphere of mind, but are they not comparatively few and incomparably less commanding, than those which so early rose illustrious in our skies? We will not say, that the years of our Franklins, our Parsons, our Rushes, Edwards, and Dwights are ended, but we do not behold the paths which they trod, to usefulness and honour, crowded by young aspirants for knowledge and immortality. Above all, we do not see that rigid regard to industrious application, that high toned intellectual integrity, that so brightened and blessed the character of these men, and the age in which they lived. It cannot be denied, that vast wealth, and multiplied years are now expended; often a nominal education merely is gained, while the pearl of intellectual price lies buried too deep for gay and careless youth to reach: and multitudes, who are assuming the character of educated men, are as shallow of intellect, and barren of thought, as they are showy and proud—alike a disgrace to their country abroad, and a burden to its interests at home. It would seem, that

the rage for improvement in mechanic arts, and the rapidity of commercial intercourse, had invaded the empire of mind, and a high road was demanded, and attempted to mental acquirements and intellectual eminence, in which the time and the toil of years might be saved, and the pleasures of youth, the honours of wealth and office, and the refinements of luxury, all become cotemporary and co-ordinate with intellectual attainments. Thus, if we mistake not, the advantages and varied facilities for education in our country, are in danger of being perverted, and made a direct check to those vigorous efforts and high attainments to which our youth should ardently aspire.

SECOND. Love of wealth is another embarrassment in the way of general education and high intellectual attainments.

This is the ruling characteristic of our country ; and when resolved into the manly spirit of energy and enterprise, and restricted to proper bounds, and advanced for proper ends, cannot be discouraged nor despised. But when it becomes the *ruling* passion, absorbing all other considerations, and creating a false standard of excellence and influence, giving to simple possession an influence and honour which belong only to mind and moral worth, it is time to frown on its spirit, and to check its advancement. Pride of riches, and an aristocracy of wealth, may be as perilling and prostrating to the interests of our country, as the pride of hereditary distinction, and an aristocracy of unalienable power.

It cannot be questioned, that wealth, too eagerly sought in extended and unwarrantable enterprises,

rashness of speculation we should rather say, has contributed to this neglect of education in a still larger class of our youth. They see the false estimate which is placed upon riches, the splendid luxury and apparent ease in which it reposes, the obsequious court and base servility that bow before it, and it fills alike their day dreams and their nightly visions, till every faculty, and every nerve, are given to its attainment. They become so anxious to be rich, that they hasten away from the facilities of learning, and regard every attainment as useless, which does not bear directly on the object of their desires. The result is, they often fail as to the object of pursuit, for want of educated minds to calculate with wisdom, and with prudence; or if they actually succeed, their very riches become sources of unhappiness; giving them, as they vainly imagine, a right to eminence which they are unfitted to hold, and to duties which they are incompetent to discharge. Thus, their ample possessions set off more glaringly the barrenness of their minds, and prove their unfitness for the stations to which they aspire, by the force of wealth.

I would say to every youth, lay a good foundation for knowledge, before you seek to become rich; and let your increase of wealth never be sought at the expense of an increase of useful learning. Think more of immortal mind than of those transient gains that glitter in the eyes of vain and foolish men; secure that which gives to wealth its real worth; to elevated life, its highest charms; to retired age, its ease and dignity.

THIRD. Another source of the evil in question,

is the almost endless profusion of stupid and scurrilous journals, which issue daily from the press, and which crowd every village of our land. Multitudes of these, created for the single purpose of pecuniary gain, are spread with industrious effort, and take the place of more respectable vehicles of intelligence. These innumerable publications are often presented as conclusive evidence of a reading population, and of growing intelligence; when in fact, it is evidence of what party men will expend for party purposes, and how vitiated and strong the public taste has become, for low and scurrilous attacks on public good and private character. While these are crowded upon us, more valuable sources of instruction will not only be excluded, but the taste for reading and useful knowledge becomes perverted and destroyed.

The great variety of reviews, which present to us the more extended works of literature, science, and religion, are in danger of exerting an unfavourable influence on that very cause which they were intended to promote. They have become the labour-saving machines of intellect, seizing and presenting the most brilliant imagery, vivid illustration, manly investigation, and extended research; these are thrown in between us and the full fountain from which they were drawn: adorned, too, as they usually are, with superadded honours, the necessity of more extended reading is regarded as unnecessary, and its labour both useless and uninviting. There are many whose wisdom is borrowed from the title of books, or, at most, from a few leading thoughts which adorn their pages.

The reading of light and superficial authors, above all, has contributed to the evil in question, and induced what is justly denominated, the age of "superficial literature." Sober history, rigid science, elevated poetry, and substantial literature, are not, as in years that are past, regarded as essential to the foundation and superstructure of education. Addison, Johnson, with the grave historians, with Cowper and Milton, and writers on natural and mental science, and moral philosophy, are too sober and dull to meet the vitiated taste and excited passions of modern times. They require too much thought and reflection. They are addressed to mind in the dignity and majesty of cultivated expansion, and are the proper aliment of its growing necessities, the rich luxuries upon which it delights to feast. And it is not strange, that mind, with partial development and perverted powers, should fail to appreciate these stores of intellect.

There are comparatively few, who seem delighted with those rich treasures of Grecian literature, which have adorned our world as widely as her monuments of art; and multitudes of our youth, we fear, would be more captivated and fired by the standards of Roman prowess, and the spreading eagles of her victory, than by the thunder of her eloquence, and the highest adornments of her civic wreaths.

While the study of biblical science should more than ever command the labour of the ministry, and of all who anticipate the usefulness of the sacred office, the great mass of the rising generation, pass with almost entire indifference and neglect those rich

resources of sacred literature, which the loftiest minds have opened before us, and to which ages of experience have given sanction and solemnity. I must be allowed to say, and that, too, not with the partiality of one in a separate department of study, but as a matter of unquestionable fact, to be deplored, that the learned professions, while they would appear as demanding richer resources, and furnishing more extended facilities, are, at the same time, fast filling with men unaccustomed to severe and protracted study. At the threshold of the ministry, we throw our most decided protest. And why, in the departments of law and medicine, should we listen to the elaborate lectures of other men and of other times, gain the forms of the one and the practice of the other, without securing that expansion of mind, which severe, protracted, and successful study alone can gain; and which alone can give us the promise and the power of new discovery and higher attainments in these departments of useful knowledge, which are but just opened before us.

The great struggle seems now to be for an early entrance upon the active employments of life, without sufficiently regarding that preparation which is essential to render those active engagements useful and successful. To be doing something—to be growing rich—to be in the high and rapid advance of independent action, is the great object which seems to absorb every other consideration. While ruined estates, prostrate health, wasted lives, and blasted characters, are the painful forfeitures of this abandonment of a judicious, rigid, and successful

course of mental discipline.* Eminence of professional character has not the charm that an early settlement in life and anticipated wealth present, and the thought of more enlarged usefulness is in danger of being wholly forgotten.

But as much as we deplore this change, we regret, if possible, still more, that loose, frivolous, light, miscellaneous reading, with which our age and our country abounds. The highest class of intellect is not now put in requisition to furnish the aliment of the public mind. Germany does, indeed, present some illustrious monuments of genius and extended research; but they lie hid, for the most part, in the dulness of their native tongue, and are almost lost to the world. Scotland and England, to use the language of their own shores, "have given birth to their complement of illustrious men; but have done with admiration of CHIEFS and will hereafter move forward in mass, by the force, and under the guidance of the common mind."† Authors now must write only what the world will read. There was a time when they formed the public mind; but now they

* It is doubtful whether any age or country can furnish a proportionate number of mercantile failures, and entire bankruptcies among young adventurers, with our own. The temptations and facilities for engaging in business, on borrowed capital; of unwarrantable extension without personal responsibility; hope of gain by hazarding, where there is no fear of personal loss; withal, the ease of effecting a compromise, on terms which will yield to the unsuccessful adventurer a handsome possession, to which he has not the shadow of right, have contributed to almost countless failures in our country, which are alike injurious to well-regulated business, and to moral integrity. And it presents a very serious question, as touching the political economy and morals of the country, whether its rapidly increasing enterprise and speculation, on fictitious and borrowed capital, is not, on the whole, a positive, and an alarming evil.

† Saturday Evening.

must yield to public sentiment, or see their works fall unnoticed and die. Hence, it is said, "they seldom appear at all;" and the world is flooded with superficial, false, and miserable literature, on which vitiated taste delights to feed, and which every hour becomes still more and more vitiated. History can scarce be read at all, till all confidence in its truth is taken away by embellishments which romantic fancy has thrown around it.

That illustrious man, whom this country has so highly honoured, whose versatile mind has gone to rest, while he may have laid the world under obligation for sweeping aside an immense mass of puerile and vulgar romance, has, at the same time, thrown an equal amount of *splendid* romance, on sober and substantial history, which has, perhaps, more than outweighed the good secured. While he has the credit of drawing human nature in broad, bright, and diversified lines, I am free to declare, that its reality is nowhere to be found in life; and he has been as unjust to the darker features of our nature, as he has been partial to those which he has sought to adorn; and I doubt not at all, that the cause of literature has, on the whole, suffered from his immense contribution to her stores, to say nothing of his having burlesqued the religion of his own country. I am willing to inscribe this prediction on the most enduring monument of his fame, that fifty years will find his works, excepting a few of a poetical character, almost as much unknown, save in the history of literature, as was their author in the zenith of his glory. When I reflect upon what the works of Sir Walter Scott have done to the sober

history of our world, and to that portion of the reading class in the higher walks of life, I cannot but admire the just and cutting reproof of the young Duke of Reichtstadt, when he said of this novelist biographer of his father, "having turned the history of his own country into fable, he has come to turn the fable of ours into history."

Do you inquire what has this to do with our duty, to increase the intelligence of our country? Much every way. I wish to direct your attention to more substantial and profitable reading, and thus secure that expansion of mind—those liberal and enlightened views, which will lay the basis of solid and useful characters, and not cultivate an early aversion to sober and instructive reading by such light and fascinating productions. You are in danger of being led through such enchanting fields of fiction, that you will be wholly unable to settle down on the sober and permanent realities of truth.

But you will probably say, that we learn much of human nature. This I very much doubt, after all. And what if you do learn much of human nature from these productions of fancy? Is it that knowledge of human nature which you most need, and which you find easy to apply to the practical purposes of life? And more than this, do you learn it in those connexions which render you safe, and which make that knowledge valuable? You may learn much of human nature from the profane and vulgar dramatists of Europe; yet what youth, especially what youth of female delicacy, would expose her virtue of mind, and modesty of emotion, by traversing such scenes of pollution and shame?

You might learn human nature in the low sinks of human degradation and debauchery, but to secure it, would you become a resident and a participant there? The fact is, there is an error here, a gross deception. These novelists and dramatists have been caressed and crowded upon the world for selfish and vicious purposes, under false pretensions; and the great mass of our youth receive and read them, not for the instruction they impart, but to keep up with a species of fashion; and above all, to feast the insatiable appetite of sickly sensibility.

Plain unvarnished history and biography are the best schools of human nature, while the dramatist and the novelist do equal injustice to the excellencies and defects of man; and give those extravagant and distorted views which feast the passions for things marvellous, and impart little that is instructive and useful.*

* I know of scarce a single portrait drawn by this much lauded painter of human character, where is blended the subject of religion, in which gross injustice is not done to the principles of the gospel. He evidently entered upon a province with which he was not acquainted. His positive denial of the authorship of his works to the Duke of York, and his subsequent acknowledgment of it, at an hour of unbecoming festivity, together with the gross injustice he has done the Covenanters, and the more eminently pious of his own kirk and country, as proved abundantly before the British Parliament, are proofs sufficient, that the moral tendency of his writings is not in accordance with the principles of virtue and religion.

And I have always been surprised at the almost indiscriminate praise bestowed upon the works of Shakspeare; especially at the place which he is assigned in the world of letters, by moral and religious men. No matter what his merit is; no matter how true to the life he has drawn his characters; no matter how brilliant and lofty his imaginative genius, the question should be, *What is the moral tendency of his works?* When, on almost every page, the God we worship is profaned, and that delicacy, and modesty, and virtue which we most prize in our youth, are rudely assailed, it would seem, that the

I would say, form a taste for reading, gain a reputation for intelligence, far above the range of romance and evanescent poetry. A taste that can be satisfied only with substantial literature; a reputation that cannot be sullied by the acknowledgment that you are ignorant of these; that you stop not to drink at these mingled waters, but go up to the high and pure fountains.

I cannot disguise the fact, that little promise of elevation in life, but faint hope of usefulness and dignified enjoyment are found in that young man who turns from instructive reading to light and ephemeral literature, and who does not resolve on the attainment of educated intellect, more than on the acquisition of wealth. And that house whose drawing rooms present the crowded display of gilded annuals and fresh romances, is not the place where you are to find the intellectual dignity, and the solid virtues of the female character. You may find the adornments of fashion, the pride of life, the show of wealth, while all that gives wealth and life their value, may be wanting still.

evil is so great, that no amount of good that can be derived from them, should give them currency. I know I am meeting the almost uniform and expressed opinion of two continents, and yet, at the same time I would ask, what youth, especially what virtuous female can, without constant violence to her virtuous sensibilities, read the pages of this dramatist? Take away his vulgarity, obscenity, and profaneness, and how long would he continue to sustain and adorn the stage? A solitary *expurgated* edition of his works, if we are not misinformed, still remains on the hands of the publisher. It is feared and believed that this author has lived as much on the depraved sensibilities of our youth, as on his own intrinsic merit as a man of mind; and it is the very splendour of his genius, and the master strokes of his imaginative powers, that renders the poison of his works so subtle and destructive.

I have long been persuaded of the importance of this subject, from its strong and direct bearing on the usefulness of active life, and the cause of vital piety. We begin to speak with admiration, and almost with reverence, of those who are "men of the old school." And that admiration and reverence arise, not alone from their intrinsic excellence and acknowledged dignity of deportment, but from the fewness of their number, and constantly retiring steps. They are like the fathers of the revolution, honourable for their age and the solitary grandeur in which they move; and like them, they impress us with gloomy fears, that, as they die away, there will be found none to prize and preserve the principles which they lived to establish, and sanctioned in death. There is a growing lightness and flippancy in our age and in our country, a constant incorporation of the vanity, the show, the superficialness of Europe; while the grave, the solid, the dignified deportment of genuine manliness and virtue, are in danger of being thrown aside. The primitive grandeur of puritanic intellect, and the solid basis of religious principle, are undermined by the insinuating corruptions of foreign growth, and the licentious spirit of false independence.

Education and valuable intelligence are, or may be made equally auxiliary to the cause of religion, as to that of genuine refinement and true dignity of manners. That knowledge of man and of Divine Providence, which is borrowed from the calm and dispassionate record of the past, is peculiarly favourable to the successful inculcation of scripture truth, and the practical duties of christian godliness.

While hearts that are vitiated, and minds formed on the model of romantic history, and light literature, are extremely unfriendly to serious thought, holy meditation, and practical piety. With such, the realities of life, of truth, and of religion, can seldom gain reception. Religion is a reality, and so are death and the judgment, heaven and hell ; and yet who does not know that these, with all the fearful evidence that fortifies their claims to man's immediate regard, gain scarce a moment's thought, or the slightest credit, from minds bewildered by fiction, and hearts whose every spring and every chord of sensitiveness is held by the love of uncertain, yet anticipated indulgence.

And hence it is, that a well meaning class of authors have formed the design of presenting to vitiated moral sentiment, their "*Religious Romances.*" The most absurd, and perhaps I may add, the most injurious of all. And if the son of the conqueror lamented to see the history of his father and of his country turned into fable, how much more should the Christian regret to have the holy religion of Jesus, converted from its sacred realities, to deceitful fiction ; or its unearthly mysteries, and its most moving scenes, shaded and impaired by vain attempts to adorn the one, to explain and enforce the other, by the aid of fictitious illustrations ?

Labour to have your minds and morals formed on the principles of truth and righteousness, and endeavour, by the rich facilities for intellectual improvement, to gain, and constantly cultivate a taste for substantial knowledge, and excite an emulation for those attainments, which enrich the public mind, add

to the resources of intellect, and contribute to the moral advancement of society. Remember, that mind which you possess is the noblest part of your existence. It is to become, indeed, it now is, the chief means of forming your moral character, and the channel through which the soul, as to its moral and sensitive nature, will drink in pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow for ever. Then let its immortal energies never lie inactive, or become perverted, but aroused and cultivated by truth, to the widest extent of their capacities here, that they may put on again, in the renovated glories of spiritual life, their original resemblance to their divine and blessed Author.

CHAPTER XI.

Intellectual attainments favourable to religion.—Religion contributes to mental development and culture, and also stimulates to industry and enterprise.—The duty of making all attainments to subserve the interests of virtue and piety.

It has been a common remark, that rich resources of intelligence were unfavourable to the attainment of piety, and the growth of christian character. And nothing can be more untrue. It is the abuse of intelligence, the pride and vanity of its resources, which contribute to this result, just as the abuse of any other possession or attainment will do. It has also been supposed, that true piety was unfavourable to vigour and expansion of intellect, and successful enterprise. This is still farther from the truth than the former impression; for piety is that principle which does not admit of such a perversion and abuse; but, from its very nature, sways and governs the mind; prompts to industrious application in our appropriate spheres of action; and, most of all, excites to useful industry, reading and study, and imparts, even to uneducated minds, a desire for information.

It has been thought that the gospel authorized this belief, where Christ says, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." This, in my opinion, more clearly teaches the unfittedness of those proud

and vain, of their religious knowledge, to gain that instruction which is so easily secured, by that humble, docile, teachable disposition, seen clearly in the days of childhood. The false impression before us, is confirmed still more, where it is said, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." This portion of sacred truth is generally misapplied. It is not declared that few of this description are actually called to be Christians, but that in the day of the first spread of the religion of Christ, not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called *to become its teachers and apostles*. There was reason why such should not be called to be preachers, and the reason is assigned in this immediate connexion. Paul, in speaking of christian teachers, says, "You see your calling, brethren, how, that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world, to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of this world, to confound the things which are mighty, that no flesh should glory in his presence."

How the selection of uneducated men to carry forward the gospel, furnished the best opportunity for the wisdom of inspiration, and the power of miracles to be shown, is obvious to all. Had the first preachers all been men of consummate wisdom and great power, the suspicion might easily have been excited, that there was deception; but as it is, the wisdom and the power are most clearly

from God, and the instrumentality is calculated to show it.

Piety is in no sense unfavourable to the highest intellectual cultivation, and the wisest enterprise of action. And if you think it so, I beg you to examine the records of science, of literature, in every useful branch, and of political economy even, and tell me whose productions are those which live through ages, and brighten from the review of years. See that rising of the mind, as from a deep sleep, when piety takes possession of the heart, and awakes at once the dormant energies of the soul. The religious world will not suffer a comparison with any other portion of our race, as to science, literature, philosophy, or for intelligence of whatever kind, and for active engagedness in the useful pursuits of life. And though the enemies of truth and righteousness may ridicule what they may please to term their cant and conventional dialect, true dignity and good sense will look beyond this for thought and feeling, and allow them, if you please, the language of their country, their king, and their hopes, and at the same time, admire the simple-heartedness with which they grow in useful knowledge, as well as in the grace of God. And do you not know, that while the most pious of the world were abused for their singularity in religion, they held, at the same time, the very nursery of the richest science on earth, and their home presented the most imposing splendours of intellectual worth. And the puritans, reviled by all the light and vain writers of both continents, were, at the same time, the teachers of a world, to whom every department of human learning and political

science, is under more obligation, than to any other class of men that ever lived. It was the acknowledgment of the infidel HUME, that England owed all the liberty which she enjoyed to the Puritans, and that they were the fast friends of liberal principles throughout the world. Let this convince you, that by becoming a sincere follower of Jesus Christ, you do not close one source of useful intelligence, nor bow, at all, the genuine dignity of intellectual worth. No, but you enhance it an hundred fold, and open the widest avenues of thought, reason, and reflection, and from which imagination chastened and pure, as on the wing of hope, can take her loftiest flights, eternal truth her unerring guide.

