

COUNSELS
TO
THE YOUNG.



LIBRARY

OF THE

Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

SCA
1049

Case, Division,

Shelf, No.,

Book, 5



7. A PORTRAITURE of MODERN SCEPTICISM; or, a Caveat against Infidelity: including a brief statement of the Evidences of Revealed Truth, and a Defence of the Canon and of Inspiration. 12mo., 4s.

8. SUGGESTIONS SUITED to the TIMES; or, the Spirit in which Religious and Political Controversy ought to be maintained. 6d.

COUNSELS

TO THE YOUNG.

BY JOHN MORISON, D.D.

Author of "Counsels to a Newly-Wedded Pair,"
&c. &c.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON :

F. WESTLEY AND A. H. DAVIS,

Stationers'-Hall Court.

MDCCCXXXII.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

THE rapidity with which the First Edition of these Counsels has been exhausted proves to the Author that such a work was needed; and the testimony which he has received, from a variety of quarters, of its usefulness, does not allow him to doubt as to the propriety of committing it a second time to the press.

Hans Place,

December 1, 1832.

CONTENTS.

Introduction - - - - -	Page 1
------------------------	-----------

CHAPTER I.

The Counsel the Young are to hear, and the Instruction they are to receive - -	12
The great Business of Youth - - -	14
The Dangers Youth is exposed to - -	23
From the Passions - - - - -	25
From the Connexions they may form -	35
From Books - - - - -	42
From Amusements - - - - -	45
From the Character of the Age - - -	5

CHAPTER II.

The great Benefit which will accrue to the Young from hearing Counsel, and receiv- ing Instruction - - - - -	77
In Old Age - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
At Death - - - - -	80
At the Day of Judgment - - - - -	82

CHAPTER III.

	Page
Suggestions to those of the Young who have been made obedient to the Counsels of Divine Wisdom - - - - -	89
Humility - - - - -	<i>ib.</i>
Watchfulness - - - - -	93
Habits of Devotion - - - - -	97
The Duty of Religious Activity - - - - -	103

INTRODUCTION.

“Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in the latter end.”—PROVERBS XIX. 20.

THERE are two great evils which beset the path of the young: on the one hand, they are fearfully exposed to the machinations of misguided or perverse counsellors; and, on the other, they are ever prone to lean to their own understandings, and to reject that divine counsel by which their eternal welfare might be secured. If

I could summon before you the vast multitudes of the young who have been destroyed by evil counsel, and the yet greater number who have been eternally ruined by rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, what a heart-rending spectacle would you behold!

When the young can be brought to feel that they need counsel, and when, moreover, they can be induced to look out for right counsel, we may console ourselves with the thought that they are in that position of mind which will secure to them unspeakable advantages for time and eternity. It is a mournful thing when self-sufficiency obtains a place in the youthful bosom;

more especially, when that self-sufficiency evinces itself chiefly in reference to the high interests of religion and eternity. Then, indeed, there is but little hope that the best advice will take effect, or that the most friendly counsels will be regarded.

But I must be permitted to remind the young that there is a period fast approaching, when to be found in possession of true wisdom will be of infinite moment. That period is denominated by Solomon, "the latter end;" and if to that consummation the young are to look forward with hope, they must see to it that the spring-time of their being is neither spent in idleness, nor wasted in frivolous pursuits.

I beseech the young, then, to hear counsel, and to receive instruction, that they may be wise in the latter end.

CHAPTER I.

I BEGIN, THEN, WITH THE COUNSEL THEY ARE TO HEAR, AND THE INSTRUCTION THEY ARE TO RECEIVE.

THIS, my dear young friends, is a wide, but important, field. I pray that it may be wisely and usefully occupied by him who now undertakes to counsel you! Let me entreat you to regard the present as a golden opportunity, which, if once neglected, may never return. Perhaps God is

now about to reason with my young reader for the last time. If you obey his voice it is well ; but if you turn a deaf ear, then his Spirit may no longer strive with you for ever. I would that the occasion of reading this little volume might be signalized by the conversion of some one who has yet the dew of youth. What a blessed memorial were this of such an event ! How would the retrospect of future life be enhanced by such a momentous transition ! And why should not such an occurrence take place ? It cannot be that the God of love and mercy forbids it ; for “ he willeth not the death of the sinner : ” and if he forbids it not, what can interpose between

you and the happy event, if it be not your own folly or Satan's devices?

“The Spirit and the bride say, Come.

And let him that heareth say, Come.

And let him that is athirst, Come.

And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”* To every

young and tender heart now lifted up

to God in prayer his language is,—“In

an acceptable time have I heard thee,

and in a day of salvation have I helped

thee.”†

Hear counsel, then, and receive instruction,

1. *As to the great business of youth.*

If “the fear of the Lord be the beginning of wisdom,”‡ it is manifest

* Rev. xxii. 17. † Isaiah xlix. 8.

‡ Psalms cxi. 10.

that life's earliest dawn ought to be occupied with the unrivalled theme. It was not, surely, that you might eat and drink, and sleep and wake, and run the round of this world's folly, that God gave you a superiority to the beasts that perish. If you have been endowed with reason, and constituted accountable beings, it is, beyond doubt, your duty to seek after the knowledge of God. Compared with this knowledge, all other objects are worthless and vain. This is "the one thing needful."—"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting, get understanding."*

* Prov. iv. 5.

Salvation, then, is the paramount business of youth. The first thing to be sought by you is "the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."* Till this is done, nothing is done to purpose. You are a candidate for immortality; but if salvation is neglected, it had been better for you that you had never been born. You have been born in sin, and if you are not born again you can never enter into the kingdom of heaven; you have been guilty of innumerable offences against God, and if you are not forgiven, for Christ's sake, you must perish in your sins; you have been living in neglect of God, of the soul, and

* Matt. vi. 33.

of eternity ; and if you are not roused to thoughtfulness and prayer, by the grace of God, your bands will be made strong, and the chain of your sin will be coiled for ever around your guilty spirit.

Oh ! suffer me, then, to introduce you to the notice of Him, who says, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear !”*

It is Jesus of Nazareth who thus addresses you. He has won the right to your confidence, by giving his life a ransom for your sins. He claims

* Rev. iii. 18.

your notice that he may enrich and bless you for ever. He promises you freedom and happiness. The wealth of the universe is his, and he can bless you “with all spiritual blessings,” and make you infinitely happy in the favour and friendship of God. He is divine, and “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;”* he is human, and “will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.”† His address to each of you is,—“Come unto me, and I will give you rest;”‡ “look unto me, and be ye saved;”§ “I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.”||

* Col. ii. 9. † Isaiah xlii. 3. ‡ Matt. xi. 28.

