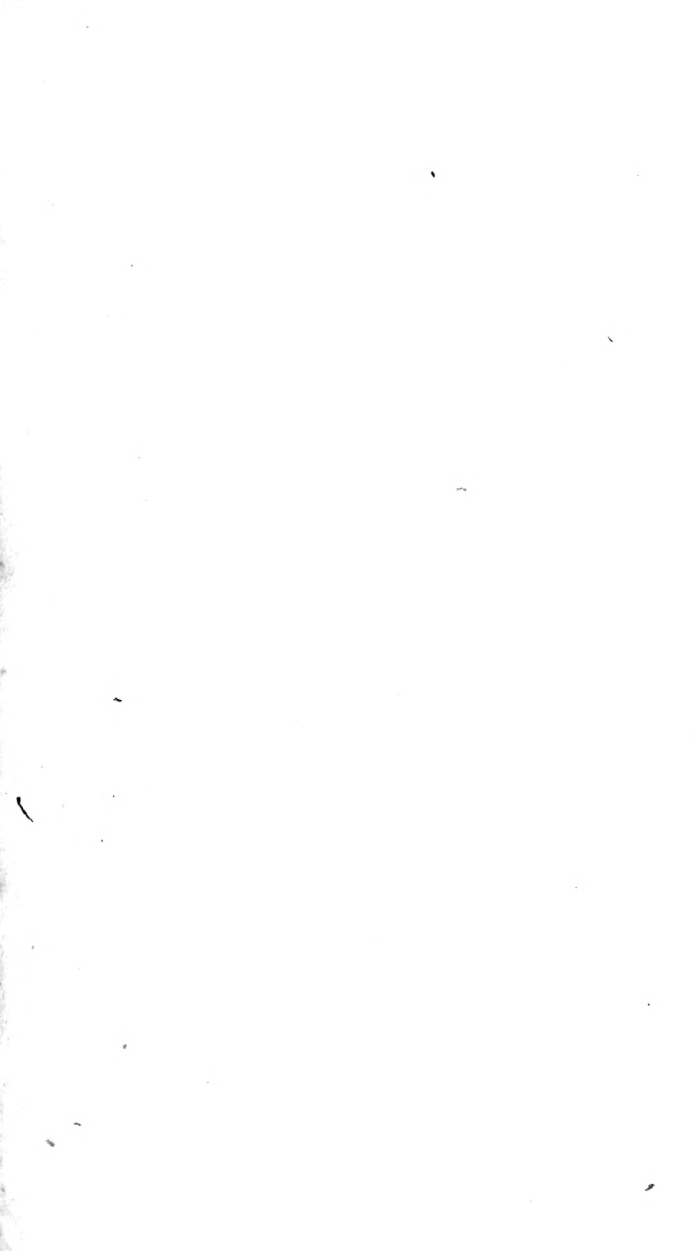




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Essays to do good









Engraving of "Mission to the Indians"

"Do not teach the nations"
Matthew 23 Chap. 17

1800

ESSAYS
TO DO GOOD.

BY
COTTON MATHER,
D. D. F. R. S.

WITH
AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY
ANDREW THOMSON, D. D.
MINISTER OF ST. GEORGE'S, EDINBURGH.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.



I. ACCORDING to the common notions, and common practice of mankind, "doing good" implies, whatever removes pain or imparts pleasure. But this is evidently a mistaken view of the subject; for pain is frequently a great blessing, and pleasure is frequently a serious evil. The amputation of a limb, though attended with severe agony, may be the means of saving the patient's life; and that which yields the sweetest gratification to the palate, may speedily terminate in disease and death. The discipline which is administered to a child may issue in his future and permanent advantage; while the indulgence of his wishes may subject him to a perpetuity of suffering. The continuance of that bodily health and that outward prosperity, on which most people set so much value, not seldom produces thoughtlessness, improvidence, immorality, and ultimate ruin; and we sometimes observe the protracted maladies, and the worldly disappointments and misfortunes, which all men naturally regard with aversion, exerting such an influence on the character and state of those who are exercised by them,

as to render them, what every one should desire to be, considerate, and virtuous, and happy. Numerous instances, in short, may be conceived, and do actually occur, from which it must be apparent, that neither the mere absence of pain, nor the mere sensation of pleasure, can be properly denominated “good;” and that he who relieves us of the one, or confers upon us the other, is not, on that account, or in that case, necessarily performing us a service; but, on the contrary, may be visiting us with an essential and irreparable injury. And it is unquestionably owing to the very loose and imperfect ideas which are entertained on this subject, that, amidst all the kindness that is felt, and all the activity which that kindness originates and keeps alive, so little progress is made in the improvement of man’s condition—so little added to the aggregate of human happiness—so little achieved of what an enlightened judgment would pronounce to be substantially and unequivocally beneficial.

To be prepared for “doing good” with certainty, and in the proper sense of the expression, we must not merely consider the immediate results of what we do for such as we intend to benefit, or the feelings which our treatment of them has, at the moment, excited in their minds. We must take a comprehensive survey of their interests. We must, for this purpose, look well to their nature, to their final destination, to the circumstances in which they are placed, and to the effects which are likely to be produced upon them now and hereafter, by our counsels or our conduct. It is from the separate study and combined view of these particulars, that

we are to learn the manner in which we must act, so as to promote the real welfare of our fellow-creatures. And in proportion to the fulness and the accuracy of our acquaintance with the points referred to, will be our success in discharging our social duties, and prosecuting our benevolent objects.

Now, in order to obtain this knowledge, we must go to the word of God. We shall never acquire it, if we apply for it solely to our own independent resources. Universal experience shows, that in this, more than in any thing else, it is beyond the ability of man to come to a settled and determinate principle. The learned and the illiterate, men of philosophy and men of business, have equally failed to fix the true character of what may be justly deemed the blessedness of our species. And, indeed, from our natural ignorance of the counsels of the Almighty respecting us, the inadequacy of our unassisted powers to discover these, and the undue bias which all our speculations receive from the moral depravity that perpetually cleaves to us, we could never expect, by any efforts of our own, to ascertain, with precision, that which mainly constitutes, or which is really conducive to our well-being. It is to the Bible that we must have recourse. One great purpose of the inspired volume is to "show us what is good." It by no means prevents or prohibits us from applying to other sources of information; it rather sanctions the widest range of inquiry that we can take, for satisfying our minds on such an important topic. But it is its own peculiar province to instruct us, with clearness and with certainty, in that which should be accounted the true honour and

felicity of our nature. And while, by teaching us what we are to choose and to pursue for ourselves, it teaches us what we are to be useful in communicating to others; it also affords us a multitude of maxims, and precepts, and examples, bearing directly on the deportment we are to maintain in reference to the welfare of our brethren of mankind, in all that variety of relation in which they stand to us, and in all that variety of condition in which they happen to be placed.

Appealing then to the Scriptures, we find the grand and all-pervading truth respecting man to be, that he is destined for "life and immortality." He is represented, indeed, as an inhabitant of this earth; but it is only for a short period that he is to continue here, and when that short period is at an end, he enters upon an eternity of existence, which must be one either of happiness or of misery. His escape from the latter, and his attainment of the former, are clearly pointed out as the only things worthy of his care or his ambition. Heaven, as presupposing his deliverance from destruction, and as implying the interminable perfection and happiness of his being, is that towards which his affections, his views, and his labours are authoritatively directed or attractively beckoned; and in that mighty consummation of his fate, which consists in his being made a partaker of celestial glory, all other interests which can possibly come into his contemplation, are completely absorbed and lost. Having gained it, he is in secure and everlasting possession of all that his heart can desire; but if he lose it, unmixed and irremediable wretchedness must be his portion.

We may safely and properly speak of heaven, not merely as man's chief, but as his only good. For supposing that he had every thing in this world which its votaries are accustomed to value most—supposing that he had its choicest gifts, unmixed with any of those crosses and pains by which these are so often rendered unavailing—and supposing that he not only enjoyed them in their highest style, and with the keenest relish, but enjoyed them as long as ever mortal was permitted to dwell in this passing scene—supposing all this, is it indeed good in his estimation, or in his experience, when he comes to die, and to appear in judgment, and to enter on a state of retribution, if withal the gate of heaven be shut against him, and he must spend a *forever* in the abodes of misery and despair? And again, supposing that he had as little temporal gratification as ever fell to the lot of the most destitute of our race—supposing that the earth were to him nothing but a bleak and desolate wilderness—and supposing that, to the termination of his “fourscore years,” he felt nothing but “labour and sorrow,” yet what could he have to regret, or what could he have to desiderate, if all the while he were an heir of eternal life, and if the conclusion of it all were admission to the blessedness which is without alloy and without end? Amidst the sensible objects, and busy pursuits by which we are so apt to be engrossed, and so long as no adversity has befallen us, to stamp the impress of vanity on whatever is seen and temporal, we may not be very willing to acknowledge the necessity of looking beyond a present world for the good that will make us truly happy. But let us only recollect that

we are destined for another state of being—let us only see what the best of terrestrial possessions and enjoyments are in the light of eternity—let us only conceive ourselves taking the last step of life which shall hide from us all that now occupies our thoughts, and enchants our hearts, and shall disclose to our eye the realities of that state in which we must abide through endless ages; and it will be but the work of a moment to convince us, that to creatures constituted and circumstanced as we are, there is nothing good but heaven.

This being the case, it is not difficult to understand the general duty of doing good. We endeavour to do good to others when we aim at securing their final introduction into heaven. This it is which distinguishes and marks the benevolent character, according to the discoveries made by revelation of the nature and destinies of man. If we have made it an exclusive object in exercising love to our neighbour, that he may at last “sit down in the kingdom of God,” we have pursued, with respect to him, that good which the Scripture tells us to pursue for ourselves, as comprehending in it all that is fit and desirable for us; and to “love our neighbour as ourselves” is the great and divine law of charity. But if we have neglected that object, or given it only a subordinate place, then, so far as we are concerned, he has not received from us any thing that is good—he has not received a single benefit that will survive the few years of his pilgrimage, or that he can recollect with gratitude when he is closing his probationary course, or that can prevent him from accusing us of positive cruelty to his soul, in that,

when we had it in our power to save him, we left him to perish. So far from having done him good, we have done him evil; and whatever praise we may have for our attention to his bodily comfort and his temporal prosperity, that must, ere long, give place to the juster decision, which will condemn us for allowing these to supersede in our regard the peace and happiness of his never-dying spirit.

When we say, that there is nothing good but heaven, we must be understood as including in that idea all which is requisite or useful, in preparing for heaven; because, when any particular means are necessary to the attainment of an end, they must be considered as partaking of the importance by which it is recommended to us, and as entitled to the same kind of practical regard which it demands from us. Now the gospel of Christ may be considered as the great instrument by which sinful men can ever be enabled to reach the heavenly happiness. It is appointed of God for that very purpose. It is possessed of every quality which can be deemed essential to its efficacy and success. And as without it no man can hope to be saved, so by its influence and power the greatest sinner may be restored to the station from which guilt had banished him, and become an inhabitant of the paradise above. As, therefore, in doing good to others, we should propose to ourselves their final introduction into heaven, so in carrying on our work, we must study to make them acquainted with that plan of divine mercy by which alone their introduction into heaven can be accomplished. If we set aside this method of redemption altogether, or if we do not give it that

prominence and operation which its Author has assigned to it, we cannot be said to do them any good. We may cherish towards them what kindness we please, and we may anxiously desire that they may be happy at last; but we nullify all the kindness, and we frustrate all the desires that we feel in their behalf, when we keep back from them, or do not labour to make known to them, the instituted way of salvation. We do good to them only when, along with a benevolent ambition that they may "enter into the joy of our Lord," we instruct them in the path by which it may be attained.

And it is not sufficient for our thus doing good to them, that we rest contented with the mere conveyance of knowledge to their minds respecting the Gospel. Such knowledge is indispensable, but it is not enough; for a bare knowledge of the Gospel will never carry them to heaven. Their knowledge of the Gospel is a good thing, only when it is accompanied with belief and obedience. And therefore, in striving to do them good, it will be our great concern that they may embrace "the truth as it is in Jesus;" that they may "believe with the heart unto righteousness;" that they may be converted and purified from the sinfulness which disqualifies them for the presence of God; and that they may be diligent in the cultivation of all those holy affections and habits by which they shall become "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Nor will we omit any thing by which they may be advanced or kept steadfast in the way that leads to Sion. Whatever bears upon that, whether directly or indirectly, whether in a greater or in a less degree, must form a part

of our labours, if we would promote their welfare. The instruction that “maketh wise unto salvation ;” the warning that would prevent backsliding or apostasy ; the reproof that may check presumption, and deter from sin ; the comfort that makes affliction light, and trials tolerable ; the encouragement that helps to encounter danger and overcome difficulty ; the example that both guides and animates ; the prayer that availeth much with God, and the kindness that availeth much with man—all these, and these in all the varieties and modifications of which they are susceptible, enter into the Christian scheme of doing good, and deserve the name and appellation of benevolent works, or real services, because they are calculated to render those with reference to whom they are performed, fit for the holy exercises and the lasting enjoyments of heaven.

The principle of doing good which has been laid down, appears to be not only rational and scriptural, but quite analogous to the views that we take, and the course that we pursue in other cases of a less important kind. In the vegetable kingdom, for instance, by what rule are we governed in our culture of any particular plant that we take under our care ? Do not we invariably consider its nature and habits ; and thinking at the same time of the purposes which it is intended to serve, are not we studious to manage it so as that its beauties may be most freely unfolded, or that its fruit may be produced in greater richness and abundance, or that its usefulness, in any other respect, may be most effectually and most extensively secured ? Does not the manner in which we rear any of the brute creation, depend on the constitution

which God has given them, and the ends which they are designed to answer in his animal creation; and do not we invariably accommodate our treatment of them to these considerations, and endeavour to render their strength, their sagacity, their instincts, their bodily structure, all their characteristic properties, whatever they may be, available to that for which it pleased their Maker to give them existence? In training up a child even for this world, is not our management of him regulated by the sphere in which he is hereafter to move, the relations in which he may be placed, the duties he may have to perform, the influence he may exercise upon those around him; and do not we cultivate his faculties with a view to these, and study as correct an adaptation of the one to the other as we are able to attain, so that though we may be disappointed at last, the failure may not be owing to any unsuitable or preposterous treatment of our youthful charge? And what should induce us to conduct ourselves towards our fellow-men, as if they were mere sensitive beings—as if they had no immortality to look to, or prepare for,—as if it were their unalterable fate to enjoy a few pleasures, to endure a few pains, and then sink into the abyss of annihilation? Or why should not we rather consider them as intended for a world of righteous and unerring retribution, and make all our dealings with them so bear upon their character, as that they “shall never perish, but have everlasting life?” This would seem to flow naturally and necessarily from a firm belief in the truth of revelation, and from an accurate knowledge of what it tells us of the present state and future prospects of those

rational beings, for whose guidance it has been vouchsafed.

It may, perhaps, be thought, that by limiting our definition of what is good to heaven, and preparation for it, we proscribe many things as evil, which reason, and Scripture, and experience, unite in pronouncing to be at once innocent and proper. A very few remarks, however, will be sufficient to remove this objection.

Let us suppose that we seriously desire to “do good” to a particular individual. It will be acknowledged, surely, that our *main* design, at least, must be to make him wise and happy for eternity. But that being allowed, it follows of course, that whatever prevents the accomplishment of that design, or makes its accomplishment less certain and less perfect than it might otherwise be, is in his case an unequivocal evil; inasmuch, as it goes to defeat in some measure, if not altogether, what we had principally in view as the good to be pursued. Now this is all that we plead for; and when duly considered and analyzed, the statement will be found to resolve itself into our original proposition, and to come to this, that nothing is good but what is found in heaven, or in meetness for heaven. Every thing we do to the object of our benevolence, or that we confer upon him, must have the effect of promoting his eternal welfare on the one hand, or of impairing it on the other—it must either make him better than he is, or worse than he might be, in his relation to a hereafter. The idea of any thing whose influence upon him in that respect will be in the middle state of indifference or neutrality, is quite erroneous;

for without entering into a minute examination of its nature and qualities, but granting that in itself it is entirely free from moral guilt and debasing tendency, still it must be held as coming in the place of something else that might have been done or given, positively and directly beneficial to him. It occupies the time, or the means, or the talents, that might have been employed in securing for him what would have contributed to his eternal welfare. Either it has the effect of depriving him altogether of a place in heaven,—in which case there cannot possibly be a doubt that it would be an incalculable evil; or it has the effect of rendering his admission into heaven matter of dubiety,—in which case it is also, though not so strongly, to be deprecated; or it subtracts from that capacity and meetness for the happiness of heaven which otherwise he might have reached,—in which case it still partakes in some measure, and comparatively at least, of the nature of a mischief. In all these instances, our kindness, ardent and active as it may have been, has failed to be of real service to him whom we intended to benefit—just as we should be accounted no benefactors to a person from whom in mistaken, however well meant friendship, we have been the means of wresting an inheritance, or whose title to it we have involved in distressing ambiguity, or whose fitness for enjoying it we have lessened, if not destroyed. In both examples, our benevolence has not had its legitimate issue; and though designing to do much good, we have inflicted an unquestionable evil.

Then, upon a consideration of all the particular points to which the objection refers, we shall find

that it has no force. Some of them we shall specify, that it may be seen not merely how little they bear against our general statement, but how easily, how fairly, and how strongly they can be made to support and illustrate it.

It may be alleged, that when we promote the temporal prosperity of others, or their success in the business of life, we do them good, while in all this, there neither is nor can be any view to the heavenly state. That there frequently is no view in all this to their existence in heaven, is too true, and too obvious; but it is no less undeniable, that such a view both can and ought to be made paramount. For surely we act in the spirit of true wisdom, as well as of true kindness, when we study to promote their temporal prosperity and success, in the way of helping and encouraging their honest industry; and by God's appointment, integrity and diligence in their worldly calling, whatever it may be, form a part of that work of preparation for eternity, which is given them to do. And while the acquisitions of wealth, influence, and honour, which they are enabled to make by our assistance, are excellent occasions of cherishing in their minds the sentiments of gratitude and devotion to Him, to whose blessing they are indebted for all that they possess, these, at the same time, provide them amply with the means of accomplishing their stewardship, of furthering their own advancement in the paths of knowledge and virtue, of being serviceable to their fellow-men in every department of usefulness, of giving its most vigorous exercise to that charity which "never faileth," which is "the bond of perfectness, and the fulfilling of the law."