Nor, on the other hand, is intelligence and elevation of character unfavourable to real piety. What is piety? The knowledge of God; love of truth; harmony with nature; obedience to laws, natural, organic, intellectual, and moral; an acquaintance and acquiescence with the character and course of Providence; and the effect of causes, with wise and prudent calculation, as to the result of events acting on the best interests of man; a diligent inquiry into the high and holy administration of God, in the grace of Jesus Christ, over rational beings, with the consequences of that supremacy; and a heart to praise and love the plan and principles upon which that administration of grace is conducted. This is piety; and what can there be in the widest extent of knowledge, unfavourable to the growth of such a spirit? It would seem, indeed, that it would contribute directly to true religion. And, in fact, when not abused and perverted, it does so. There is no

intelligent man living in Christendom, who remains in sin, without doing violence to the powers of his mind, as well as the dictates of his conscience and the word of God. This knowledge points him to that truth and wisdom, which is the understanding of eternal life. And but for his pride and perversion of intellect, he would become a Christian. He is kept from it, only, as his unholy heart opposes the dictates of his mind and conscience.

Not only so, but I would add, there is much that is called intelligence, which is only the show of knowledge, and a philosophy falsely so called; errors of science, philosophy, and literature, which ought not to be classed with useful knowledge. The more you possess of this, the more widely are you removed from the possession and prospect of genuine intelligence. This is a miserable possession; the more you have of it, the poorer you are. False principles of science are worse than none. False philosophy has done most of all to engender errors in religion; for our views of the doctrines of the gospel will be governed by our principles of intellectual philosophy, while false and useless literature has seemed to complete the destruction of good, as it respects religion. But all this should never be dignified with the name of knowledge. True principles of science fortify the truth of the Bible. True philosophy, and substantial literature, must be harmonious with evangelical piety; for that God who laid the foundations of philosophy, and the structure of science, is also the author and revealer of evangelical religion. United, they all contribute to lead a candid mind to God, and the sublimities of his truth.

I would urge the attainment of knowledge, with the facilities for its acquisition, and press the obligation, the advantage, the pleasure, of its being wisely directed, and that to it, be added that knowledge which is unto life eternal. And I bring you the high injunction of that man, who, under the direction of Infinite Wisdom, has, in the short compass of his brief record, taught more infallible lessons of human nature, as to all its forms of excellence and deformity, than can be gathered from all the uninspired writers of the world beside. He thus writes, Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. Get wisdom; get understanding; forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth: forsake her not, she shall preserve thee; love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom; and with all thy gettings, get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honour; she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

The leading object, in this connexion, was to enforce the obligation under which you all are laid, to make your attainments and resources auxiliary to virtue and religion. I know that it is in vain to enforce this with hope of success, from the obvious reasonableness of the duty alone, or from simple abstract considerations. I would bring that sanction, which you are compelled to give, to that virtuous and pious character, in which this obligation is felt and discharged. Let education, intelligence, and opportunities for usefulness, lead to true virtue and

religion. Let moral excellence be added to all the ordinary attainments of life, and what an amount of confidence, of respect, of credit, is at once secured. More is gained in a day, than wealth or wisdom, than worldly possessions of whatever kind, can ever gain or give.

There is a principle in human nature, with all its love of sin, and hatred of true religion, that, unbidden, yields a tribute of respect to moral and religious worth : that will confide in its friendship and protection, when bleeding and driven in despair from the treachery of sinful men.

Intellect alone may command a moment's admiration and wonder, like a blazing meteor, but it is moral excellence that must impart the rich and mild radiance of the evening star. A wide range of influence always carries with it something forbidding and distrustful, where religious principle is not found to preserve and guide. God himself, as a being of intellect, perfectly pervading and commanding, is a being to be dreaded ; but when this mighty intellect is associated with holiness, is a being to be loved and adored. We have embedded in our own souls too much selfishness and covetousness to confide strongly in the integrity and charity of any man, where great interests are involved, if we are not persuaded that moral principle is sure to govern. As you contrast the respect which you invariably cherish for moral and religious principle, as illustrated in life, with that distrust and suspicion you carry towards those who are without it, does not your own soul prompt you to the cultivation of that character for virtue and religion

While there is something fascinating in human elevation, as seen in the range of worldly influence, there is at the same time something cold, and cheerless, and forbidding, as you view it, all sinking under the stroke of death. Here all love, if not respect, dies, where you are unable to admit the associations of moral worth. Men live, in our grateful remembrance, only as they seize on our affections, by the valuable memorials of their own virtue. You may wander amid the tombs of the illustrious dead; you may call up all that was great and commanding in their character while living; and what mingled emotions spring in the soul as you contemplate their moral character? There is something peculiarly cold, save where you can look down and mark the sleeping remains of moral goodness; and there is often a pleasure, almost unmingled delight, in the silent tomb of a devoted saint, while damp and gloomy is the charnel house of those who lived without religion, and died without hope. There is here, nothing which mind can contemplate with pleasure, or which virtue can love. And to feel this, it is not necessary to crowd the lives of the departed with exalted excellence, or with flagrant sins. Nor have we to borrow from their future state the impression of spirits once animating these mouldering ashes of peace and glory, or of death and hell. Beside all this, there is a principle in our moral being, that looks with respect, and almost veneration, on moral and religious character; and that raises its excellence, as *death* has closed its earthly career.

You all know how anxious surviving friends are, to write upon the monuments of their dead,

some moral virtue, some religious feeling, as foreign as it may have been to the whole course of their lives. And what youth, in the high career of his irreligious life, would not shudder at the thought, that his *grave stone* would soon give the full portrait of his character, and tell, when dead, each secret of his life ?

I wish you to review the impressions which arise in your own minds, while contemplating character, the living or the dead, as you clothe or divest them of true religion. Take Hannah More and Madame de Stael, Mrs. Sherwood and Lady Morgan. The splendid actress or Queen Elizabeth, and Harriet Newel. Take Howard, on his errands of mercy, disrobing the prisons of their terrors, and the sleepless monarch of ambition, rich in human glory. The lordly Bishop, amid the halls of Calcutta, and the devoted Martyn, dying beneath the suns of Syria. Lord Apthorpe, in aspiring covetousness, and David Brainard, in the wigwam of the Indian. The great conqueror of nations, in the pride of his glory, and Samuel J. Mills, the poor African's friend, in the bosom of the deep. What means all this diversity of feeling ? Why, as you undervalue religion, and shrink from its spirit and its claims, are you so instinctively compelled to yield it the tribute of your respect, when viewed distinct from its immediate demands on you ? Beloved youth, you carry within you, deep in your souls, that principle which compels you to decide for virtue and religion ; and it is one of those deep and durable principles, which will cause you undying anguish, if that virtue and religion are found to have no fixed

and permanent residence in your hearts. To have forfeited forever what you forever must respect and honour, will be an eternal stimulus to self reproach, the fire that shall never be quenched.

Do you ask, what shall we do? follow the direction of inspired truth, and the lesson of wise experience. Get wisdom; get understanding. Exalt *her*, and she shall promote *thee*; she shall bring thee to honour; she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver thee. Hear, O, my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of thy life shall be many.

CHAPTER XII.

The certain method of securing temporal prosperity.—The formation of a virtuous and religious character.—Obstacles which strongly oppose the formation of such a character.—1. Strong desire for public action, and aversion to laborious exertion.—2. Love of games.—3. Want of serious reflection, sobriety, and temperance.—4. Neglect of the gospel, as the only rule of duty, and way of life, and salvation.

THERE is almost universally a strong desire to secure valuable and extended possessions in this world, and such as are necessary to usefulness, it is proper that we should seek to gain. The wisest and most successful method of doing this, is beautifully pointed out in the gospel. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. "The things" to be added are the temporal blessings of life, those external advantages and worldly possessions which contribute to true enjoyment and usefulness. And Jesus Christ, who makes this promise, declares, as an evidence and assurance of its value and accomplishment, your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Cultivate the spirit, discharge the duties of the gospel, and all these things shall be yours. Give that preference in your interest and affections, which its pre-eminence demands, its infinite value claims, and you have secured to you those inferior blessings of life, of which your heavenly Father knows that you have need. The principle will be admitted

by all, that it is not the evidence, nor the dictate, of a wise and enlightened mind, to attend to subjects of inferior value, while those of incomparably greater interest, are endangered or neglected: Nor would it be any more so, to overlook the prescribed and only method of attaining the objects of desire. And yet how few, in their eager pursuit of the possessions of life, regard thus only certain method of their attainment?

They more often press directly towards their objects of interest and ambition, regardless of that method of certain success, in laudable pursuits, which superior wisdom has devised. And you are probably aware, too, that the great mass of men generally regard this divinely prescribed method of securing the possessions of this world, as most unfavourable to its speedy and enlarged possession. Most men feel that religion is an embarrassment in the way of worldly prosperity. If it is so, the gospel has entirely mistaken this whole subject; and, if I am not very much deceived, an actual examination of the world will show, that religion is a most powerful auxiliary towards the attainment of worldly possessions of every valuable kind.

You have already seen how favourable it was to the acquisition of intellectual knowledge, at once and powerfully arousing and stimulating those immortal principles on which true knowledge rests. And as it prompts to industry, love of usefulness, secures confidence and credit, and from principles of honesty, forbids rash and hazardous speculation and extravagance, it can hardly fail, (without calling in the aid of mystery and miracles of special provi-

dence) to secure the most enlarged prosperity. And when a religious man fails of success in this world, in any laudable pursuit, it almost always arises from some defect which it is not the province of religion to cure, or from want of real piety itself. And one fact is obvious, truly religious men seldom ever do ultimately fail of success in the virtuous pursuits of human life.

Do you say this seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, through the prescribed method of the gospel, is not indispensable to the attainment of the most enlarged earthly estates and the highest possessions that enrich mankind? In one sense *this* is true, and in another it is not true. *Men do sometimes* secure these wide possessions without religion, and with no regard to religion, but have they any *certainty* of attaining them? and is it wise to take a doubtful course, when you have one pointed out that is sure?

Another question, do not such men lose the *value* of their possession, by the unwise and unprescribed method of their attainment? Actually unfit themselves to enjoy them, by that secret poison which has become diffused through the soul, in those habits of thought and feeling, with which they have pursued and attained the object of their worldly lusts? And withal secured a character that is as unlovely in the eyes of true wisdom and virtue, as it is painful in possession.

“Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man’s life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” The worldly possessions of many men, are the blast of their reputation, the

poison of their peace, and the destruction of their souls—actually their poverty. And can such men be said to have attained the good things of this life? Not at all. Or if they have inscribed upon them their titles, it is a miserable possession, and all because they have poisoned the heart that would enjoy them, and perverted the principles that would use them, and may after all be poor in the midst of wealth, and miserable within the reach of enjoyment; “though rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, yet they are poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and *in need of all things.*” And all this from the fact, that they chose their own way in securing the things of this world. Then will you point to these cases in wide departure from the gospel precept, and question the value of its direction? O! seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

My object has been to prompt you to make the attainment of religion and religious influence the end of all your advantages and possessions. To show that this was the duty to which God pointed you, and to which reason urged.

The subject before us, so far as we have considered it, implies that there are difficulties in the way of this, which are often of a serious and destructive character. The removal of these is a subject of unquestionable importance. The gospel suggests a general method which would be perfectly adequate to the object in question, which is to place the subject, the claims, the duties, and prospects of morality and religion, in that commanding station,

which, from their nature, they must eternally occupy, when things become viewed in their relative importance.

But there are serious obstacles in the way of doing this. There is no difficulty in securing the acknowledgment from every man that this is reasonable and a duty; but to make him *feel* the immediate demand and his privilege, is not so easy. I would therefore point out some of those obstacles and evils which stand in the way of this invaluable character.

I have already in other connexions alluded to many of these, I shall barely refer to them, and present some more. One which I have mentioned is the passionate desire for public action and immediate gain. Another, the love of idleness, and aversion to laborious effort. Imperfect education, and the love of light and useless reading. Another, habits of useless intercourse, associations which preclude intellectual and moral improvement, and which, at the same time, cultivate a vain, proud, dissipated, and unstable character.

Another, is the love of games, absorbing those calm and peaceful hours, so favourable to useful reading, reflection, and valuable intercourse. From an almost constant residence for near fifteen years, within the walls of our literary institutions, and from extensive acquaintance with the society that surrounded them, I am prepared to say, that the love of games is one of the most ruinous indulgences, to which youth of either sex can be addicted, and those who are so do, in almost every case, fail of ultimate success in life, seldom if ever display those developments of intellectual power, or reach those moral

excellencies, which otherwise might have adorned their character. There is a counteracting, a poisoning, a withering influence in these habits, which almost invariably blasts the fair prospect of respectability and excellence. In your youthful habits, so interesting from their permanence and power; in the first arrangements of your homes, so endearing from the freshness of their charms, and from the promise of future good they unfold, as well as from the wide influence you exert on the more ordinary walks of life, allow me to ask you, as a friend to your best good and the best good of society, is it not wise and prudent, to dismiss these habits for ever?

Another obstacle in the way of securing first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, or of fixing your affections permanently on the great subjects of religion, arises from want of habits of serious reflection, sobriety, and temperance. The great attainments of piety never will be secured, without rational, serious, and continued reflection. The calling in of the mind from its wanderings and visionary speculations, to dwell, with the considerateness of sober reason, on the claims of God, the duties of men, and the destiny of immortals, with those religious subjects which stand connected with the government of God, and the everlasting interests of man.

Not only is this essential, but those restless and ungovernable passions, vain flights of fancy, and visionary speculations of mind, and hopeless indulgences of desire, with all that boundless and indescribable range of youthful imaginings and dreams of wakeful romance, which crowd upon the minds,

and so often wholly absorb the hearts of the young and ardent ; all this must be checked and subdued, and the mind made to dwell on the sober and substantial realities of life, and the heart become chained to the more valuable considerations of present and future welfare. The habit to which I allude is more easily understood from experience, and more justly conceived than accurately described ; and it is impossible to make any one feel, who has never analyzed and followed the workings of an active, ardent, and visionary mind, how extremely unfavourable these indulgences are to virtuous reflection and religious knowledge ; and it is from this native want of sobriety of mind, the calm and useful resting of the affections on real and valuable objects, I ground my most serious and decided objection to the whole class of light and fictitious literature. It seizes on this native buoyancy of the soul, this restless roving of the heart ; nourishes, by the luxuriousness of fancy, and ultimately engenders half the misanthropy and insaneness of our world, and unfits multitudes more for any thing like useful reflection and religious principle. I would say, bring down your minds, and resolutely bind your hearts to things substantial, useful, permanent, and religious. Do this, and you will soon find how reasonable, as well as holy, are the claims of the kingdom of God and his righteousness upon you ; and, I would trust, realize the blessed result of its attainment, in the direction of that course it so wisely prescribes.

I cannot wholly pass by a brief consideration of the value of temperance, or its want, as one of the great obstacles in the way of usefulness and religion,

and the claims which humanity brings upon all our youth, to aid directly in that cause, on which such invaluable interests are reposed.

I doubt not at all, and I am fortified in this opinion by the settled convictions of those who have long examined this subject, that with all that has been done, Intemperance is still one of the chief obstacles to the increase of useful knowledge and true religion in our world. As to the subjects of this evil, there can scarcely remain a hope of their moral benefit, till induced to an utter abandonment of their indulgence, however limited it may be. And the youth who, in such a day as this, will persist even in its unfrequent occurrence, may dismiss the hope of a religious character, and of ever attaining the kingdom of God; and, indeed, anything like worldly prosperity. God, in token visible and deadly, has spoken out his disapprobation, and made thousands of graves sound an admonitory lesson, which no reasoning nor persuasion could before enforce. Taking the danger to be incurred, the obligation to be exemplary, the confidence and character to be forfeited, that partial delirium and temporary blindness, stupidity, and madness which even occasional indulgence creates, with that immediate and utter alienation of the soul from anything like sober and encouraging reflection on religious truth and duty, and the utter inconsistency of this excited state, to favour the least influence of the Divine Spirit, and the soul becomes hopeless as to permanent impressions of good, and soon alienated forever from anything like spirituality of thought and feeling. And on such, (read Scripture truth, mark Providence,) on

such the Spirit of God is not seen to rest; and in such a day as this, nothing is found there but a melancholy anticipation of speedy ruin, or a life worse than early death.

There is also an indifference to this subject, a lightness with which it is viewed, and a trifling with its most appalling spectacles and most tremendous consequences, which is almost as unfavourable to the cultivation of a better spirit of religious feeling, as actual indulgence itself; while it shows a coldness, a callousness of heart, an utter want of humane sensibility, which is forbidding and painful, as the loud laugh at the death bed, and the mocking of its groans. Ah! is there any thing at which to smile, in that more than widowed mother, who, with her offspring, flies from home to life and safety? Is there any thing at which to trifle, in the bloated form that sinks to the grave, a loathsome wreck of body and of soul? Those who are thoughtless on this momentous subject, must be far from that state of mind, of social sympathy, of kindness and charity, of moral feeling respecting the present and the future, which the gospel makes essential to the hope of forgiveness, and the culture of piety. The spirit of the gospel is a spirit of social interest, and love for man's best good and permanent enjoyment.

One of two things is true of such, they are either void of that moral sensibility, which is the foundation and security of true virtue, or they have become hardened and familiar to these scenes, by their own indulgence, or the sad indulgence of near relatives and friends. Be assured that there is something wrong; for a soul that can trifle with this, and the

efforts for its remedy, can do so with the divinely portrayed evils and penalties of sin, and with all the divine efforts of mercy to save mankind. On such, the truths of the kingdom of God and his righteousness, will have no saving efficacy. As the young man trifles with this, he is probably trifling with his own ultimate experience, and laughing at the reflection of his future shame. And she, who can smile, where tears are demanded, or fail to weep and mourn at others' woes, with no heart to feel, nor hands to aid in efforts to relieve, may yet be made herself to weep, and feel these woes as deep and durable in her own soul. Thoughtlessness now, and a trifling air in this great cause, is but a melancholy prospect of a change as lamentable as it may appear distant. Could all this be done away, and our youth rejecting those stimulants that bewilder reason and drown sensibility, and those strong habits of inattention and disregard of the deep seated maladies and deadly evils that are preying upon their fellow-men, and under the guidance of an unclouded mind, and the prompting of a kind heart, be made alive to their privilege and duty, their nature and interest would unitedly constrain to the work of gospel charity. And to this unclouded and unbewildered reason, to this kind and sympathizing heart, we might come with better hopes of lodging there the ennobling principles of the gospel.

Which leads me to speak, in conclusion, of one more obstacle to the attainment of the kingdom of God and his righteousness, which is a want of daily reference to the only source of intelligence respecting its nature and its claims, and the only hope of moral

excellence. You refresh and revive your decayed strength; you invigorate and adorn your dying natures, and why will you not instruct immortal mind with the sublimities of truth, and adorn the undying soul with the charity it breathes? Would you not be classed with heavenly intelligences? Tremble, lest you be found naked and deformed, when the cloudless light of eternity shall shine around you. Come to the study of the truth as it is in Jesus; the gospel of your salvation.

“ This book, this holy book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high divinity;
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
Divine, and with eternal heraldry,
• And signature of God Almighty stamped
From first to last: this ray of sacred light,
This lamp from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow;
And ever more beseeching men, with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Obstacles to the formation of moral and religious character continued.

—1. The ordinary amusements of the young.—The Theatre.—Dancing, &c.—2. Erroneous principles respecting the standard of morals in the different sexes.—3. Impression that personal character is unknown.—The wisdom and mercy of God in disclosing the depravities of men. His forbearance and goodness towards the guilty.