§ Isaiah xlv. 22. || Prov. viii. 17.

To the service of this blessed Master let me win your young and tender heart, by arguments drawn from your own necessities, and his boundless love. Without an interest in the Saviour of sinners you must perish beneath the frown of the Eternal. Your transgressions are an effectual barrier in your way to heaven, and none but Christ can remove them. You are in pursuit of happiness, but you will never find it till you hear Jesus saying to you, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"* You are picturing to

* John xiv. 27.

your imaginations many a fair scene of future bliss ; but all will be “ vanity and vexation of spirit,” if that “ Friend that sticketh closer than a brother” is not with you, to sweeten what is bitter in life, and to make every blessing doubly blessed.

Your first concern, then, is to be true Christians. All other objects of pursuit are to give place to this. Your earliest, your best thoughts should be devoted to the salvation of your never-dying souls. The way to pardon and peace is clearly revealed. Jesus waits to receive you. His blood can cleanse you from all sin. His Spirit can create in you “ a new heart, and a right spirit.” Delay not your application

to Christ for a single moment. Procrastination may be your ruin. If you do not repent and live now, divine mercy may plead with you no more. Every step you proceed in impenitence, but hardens the heart still more and more. Another opportunity so favourable as the present, of turning to God, will never more occur. Shake off, then, your thoughtlessness and your neglect of God. Rouse yourselves to feel your dread responsibility. Think how terrible must be the condition of a soul "without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world." Think of what it is to be "enmity against God." Think of what it is to be in immediate danger of being

plunged “into that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Think of what it is to be young and lovely in the eyes of your fellow-creatures, and yet to have no interest in the favour of heaven. Think of what it is to be moving thoughtlessly along the path of life, while no provision has been made for death and judgment, and for the realities of an eternal scene. Think of what it is for the vanities of a moment so completely to absorb the mind as to banish all serious thought about the soul and futurity, as much, indeed, as if they had no existence. Think, I beseech you, of all this ; and, while reflection is called into exercise, re-

solve, with a determination not to be shaken, that you will dedicate yourselves from this very hour to the Lord, and that the days of youth, and vigour, and hilarity, shall be devoted to his service.

Witness, then, ye ministering spirits of the church, the decisions of this hallowed moment! And, as you wing your flight to the regions of eternal day, carry with you the glad tidings of some youthful bosom quickened to all the sensibilities of a new life in Christ Jesus.

Hear counsel, and receive instruction—

2. *As to the peculiar dangers to which youth is exposed.*

But how can I sufficiently warn you, my dear young friends, against the evils which beset your unwary path! Would that I could paint, in colours sufficiently vivid, the rocks and quicksands which await you in your perilous voyage! It is most difficult to impress your cheerful and bounding hearts with any thing like the conception of danger. And far be it from me to throw an adventitious gloom over the sweetest and loveliest period of human existence. Did I not feel that your characters for eternity are now forming, and that by some fatal influence they may be blighted for ever, I could not bring myself to counsel you upon the

subject of evils which you are slow of heart to believe, and the very existence of which you are greatly disposed to question. But, ah ! my beloved friends, we must relinquish what is sentimental in thinking of what is real ; and while I would not disturb your happy dreams either of the present or the future, I must yet remind you that you are surrounded by the inveterate enemies of your peace, and that you can only prepare yourselves for the conflict by knowing the real extent of the danger which threatens alike your peace and safety.

I must be allowed, then, to remind you *that you are in danger from the passions.* I see pride, sensuality, am-

bition, vain display, like so many spirits of darkness, ready to seize on you, and to pervert and debase all that is fair and lovely in blooming youth. Nor must you forget that your very heart is the soil which generates these noxious plants. It is there that they spring up; it is there that they acquire all their base and virulent qualities; it is there that they mature and bring to perfection the elements of moral and eternal ruin. *Pride* you must subdue in all its forms; whether it shows itself in the assumption of intellectual superiority—or in a haughty deportment to superiors or equals—or in the folly and extravagance of dress—or in the undue estimate of birth,

education, and wealth—or in the fading shadowy distinctions of beauty and personal accomplishment. When this baneful passion would operate, remember that it makes you resemble, in a great degree, the great spirit of darkness—that it is one of the most unlovely qualities of mind—that it tends to destroy the finest sensibilities of human nature—that it is in direct contrast with the spirit of the gospel, which requires that all who become the disciples of the Lord Jesus, should “be converted and become as little children.”* When you feel the unhallowed workings of pride, ambition, and empty display,

* Matt. xviii. 3.

I beseech you to think of the utter insignificance of all those things upon which men are accustomed to value themselves. Recollect that soon, very soon, all distinctions which are not moral will vanish away—that princes and beggars, philosophers and clowns, will, ere long, stand on one common level—that beauty and deformity will be cited before the same dread tribunal ; and that nothing will be found important or worthy of possession “but a new creature, and faith which worketh by love.”*

Oh! if I could open up to you the loathsomeness of the noisome tomb ; if I could show you the sad transitions

* Gal. v. 6.

which there pass on the loveliest forms ; if I could exhibit to your view the horrors of the resurrection to many an object of human idolatry ; if I could present before you the fearful deformity of nature often concealed beneath a fair but deceitful exterior ; how would you despise that vain conceit of personal beauty and attraction which would deck the body in meretricious attire, and leave the soul the dwelling-place of sin—the victim of Satan's dark designs !

And oh, my beloved young friends ! flee from *sensuality and intemperance* as you would from the face of a deadly serpent ! There are no crimes which expose you to greater calamity and ruin than these. They may spring

up in your nature by degrees, or they may make a sudden and violent inroad on your character, by the force of some overwhelming temptation. Christ has pronounced his blessing on "the pure in heart," and has cheered them with the assurance that "they shall see God."* But upon those who minister to the lusts of the flesh, and who are strangers to the habit of self-government, he has pronounced the heaviest sentence of his condemnation.