Does the objection refer to those acts of kindness which we perform to the poor and afflicted? Alas! it is to be lamented, that these acts are too frequently separated from all consideration of their spiritual effects. But they need not, and they should not be thus secularised. They are calculated to be beneficial to the souls of those whom we succour, as well as to their bodies and their outward condition. We thereby prevent them from perishing, and thus lengthen out their period for repentance and preparation; or we put their minds into a better and more comfortable frame than they would otherwise be, during the short remainder of their residence here, for minding "the things that belong to their peace." We also furnish them with motives of no ordinary strength for embracing the Gospel, when we, plainly and avowedly under its benign influence, sympathise with their distresses, supply their wants, alleviate their pains, and do what we can for their deliverance and consolation. Nothing is better fitted than such deeds of mercy, flowing from the constraining power of the religion we profess, to recommend it to the admiration, and the acceptance, and the love of those who are in this manner so much indebted to it, through our instrumentality. And if they are already believers, all our labours of Christian compassion towards them, tend to confirm and uphold their belief, to animate their trust in the providence and grace of their heavenly Father, to soothe their troubled hearts for a more peaceful and edifying contemplation of those truths by which they are to be sanctified and saved, and to enliven in them that faith,

and to cherish in them that patience, through which they are to be made meet “for inheriting the promises.”

Again, If we promote their intellectual improvement, this, in all its variety, may, and should be so managed, as to render them wiser, and holier, and better prepared for inhabiting the celestial abodes. Every accession that is made to their knowledge of the phenomena of nature, of the conduct of Providence, of themselves, and of their fellow-creatures throughout the universe, will afford them more correct, as well as more enlarged views of the character of God, and present to them more abundant reasons for the diligent cultivation of piety and virtue. The higher and the more skilful the direction is that we give to their mental powers, the more capable do we make them of studying with success whatever can ennoble or purify their rational nature, of engaging with vigour and perseverance in the service of Him from whom they look for their final reward, of discovering and of following what will contribute most essentially to their true interest and happiness, and of becoming fit associates for those pure and exalted intelligences that dwell in the world of glory. In short, by extending their information on all the subjects which are accessible to human curiosity,—by teaching them to distinguish, with greater facility and acuteness, between truth and error,—by subjecting them to that discipline which renders their imagination, their memory, their judgment, their reason, their taste, their every faculty, more competent to its peculiar operations, we at once multiply the materials which give scope and

exercise to their moral dispositions, and increase their ability to employ these materials in such a manner as to quicken their progress in the path of excellence, and of course to produce in them a greater adaptation to the exercises, and a wider capacity for the enjoyments of heaven, as a place in which, all sin and all imperfection being excluded, knowledge and understanding shall be identified, as it were, with purity and with pleasure. Nor are these consequences to be expected merely from a great and regular system of intellectual tuition. They will be proportionally experienced, in whatever degree the method from which they result is adopted and pursued. Every new fact in creation, or in the events of history, with which we make others acquainted; every assistance we impart, in correcting the errors of their judgment, or in improving their powers and their modes of reasoning; every new lesson, and every additional help that we give them, in their range over the field of science; every thing of this kind, however small and insignificant it may be, is so far an enlargement of their resources for growing in conformity to the divine will, and in qualification for future felicity. Such acquisitions are not necessarily productive of these advantages,—they may prove useless, or they may be abused to unworthy purposes; but it is their proper tendency, and, when suitably directed, it is their certain tendency, to ameliorate the character, and to augment the blessedness, of those whom they distinguish.

Even in the case of amusements, which, at first sight, appear to have no connection with what we

hold to be man's only good, the proposition we have laid down may be easily established. Man is so constituted, and so situated, that he needs relaxation both of mind and body, to keep his frame in health and vigour, and thus enable him to perform his various moral functions with more energy, with more alacrity, and with more success. If such relaxation is not needful for him, then it is clearly unlawful; because it wastes the time and the efforts that should have been beneficially expended. But, on the supposition that his nature requires it, then, its being taken suitably, both as to kind, and season, and degree, becomes a part of his duty, and is instrumental in advancing his spiritual and eternal well-being. And therefore when we provide him with it,—its character and measure being appropriate,—so far from merely gratifying his love of pleasure, or his passion for trifling and vanity, we contribute to his substantial interests; and, instead of neglecting him as a religious being, and as a candidate for immortality, we further his prosperity in both respects, and fill up what would otherwise have been a defect in that comprehensive system by which he is to be made at once holier here, and happier hereafter.

The doctrine for which we have been contending is illustrated and proved by the example of Christ. "Doing good" to men, was his grand characteristic. And in this respect, we are commanded to take him for our model—not only with regard to the obligation itself, but also with regard to the manner in which we are to fulfil the obligation. "Walk in love," says an Apostle, "as Christ also hath loved

us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice unto God.”* Now, if we examine the conduct of Christ, from the commencement of his public labours, to their termination on Calvary, we shall find that it was devoted minutely, and zealously, and perseveringly, to the spiritual welfare of mankind. He came originally into the world, for the single purpose of redeeming them from the guilt and power of sin, of restoring them to the favour of God, and of leading them on the way to heaven. And that gracious purpose he lived and laboured, suffered and died, to effectuate, neglecting nothing which goodness could suggest, which wisdom could devise, or which power could achieve, in order to secure it in all its requisite extent. This was the constant and ultimate object of the discourses which he delivered, of the miracles which he wrought, of the toils which he underwent, of the pains which he endured, of the decease which he at last accomplished. We are not aware, indeed, of one action that he performed, or of one word that he uttered, which did not, more remotely or more immediately, relate to the salvation of sinners. Even when he was saying and doing what seemed to go no further than the bodily comfort, or the present advantage of those to whom he was showing kindness, he was in fact ministering to their deliverance from unbelief, or to their encouragement in the paths of holiness. So far as his deeds of beneficence are recorded, they were, without almost an exception, of a miraculous nature; and they were expressly

* Eph. v. 2.

done for the purpose of converting those who witnessed them to the faith and obedience of his Gospel. At least, when this was not obviously and explicitly their design, they were yet expected to excite spiritual feelings, or to ameliorate religious character. A wo was denounced on certain cities, because their inhabitants had not been brought to repentance by the mighty works done among them;* the multitude, "when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see, glorified the God of Israel;"† the two blind men that sat by the way-side, upon their receiving sight, through the divine compassion of Christ, are said to have followed him;‡ and when, of the ten lepers whom Christ healed, one only showed any symptoms of piety and gratitude, He was, as it were, disappointed, and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger."§

Since then Christ, in his whole doings, never once lost sight of the religious and moral well-being of mankind, and since we are to follow his footsteps in this as well as in all other imitable parts of his character, we fall short of our duty, as thus defined and enforced, when we limit our benevolence, in any case, to the mere animal gratifications, or the mere temporal necessities, of those whom we assist.

It is very true, Christ was a divine messenger; and it was right and necessary that his care should

* Matth. xi. 20, et seq. † xv. 31. ‡ xx. 34.

§ Luke xvii. 17, 18.

be engrossed with the souls of those whom he had come to save. But still, if his deportment, in respect of benevolence, is the authoritative rule for us in that branch of holy living, we must conform to it as far as our circumstances will permit. And though we cannot be all expected to occupy ourselves in communicating direct instruction in the things of God, and to make it the professional business of our life, if we may so speak, to lead our fellow-men in the way of salvation, yet, if we are to "walk as Christ also walked," and if he walked in love, so as to keep his eye continually on the spiritual interests of men, it is not very easy to see how we should not be obliged to resemble him in that point, with as much strictness and fidelity as we should resemble him in meekness, and purity, and patience. It may as well be urged, that we need not strive at all to be merciful, as he was merciful; because his merciful dealings with the afflicted were all miraculous, and we cannot perform miracles. That could not surely be maintained. And as we must do works of mercy unassociated with miracles, in imitation of his works of mercy, which were distinguished by that superhuman attribute, so we must do our works with a constant view to the abiding welfare of those who profit by them, in imitation of his works, which were guided and animated by that view, not only in general, but in every particular case. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." And what is the specific instance by which the Apostle explains the import of his exhortation? "And given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice unto God." He does not mean, for he cannot mean, that, in showing our af-

fection for others, we should ever dream of giving ourselves a sacrifice for them, in the sense in which Christ gave himself a sacrifice. And yet that is the very expression of love which he holds out for imitation; no doubt intimating thereby, that, as the love of Christ was manifested in promoting the salvation of sinners, in a manner suited to their need, and to his ability, so our love should be manifested, when pursuing the very same object, in a manner accommodated to the situation and the wants of those whom we are to relieve, and to the more limited powers and opportunities of which we are possessed. His dying for the redemption of mankind, is put forth as the law and the measure of that beneficence which we are to practise, as believers in his doctrine; and nothing but want of capacity, or want of means, will be sustained as an apology for our refusing to act up to it, in all its legitimate extent. We cannot, like Christ, die for sinners; but, in the spirit by which he was actuated, we can be zealous and active, as instruments in prosecuting the end for which that "obedience unto death" was yielded. We cannot work miracles as Christ did, in order to influence the hearts of those who experience them, so that they may believe and repent; but we can act upon the principle of being kind and useful to them, in such a way as to furnish them with arguments for exercising the faith and the penitence to which they are called. We cannot devote ourselves, in the same mode and in the same degree that Christ did, to the office of a sacred and saving teacher; but we can set the same end before us that he pursued, and we can aim at it through the medium of all our social inter-

course, and of all our charitable efforts. And, being capable of all this, we may deduce our obligation to labour for its fulfilment, according to the measure of our capacity, from those very circumstances which are apt to be adduced as reasons for confining our attempts to do good within narrower bounds than what we have been endeavouring to establish. If Christ, in doing good, gave himself an offering and a sacrifice for sinners, does not that give such a demonstration of the value of the human soul, as should determine us, not only to seek its salvation above all other things, but to omit no opportunity, and to withhold no exertion, by which we may be fellow-workers with the Redeemer, in securing for it the attainment of those blessings, for which he paid the costly price of his own blood? If he was so intent on the reformation and happiness of those among whom he tabernacled, that he wrought miracles of love to reclaim them from their errors, and to bring them back to God, shall we not feel this to be an irresistible argument for us so to regulate all our expressions of love to our neighbours and our friends, as that they may produce the same salutary effects on their mind and condition? And if, in the course of his official life, he made all that he said, and all that he did, for the benefit of man, subservient in some shape or other to their moral advancement, does not that teach us to look to the souls of our brethren as the objects of our unceasing concern; to neglect nothing which may, in that view, be made use of for their advantage; to govern our social conduct, at all times, by a tender regard to what may profit them eternally; and not to “give them even

a cup of cold water but in the name of disciples;”—
 “walking towards them in love, as Christ also hath
 loved them, and given himself for them?”

The advantages of that interpretation of “doing good,” which we have given, are manifold. Were it generally received and acted upon, what a different scene would the world present to our contemplation! By setting ourselves, in all the movements that we make concerning our fellow men, to deliver them from sin, what a vast multitude of temporal evils would be swept away from the face of the earth!—for it is evidently the prevalence of sin which occasions so much individual suffering, so much domestic misery, so much public calamity. By diffusing the knowledge and influence of the Gospel, which is no less calculated, than it is intended by its great Author, to make those who embrace it, wise, and good, and happy, how greatly should we stimulate the industry of the poor, and call forth the humanity of the rich, and cherish among all classes of the people, those dispositions of mind, and those habits of life, which, being agreeable to the law of God, are the certain sources of prosperity, and peace, and joy, both to those by whom they are cultivated, and to those towards whom they are exercised! By thus cutting off the most copious fountain of worldly sorrow, and opening up the very well-springs of comfort and gladness in the hearts and the habitations of afflicted mortals, we would secure more effectually, than could be done by any of those plans which are usually put in operation, all that is attainable in the work of lessening the troubles and increasing the happiness of our species. And while in this way

we at once diminished the sum of human wretchedness, and added to the stock of human enjoyment, by means of the mightiest engine of beneficence that can be employed in behalf of mankind, considered merely as to their existence in this present fugitive state, we should be accomplishing what must be held by the feeblest and most reluctant believer in revelation, to be the richest boon that can be conferred on them as beings who are destined for a future and never-ending state; we should be accomplishing what must be regarded as far more than a full compensation for all the pains and grievances, of a temporal kind, which we might leave unallayed or unredressed, and as infinitely transcending all the best and most worthy gifts, of a temporal kind, that their keenest desires could imagine; we should be accomplishing the eternal salvation of their souls, their escape from the penalties of God's broken law, and their admission into the glories of God's heavenly presence. Animated by a well-informed and unquenchable zeal for their spiritual and final redemption, every the minutest effort that we made in their behalf would have a twofold direction—the one which is of most importance commanding, of course, our paramount regard—the other, which is of least importance, being kept in subordination and made subservient to it—and both combining to raise those who are the objects of our concern, to the highest possible degree of excellence, of comfort, and felicity. Not only would all criminal pursuits and indulgences be banished from their system of life, as the robbers of its peace, and the authors of its woes, but there would be equally excluded those pursuits and

indulgences, which, though free from any intrinsic immorality, are yet perfectly frivolous in themselves, and perfectly evanescent in their effects,—which have not the remotest connection with the improvement of the understanding, the purification of the heart, the virtue of the conduct, the health of the body, or the prosperity of the outward condition—which may charm, for the moment, such as are immersed in them, but are, in fact, illusory as the dreams of the night, and to the inanity of their own inherent character, add the demerit of absolutely wasting and throwing away the energies, and the resources, and the advantages of an immortal nature. And in this manner divesting their situation of whatever is silly, or useless, or hurtful, we should make no encroachment on any thing that is in the least essential or conducive to the prosperity of their earthly portion; but, on the contrary, would shed a brighter light on all their goings, and add a greater value to all their possessions, and impart a keener relish to all their gratifications, and render them just as delighted as the highest wisdom, and the strongest faith, and the purest virtue, and the widest command of God's works and bounties, could be supposed to make them.

Such we conceive to be the sound definition of doing good, and the advantages attending it. Its advantages must, of course, be liable to many shortcomings, and we never can expect to see it carried to its full issues. But it appears to us that, on the one hand, in proportion as we approach it in the actings of our philanthropy, in that proportion will we succeed in removing the consequences of the

curse that has been entailed by the fall on our unhappy race; and that in proportion as we disregard it, in that proportion will we be instrumental in perpetuating the reign of all those evils which it so much annoys us to feel and to behold, and which it has baffled the wisest of unchristian sages either to alleviate or to cure. These things may sound strange in the ear of the worldling and the unbeliever; but the principle which pervades them must be familiar to the minds of all who know the Gospel in its sanctifying, and enlightening, and consoling power. And though they may be despised as idle or enthusiastic speculations, when considered amidst the fascinations, and corruptions, and errors of a world lying in ignorance and in wickedness, yet we doubt not, the time is coming when their justness and their truth will be universally acknowledged, because it will be seen in the experience of reclaimed and solaced humanity: and certainly, in the eternal state, it will be a demonstration as clear and unclouded as the light of heaven itself, that a vast majority of those acts of kindness which are now thought to constitute the benevolent character, are nothing else than vanity—and that they, and none but they, received “good” from us, who by the good that was bestowed, had the means of safety afforded them as moral and responsible agents, and were enabled, when they departed from their earthly probation, to carry with them a purer and a higher meetness for the realms of everlasting bliss.

II. There are many, who so far from going along with us in the past part of our argument, have a

strong aversion to the exercise of spiritual charity altogether, on account of its supposed interference with the exercise of secular charity. They allege that our efforts for the religious prosperity of mankind necessarily impair the efforts which we ought to make, and which would otherwise be made, for applying a remedy to the common ills and distresses of our brethren: and it is even believed by not a few, that every sum of money which we expend, and every degree of exertion which we put forth, in sending Bibles, for instance, or missionaries, or other instruments of sacred instruction, to those who need them, are literally subtracted from the relief and comfort of ordinary indigence. It may be proper to employ a few paragraphs in exposing the groundlessness and futility of this allegation.

In reply to it we have to state, in the very outset, that whatever the effect is in point of fact, or whatever the most unreasonable hypothesis may suppose it to be, that cannot annul our obligation, and must not interdict our endeavours to "do good" to the *souls* of men. If compassion be a duty at all, that compassion must be important and requisite above all others, which goes to rescue from the pressure of everlasting evils, and to secure the attainment of everlasting benefits. Either we must allow that the inward comfort and the eternal peace of men are supremely entitled to our attention and solicitude, or we must hold that there is no truth in Christianity, no moment in its doctrines, and no authority in its precepts. And we put it to the judgment of any individual whatever, whether, if he believes the Bible firmly, if he loves it dearly,

if he knows it experimentally, and if he rejoices in it as the message of divine grace and of spiritual redemption to perishing sinners, he will not regard it as a paramount duty, and feel an irresistible inclination, in the exercise of that mercy which it equally displays and inculcates, to send it into every land, and into every cottage, and, if possible, into every heart which providence has placed within the reach of his beneficence.

But we go farther, and deny that the effect really is what it is thought or pretended to be. We maintain, on the contrary, that it is a just estimate of the *spiritual* necessities of mankind, and this alone, which leads to correct notions, tender sentiments, and benevolent conduct respecting their *temporal* necessities—that doing good to their *souls* is the best and only security for doing good to their *bodies*. And in proof of this we appeal to speculative argument, and especially to incontrovertible fact.

It is not difficult to see, that if we really believe man to be a moral being, and a being destined to endless existence, and are accustomed to regard him with lively interest, as capable either of unceasing misery, or of unceasing bliss, we cannot be indifferent to *any thing* which affects his feelings, his conduct, or his situation in the world. That very impulse which constrains us to attend to the welfare and safety of his spiritual state, will determine us to care for the relief and the comfort of his animal frame. It is the same great principle which operates upon both objects—the principle of love. And though it cannot consistently neglect either of them,

but must pay to each a proportionate regard, yet, being chiefly concerned and chiefly employed with the former, which is the most important, it acquires such warmth, and vigour, and expansion, by its exercise there, that it will not rest satisfied without doing all that it can for the latter, and extending its labours to every department where there is one evil to remove, or one blessing to confer. The doctrine which teaches us to give instruction to the ignorant, and warning to the wicked, and consolation to the agitated or the downcast spirit, teaches us with the same tenderness, and the same authority, to supply the wants of the poor, and to heal the victims of disease, and to cause “the widow’s heart to sing for joy.” To all such deeds of beneficence we will give ourselves, as the natural and necessary result of that principle, which, though it carries our eye beyond the horizon of mortality, is intended to regulate all our affections and all our conduct in this lower world, and to make us meet for heaven, by the cultivation of those charities of our renewed nature, which link us to man and assimilate us to God. And while we must, along with all our attention to the higher and more durable interests of our fellow-creatures, attend with equal certainty to their present and passing necessities, our obligation to do the one being derived from the same source as our obligation to do the other, and while we will devote our anxieties and our activities to both, for the purpose of perfecting our own personal character,—we will also, in the more generous and disinterested expressions of our love to them, recognise, in a practical concern for the latter, a most excellent and efficacious means

of advancing the former; and thus, so far as we occupy ourselves in doing good, we will strive to make men comfortable in time, just in proportion to the zeal with which we strive to make them fit for eternity.