TRUE wisdom consists in seeking valuable objects, and adapting means to the ends which we have in view. And it is the extreme of folly, even were there no moral considerations involved, to lose the season of successful exertion. Confessedly, the greatest object that can engage the interest and efforts of men, is the one which I have attempted to urge upon your attention. And confessedly, too, it is strange, that it awakens no greater anxiety and effort to secure at once its full benefit; and most of all, that it should so often be forfeited forever by rational beings. So many of our youth actually resign the prospect and the hope of its attainment, by wasting the season appointed for its security, that I have felt it more important to press the subject upon them; to urge the solemn admonitions of divine truth, and to consider some of those obstacles which oppose obedience to its direction. There are obstacles of an alarming character; not such, however, from the nature of the subject before us, in itself considered, but from the depravity of those to whom it is addressed. If you were pure beings, there would be no obstacles in your way to useful-

ness, to honour and to Heaven:—and all the temptations and difficulties, now so destructive, would be but stimulants and auxiliaries in the way to immortal life. They would affect you no more than they did the pure mind of the Saviour. They might cause you to weep, but they would not cause you to sin. Let then the obstacles you meet reflect upon the natures and the characters which you bear, and remind you, that these require entire renovation.

The difficulties which stand in the way of seeking first the kingdom of Heaven, and ultimately reaching all that is desirable, to some extent, we have already examined. The last which I mentioned was the fatal habit of disregarding the only source of intelligence respecting the nature and value of virtue and religion, with the methods of its saving attainment. I must dwell still farther on this subject. It is peculiarly appropriate to the condition of youth. A change in the habits of those who have passed this interesting period of life, is hardly to be expected, melancholy as the fact may appear.

The next obstacle to the security of religion and that righteousness which the kingdom of God demands, I shall consider in the comprehensive term of those ordinary amusements, upon which there is such a diversity of feeling and conduct, and which are generally sustained by the young. Upon this subject it is difficult to speak, and I might pass it entirely, did it not lie so directly in the course of discussion prescribed—that silence might be considered as a testimony on my part of the very trifling influence which all this exerts upon youthful character. My reason for ordinary silence on these sub-

jects, arise from the conviction, that a direct attack would neither remedy their evil tendency, nor appear demanded in the eyes of those whom they most directly influence. I have rather felt, that an enlarged mind, correct education, a refined taste, moral sensibility, and, above all, the pervading influence of the gospel, would the soonest remove all the difficulties arising from this source, and that an indirect, rather than a direct application, would most effectually remove the obstacles in question.

The Theatre, the Circus, the Opera, and the chamber of mirth, will no doubt remain open and thronged, till there shall be an elevation of public intellect, an improvement of public taste and moral feeling, too pure and refined to seek and enjoy these crowded scenes. That such a time will come, we have not a doubt; that we behold its approach, we verily believe. The question with me, as a brother and a father, as a casuist and a Christian, is not simply, whether all or any one of these amusements, separately or in themselves considered, are injurious to mental and moral character, as to their immediate influence I mean: not whether, if these did not exist, our youth would seek and secure more vitiating recreations. But the question with me is, whether these very amusements, one and all, as virtuous and innocent as they may be, do not fit the mind, and prepare the way for those scenes of grosser immorality and danger, for which they are professedly made a substitute. And are they not, at the same time, the obvious cause of those more gross, profane, and fatal habits of recreation, which pervade the lower walks of life—the invariable and legitimate cause of those

highways to death and Hell, which are crowded by the debased and abandoned. There is not a man on earth, who understands the resources and results of the pleasures of which I have spoken, who will question the truth of this declaration.

Then, I say, the question is not, how much innocence is there here; how much benefit may there be; but the question is, what is the result, as anticipated from their character, and as seen from the history and existing state of public morals? Let that great question be settled, and the whole subject to my mind is disposed of at once. It is the same as the subject of intemperance; not whether I may indulge now with safety and profit, but am I in danger of ultimate injury, and do I send others to ruin and to death?

You will not understand me, however, as allowing that all these things have intrinsically no moral character. The very power and permanence of their distant results, allow that they exert no immediate injury, stamp them with a moral character of no questionable order. There is no species of human recreation among the low, no sources of guilt and danger, but have borrowed themselves, if I may so speak, come down as imitations of the habits in higher life, changed only to suit the society and circumstances, where they appear more gross and destructive, because the restraints and securities of educated society are unknown. Let all those bright and bewildering scenes of human enchantment be suspended in the higher walks of life, where they are spread with such apparent innocence and profit; not only would the nursery of those inferior be

closed, but the strongest stimulants to their existence would be removed: for you have not yet to learn, that there are few habits in the low walks of life, but what are gross imitations of what is seen in more refined and elevated society. I say without hesitation, the youth who support these scenes in their purest form, create and continue vice and debauchery, in their most gross and deadly character, in circles of society below them.

Not only would I present this view of the subject, but I will ask the intelligent and virtuous youth of either sex, with all the innocence and purity you can give to these scenes, are they not linked to a chain of downward and deteriorating causes, while they never are to upward and more virtuous associations? And with all the pure, and innocent, and intelligent which you can assemble, do you not find there, in crowded numbers, those who are already poisoned with vice and shame; whose society under other circumstances you would not for a moment allow? And do you not think that virtuous sensibility is sullied, and that modesty should blush, as the crowds of the theatre are surveyed in their mixed and abominable character; with those exciting causes to deeds of darkness and shame, so profusely spread in open blaze, as well as in more secret retirement? And do you not think that youthful delicacy is too much exposed, when, away from the parental eye and home, in the place of public resort, at the cold hour of midnight, with the excitements and stimulants of the gay scene, with all those nameless evolutions that would, under any other circumstances, disgrace modesty itself; and then, exhausted, return,

perhaps, under the guardianship of a stranger, at that season, when all is silent and retired at home, when every thing conspires to awaken fears for virtue, peace, and life itself? I will say nothing here of the immorality of all this; but I ask, is it not, in every view, wholly at war with unsullied virtue and delicacy, with true religion and moral culture? If so, is it not an obstacle in the way of attaining the kingdom of God, and destructive to the hope of his righteousness?

To be prepared for this amusement, we must first commit our children to the care of individuals with whom you would not associate, and whose very profession is a bar to all refined and virtuous society. We must send them from our home, generally to a place of hazardous resort, at hours of blighting influence, and at an age of tenderest and most delicate susceptibility, *and for what?* to practice movements, attitudes, evolutions, which modesty forbids, and which common delicacy would disallow, under any other possible circumstances of life.

There is no resort of wide and ruinous debauchery, where the unsuspecting are decoyed and ruined; where this species of amusement is not considered an essential tributary. Around these purlieus of hell is thrown a brilliancy that catches the eye, while strains of enlivening and voluptuous music salute the ear; within, the lascivious movements of the dance bewilder and enchain the young; while the unsuspecting, and the mature in vice, sink together in infamy and death. Can this be gainsayed? No: these ten thousand reservoirs of robbery and crime, and endless wo, are fed by the power of music and

the dance. Consider also what nations, and what communities are most addicted to indulgence in this amusement? France, Italy, and Barbarians. And as to morals and virtue, purity and chastity, what are France and Italy? Facts here, are too appalling to be disclosed. Say, not that this amusement has its origin in refinement, because you see it reigning in capitals and in circles of fashion. This is no part and no evidence of the wisdom, the dignity, and worth of elevated and refined society. Its origin is barbarian, and its affinities are lust and moral debasement. The field of its rank luxuriance, is among the vulgar and abandoned.

There is, unquestionably, in the amusement itself, in its most innocent forms and limited exercise, a tendency to inflame passion, to poison virtue, to destroy modesty, to endanger purity, and to lead to more gross and deadly evils. If not, so much is true, sin and death have so seized an innocent recreation, that it has subserved their cause in maturing crimes at which humanity shudders; and in annihilating hopes and destroying souls, beyond computation. Who that is wise, will cultivate and allow such recreations with such perils.

Allow them simply unfavourable to the kingdom of God and its hopes, and who would desire them? As dying and immortal beings, who of you would crowd the last days and hours of life with such recreations, though innocent? Ah, there is in our nature, when we bring eternity to view, a shrinking back from their indulgence. The conflagration of the house of mirth, consigning thousands to eternity, sends a shock to the soul; and that, too, wholly

unlike the emotion that fills the mind, as the crowded ship sinks in the deep, or an explosion sends souls in an instant to eternity. As the youth, in her bloom, falling from the precipice and lost in the flood, drew us to the spot with tenderest sympathy ; he who falls and mingles his death groans with the sounds of mirth, appals and repels the very heart of affection. And why this difference of feeling ? simply the moral diversity of the *circumstances* under which these souls exchanged worlds.

Moral principle decides this instinctively, and tells us plainly, there is something besides innocent recreation here.* This moral impression no one can erase, and it is no doubtful monitor of youthful habits.

If I have proved that these things are unfavourable to intellectual and moral culture, serious reflection, and religious duty, I have, of course, satisfied you as to their unfriendliness and opposition to the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; and your sacrifice of one or the other, will be according to your estimation of their relative value. If you estimate them above the kingdom of God and his righteousness, you will of course not surrender them for the possession of a holy heart, and a godly life ; yet I doubt not you see the impossibility of possessing and enjoying both. If the views which I have expressed on these subjects are neither philosophical nor scriptural, they will of course pass as my private opinion. And

* The above remarks, together with others that follow, were some time since sanctioned and published by the American Tract Society, as furnished by the author.

if they are not sustained by actual experience, I am wholly mistaken in the views which I have entertained of human life.

There is another obstacle, which, for want of a more appropriate designation, I shall call erroneous principles of judgment and conduct, which extensively prevails in society, respecting the habits of youth.

You are aware of the great diversity between the sexes, as to moral impressions and religious character : how much higher is the standard of morality, and how much more general religious reformations are among our sisters and our daughters, than among our brothers and sons. How is this to be accounted for? Not alone, as may be thought from the liveliness of the sensibility of one class, and the ease with which they are influenced. The erroneous principles of judging, and acting, to which I have alluded, and the amusements of life, which I have just reviewed, will, to my mind, give the clear and satisfactory solution.

The education of our daughters, generally, is no more religious than that of our sons; indeed, the boarding-schools of the former, are generally not as well disciplined as to pious influence, as the colleges of the other; and yet the influence of piety and religion, is altogether on the other side.

First, I will allude to the erroneous principle of judging, and of acting, which prevails among our youth, and which are not excluded from the habits of feeling and of life, among the more advanced. The principle is this, of requiring a stricter morality, a more decided and permanent sobriety; greater

purity of language, discreetness of deportment, circumspection of life, from one sex, than from the other.

I do not say, that we require too much from the one ; far from it ; but too little is demanded from the other. While this is like a wall of fire to the one, the want of it invites the other away from all its securities and benefits.

And here I must say, that the wisdom and correctness of principle lie upon our side ; while those who are suffering the most from this false principle, appear the least willing to correct it. My meaning is this : our sex will not tolerate vices in the other which they do in ours. Where is the female who could lift her head in life, whose language was vulgar and profane ; whose habits were shaded with the most partial intemperance, or on whose virtue a shadow of suspicion could be thrown ? And yet, are these barriers in the way of men ? Are they regarded such, even by those whose unsullied virtue we admire ? If these habits are kept out of view, they form no effectual exclusion from virtuous society.

What young man, though of no better reputation, would give his heart and hand to one, whose character was thus suspicious and sullied ? And yet how often is this the case, with those who, of all things on earth, short of the immediate protection of God, should seek the friendship and protection of nothing but unsullied virtue and tried integrity ?

While these feelings and habits which I have mentioned are an effectual barrier to the reception and settlement of the one sex, in virtuous

and refined society, they are not such to the other ; hence, the virtue and purity of the one have a thousand guards, of which the other knows nothing ; and considering what their natures are, they are rather prompted to vice, than secured in virtue, by these very principles and habits of society.

There is no redemption for her, who errs but once and falls. No years can replace *her* foot on safe and solid ground, or bleach away the stains her modesty and virtue bear. She is gone, hopelessly and irrecoverably gone. And though tremendously severe, you say it is just. Here lie the safety and preservation of her sex. True. And why not reap the same benefits for others? They may go to all the mad extremes of vice, profaneness, and impurity, and often not even lose their hold on solid ground. An actual or pretended reformation restores confidence and kindness of attention, which may have been for a moment forfeited and withdrawn.

That this is the fact with one sex, and not with the other, we all know ; and that this is peculiarly unfavourable to virtue and religion in all classes, no one can deny. To one, it is almost an effectual barrier to religion ; and towards the other, it evinces and becomes the sanction of immoralities, which continually lower and vitiate respect and reverence for virtue and piety.

Here is unquestionably an incorrect principle of feeling and conduct, and one which demands correction. Some of the most powerful guards, to the modesty, virtue, and decorum of our sisters and daughters, are wholly unfelt and unknown by the youth of the other sex. And there is as much cold

neglect and cruelty in the one case, as there is improvident and unmerited regard in the other. While the poor, deceived, and ruined victim lies, outcast, abandoned, forlorn, and dying, in the lone hovel, from which even humanity recoils, who could not be redeemed and restored even if she would; *he*, who deceived and plunged her to that hopeless home, is seen walking in his pride and arrogance—setting at defiance all virtuous sentiment, and has his abode perhaps with intelligence and respectability. This is no picture of fancy. And there is cruelty on the one hand, and a gross departure from wise and virtuous principle on the other: and it is astonishing that the class of the community, from whom this victim has been torn, can tolerate, at all, *such men* as participate in the guilt. Rather let them, by a well-regulated public sentiment, more imperative than law, and as decisive as executed justice, place the base monster, as low in character and as distant from regard as he has thrown the victim of his crime, and no more admit him to their society and home, than the ruined subject of his indulgence.

Let this be done: let the mothers, the sisters, and the daughters of our land, tolerate profaneness, impiety, intemperance, infidelity, and uncleanness, no more in our sex than we and they do in theirs: let the opinions and habits of society harmonize and stand out in practical illustration. Let all these immoralities exclude our youth from their esteem, friendship, and society, and there is, at once, a check to vice and immorality around our youth, which was never felt before; and which would do more than

all moral codes besides can ever do. Society will never attain its elevation and purity, with the essential preparation for the kingdom of God, till this is done ; and I would affectionately and solemnly call upon those whom I now address, seriously to review this whole subject.

A question of importance, and of delicate interest, may arise in your minds. You may say, as mothers and daughters, if we adopt this course, in regard to the other sex, which has been adopted in reference to our own, shall we not lose the hope of reforming young men, and take away all stimulus and encouragement to regain forfeited character? I would ask, why not apply this same principle to the unfortunate and fallen of your own sex ; and more especially, when, in ours, it is an unprovoked crime, and in theirs more generally growing out of the intrigue and falseness of others.

There is a safe principle here. It is this : Go so far as to present an encouragement to reform, but not so far as to countenance in continued sin, and to leave, as is now done, the impression, that vice is no effectual barrier from the society of the virtuous and refined. Take an elevated stand, and soon you will have few victims to reform ; for what young man would plunge himself from these pure heights, if he knew there was no redemption.

Another cause of this inequality of virtue and religion among the sexes, and equally an obstacle in the way of reform among our young men, is the character and result of those amusements which I have already considered. Youth of both sexes indulge them. But even in their indulgence, there is

a security to the one, which is unknown to the other. I will not go into their arrangements. Some of you, at least, know what I mean. The theatre, the opera, and the chamber of mirth, place restrictions on one, which the other do not feel. The hour arrives, when all these scenes are closed. The one class are handed to their homes, not, I grant, in the most favourable state for moral reflection; but they retire home; perhaps to the wakeful solicitude of a mother's love, and lie down beneath the kindness of a mother's prayer. The other class, now left alone, return to the scene of their amusement, and review the events of the night; pass their approbation and strictures, not always in a manner the most becoming and chaste, for the nature of the subject in review does not always admit it. Under lassitude and exhaustion, they seek additional stimulants to refresh and invigorate. The night is far spent; the remainder is exhausted in feasting, or in games, and a weary and diseased frame is dragged out to the labours of another day, or seeks repose to recruit its energies.

Other species of amusement throw a crowd of youth upon the open bosom of our cities, who have no homes to revisit; no parents nor friends, and with minds poorly fitted to retire to their solitary repose, they are allured by the brilliant retreats that blazon around the place of their recreation. Temptations are spread; the charms and chances of gaming are before them, and where mere curiosity first led their steps, hope of gain now binds them; and by the initiatory influence of a solitary night, they are irrecoverably lost. Others, wandering from scenes of

amusement, soon hear the strains of that voluptuous music which never sleeps; pause at its brilliant habitation, and all is gayety within. "They enter, a dart strikes through their liver. The house is the way to hell; going down to the chamber of death."

"I looked, and saw him follow to her house,
As goes the ox to slaughter; as a fool
To the correction of the stocks; or bird
That hastes into the subtle fowlers snare,
And knows not, simple thing, 'tis for his life.
I saw him enter in; and heard the door
Behind them shut; and in the dark, still night,
When God's unsleeping eye alone can see,
He went to her adulterous bed. At morn
I look'd, and saw him not among the youth:
I heard his father mourn, his mother weep;
For none returned, that went with her. The dead
Were in her house; her guests in depths of hell:
She wove the winding sheet of souls, and laid
Them in the urn of *everlasting death*."

A million of youth, paid back in innocence, to broken hearts, would not repair the sacrifice, thus made in a solitary city.

This minute detail of the common amusements of life, may not appear to be demanded, nor entitled to that place, which has here been given. Little consideration has been given to these subjects, and they have been left, to exert their influence upon the young, as matters almost of necessity. But one who has watched their influence, and observed their advancement, and now considers the strong dominion which they have gained over the public taste, cannot question the propriety of efforts to check their advancement. They have assumed an influence, gained such ex-

tended patronage, are drawing such treasures, at the same time becoming so gross and vulgar, that every valuable interest is endangered by them. Few circles in life are raised above them; and even domestic arrangements, where intelligence and piety should be expected, are often found yielding to their sway, and dignifying their character. Attending extravagances and exposures, which have risen and reigned in other countries, are fast finding their way among us, despoiling the innocence and order of social life, and threatening to impair, if not to ruin, our reputation for decorum and piety. If, in the advancement of civilization and refinement, such wasting influences are to be embodied, we must resign the hope, that evangelical religion can prosper, or that our free institutions can live. The amusements of which I have spoken, are assuming a new and fearful character, and demanding an introduction beyond anticipation and endurance. It was said, fifty years ago, "It is amazing to think, that women, who pretend to decency and reputation, whose brightest ornament ought to be modesty, should continue to abet, by their presence, so much unchastity as is found in the theatre."* If this astonishment was felt then, what ought to be the language of amazement now, when an avowed experiment is making upon female delicacy and self-respect, and which its authors themselves declare, "*a bold experiment?*"† It need not be added, that this amuse-

* Dr. Witherspoon.

† "Among the causes of vicious excitement in our cities," says Professor Griscom, of New-York, "none appear to be so powerful in their

ment holds a strong affinity to the other, and that they both borrow their sanction and support from the same source, and are alike hostile to true virtue. They are equally in the process of "bold experiment," invading, with rude, and gross, and vulgar arrogance, the circles of virtuous refinement. And the young, especially, consider their indulgence necessary, if not innocent, as an important and almost uniform consequence of advancing refinement. They forget the new forms under which they appear, and the blighting influence with which they strike the

nature, as theatrical amusements. The number of boys and young men who have become determined thieves, in order to procure the means of introduction to the theatres and circuses, would appal the feelings of every virtuous mind, could the whole truth be laid open to the public. In the case of the feebler sex, the result is still worse. A relish for the amusement of the theatre, without the means of indulgence, becomes too great a motive for listening to the first suggestions of the seducer, and thus prepares for the haunts of infamy, and a total destitution of all that is valuable in the mind and character of women."

He adds, "during the progress of one of the most ferocious revolutions that ever shocked the face of heaven, theatres, in Paris alone, multiplied from six, to twenty-five. One of two conclusions must follow from this: either the spirit of the times produced the institutions, or the institutions cherished the spirit of the times; and this will certainly prove, that they are either the parents of vice, or the offspring of it."

The infidel Rousseau, declares, "That the theatre is, in all cases, a school of vice."