I would have the young remember that they are peculiarly exposed to those temptations which tend to overcome virtuous feeling, and to bring the soul into bondage to a sensual mode of existence. How lovely is

* Matt. v. 8.

unsullied purity in the young, especially when it is the result of principle, and when it has found a dwelling-place in the heart! If the great apostle of the Gentiles urged his son Timothy to "flee youthful lusts,"* surely it would ill become the ministers of Christ not to address similar exhortations to the young in general. There is great danger in your path, my dear young friends; and there must be warning and caution corresponding to it. The first movements of impurity in the heart must be watched over and suppressed, or the feverish heat of sin will soon be beyond control. You must never imagine that

* 2 Tim. ii. 22.

those impure thoughts and actions which are entirely hid from the eye of man, will not be charged against you in the day of the Lord. The most secret act of sin you ever committed was beheld by the piercing eye of omniscience, and was recorded in the book of God's remembrance. "Yea, the darkness hideth not from God, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to him."*

"Who," said David, "can understand his errors! Cleanse thou me from secret faults; keep back thy servant, also, from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then

* Psa cxxxix. 12.

shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.”* There is no way of securing purity of life, but by cultivating purity of heart. An impure heart will speedily exhibit a life in conformity to itself. “By what means, then, shall a young man learn to cleanse his way?” The question is important; and it proceeds on the supposition that even a life which has been polluted by sin may yet be subjected, with success, to a purifying process. Nor does the answer of the Spirit leave any doubt as to the correctness of such a supposition. It is by “taking heed to their ways according to God’s word,” † that the

* Psa. xix. 12. † Psa. cxix. 9.

young can hope to purify their course. Let them open this blessed volume, and there read God's denunciations against impurity; let them learn its evils in the judgments which have ever followed its train; let them reflect on the solemn thought, that "nothing that defileth or that worketh abomination" * can enter the celestial paradise; let them yield up their minds to those high and holy motives which Christianity brings to bear upon human character—the love of Christ—the honour of God—and the desire of safety and happiness; above all, let them think of those promises of strength against sin and temptation

* Rev. xxi. 27.

which the word of God so abundantly supplies, by which “the feeble shall be as David, and David as the angel of the Lord.” *

But as you are in danger from the passions, so are you in *danger from the connexions you may form.*

The social principle of our nature, while it is the source of some of our simplest and purest enjoyments, is often the unhappy occasion of some of our bitterest sorrows, and most flagrant transgressions. In the domestic circle we are so circumstanced often, that we have no option in the selection of our society; and if in any instance it should happen to be unpropitious to

* Zech. xii. 8.

our spiritual interests, it is our duty to make the best of the condition in which Providence has placed us, and to endeavour to do as much good, and to receive as little harm, as we possibly can. Beyond the limits of home, however, it becomes us to pause, ere we expose ourselves to a companionship which may not tend to promote our best interests. If we associate with the gay, and frivolous, and dissipated, and irreligious, and sceptical, we may expect that we shall be drawn into their modes of thinking and of acting. There is a fellowship of mind which results from habitual intercourse. Besides, the very taste which is displayed, in the act of habitual

preference for unprofitable intercourses, sufficiently shows that we are not alive either to our own danger or to the honour of God.

How many of the young and promising, of both sexes, have fallen victims to the indiscreet and dangerous exercise of the social principle! See that pale and emaciated form, covered with rags, and trembling beneath the winter's cold, friendless and without a home,—the outward spectacle but a faint image of the deeper desolation of a heart withered and blighted by sin! And yet she was once tender and beloved in the sight of her mother; but she forsook the guide of her youth—she forgot the covenant of her

God, and she is now, alas! tasting the fruit of her own doings which have not been good, and presents a striking monument of the truth of that divine maxim—"Evil communications corrupt good manners."*

Behold that youth, his figure shattered, his health decayed, his patrimony wasted, his spirits sunk, his character lost! See his aged father weeping over the sad wreck of withered hopes, and exclaiming, "My son! my son! thou wilt bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave!" And, ah! what has realized this sad picture? It is that companionship of fools which leads to destruction. The

* 1 Cor. xv. 33.

wayward child grows up to be the disobedient youth; the youth, no longer subject to the control of parents and the restraints of home, seeks for other and more congenial fellowships; the garb of simplicity is laid aside for the attire of foppish vanity; expenses, never intended to be met, are launched into; the inebriating cup is seized for the sake of drowning serious reflection; intemperance is followed up with licentiousness; and then the character is ruined, and often *for ever*; for “none that go unto the strange woman return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.”*

* Prov. ii. 19.

And even where such fatal results are not realized, how often do the fellowships of this world prove most injurious! It is thus, often, that the pious instructions and examples of home are discarded, or set at nought; it is thus that early habits of sobriety and reflection are exchanged for a course of thoughtless neglect both of decorum and piety; it is thus that unsuitable domestic relations are entered into; and it is thus, often, that religion gradually departs out of families in which it has long been an ornament and a defence.

To the pious youth, who may read this little volume, I would say, beware of too much fellowship with the

enemies of God ; they will draw away your affections from their proper objects ; they will diminish your sense of the evil of sin ; they will lead you into the most dangerous worldly conformity ; they will interrupt the closeness of your walk with God ; they will drive you into many a scene of temptation ; they will obscure your perceptions as to the proper distinction between the church and the world ; and they will lead you to the formation of those ungodly alliances which are opposed to the imperative command, that believers are “only to marry in the Lord.”* There is nothing, rest assured, to be gained by such alliances ;

* 1 Cor. vii. 39.

but there is much—yea, there is every thing to be lost.

You are in great *danger from books*. A pernicious book is as injurious to the soul as is the fellowship of an evil spirit. The press teems with publications which tend to inflict the greatest injury on the youthful mind. Books were as bad in former periods of our history as they are now, or ever can be ; but, then, there were not so many of them. Books of light reading, and withal full of dangerous fuel for the passions, are now as numerous and injurious as the plagues of Egypt. There never was more reading than in the present age ; and there never was so little reading to good purpose.

Romances and Religious Tales bid fair to supplant all other works,—the former to supply mental provision for the world, and the latter to the church. Fie upon Christians! to forsake Baxter and Owen, and Leighton, and Scott, and Watts, and Doddridge, and Howe, for a succession of religious tales badly told!