With this argument the history of benevolence exactly corresponds. Human calamities were never properly cared for till Christianity appeared; nor are they properly cared for in any quarter of the globe into which Christianity has not been introduced. And what is Christianity? It is a system which directs its principal, we had almost said its sole, attention to our spiritual circumstances; which shows the value of the human soul, by showing the price that has been paid for its redemption; which, by representing man as the object of saving mercy, gives him a nobler place in the universe than he could otherwise have held, and creates for him a far deeper interest than he could otherwise have excited; and which, while it inculcates the great duties of benevolence with the voice of divine majesty, enforces and recommends them by motives that are connected with the love of God, with the faith of Christ, with the influence of the Spirit, with the experience of heavenly comfort, and with the hope of life and immortality. Christianity, possessed of this peculiar character, distinguished by doctrines which refer to the deliverance of our race from guilt and the fears of hell, and their restoration to holiness and the expectations of heaven—distinguished by precepts of charity, which derive their chief beauty, and their most persuasive charm from the influence of these very doctrines—distinguished by examples of philanthropy, whose language and whose doings

have an almost exclusive reference to the final destiny of their objects—distinguished by the awakening views which it gives of man's fallen state, and by the earnestness with which it presses this on our fear and our pity;—Christianity distinguished by these broad and over-spreading features of spirituality, has done more in one day to alleviate the temporal distresses of our species, than has been achieved by the philosophy, and the policy, and the humanity of the heathen, from their first beginnings down to the present time. And surely it may be considered as a settled point, that so long as Christianity prevails or exercises any influence, it will not cease to cherish, in those who have embraced it so cordially, as to be zealous for its propagation, the same sympathies for suffering mortals which it has awakened in all past ages, and to produce the same affectionate treatment of them by which it has uniformly characterised the true disciples of Jesus, from the very first moment of its establishment in the world.

We may also refer to the history of those extraordinary exertions that have been recently made, for relieving the distresses and ameliorating the condition of man. Were the notion at all correct, that exertions for the advancement of religion in the world are hostile to almsgiving, and similar exercises of charity, the sums that have been expended on spiritual objects, must have been withdrawn from the promotion of those that are temporal. The revenues of associations instituted in behalf of the latter must have been diminished, and the revenues drawn for the support of the former must have been increased, in a ratio somewhat proportional,

so far as they were derived from the generosity of Christians. And, in short, considering what has been done for disseminating the Scriptures, supporting missions, establishing Sabbath schools, circulating tracts, (to mention no more), we should have expected to find that little or nothing was done for the sick, and the poor, and the unfortunate; that institutions for the purpose of administering to the wants of these afflicted ones, were abandoned or neglected; that no means were employed to provide bread for the hungry, and clothing for the naked, and a refuge for the orphan and the outcast. But what is the fact? Why, the broad and undeniable fact is this, that there never was a period during which so much was attempted, and so much accomplished, for the temporal welfare of mankind; so many societies formed; such personal labours undergone; such minute attention paid to the multifarious distresses of human life; and such general and liberal contributions of money for their alleviation and relief. And this unquestionably proves, that the two schemes, and the objects that they have in view, and the means by which their several ends are to be attained, are perfectly compatible and harmonious; or rather, that the one serves to give the other greater vigour, greater perfection, and greater success. This is the obvious and unavoidable inference;—unless it be maintained that the supporters of spiritual charity, and the supporters of secular charity, are two distinct and separate classes of men; and that these two different species of charity are not promoted chiefly by the same individuals; and that, as scarcely any of the latter are to be found among

the former, so as few of the former are to be found among the latter. But who can maintain this, and hope to receive credit, either for his fairness or his sagacity? We state it as a fact, equally important and irrefragable in the present discussion, that those who are most anxious about their own religious interests, and the religious interests of others, are, at the same time, most concerned, most active, most liberal in providing for the temporal wants of their fellow-men. We are not entitled to say, that this holds universally; but every day's observation justifies us in maintaining that it is true as a general statement, and that the exceptions to it are neither numerous nor considerable.

If, indeed, the allegation of our opponents were founded on truth, we should suppose before-hand, that the individuals to whom this world is every thing would, if compassionate at all, be greatly and prominently compassionate in contributing to the relief of temporal affliction; and we should also suppose, that those who are earnestly occupied with the concerns of spiritual and eternal salvation, would have their attention engrossed, and their sympathies exhausted by them, to the exclusion of every call that might come to them from the victims of worldly misfortune. Nothing, however, can be farther from the reality of the case. We see these several classes of men feeling and acting in a manner the very reverse. The men of the world, from the very nature of their system, from the selfishness of the pursuits on which they are altogether bent, from the demands made upon their resources by the pleasures and amusements to which they are addicted, and the

deadening effect which these, when carried to excess, have upon the generous feelings, will not listen to the tale of woe, and are "not grieved for any man's affliction:" whereas the true Christian, in the very spirit of his faith, and in the exercise of his proper vocation, is ever ready with his consoling language, and his pecuniary aid, and his personal services, to comfort and to succour the helpless beings whom God has cast upon his bounty. Notwithstanding all that has been said of the dignity and the tenderness of human nature, we are borne out by history, and by observation, and by our Bible, in saying, that man is naturally selfish. The simple elements of that character are implanted in his constitution to answer wise purposes; but they are injured and perverted by the moral depravity which has infected him, by the temptations to which he is outwardly exposed, and by the indulgences in which, from ignorance or from waywardness, he has been accustomed to seek his happiness. And this selfishness, even in its least aggravated form, but especially when increased, as it frequently is, by habits of dissipation or of avarice, is too firmly rooted in him to be extirpated by any of those ordinary forces to which speculative and political moralists have trusted, in attempting to accomplish his reformation. It will not give way to better affections, except by the application of some mighty, and ennobling, and generous influence to his heart. And such influence, as experience teaches, belongs to the gospel, and to the gospel alone. Whenever that is made to bear upon the sinner, and carried home to him by the energy of divine grace, he becomes "a new creature." He

puts away from him all the passions which centered in his own gratification. He has felt the love of God to his own soul; and hence he learns, and is persuaded to love his neighbour as himself. The precepts, and the spirit, and the examples, and the whole character of revelation, enforce upon him the charitable lesson. From looking entirely and exclusively on "his own things," he comes to "look also on the things of others." From being indifferent to the concerns of his brethren, he comes to take a lively interest in all that relates to them. From regarding them with hatred or malice, he comes to cherish towards them the kindest affections. And from sacrificing their welfare at the shrine of personal aggrandizement, treating them as aliens and enemies, perhaps persecuting them with relentless violence, he comes to do them good with a "willing mind," and to forget the claims of self in his endeavours to advance the happiness and well-being of his fellow-men. And by the zeal and the fervour, as well as the fidelity and perseverance with which he labours in the cause of humanity, he shows that he is actuated, not so much by a dry sense of duty, as by the general tone and tendency of that doctrine in which it has been given him to believe as the doctrine of heavenly truth; which speaks of man as lost by sin, and recovered by grace; which has brought him individually into a state of spiritual light, and life, and hope; and which teaches him to look on the lowest and the poorest of his kind as creatures like himself, whom God has pitied, and whom Christ has died to save.

But the opponents of spiritual charity try to strengthen their case, by accusing us of going to

distant objects of a religious kind, and overlooking those objects of a temporal kind, which are immediately under our eye. Now, supposing this to be done, we say freely and decidedly, that such conduct is wrong, and must proceed from great weakness, or from a strange perversion of the benevolent affections. But is it the fact, that Christians, who are compassionate to the souls of the heathen abroad, are not compassionate to the bodies of their brethren at home? If it be the fact, does it prevail to any hurtful or considerable extent? Or does it exist in such a degree as to be worthy of formal notice or of public censure, and to constitute sufficient ground for the general and sweeping conclusion that some would have us to draw from it? We can safely appeal to every candid observer of what is passing around us, when we say that it does not—that it is a mere fiction of the fancy—a mere bugbear, conjured up to excite prejudices in the minds of the timid against exertions and associations for religious purposes—a mere gratuitous assumption, which is not only incapable of being substantiated, but whose utter groundlessness may be demonstrated beyond the reach of controversy or of doubt.

The persons whom it is the fashion to accuse of lavishing all their charity on the circulation of Bibles, and the diffusion of the Gospel in remote countries, are the very persons by whom the destitute sick, and old men, and indigent widows, and orphan children, are principally supported, and relieved, and educated, in our own country. We do not say this in the way of boasting of their good deeds; but we adduce it to repel a sophistical argument, and an injurious accu-

sation, which have been employed to discredit their conduct and their cause; and we adduce it as an undeniable fact. They may be exceeded occasionally by men of the world, whose constitutional sympathies are conjoined with the wealth which enables them to be liberal. They may come short, when the alms which are required are necessary as the test and the expression of a political creed, or of a party attachment. They may not abide comparison, when the strife is about who shall sacrifice most at the shrine of ostentation and of fame. They may be equalled, when there is an institution to be looked after whose management brings along with it the sweets of patronage and influence, or which holds a conspicuous place in the eye and estimation of the world. There may be no perceptible difference between the two classes, when there is such an appeal made to their humanity, by the calamities of the poor, as would require a heart of stone to resist it. But it is indelibly recorded in the history of all our charitable enterprises and associations, whether of a sacred or of a secular description, that those who must be branded, forsooth, as enthusiasts, because they feel for the souls of their brethren in every clime, and would send the doctrine of grace wherever there is a human heart to feel it, or a human habitation to be cheered by it—that they are the people who give as “God has prospered them,” for the relief of human wretchedness, in its ten thousand forms—that they are the people who penetrate the recesses of our crowded populations, and visit the abodes of poverty and disease, and inquire into the circumstances of their miserable inhabitants, and

minister in person, and in tenderness, to their manifold wants—that they are the people who need not the gaze of the world, nor the excitement of romantic or aggravated distress, to awaken their compassions, and to quicken their alms-givings; but who devote themselves silently and habitually, steadily and unweariedly, to the labours of a substantial and painstaking beneficence—that they are the people upon whose pecuniary contributions you can count with certainty, and whose individual services you can command almost at pleasure, where there is any scheme of mercy to carry forward—that they are the people whom difficulties do not discourage, and ingratitude cannot arrest, in their career of benevolence, but who persevere in it with an ardour that never cools, and an activity that never stops, and who do so, because they act under the conviction that God himself is their witness and their reward, that the love of the Saviour calls for all the love they can show to their fellow-men, and that true charity is a virtue which “never faileth” in heaven, and must, therefore, never fail upon earth.

But we are still told, that our doctrine, and the practice founded on it, cannot be right, because the good we do to the objects of temporal benevolence among ourselves is certain, whereas the good we propose to do to the objects of spiritual benevolence, either among ourselves or in foreign parts, is at the best but problematical. This objection, however, if it be carried its legitimate length, will be found to go a great deal too far, and, on that account, to be good for nothing. If suppositions are to stand for arguments, there is no scheme and no conduct to

which we might not discover valid exceptions. We might say, "You should not give to the poor, because it may lead them to be idle, dissipated, and improvident. You should not restore a sick man, because he may employ his recovered health in working mischief to his fellow creatures. You should not relieve the distressed in any case, because it may be a motive for their friends to cast them, in such circumstances, on the public bounty, and thus prove destructive of the affections of kindred. And you should not give assistance to a neighbour, in order to recover him from his embarrassments, or to advance his honest views in trade, because, after all, he may not succeed." If such hypotheses were to be admitted as principles of action in secular things, it is evident that the business of the world must stop. And then, why they should be excluded from the consideration of these, and admitted into our reasoning on spiritual things, is a question of which it may not be easy to give a satisfactory solution.

Just see how this objection applies to certain institutions for intellectual and religious purposes which we have in our own land. Have we not the institution of schools? And is it not, in one sense, problematical, whether the education which our children receive there may not be afterwards abused, as indeed it often is, to purposes which are to be deprecated as altogether foreign to their tendency and design? And yet would you agree to abolish the office of teachers, and pull down our seminaries of elementary instruction, and abandon the youth of our country to the dominion of ignorance?—Have we not the institution of churches, for the Christian edification of

the people? And is it not problematical, also, whether the people shall receive and profit by the lessons that we convey to them? Nay, how often do we dispense the word and ordinances of the gospel, without any visible effect! How often do we preach to those who hear us as if they heard us not! And how many are there who will not attend our ministrations! And how many are there who attend them regularly, and yet continue ignorant, careless, and unsanctified to the very end! But would you, on that account, propose to shut up our sanctuaries, to abrogate the ordinance of pastors, and to put an end to the whole system of external means for the support and prosperity of religion? No; you would agree to none of these things. And why should it be, that, without any better reason, you would forbid us to send the word of God, and the Gospel of salvation, in which we ourselves rejoice, to the inhabitants of every region that is yet covered with the shadows and the darkness of spiritual death?

It is painful to be under the necessity of descending into such minute discussion, on a subject so plain and intelligible. But its practical importance, and the captiousness of those with whom we have to do in this argument, render such apparently trifling reasonings expedient, if not indispensable. We shall not, however, enter farther into the controversy, than to remark, that the reason and truth of the case seem to be comprised in these two simple propositions. In the *first* place, we have to perform our duty, whatever be either the known or the problematical result of it; and our duty, as followers of Jesus, is to do good, according to our abilities and opportunities,

both to the bodies and to the souls of men, leaving the consequences to him with whom is “the residue of the Spirit,” and who will accomplish his own purposes, at his own time, and in his own way. And in the *second* place, if we do our duty in the exercise of spiritual, as well as of temporal charity, good will and must be effected. There is here nothing problematical, more than there is in all things which lie in the womb of futurity, and have man’s wisdom, and man’s virtue, as the instruments of their attainment. From the constitution of human nature, and from the experience of human society, it is abundantly evident, that if you circulate useful knowledge, you will more or less advance the improvement, and interests, and happiness, of the species, both individually and collectively. And surely we may trust the faithfulness of God, who has promised that the time will come when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea,” and who, as the means for attaining that glorious end, commanded his disciples to “go into the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” and also commands us to be zealous and active in pursuing the same object within the sphere of our influence, and according to the measure of our ability.

It may be safely concluded, then, that spiritual charity and temporal charity are perfectly consistent, —that the former is the best security, and the most powerful stimulus that we can have, for the latter, —that those who discourage our exertions for enlightening, and converting, and saving the souls of our fellow-men, are proportionally, though, it may

be, unintentionally, hostile to the work of benevolence in all its forms,—that whenever we cease to feel for the eternal well-being of those who, of whatever colour, and in whatever clime, they may happen to be, are still “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,” then, most assuredly, our provisions for the mitigation or removal of temporal distresses, will languish and decay,—and that no man could confer a higher or a richer boon on our common charities, than by persuading all to whom they can look for support, to mind the things which belong to their own eternal peace, and to compassionate the helpless and heart-rending case of those who, for want of religious instruction, are still without Christ, and “without God, and without hope in the world.”

III. The ground of discussion over which we have been travelling, is both interesting and important. And we trust that our remarks are calculated to give a just view of the duty of doing good. But there are several points, to which it is still of consequence to direct the reader’s attention, in order that he may be guided in the discharge of that duty, so as to make it more worthy of his character as a Christian benefactor, and more extensively useful to those for whose advantage he performs it. Various errors, notional and practical, prevail concerning it, which tend very much, either to hinder the good that *may* be done, or to make the good that is actually done less productive of credit to its authors, and of benefit to its objects, than it would otherwise be ;—and at the removal or correction of

these errors, we shall principally aim, in the remainder of this prefatory discourse.

1. Some people have set up an unfounded and unfortunate distinction between doing justice and doing good, by which the obligation of the one is made peremptory, and that of the other is made optional. They speak of the former as a *perfect*, and of the latter as an *imperfect* obligation. They mean by this, that it is necessary for them to be honest, but that it is a matter of free choice whether they shall be charitable. And while they not unfrequently reduce their theory to practice, it is owing, in a great measure, to the currency which the theory has obtained, that the practice of withholding kindness, even where its exercise is most urgently required, so generally prevails. We observe many persons taking great merit to themselves when they perform a *benevolent* action, whereas they would be ashamed to receive praise for doing what was nothing more than *equitable*. We sometimes see them, in a fit of resentment or of caprice, turning a deaf ear to the most imperious call of distress, without seeming to think, that, in doing so, they are violating any moral duty. And we sometimes see them habitually addicted to the pursuits of avarice, or stinted, beyond all the bounds of decency, in their usefulness and their charities to mankind,—and all the while flattering themselves, that, being sober, and honest, and peaceable, and, as they imagine, pious, they have all the qualities that can be strictly demanded of them, and only want that which they are not obliged to possess.

Now, such persons we deem to be greatly mis-

taken, not only in their conduct, which will be generally condemned, but also in the views from which it proceeds, or by which it is influenced, though on this point we do not expect a general coincidence of opinion. It is admitted, that there is a distinction between justice and benevolence. This distinction holds so far, as that the claims of the former, when there is a competition, must be preferred to the claims of the latter; according to the common adage, which is at once agreeable to Scripture, and founded on right reason, that “a man should be just, before he is generous.” And it also holds so far, as that, while human laws can regulate the operations of justice, it is impossible for them to extend their authority, in the same way, or in the same measure, to the exercise of benevolence. We allow the distinction to go thus far, but no farther. It is not true, that though men are expressly and absolutely bound to be just, so that no considerations can excuse them for being destitute of that attribute, they are yet at perfect liberty to be benevolent or not as they may think proper, and that they may give or withhold their aid, on what occasions, and in what degree they please. This is correct, only on the supposition that they are accountable to none but man. The moment you admit that you are subject and responsible to God—that moment you admit also, that your obligation to be just, is not one whit more clear and binding, than is your obligation to be benevolent; for both virtues are the subject of his special commandment.

In the actual display of your benevolence, indeed, a great deal must, of course, and from the

very nature of the thing, be left to your own discretion: but it is a discretion, in the exercise of which you must be under the guidance of certain fixed principles, and for the use of which you must be answerable to the great Judge of the world. And, after all, with respect to this very discretion, there is not so much contrariety between justice and benevolence, as some may imagine. When claims are made upon your justice, by those to whom you are indebted, you employ your judgment and your means of research, in order to ascertain that their claims are correct and lawful; and it is only after a satisfactory determination of this point, that you proceed to give them what you have found to be strictly due. Now, we are not aware of any mighty difference in the case of claims that are made upon your benevolence. It is not required that you should fulfil these, without being previously convinced, by inquiry and prudent consideration, that they are such as are entitled to your attention. You are not only free, but it is expedient and proper for you, to see your way clearly through the impositions that may be practised upon you, and the injudicious or extravagant applications that may be addressed to your humane feelings; and then, setting these aside, you come to a discreet settlement in your minds, as to all that is needed on the one hand, and as to all that you can bestow in relief on the other. But what we maintain is this, that, having come to this discreet settlement in your own minds, it is no longer a matter of hesitation or of self-will how you shall proceed to act. The duty becomes quite plain and indisputable. A voice

from heaven enjoins you to do good—to give as you have received—to “sow bountifully that you may reap bountifully.” The opportunity of obeying that voice is set before you;—the ability to obey it is conferred upon you. And though no human tribunal can call you to account for rebelling against it, yet, at the tribunal of God, you must reckon with the authority of God, for refusing to obtemper his behests, and will find, that, in his holy judgment, there was as little of the true Christian in withstanding the appeals of benevolence, as there was in resisting the demands of justice.