Sir John Hawkins, in his life of Johnson, says, "A playhouse, and the region about it, are the very hot-beds of vice."

Archbishop Tillotson, declares, "The theatre a nursery of licentiousness and vice."

Bishop Collier, says, "That he was persuaded, that nothing had done more to debase the age in which he lived, than the stage poets and the playhouse."

And even Plato has declared, "That plays raise the passions, and pervert the use of them, and are of course dangerous to morality."

If this is the united testimony of heathen philosophers, of enlightened statesmen, and christian moralists, respecting the theatre, what must be the character and effects of the opera and its attending amusement?

moral sensibilities of society, and the utter annihilation of virtuous and religious character, which so often follow in their steps.

What is the remedy for all this? Some will tell you, give innocent recreations, ordinary amusements under proper restrictions, and thus keep our youth from the resorts of gross immorality and certain ruin. But have not these things prepared the way already, for the very evils which we deplore? What shall be done? Provide other sources of recreation, which shall embody intellectual and moral influence, and which shall bind our young men together, in the ties of mutual interest, and impart the hope of elevation and worth, holding out to them the value of mental discipline and religious dignity. Time will not allow that justice to this subject, which its importance demands.

I bring the subject, however, to you. Here are young men; and for your mental and moral elevation, I would ask the interest of all the wise and good. I would say to their employers, guardians, and friends—admit them to your families; so fill with interest their vacant time, that they may not desire hazardous recreation at unseasonable hours, either in the retirements of the country, or in the crowds of the city; nor resort to the places of public assemblies and exciting festivities. As respectable as these may be, they have no ordinary temptations. I would say to them, as you value health, honour, virtue, life, and religion, keep from the resorts of nightly feasting, and from the miserable allurements of wine, of lascivious music, and of games. Start, beloved youth, in the

career of virtuous intelligence, and christian character, and when one century shall have rolled its suns away, then tell me, did the casuist mistake your duty, your interest, and your joy ?

I will mention but one obstacle more, to the formation of virtuous and religious character, which is, the impression that prevails among men, that if their habits and character are concealed, they will be regarded according to the company in which they are found and the professions which they make. This impression becomes confirmed, by the fact, that men are generally treated according to their public character, however strongly suspected their private conduct may have been. Whatever impressions we may have, as to the secrecy of our lives, it would be well for us to consider that there is but little about us, which is unknown. All that we have said, there is some ear that has heard ; and the softest whisper we have breathed, has its lodgment there.

Some eye marks the most silent and solitary footsteps of our life, though trod in darkness : and if no tongue reveals the deep secrets of our souls, a mysterious delineation is soon made, that tells to the world, as with a herald's voice, just what we are.

And though it were possible, that secrecy and silence could be thrown over guilt and meanness ; there is still from the laws of physical being, developing in external nature, a clear and constant index to secret character ; and the community knows and understands the general history of its members ; and reads, as with an eye of actual observation, what passes in secluded retreats, in silent darkness, and

what rises often in the unbreathed emotions of the polluted soul. Many a youth early writes his own epitaph; and his pale and broken form is the marble upon which, in lines of guilt, and shame, and blood, that epitaph is written. There is no such disguise to character as men imagine. And let the impression be deeply felt, as it ought to be, that not only the eye of God, but the eye of man, reads my character; and it will be a check to immorality, which might lead to the formation of virtue, and the purity of the gospel.

It might be profitable to speak of that obstacle, allied to this, which arises from disregarding those clear developments of character, that will crowd the whole of a depraved life into one solitary disclosure to every eye, and make the issues of an unalterable eternity to settle on the nature of that development.

Now, though it may be decided by a single rash and initiatory step, its penalty is made distant and uncertain, and dismissed without a thought; when it is coming on, clear, and rapid, and certain as the judgment; and well did the preacher of Israel say, Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.

I have now passed a train of subjects, which I considered essential to a just delineation of this branch of your practical duties, and of those dangers to which, as youth, you are exposed. I would hope at least, from their illustration, you may see, that

the Bible is full of them, and that while it is a system of the sublimest truth, it is, at the same time, the most perfect development of human character, and the richest assemblage of moral precepts. That all you are and ought to be, is clearly pointed out in the word of God, and that with the hand of unerring truth and justice, it tears the veil from the guilty, and pours the light of Heaven upon their naked deformity, and speaks of all their sin and shame, their misery and death, with a voice of melting tenderness, yet of solemn admonition.

The subjects over which we have passed, are not unsuited to awaken in our minds many serious reflections on the moral natures, susceptibilities and characters of men, and I think you must be peculiarly thoughtless, if you have not, partially, at least, reviewed some portion of your own private history and conduct, on which your destinies are hung. The thought may have come already to your soul, and may it gain a lodgment there, how kind and indulgent is God, to *me*, an erring youth. May that goodness lead you to repentance.

The reason why God has made this clear development of human guilt and shame, in his holy word, is, if possible, to reclaim erring men, and to guard the unsuspecting from encountering those evils before which such multitudes have fallen. At the same time, to magnify his grace and forbearance. To exhibit and comprehend the mercy and long suffering of God, in their true and impressive light, we must become acquainted with the leading features of human character. In no other way can we rightly

estimate these Divine perfections, or receive benefit from the restriction of the Divine Laws.

Take the human race, as left unguarded and unrestricted by special influence and Gospel Grace, and what do you behold, but an utter forgetfulness of God, and the wide prevalence of abominable idolatry? With all the displays of his being and perfections, of his providence and care, from hour to hour, and from year to year; with the varied seasons of returning and exuberant goodness; with the testimony of all this, for near six thousand years, the great mass of mankind are idolaters still. And even where idols are unseen, and the gospel is proclaimed, the warmest affections are given to objects of earth, as controlling and debasing in their influence as the idols of Pagan lands. Before these the great mass of our youth as blindly and as devoutly kneel, and drive from their hearts the God of Heaven, and from their blinded eyes the brightening evidence of his being, his providence, and his grace. To this Idolatry, has been added the most unblushing blasphemy and impiety: and this has been the characteristic, not of a few, not of one nation, or of a few of many nations, but it has been the characteristic of the great mass of mankind.

We are next led to view the malignant and fiend-like passions which multitudes of mankind display. It would seem, that war was their employment, and bloodshed their province of delight. The great globe itself is but one wide arsenal; while every hill and valley, every river and every wave, bear the marks of carnage and of death. Men are, and always have, under the covetous, envious, jealous, malig-

nant, and revengeful passions, been preying upon each other ; and souls and families, villages and cities, with whole nations, are fast swept from the face of the globe into the presence of a holy and terrible God, by the murderous hand of human cruelty. Under the influence of these malign and fiendlike passions, what has not been done on earth, and in every portion of our world ? We see not alone the wide desolations of a legalized and justified war, but oppression and injustice, which the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, are called to suffer ; and even the prophet of God, hanging on the horns of the altar, cannot escape the poisoned arrow. The persecution, falsehood, treachery, and perjury, which rise through the land, you well know. The thefts, murders, lewdness, lasciviousness of every form ; haughty pride, arrogance, ingratitude and slander, coldness, and cruel neglect, with all those nameless emotions and actions of unkindness which show the sad departure from the human heart and human life of the kind sympathies of primeval innocence, and the tender mercies of unfallen charity, which might adorn and bless. And God treats all men, thus unkind, cruel, and at war with each other and with himself, as his great family of children, and would, were it possible, from the nature of his being and their constitution, make them happy still. His sun rises, his rain falls, his sweet breezes refresh, and his fruits sustain them still. While with his floods or flames, he might in justice sweep them to eternity, he bears them in his arms, as creatures of his tenderest care, and with a voice of inexpressible

love, exclaims, "*How can I give thee up?*" Thus he would call upon you in his word and works—

"To seek him where his mercy shines."

Here is a character for care and kindness, mercy and forbearance, peculiar to God, and but in the most inferior degrees, is never seen in any other beings. I would follow the train of thought, and much of the language of a beautiful and eminent writer on the subject before us.* "*Were the meekest man that ever lived; were one of the high and holy intelligences of heaven, to catch but a portion of omniscience, and survey, at one glance, all that hemisphere of our globe, on which the sun now shines, and at the next glance behold that other half, shrouded in darkness; could his eye pierce into the secret chambers of every human habitation, in every city and village; in all those haunts where crimes are veiled by shades of night from human eyes: could he view, at one glance, all the abominations hourly committed, in every region of the world, Pagan, Heathen, savage, and civilized; execrable rites, millions of victims, savage torments, oppressions of ambition and abused power, inflicted tortures, inquisitorial fires, malignant persecutions, with prisons, and chains, and dungeons; the bosom bleeding from the assassin's wound; the poor victim of the robber's murder; the midnight plunderers in the abode of honest industry, strangling its inmates, and bearing off its treasures; the pirate plundering*

* Rev. Robert Hall.

on the seas ; the malevolent and envious devising the ruin of his neighbour ; the gambler abandoning his own home in cruelty and cold neglect, and robbing others by plundering their just support ; the sceptic sporting with most sacred truths, poisoning minds, and blasting souls ; the atheist defying Omnipotence ; the wretch wallowing in the mire of uncleanness ; the drunkard in his revels of debauch ; base hypocrisy and deceit, envious detraction and malignant slander, falsehood, and folly, which rise from these hearts of deceit and desperate wickedness, and poison the very air of life. I say, could he behold all this acting on our globe in the course of a single day, and were the elements of nature in his hands, would he not, before the sun should set, annihilate its countless crowds, that prey like vampires upon each other's blood ?”

“ Who writes the history
Of men, and writes it true, must write them bad.
Who reads, must read of violence and blood.”

Yet God knows and sees it all, and still his tender mercy is over all. And does he draw a veil over these dark scenes ? No ; for, then, where would be the display of his forbearance, and the hope of their remedy ? No ; he has written it all in the volume of his truth, and by the blazing light of its own desolation, he calls upon the world to rid itself of its pressing burdens of guilt. He did it once, he will do it no more. He has placed in our hands means to do it ; and while he is loudly proclaiming in our ears the existence and the nature of the evils, shall we refuse to repeat his voice, or withhold the record

of our credentials? No ; for, then, we shall never see a remedy.

In all these scenes of guilt, I would have each ask himself, what is my portion ? how stands my responsibility in this great question of human morals and human misery ? A reformation must be effected, or desolation will come, not in the swellings of a flood, on whose retreating cloud the bow of mercy rose, but in the terrors of an eternal storm.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON INFIDELITY.—Scepticism, a feature of the present age.—The female sex, generally exempted.—Young men, peculiarly exposed to it.—The prominent causes of Infidelity.—The constitution and character of young men favourable to the action of these causes.—The characteristics of Infidelity.—1. Its uniform ignorance.—2. Disingenuousness.—3. Its scurrility, grossness, and vulgarity.—4. Instability.—5. Inconsistency.—6. It is immoral, debasing, and cruel.—7. Uniformly unsuccessful.—8. Arrogant and boastful.—9. It is at war with the analogies of nature and Providence.—10. Contrary to the fulfilled prophecies of the bible, and the authentic history of the world.—**CHRISTIANITY.**—Its characteristics, as contrasted with those of Infidelity.

“ Behold’st thou, yonder, on the crystal sea,
 Beneath the throne of God, an image fair,
 And in its hand a mirror large and bright!
 ’Tis Truth, immutable, eternal Truth,
 In figure emblematical expressed.
 Before it, Virtue stands, and smiling sees,
 Well pleased, in her reflected soul, no spot.
 The sons of heaven, archangel, seraph, saint,
 There daily read their own celestial worth;
 And as they read, take place among the just;
 Or high, or low, each as his value seems.
 There each his certain interest learns, his true
 Capacity; and going thence pursues,
 Unerringly through all the tracts of thought,
 As God ordains, best ends by wisest means.”

EVERY age has something peculiar to itself, while the general features of human character remain the same. One strong feature of that character, is unbelief of scripture truth. The age in which we live, seems peculiarly exposed to the return and vigorous assaults of this malign principle, and I cannot pass entirely the exposedness of the young,

to its ruinous influence ; nor neglect to urge upon them the strongest defence against its attacks.

It is a source of pleasure, that we are required to address but one class of our youth on the subject of infidelity. From this delusion and madness, the female sex have generally stood exempt. Whenever they have fallen from the high stand that Christianity assigns them, to the level of scepticism, they have become disrobed of their dignity and virtue, alike a disgrace to their sex, and monsters in society.

It is alone almost sufficient to justify the peculiar blessings with which Christianity has crowned the female sex, that they were never found in opposition to its incarnate Author. "He had something to do for women, which should at once emancipate them from human impositions, and equalize them in divine privileges. * * * * * None of whom appear to have been amongst his public enemies, either during his life, or at his crucifixion. Even Pilate's wife warned her husband, on the judgment seat, to have nothing to do against that 'just person.' In like manner, the multitude of women who followed the Saviour from the city to Calvary, instead of joining with the men in the cry of '*crucify him,*' bewailed and lamented him. Indeed, there is no instance of any female offering any public indignation to Christ, while he was on earth."*

"Not she, with traitorous kiss, her Saviour stung ;
Not she denied him, with unholy tongue ;
She, while Apostles shrank, could dangers brave ;
Last at the cross, and earliest at the grave."

* The Mary's.

Religion has borrowed many of her brightest ornaments from the female sex, and uniformly poured upon them the choicest of her stores ; and long may it continue to be alike their disgrace and ruin, to despise and reject the religion of heaven.

Infidelity has drawn her supporters and her victims, mainly, from another class ; from the ranks of young men, into whose ardent and undisciplined minds she has sought to instil the pride of independence, and to look undismayed on the threatening aspect of truth, and to call it manliness and fortitude ; to meet undaunted the terrors of the grave and eternity, and call it philosophy. She has boldly declared, that she was the nurse of science ; the patron of literature ; the liberator of the mind from the shackles of a gloomy superstition ; as well as the ornament of man in every department of life. She has held in one hand her promises and her rewards ; and in the glitter of surreptitious charms, stood forth the enchantress of nations ; while in the other, she has grasped the weapon of death beneath the folded drapery of the grave ; and millions allured have crowded in her train, and sacrificed the soul on her altars of blood.

There are dangers crowding upon our youth and upon our whole country, from the widely disseminated principles of infidel philosophy. The source from which it springs, and the causes that aid its advancement, should be known and studied by all who are exposed to its influence. It should be viewed in its true character, and followed out to its final results, and with an open and intelligent eye, we should read in each step of its progress, the fruits of its adoption, and learn, from its practical bearing upon

the interests of our race, the evil or the good, which it has the power to achieve.

What are the sources, the efficient causes of infidelity? In answering this inquiry, I shall refer to the opinions of two of the most commanding writers of our country,* and beg you to make yourselves familiar with their strong reasoning, and their impressive illustrations. I will place the causes of infidelity before you, in their own language.

“Undoubtedly the generic cause, without which all others would be powerless, is to be sought in the alienation of man from God, and his deep aversion to the responsibilities of his perfect and eternal government.”

“There is an actual bias of the world towards infidelity. The natural propensities of man, as exhibited by the scriptures and as proved by all experience, is a propensity to sin. Sin and infidelity are mutually causes and effects. Sin demands and prompts to infidelity as its justification; infidelity warrants, encourages, and defends sin. Sin derives its peace and security from infidelity; infidelity its reception, its support, and friends from sin. Thus, in every age, there is a natural bias in man to infidelity.” “And, in immediate and necessary connexion with this, there is a natural bias in the human heart against Christianity.” Its restraints, its persuasions, its promises, and denunciations are all against sin and self-indulgence, and in favour of holiness and God. This aversion of the human heart to truth and the spirit of holiness,

* Drs. Dwight and Beecher.

seeks to create and easily secure, the belief, that the gospel is wanting in evidence, and it is at once fearlessly rejected, while its claims lie unexamined.

“Another fruitful cause of scepticism is found in the supposed irresponsibility of man for his opinions;” and “a demand of evidence on moral subjects, which the nature of mind renders impossible.”

“The pushing of investigation without first principles, competent instruction, and study, is another cause.

“The society of sceptical men, who are scoffers and partisans in the warfare against Christianity; and the contempt and ridicule, with which it is opposed.”

“Another source of danger, is the confidence with which Infidel Philosophers assert their doctrines and advance their arguments, and in the various methods used by them to persuade us, that their opinions are embraced by the great body of mankind, especially of the ingenious and learned.”

“False conceptions of the nature and prerogatives of reason have been another and abundant cause of confusion and scepticism.”

“Another is found in mental dissipation.” “And still another in professing to believe the truth, without obeying it.”

“Undefined and unworthy conceptions of experimental religion, as associated with the weaknesses and extravagances of indiscreet and fanatical good men, are occasions of uncertainty and doubt to many minds.”

“Another cause of scepticism, is found in dissolute habits. The process is short and obvious. The conflict between the man's conscience and his prac

tice, is too severe to be permanently endured. One or the other must conform, or there can be no peace. To relinquish his guilty pleasures, and sinful ways, he is not prepared. These he will not give up, and, therefore, his only alternative is, to deceive himself, and still his conscience by false testimony."

To all these causes of infidelity we may add an excessive credulity, a servile yielding of the mind to the unfounded opinions of others, without the labour, the manliness, and the magnanimity of honest and laborious investigation. Man will believe what he desires to have true, however unfounded and absurd, if sustained even by the most weak and worthless advocacy.

All these causes are in constant and vigorous operation. They are sustained by interests without and by advocates within. Finding a genial bed in the human heart, they are sown with the hand of most wakeful and active industry:—Spring forth as beneath their native skies in rank luxuriance and bear a harvest, that yields in every month and every hour its abundant fruits. These causes, with all the improvements of modern times, the speculation of the visionary and the reckless spirit of innovation and revolution, have spread over continents, and left, on one-half of our world, unnumbered memorials of their influence. Their object has been undisguised, and the fruits of their advance are of no doubtful character. They are written in the private history of thousands—in their results on the domestic economy and the social state—on the privileges and prerogatives of civil rights, and they have woven themselves into the whole structure of national

legislation. They have breathed their spirit and carried out their undisguised designs from the high place of power to the lowest hovel of seclusion and ignorance. A fair experiment has been made of the principles and powers of infidelity—made on the most broad and imposing scale. It has brought to its aid the refinements of fashion; the aid of authority; the pride of intellect; the most resolute and determined spirits; as brilliant and imposing array of power as ever lent its aid to any human effort; and what has it done? I would have you examine and see.

It would seem to be necessary, that before this it should have ceased its efforts; been reposing in the triumphs of its victory, or shorn of its strength and silenced of its claims, have sunk beneath defeat and abandoned its ends. But no: it has neither risen to enjoy the one, nor is it prepared to relinquish the other. As it had its rise in human nature, it seems destined to reign, while human nature shall endure. And each successor in the pathway of this world's history, is required to meet and canvass its claims. It now appears before the youth of our land, and it comes too in every variety of form, which the experiments and changes of centuries have enabled it to assume. In the blandishments of fashion, in the pride of show, in the sweets of luxury, in the boastings of reason, in the indulgence of lust and the selfishness of licentiousness and plunder, she knocks at every door, and suits her attitude and attire to the character and condition that are found within. And when unsuccessful in one form, she appears in new array, resolute and determined still,

and there is no prospect of such a triumph, or of such a defeat, as shall suspend the vigour of her exertions, or silence the voice of her pretensions.

I am willing, and it is my desire, that you should meet this subject, and meet it as a subject that has claims upon you, as youth of intellect and influence. If it comes a friend to your interests, receive it and defend it; if an enemy to your safety, repel and destroy it. I would say, look at it, in all its bearings on private, social, and public interest. Lay it beside its opposing principles, and judge for yourselves, for which it is wise and safe for you to decide. Decide in view of argument; from mature judgment, and not from the suggestions of passion.