Solid, useful reading, my dear young friends, I would recommend to you; and, if you feel that something is due to innocent recreation, ask counsel of some wise and experienced Christian, what works you shall consult for amusement. Do not read *unknown* works, any more than you would make a companion of a stranger whom you

should meet in the street. If you can find access to Commentaries, read Matthew Henry's invaluable exposition of the Holy Scriptures. For doctrine, consult Doddridge, President Edwards, and Dr. Dwight. For powerful and experimental godliness, read Boston's Fourfold State, Edwards on Religious Affections, Rutherford's Letters, and Baxter's Saints' Rest. For religious Biography, consult Henry Martyn's Life, the Life of Legh Richmond, the Memoir of Dr. Waugh, the Life of Thomas Scott, the Memoirs of Philip Henry, the Life of Mrs. Graham, the Memoir of Dr. Payson, and the delightful account of Mrs. Huntingdon. But let these only be auxiliary to the

Bible. Let *it* be your daily companion. Resolve to read it quite through this year; and, above all, pray that you may read so as to understand, believe, and obey.

You are in *great danger from amusements*. Youth is the time for cheerfulness and hilarity; and none of the laws of Christianity can be intended to counteract the ordinations and the instincts of our nature. The young *may* be amused,—the young *must* be amused,—the young *ought* to be amused. But let us take care not to infuse destructive poison into the cup of pleasure. It may be fairly questioned whether the world's mode of supplying amusement for the young be always free

from danger. It may be greatly doubted whether the ball-room, and the card-party, and the fashionable route, and the midnight theatre, and the endless coquettings of polished life, supply wholesome recreation to the young, without feverish excitement, and hazardous ministration to the passions. It is clear to my mind that these worldly practices foster a spirit of display, that they generate habits of fashionable dissimulation, that they produce a love of novelty, that they destroy all simplicity of manners, that they create indifference to habits of devotion and piety, and that they too often, at least with young men, lead to prodigality and

dissipation. I am far from placing all cases on a level, or blending in one mass all who fall in with the world's way of murdering time; but, from what I have seen, I strongly incline to the opinion that little good and great evil are derived from training youth to the love of pleasure as a *distinct occupation*; and that more actual happiness is dispensed in families where there is far less excitement. Let free exercise in the open air, let the love of books, and let the rational converse of friendship, be substituted for the vain display of the ball-room, and for the sensual exhibitions of the stage, and I will promise our rising

families more health, more cheerfulness, and a conscience purer and more serene.

In these remarks it will be seen that I take it for granted that the habit of resorting to theatres and ball-rooms is confined to the world. And I believe it is so; with the exception of a few of those unhappy persons, whom Miss Hannah More would style "Borderers," who endeavour, as much as possible, to blend religious profession and worldly habits. But, oh! how little are such professors of the gospel to be envied! Let them listen to the solemn and awful appeal of an inspired apostle—"Ye adulterers, and

adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"*

Let our religious youth, of both sexes, strive to rise above the unsatisfactory modes of seeking happiness which obtain in the world. Let them give themselves to the rational cultivation of their minds, let them be daily aiming to augment the stores of their knowledge, let them ponder the best selected books, let them indulge in the habitual exercise of active benevolence, let them live nearer to God, let them cultivate that spirituality of mind which is life and peace, and they may then rest assured that

* James iv. 4.

they shall know nothing of the world's *ennui*, but that, fresh and fragrant, they shall grow up in the house of the Lord, as plants by the rivers of water—their intellect clear and unclouded, their hearts peaceful and serene, and their conduct sweetly reflecting the image of him who went about doing good continually.

I must here remind you that you are in danger *from the character of the age in which we live*. There is at the present moment a great deal of unwholesome excitement obtaining in certain religious circles. Sober truth is almost lost sight of in the pursuit of curious and unprofitable speculations. We hear as much of prophecy

and miracles in our day as if some divinely commissioned prophet had actually made his appearance among us, and as if signs and wonders had been wrought before our eyes. I would have my dear young friends keep as far off as possible from all curious and speculative teachers, who are constantly praising themselves, and depreciating their brethren. Their novelties and their strange doctrines have no tendency to "godly edifying;" and, in not a few instances, they have led astray and perverted unstable minds. The more genius, the more pretension, the more seriousness, and the more practical virtue such teachers exhibit,—the more pernicious and

ensnaring will be their ministrations. Remember, that “high swelling words of vanity” but little suit the humble teacher of Christianity; and dogmatical announcements upon unfulfilled prophecies, and upon renewed miracles, may well foster presumption, and vain glory, but can have little connexion with the cultivation of the mild and holy graces of Christianity.

It is the more necessary that you should be on your guard in these times, as many, once sound in the faith, have been led away to vain jangling; and as the advocates of extravagant interpretations of Scripture have, of late, increased both in numbers and zeal. Many in the higher

circles have been sadly perverted by the follies of the new school ; so that Peers of the realm, Members of Parliament, Ladies of quality, and Officers in the army and navy, are among the chief expectants of Christ's personal reign, and the chief advocates of "tongues," "prophecies," and miraculous "gifts of healing." But remember, my dear young friends, that we have no solid divines among these agitators ; that our aged ministers, of any note in the church, continue to pursue the good old path ; that many of the new lights have always been children of extravagance ; that many more of them have been very ill instructed ; and that the wild and extra-

vagant scheme to which they adhere is beginning to sink into that disrepute and decay which a few short years have brought upon it, partly through its own reckless absurdity, and partly by the *folly*, not to say *impudence*, of its advocates.

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of introducing to the notice of my young readers, a very interesting and striking passage on this subject, from the dedication of Mr. Jay's Evening Exercises, just published. Addressing himself to the Liberator of Africa, he thus expresses himself:—

“ I rejoice, my dear sir, that a person of your consideration is in the healthful number of those who, not-

withstanding the contemptuous denial of some, and the gloomy forebodings of others, believe that real religion *has* been advancing, and *is* spreading, and *will* continue to spread, till, without any disruption of the present system, 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' *You* do not expect that a country called by his name, and in which he has such a growing multitude of followers, will be given up of God; and the fountain, from which so many streams of health and life are issuing to bless the world, will be destroyed. You justly think, that the way to gain

more is not to despise or disown what the Spirit of God has graciously done for us already; and that the way to improvement is not to run down and condemn every present scheme, attainment, and exertion, because they are not free from those failings which some are too studious to discover, too delighted to expose, and too zealous to enlarge and magnify. If we are not to be weary in well-doing, we need not only exhortation, but hope, which is at once the most active, as well as the most cheerful, principle. Nothing so unnerves energy, and slackens diligence, as despondency. Nothing is equally contagious with fear. Those who feel

alarm always love to transfuse it. Awful intimations of approaching evils are not only congenial with the melancholic, but the dissatisfied; and, while they distress the timid, they charm those who are given to change. It is also easy to perceive that when men have committed themselves in woeful announcements, they immediately feel a kind of prophetic credit at stake, and are under a considerable temptation to welcome disasters as prognostics: for, though they may professedly pray against the judgments, they know, and this is a great drawback to their fervency, that their avowed creed requires the calamities as vouchers of the wisdom

and truth of their interpretations. If, to preserve his reputation from suspicion, after he had cried, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed, Jonah himself was sad and sullen, and thought he did well to be angry even unto death, because the city, with all the men, women, children, and cattle, was not demolished, according to his word; what may not be feared from human nature now, if exercised with similar *disappointments*?