This is put beyond all doubt, by the instructions of that sacred volume which God has given to direct us, not how we *may*, but how we *must* act as his servants and people. In it, the duty of being benevolent is presented to us in a variety of aspects, and through the medium of many illustrations: but it is uniformly held forth in such a light, as to show us that a faithful and diligent performance of it is indispensably requisite. It is a leading commandment of the law—“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” It is a precept which runs through the whole of the Gospel, that we “be kind one to another,” and “do good to all men as we have opportunity.” It is made the test of our being Christ’s disciples, that we “have love one to another.” It is the prominent lesson taught by his example, that he “went about doing good.” It is the proof of our belonging to God’s family, that we “love our enemies, bless them that curse us, and do good to them that hate us.” And it is according as we have, or have not, “fed the hungry,” and

“ clothed the naked,” and “ visited the sick,” and engaged in similar works of mercy, that we shall be sentenced at last to “ depart into everlasting fire,” or to “ inherit the kingdom” of heaven. When we consider these things, and all the other great and important things that are said of charity in the book of inspiration, it is but trifling with the truth to talk of any imperfection being attached to the obligation of benevolence. And it is worse than trifling with the truth, for any one who professes belief in the Bible, to neglect the cultivation of that grace, when urged to it by such high sanctions, and such powerful motives, and to shelter themselves under the vain pretext that no legal enactment can either compel them to do good to others, or define the breadth and the length of the charity which they may gratuitously show.

Now, my Christian friend, let me ask you if you have on any occasion denied assistance to the needy, when you were able to give it, merely because the rejected applicant could not get redress in a court of law or of equity? Remember, then, that though you were *right* in thinking that no force could be employed to extort from you what you refused to give willingly, or to give at all, and that it was wise to leave the matter in this unregulated shape, you were as unquestionably *wrong* in thinking, that in using your freedom as you did, you used it innocently, or used it well. You forgot that there is an authority in heaven paramount to all authority upon earth—that this authority does, both in the most peremptory and in the most tender way, enjoin you to do good as you have opportunity—that it has

appointed a day of reckoning for you, and that on that day you must account, in an especial manner, for the treatment you have given to the poor and destitute. And you showed by this failure in your benevolence, that if the claimant on your bounty had appeared before you in the character of a claimant on your justice, backed by no positive law, and by no civil power or penalties, he would not have been more successful in obtaining what he demanded as a matter of right, than he was in getting what he supplicated as a token of mercy. In this instance, had you looked more to Christian principle, than to political economy—and more to the example of your Saviour, than to the selfish maxims and practices of worldly men—and more to the liberty which God has given you by the Gospel, to abound in good works, than to the liberty which men have left you to abstain from them,—you would not have sent away the unhappy brother who asked from you the meat that was necessary to sustain his body, or the instruction that was necessary to nourish his soul, and congratulated yourselves that you had preserved untouched your privilege of withholding help from the desolate suppliant, though, in the assertion of that privilege, you had allowed him to starve for want of bread, or to perish for lack of knowledge. But such having been your conduct, and that implying in it a forgetfulness or disregard of the obligation under which Christianity has laid you to be benevolent or to do good, you were guilty of a great sin. Repent, then, of that sin, for which, in the name of our divine Master, and for your correction, we administer this reproof; and “go, and sin no more, lest a worse

thing befall you." But even though your memory does not recall any particular instance in which you literally acted as we have supposed, still, if your general views be as we have alleged, it is impossible but they must have had some influence on your social deportment; and, if you continue to hold them, they must, of necessity, be injurious to your character and to your doings as lovers of your kind. See, therefore, that you discard them. Embrace the holier and the better views that are enforced on you by the blessed Gospel. Consider, that it is as essential for you, in your Christian capacity, to be benevolent, as it is for you to be just. And often meditate on the various circumstances set before you, as constituting that obligation, in order that you may feel it habitually and strongly, and have your deportment adorned with all the beauties of charity and mercy.

2. It is a very common, but a very false maxim, that if we do good, it is of little or no moment from what motives we do it. This maxim is too generally adopted throughout the whole range of moral and religious duty. But we are particularly liable to be misled by it in the exercises of benevolence. Acts of kindness are of so amiable a nature, and so engaging an aspect; their effects are often so important and so striking; they frequently call forth so much gratitude from those on whom they are wrought, and so much admiration from those by whom they are witnessed—that we are apt to be contented with the bare performance of them, to set them down as quite sufficient in themselves, and never to think of inquiring into the reasons and

principles from which they have proceeded. And we congratulate ourselves, and are applauded by others, merely because we have done many things which are profitable to men, and although not one of them can be said to have originated in any piety of feeling or in any purity of intention.

This is a sort of mechanical view of the subject. It has no relation to us as rational and accountable beings. It degrades the physician to a level with the medicine by which he cures his patient. It gives no more praise to the benefactor himself, than to the bread with which he feeds the hungry, and the garments with which he covers the naked. Nay, it confounds the distinctions of character, and makes the only distinctions to be those of outward condition,—conferring the praise of benevolence on the rich man, because he can give much relief to the distressed, and withholding it from the poor man, because he can give none. It is doubtless true, that the alms which we bestow will support the poor, whether the bestowal of them has been prompted by a good feeling or by a bad one. But when speaking of those actions which compose the Christian character, which our divine Ruler requires of us, and for which we are to be responsible to him at last, we must look, not to effects and consequences only, but also to principles and motives; we must take the moral, not the physical view of the subject; we must not so much consider the assistance we have actually imparted, as we must examine the state of mind under whose influence we imparted it. There is not a position in moral science, as taught in the Bible, and recognised by all enlightened men, more

indubitable or better established than this. We know what our Saviour said of the Pharisees, who gave alms that they might be seen and have glory of the world. Their alms, as to effect, were just as valuable and useful as the alms of holier men; and yet he condemned them for their almsgiving, as if it had been a sin, just because it had no counterpart in the affections of the heart. We know what the apostle Paul affirms of those beneficent deeds which do not flow from corresponding sentiments: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." And we know what we ourselves would think, were we to discover that the man to whom we had been indebted for any boon, had communicated it merely to serve some selfish or some wicked purpose of his own. We might be the better of his aid, but we could have no admiration of his virtue. And, while we would be thankful that he had been made instrumental in doing us good, we could not forbear reprobating him for his pretended kindness and his detected hypocrisy.

It will follow, indeed, that few, comparatively speaking, of those who are usually accounted benevolent, possess that character in its true and scriptural import; and that in the good which the really benevolent do, there will be no inconsiderable portion of alloy to debase its excellence and its worth. But the inference, though humbling to some, and mortifying to many, is yet instructive, and ought to awaken serious concern and self-examination. For amidst our benevolent works, let them be as numerous and as splendid as they may, it is neither

wise, nor holy, nor safe to forget, that while we are the subjects of God's government, and accountable to him for all our ways, he looks not merely to the outward deportment—that he is not satisfied with mere bodily service, however active and efficient—that he requires the homage and obedience of the heart—and that he will reject as a vain oblation every thing we say, and every thing we do, which does not emanate from the views and dispositions of “a right and sanctified spirit.” If our doing good be merely to attract the notice, and gain the approbation of perishing man; if it be to secure for ourselves a reputation as empty, as those by whom it is awarded are erring and corrupt; if it be to promote our acquisition of worldly patronage and secular gain; if it be to accomplish, more easily and smoothly than we could otherwise do, some base or unworthy purpose; if it be to comply with the prevalent and transitory fashion of the day, which, like other fashions, looks away from God and bows to the caprice of mortals; if it be to make atonement for a course of avarice, or for deeds of cruelty in our past life, which, with all our other demerit, can be atoned for only by the blood of Christ; if it be to impose ungenerously and selfishly a debt of gratitude on the objects of our bounty, which we are to exact as soon as our interest or our humour shall dictate; if it be to please ourselves with the affectation of a sensibility which we are conscious of not possessing, or to get up a story of romantic distress, and of romantic benevolence, with the rehearsal of which we may flatter our own vanity, and awaken the sympathies of our friends and acquaintances;—if it be for such ends as

these that we are kind to the unfortunate and the afflicted,—the unfortunate and the afflicted may be bettered indeed by our interposition in their behalf, and may celebrate us in strains of thanksgiving which possess the sincerity of which the benefit is destitute; but all this will be of no avail in the eye, and at the bar of the Almighty, by whom our actions and our motives are viewed in inseparable connection; who will decide our fate, as he will judge of our character, not by the complexion of the former, but by the spirit of the latter; and who will accept of none of our services, whether rendered to himself or to our fellow-men, which do not bear a submissive reference to his will, and issue from “a clean heart” and heaven-taught principles.

The apostle Paul sets before us the true account of the matter, when he speaks of “charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.” We cannot do good as it ought to be done—our benevolence will neither be accepted of God, nor form any qualification for heaven, unless it be the operation and acting of a renewed mind, such as is here described. It must be the offspring of a heart, purified from worldly and sinful passions—of a conscience that can humbly appeal to him who “tries the reins” for the sincerity of what is said, and the uprightness of what is done for the welfare of others—and of a faith which relies with unaffected simplicity and earnestness on the redeeming mercy of Jesus Christ, which submits implicitly to his precepts, which follows the pattern of his life, and which realizes the judgment he has foretold, and the immortality he has promised. When he went about

doing good, nothing that was sinister attached to any part of his beneficent career. There was no mixture of selfishness or of vain-glory in the least or in the greatest of his works of mercy. All his conduct, whether its aspect was towards the temporal or towards the spiritual benefit of those upon whom he lavished his kindness, was animated by ardent piety to God, and deep-felt compassion for men. And in every effort that we make to be useful to our brethren, we must “go and do likewise;” and strive, both as to the labours and the motives of our benevolence, to “have the same mind in us which was in Christ, and to walk even as he also walked.”

It is in this way only that we can do justice to the benevolent, whatever their outward circumstances may be. When the mere act of giving money, or of making personal efforts, or of contributing in any similar mode to the benefit of others, is taken as the test of real charity, then real charity is no longer an attribute of character but of condition;—he who can do little or nothing, because providence has placed him in a state of poverty, is incapable of cultivating love: and he only can possess that grace, who has the treasures of opulence at his disposal. Nothing, however, can be farther from the truth, more opposite to right reason, or more contradictory to all that Scripture tells us on this subject. Real charity resides in the temper and habit of the soul; and, though its exhibition must depend on external means, its existence may be as certain, and its energy as great, and its reward as precious, when it is accompanied with indigence, as when it has all the machinery of power and wealth to work with. The

widow's mite, and the disciple's cup of cold water, given "as to the Lord, and not unto men," are as "precious in the sight of God," and as sure of recompense, as are the costliest gifts and most noble bequeathments of the rich. And when the latter flow from vanity, or from a compromise with conscience, or from any thing but the "liberal heart," then there is no comparison at all between the two cases, for the one has but the appearance and the form, while the other has all the spirit and the power of charity.

Nor should it escape our notice, that as a devout attention to the nature of those principles and motives by which we are governed in the exercise of our benevolence, is absolutely necessary in order to constitute it a part of our Christian character, and to render it the subject of a safe responsibility, so our doing good from right principles and motives, is the only adequate security that we have for doing good with vigour, activity, and perseverance. Let the ostentatious alms-giver be removed from the gaze of the multitude—let him be so situated, that few or none can observe whether he is liberal or niggardly—let such secrecy be imposed on his movements, as that his "left hand shall scarcely know what his right hand doeth;"—and immediately the fountain of his charities is dried up, or it sends forth such a scanty stream, as to be at once imperceptible and useless. Let the man who is bountiful, with the view of acquiring worldly patronage, and gathering filthy lucre, find that his bounties will no longer advance his secular interest;—and if he does not become oppressive and cruel, where he formerly showed kindness, we shall see him degenerating into cold indifference, or

giving with a reluctant and parsimonious hand. And let him who is active, and ardent, and generous in conveying instruction to ignorant children, and putting Bibles into the hands of ignorant adults, because such exercises of spiritual compassion have come into vogue among the great and the noble of the land, discover that these exemplars of his benevolence begin to relax in their exertions, or to withdraw their support;—and he soon ceases to engage in what he once seemed to delight in, and leaves, without a sigh, the young and the old equally to perish for lack of knowledge. The considerations which influence these persons, and all others who are like-minded, are so variable in their nature—so dependent on external circumstances—so much connected with transient emotions,—that no confidence can be placed either in the abundance or in the perpetuity of those charitable doings which owe their birth to them. But the considerations which lead the true Christian to do good may be trusted in, as at once powerful and permanent. A sense of duty, derived from the paramount and immutable authority of God—gratitude to the Saviour for mercies that are inestimable and everlasting—enlightened views of mankind afforded by the volume of divine revelation, and compassionate feelings for their present and future happiness, awakened by the Spirit of love—a solemn anticipation of the reckoning which Christ will enter into at the last day, for the treatment which is here given to his poor members—and the hope of dwelling for ever in that blessed region for whose happiness charity is the chief preparation, as it will be one fertile source of it,—

these are the principles which actuate a genuine believer in his benevolent practice; and whosoever is impelled and regulated by such principles, must do good zealously, diligently, and continually. He will do good whether the admiring world look at him or not. He will do good in spite of opposition, and obloquy, and ingratitude. He will do good as often as occasion presents itself, and as long as the talent is intrusted with him. And, therefore, those are the best friends of philanthropy, who, instead of being contented with works of charity, to whatever motives they may be traced, are anxious to have the motives pure, and holy, and godlike; as those are the best philanthropists themselves, who most nearly resemble the Saviour, not only in his works of charity, but also in the spirit and the temper with which he performed them.

3. It seems to be the opinion of some, that, while it is incumbent on us to do good, it is in many cases not merely allowable, but positively a duty to accomplish our object even at the expense of moral virtue. Accordingly, they will not scruple much to commit a fraud, or to utter a falsehood, if that be necessary, for the more easy, or the more speedy attainment of their benevolent end. And, in particular instances, they have been known to violate the principles, not only of justice, but of humanity itself, in order to confer some signal favour on the persons whom they were desirous to assist or to protect.

This great practical error may be traced to that radical defect which was considered in the last particular we discussed. If a person's heart is not renewed, and under the habitual government of worthy

motives, he must, almost of necessity, fall into many inconsistencies of outward conduct. He will just now perform an action which is agreeable to the divine law, and immediately after he will perpetrate an action which is opposed to the divine law, and he will do both with equal freedom and deliberation. Nay, as in the instance under review, he will aim at the achievement of what is in itself most laudable, by means which involve criminality and guilt; and thus at the same time, and in the same overt act, he will be chargeable with obeying, and with disobeying the will of heaven. And he is betrayed into such palpable contradictions just because he is still under the dominion of ungodliness, and is consequently the sport of every passion, and the prey of every temptation, whether the doings to which these prompt him are in their own nature right or wrong. Whereas, had there been a renovation of the inner man, and had he resolved to do good under the impulse and direction of the new spirit which had acquired the ascendancy in his mind, that same spirit would have prevented him from prosecuting his views in any manner which implied the commission of sin, and, indeed, would have rendered his whole character one undivided tribute of homage and obedience to the authority of God. So true is it, in the quaint language of MATHER, that “the *first born* of all devices to do good, is in being *born again*.”

In the conduct of Christ we find nothing to countenance the maxim, that “the end sanctifies the means.” The testimony given to him is, that “he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” And this applies to every the minutest

portion of his character, and is intended to banish even the least suspicion from our minds of his having, on any occasion, or in any degree, deviated from the path of perfect purity and rectitude. Of him it is said emphatically, that he “went about doing good.” This was the single object of his ambition—the sole business of his life—the “one thing,” which he pursued with ceaseless diligence, and unconquerable zeal. And had it been competent for him as an ensample to his people, to promote his benevolent work by any violation of the moral law, so numerous were the opportunities, and so powerful were the temptations which he had to do this, that instances of it must have occurred in the course of his labours. Yet it does not appear that he ever sacrificed one personal obligation, in order to confer the highest boon, or to accomplish the most generous purpose. In all things, and at all times, he was “holy, and harmless, and undefiled,”—incessantly employed in the operations of kindness, but maintaining in every one of them a strict and incorruptible integrity. Even in those few cases which look like a departure from this rule, there is nothing incompatible with “a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men.” He was accused of breaking the fourth commandment, because he allowed his disciples to “pluck the ears of corn,” and did himself heal “a man which had his hand withered,” on the Sabbath day. But allowing to this charge all the weight which his enemies gave it, he vindicated himself by a most satisfactory and triumphant explanation of the nature and purposes of that institution, and by proving the subordination of its peculiar

sanctity to the claims of necessity and mercy. And when, in disposing of the unclean spirits, from whose domineering and outrageous influence he had compassionately delivered a poor unhappy man, he suffered them to enter into the herd of swine, so that when these animals perished in the sea, the property of their owners was destroyed,—this does not seem to have been done so much for the purpose of effectuating the cure of the demoniac, as to inflict a punishment, or to send a warning, where unbelief, and impenitence, and spiritual insensibility prevailed; and at any rate the double miracle which was thus performed, showed that Christ being “the great power of God,” was entitled to deprive the Gadarenes of their possessions, if his administration required it, and able, if divine wisdom should see meet, to make ample compensation for what had been taken away.