I am aware, that in the outset of this investigation, you are in danger, from an influence already exerted upon you, in favour of infidelity, beyond that natural bias of the heart, of which we have spoken. You may have already associated in your minds with infidel philosophy, or with that which is its true spirit, "an independent, honourable, spirited, magnanimous disposition;" that disdains the fetters and the dictates of opinion, and that can stand alone, and decide from its own resources of judgment. It may have become your settled belief, that the gospel is utterly at variance with the most dignified and commanding qualities of human nature, and that "just in proportion to the depth of his piety, man becomes narrow-minded and mean spirited, and a stranger to the most magnanimous, liberal, and generous views and sentiments, which belong to the class of free inquirers." You may find it difficult to conceive, "how a religion, which demands and cultivates hu-

mility, meekness, and self-abasement, should consist with that nobleness of mind, and that greatness of spirit, without which, man, whatever he may possess, becomes degraded and despicable.”

Yet, with all the unfavourableness of your nature, and the false impressions of your life, I would have you come to the subject, and meet it manfully, and then decide for yourself.

Let us inquire what are some of the elements of infidelity, as contrasted with the principles of inspired truth.

1. Its uniform and unblushing ignorance. It lives in the denial of truth, rather than in the establishment of error. It generally decides early and rashly. Infidels almost uniformly become such, while young; before they are accustomed to reflection and reading, or are able, from the maturity of mind, to decide on the strength and validity of argument. From this early enlistment, they become not inquirers after truth, not accustomed to investigate its claims, but they at once enter upon the war of aggression on the province of truth, or stand as the warm defenders of its opposing system: and while seeking and arranging arguments for defence, they are, of course, unfitting and unfitted to examine and receive the truth. And, hence it is, that infidelity has almost uniformly recruited her ranks from the ignorant and uneducated classes of society. And even in those cases, where there has been the greatest intellectual cultivation, there has existed, at the same time, a most unpardonable ignorance of the principles and the defence of the christian system. It has still held on its steady and unholy course of

denying, and denying where it could not disprove. Had the enemies of the gospel studied the system of Christianity with one half the industry that its friends have studied infidelity, they would have sundered the bonds of their own ignorance, and yielded to the claims of the gospel.

I am well aware that infidel philosophy has long lived enthroned in the pride of intellect, and arrogated to herself the clearest minds, and the most profound investigation. "It is admitted, that many infidels have been ingenious men; that some of them have been learned men; and that a few of them have been great men. Hume, Tindal, and a few others, have been distinguished for superior strength of mind; Bolingbroke for eloquence of pen; Voltaire for brilliancy of imagination; and various others for respectable talents of different kinds. But I am wholly unable to form a list of infidels, who can, without extreme disadvantage, be compared with the Bacons, Erasmus, Cumberland, Stillingfleet, Grotius, Locke, Butler, Newton, Boyle, Berkley, Milton, Johnson, &c. In no walks of genius, in no path of knowledge, can infidels support a claim to superiority, or equality with Christians."*

Do you point to PAINE, whose defence of American principles we all admire, and before whose sceptical productions our whole land has trembled, and say here is intellect? I will point you back to the same example, and remind you, that when he wrote in the defence of our civil economy, in

* Dr. Dwight.

the pride of his life and the clearness of his reason, it was then he wrote and reasoned in defence of religion. And, it was not till debauchery had diseased his frame, and dissoluteness had deranged his mind, that he renounced the truth, and made a wreck of all his giant powers, in low and ignorant scurrility against God and his Son.

And what is more modern infidelity? It has not even the show of learning and intelligence, with which it once, in revolutionary phrenzy, traversed the continent of Europe, and made its assault, heaven be praised, unsuccessful assault, on the land of our fathers. If it comes in the gaudy trappings of Continental Europe, it appears in the shallowness and fickleness of its origin; supported only by the miserably arranged defences of older times, not with one new thought; not with one new mind of highest order to enforce its claims. If we receive it from England, it comes in connexions too gross, too vulgar, too ignorant, to claim a moment's respect. And where, in all our land, has it a living advocate of intellectual eminence? If you claim for its honour, the support of that illustrious man who penned our declaration of independence, you will not forget, that here he argues without reason, and decides without evidence, and that in his own country, and among his own friends, the other productions of his splendid and versatile mind, cannot be sustained under that heavy load, that moral incubus, which his low attack on Christianity has bound upon them. To say nothing of the moral character of infidelity, its ignorance is its disgrace, and should be its ruin.

2. Infidelity is disingenuous. It attributes to Christianity what in no sense belongs to her, and borrows its sole excellences from what she has achieved. It makes the religion of the gospel responsible for the evils it comes to cure, and demands credit for all the maxims of wisdom, and precepts of virtue, which it has stolen from the treasures of sacred truth. It seizes on the lamentable remains of its own principles, in the society of Christians, traces out their immoral and agitating influence, till they convulse the church and desolate the world, and then charge it upon the truth. Like the Roman Emperor, who fired the city, that he might accuse and destroy the Christians, it kindles to a flame the evil passions of men, till virtue withers and comfort dies, and then charges it upon piety. Thus crusades, intolerance, persecution, bigotry, and bloodshed, which have arisen from the clashing of infidelity with the pure elements of christian piety, have all been unfairly thrown upon the gospel: while every thing that infidelity embodies of wisdom and of knowledge respecting the human soul and futurity, of duty and social obligation, of virtue and political integrity, are surreptitiously taken from the gospel. And to free herself from the sense of obligation, and claim without fear of detection, the exclusive right to the stolen honours, with which she would adorn herself, she has attempted to destroy the Bible, that she might bury in oblivion all knowledge of that fountain of truth and virtue.

3. Infidelity is distinguished for scurrility, grossness, and vulgarity. Its leading characters have almost uniformly been low and grovelling; though

it may, sometimes, have numbered in its highest ranks, a few of refined intellect and chastened imagination, who have written in the style of decorum and manliness, yet these have been few. The great mass of her leaders and her disciples have been gross and vulgar. Their intercourse among each other, has nothing of noble, refined, and elevated carriage. If held for a season, by the circumstance of office or society, where are blended some lines of christian virtue, and obliged to assume the appearance of chasteness and honour, all has soon died away, when these restraints to their native character were removed. In their intercourse with the world, infidels are almost uniformly coarse and rude, often obtrusive and insolent. They seem utter strangers to the manliness of virtue, and the acknowledged civilities of common life; and to have blunted their moral sensibilities not only, but to have lost susceptibility for the finer feelings of human nature, and the endearing sympathies of social life. There is no department of society but what fidelity invades with its rudeness. It spares not its own circle—not even its own fireside, but blinds the eye of domestic discernment, and blasts the heart of conjugal and parental love. As to the character of its scurrility and grossness in its public discussions, I need not remark. I have yet to be informed of a solitary work, whose pages are uniformly free from these features, and in which there breathes the spirit of honourable, dignified, and chaste discussion.

4. Infidelity has uniformly been distinguished for instability, it has had no fixed and permanent character. It presents no well ordered and received system. It lives in denying the truth

of all other systems, rather than in adopting one of its own. It spreads by warring against all truth, instead of establishing any. No two of its champions or disciples are found to agree; and no one remains permanent in his own faith or unbelief for a single day. What one advances, another denies. What is to-day maintained and defended, is to-morrow denounced and recalled. Scepticism, infidelity, deism, and atheism tread rapidly upon each other, till there is nothing left in the universe, but cold and cheerless uncertainty, where the mind, in its everlasting restlessness, is thrown upon itself, ever changing and never satisfied. Infidelity has not only been unstable in its own character, but it has ever been changing as to its ideas of truth and the modes of its attack. It at one time praises the precepts of the gospel, and again denounces the whole. At one time calls in the aids of its motives, and soon denies the reality of their existence. Now abjuring revelation and extolling natural religion; soon it denies all, both natural and revealed, and sinks back to its dark and changing uncertainty. "In embracing such a philosophy, what satisfaction can be found—what resting place for the mind? To infidel philosophers, it has plainly furnished none; for they have retreated and wandered from one residence to another, and have thus proved, that they have discovered no place where they could permanently and comfortably abide. You must feel even more unsettled. You feel that you are rational and immortal, and your interests are, therefore, immense and inestimable, and that an effectual provision for them de-

mands and will repay every care and every exertion. To a mind, thus circumstanced, uncertainty is corroding and intolerable; and from a system, thus fluctuating, nothing but uncertainty can be gained or hoped. Wretched must be the condition of that mind, which, labouring with intense anxiety, to discover a peaceful rest for an unsatisfied conscience, and a final home at the close of a weary pilgrimage, finds within the horizon of its view nothing but a structure built of clouds, variable in its form, and shadowy in its substance, gay, indeed, with a thousand brilliant colours, and romantic with all the fantastical diversities of shape, but bleak, desolate, and incapable of being inhabited.”*

5. Infidelity is as inconsistent as it is unstable. It is inconsistent with itself. Having no fixed character, or permanent principles of action, it is ever engaged in demolishing with one hand what it has erected with the other. It at one and the same time praises Christianity for the purity of its precepts, and undermines the spirit of obedience, and even it has extolled these heavenly lessons, while it has burnt the volume that contained them, and sworn to exterminate every vestige of its influence. It has allowed Jesus Christ to be the perfection of its moral excellence, while it has denied the truth of the principles upon which that excellence was formed, even denied that he ever existed at all. It has acknowledged his worth and glory, and soon in madness cried “*crush the wretch!*” It has paid the same

* Dr. Dwight.

tribute of respect to the apostles of Christ—to the purity of their lives—the extent of their benevolence and labours, at the same time waged an exterminating war against them and the cause they sustained. It has brought forward its system of natural religion, and by its boldest champions “declared it, in strong and solemn terms, a system of duties indispensable; that men are wholly accountable for the discharge of them, and that according to their fulfilment or neglect of them, they would be judged and rewarded; yet they have sapped the foundation of this whole system, by undermining moral obligation and removing guilt from sin.”* It has denied the existence of truth, yet asserted its value; it has ridiculed providence, yet trembled before it; it has rejected God and the Saviour, and in the hour of peril and the pains of the death, has owned the being of the one, and implored the mercy of the other.

6. Infidelity has uniformly been immoral, and debasing, and cruel. This must ever be its influence, while human nature shall remain unchanged. It has thrown off all salutary restraints, and opposes no checks to the passions of men. It abandons the whole human family to the dominion of brutal incest and lust; avowing, as the leading principle of its system, that all control of native passion, is undemanded violence to our constitution, and a barrier to the highest good of society. It has boldly asserted, that virtue lies in the indulgence of desire, and that true wisdom consists in seeking the gratifi-

* Dr. Dwight.

cation of the passions. It has denied the existence of a future state of rewards and punishments, and left no sense of obligation; and, in fact, denied that a sense of moral obligation could consist with virtue. Hume himself, declares, "that self-denial, self-mortification, and humility, are not virtues, but are useless and mischievous; and that adultery must be practiced, if we would obtain all the advantages of life." Another has said, "that all men and women were unchaste, and that there is no such thing as conjugal fidelity;" and again it is said, "that man may get all things if he can."

These are but a few of the thousand precepts of infidel philosophy. And what can be expected from a system like this? Can safety, morality, and virtue live? Have they ever lived in the society of infidels? Are virtue and morality its fruits? As to private character, infidels are just what might be expected from their avowed principles. Lewdness has been their common sin. "The great infidel circle of France had not virtue enough to be married men;" and, together, they sunk to the beastliness of Sodom. Infidelity is not satisfied with sundering all the bonds of public and private virtue, but it rudely assails the social state, even to its domestic retirement. It will not allow any thing safe and sacred even here. This must be invaded, "that the highest ends of life may be obtained;" and our own land has been invaded and swept by this moral besom of destruction. Leveling the Sabbath, burning the Bible, denying eternity, blotting out the fear and the belief of God; infidelity is prepared to walk through the land in blood, and waste all its fair fruits and tender plants, and in

the name of pride and lust to seat itself on the grave of all our hopes. Having sundered the bonds of moral obligation, it throws man, a monster and a vampire on his race; dissolves his arrangements of order, revolutionizes his government, and drives out upon the open fields, in promiscuous crowds, rational men, as herds of brutes, instinct only for the purpose of ravage and lust. "The family, the foundation of the political edifice, the methodiser of the world's business, and the mainspring of its industry, infidels would demolish.—*The family*—the sanctuary of the pure and warm affections, where the helpless find protection, the wretched, sympathy, and the wayward undying affection, while paternal hearts live to love, and pray, and forgive, they would disband and desecrate. *The family*—that school of indelible impression, and of unextinguished affection; that verdant spot in life's dreary waste, about which memory lingers; the centre of attraction, which holds back the heady and the high-minded, and whose cords bring out of the vortex the shipwrecked mariner, after the last strand of every other cable is parted, these political Vandals would dismantle. The fire on its altars they would put out; the cold hand of death they would place on the warm beatings of its heart, to substitute the vagrancy of desire, the rage of lust, and the solitude, and disease, and desolation, which follow the footsteps of unregulated nature, exhausted by excess."* Leaving desolate the hallowed retreat of domestic life, scepticism next in-

* Dr. Beecher.

vades the right of private possession, and opens a system of indiscriminate plunder and bloodshed, till all the sinews of government are relaxed, and the last authority of law is torn away, and a nation lies weltering in its own blood, and seeks refuge in iron-hearted despotism. This is infidel morality, in its private, social, and civil relations.*

7. Infidelity has uniformly been unsuccessful in its efforts, and false in its promises. It has arisen ardent, active, and boastful. Pledging to enthralled mankind, light, and liberty, and happiness. Ascribing the evils of the world to its systems of religious faith, the uncertainty and fearfulness of the future, to the power of superstition, she has vowed to exterminate Christianity, and redeem the world. With these pledges, she has entered on her work, and what has she done? "Fired and maddened by the recital of what twelve men had accomplished, in overthrowing idolatry, and planting the christian religion, it has sworn to exterminate the name of Jesus, and to erase the last vestige of his truth." Infidels have indeed gathered up and burnt the Bible; they have demolished the Sabbath, and silenced the worship of God. But is this success? Christianity still lives; enlarges and beautifies its dominions. Though it has been proclaimed there is no God, and

* "What is it to kill a man," said one of the atheistic philosophers, while the work of death was going on, "only just to change the direction of a few ounces of blood?" and so in the progress of one revolution, was changed, in about 5,000,000 of instances, "the direction of a few ounces of blood."

no religion; no divinity in nature, and in providence; yet nature rolls on, unfolding new evidence of her author, and strengthens belief in his providence, and brings crowded accessions to his worshippers. Though the immortality of the soul, and all moral obligation are rejected, the soul still clings to its hopes, and cannot, even in its guilt, throw off its fears, and the ties of mutual and social obligation, though rudely sundered, refuse to die. Civil governments rise on the ruins of revolutionary phrenzy, in which law is enacted and honoured. The domestic economy lives in all its holy endearment; private right is held sacred still; conjugal fidelity, natural and chaste affection, are still found, and still spreading, and still loved. Infidelity is unsuccessful and false. She redeems not a solitary pledge. She leaves her victims shorn of their virtue, and abandoned of their hopes; and pours upon them, in the conflict of death, the horrors of darkness and despair. Here her boasting ends, her vain-glory dies, and the terrors, at which she laughed, rise in the strength and the vigour of immortality.

8. Infidelity has always borne the character of arrogance. No defeat, no disappointment, no disgrace have disrobed her of this character; she is arrogant still. She has laid claim to all that is high-minded, spirited, magnanimous, and learned. She has claimed the authorship of the sole method of securing human perfectibility. She has not only pronounced upon what she knows and has examined in her own sphere, but upon all that lies beyond it.—
“To be able to say that there is a God, we have only to look abroad on some definite territory,

and point to the vestiges that are given of His power and His presence somewhere. To be able to say, that there is *no God*, we must walk the whole expanse of infinity, and ascertain by observation that such vestiges are to be found nowhere. Grant that no trace of Him can be discerned in that quarter of contemplation, which our puny optics have explored—does it follow, that, throughout all immensity, a Being, with the essence and sovereignty of a God cannot be found? Because through our loopholes of communication with that small portion of external nature which is before us, we have not seen or ascertained a God, must we therefore conclude of every unknown and untrodden vastness in this illimitable universe, that no Divinity is there? Or because through the brief successions of our little day, these heavens have not once broke silence, is it therefore for us to speak to all the periods of that eternity which is behind us; and to say, that never hath a God come forth with the unequivocal tokens of his existence? Ere we can say that there is a God, we must have seen, on that portion of nature to which we have access, the print of his footsteps, or have had direct intimation from himself; or been satisfied by the authentic memorials of His converse with our species in other days. But ere we can say there is no God, we must have roamed over all nature and seen that no mark of a Divine footstep was there; and we must have gotten intimacy with every existent spirit in the universe, and learned from each, that never did a revelation of the Deity visit him; and we must have searched not into the records of one solitary planet, but into the

archives of all worlds, and thence gathered, that throughout the wide realms of immensity, not one exhibition of a reigning and living God ever has been made."*

Yet infidelity arrogantly pronounces, *there is no God*, and denies the force of every testimony, and presumes to decide not only for itself but for all. "The wonder turns on the great process by which a man could grow to that immense intelligence that can know that there is no God. What ages and what lights are requisite for this attainment? This intelligence involves the very attribute, of Divinity, while a God is denied. For unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there may be in some place manifestations of Deity, by which even *he* would be overpowered."†

9. Infidelity is at war with all the analogies of nature and providence. It has not only to meet the Bible, but the cloudless exhibition of truth, as drawn on the heavens and the earth. While in ignorance of its doctrines and its precepts, it may close the pages of the gospel, or profanely commit it to the flames, it has not power to quench the glories of the skies—it has not strength to arrest the march of providence, or close the fountains of exuberant goodness. So plainly is God exhibited in his works, in ways harmonious with his word, that were the one renounced, no excuse would be taken away for sin, while the other remained.

* Chalmers.

† Foster.

Infidelity may deny the existence of a God, and yet the mind is carried irresistibly through the wide creation, and along the line of providence, and every where reads the impressive lessons of one all pervading and all powerful Agent. It may deny the existence of sin, and yet the traces of apostasy are drawn upon every object, and the soul itself, in its deep consciousness, responds to the lessons of nature and providence. It may sport at the idea of suffering or of good, from the apostasy or virtue of others, and yet it lives on past parental suffering and kindness, or pines and dies beneath causes started in ages that are past. It may sport with the laws of retributive justice, and the demand of vicarious suffering, beyond what repentance and reformation can secure, and yet it meets at every step the fruit of its crime in the uniform reacting of nature's outraged and offended laws, and pines and sinks and expires beneath the wounds that its own hand has inflicted, and which no tears of sorrow, no reform of life can heal. The laws of nature move on, and providence advances, rewarding the obedient, and leaving in wretchedness the offender, and points to the immutable truth of the Bible, that the wicked shall not go unpunished. Infidelity may trifle with the thought of a resurrection, and yet the alternations of the seasons roll round, and decayed nature puts on again her fresh beauties, and preaches the possibility, if not the certainty of another life. The sceptic may ridicule the eternity of his own being, yet nature, indestructible in every element, reads to his eye the lesson of immortality, and amid all his suicidal efforts to annihilate the consciousness of

responsible and undying being, a living, reigning, and restless spirit speaks within, and loudly warns of judgment and of hell.

10. Infidelity is also directly at war with the fulfilled prophecies of the Bible, and with the genuine and authentic history of the world. The leading facts of the Bible stand prominent in the history of the earth, as clearly as her mountains, her rivers, and her seas. And the wonders of divine redemption, in the life and labours, the sufferings and death of its Author, with the high and successful career of his apostles, are facts to which sacred and profane record have alike affixed their sanction. And in these facts, so attested, is found accomplished the prophecy of near six thousand years, while almost countless events are springing up just as predicted, to fortify the truth of God, and fix immutable the faith of man in prophecy yet unfolded.

This is the character, and these are the difficulties of infidel philosophy. This is what scepticism presents, and this is the result in which the rejection of the gospel will involve you. And permit me to say, that in the unsanctified heart are found the elements of this gross and blasting system; and in your young hearts they may be found, silently and forcibly working their way, preparing ere long to develop a character that shall look fearlessly upon the Bible and upon God, trample upon the one, and challenge the vengeance of the other.