“As, owing to the mildness and justice of the laws of the paternal government under which we are privileged to live, there is now no outward persecution; and yet, as religion

always requires to be tried, we must expect that ‘from among ourselves will men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them:’ for ‘there must be heresies, that they which are of a contrary part may be made manifest.’ In such cases many are ‘tossed about by every wind of doctrine,’ till they make ‘shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.’ Others, who are not destroyed, suffer loss, especially in the simple, affectionate, devotional frame of their spirit. If *good* men are injured, they are commonly beguiled: *they* are drawn aside by something piously specious. Any proposal, directly erroneous or sinful, would excite

their alarm as well as aversion. But if the enemy comes transformed into an angel of light, they think they ought not only to receive, but welcome a heavenly visitant: if he enters with the Bible only in his hand, and claims to fix their regards to any thing on that holy ground, they feel themselves not only safe, but even following the will of God:—not considering that if, even in the Scriptures, the speculative entices us away from the practical, and the mysterious from the plain; and something, though true and good in itself, but subordinate, engrosses the time and attention which should be supremely absorbed by repentance towards God

and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ—his aim may be answered, and ‘Satan get an advantage over us.’ Such persons, acting conscientiously, become as determined as martyrs ; and, continually musing upon one chosen topic, they grow as passionate as lovers, and wonder that all others are not likeminded with them :

‘The worst of madmen is a saint run mad.’

There is not only a pride in dress, and beauty, and riches, and rank, and talent, but of opinion also : a kind of mental vanity that seeks distinction by peculiarity ; and would draw notice by separateness : as that which

stands alone is more observable, especially when noise is added to position. In this case the female is easily betrayed beyond some of the decorums of her sex; the younger will not submit to the elder; the hearer sits in judgment on the preacher; and he that is wise in his own conceit will be wiser than seven men that can render a reason. For

‘Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.’

Mushrooms, and less saleable fungusses, are ordinarily found in a certain kind of rich and rank soil. When religion, from being neglected, becomes all at once the subject of general attention, many will not only

be impressed, but surprised and perplexed. The light, good in itself, may for the time be too strong for the weakness of the eye, and the suddenness of the glare may dazzle rather than enlighten. It is very possible for the church, when roused from a state of lethargy, to be in danger from the opposite extreme. The frost of formality may be followed by the fever of enthusiasm. Whenever, indeed, there is a high degree of religious excitement, it cannot be wonderful, considering human ignorance, prejudice, and depravity, that there should be some visionary and strange ebullitions. We have witnessed some of these during the years that are

past; but the day in which we now are is singular for the revival (with some perhaps perfectly new pretensions) of most of the notions that were fermented into being at the time of the commonwealth, and which were then opposed by Owen, Baxter, and others, who had more divinity in their little finger than is to be found in the body, soul, and spirit, of many of the modern innovators and improvers, who imagine that *their* light is not only ‘the light of the sun, but the light of seven days!’

“A review of history will show us that, at the return of less than half a century, some have commonly risen up eager and able to determine the

times and the seasons, which the Father hath put into his own power, and which the *apostles* were told it was not for *them* to know. And the same confidence has always been attended with the same success. No gain has ever followed the effects worthy the time and attention expended upon them; no addition has ever been made to the understanding of the Scriptures; no fresh data have been established from which preachers could safely argue; no practical utility has been afforded to Christians in their private walk with God. And as their documents were not capable of demonstration; as for want of certainty they could not become principles

of conduct ; and as no great impression can be long maintained on the public mind that is not based on obvious truth ; the noise of the warfare after a while has always died away, and left us with the conviction that ‘there is no prophet among us ; nor any that telleth how long.’

“Some prove, in their spiritual genealogy, a descent from Reuben, of whom the dying father said, “unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.’ Yet they may strike, and produce a *temporary* impression in their favour, especially in a country like this ; a country proverbial for its credulity, and its more than Athenian rage for

something new, whatever be the *nature* of it. In England—

(‘ England, with all thy faults I love thee still—
————— and I can feel
Thy follies too’)—

in England, it has been said by a satirical though just observer, that ‘any monster will make a man:’ that is, be the means of rendering him renowned or rich. Who can question this for a moment, that has patience to mortify himself as a Briton by reflection and review? Take prodigies. Dwarfs, giants, unnatural births, deformities—the more hideous, the more repelling the spectacles, the more attractive and popular have they always

been. Take empiricism. Their name is Legion ; from animal magnetism and the metallic tractors, down to the last infallible remedy for general or specific complaints ; all attested and recommended by the most unexceptionable authorities, especially in high life ! Take the feats which have been announced for exhibition. Whatever the promiser has engaged to perform—whether to walk upon the water, or draw himself into a bottle—what large crowds have been drawn together at the time appointed, and with no few of the better sort of people always among them ! How has learning been trifled with and degraded ! Two or three insulated facts, and a few doubtful or

controvertible appearances, have been wrought up into a SCIENCE ; and some very clever men have advocated its claims to zealous belief, and contrived to puzzle the opponents they could not convince. In the article of preaching, what manœuvres of popularity have not been successfully tried, till there seems hardly any thing left for an experimenter—unless to vociferate with his heels in the air. This would certainly produce greater congregations than any which have been witnessed—and who could deny that there would be something in the case *preter-natural* ?