The whole strain of the Scriptures corresponds on this point with the example of Christ. Their great and uniform design is to make us holy. They therefore hold out sin, as in every form and in every degree, at all times and in all circumstances, that which we must cordially hate and scrupulously avoid. And it would be to stultify their own declarations, and to defeat their own purpose, were they on any ground whatever to sanction the commission of it. Their righteous Author commands us expressly to do good; and it is evidently both required and expected of us, that in obeying that commandment, we should be ready to labour much, and to risk much, and to suffer much. Such sacrifices are necessary to give full proof of our charitable feelings, and full effect to our charitable exertions. But we

never read of any thing in the way of encouragement or permission to make a sacrifice of the slightest moral obligation, even though it were essential for conferring the highest possible benefit on mankind. Indeed it is most absurd and inadmissible to suppose that He who is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity," and whose mercy and whose justice are alike employed to prevent us from indulging in it, should yet, when he commands us to do good, leave us at liberty, or make it indispensable for us, to render submission to him in that particular, by the help of an act of rebellion against his own government. And if in any one thing more than in another, he is to be understood as demanding of us a rigid abstinence from transgression, it must be when he is enjoining us to lend our aid to our brethren, with the view of making them holy and happy as his subjects upon earth, and preparing them for the immaculate joys of his presence in heaven. Very important is the work of benevolence; and if we engage in it heartily and actively, it cannot be without its fruits in the well-being of those in whose behalf it is carried on, and without its recompense to us who are faithful to perform it. But surely this recompense cannot belong to what implies in it an act of known and wilful disobedience to Him by whom it is to be bestowed; and these fruits can never depend for their production upon resistance to that will which "ruleth over all," and which forbids us "to do evil," as expressly as it commands us to "do good." The Supreme Being, according to those delineations of his character, and those enactments of his authority, which are set before us in the Bible, is too holy to sanction any

delinquency, for any purpose, or in any case; and he is too wise to stand in need of such a mode of cherishing the sympathy, and securing the assistance of man to man. The first thing which he exacts from us is, that we be personally pure and virtuous, and thus resemble himself with whom “there is no unrighteousness” at all. This is our primary and paramount concern as responsible agents. And it must never be lost sight of, whether we be tempted by the hope of aggrandizing ourselves, or allured by the prospect of helping our brethren. It is recorded of Job, that he reprov’d his friends because they “spoke wickedly and deceitfully for God;”* and if it was wrong to act thus for the divine glory, it must be at least equally wrong to do it for the sake of human advantage. The Psalmist describes a good man as keeping his oath, even though he had sworn to his own hurt;† and surely if you are bound to keep your oath, at the expense of your own interests, I am not entitled to break mine, that I may advance the interests of my neighbour or my friend. And when certain persons had represented the Apostle Paul and his fellow Christians as saying, “Let us do evil that good may come,”‡ he not only spurned away the allegation from him as a foul slander, but entered his solemn protest against the principle imputed to him, applied though it might be to the display of God’s perfections in the justification of sinners, declared all who held and acted upon it to be condemned, and pronounced their “condemnation to be just.”

* Job xiii. 7.

† Psalm xv. 4.

‡ Rom. iii. 8.

Let it not be forgotten, then, that this condemnation lies upon those who, to forward the prosperity and raise the reputation of any one to whom they are attached, scruple not to trample on the rights, or to injure the good name of such as stand in the way; and upon those who, that they may be largely beneficent to the needy or the ignorant, withhold payment of the debts which they have contracted, and subject the family of the industrious tradesman to suffering or to want; and upon those who, that strangers and foreigners may enjoy a liberal share of their bounty, neglect to make that provision for their neighbours, their kindred, and their own children, which nature and religion demand of them; and upon those who, in consulting the safety or the advancement of others, boldly utter the language of falsehood, or cunningly practise the arts of deceit; and upon those who, to decoy the uninstructed and the prejudiced into a perusal of the Bible, would put into their hands, as the word of God, that which they know to be contrary to the word of God; and upon those who, for the purpose of giving a wider dissemination to sacred truth, hesitate not to circulate along with it, errors the most opposite to their own views, and the most dangerous to the souls of men. In all these instances, and in every instance of a similar kind, there is either a portion of disregard for the holiness of God, as if he could be pleased with sin, or indifferent to it, because it had been made an instrument of charity; or there is a portion of distrust in the providence of God, as if one class of his creatures could not prosper and be happy, without another class of them involving themselves in guilt.

And while the divine excellence is in this manner impeached by the error against which we are contending, a door is opened for the perpetration of every crime which may be made the occasion of good; and benevolence, thus associated, and thus manifested, not only ceases to be a virtue, but partakes of the iniquity for which it is made a pretext, and excludes those who practise it from the kingdom of heaven, as certainly, at least, as it guides to the kingdom of heaven those who are made to partake of its benefits.

4. We come now to make a few remarks on what may be called the economy of benevolence,—a subject which is greatly neglected and greatly misunderstood, but which is of much importance, and deserving of a far minuter and more detailed consideration than we can here afford to give it.

As there are some who do good without regarding the motives by which they are actuated, so there are others who do good without paying any adequate attention to the efficiency of the measures which they employ. In the former we observe a want of principle—in the latter we discover a want of wisdom. And though the want of principle renders such as are distinguished by it more obnoxious to censure and reproach, it is not to be concealed, that the want of wisdom mars, in almost an equal degree, the benevolence of those to whom unfortunately it attaches. Evident as it is, that if we are sincere in our desires and our endeavours to do good, this sincerity will make us desire and endeavour to do as much good as possible, it is no less evident, that the greatest possible good is not to be attained by vague wishes,

by undigested plans, by random efforts. Every one who is at all acquainted with the nature of charity—the variety of character and circumstances which it has to deal with—the multiplicity of forms which, in correspondence with these, it is called to assume—the different kinds of machinery with which it has to operate upon its objects—and the disappointments, provocations, and discouragements it has to encounter in its exercise—must be sensible that much thought, much consideration, much inquiry, much discretion, and much patience, are necessary in order to its “having its perfect work.” In all other cases we are careful to accommodate our means to our end; not merely by applying the kind of means that we know to be best adapted to the end at which we aim, but by using the means in such a skilful and energetic way as to gain the end most effectually, in a manner consistent with the security of other objects not less precious, and without the admixture of any counteracting or counterbalancing evils. And unquestionably in the case of “doing good,” this rule is to be observed with fully as much strictness and care as in any other department of human activity. The mischievous effects of disregarding it must have frequently occurred to our notice. How often have we seen the man of benevolence wasting his resources on an object which a little examination would have shown to be impracticable, and thus disqualifying himself from gaining one that was within his reach! How often have we seen him employing methods for promoting his philanthropic purposes, which his own reflection, had he given it, or the good counsel of others, had

he asked it, would have speedily satisfied him were utterly unsuitable and unavailing; and thus losing at once the benefit he proposed to confer, and the time and the exertions, which, if better directed, would have enabled him to secure it! How often have we seen him frittering away his attention, and his talents, and his activities, on such a multitude of different schemes, as nothing but thoughtlessness could hinder him from seeing to be quite beyond the grasp of an individual, and in this way casting from him advantages which would have made him a distinguished blessing in any one channel by which he might have chosen to communicate his kindness! And how often have we seen him, even though competent to a great diversity of charitable doings, yet so heedless with regard to what he had undertaken, so rash in one thing and so remiss in another, so little mindful of suiting his efforts to his exigencies, so ignorant of the influence of circumstances, so unprepared for difficulties and crosses and trials, and so lost amidst the conflicting demands of those multitudinous and ill-assorted engagements in which he had involved himself, that many things were but imperfectly done, and many things altogether neglected,—that fruitless bustle was frequently all that he could show for real usefulness,—and that, on the whole, little perceptible good was effected, in comparison of what his dispositions induced him to attempt, and his capabilities and enterprizes would have led us to anticipate!

Now, to provide against such distressing failures, it is quite necessary that we bring our reason more into play—that we study our subject with greater

accuracy and solicitude—that we acquire all the information respecting it that can be obtained—and that we prepare ourselves for the work of charity, as we would prepare for any other work, requiring exact knowledge, sound views, mature deliberation, and prudent management. We should take a correct survey of the field of benevolence on which we are called to labour; we should consider well the various and contending claims that may be made upon us for assistance; we should try to estimate the extent of our outward means, and the peculiar fitness of our personal talents and capacities; we should endeavour to draw the line within which we need not confine ourselves, and the line beyond which it would be wrong or foolish to venture; we should be aware of the facilities which are afforded by our professional employments, our local situation, our general influence; we should ascertain the cases in which individual must give place to associated labour; we should settle in our minds certain fixed maxims by which we are to be guided in our plans and movements; we should determine what it will be best for us to do, how much in any given circumstances we can probably achieve, where, and in what way, and on what occasions, we can be truly and can be most useful;—and thus furnished, we may go forth to our “labours of love,” with the hope of doing as much good as the opportunities that present themselves will admit of, and as is consistent with that imperfection which adheres to the best of our schemes, and the most vigorous of our performances. We shall be seldomer disappointed by failure; we shall have less cause to regret the misapplication of

time, and means, and faculties; we shall have fewer grounds of self-reproach for going wrong, by not being careful to go right, and for missing the object, which less feeling and more discretion would have enabled us to attain.

It is not meant, by all this, that we should never offer to do good till we have made a minute inquiry, and given a lengthened consideration, and come to a logical or mercantile conclusion, concerning the particular case that has been brought before us. Such a cold, elaborate, constant calculation, would operate like a freezing process upon our benevolence; the current of our benevolence would be stopped, and its warmth expelled; and before it had time to recover what it had thus lost, the misery that required our aid may have proved fatal, or our power of removing it become unavailing. We would not have it forgotten, that charity is an affection of the heart, and not a faculty of the understanding; and that therefore it must be indulged in a freedom and a forthcoming which are not compatible with rigid computations, nice adjustments, and perpetual checks. It must take the lead in all benevolent operations; it must be paramount in every act of kindness; and in cases of urgent danger or distress, it must be allowed to express itself, and display its energies, without waiting for any other dictate, or any other guidance, than what it derives from the instinct which gives it birth, or the inspiration which breathes upon it from heaven. But it is nevertheless true, that while charity is an affection of the heart, that heart beats in the bosom of a rational being; and it would ill become us, who are endowed with such a nature, not to

make one department of it subservient to another, and to put our charity so far under the control and direction of our reason, as to render it a more steady, a more painstaking, a more efficient, and a not less tender and zealous friend of humanity, than it could possibly be, if left to its own ungoverned sensibilities. This is all that we argue for; and if the argument is not only admitted, but is allowed to have a practical and habitual influence, philanthropy gains by it to an inconceivable degree.

Were it necessary to get any authoritative sanction for the views we have been inculcating, we might refer you to the example of Christ. No one can doubt the intensity of his love to men; and yet, from first to last, he was regulated in the expression of it by the maxims of wisdom. When, under its impulse, he came into the world, he did not come as if *any time* would have answered for his advent; but he came at the time which, by the arrangements of Providence, was the most seasonable that could be chosen. And he did not come as if *any place* would have suited his appearance and his work; but he came to the place which, from the character of the people that dwelt in it, and of the dispensation that prevailed in it, was the fittest for the fulfilment of his gracious designs. He did not rashly and unadvisedly enter upon that career of mercy which he afterwards pursued with so much glory to God and so much benefit to man; but he spent many years in meditating upon it, and in preparing himself for it. He did not waste his miraculous power, by performing his works of wonder and compassion, wherever and whenever he was asked to do so, either by a

malignant curiosity, or by unfeigned distress; he gave these manifestations of his divinity and his grace, only on such occasions as promised to answer the beneficent ends which he then contemplated. He did not preach and rebuke without regard to the temper and character of his audience, and to the special circumstances in which he himself was placed; but he spoke, or he was silent, in obedience to the suggestions of a prudence, which was as far removed from recklessness on the one hand, as it was from humour and caprice on the other. He did not heedlessly and causelessly expose his life to danger, in the course of his benevolent itinerancy through the land of Judea; but, taking a prospective view of what he had ultimately to suffer in behalf of those whom he had come to save, he sometimes withdrew himself from the presence and the malice of his enemies, and thus took care that his death should not be premature for the redemption of the world. In short, in tracing the footsteps of Christ through the whole course of his merciful and generous enterprise, you will find every one of them marked by a wise and premeditated adaptation to the great purposes which his mission was intended to subserve. He always did what was best fitted either to promote the beneficent object that was immediately before him, or to accomplish the grand and ultimate purpose for which his benevolence had prompted him to become incarnate. Charity beams through every action of his life; but his charity is uniformly accompanied with the exercise of that wisdom which is profitable to direct. We never see it, even in its most ardent moods, disdaining or despising the government of wisdom,

but on the contrary, calling in its aid, and submitting to its guidance, as often as there is a kind word to be spoken, or a kind deed to be performed; and, instead of being cramped by its interference, becoming on that very account more efficient in its exertions, and more successful in its results.

We quote the example of Christ, chiefly to protect us against the reproaches of those soft-hearted or warm-blooded philanthropists, whose sympathies are raised by the least appearance of suffering, who enter at once into every scheme of mercy that is proposed to them, who gratify their compassionate feelings by doing or giving, without reflection, what is merely asked, and may not be deserved; who applaud as the only true lovers of their species such as are equally unthinking and indiscriminate in alms-deeds with themselves, and who stigmatise us as unsusceptible of kind sentiment, or as enemies to the poor and needy, because we often hesitate, and sometimes withhold, and because we carry with us through the whole range of our charities, spiritual and temporal, the maxims of a rational as well as a liberal policy. To persons of this description we may hold up the conduct of the Saviour, as justifying what they are so apt to condemn; and, under the shelter of its high authority, we may read them lessons on the economy of benevolence in relation to every particular exercise of that virtue in which they may be accustomed or disposed to indulge.

If they are engaged in the laudable practice of giving alms to the poor, we would say to them, "Certainly 'give alms of such things as ye have;' but see that your gifts be not conferred on such as have

the pretence and the appearance, but not the reality of want to recommend them, and thus bestow upon the undeserving, what should have rewarded the meritorious and relieved the needy. And when, by your mode of rendering assistance, you can help two families in place of one, or can produce the effect by quickening their own industry, and calling forth their own resources instead of holding out a bounty to their idleness and improvidence, or can accomplish your object in such a way as to guard your liberality against abuse, and prevent the indigence from recurring, and convert both the evil and its remedy into an instrument of spiritual benefit to those whom you are aiding;—then, unquestionably, give that mode the preference, and comfort yourselves with the assurance, that though there may be as little, or even less of the eclat of lavishing money, there is far more of the virtue of doing good.”

If they are employing themselves in imparting education to the young, we would say to them, “ You can scarcely be better occupied ; but supposing that if by properly husbanding, and judiciously expending your funds, you can instruct a hundred in room of fifty; that you can get the pupils taught to be sound thinkers as well as good readers, and to acquire the principles and sentiments of Christianity as well as the accomplishments of arithmetic and penmanship ; and that while you prepare the children for acting a useful, and an honourable, and a religious part in the after period of their existence, you also contrive to keep up the independent spirit, and improve the moral character of their parents—would not you choose to have the schools that you estab-

lish and patronize, distinguished by these qualities, and attended with these consequences, rather than to see them, on account of your carelessness, few in number, ill attended, worse conducted, and with the imposing name of seminaries of knowledge or of tuition, productive of no substantial advantage either to the young or to the old of your neighbourhood? You cannot hesitate to answer in the affirmative; and this is really nothing more nor less than what we would now inculcate.”

If they think proper, or are kind enough to reprove the wicked and to warn the careless with whom they happen to come in contact, we would say to them, “Your intention doubtless is praiseworthy, and much benefit has often accrued from such admonitions; but we advise you to exercise caution in this display of your benevolence also, for it has not seldom happened, that harm was done where only good was aimed at, and unless you attend to times and seasons, to places and circumstances, to peculiarities of temper, and to proprieties of speech, then, in place of checking profaneness and vice, or reforming those who are addicted to them, you may, by forgetting your Saviour’s exhortation, which tells you not to “give that which is holy unto the dogs,” nor to “cast your pearls before swine,” confirm the wicked in their wickedness, diminish your own influence, bring discredit upon religion, and cause the “holy name by which you are called to be more blasphemed” than ever.

If they are connected with those who circulate the Holy Scriptures among their fellow-men, we would say to them, “You have a title to be con-

sidered as the noblest of benefactors; but you have no title to despise the counsel which would enable you to perform in that capacity more than you could otherwise do, and to perform it better. And when we ask you, whether you would heap Bibles on those who are indifferent to them, or present them to such as are eagerly thirsting for the gift, and well prepared for profiting by it; and whether you would not rather give them to the inhabitants of your own country, than to the inhabitants of a distant country, if you could not give them to both; and whether you would not put them into the hands of such as would make some sacrifice of pecuniary interest in order to assist in purchasing them, in preference to those, who, though equally able, would only receive them if gratuitously imparted?—when we propose such questions as these, we suggest ideas of which you would do well to take advantage, in your attempts to disseminate the word of God, and, by reducing which to practice, you will merit respect for your understanding, without suffering any loss in the warmth of your piety or in the kindness of your heart.”

Finally, if they are busy and ardent in the missionary cause, in sending devoted men to preach to the Gentiles the glad tidings of salvation, we would say to them, “We admire your zeal and your diligence in this glorious work; we congratulate you on the honourable service you have undertaken, and we would encourage you to persevere and to abound in it. But we do not think that when we urge you to a prudent, and skilful, and economical application of the means with which you are intrusted by your Christian brethren, we say what is either of little

moment, or of inappropriate import. And you must not be surprised that we hold it to be foolish, in reference to your own general views, which are unspeakably excellent, to send upon your errands of mercy, men who are unqualified for doing the work assigned them, and who therefore consume the sinews of your institutions, without achieving any thing to justify the expenditure they cost you, when, for a little more, you might have substituted others, who, clothed in befitting panoply, would have waged successfully your warfare against ignorance and idolatry;—or to plant them in districts where their voice must be like that of one crying in an almost unpeopled wilderness, when there are places, as accessible at least, as these, whose crowded millions hold out a far more inviting prospect, and promise a far richer harvest of converts;—or to assign them their field of labour under the government of an unfriendly despot, (himself perhaps the slave of a jealous and intolerant priesthood,) who has only to utter the decree, and, in a moment, they are banished from his domains, and all their expectations blasted, when they might have been as easily stationed where they would have had equal materials to work upon, and such a civil protection as would have encouraged their toils and secured what they had won;—or to squander away, in providing them with those personal and domiciliary comforts, which no true missionary can grudge to be without, and which often secularise his spirit, while they seem to increase his energy, the many thousands, which would have enabled you to add to their number, and to their fitness, what both in number and in fitness they especially required;—or to occupy

their time in unprofitable conversation with old women, and in equally useless reasonings with old priests, when they ought to have been addressing themselves to the more hopeful task of initiating the young into the elements of literature, impressing their susceptible minds with religious and moral truth, and thus preparing the generations that are to come for that reception of the Gospel, to which in the prejudices and habits of the generation that exists, they will find a mighty obstruction, if not an insuperable bar;—or, in fine, to act with regard to your whole scheme, as if it were only at its commencement, and as if you were merely feeling your way through its untried difficulties, and as if you might on that account be justified in making romantic experiments, and excused for falling into egregious mistakes, when you may be justly expected to walk in the light of a lengthened and instructive experience, and, by the aid of that light, to avoid on the one hand those errors which have caused many of your best-looking enterprizes to terminate in vanity, and on the other hand to pursue those measures which are as much distinguished by the wisdom that guides, as by the zeal which animates them, and by which alone it is, that, through the blessing of the Saviour, our anticipations of a speedy or an effectual spread of his religion can possibly be realized.”