We would, then, not only fortify your minds against scepticism, but we would also have your hearts imbued with the spirit of truth and of Christ. For one moment, then, compare Christianity with the

system which we have drawn. In itself it is the wisdom of God ; it comes to render us wise ; it borrows no aid from ignorance ; courts investigation ; shrinks not from the light of day ; numbers the wisest of earth in her train, and makes them wiser still in the wisdom she imparts. There is no unfairness, nothing disingenuous in its character. It assumes nothing to which it is not entitled ; it charges upon sin nothing but its nature and its fruits, and asks for virtue nothing but its intrinsic excellence and its own reward. Christianity is pure, chaste, and refined. Never did it descend to scurrility and abuse, or betray the dignity of its holy origin. It meets its enemies in the mildness of mercy and the tenderness of love, and rather than revile and enkindle wrath, before her strongest persecution she bows in the majesty of suffering, and conquers by yielding. You may draw from the Bible the finest lessons of genuine refinement of feeling and of manners, and there behold the fairest specimens of true dignity. Christianity comes with a fixedness and permanence of character. Immutable in her laws, changeless in her precepts and her promises : perfect and entire, wanting nothing ; like her Author, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. She proffers her benefits upon immutable conditions ; pronounces on all offenders the same unerring judgments, and holds on her steady and uniform course of grace and righteousness. Christianity is consistent as it is immutable. In all its lengthened and blended history, the infinite variety of its parts, and the long succession of ages and authors which have combined to mature and raise its imperishable structure, it is per-

fectly harmonious, and presents a symmetry and beauty, a unity of design and effect, a reflection on the past, and a development of the future, which is not only incomparable but divine. It is alike distinguished for its pure morality, its elevating influence, and its unearthly kindness. It stands an eternal contrast to the immoral, debasing, and cruel spirit of scepticism. It takes man destroyed and in ruins, repairs and saves him. It rebinds sundered society in intellectual and moral harmony, while it extends the hand of support and love to the suffering and afflicted. It bids the prostrate rise, the dead live, and restores men from gregarian pollution to the order, the intelligence, the purity, the dignity of the sons of God. It throws into the human constitution a fortitude, into the human character a magnanimity, of which it would seem utterly unsusceptible, but from the divinity of its original creation. Look at its precursor, turning from the prospect of ease and the honours of life, to the eye of the world, bound in strange austerities, yet he rose in magnanimity and fortitude, the mild reprovcr of the ungodly, and laid his headless trunk in the dungeon, rather than pamper the passions of a lascivious prince.

Christianity gives those elements of character—that greatness of mind, which aims at high attainments, and shrinks not from difficulties; which denies no sacrifices, and which presses forward and aspires to fellowship with minds kindred to its own. Look at Paul with Gamaliel, and at Paul with Jesus Christ. A pharisee in the synagogue, or a citizen of Rome, was enough for the one, but the world itself could not limit the expanding mind, and

satisfy the glowing heart of the other. "His citizenship was in heaven." "He was of the household of God." "The Christian selects his companions and friends from the intellectual and moral nobility of the universe—studies David, Daniel, Isaiah, John, and JESUS CHRIST. The moment religion enters the soul of man, no matter how degraded formerly, he becomes immediately possessed of an affinity for the master-spirits of the world, and he, who could once delight himself and be at home with the most debased of his species, rises to sit with patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and communes with them as his elect and familiar friends. Nay, not contented yet, he pants after Deity itself, and rests not till, like Enoch, he walks with God, and has his fellowship with the infinite and glorious Father of spirits." This is the preparation which Christianity gives man to re-enter the walks of social life, to rebuild the desolations of his state, and to repeople the world with the sons and daughters of the Lord.

And while Christianity has imparted this elevation and charity, it has been uniformly successful and true to all her promises. In the face of the world she has steadily advanced; taken possession after possession, rolled back as with the hand of omnipotence the waves of darkness.

And where has she ever failed, in one solitary promise, to the weak, the trembling, and the dying believer? She has arrogated to herself nothing which she had not a right to claim, and boasted of no excellence with which she was not adorned, no wisdom which she did not possess and was not

able to impart. Christianity is harmonious with nature and with providence ; borrows proof of her divinity from her alliance to the Author of the world, and the harmony of her advancement with the developments of his will. The prophecies of God are fulfilled in her, and the predicted consummation of all events is the crowning glory of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Turning from cold and cheerless infidelity, from the fearful apathy and unbelief of your own heart, we point you, we urge you, to a trial of Christianity, not in the speculations of intellect, but the vitality of true godliness. You have a character to form with which to live : there is an hour when you must die, and an eternity of retribution.

Where can you find models of character better than Christianity affords ; scenes of death more painful and sublime, or hopes of immortality, richer than the gospel brings ? Will you turn to sceptical philosophy ? “ To philosophy, the invisible world is an unknown vast, over which, like the raven from the ark, she wanders with a wearied wing, seeking rest and finding none. To her exploring eye, the universe is one immense, unfathomable ocean. Above, around, beneath, all is doubt, anxiety, and despair. Religion, on the contrary, changes the thorny couch into a bed of down ; closes with a touch the wounds of the soul, and converts a wilderness of wo into the borders of paradise. * * * * * This same sweetener of civil life will accompany you to the end, and seating herself by your dying bed, will draw aside the curtains of eternity—will bid you lift your closing eyes on the end of sorrow, pain,

and care ; and in the opening gates of peace and glory will point to you, in full view, the friends of Christ waiting to hail your arrival.”*

* Dr. Dwight.

CHAPTER XV.

Duties which the young owe to their Creator, contained in the Decalogue.

—THE FIRST FOUR COMMANDMENTS PRE-EMINENTLY IMPORTANT—

1. From their specific OBJECT.—2. The estimation in which they are held by the Jews, and the providences of God towards that people, in relation to these commandments.

OUR duties well understood and performed towards our God, are the perfection and glory of human character. These embrace all others. A heart in love with Him, is in love with virtue, with wisdom, and with man; at peace, full of hope, and immortality.

This is the third and highest subject which it was proposed to consider. These duties, in their full extent, constitute true religion, and respect alike the secret principles of the heart and the whole circle of external conduct. They have their origin in love to God. This is the fulfilling of the law, and covers the wide ground of obligation.

Leaving the more ordinary method of considering those subjects, which embrace the life of youthful piety, I will ask you to recur to those leading principles of moral obligation, where are unfolded with clearness and solemnity, your duties to your Creator and Judge. The scene is one of early and sublime disclosure. It was the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Israel lay encamped beneath it. "Moses ascended alone, amid thunderings and lightnings; and a thick cloud was upon the mount, and the

voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, and all the people trembled. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole people quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long and waxed louder, Moses spake, and God answered by a voice." Such was the scene in which the moral law was given. It was then written by the hand of God upon two tables of stone. Hence may have arisen the distinction between the first and second tables of the law, as the revelation of God's will and our duties towards him, and towards our fellow-men.

This law we have too long passed in its general terms, or as the dead record of worn out and forgotten statutes of remote and unenlightened ages, rather than as the living law of the living God. Who would now judge, from the feelings and the habits of the world, that this law, these ten commandments, were the same which came from amid the thunders and the lightnings of Sinai; which Israel so long bore around their camp, when a sanctuary, and before their tribes when they marched forth to conflict, and before which trembled their strongest enemies? Who would dream that it was the same law, which rested sacred in the ark, where spread the wings of the cherubim, and the glory of the Lord enkindled? Above all, who would dream that it was the law of nature and of God, now and forever binding upon all men, which was ratified in the blood of the Cross, and which shall yet blaze forth in the symbols of the judgment, and the imagery of hell, upon all the enemies of godliness?

Yet these ten commandments are the same which God gave to man—which Israel revered—which Christ magnified in death—which the gospel now enforces—which the judgment shall vindicate, and eternity, with its sanction, shall sustain.

Is it not time that these laws were redeemed from forgetfulness and perversion, and made, as formerly, the rule of human duty, and the arbiter of human destiny? Is it not time that they assume that place in the kingdom of God, which they originally held, and which they must hold, when God shall judge the world in righteousness?

And that we may not, for a moment, blend these ten commandments, or any one of them, with the abrogated ceremonies of the Jewish economy, remember, that the whole transaction of the giving of the moral law, stands sublimely alone, with a magnificence of grandeur and sublimity, which has marked no event on earth, save the crucifixion of Christ, and which shall be surpassed by no event yet to come, save the final judgment, when this same law, in holy union with the gospel, shall break forth again in all the terror of its sanctions.

My object, at this time is, to consider that portion of the law which is contained in the *first four commandments*, as presenting and enforcing the duties which we owe to our Creator.

The remainder are more fresh in our remembrance, and regarded as more immediately binding, because human legislation has adopted them, as the principles of its jurisprudence; while the others have been cast aside, and left to urge their unacknowledged claims; to assert their divine authority,

and redeem themselves from the rubbish of Jewish antiquities, and abrogated ceremonies. The principles of private interest and self-defence, have guarded the last six commandments, so that, around three of them, at least, which most intimately respect our personal interest, are thrown all the securities that penal sanctions can create. At the same time, the principles of depraved nature, which the Scriptures characterize as enmity against God, are continually casting off all reverence for the first four commandments, till there is scarce a statute in all our criminal code, to guard their sacredness, or even to recognise their authority.

While human legislation has reared her barriers around murder, theft, and perjury, every other violation of the decalogue has been reduced to a trifling misdemeanour, or left to receive its sentence from the uncertainties of common law. This is strictly true, in our community, as to the first four commandments. From the very principles of our depraved nature, which loves to cast aside whatever brings God distinctly to view, and urges obedience to his will, and also from our earliest impression, drawn from human laws, which have so materially varied from the original features of the decalogue, our ideas of obligation to God have become sadly deranged, and almost effaced. It is equally our duty and our safety, to return to the statutes of God, and learn those duties to Him, which must ever hold the highest place in the record of our obligation.

THE FIRST FOUR COMMANDMENTS PRE-EMINENTLY IMPORTANT.

The truth of this proposition will appear, **FIRST:**
From their immediate and specific Object.

The great and eternal God, is the first and Supreme, if I may not add, the sole, immediate, and specific object of each of these four commandments. They are engraven before us, to reveal more clearly the divine perfections, and to secure the increasing and permanent glory of Jehovah. They stand to guard the sacred name and character of the great God and Maker of the universe: to keep inviolate the purity, and dignity, and sovereignty of his dominion. Casting aside every other object that may rise to claim homage, they come to secure the reverence and homage, which, as accountable beings, we owe to the supreme God. Thus, united in their object, and reciprocal in their influence, they are to preserve, undivided, that broad and beautiful current of love, and gratitude, and praise, which should flow home to God, as the exhaustless and ever-swell-ing revenue of His glory. They hold up the great Jehovah, and Him only, to be adored and worshipped. They prescribe the *manner* and determine the *time* of doing it. Thus, laying aside every thing which may prevent the conviction of the duty, and its proper and reasonable performance.

In each of these four commandments, you find God the first, grand, and specific object. It is not so with the remainder of the decalogue. Of the last six commandments, immeasurably important as they are, man is the immediate and specific object of each one of them. In obeying these, we promote the glory of God, and prepare for the rewards of heaven.

And what comparison is there between the infinite and eternal God; the immediate and specific object of the first, and frail, and finite man; the immediate and specific object of the second table of the law?

I would illustrate this argument, by the ordinary usage of society. We estimate the guilt of transgression, by its relative circumstances. The disturbances among children and servants, pass unnoticed. An insurrection in some distant and obscure province, dies away, or is subdued by the humble authority that may preside there. But trace the violation of law through the ascending orders of society, until you reach the city, the palace, the throne, and the offence gathers magnitude at every step, till one single blow here, is more than an open insurrection in the obscure and distant province.

Take another illustration. The character of crime is estimated by the object, or the individual against whom it is committed. Is he obscure, it is soon forgotten. Let the object of disrespect or of crime, be some inferior magistrate, and the penalty is measured accordingly. But pass the ascending series of honour, and come to the bench of supreme judicature, or to the throne and the king, and that which a moment before passed unnoticed, becomes rebellion and treason. Death follows, where a frown was not incurred before.

And what, I ask, would be the result of an utter disregard of all that is demanded and due to sovereignty? What, if the appointed seasons of its honour were disregarded? What, if instead of the universal respect due to a rightful sovereign, a thousand others should be called in to share the divided ho-

mage? What if the rightful king should be cast down, his throne demolished, and his empire invaded? Are there any crimes and offences of one subject against another, however numerous, which could compare with this? This is not only treason against the head and the heart of the nation; but every member, however distant, feels the tremendous shock. Over what has the hand of justice drawn such an avenging sword? From what other source do such wide and fatal consequences flow? Again, I ask, what other crimes, multiplied throughout the kingdom, and forbidden by penal statutes, could compare with this?

Make this insulted and dethroned Sovereign, GOD ALMIGHTY, and you see at once the aggravated guilt of violating either of these commands which have HIM for their immediate object.

As far as the infinite Jehovah transcends in dignity and glory frail and finite men, and as far as his sovereignty transcends in sacredness and importance the low and limited sovereignties of earth, so pre-eminently sacred and important are the first four commandments.

What is the unavoidable conclusion? Is it not, that man, who refuses supreme love to God and his appointed worship, profanes His holy NAME, or violates His Sabbath, is stamped in the eyes of heaven with consummate guilt? Tell me, with your eye fixed on God, your holy and eternal Sovereign, what do the last six commandments forbid, human laws condemn, prisons punish, or scaffolds avenge, that can compare with guilt like this?

Secondly : In support of the *pre-eminent sacredness and importance* of the *first commandments*, consider the reverence in which they were held by the Jews, in their best and purest days, and the dispensations of God towards that people, in relation to these very commandments.

The whole law was held sacred by the Hebrew race, as the charter of their rights and privileges, and as the pledge of Divine protection. But there is something, at the same time, peculiarly solemn and affecting thrown around the first four commandments. The first table of the law seems to consecrate the ark, and to enkindle upon it the glory of God.

When the law was given, the Lord said unto Moses, on the mount, "Go down, charge this people, lest they burst through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish." This declaration, as well as others, united with numerous dispensations, which brought God distinctly to view, impressed on the people of Israel the most affecting reverence for the Divine Existence.

Such grandeur and glory surrounded HIM, that it became their settled belief, that no man could behold Him and live. Moses even, who had for forty days dwelt in the presence of Jehovah, must be sheltered in the cleft of the rock, and covered by the hand of the Almighty, when He was to appear in the more sublime exhibitions of his majesty. Hence, also, Manoah cried, as the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." And Isaiah, "Wo is me; I am undone,

for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." God was in their view connected with every event. His agency was acknowledged in every dispensation. His theocracy was as pervading as the atmosphere and the light. He was their King and their Father : they heard his voice in the storm, and they saw his love in the rain and the dew. The clouds were his chariot, and he rode on the wings of the wind. Such was their reverence and regard for the existence of that God, who is the specific object of the first commandment.

No less was that reverence, which was cherished for the worship of God, the specific object of the second commandment. I need not detail before you the service of the tabernacle in the wilderness, or of the temple in Zion.

But what were the feelings of Moses, as he came, all happy from God, bearing in his arms the tables of the law, when he heard the music and the noise of dancing around the idol of Aaron.

Indignant and overwhelmed, he dashed to the ground the tables of God's law, and rebuked the camp of Israel, and, standing in the gate, he cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; put every man his sword by his side; go in and out from gate to gate, throughout the camp; slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour; and there fell of the people of Israel, that day, about three thousand souls. Moses returned to God, to make atonement for the sins of the living, and thus saith the Lord; Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my

book." *What must be the sin of deranging or withholding the worship of God?*

Spirituality of worship was also demanded. "The sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not; and there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord."

Immediate death was the consequence of a want of reverence for the true worship of God. Hence, not only the tabernacle, and the ark, the priestly office, and the altar, but the temple and the city; yea, all the hills of Zion, where his fathers worshipped, are, even to the present hour, sacred in the eyes of a Jew. And the Lord has declared to Israel, and to all men in view of his worship, "I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

As the third of these commandments, that Being who was so jealous of his worship, adds, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. And such was the respect and reverence cherished by the Jews for the name of the Lord, which this command was given to guard, that those titles which belong exclusively to God, were never taken upon their lips; and so deep was this reverence, that it became their abiding belief, that it would be, not only profaneness, but death to do it. And this was an impression so abiding, and considered so just, that the authors of the Greek version of the ancient Scriptures, in order that they might not profane the

name of the Lord, or use it with apparent familiarity, were cautious not to admit the exclusive titles of God to its pages. And, in the Bible of our language, the sacred names, Jah and Jehovah, are seldom introduced.

Whatever may have been the character of this reverence, it was not unwarranted by the dispensations of God. There was one in the society of Israel, who blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp, and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him. Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sins; and he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death."

It remains that I speak of the *fourth* commandment, the last article in the first table of the law.

This was pre-eminently sacred, as Jehovah had hallowed the Sabbath by his own rest. This was the first religious institution that God gave to man. It was given to preserve His name, His worship, and His being; clothed, I had almost said, with sacredness and importance equal to them all. As this was the first institution of religion enjoined upon man, and observed by the Jews before the other commandments were given, it rose prominent among them, and stands as the guardian of all the others. An appointed *time* for worship is the only security for its existence. The Sabbath forgotten, the sacred name, and, indeed, the very being of God will soon be forgotten and unknown.

This institution, rising from the very necessities of our being, God has doubly fortified. Reverence for this command, is one of the last religious emotions that dies from the heart of the degenerate Jew, and it is among the first that kindles up in the soul of the renewed. "The Lord said, Ye *shall* keep the Sabbath day, for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it, shall surely be put to death; whosoever doeth *any work* therein, shall be cut off from among his people. Whosoever doeth any work in the *Sabbath*, shall surely *be put to death.*" This was no vain decision of the Almighty. Mark his dispensations. A man was found, that "gathered sticks on the Sabbath, and they brought him to Aaron and Moses, and unto all the congregation. And the Lord said, the man shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall stone him. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died as the Lord commanded." What reverence must this have given to all Israel for that day? Nehemiah felt it, as he rebuilt Jerusalem—David felt it, as he strung his sacred lyre—Isaiah, enraptured by prophetic vision, felt it, and the beloved disciple felt it, as he adored the Lord of the Sabbath in the island of his solitude.

Here you have the reverence in which holy men of old held these four commandments, and the solemn and public dispensation of God, which so fully sanctioned that reverence. And, I would ask, are not these commands as sacred now as they were then? Are they not as important and as binding?

Will not the dispensations of God, sooner or later, clothe them with sanctions equally overwhelming to the transgressor? What, though man now drops not a tear, and feels no danger, where Israel would have trembled and expired? Hath not the law "dominion over a man as long as he liveth?"

I would press the subject upon your consideration, and, if possible, revive the authority of these four commandments. They are as sacred, and as binding upon you, as on Israel of old. These laws still live, unburied by the rubbish of abrogated ceremonies, and unobscured by the lapse of ages. Your distance from the Jew, does not release you from your obligations to the God of Israel; nor with less guilt and danger, can you have other gods before him. Is not the first table of the law binding upon you in all its force? To whom has God been more clearly revealed? And has he not been swelling around you the tide of his blessings, ever since the solemnities of Sinai? Instead of the angel of the covenant, you have Jesus the Messiah. Instead of the pillar of fire and of cloud, you have the Holy Spirit to guide and defend. Instead of Canaan, with its richness and rest to invite you onward, you have heaven with its holiness, and happiness. Yet, where are those thanksgivings to God, which so often made the wilderness rejoice? Where is that deep reverence for Jehovah, which one thought of his existence gave to every Hebrew? The ten thousand subjects of his increasing agency are sundered from his hand, and we have left to fortune, and the course of nature, those moving

providences which once bound the heart to the Efficient Cause of all things.