“But what exemplifications, had we leisure to pursue them, should we find

in the article of religious absurdity and extravagance! Has any thing ever been broached with confidence that has not gained considerable attention? Did not the effusions of a Brothers, who died, where only he should have lived, in confinement for madness, secure numerous believers and admirers? Had he not defenders from the press? Did he not obtain the notice of a very learned senator in the House of Commons? And as to the Exeter prophetess, without any one quality to recommend her but ignorance, impudence, and blasphemy; yet did she not make a multitude of converts, not only among the canaille, but among persons of some distinction?

And had she not followers and defenders even among the Clergy themselves?—Not to observe that when she reported that she should soon be the mother of the infant Messiah, a medical practitioner of some eminence, and the author of a useful work for families, came forward and staked his credit on her being enceinte!

“All reasoning, and all ridicule, for the time only served to contribute to the force and obstinacy of the folly. But how just, here, is the remark of an eminent female writer: ‘Such preposterous pretensions being obviously out of the power of human nature to accomplish, the very extravagance is believed to be supernatural.

It is the impossibility which makes the assumed certainty ; as the epilepsy of Mahomet confirmed his claims to inspiration.' And is there nothing now going forward far exceeding in credulous wonder, arrogant pretension, and miraculous boasting, all that has gone before it, in a country which, in a twofold sense, may be called ' a land of vision ?'*

* "If a person wishes to see this subject fully treated, he would do well to read a late publication, called 'Modern Fanaticism Unveiled.'" The work is anonymous ; but the Author not only writes with great ability and spirit, but is a determined advocate for Evangelical religion, and says nothing (which is always to be dreaded in such discussions,) to the disparagement of *serious* or *servent* piety."

“ One way to become sceptical is, instead of remembering our Lord’s words, ‘ If ye know these things—happy are ye if ye do them,’ to become critical and curious in religion. A very fruitful source of error is to trample on the distinction of Moses: ‘ The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.’ The sciences and the arts, being human inventions, and therefore not only finite, but imperfect, will allow of new discoveries; and every innovation is commonly an improvement, or by experiment it is soon rejected: but we

make no scruple to say, that novelty in religion is needless, dangerous, delusive. We are to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. The design of the Gospel is to ‘cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.’

“The maxim often quoted, of a very great and a very good man, who blesses and adorns our own age, and who furnishes another proof that first-rate minds are simple and free from eccentricities—‘Though we are not to be wise above what is written, we should be wise up to what is written,’—has

been made to justify more than he intended. The apostle considers it a reproach to be 'always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth : ' and it is a matter of lamentation when persons, perhaps well disposed, are seized with the imagination that there is something of importance to be yet found out in religion, instead of walking in the light, and having the heart established with grace. And what is the subject of these possible or desirable developments? And what lack of motive or of consolation did *they* feel, who have gone before us in every kind of excellency? And what more perfect characters can we expect than the Leigh-

tons and Howes, who, it now seems, were denied illuminations conferred on individuals just entering into the kingdom of God, without a religious education, and from the midst of worldly dissipation or indifference? And where are the superior effects of discoveries, which we are assured not only possess truth, but are of the greatest efficiency? We need not be afraid to compare the converts, the benefactors, the sufferers, the martyrs of one school with those of another. ‘No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better.’ ”

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT BENEFIT WHICH WILL
ACCRUE TO THE YOUNG FROM
HEARING COUNSEL AND RECEIV-
ING INSTRUCTION.

*“That thou mayest be wise in the
latter end.”*

1. *The latter end may be old age.*
Youth spent in folly and neglect of
God too often conducts to a cheer-
less, a miserable, a foolish, and a
contemptible old age. It is a re-
markable fact, that the old age of a

worldling is often as much distinguished by folly as were the days of his youth. Behold, in proof of this, the aged fops, and the painted matrons, of threescore years and ten, who abound in this great city. But piety in youth will make a green old age. The "hoary hairs that are found in the way of righteousness shall be as a crown of life." The experience which the believer who has long walked in the ways of God acquires is large and diversified. He has an eye to penetrate into the deep things of God, and a heart too to relish them. He looks around him on children and on children's children; and, while he pours out over them his patriarchal

blessing, he pleads the promise on their behalf, and looks forward with cheerful hope to the time when “one of them shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.”* Such a man leaves an inheritance to his children better than of silver or gold. Reposing with unshaken confidence on the everlasting covenant, he believes the assurance of the God of Abraham, “I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.” In one word, a religious character from the days of youth

* Isaiah xliv. 5.

will not only tend to promote longevity, but it will also crown it with blessings and honours all its own.

2. *The latter end may be death.* That wisdom which will not stand the test of death will be found at last to be but folly! How many, amidst their accumulation of knowledge, are strangers to that which alone can make them wise towards God! Oh, "hear counsel, and receive instruction, that you may be wise at the latter end!" What will it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, at the tremendous risk of losing his own soul? Though you are young, and blooming, and healthful, there may be a deadly worm eating

at the root of the fair plant. Others, as young, and fair, and gay as you, have had their prospects of long life speedily blighted, and have fallen into an untimely grave. But there is no untimely grave for the meek and humble disciple of Christ. To him the grave has been perfumed by his gracious Redeemer; and from him the sting of death, which is sin, has been taken away. Whether in youth or age, by sudden accident, or slow-consuming fever, the child of God is dismissed from his prison-house,—*all* is well. He has listened “to counsel and received instruction;” and never can the grim messenger seize on him in a condition

totally unprepared. To him “to live is Christ, and to die is gain;” and “the life which he lives in the flesh, he lives by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himself for him.”

3. *The latter end may be the day of judgment.* In that day, “the wisdom of this world” will be seen in all its emptiness : while the Christian’s folly, or rather what was esteemed to be his folly, will be demonstrated, before assembled worlds, to be the truest wisdom. The sentence of that awful day will proclaim, as in a voice of thunder, that *the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”** All our

* Prov. i. 7.

present views and pursuits must be viewed in the light of that great tribunal, at which our characters and destiny shall be for ever fixed. Oh, if my youthful readers could be persuaded to refer all their views and actions to this great and solemn test, what inestimable benefits would accrue to them from such a line of conduct! It is the thought of an eternal future that most powerfully influences the present. The habitual anticipation of what we shall be, when we pass out of the body, is fitted to give the most powerful bias to all the movements of this fleeting and transitory existence. What a stimulus to duty—what a check to

the power of temptation is the solemn thought—“*For all* these things we shall be brought into judgment!” Learn, my young friends, to judge of every object, of every relation, and of every pursuit, in the light of judgment and eternity. Whatever will not bear to be looked at in these solemn lights must be abandoned, and abandoned without delay. If you trifle with the convictions of conscience, they will gradually subside, and an impenitence more fearful than any thing you have yet experienced will ultimately take possession of the mind. To sink to hell, with your light, will be dreadful beyond conception. It had been better for you that you

had never been born, than that it should be said to you at last, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!"