5. We have scarcely left room for saying any thing on what relates to the universality of benevolence; and yet we cannot wholly pass it over without remark.

Benevolence, according to the Gospel view of it,

is quite unlimited in its objects. It not only takes within its range every species of suffering, to which mankind are subject, and every species of benefit of which mankind are capable; but it embraces as those to whom it communicates its blessings, all the members of the human family, without distinction, and without exception. The Christian philanthropist varies the expressions of his kindness, in conformity to the relations in which he stands to them, the characters of which they are possessed, and the circumstances in which they are placed. But towards all of them his sympathies are cherished, and from none of them are his services withheld. And nothing can occur in the case of any individual, wearing the form of man, to justify him in cherishing malice, or in refusing to do good.

This most liberal doctrine stands opposed to the high-sounding and much celebrated, but self-seeking and cruel patriotism of Greece and Rome, which not only had no fellow-feeling with any other people, but systematically trampled on their rights, robbed them of their liberties and their property, and subjected them remorselessly to every severity of treatment, whenever it served to promote their own aggrandizement. It stands opposed to that hard and contracted spirit, by which the Jews of our Saviour's time were actuated in their regards to all who were not of the house of Israel, or who, though of that privileged tribe, had been so unfortunate as to offend or injure them, and which, founded on unwarranted tradition, and imbittered by the depravity which they cherished, made them often relentless to the most needy and miserable

suppliants of their kindness. And it stands opposed to the bigotted maxims, and narrow doings of many among ourselves, who never cast a generous look beyond the little circle in which they move, who provide plentifully for those who immediately depend upon their aid, who will care for a near relative, or for a near neighbour, but are deaf to the cry that reaches them from a more remote claimant, however destitute and afflicted; and who meet every application for the exercise of an enlarged charity, by the maxim, that "Charity begins at home," and show by their practice, that, in their opinion, charity also ends there.

All this is quite away from the teaching of Christianity, and quite at variance with it. Nor, indeed, does it appear, that any thing but Christianity can soften the heart that is so hardened, or break down the barriers which thus confine and repress its best sympathies. But when we examine this dispensation in all its aspects on the duties and happiness of men, we observe it inculcating in every possible way the benevolence which travels round the globe in search of its objects, and overleaps all the obstacles and discouragements which it meets with in its heaven-directed journeyings. Besides giving us a clearer enunciation than we had before, of the truth that God is the Maker and Preserver of us all, it brings to light the still more affecting discovery, that he is the Redeemer of us all, and that the love which he has manifested, and the salvation which he has provided, have respect to men of every kindred, and of every tribe, of every rank, and of every condition, throughout the wide world. And then He points

to this exhibition of the divine character, as furnishing a model for the direction of ours, so that we may "be merciful, as our Father in heaven is merciful." Again, when we look to the conduct of his incarnate Son, whom he sent to die for us, to speak instruction, and to exemplify what he taught, we find that we should neither be submissive to that great Prophet, nor resemble that pattern of all excellence, unless we extended our compassions and our beneficence to every child of mortality whom Providence has placed within our reach, or committed to our protection. Nor is it unworthy of notice that the duty of doing good, in this comprehensive sense, is not merely set before us by the Gospel, in the great principles from which it must emanate, and in the example by which it is recommended, but it is moreover presented in the form of a commandment, authoritatively announced, frequently repeated, earnestly urged, and powerfully sanctioned, so that there is no escaping from the obligation, but by being insensible to the most endearing and instructive manifestations of the divine love, or by being disobedient to the plainest and most solemn enactments of the divine law.

But while Christianity thus breathes in its very spirit, and enjoins in its plainest precepts, and enforces by its most attractive examples, the exercise of good-will and of good offices to all men, it has no affinity to the theory which breaks down all the distinctions arising from relationship, vicinage, religious faith, country, acquaintanceship, and other circumstances of that kind, and teaches us to take within one indiscriminating embrace the whole hu-

man race, and even to abandon the certainty of being useful to the individuals with whom we come in contact, for the purpose of communicating some speculative advantage to our species at large. It is just as remote from such Utopian and impracticable notions, as it is hostile to the other extreme, of limiting all our kindness to those who are beside us, or closely allied to us. It bids us look—not with an equal, but—with a benevolent eye, on all our fellow-creatures. In this, as in every other respect, it adapts itself to our original nature, and to the ties by which we are necessarily united with one another; and, without violating or encroaching on any of the obligations which these impose, it requires us to feel and to act as citizens of the world. According to its primary lessons, we are to love and “provide for our own,” our families, our kindred, our neighbours, our friends, our countrymen; and doing good to these, agreeably to the special and proportional claims that they have upon us, in preference to such as, in the providential arrangements of our lot, are more remotely connected with us, we are then to “do good to all,” with such impartiality, as that there shall be to us “neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free,” and that no distance of place, or difference of colour,—no inferiority of station, or poverty of estate,—no distinction of party, or opposition of interests,—no contrariety of belief, or degradation of character, or rancour of hostility, shall alienate one human being from our kind regards, or prevent us from imparting to him whatever comfort and whatever assistance the necessities of his case may demand.

Dr. COTTON MATHER, the author of the following work, was distinguished for his diligence in "doing good." His views on the subject were sound; his practice corresponded with his opinions and professions; and he has recorded them for the direction and encouragement of others. In his small volume, we recognize the production of a man of learning, of talent, and of true philanthropy; and we discover in it a concise statement of most of those ideas which now prevail on the interesting topic to which it refers, and the germ, as it were, of many of those institutions by which our country is at once blessed and adorned. We do not mean to affirm, that he is right in every sentiment he expresses, or in every advice that he gives. He sometimes errs; but his errors are those of a generous heart, and they are always so much associated with what is substantially excellent and wise, that we speedily forget them, and only remember those sound general principles, and those admirable practical details, which so thoroughly pervade his pages. When he proposes to reward children for committing passages of Scripture to memory, "with silver, or gold, or some good thing," and when he gravely affirms, that every man should give at least a tenth of his income to charitable uses, we are disposed to wonder or to smile at what, after all, is nothing but a mistaken zeal for godliness and good works. But when we find him making this the grand inquiry, "How may I become a blessing to the world?" and, "What may I do that righteousness may dwell on the earth?"—when we find him uttering such a sentence as this, "The slavish

boisterous manner of education too commonly used, I consider as no small article in the wrath and curse of God upon a miserable world;”—and when we find him not only inculcating the great duty of benevolence, but showing how every man, in every situation, may perform it, and applying his general maxims to a multitude of individual cases which are commonly overlooked in our plans and efforts for doing good,—we are strongly impressed with the conviction, that he was a person of singular endowments, that he had a thorough insight into the nature of man, and the interests of society, and that he combined deep piety to God with the most fervent and enlightened charity to his fellow-creatures. His “*ESSAYS TO DO GOOD*,” are worthy of the perusal of every one who would be instructed, and quickened, and animated in the work of beneficence. They have been of great service ever since they were given to the public. The celebrated Franklin avows his obligations to them in strong terms: “If I have been a useful citizen, as you seem to think,” says he, in a letter to the Author’s son, “the public owes the advantage to that book.” Many hints have been borrowed from this book, and embodied in individual efforts, and public institutions, without any acknowledgment. This omission Dr. Mather (had he lived to witness it,) would, we are sure, from the tone and complexion of his character, have overlooked, in the midst of his disinterested satisfaction, that some portion of the object he aimed at had been accomplished. And we have equal confidence, that he would have heartily seconded our desire for more hints still being taken

from it, even though there should be the same neglect of mentioning the source from which they were drawn, and paying that tribute to which the merit of the Author was justly entitled. It is a manual, from which persons of every profession, and in every condition, may derive the greatest advantage in showing "good-will to men." It should find a place in the shelves of every library, or rather on the table of every parlour, in Christendom. And, above all, its contents should be familiar to the minds of all who, whatever their calling may be, whether sacred or secular, would not "run in vain, neither labour in vain," as members of "the household of faith," and of the great family of mankind.

A. T.

Edinburgh, Nov. 1825.



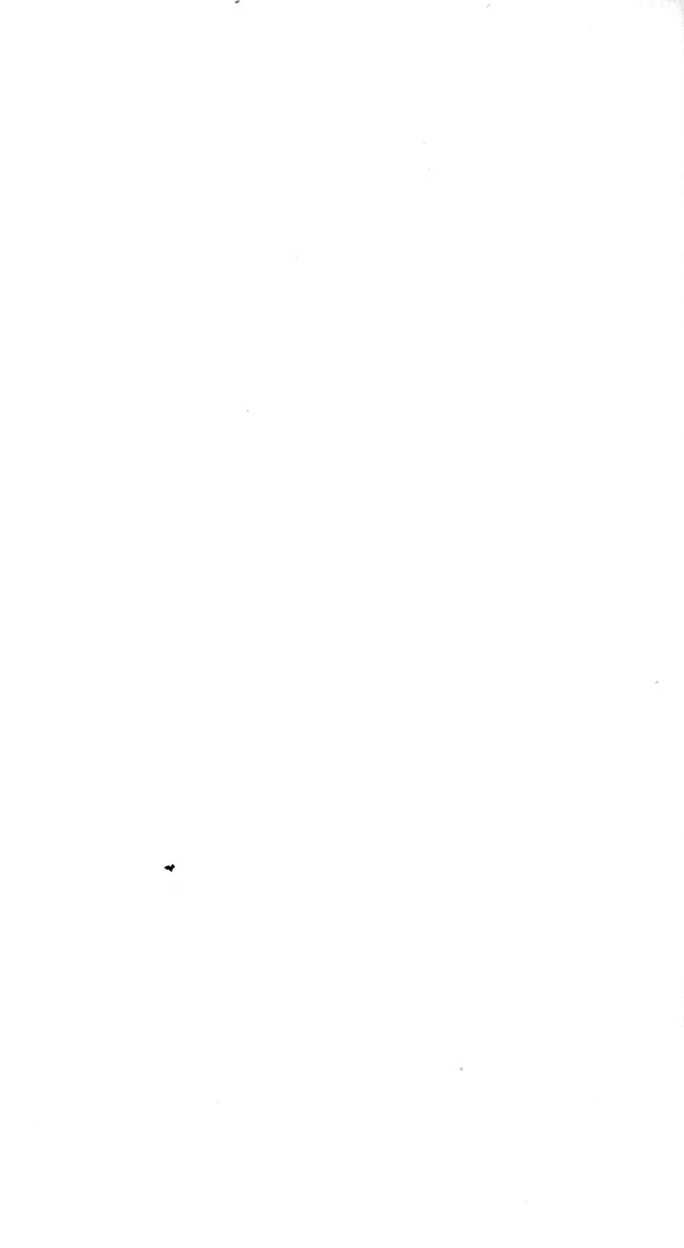
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ESSAYS TO DO GOOD.



P R E F A C E.

AMONG the many customs of the world with which it is almost necessary to comply, this is one—that a book must not appear without a Preface; and this little book willingly submits to the customary ceremony. It comes with a Preface; however, it shall not be one like the gates of Mindus. But there is a greater difficulty in complying with another usage, that of an Epistle Dedicatory. Dedications are become such foolish and fulsome adulations, that they are in a manner useless: frequently they serve no other purpose, than to furnish the critics on “the manners of the age” with matter of ridicule. The excellent Boyle employed but a just expression in saying, “It is almost as much out of fashion in such addresses to omit giving praises, (I may say, unjust ones,) as it is to believe the praises given on such occasions.” Sometimes the authors themselves live to see their own mistakes, and acknowledge them. And Austin makes the flourishes which he had once used in a dedication, an article of his “Retractations;” and Calvin revokes a dedication, because he finds he had made it to an unworthy

person. I may add, that at other times, every one perceives what the authors aim at, and how much they write for themselves, while they flatter other men. Another course must now be steered.

If a book of *ESSAYS TO DO GOOD* were to be dedicated to a person of quality, it should seek a patron who is a true man of honour, and of uncommon goodness. Thy patron, O Book of Benefits to the World! should be a general and most generous benefactor to mankind—one who never accounts himself so well advanced, as in stooping to do good to all who may be benefitted by him—one whose highest ambition is to abound in serviceable condescensions—a stranger to the gain of oppression—the common refuge of the oppressed and the distressed—one who will know nothing that is base—a lover of all good men, in all persuasions; able to distinguish them, and loving them without any distinction. Let him also be one who has nobly stripped himself of emoluments and advantages, when they would have encumbered his opportunities to serve his nation. Yea, presume upon one who has governed and adorned the greatest and bravest city on the face of the earth; and so much “the delight” of that city, as well as of the rest of mankind, that she shall never account her honour or welfare better consulted, than when he appears for her as a representative in the most illustrious assembly in the world; beloved by the queen of cities, the fairest and richest lady of the universe.

In one word—A PUBLIC SPIRIT. Let him, therefore, and on more than all these accounts, be, SIR WILLIAM ASHHURST. For, as of old the

poet observed, on mentioning the name of Plutarch, that the echo answered, "Philosophy;" so now, A PUBLIC SPIRIT will immediately be the echo, in the sense of all men, and with a repetition more frequent than that at Pont-Chareton, if the name of SIR WILLIAM ASHHURST once be mentioned. He it is whom the confession of all men brings into the catalogue with Abraham and Joseph, and those other ancient blessings, who are thus excellently described by Grotius: "Men born to serve mankind, who reckon it their greatest gain to have it in their power to do good." America, afar off, also knows him; the American colonies have their eye on the efforts of his goodness for them. Nations of Christianized Indians likewise pray for him as their GOVERNOR. To him, the design of such a book will be acceptable, whatever may be the mean and defective manner of treating its noble subject. To him it wishes that all the blessings of those who devise good may be for ever multiplied.

I will presume to do something that will carry a sweet harmony with one of the chief methods to be observed in prosecuting the design of this book; which is, for "brethren to dwell together in unity," and carry on every good design with united endeavours.

They will pardon me, if I take leave to join with him in the testimonies of our great esteem, for an honourable disposition to love good men, and to do good in the world, his excellent brother-in-law. The well-known name of a JOSEPH THOMSON, has long been valued, and shall always be remembered, in the country where this book is published.

God will be glorified for the piety which adorns him, and the "pure religion," which, in the midst of the world and of temptations from it, keeps him so "unspotted from the world." It was the maxim of a Pagan, Asdrubal, in Livy, "Men distinguished by their prosperity, are seldom distinguished for virtue." Christianity will, in this gentleman, give to the world a happy experiment, that the maxim is capable of a confutation. Because a book of "Essays to do Good" will doubtless find an agreeable acceptance with one of so good a mind; and the treasurer of a corporation formed on the intention to do in America that good which is of all the greatest, of which Sir William Ashurst is the Governor, he also has a part in the humble tender of it; and it must wish unto him "all the blessings of goodness."

The book now requires that some account be given of it.—It was a passage in the speech of an envoy from his Britannic Majesty to the Duke of Brandenburg, many years ago: "A capacity to do good, not only gives a title to it, but also makes the doing of it a duty." Ink were too vile a liquor to write that passage. Letters of gold were too mean to be the preservers of it. Paper of Amyanthus or Asbestos would not be precious and perennous enough to perpetuate it.

To be brief, Reader, the book now in thy hands is nothing but an illustration and a prosecution of that memorable sentence. As gold is capable of a wonderful dilatation, (experiment has told us it may be so dilated, that the hundred thousandth

part of a grain may be visible without a microscope,) this "golden sentence" may be as much extended: no man can say how much. This book is but a beating upon it. And at the same time it is a commentary on that inspired maxim, "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men." Every proposal here made upon it, hopes to be able to say, "When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold."

I have not been unaware, that all the rules of discretion and behaviour are included in that one word, *modesty*. But it will be no breach of modesty, to be very positive in asserting, that the only wisdom of man lies in conversing with the great God, and his glorious Christ; and in engaging as many others as we can, to join with us in this our blessedness; thereby promoting his kingdom among the children of men; and in studying to do good to all about us; to be blessings in our several relations; to heal the disorders, and help the distresses of a miserable world, as far as ever we can extend our influence. It will be no trespass upon the rules of modesty, with all possible assurance to assert, that no man begins to be wise till he come to make this the main purpose and pleasure of his life; yea, that every man will at some time or other be so wise as to own, that every thing without this is but folly; though, alas! most men arrive not at that conclusion till too late.

Millions of men, in every rank, besides those whose *Dying thoughts* are collected in the "Fair Warnings to a Careless World," have at length declared their conviction of it. It will be no im-

modesty in me to say, that the man who is not satisfied of the wisdom of making it the work of his life to do good, is always to be regarded with the pity due to an idiot. No first principles are more peremptorily to be adhered to. Or, do but grant “a judgment to come,” and my assertion is presently victorious.

I will not be immodest, and yet I will boldly say, The man is worse than a Pagan, who will not come into this notion of things: “A good man is a common good;” and, “none but a good man is really a living man;” and, “the more good any man does, the more he really lives.” All the rest is death, or belongs to it. Yea, you must excuse me if I say, the Mahometan also shall condemn the man who comes not into the principles of this book; for I think it occurs no less than three times in the Koran, “God loves those that are inclined to do good.”

For this way of living, if we are fallen into a generation, wherein men will cry Sotah! “He is a fool,” that practises it, as the Rabbins foretell, it will be in the generation wherein the Messiah comes; yet there will be a wiser generation, and “wisdom will be justified of her children.” Among the Jews there has been an Ezra, whose head they called “the throne of wisdom.” Among the Greeks there has been a Democritus, who was called Sophia in the abstract. The later ages knew a Gildas, who wore the surname of *Sapiens*: but it is the man whose temper and intent it is “to do good,” that is the truly wise man after all. And, indeed, had a man the hands of a Briareus, they would all

be too few to do good; he might find occasions to call for more than all of them. The English nation had once a sect of men called "Bons hommes," or "Good men." The ambition of this book is to revive and enlarge a sect that may claim that name; yea, to solicit that it may extend beyond the bounds of a sect, by the coming of all men into it.

Of all the "trees in the garden of God," which is there that envies not the palm-tree, out of which alone, as Plutarch informs us, the Babylonians obtained more than three hundred commodities? Or the cocoa-tree, so beneficial to man, that a vessel may be built, and rigged, and freighted, and victualled from that alone? To plant such "trees of righteousness," and to prune them, is the object of the book now before us.

The men who devise good, will now give me leave to remind them of a few things, by which they may be a little fortified for their grand intention; for, sirs, you are to pass between "Bozez" (or dirty) and "Seneh" (or thorny), and encounter a host of things worse than Philistines, in your undertaking.