Because God has changed his economy, has he therefore changed his nature and his claims? Has he laid aside his demand for reverence and love? Is practical atheism a sin that heaven now forgets? Is this wide spread neglect of God, deep cherished infidelity of soul, accumulating no guilt, no judgment, and fiery indignation? Has Jehovah so denied the evidence of his existence, or so unclothed his sacred being, that we may sport with Jewish reverence, banish the memorials of a present and presiding Deity, and give loose to the pride and passions of the soul?

Retributions do not, indeed, immediately follow on the footsteps of sin, as in ancient days. The earth may not open to receive you; fire from heaven may not lay your dwellings in ashes; the flood may not roll its unfathomed waters; yet, be assured, there is a retribution to come. The law against the wide spread atheism and idolatry of the present hour, stands unchanged; and to it, there is bound the penalty of death. Men may long deny the God of Israel, and have a thousand other gods before Him. In modern infidelity and boasted refinement, they may smile at the reverence of the Hebrew, as the heavens shook at the voice of Jehovah, and the sea roared at the driving of his tempests. Yet well may despisers of God and his providence, fear. He will yet look out from his pillar of glory, and trouble their hosts. The God of Israel is still their king and judge: in his hand is the cup of trembling, and they shall drink it to the very dregs.

Where Israel revered and worshipped the Lord, do you not despise his law? Israel had their idols. Do you acknowledge the existence of God, and his claims to devotion? Where, let me ask, is your altar, and what is the incense of your praise? Do you not disown God, by withholding that worship which he claims? Have you, then, no idols? Refuse to acknowledge God in holy worship, then read your doom in the slaughter of Israel. Do you bring the externals of devotion? Let the dead sons of Aaron teach you. Withhold the heart from God, and refuse his service, and must you not reap, beyond the grave, the wages of death?

And is not the name of the Lord as sacred, as when he first spoke to Israel? Has the continual brightening of his glory for four thousand years, granted indulgence to *profaneness*? Yet it rolls from the lips of the swearer; society often smiles and gives it currency. Who now fears to take upon his lips the name of God? But is he held guiltless, that taketh his name in vain? Be it ever known, that his NAME is still sacred in the eyes of heaven, and when it falls from your lips profaned, guilt is written on the heart, and the sentence of God's law is recorded above.

If the name and the worship of the living Jehovah, whom Israel adored, are still so sacred, and to be had in reverence, is that *consecrated day* to be forgotten which brings that God to view, appoints his worship, and draws increasing sacredness around his name? Who has an exemption from the law of the Sabbath? Is physical and moral nature so changed, that the Sabbath is not demanded? Has

not the Lord said, "I gave them my Sabbath to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them?" Is no day of rest and worship now required for God's honour and our salvation? Is piety so deeply rooted in the soul, that no hallowed hours and sacred worship are necessary to preserve it? Has God blotted out that day? Does he require no special service from his creatures? Can you labour now with innocence, and trample on the hours of this sacred day, and profane the most holy institutions of Jehovah, where one act cost the Jew his life? Tell me of one act of God, of one reason, drawn from his fuller dispensations, from the character of physical and moral being, or from any source, that takes from this day its sacredness and binding obligation. Are we not bound to rest, and worship God; to do it when he commands? Has he ever removed the penalty from the law of the Sabbath?

Tell me one reason why God gave and renewed this law to Israel, and that reason shall bind it still more solemnly on you. Did the physical and moral necessities of Israel demand a Sabbath? These necessities have been increasing ever since the law was given. Did spiritual, national, and individual blessings flow to them from the Sabbath? Here you gather your richest hopes. Did the Sabbath point them back to creation and the rest of God, and forward to the peace of Canaan? It points you to the wonders of redeeming love, and the rest of heaven. Was it death, by God's enactment, to break the Sabbath by a single act? Look at the

blessings the Sabbath brings, with all the glories it unfolds, and what must be the judgments accumulating in eternity, for them that fearlessly trample on the Sabbath now? O, could that dying victim speak from the congregation of Israel, would he not send a warning of unearthly power to these contemners of Jehovah's Law?

CHAPTER XVI.

The pre-eminent importance of the first four commandments, continued.—

3. They are the foundation and support of all the others.—The security of moral principle.—Their violation is the destruction of this principle.—The character of society where these are unknown or disregarded.

—4. The permanent existence of the specific objects of these commandments.

IN considering the pre-eminent importance of the *first four commandments*, I have remarked upon their immediate and specific Object, the supreme Jehovah: that they present his sacred being, preserve his honour, and secure his worship. I have alluded to the deep reverence of the ancient people of God, for these laws, with his affecting dispensations towards Israel, to preserve them inviolate; showing, that every reason for their original appointment now exists, with undiminished force.

I would proceed further to establish and illustrate the proposition laid down in the commencement of this discussion.

THIRDLY. *The first four commandments are the foundation and support of all the others.* There is no security for the observance of the last six commandments, without the first four. There would be no effectual sanctions, no penalties to any law. The relative obligations of society will never be felt, nor the duties of social life be discharged, if the obligations which we owe to God are not acknowledged, and the duties arising from them performed. There can exist nothing like correct

morals. Lay aside the relations and duties included in the first table of the law, and there remains no authority to sanction and sustain the second. All motives to obey these laws, would rise from considerations of expediency, from personal profit and convenience. The scene of their operation and influence lies on earth, and this world only must furnish the security that they shall be obeyed. And who does not know that those *passions*, which urge or refuse obedience, lie wholly beyond the reach of human legislation? Occasional checks may be given to open and flagrant violation of these divine laws; but those powerful principles, the conflicting and restless passions of nature, which are ever urging to their violation, no human sanction can reach, no human power can bind.

It may be settled as an unquestionable principle, that there is nothing, independent of the relation in which man stands to his God, with those obligations and responsibilities which rise from that relation, which can afford the least security for the lives, liberties, and possessions of men. The history of mankind abundantly establishes the supreme importance of the first four commandments; without these, the obligations to obey the others have never been fully felt, nor their duties discharged.

When the true worship of God was abandoned, his name profaned, and his Sabbaths violated, the relative duties and sympathies of social life were swept away, even before the race of men had multiplied sufficiently to lose the affecting claims of kindred and consanguinity; and so lost were man-

kind, not only to God and his worship, but to every sense of social duty and relationship, that nothing but an universal deluge could arrest the march of human wickedness.

In subsequent ages, the special instructions of the first four commandments, as far as the revealed and written knowledge of them was concerned, were confined to the Jewish nation. And what was the character and condition of the whole world beside? Was there any regard to the lives, liberties, and possessions of men? Were truth and pureness of living to be found? Was there any more appearance of virtue, of mutual and acknowledged obligation, of peace and harmony, than amidst the herds of the brute creation?

The Jews, whenever they forgot God, suspended or deranged his worship, and neglected his Sabbaths, that moment lost all sense of obligation and desire to obey the last six commandments, and disorder and death broke into the ranks of Israel. Thefts, murders, adulteries, abuse of parents, perjury, and covetousness, raged uncontrolled. Why was all this? Because superior obligation to the first four commandments was not felt, and inferior obligation of course could not be. The sanctions and supports of true morality were lost, and the corrupted passions of nature broke loose and ranged unrestrained.

As you trace the history of this interesting people, at every step of their progress, you will find their private obligations and social duties cast aside and forgotten, just in proportion as they departed from the sincere acknowledgment and worship of God, reverence for his name, and his Sabbaths.

The pagan nations almost universally show an entire disregard of the social duties, and are lost to all the valuable possessions and hopes of life. You can nowhere find among them, obedience to the last six commandments. Instead of honour paid to father and mother, you meet instructions to destroy them, when selfishness suggests advantage. Falsehood and perjury are taught as a system; and, together with thefts, recommended as virtues. Murder is legalized, and, indeed, made an important portion of religious service; and debasement, and the grossest impurity, have not only been sanctioned to satiate human passions, but as an act of homage to the gods that were worshipped.

What will human nature not become, when loosed from the knowledge and obedience of the first statutes of Jehovah's law? All this degeneracy and debasement springs from mistaken views of God, and the acceptable methods of his worship; that is, from want of knowledge and regard of the first table of the law. In this state, professing themselves wise, as all men do who rise in what they call dignity and independence, above the duties of the first four commandments, they become fools; and, in the language of Inspiration, changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. "Wherefore, God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts; to vile affections, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, backbiters, haters of God, despite-

ful, proud, disobedient to parents, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."

You have not only the history of man, but the testimony of Inspiration, that where God, his worship, and his Sabbaths, are cast aside, there remains no possible security to any other of the commandments. All are swept away in one deep, rapid, and resistless tide of licentiousness. Reason, revelation, and experience, combine to assure you, that all this arises from ignorance of God's character, and neglect of his worship. Knowledge of the divine character and worship rest wholly on the combined influence of the first four commandments. Knowledge of the existence and character of God lost, his worship and Sabbaths of course will die. So, let his name be profaned, his worship abandoned, and his Sabbaths violated, and from the very laws of our nature, we know, that speedily the character not only, but the very existence of God, will pass wholly from the mind. The history of forty centuries practically demonstrates this truth, and presents, with new and affecting force, the declaration of the Lord: "I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them. Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them."

To fortify this argument, and render more clear the conclusion to which it leads, let us inquire why the state of morals is so loose and wretched in the church of Rome, and throughout the papal dominions? Unquestionably, because the injunctions of some, if not of all the first four commandments, have been violated and cast aside. The pontiff has

assumed the place of the Almighty. Imagery is substituted for the spiritual presence of Christ, and formality for holy worship. The Sabbath has lost its sacredness, in the multitude of festivals that have crowded the calendar. In saints' worship, and consecrated days, reverence for the Saviour and the Sabbath, has died away. Now, and for centuries, both popular and priestly licentiousness, corruption of morals, and debasement of mind, are swelling the miseries of that devoted people.

We might enter other countries and communities, and show you that morality or obedience to the last six commandments is miserable indeed, where God is not practically acknowledged and worshipped, in the ways of his appointment; where his name is not revered, and his Sabbaths hallowed by sacred rest. Look around you, and what is the moral character of those among whom no sanctuaries are found, and no Sabbath assemblies; where, fearless of judgment, men unrestrained trample upon these first four laws of God?

I might come still nearer home, and ask, who is, in reality, the trusty and virtuous man? Is it he who violates the first four commandments? I will not press this inquiry. But do you not require signatures, and seals, and securities, and carry a distrust of the private virtues of men just in proportion as they live remote from the first four commandments?

That man who acknowledges and worships God, who is not profane, and who hallows the Sabbath, will invariably be correct in all his deportment. He is obedient to the whole law of God. But for his

obedience to the last six commandments simply, you bestow no unusual degree of credit; you would regard him as a monster if he refused it. Neither is there any pledge in that obedience, that he will rise still higher, and obey the first table of the law. He can rise no higher in moral character than the level of his principles. But obey the first four commandments, and from moral necessity he will obey the others. The first violated, and all are violated: the first kept, and all are kept. The first are the foundation of obedience; the last the structure of character that is raised upon it; and while the broad deep foundation bears up the edifice which rests upon it, that bright, and beautiful, and firm, as it may be, has no power to sustain and secure its foundation from the wasting waters that may be dashing at its base.

What then is the consequence of violating the first four commandments? Are not the securities of true religion, and the sanctions of all true morality destroyed? Shall I go back, and point you to the three thousand corpses that crowded the camp of Israel? Shall I point you to the dead sons of Aaron, their censers in their palsied hands? Shall I remind you of the son of Shelometh, who cursed, and blasphemed, and expired? Shall I tell you again of him who broke the Sabbath, and died for his presumption? Fearful must be the consequences of violating these commandments, or such visitations of death had not been so certainly, so solemnly, and publicly executed. Shall I point you to France, who in madness declared, destroy the

Sabbath and the Sacrament, and we blot out the christian religion, and the name of God! She did it, and three millions of souls paid to her madness the forfeiture of life. These are the recorded admonitions of God to preserve his being, and his worship, and his cause.

As a parental warning, God declares, "I will cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries into desolation. I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities waste. And upon them that are left of you, I will send a faintness, and the sound of a shaking leaf shall chase them. They shall flee, as fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when none pursueth." Follow the footsteps of man from the moment of these declarations, and you will see all the evils of this world rising from sin against the first four commandments. Find one spot where these are kept, there virtue blooms, and grace abounds, to adorn and bless.

I would present Israel, when in idolatry, then deep in calamity. I would present the captivity of Babylon; Israel distant in bondage, that God's Sabbaths might be kept. I would present the wasting away of the glory of Lebanon; the ruins of the temple, and the city of God; the mournings of Zion; the wide dispersion of unhappy Israel; the "fear" and "faintness," and "the falling when none pursueth." I would point you to the ruin of christian churches; to the abominations of the east amid the ashes of a thousand altars; to the plrenzy and blood

of superstition; the lengthened and desolating wars, with the woes that now settle, as the scourges of Heaven, on the race of mankind.

Go where you will, forgotten and neglected worship, forgotten and neglected Sabbaths, a profaned and forgotten God, are the living springs whence are poured out these oceans of wo. The voice of warning which now rises from these broken institutions of heaven, with the groans of nations borne on the winds, is louder in our ears than the voice of mighty thunderings, and warn us of judgments desolating as the rush of many waters. If all Israel “quaked greatly,” as Jehovah gave his law, O, how can we but tremble before it, as the power of its penalties is drawn in the blood of ten thousand victims; ratified on the cross, and demanding full redemption in the unerring certainties and unending issues of the judgment day?

Violate the first four commandments, or any one of them, and as an immediate consequence you open a direct inroad on *moral principle*, that will prepare the way, not for one murder or theft, or perjury, but for thousands, with all the countless immoralities and crimes that swell the calendar of human guilt.

What has filled the world with cruelty and death, with prisons and scaffolds; and hell with spirits prematurely ripened for its woes? I speak not ignorantly. Go from convict to convict, from dungeon to dungeon; ask each tenant of his dreary cell, what led you to this home? The reply of one, with scarce an exception, will be the reply of all—“the Sabbath was violated and forgotten—the sanc-

tuary abandoned—God's name and his worship profaned, and the restraints of his grace, and the guardianship of his care were lost—corrupted and uncontrolled passions swayed me—the fear of the law, these walls, this dreary cell, and death itself, with all the endless miseries of hell, could not arrest me in the course of crime.

This is the course of nature, such God allows, yea, in justice, decides it shall be ; and of this experience and the scriptures assure us. The greater barrier surmounted, nothing obstructs the course of passion. The grand defence thrown down, and the torrent sweeps resistless and uncontrolled. It is here, when men disregard God and his institutions, professing themselves wise they become fools ; and in accordance with the laws of their own nature, and in righteous judgment, God gives them up to a reprobate mind, filled with all unrighteousness.*

What is there here but an utter prostration of *moral principle*—the ruin of the social virtues ; and, with eternity in view, what interest can compare with this ? What evil can exceed the corruption of virtue, and the prostration of principle ? Here, temporal and eternal good are blasted forever.

Moral principle emanates from God, and all its appropriate objects are created by the divine existence.

* Lord Chief Justice Hale remarks, that of all the persons who were convicted of capital crimes, while he was on the bench, he found a *few* only, who would not confess, on inquiry, that they began their career of wickedness by neglecting the duties of the Sabbath, and by vicious conduct on that day.

This principle of our being lies dormant, and dies away when its appropriate objects are withdrawn or forgotten. Hence, whatever leads to the forgetfulness of God and his holy institutions, conducts directly to its prostration and ruin.

It is the Sabbath and the worship of God, with their connexions and dependencies, which constitute the appropriate objects of man's moral feeling, reduces that feeling to settled principle, and preserves it from extinction and decay.

Trespass on either of these first commandments, and you at once make war upon the source and security, yea, upon the very existence of moral principle. You enter upon the work of exterminating from your own being every vestige of moral worth, every possibility of thorough reformation and of eternal enjoyment. It is here that you destroy the last hold of Heaven upon the soul, sunder yourself from God, and sympathy with goodness, and are sent afloat like an abandoned wreck amid storms, with no certainty, no possibility of reaching safety or repose. You become as the spirit shut out from heaven in eternal wanderings of despair, without one principle that can claim affinity with goodness, or kindle desire for holiness. The last chain that bound you to the kingdom of Jehovah is severed. No power remains to re-unite the heart now lost to moral objects, and devoid of moral principle, to the faintest hope of future good.

But this is not all. This war is wide in its range. It is continually sweeping moral principle from every soul it can reach, destroying the sacredness and

reality of its appropriate objects, and strengthening the desires of the unregenerate soul, which ever loves to forget God and his institutions. Hence, while we shrink back from the murderer, the thief, and the perjured, as from a pestilence, our safety endangered and our indignation roused, the example of those who disregard God and his law becomes attractive and persuasive to degenerate men, and carries a power silent and unseen, yet more deadly than the pestilence of night. The influence of such men is like the whirlpool, extending wide and fearful, to engulf in its dark and returnless bosom.

I cannot leave this subject without another brief consideration, as illustrating and enforcing the pre-eminent importance of these divine commands. The *specific objects* which they regard are of eternal duration, and lay the foundation for their unceasing existence. They are the laws which God has made known to us, as the security of divine and endless realities, to preserve inviolate the ever opening excellencies and glories of the Deity. They arose from the nature of moral being, and must be co-existent with the principles of that being.

Is it so with the other commandments? Important as they now are, and clothed, too, as they are with the authority of God, the necessity and importance of these shall soon be laid aside; for their specific objects are soon to be removed.

A few more years, and no law will be required against the abuse of parents, for parental and filial relations will be ended. There will be no murder to forbid, for all men shall become immortal. "There

shall be no law against adultery, for we shall be as angels, neither marrying nor giving in marriage." There will be no law against theft, and perjury, and covetousness, for you shall possess forever all that immortality can desire in heaven, or ask but one drop of water to cool your parched tongue in hell. When the specific and appropriate objects of these laws, as the reason for their enactment, shall disappear, the laws themselves shall die. But will the time ever come when the nature and necessities of moral being shall not require the *first four laws* of the decalogue? Will *their* specific and appropriate objects ever die? No: for when will God cease to exist, or lose his supremacy? Never will sacredness die away from his name, that we may take it on our lips in vain, and be guiltless. Above all, when will it be, that He is not to be adored and worshipped by the holy service of the Sabbath institution? The Sabbath, the name, the worship, and the being of God are forever and forever. Heaven is his home—there is the temple of his praise, the eternal worship of his name; and heaven itself, filled with its redeemed multitudes, is the Sabbath of the people of God for eternity. That holy institution that celebrates the power and wisdom of creation, that commemorates the still greater work of redeeming love, and serves to honour God, and bring forever upon the heart a brighter and a brighter image of Jehovah; that is the emblem of heaven, created and hallowed by the rest of God, as moral being sprung forth on earth shall never cease till moral being shall expire. He, then, that violates the Sabbath, and

thus deranges and detracts from the worship of God, strikes not at an institution of man, but of the Almighty; not an institution of time, but of eternity. He raises his hand against the rest, and the worship, and the glory of heaven; declares war with the saints and angels, and with God himself in the glories of an eternal Sabbath. Against the combined fury of the wicked in despair, these four commandments, with their sacred and eternal objects shall stand, and the saints and angels shall keep them holy—heaven their home—God their father, and eternity their Sabbath of unending worship and unending rest.

Thus, I have attempted to show, that upon these first four commandments, these eternal laws of God, which result from the nature of moral beings, drawn out to preserve forever the honour and glory of the divine existence, rest the preservation and existence of all moral principle; that without them, there is no effectual barriers to vice, or securities for virtue; that they sanction and sustain all the other commandments; that the history of the world is but one unbroken history of crime, of cruelty, and death, where these have been unknown or disregarded; that the example of the Jews, in their best and purest days, together with the word and dispensations of God towards that people, clothed these commandments with pre-eminent sacredness and importance. And, first of all, that the infinite God was their great and specific object; that it was his honour and glory which they defended. So that without them, God can neither be honoured nor known; man made happy or holy; but with them, every object that can

interest heaven or earth, is secured. Take them away, and leave what you will beside, do you leave happiness, or hope, or piety? No.