I long, my beloved friends, to see you on the side of Christ. "Following him in the regeneration, you shall walk with him in light." On his great white throne, he will acknowledge and honour those who have forsaken all and followed him. In deciding to become his disciples, you can never have cause to regret your choice. His service is freedom, and honour, and happiness. But he demands your heart's warmest affections, and he will accept of nothing less. Give him, then, your heart.

It will never be the dwelling-place of peace till it is surrendered without reserve to its rightful Lord. Oh! entreat him to make your hearts temples of the Holy Ghost! Then will evil passions no longer control your actions,—then you will rank with “the pure in heart, who shall see God,”—then will your example become a blessing to all around you,—then will you prove for yourselves that the religion of Jesus is the source of unnumbered joys,—and then will you cease to depend for your happiness upon those transitory enjoyments which form the only portion of worldly minds.

Be entreated to begin the life of

prayer, to study for yourselves the word of God, to abandon every discovered habit of sin, to cultivate an habitual attendance upon Christian ordinances, to prize the society of the good, and cheerfully to relinquish every companionship of sin. Forget not that thousands of spiritual enemies are watching for your destruction; and never lose sight of the fact, that you have within you an evil heart of unbelief, prone to receive all impressions of moral evil. “*Watch, then, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*”

Above all, my dear young friends, entreat God, by his Spirit, to impart to you a new heart and a right spirit. “The carnal mind is enmity against

God ;” and “they that are in the flesh cannot please him.” “The tree must be made good,” or the fruit can never be good. You must be united by faith to the Lord Jesus, or remain in your old relations of sin and death. Believe in this Great Deliverer, and be saved. He casts off none who apply to him. He will not cast off *you*. While he says, “Seek ye my face,” let your reply be, “Thy face, Lord, will we seek.” While he says, “Come unto me,” let your response be, “We come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.” While he waits to be gracious, provoke him not by your sinful delays ; but hasten to his cross, as the only refuge for perishing sinners.

CHAPTER III.

SUGGESTIONS TO THOSE OF THE YOUNG
WHO HAVE BEEN MADE OBEDIENT
TO THE COUNSELS OF DIVINE WIS-
DOM.

ON HUMILITY.

To the young Christian I would say, "Walk humbly with your God." Let modesty and retiring diffidence be the distinct characteristics of your religion. Avoid every thing that savours of vain-glorious display. There is more than enough of flaunting piety in the day in which we live, especially among young professors. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the

elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility : for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." It is truly afflictive to mark how speedily some young Christians lose all the diffidence which properly belongs to the earlier and more inexperienced stages of the religious life. Self-confident and dictatorial, they become objects of dislike to their more established brethren, and are, therefore, chiefly left to mingle in the society of persons of their own stamp of mind ; so that they become confirmed in habits of dogmatism and obtrusiveness. Let me remind young Chris-

* 1 Peter v. 5.

tians, that a child-like simplicity of deportment is that which best comports with their slender attainments in knowledge, and in conformity to the divine will. If they would share the benefit of intercourse with those who have drank deeply into the spirit of the gospel, and who have known the advantages connected with long and habitual communion with God, they must cultivate that modesty and that self-diffidence which tend to attract and endear. Eminent Christians are always distinguished by the attributes of kindness and condescension; and if they perceive in you a willingness to learn, and a disposition to be devout, they will bear with your

inexperience, and even with your foibles, and will be ready to take you by the hand, and to lead you forward in the path of life. I have never known a young Christian, who modestly sought the fellowship of those who were eminent for their spirituality of mind, who did not gradually advance to high attainments in religion. On the other hand, I have seen nothing but disaster and absolute failure attending the path of those who have been "wise in their own conceit," and who have been too lofty in their estimate of self to call in to their aid the counsel and the prayers of those who have been "fathers in Christ."

ON WATCHFULNESS.

Next to humility, let the young Christian cultivate the spirit of watchfulness. Ever exposed to evil, let him not slumber at his post. Without vigilance, sinful habits which have been partially overcome will resume their wonted dominion, and new enemies will rush in to enslave and corrupt the mind. The joys which are peculiar to the first stages of the Christian profession are apt, through the infirmity of our nature, to mislead the mind, and to superinduce a feeling of security in a high degree perilous to the best interests of the soul. "The joy of the Lord" cannot, indeed, prevail too much; but then it

must be associated with those other feelings which are as essential as itself to the entire prevalence of religion in the heart.

As the young Christian is exposed to the onset of innumerable evils, it becomes him to guard every avenue at which temptation may be supposed to enter. In this process, let him not overlook the constitutional besetments of his nature, whether anger, pride, or sensuality. A double watch must ever be placed where there is a weak or assailable point. Nor must he forget the excitements to evil which arise out of his fellowships with others. Even in Christian society, he will find many things which ought to operate

as warnings rather than as examples ; and, in the society of the world, he will discover every thing to indicate its forgetfulness of God, and its enmity against the spirit and maxims of true religion. Let him, moreover, not forget that the spirit of darkness has been watching, with malignant eye, the change which has been wrought in his views, feelings, and conduct. When he was rolling down the current of this world's ungodliness, the great adversary of souls made but little effort to stimulate him to evil ; but now it is far otherwise ; he is under apprehension that he has been deprived of a subject of his empire, and he will do his utmost to regain

his lost possession, and to rouse into tenfold action all the propensities of a fallen nature.

And, while reference is made to our fallen nature, I must not forget to remind the young disciple of Christ, that his greatest danger is, after all, to be apprehended from that evil heart of unbelief which lodges within him. To the movements of that heart, the full energy of Christian watchfulness ought to be directed. Out of this heart proceeds every evil by which the conscience is perverted, and the life vitiated. You are to keep your heart, then, with all diligence; for, if it be neglected, Satan and the world will find you an easy prey.

“ Watch and pray, then, that you enter not into temptation.”

ON HABITS OF DEVOTION.