MISCONSTRUCTION is one thing against which you will do well to furnish yourselves with the armour both of prudence and of patience; prudence for the prevention of it, patience for the endurance of it. You will unavoidably be put upon doing many good things, which other people will see but at a distance, and be unacquainted with the motives and methods of your doing them; yea, they may imagine their own purposes crossed in what you do; and this will expose you to their censures. Yet more particularly. In your essays to do good you may hap-

pen to be concerned with persons whose power is greater than their virtue. It may be needful as well as lawful for you to mollify them with acknowledgments of those things in them, which may render them honourable or considerable; and forbear to take notice, at present, of what may be termed culpable. In this you may aim at nothing, but merely that you may be the more able to do them good; or, by their means, to do good to others: and yet, if you are not very cautious, this your civility may prove to your disadvantage; especially if you find yourselves obliged either to change your opinion of the persons, or to tax any miscarriage in them. The injustice of the censures upon you, may be much as if Paul, rebuking Felix for his unrighteousness and unchastity, should have been reproached with his inconsistency in having so lately complimented this very Felix, and said, he was glad he had one to be concerned with of such accomplishments and so well acquainted with the affairs of his nation. But you must not be uneasy if you should be thus unjustly treated. Jerome had written highly of Origen, as a man of bright endowments; at another time he wrote as severely against some things that he was (perhaps unjustly) accused of. They charged Jerome with levity, yea, with falsehood: but he despised the calumny, and replied, "I did once commend what I thought was great in him; and now I condemn what I find to be evil in him." I pray where is the contradiction? I say, Be cautious; but I say again, Be not uneasy.

What I add, is, that you must be above all DISCOURAGEMENTS. Look for them, and with a magnanimous courage overlook them.

Some have observed, that the most concealed, and yet the most violent of all our passions, is usually that of idleness. It lays adamant chains of death and of darkness upon us. It holds in chains that cannot be shaken off, all our other inclinations, however impetuous. That no more mischief is done in the world, is very much owing to a spontaneous lassitude on the minds of men, as well as that no more good is done. A Pharaoh will do us no wrong if he tells us, "Ye are idle, ye are idle!" We have usually more strength to do good, than we have inclination to employ it. Sirs, "Be up and be doing!" It is, surely, too soon for a "Here lies interred."

If you meet with vile INGRATITUDE from those whom you have laid under the most weighty obligations, do not wonder at it. Into such a state of turpitude is man sunk, that he would bear any weight rather than that of obligation. Men will acknowledge small obligations; but return wonderful hatred and malice for such as are extraordinary. They will render it a dangerous thing to be very charitable and beneficent. Communities will do it as well as individuals. Excess of desert turns at length into a kind of demerit. Men will sooner forgive great injuries, than great services. He that built a matchless castle for the Poles, for his reward, had his eyes put out, that he might not build such another. Such things are enough to make one sick of the world; but, my friend, they should not make thee sick of essays to do good in the world. Let a conformity to thy Saviour, and a communion with him, be sufficient to carry thee through all.

It will be impossible to avoid ENVY: "For a right work," and for a good one, and especially if a man do many such, "he shall be envied of his neighbour." It is incredible what power there is in the pride of men to produce detraction! pride, working in a sort of impatience, that any man should be, or do more than they. "The minds of men," as one says, "have got the vapours; a sweet report of any one throws them into convulsions; a foul one refreshes them." You must bear all the outrage of it; and there is but one sort of revenge to be allowed you. It is observed, "There is not any revenge more heroical, than that which torments envy by doing good."

It is a surprising passage, which a late French author has given us, "That a man of great merit is a kind of public enemy. And that by engrossing a multitude of applauses, which would serve to gratify a great many others, he cannot but be envied; and that men naturally hate what they esteem much, but cannot love." But, my readers, let us not be surprised at it. You have read, who suffered the ostracism at Athens; and what a pretty reason the country-fellow offered why he gave his voice for the banishment of Aristides:—"Because he was every where always called the just:" and for what reason the Ephori laid a fine on Agesilaus: "Because he possessed, above all other men, the hearts of the Lacedemonians." You have read the reason why the Ephesians expelled the best of their citizens: "If any will excel their neighbours, let them find another place to do it." You have read, that he who conquered Hannibal, saw it necessary to retire

from Rome, that the merit of others might be more noticed. My authors tell me, that, "At all times nothing has been more dangerous among men than too shining merit." But, my readers, the terror of this envy must not intimidate you. I must press you to do good, and be so far from affrighted at it, that you shall rather be generously delighted with the most envious deplumations.

I wish I may prove a false prophet when I foretell one discouragement more which you will have to contend with; I mean—**DERISION**. And I pray let not my prediction be derided. It was long since noted,

"For ridicule shall frequently prevail,
And cut the knot, when graver reasons fail."

It is a thing of late started, that the way of banter, and scoffing, and ridicule, or the "Bartholomew-fair method," as they term it, is a more effectual way to discourage all goodness, and put it out of countenance, than fire and faggot. No cruelties are so insupportable to humanity "as cruel mockings." It is extremely probable that the devil being somewhat chained up in several places, from other ways of persecution, will more than ever apply himself to this. Essays to do good shall be derided with all the art and wit that he can inspire into his Janizaries (a yani-cheer, or, a new order, the grand seignior of hell has instituted.) Exquisite profaneness and buffoonery shall try their skill to laugh people out of them. The men who abound in them, shall be exposed on the stage; libels, and lampoons, and satires, the most poignant that ever were in-

vented, shall be darted at them; and pamphlets full of lying stories be scattered, with a design to make them ridiculous. “In this the devil may be discovered at work.” The devil will try whether the fear of being laughed at will not cool their zeal to do good, and scare it out of the world. “But let this rather increase your boldness and zeal.” Sirs, “Despise the shame,” whatever “contradiction of sinners” you meet with; you know what example did so before you. “Quit you like men—be strong:” you know who gives you the direction. Say with resolution, “The proud have had me greatly in derision, yet have not I declined to do as much good as I could!” If you should arrive to a share in such sufferings, I will humbly “show you my opinion” about the best conduct under them; it is, neglect and contempt. I have a whole university on my side: the university of Helmstadt, upon a late abuse offered to it, had this noble passage in a declaration, “Resolved, That we use no other remedy in this affair, than a generous silence, and a holy contempt.” Go on to do good: and “Go well,—comely in your goings,” like the noble creature which “turneth not away for any.” A life spent in industrious essays to do good will be your powerful and perpetual vindication. It will give you such a well-established interest in the minds where conscience is consulted, that a few squibbing, silly, impotent accusations, will never be able to extinguish it. If they ridicule you in their printed excursions, your name will be so oiled that ink will not adhere to it. I remember that Valerianus Magnus, being abused by a Jesuit, who had laboured

(by a "modest inquiry," you may be sure!) to make him ridiculous, made no other defence, but only on every stroke adjoined, "It is a most impudent lie, Sir!" And such an answer might very truly be given to every line of some stories that I have seen elsewhere, brewed by another who is no Jesuit. But even so much answer to their folly, is too much notice of it. It is well observed that "The contempt of such discourses discredits them, and takes away the pleasure from those that make them." And it is another observation, "That when they of whom we have heard very ill, are yet found upon trial to be very good, we naturally conclude that they have a merit which is troublesome to some other people." The rule then is, be very good; yea, do very much good; and cast a generous disdain upon contumelies,—the great remedy against them. If you want a pattern, I can give you an imperial one; it was Vespasian, who, when a person spake evil of him, said, "While I do nothing that merits reproach, these lies give me no uneasiness." And I am deceived if it be not an easy thing to be as honest a man as Vespasian.

Sirs! An unfainting resolution to do good, and an unwearied well-doing, is that which is now urged upon you. And may this little book now be so happy, as herein to perform the office of a monitor to the reader.

I do not find that I have spent so many weeks in composing the book, as Descartes, though a profound geometrician, declared he spent in studying the solution of one geometrical question: yet the composure has exceeded the limits which I wished;

and there is not one proposal in it, which would not, if well pursued, afford a more solid and durable satisfaction to the mind, than the solution of all the problems in Euclid, or in Pappus. It is a vanity in writers to compliment the readers with—"I am sorry it is no better." Instead of which I freely tell my readers, "I have written what is not unworthy of their perusal." If I did not think so, truly, I would not publish it: for no man living has demanded it of me; it is not published "to gratify the importunity of friends," as your authors are used to say; but it is to use importunity with others, in a point on which I thought they needed it. And, I will venture to say, there is not one whimsey in all my proposals. I propose no object but what the conscience of every good man will say, "It were well if it could be accomplished." That writer was in the right who said, "I cannot understand how any honest man can print a book, and yet profess that he thinks none will be the wiser or better for the reading it." Indeed I own that my subject is worthy to be much better treated; and my manner of treating it, is not such as to embolden me to affix my name to it, as the famous painter Titian did to his pieces, with a double *fecit, fecit*; as much as to say, "Very well done!" and I must have utterly suppressed it, had I been of the same humour with Cimabus, another famous painter, who, if himself or any other detected the least fault in his pieces, would utterly destroy them, though he had bestowed a twelvemonth's pains upon them. Yet I will venture to say, the book is full of reasonable and serviceable things; and it would be well for us if such

things were regarded; and I have done well to propose them.

Who the author is, there is no need of inquiring. This will be unavoidably known in the vicinity; but his writing without a name (as well as not for one,) will conceal it from most of those to whom the book may come. And the concealment of his name, he apprehends, may be of some use to the book; for now, not *who*, but *what*, is the only thing to be considered.*

It was a vanity in one author, and there may be too many guilty of the like; to demand, "Reader, whatever you do, account the author somebody." But, I pray, sir, who are *you*, that mankind should be at all concerned about you? He was almost as great a man as any ecclesiastical preferments could make him, who yet would not have so much as his name in this epitaph; he would only have "Here lies a shadow—ashes—nothing." There shall be no other name on this composure: "Here is written, or rather attempted, by one who is a shadow—ashes—nobody."

However, he is very strongly persuaded that there is a day very near at hand, when books of such a tendency as this, will be the most welcome thing imaginable to many thousands of readers, and have more than one edition. Yea, great will be the army of them that publish them! 1716 is coming.†

* This treatise was originally published without the Author's name.

† What may have been the Author's expectations of the year 1716, are not known.—ED.

A vast variety of new ways to do good will be fallen upon; “paths” which no fowl of the best flight at noble designs has yet known; and which the vulture’s most piercing eye has not yet seen; and where the lions of the strongest resolution have never passed.

In the mean time, North Britain will be distinguished (pardon me, if I use the term, Goshenized,) by irradiations from heaven upon it, of such a tendency. There will be found a set of excellent men in that reformed and renowned Church of Scotland, with whom the most refined and extensive essays to do good will become so natural, that the whole world will fare the better for them. To these, this book is humbly presented by a great admirer of the good things daily doing among them; as knowing, that if no where else, yet among them it will find some reception; they will “not be forgetful to entertain such a stranger!”

The censure of “writing too much,” (though he should go as far as Terentianus Carthaginensis tells us Varro did,) he accounts not worth answering.— And, I pray, why not also “preaching too much?” But Erasmus, who wrote more, has furnished him with an answer which is all that he ever intends to give: “The censure of others upbraids me that I have done so much; my own conscience condemns me that I have done so little: the good God forgive my slothfulness!”

ESSAYS TO DO GOOD.



SECTION I.

Much necessity for doing Good.

SUCH glorious things are spoken in the oracles of our good God, concerning those who devise good, that A BOOK OF GOOD DEVICES, may very reasonably demand attention and acceptance from those that have any impressions of the most reasonable religion upon them. I am devising such a book; but at the same time offering a sorrowful demonstration, that if men would set themselves to devise good, a world of good might be done, more than is done, in this present evil world. It is very certain the world has need enough. There requires much to be done, that the great God and his Christ may be more known and served in the world; and that the errors which are impediments to the knowledge wherewith men ought to glorify their Creator and Redeemer, may be rectified. There requires abundance to be done, that the evil manners of the world, by which men are drowned in perdition, may

be reformed; and mankind rescued from the epidemical corruption and slavery which has overwhelmed it. There needs abundance to be done, that the miseries of the world may have adequate remedies provided for them; and that the miserable may be relieved and comforted. The world has, according to the computation of some, above seven hundred millions of people now living in it. What an ample field among all these to do good! In a word, the kingdom of God in the world calls for innumerable services from us. To do such things is to do good. Those men devise good, who form any devices to do things of such a tendency; whether they be of a spiritual or of a temporal nature. You see the general matter, appearing as yet, but as a chaos, which is to be wrought upon. Oh! that the good Spirit of God may now fall upon us, and carry on the glorious work which lies before us!



SECTION II.

The excellency of good devices.

IT is to be supposed, my readers will readily allow, that it is an excellent, a virtuous, a laudable thing to be full of devices, to bring about such noble purposes. For any man to deride, or to despise my proposal, "That we resolve and study to do as much good in the world as we can," would indicate so

black a character, that I am not willing to suppose it in any of those with whom I am concerned. Let no man pretend to the name of a Christian, who does not approve the proposal of a perpetual endeavour to do good in the world. What pretension can such a man have to be a follower of the Good One? The primitive Christians gladly accepted and improved the name, when the Pagans by mistake styled them, *Chrestians*; because it signified, *useful ones*. The Christians who have no ambition to be such, shall be condemned by the Pagans; among whom it was a term of the highest honour, to be termed, “a Benefactor:” to have done good was accounted honourable. The philosopher being asked why every one desired so much to look upon a fair object? he answered, That it was a question of a blind man. If any man ask, as not understanding it; What is the worth of doing good in the world? I must say, It sounds not like the question of a good man. The “spiritual taste” of every good man will make him have an unspeakable relish for it. Yea, he is unworthy to be considered as a man, who is not for doing good among men. An enemy to the proposal, that mankind may be the better for us, deserves to be reckoned little better than a common enemy of mankind. How cogently do I bespeak a good reception of what is now designed! I produce not only religion, but even humanity itself, as full of a “fiery indignation against the adversaries” of the design. Excuse me, Sirs; I declare, that if I could have my choice, I would never eat, or drink, or walk with such a one, as

long as I live; or look on him as any other than one by whom humanity itself is debased and blemished. A very wicked writer, has yet found himself compelled by the force of reason, to publish this confession: "To love the public, to study the universal good, and to promote the interest of the whole world, as far as is in our power, is surely the highest goodness, and makes that temper which we call divine." And he goes on, "Is the doing of good for glory's sake so divine a thing?" (Alas, too much *human*, Sir!) "or, is it not more divine to do good, even where it may be thought inglorious? even to the ungrateful, and to those who are wholly insensible of the good they receive?" A man must be far gone in wickedness, who will open his mouth against such maxims and actions. A better pen has remarked it; yea, the man must be much a stranger to history, who has not made the remark: "To speak truth, and to do good, were, in the esteem even of the heathen world, most godlike qualities." God forbid that there should be any abatement in the esteem of the Christian world for those qualities!

SECTION III.

The reward of well-doing.

I WILL not yet propose the Reward of well-doing, and the glorious things which the mercy and truth of God will do for those who devise good; because

I would have to do with such as will esteem it a sufficient reward in itself. I will conceive that my readers possess that generous ingenuity which will dispose them to count themselves well rewarded in the thing itself, if God will permit them to do good in the world. It is an invaluable honour to do good; it is an incomparable pleasure. A man must look upon himself as dignified and gratified by God, when an opportunity to do good is put into his hands. He must embrace it with rapture, as enabling him directly to answer the great end of his being. He must manage it with rapturous delight, as a most suitable business, as a most precious privilege. He must “sing in those ways of the Lord,” wherein he cannot but find himself, while he is doing good. As the saint of old sweetly sang, “I was glad, when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” Thus ought we to be glad, when any opportunity to do good is offered to us. We should need no arguments to make us entertain the offer; but we should naturally fly into the matter, as most agreeable to the divine nature, whereof we are made partakers. It should oblige us wonderfully. An ingot of gold presented unto us, should not be more gratifying! Think thus—Now I enjoy what I covet; now I attain what I wish for. Some servants of God have been so strongly disposed this way, that they have cheerfully made a tender of any recompense that could be desired, (yea, rather than fail, a pecuniary one,) to any friend that would think for them, and supply the barrenness of their thoughts, and suggest to them any special and proper methods,

wherein they might be serviceable. Certainly, to do good, is a thing that brings its own recompense, in the opinion of those who consider that any person who gives them information on any point wherein they may do good, is worthy of a recompense. I will only say, if any of you are strangers to such a disposition as this, and do not look upon an opportunity to do good, as a thing that enriches you, and that you are favoured of God, when he does employ you to do good, I have done with you, and I would pray such to lay the book aside; it will disdain to carry on any farther conversation with them. It handles a subject on which the house of Caleb will not be conversed with. It is content with one of Dr. Stoughton's introductions: "It is enough for me that I speak to wise men, whose reason shall be my rhetoric; to Christians, whose conscience shall be my eloquence."



SECTION IV.

Men might do more good than they do.

THOUGH the assertion should fly like a chain-shot among us, and rake down all before it, yet I will again and again assert it, that we might, every one of us, do more good than we do. And therefore, the first proposal I would make is to be exceedingly humbled that we have done so little good in the world. I am not uncharitable in saying,

that I know not an assembly of Christians upon earth which ought not to be a Bochim, on this consideration. O! tell me in what Utopia I shall find it. Sirs, let us begin to bring forth some good fruit, by lamenting our own great unfruitfulness. Verily, sins of omission must be confessed and bewailed, else we add to their number. The most useful men in the world have gone out of it, crying to God, "Lord, let our sins of omission be forgiven us!" Men that have made more than ordinary conscience about spending well their time, have had their death-bed made uneasy by this reflection, "The loss of time now sits heavy upon me." All unregenerate persons, are certainly, as our Bible tells us, unprofitable persons. It is not for nothing that the comparison of "thorns and briars" has been used, to teach us what they are. An un-renewed sinner, alas! he never did one good work in all his life. In all his *life*, did I say? You must allow me to recal that word. He is "dead while he lives;" he is "dead in sins;" he has never yet begun to "live unto God:" and as he is, so are "all the works of his hands"—they are "dead works." Ah! wretched unprofitable servant. Wonder, wonder at the patience of heaven, which yet forbears cutting down such a "cumberer of the ground." The best, and the first advice, to be given to such persons, is, immediately to endeavour to get out of their wofully unregenerate state. Let them immediately acknowledge the necessity of their turning to God, how unable they are to do it, and how unworthy that God should make them able.

Immediately let them lift up their cry to sovereign grace to quicken them; and let them then try whether they cannot with quickened souls, plead the sacrifice and righteousness of the glorious Saviour for their happy reconciliation to God; seriously resolve on a life of obedience to God, and resign themselves up to the Holy Spirit, that he may possess them, instruct them, strengthen them, and, for his name's sake, lead them in the paths of holiness. No good will be done, till this be done. The *first-born* of all devices to do good, is in being *born again*.