Remove them, and then enforce every remaining law, and even dry up these passions which urge to violation and excess. Make every man to love and honour his father and mother; to keep from murder and from malice even; from theft and adultery; from perjury and covetousness. Present the whole human family, in the harmony and love of one extended brotherhood; yet where, and what is their religion? Where is God and his worship? Where is any thing like preparation for that spiritual world to which all men are so rapidly hastening? With all this, you do not give even the hopes or the prospects of the Deist.

While the violation of any commandment encroaches on the prerogative and honour of Him who gave it; trespasses on the rights and privileges of those it was designed to benefit; remember, that a violation of either of these *first four commandments* is a direct attack, not only on the prerogatives and honour of God, but on the very *existence* of Jehovah; its immediate influence and ultimate tendency is, to bring back the horrors of unbroken atheism, leaving no important sanction to one rule of human duty; no security for the lives, the liberties, or possessions of men: above all, no security for hope, or eternal happiness beyond the grave.

Without these first four commandments, there is no religion left. God's worship dies; the knowledge of his being becomes extinct; and more than

Egypt's scourges, and Egypt's gloom, settle upon the endless destinies of man.

It is thus, the violation of these commandments is a direct and tremendous attack on moral principle, and the speedy ruin of private and public virtue. It is shutting out the power of heaven from earth, and cutting this world asunder from the light and liberty of the sons of God. And the responsibility and guilt is not to be learned from the destruction of the soul alone, but from the deadly influence sent forward to future years, and the direct dishonour cast upon the authority and being of God.

What then is your duty in view of this first table of the law? Does it not demand redemption from the long abuse of centuries? Does it not demand it at your hands? It claims again, a resting place in the sanctuaries of the Lord, and the deep reverence of his people. And shall we, who are the successors of Israel to the ark, the covenants and the promises; and, dependent as we are, on virtue and religion, rest secure, while these laws are trodden under foot? It is the duty of every man who loves his country, and the kingdom of Christ, to withstand the violation of the Sabbath, the name, and the worship of God. Do it not; and Israel's captivity, that God's Sabbath might be kept, is but a faint emblem of our ruin. Jehovah will be honoured, and he will be honoured by his own institutions. Keep them inviolate, and floods of prosperity and blessing will flow in upon us. Do it not, and a nation trembles. God will yet write his judgments in our ashes.

In our social and civil relations, this subject speaks

to us in commanding language. Unheeded, and we are undone. The thousand judgments of God on Israel, are but fearful symbols hung out from eternity, of deeper woes unveiled beyond the grave.

You have a personal interest here. How would you shudder at the charge of crime that human law condemns? How would you shrink from the prison and the scaffold? But are there not other and higher laws? Why so thoughtless of *their* violation? May you not have broken these? And why is not the thought equally alarming? O, had you lived when Moses was the judge, and God the king, where would profaneness, and Sabbath violation, and neglect of God have left you? Remember, you have a judge, more just and holy than the judge of Israel, and God is now your king. As long as you live, his law has dominion over you. In his sight, where does its violation leave you? You may have traced the whole book of human law, and stand exempted from all which the last six commands forbid. But are there not other and higher laws? Are not *these* broken, and have *they* no claims upon you? Will your character satisfy these? Shrink not from the investigation before you. It demands your immediate and solemn attention. That investigation must be had. Then measure not your moral character, nor calculate your final destiny, by the limited and feeble enactments of human law, or the impressions which imperfect education may have given. The last judgment will admit no such standards as these. Go to the tables of the law; to the unrepealed statutes of the Lord. If they condemn you now, remember they will meet you at the judgment. Let

past and present disobedience of these first commands, so pre-eminently sacred, sound an alarm, and roll up, like the gatherings of that tempest, from which thunderings and lightnings may yet fall with more convulsing power than rocked the mount of Sinai, and sent a thrill of horror through the ranks of Israel.

That predicted scene of terror and of final doom to guilty men, will come. The trumpet of the final day will break upon your ears; the sun and stars shall fall, and nature be dissolved. Then shall this law of God lay its penalties of death eternal on the disobedient in despair.

When the last table of the law shall be lost amid the changes of the resurrection, these first commands shall stand forth, as the statutes of eternity, with their great and ever living Author; may God be your God and Saviour—his worship your joy and glory—His name forever hallowed—His eternity, your Sabbath of endless rest.

CHAPTER XVII.

On the wise arrangement of God in creation and providence, to render mankind happy.—Our safety and happiness found in regarding the established and uniform laws of God, in nature, providence, and grace.—The evils of life, and the retribution of future misery, the result of violating these laws.

THE monarch of Israel on the roof of his palace, in one of those splendid evenings, for which Palestine was distinguished, raising his adoring eyes to the starry firmament, thus sang: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament showeth his handy work; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; There is no speech, nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth; their words unto the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is, as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth, is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter, also, than honey and the honey-comb.

Moreover, by them is thy servant warned ; and in keeping of them there is great reward."

The great secret, and end of life well spent, is to secure the result which is here brought to view. Without this, every thing else is but poor and worthless. The successful method of doing this, is clearly pointed out by the wisdom of Inspiration.

Such are the arrangements of God in nature, providence, and grace ; such are the laws of his kingdom, natural, organic, intellectual, and moral, that strict observance of these laws would secure all the happiness which human nature, in its endlessly diversified susceptibilities, is capable of enjoying. In keeping of them there is great reward.

I am forcibly reminded of the remarks of Robert Hall, as illustrating the divine goodness, even in the afflictions of life, showing that the misery which flows from guilt is calculated to remedy sin itself, rising like a barrier to warn against repeated transgressions, to drive back to reformation and virtue. "A consideration," says this great and good man, "a consideration of the benefit of afflictions, should teach us to bear them patiently, when they fall to our lot, and to be thankful to heaven for having planted such barriers around us, to restrain the exuberance of our follies and crimes. Let these sacred fences be removed ; exempt ambition from disappointment, and the guilty from remorse ; let luxury be unattended by disease, and indiscretion lead to no embarrassment or distress ; our vices would range without control, and the impetuosity of our passions have no bounds ; every family would be filled with strife ; every nation with carnage, and a deluge of

calamities would break in upon us, which would produce more misery in a year, than is inflicted by the hand of Providence in a lapse of ages."

The great inquiry of wisdom is to seek a remedy for all these evils, over which we have cast a momentary glance; and the great object of charity is to see that remedy applied. The superficial observer, as he contemplates the calamities that fill our world, and the more numerous avenues by which we are exposed to distress, and the obstacles opposing virtue and holiness, might regard our world as one great nursery of disease, one vast receptacle of misery, filled with beings whom Providence has endowed with susceptibilities to suffer, rather than with capacities to enjoy: but the cause of all this appears on a moment's reflection, and man's miseries are seen to rise the fruit of his crimes; and that but for these, we should see exemplified what is actually the case, that God has made all things well, and that in keeping his commandments there is great reward.

The guilt and misery of this world are not, and should not be disguised; and I wish, in this place, by the actual presentation of their nature and consequences, to secure a regard for those virtues, which are an effectual barrier against evil, as they are foreign to vice and immorality.

The sentiment which I have already borrowed, from the Psalmist of Israel, is, that obedience to the laws of God in nature, organic, intellectual, and moral, would render mankind as happy as they are capable of being.

The young are laying a foundation for future

character, and for everlasting retribution. You are not influencing, or acting, on the providential or judicial arrangements of God, and his future decisions; these are all formed and settled; but you are preparing your hearts, forming your characters, and moulding your susceptibilities, to meet these established providences, and immutable laws of God's economy. The result, as to your condition of enjoyment or sorrow, life or death, is not to be known from what God will do in future, but from what you are now doing, and from the character you are now forming, and which will result in painful or pleasurable effects, as it shall agree with, or be found opposed to the character and government of God. That character and that government are fixed. The laws resulting from the one, and guarding the other, are immutable, and the providences which arise from both, will be productive of joy or sorrow, life or death, heaven or hell, just according to the moral character which you form and with which you must meet them.

The position which I have laid down, as borrowed from Inspiration, is, that if your character and conduct conform to the character and government of God, you will be as happy as your natures will allow. And if this is true, a subject of no ordinary interest is brought before you; and could I bring it in any other name, or under any new aspect, but that of religion, I might command your whole souls in anticipation of the good, and in efforts to reap the reward.

God has so arranged this world and his govern-

ment with men, that their obedience to his laws secures their happiness. What I wish you to see, is, that conformity to these laws renders your happiness certain; a violation of them entails upon you misery, and deep sorrow of heart. God has made you a physical being, with an animal structure, or what we may call organic nature; he has made you an intelligent being; and also, he has endowed you with moral and immortal principles. In this three-fold view, we are to regard mankind, animal or organic, intellectual and moral.

To each of these natures, if I may so call them, there are appropriate fields of action; laws that regulate each, and subjects and influences suited to each, and all of them are sources of peculiar and exquisite sensibility.

The first, and inferior, is the groundwork of the other. The intellectual holds an intermediate relation to both the others; it is the guide of the one, and the subordinate auxiliary to the supreme direction of moral being, the affections of the soul. Intellect controls the physical nature, and moral sentiments hold undisputed supremacy over both the organic structure and the intellectual faculties.

Though reason is man's high and boasted prerogative, moral principle, either in its sanctified or depraved influence, holds its empire over it with almost perfect and unlimited sway. Each of these departments are direct tributaries to moral character, and each is fast heaping up the exhaustless stores of future and of endless sensibility, of joy or sorrow. Neither of them are to know or suffer death, but to

lead on to a resurrection, and a state of more enlarged and lively sensibility.

To each of these natures there are objects perfectly adapted, and laws clearly defined. Objects, the right contemplation and use of which is certain, substantial, and continued enjoyment. Laws, the regard and obedience of which are perfect security and peace; in keeping of them is great reward. And all the pain of our organic nature; all the throes of our animal sensibility, spring from an abuse of these objects and an infringement of these laws.

To introduce you more fully and clearly to what I mean, for it is a subject of valuable contemplation; and I can only allude to some general principles; look out upon this world, its multiplied materials, productions, and changes, and see how all is adapted to the structure of your organic nature; how delightfully fitted your unimpaired organs are, to gather profit, and to drink in pleasure from the works of creation, and the arrangements of providence; and how a regard to all their established laws would secure your peace and safety.

Tell me how could you make a world better suited to your organized existence? For the eye, could you spread richer verdure, fairer flowers, or deck the sky with stars more splendid; give to the blaze of day more brilliancy of light, or spread the evening clouds with richer beauties, where sinks the orb of day as in a bed of glory? Could you pour into the listening ear sweeter sounds, or borrow softer melodies than are borne upon the air; paint fairer fruits than mellow in the sun or blush upon the

vine; or breathe upon the morning air a richer fragrance than rises with the honeyed dew?

So much of happiness, so much of usefulness, so much of true piety and exalted devotion is found here, that I am not engaged in poetry or declamation, in urging them upon your consideration. To the Psalmist, to Solomon, to Isaiah, these were themes of most ennobling and devout contemplation; and but for these, with the numerous events which transpire in connexion with them, I know not how we should prove the Bible true. It is the harmony of the Bible with nature and with providence, and the adaptedness of the whole to man's organic and moral being, that establishes the truth of the Bible, and displays the existence, wisdom, and benevolence of its Author. The preservation of all these organs, active and healthy, with that cultivation of which they are susceptible, are sources of high enjoyment, and means of extensive good, as we refer to that kind arrangement which God has made to meet them.

So, in regard to intellect: you have given perception and the relation of external objects. Reflection, with all those powers of reason which can borrow pleasure and secure profit from the experience of the past, from the arrangements of the present, and with the aid of anticipation and hope, with wisdom of calculation, prepare for the future, and gather its enjoyments from the perception of its approach. Thus, by the aid of faith, fortified by experience, you may secure the blessings of hope, and thus make intellect subservient to the high enjoy-

ment of the moral affections ; stimulate the pleasure of mental perceptions, which will cast their benign influence back upon organic nature, and make even this crumbling tenement of clay assume a dignity and worth, as the habitation of an immortal mind and a redeemed soul, which shall point to its resurrection and its spiritual state, where disease and decay shall be unknown.

What can you conceive deficient, in the whole kingdom of thought, and what object, subject, or relation addressed to mind, of which mind is susceptible, but what is found to ennoble and make man happy, as an intelligent and rational being, when his intellect is unimpaired and rightly directed ?

There is also a moral nature ; the affections of the soul, and as these are innumerable, active, restless, ranging, and eternal, so the field of their exercise is unlimited and as richly stored as the exhaustless bounties of a beneficent Creator : God himself, in his holy, unexplored, and unexplorable perfections, stands forth in the mildness and the majesty of a father and a friend, to arouse, to cultivate, and receive them ; and as from the pure springs of his own exhaustless beneficence and bliss, to pour back upon the soul of moral and sanctified sensibility, an exuberance and an eternity of enjoyment.

Has he not made all things well ; and in keeping his commandments is there not great reward ?

But do you say, that after all these provisions of God, in nature and providence, man, as to his organic nature is a sufferer ; as to mind, a maniac ; and in morals, painfully alive ? True, it is so.

But why is it so? Is the fault in God, in creation, or in providence? I grant, this world is full of misery, casualties, disease, derangement, death; and hell is crowded with unnumbered victims of eternal wo. But why is it so? I reply, because there is constant infringement and violation of the laws of organic, intellectual, and moral nature. Here is the source of misery, temporal and eternal.

**“ He that would win the race, must guide his horse
Obedient to the customs of the course ;
Else, though unequalled to the goal he flies,
A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
Grace leads the right way ; if you choose the wrong,
Take it, and perish ; but restrain your tongue ;
Charge not, with light sufficient, and left free,
Your wilful suicide on God’s decree.”**

You will find no diseased organ but what has arisen from some violation of a wise law of nature. Misfortunes and casualties have their origin in disregard of known and well established laws. Intemperance of every kind will chase away health and beauty. Bold and extravagant exploits, that respect not the laws of nature, will result in disasters of shipwrecks and conflagrations; and even the submerged cities of a volcano, will read their misery in presumptuous entrenchment on a province which God, by the very arrangements of nature, had guarded from the safe approach of man. So, I may say, that every sorrow or calamity of life, results from the periling of what you had no right to expose ; from a gross disregard of God’s wise laws.

Do you say results are not to be foreseen? Did you examine, and by the light of nature, and of pro-

vidence, and the Bible, and experience, did you labour to anticipate results? The laws of nature are so fixed, and the course of providence so settled and uniform, that there is no room for deception, but to wilful blindness: and so kindly is every thing arranged, that there is no source of misery, but in guilty violation of God's holy will.

I have alluded to those wise and beneficent laws, in your three-fold state; animal, intellectual, and moral, a regard to all of these would make you perfectly happy; because abundant objects are appropriate to each department, suited to high and endless enjoyment. But a violation of the laws of either of these constitutions, of necessity incurs guilt, not only, but induces misery. Exhaust those hours which God has given for rest, in dissipation and debauchery, and you lay yourself of necessity, by the violation of a wise constitutional law, beneath guilt and misery. Break over the bounds of temperance, and you crumble down a constitution of vigour and beauty, that otherwise might have survived the seasons of seventy years, and died, only as it wasted away in peaceful decline the last moments of its destined duration. So press forward, even in the laudable pursuits of this world, beyond what God requires for health, prosperity, and holy living; overtask the energies God has given; brave seas and storms; press on in eager pursuit, beyond the demands of want, and usefulness, defying the influence of climate and of seasons; seizing the hours of night to prolong the labour of the day, (you may call it enterprise if you please, industry, love of study, and yet it is folly and presumption,) and you

will not only incur the guilt of disregarding the premonitions of nature, in the arrangement of her salutary laws, but you must incur premature decay, and an early grave, and transmit, in the line of your posterity, weakness, and disease, and death. All this arises, and it is what we see every day, from an unwarrantable inroad upon that wise constitution which God has formed, and lays the foundation for deep regret, and protracted misery, and sometimes for that remorse which reveals the guilt of this transaction, as well as the sorrow it entails. Were it not for this, who can say, that every man, when we had recovered from the shock which has already been given to our whole race, might not live the allotted period of time, his three-score years and ten. Casualties indeed, excepted, and these would no doubt be of rare occurrence, just like all exceptions to a general rule, only to preserve more inviolate the stability of the general principle. God might, indeed, dart down from the clouds his lightnings, or heave the earth with volcanoes, where it had reposed in peace since creation, yet this is uncertain, and if so, would not destroy the principle, but lay open energies at the command of Omnipotence, to punish offenders.

It is want of temperance, sobriety, and chastity, with those calm emotions of the soul, on which so much depends, which entails disease and death, from generation to generation, and makes this world one broad burying-ground of infants and of youth, while the monument is seldom found of the man of seventy years.

It is the same as to mind; violate the laws

of its discipline, and it becomes deranged or destroyed; neglected, it sleeps and dies.

And the moral constitution also has its laws, by which it secures pleasure, or the violation of which is the fruitful source of evil. The statutes of this constitution are what we call the moral law. Let any man disregard this, trespass upon it, and he is continually infusing into his moral existence the poison and the death of moral sensibility. He is fast doing to his conscience, his affections, and all the moral faculties of the soul, what he has just done to the living fibre of his animal frame. He is destroying the soul, and preparing to cast it prematurely in the grave of the second death. He brings darkness upon his mind, hardness upon his heart, and a deathlike insensibility pervades his soul. He dies in trespasses and sins; his moral being, as to usefulness and hope, is extinct. He lies before us in all the loathful deformity of moral death, and is doomed to the pains of an endless hell.

Here is the result of invading and violating the principles of nature, and trampling on her salutary laws. Review this grand law, and see where your happiness lies. See what your natures are, and what by piety they may become. Those bodies, organic structures, yet to be roused to the living sensibilities of eternity, and draw through every channel of feeling the pleasures or the pains of futurity: those minds, ennobled or debased, to be angels of light, or fiends in the phrenzy of the pit; those immortal souls, sons of God, or heirs of hell.

I pray you, so live now, that you may carry up in life, a constitution unimpaired and pure, that

hereafter you may stand in innocence and virtue. Impair not the reflections of the mind; oh, stamp not the soul, in this early day of its formation, with sin and misery. You may sin in the revels of indulged desire, and hope for repentance and grace to restore all you lose. But no, dear youth, no; repentance cannot give back what you now forfeit. Even grace restores no violated laws. You will carry up in life some fresh memorials of every youthful indiscretion, and sin will leave its stain and sorrow on the soul. And when your bodies, with the keen sensibilities of a new resurrection; your minds, in the clearness of eternal day, and your souls in all the vigour of immortality, are yet to be united in another world; not the cold river of death will cleanse your guilt away; not even the crystal waters from the throne, will wash out your sin.

If lost, you will find eternal misery, the reasonable and necessary result of your own unrighteousness. As the spirit sinks in the horrors of its interminable anguish, at every step, it shall reap the fruit of its own voluntary choice, and find springing within, those ruinous and restless passions, which were loved and indulged on earth, and which, in the still broader freedom of their eternal reign, shall kindle in the soul its inextinguishable fires, and fasten on its imperishable sensibility, *the worm that never dies*.

The damnation of lost spirits, is the natural and necessary result of their own sin, turning the soul itself into a living hell of inflamed passions. And as the seat of all this is *mind*, undying thought, and feeling, the Bible, even in its glowing imagery of

distress and anguish, must fall far short of the reality of this dreadful and durable state. The pains of prisons, dungeons, and fires, can be endured, *but "a wounded spirit who can bear?"* Bear it! It cannot be borne. The soul withers before it—"it is eternal dying!" There is a refuge—a remedy. I point you—I urge you to its blessings, the blood of CHRIST—the proffered pardon of His merits. With all the precaution we bring, and with which the Bible speaks, you are involved in the evils from which it would redeem and save. The SPIRIT waits to fit you for the skies. O, turn and live,

"Approved of God, the judge of all; and have
Your name recorded in the book of life."

THE END.

ERRATUM.

Page 27—last line, *for successively, read successfully.*

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