It is not enough that the young Christian should be humble and watchful ; he must also learn to hold intimate converse with Heaven, if he would attain to any considerable measure of establishment in the divine life. Slender habits of devotion will be connected with slender manifestations of the power of godliness. It is of immense importance that the religion of the closet should obtain an entire ascendancy over the character. And, in order to this, it is indispen-

sable that a fixed and somewhat laborious method of devotion should be determined upon at an early stage of the Christian profession. If a light and trifling mode of serving God in private should be once adopted, there is great danger of its obtaining through life. The young Christian must cultivate the habit of retired and oft-repeated communion with Heaven, if he would look for much of the divine presence, or if he would expect to attain to much usefulness in the church of Christ. Stated periods of devotion may be agreed on, and even adhered to, where there is but little of fervent intercourse with God, and where there is but a partial atten-

dance to the various duties of the closet. If the exercises of devotion are to become interesting, they must be associated with the habitual effort of mind ; for we are so constituted, as rational beings, that objects which continue deeply to interest us must engage our faculties. Let me recommend to the young Christian, then, the plan of combining, with the stated prayers of the closet, such exercises of reading and meditation as may tend to exercise the judgment, to excite the affections, and to store the memory. A regular course of Scripture reading must, of course, be adopted ; and it should, if possible, be such as to conduct the mind by

gradual steps, to an accurate acquaintance with the entire outline of revealed truth. In pursuing this process, such assistance as may be found necessary must be called in; and, in the excellent Commentaries which abound in this country, there will be found no lack of suitable aid. But do not forget that the *meditative* qualities of the mind must be added to the *investigating*, and that the *spirit of ardent devotion* must sanctify the entire exercise.

I cannot here omit to observe, that the plan of keeping something in the form of a *diary* will be found to be of the utmost service in enlivening and rendering profitable the medita-

tions and prayers of the closet. But, in recommending the keeping of such a record, I would by no means advise the young Christian to confine it, as is too common, to the mere expression of his *religious feelings* for the time being, but to extend it to a full and honest estimate of his general character and habits, and to make it the depository of his thoughts, opinions, and feelings, upon all subjects connected with the momentous concerns of religion and eternity. Such a diary as this would be rescued from the charge of common-place, and would be purged from that display of rash and thoughtless expression which often pervades documents of the kind

referred to, to the discouragement of timid and self-diffident Christians, and to the awakening of many painful suspicions in the minds of persons not thoroughly acquainted with the legitimate influence of divine truth. An *honest record* of *one* human heart is yet a *desideratum* ; and, though the *publication* of such a document might not tend to edification, it is a matter of undoubted certainty that its existence would contribute to the benefit of the individual who had decision of character enough to supply, from day to day, such a faithful mirror for the reflection of his own actions.

ON THE DUTY OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY.

Nothing is more to be deprecated than indolent repose in the disciple of Him who went about continually doing good. Both the temper and the obligations of Christianity forbid any of its subjects to live to themselves. Irrespective of all other considerations, there is an inexpressible beauty in the ardent and energetic devotement of the young mind. And shall it ever be said, with truth, that the most sacred of all impulses leaves the character under the influence of that selfishness which cares only for its own things, and neglects the things of others? It is impossible that true

religion can lie dormant and inactive in the soul. It is the offspring of infinite benevolence; and, wherever implanted, it will struggle to express itself in a manner suited to its own nature. It is of great importance that the active energies of the young Christian should be properly called forth and directed. And, in an age like the present, when the demand for active exertion is so great, it becomes the more necessary that every young disciple of the Lord Jesus should know what is demanded of him, and that he should act accordingly. It is by no means easy to adjust the claims of duty which press upon individual minds; but there are certain general

principles which will admit of application to almost all cases which can occur. If there be a desire to know what is the will of God, circumstances will generally transpire to give a direction to the inquiring mind. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is a question which, if sincerely asked, will not long remain without an answer. On the one hand, the young Christian is to shun undue publicity; and, on the other, he is to strive against that selfish retirement which those only seek who are living to themselves.

Among the various methods in which the young Christian may employ his energies for God and his fel-

low creatures, I would refer with pleasure to the office of a *Sunday-school Teacher*. In devoting himself to this work, he will interfere with no lawful secular claims, and will, moreover, so much improve his own mind, in endeavouring to improve the minds of others, that he will speedily find his reward in his labour. We want to see the number of pious and devoted Sunday-school Teachers greatly increased. For the want of such agents, the system, great as have been its benefits, has been comparatively inefficient.

I would advise the young, also, under the direction of their Christian pastors, to engage in the work of pro-

moting missionary institutions. Such employment will greatly enlarge and improve the mind, and will train it to the habitual exercise of those moral sympathies which will elevate and refine the character. The cause of missions is every day acquiring new features of interest; and, ere the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, it must occupy, to a far greater extent than it has yet done, the energies of the Christian world. Let the young rouse themselves to the work of God, and we may soon expect to see the wilderness and the solitary place rejoicing and blossoming as the rose.

I should greatly advise the young

Christian to acquire the habit of visiting the abodes of poverty and wretchedness, for the purpose of administering instruction and consolation. In the present day, the *District Visiting Societies* furnish ample opportunity for the cultivation of such a habit; and, under the direction of a discreet minister, it may be pursued with great advantage to all the graces of the Christian character. At the same time, there are dangers connected with this and every other species of doing good. It is necessary, in all public efforts, to guard the religion of the heart, and to take care lest in cultivating the vineyards of others we neglect our own.

ON RELIGIOUS CONNEXION.

This is a subject of great moment. I would have no serious young person remain in a state of separation from the visible church of Christ. It is an equal duty and privilege to confess Christ before men. Let your union to some Christian society be a matter of conscience, and let conscience take its rule from the word of God. But do not neglect the standing memorial of our blessed Lord's sacrifice for sin. Give yourself first to him, and then to his church; and let your pastor feel that you are a helper with him unto the kingdom of God. Study, by a meek, and humble, and active deportment, to become a blessing in the

church to which you belong. Remember that you are the pledged servant of Christ, and that, having put your hand to the plough, you are not at liberty to look back. Be punctual in your attendance upon all ordinances. Cultivate the spirit of Christian love. Contribute your part to the devotional habits of the community to which you belong. Aim at distinguished usefulness. Walk with God, and then your intercourse with your Christian brethren will be that of one who has come out from the presence-chamber of Deity.