But you who have been brought home to God, have great cause not only to deplore the dark days of your unregeneracy, in which you produced only "the unfruitful works of darkness:" but also that you have done so little, since God has quickened you, and enabled you to do the things that should be done. How little have you lived up to those strains of gratitude, which might justly have been expected, since God brought you into his "marvellous light!" The best of us may mourn in his complaints and say, "Lord, how little good have I done, to what I might have done!" Let the sense of this cause us to loathe and judge ourselves before the Lord; let it fill us with shame; and abase us wonderfully. How can we do otherwise than, like David, "water our couch with tears," when we consider how little good we have done! "O that our heads were waters," because they have been so dry of all thoughts to do good. "O that our eyes were a fountain of tears," because they have looked out so little for methods and occasions to do good. For

the pardon of this evil-doing, let us fly to the great Sacrifice, which is our only expiation, and plead the blood of that "Lamb of God," whose universal *usefulness* is one of those admirable properties on account of which he is called "a Lamb." The pardon of our barrenness of good works being thus obtained, by faith in that blood which cleanseth from all sin, we shall be rescued from a condemnation to perpetual barrenness: the dreadful sentence, "Let no fruit grow on thee for ever," will be prevented by such a pardon. A true evangelical procedure to do good, must have this repentance laid in the foundation of it. We do not "handle the matter wisely," if a foundation be not laid thus low, and in the deepest self-abasement.



SECTION V.

The diligence of men in their secular affairs.

How full of devices are we for our own secular advantage! and how expert in devising many little things to be done for ourselves! We apply our thoughts with mighty assiduity to the old question—"What shall we eat and drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" It is with strong application of thought we inquire, What shall we do for ourselves in our marriages, in our voyages, in our bargains, and in many other concerns, wherein we are solicitous to have our condition easy? We anxiously

contrive to accomplish our plans, and steer clear of numerous inconveniences, to which, without some contrivance, we should be obnoxious. We carry on the business of our personal callings, with numberless thoughts how we may do them well; and to accomplish our numerous temporal affairs we “find out witty inventions.” But, O rational, immortal, heaven-born soul, are thy wonderous faculties capable of no greater improvements—no better employments? Why should a soul of such high capacities—a soul that may arrive to “be clothed in the scarlet” of angels, yet “embrace a dunghill!” O let a blush deeper than scarlet, be thy clothing, for thy being found so meanly occupied. Alas! “in the multitude of thy thoughts within thee,” hast thou no disposition to raise thy soul to some thoughts—What may be done for God—for Christ—for my own soul, and for other most important interests? How many hundreds of thoughts have we how to obtain or secure some trifle for ourselves, for one how we may serve the interests of the glorious Lord, and of his people in the world? How then can we pretend that we love him, or that a carnal, a criminal self-love has not the dominion over us? I again come to a soul of heavenly extract, and smite it, as the angel did the sleeping prisoner, and cry, “Awake; shake off thy chains.” Lie no longer fettered in a base confinement, and to nothing but a meaner sort of business. Assume and assert the liberty of sometimes thinking on the noblest question in the world, “What good may I do in the world?” There was a time when it was lamented by no less a man than

Gregory the great, the bishop of Rome—"I am sunk into the world!" This may be the complaint of a soul that minds every thing else, and rarely calls to mind that noblest question. Ah! "star fallen from heaven," and choked in dust, rise and soar up to something answerable to thy original. Begin a course of thoughts, which when begun will be like a resurrection from the dead. They which dwell in the dust, wake and sing, and a little anticipate the life which we are to live at the resurrection of the dead, when they with vigour set themselves to think, "How may I become a blessing to the world?" and "What may I do, that righteousness may dwell in the world?"

SECTION VI.

The diligence of wicked men in doing evil.

How much evil may be done by one wicked man! Yea, sometimes one wicked man, of slender abilities, becoming an indefatigable tool of the devil, may do an incredible mischief in the world. We have seen some wretched instruments of cursed memory, ply the intention of doing mischief at a strange rate, till they have undone a whole country; yea, unto the undoing of more than three kingdoms. It is a melancholy consideration, and I may say, an astonishing one: you will hardly find one of a thousand who does half so much to serve God, and Christ, and his

own soul, as you may see done by thousands to serve the devil. A horrible thing!

“O my soul, thy Maker, and thy Saviour, so worthy of thy love—a Lord, whose infinite goodness will follow all thou doest for him, with remunerations, beyond all comprehension glorious; how little, how little is it that thou doest for him! At the same time, look into thy neighbourhood. See there a monster of wickedness, who, to his uttermost, will serve a master that will prove a destroyer to him, and all whose wages will be torments: he studies how to serve the devil; he is never weary of his drudgery; he racks his invention to go through with it. He shames me; he shames me wonderfully! “O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face unto thee.”

We read of a man “who deviseth mischief upon his bed; who setteth himself in a way that is not good.” Now, why should not we be as active, as frequent, as forward, in devising good, and as full of exquisite contrivances? Why should not we be as wise to do good, as any are to do evil? I am sure we have a better cause, and better reason for it. My friend, though, perhaps, thou art one who makest but a little figure in the world—“a brother of low degree,” yet, behold a vast encouragement! a little man may do a great deal of harm; and pray, why may not a little man do a great deal of good? It is possible “the wisdom of a poor man” may start a proposal which may “save a city”—serve a nation! A single hair, applied to a flyer that has other wheels depending on it, may pull up an oak, or pull down a house.

It is very observable, that when our Lord Jesus Christ would recommend the zeal with which the kingdom of heaven is to be served, he did not give an example of honest wisdom: no, but that of an unrighteous and scandalous dishonesty—that of the unjust steward. The wisdom of our Lord in this is much to be observed. His design is not only to represent the prudence, but also the industry, the ingenuity, the resolution, and the heroic effort of the soul, necessary in those who would seek, and serve the kingdom of God. There is seldom to be found among men that vivacity of spirit in lawful actions, which we observe in unlawful ones. The ways of honesty are plain to men, and require not so much uneasiness in managing them; but thieves and cheats, and men that follow courses of dishonesty, take ways that are full of difficulties; the turns and tricks with which they must be carried through them are innumerable: hence you find among such people the exercise of extraordinary subtlety; you find no such cunning and nimble application any where else. It is very emphatical, then, to borrow from thence the colours of heavenly wisdom! What I now aim at is this—Let us endeavour to do good with as much application, as wicked men employ in doing evil. When “wickedness proceeds from the wicked, it is done with both hands, and greedily.” Why may not we proceed in our usefulness “with both hands,” and “greedily” watching for opportunities? We have no occasion for any sinister arts in carrying on our designs to do good. God forbid that we should ever attempt the union of such inconsisten-

cies! But why cannot we carry on our designs with as much deep and copious thought as the men of evil arts? And why may we not lay out our spirits with as transporting a vigour to do the things which are acceptable to God and profitable to men, as those wretches manifest, when they “weary themselves to commit iniquity?” To reprove certain ecclesiastical drones, who had little inclination to do good, Father Latimer used a coarse expression to this effect: “If you will not learn of good men, for shame, learn of the devil; he is never idle,” he goes about seeking what hurt he may do. Indeed, the indefatigable prosecution of the designs of some whom the word of God has called “the children of the devil,” may put us to the blush. Our obligations to do good are infinite: they do evil against all obligations. The compensation promised to them who do good, is encouraging beyond calculation: they who do evil get nothing to boast of; but “evil pursueth the sinners.” If the devil “go about,” and people inspired by him “go about,” seeking what harm they may do; why may not we go about, and think, and seek, where and how to do good? Verily, it were worthy of a good angel to do so! O thou child of God, and lover of all righteousness, how canst thou find in thy heart, at any time, to cease from doing all the good that can be done, “in the right ways of the Lord?” Methinks, that word of the Lord may be a burden to us: if we have a sense of honour in us, it will be so—“The children of this world are in, (and for) their generation, wiser than the children of light;” yea, they pursue “the works of darkness”

more vigorously than any of us “walk in that light” with which our great Saviour hath favoured us.



SECTION VII.

Men should do good from proper principles.

To the title of Good Works belong those Essays to do Good, for which we are now urging. To produce them, the *first* thing, and indeed, the *one* thing that is needful is—A glorious work of grace on the soul, renewing and quickening it, purifying the sinner, and rendering him “zealous of good works;”—“a workmanship of God” upon us, “creating us anew, in Jesus Christ, unto good works:” and then, there is needful, what will necessarily follow such a work—that is, a disposition to do good works, on true, genuine, generous, and evangelical principles. These principles require to be stated before we proceed. When they are in activity they will carry us a great length.

It is, in the first place, to be taken for granted, that the end for which we do good works must not be designed as the matter of our justification before God: indeed, no good works can be done by us till we are justified; until a man be united to Christ, who is our life, he is a dead man, and what good works can be expected from such a man? They will be dead works. “Severed from me,” saith our Saviour, “ye can do nothing.” The justification

of a sinner by faith, *before good works*, and *in order to them*, is one of those doctrines which may say to the popish innovations, “With us are the grey-headed, and very aged men, much elder than thy father.” It was an old maxim of the faithful,—“Good works follow; they do not precede justification.” It is the righteousness of the good works done by our Saviour and surety, not our own, that justifies us before God; and answers the demands of his law upon us. We, by faith, lay hold on those good works for our justifying righteousness, before we are enabled to perform our own. It is not our faith itself either as doing good works, or as being itself one of them, which entitles us to the justifying righteousness of our Saviour: but it is faith alone as renouncing our own righteousness, and relying on that of Christ, provided for the chief of sinners, by which we are justified. All our attempts at good works will come to nothing, till a justifying faith in the Saviour shall carry us forth to them. This was the divinity of the ancients. Jerome has well expressed it—“Without Christ all virtue is but vice.”

Nevertheless, first, you are to look upon it as a glorious truth of the gospel, that the moral law (which prescribes and requires good works) must by every Christian alive, be the rule of his life. “Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” The rule by which we are to glorify God, is given us in that law of good works which we possess (I will so express it) in the ten commandments. It is impossible for us to be released from all obligations to glorify God, by a

conformity to this rule; sooner shall we cease to be creatures. The conformity to that rule, in the righteousness, which our Saviour by his obedience to it has brought in to justify us, has for ever “magnified the law, and made it honourable.” Though our Saviour has furnished us with a perfect and spotless righteousness, when his obedience to the law is placed to our account; yet it is sinful in us to come short in our own obedience to the law. We must always judge and loathe ourselves for the sin. We are not under the law as a *covenant of works*. Our own exactness in doing good works is not now the condition of our entering into life; (wo unto us if it were!) but still the covenant of grace holds us to it as our *duty*: and if we are in the covenant of grace, we shall make it our study to do those good works which were once the terms of entering into life. “The whole law of goodliness remains,” was the divinity of Tertullian’s days. There must be such an esteem for the law of good works for ever retained in every justified person—a law never to be abrogated, never to be abolished.

And then, secondly, though we are justified by “a precious faith in the righteousness of God our Saviour,” yet good works are required of us to justify our faith—to demonstrate that it is indeed “precious faith.” Justifying faith is a jewel which may be counterfeited: but the marks of a faith which is not a counterfeit, are to be found in those good works to which a servant of God is inclined and assisted by his faith. It is by a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, that faith is wrought in the hearts

of the chosen people; now the same work of grace which in regeneration disposes a man to fly by faith to the righteousness of his Saviour, will also dispose him to the good works of a Christian life; and the same faith which goes to the Saviour for an interest in his righteousness, will also go to him for a heart and strength to perform the good works which are “ordained that we should walk in them.” If such be not our faith it is a lifeless faith, and it will not bring to life. A workless faith is a worthless faith.

My friend! suppose thyself standing before the judgment-seat of the glorious Lord—a needful, a prudent supposition; it ought to be a very frequent one. The Judge demands—“What hast thou to plead, for a portion in the blessedness of the righteous?” The plea must be, “O my glorious Judge, thou hast been my sacrifice. O thou Judge of all the earth, give poor dust and ashes leave to say, My righteousness is on the bench. Surely, in the Lord have I righteousness. O my Saviour, I have received it, I have secured it on thy own gracious offer of it.” The Judge proceeds—“But what hast thou to plead that thy faith should not be rejected as the faith and hope of the hypocrite?” Here the plea must be, “Lord, my faith was thy work. It was a faith which disposed me to all the good works of thy holy religion. It sanctified me. It carried me to thee, O my Saviour, for grace to do the works of righteousness: it embraced thee for my Lord, as well as for my Saviour: it caused me, with sincerity, to love and keep thy commandments, and with assi-

duity to serve the interests of thy kingdom in the world.”

Thus you have Paul and James reconciled. Thus you have good works provided for. The aphorism of the physicians is—“By the deeds of the arm you may form your judgment of the state of the heart.” The actions of men are surer indications than all their sayings of what they are within.

But there is yet another consideration by which you must be zealously affected for good works. You must consider them as *a part of the great salvation* which is purchased and intended for you by your blessed Saviour. Without a holy heart you cannot be fit for a holy heaven—“meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;” which admits no works of darkness; where none but good works are done for eternal ages: but a holy heart will cause a man to do good with all his heart. The motto on the gates of the holy city is, “None but the lovers of good works to enter here:” it is implied in what we read—“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord:” yea, to be saved without good works, were to be saved without salvation. Much of our salvation consists in doing good works. When our souls are enlarged, it is that we may do such things. Heaven is begun upon earth when we are so engaged. Doubtless, no man will reach heaven who is not so persuaded.

I shall mention but one more of those principles in which good works originate; it is that noble one of GRATITUDE. The believer cannot but inquire, “What shall I render to my Saviour?”—the result

of the inquiry will be, “ With good works to glorify him.” We read, that “ faith worketh by love.” Our faith will first show us the matchless and marvellous love of God in saving us; and the faith of this love will work on our hearts, till it hath raised in us an unquenchable flame of love to Him who hath so loved and saved us. These, these are to be our dispositions—“ O my Saviour! hast thou done so much for me? Now will I do all I can for thy kingdom and people in the world. O! what service is there that I may now do for my Saviour and for his people in the world?”

These are the principles to be proceeded on; and on them I will observe a notable thing. It is worthy of observation, that there are no men in the world who so much abound in good works, as those who have abandoned every pretence to merit in their works. There are Protestants who have outdone Papists in our day, as well as in those of Dr. Willet. No merit-mongers have gone beyond some holy Christians, who have performed good works on the assurance of their being already justified, and entitled to eternal life.

I observe that our apostle, casting a just contempt on the endless genealogies, and long, intricate pedigrees, which the Jews of his time counted so much upon, proposes in their stead “ Charity, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;” as if he had said, “ I will give you a genealogy worth ten thousand of theirs:—First, from faith unfeigned proceeds a good conscience; from a good conscience proceeds a pure heart; and from a

pure heart proceeds charity to all around us. It is admirably stated.

SECTION VIII.

Opportunities to do good are talents for which we must give an account.

IT is to be feared that we seldom inquire after OPPORTUNITIES OF DOING GOOD. Our opportunities to do good are our talents. An awful account must be rendered to the great God concerning the use of the talents with which he has intrusted us in these precious opportunities. We frequently do not use our opportunities, because we do not know them: and the reason why we do not know is, because we do not think. Our opportunities to do good lie by unregarded and unimproved; and so it is but a mean account that can be given of them. We read of a thing which we deride as often as we behold it: "There is that maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches." This is too frequently exemplified in our opportunities to do good, which are some of our most valuable riches. Many a man seems to reckon himself destitute of these talents, as if there were nothing for him to do; he pretends he is not in a condition to do any good. Alas! poor man, what can *he* do? My friend, think again, think often: inquire what your opportunities are: you will certainly find them to be more than you were aware of.

“Plain men, dwelling in tents”—persons of a very ordinary rank may, by their eminent piety, prove persons of extraordinary usefulness. A poor John Urich may make a Grotius the better for him. I have read of a pious weaver, of whom some eminent persons would say, “Christ walked, as it were, alive on the earth in that man.” And a world of good was done by that man. A mean mechanic—who can tell what an engine of good he may become, if humbly and wisely applied to it.

This, then, is the next proposal. Without abridging yourselves of your occasional thoughts on the question, often every day, “What good may I do?” fix a time now and then, for more deliberate thoughts upon it. Cannot you find time (suppose once a-week, and how suitably on the Lord’s day!) to take this question into consideration—

What is there that I may do for the service of the glorious Lord, and for the welfare of those for whom I ought to be concerned?

Having implored the direction of God, “the Father of lights,” and the author and giver of good thoughts, consider the matter, in the various aspects of it. Consider till you have *resolved* on something. Write down the resolutions you make. Examine what precept and what promise you can find in the word of God to countenance your intentions. Review these memorials at proper seasons, to see how far you have proceeded in the execution of them. The advantages of these preserved and revised memorials, no rhetoric will be sufficient to commend them, no arithmetic to number them. There are some ani-

mals of which we say, "They know not their own strength;" Christians, why should you be like them?

SECTION IX.

Every means of usefulness should be embraced.

LET us now descend to particulars; but let it not be imagined that I pretend to give an enumeration of all the *good devices* that may be conceived. Indeed, not a thousandth part of them can now be enumerated. The essay which I am making is only to dig open the several springs of usefulness, which, having once begun to flow, will spread into streams, which no human foresight can comprehend. "Spring up, O well!" so will every true Israelite sing upon every proposal here exhibited; and "the nobles of Israel" can do nothing more agreeable to their own character, than to fall to work upon it. Perhaps every proposal to be now mentioned may be like a stone falling into a pool. Reader, keep thy mind calm, and see whether the effect prove not so that one circle and service will produce another, till they extend—who can tell how far? Those who give themselves up to good devices, and who duly observe their opportunities to do good, usually find a wonderful increase of their opportunities. The gracious and faithful providence of God grants this recompense to his diligent servants, that he will

multiply their opportunities of being serviceable: and when ingenious men have a little used themselves to contrivances, in the way of pursuing the best intentions, their ingenuity will sensibly improve, and there will be more of expansion in their diffusive applications. Among all the dispensations of a special providence in the government of the world, there is none more uninterrupted than the accomplishment of that word—"Unto him that hath shall be given." I will say this, "O useful man! take for thy motto—To him that hath shall be given;" and, in a lively use of thy opportunities to do good, see how remarkably it will be accomplished; see what accomplishment of that word will at last surprise thee—"Though thy beginning be small, yet thy latter end shall greatly increase."



SECTION X.

On the cultivation of personal religion.

"CALL not that man wise whose wisdom begins not at home." Why should not the charity of which we are treating "begin at home?" It observes not a due decorum if it do not so; and it will be liable to great exceptions in its pretensions and proceedings. This, then, is to be made an early proposal.

First, Let every man devise what good may be done for the correction of what is yet amiss, **IN HIS OWN HEART AND LIFE.** It is a good observation

of the witty Fuller: "He need not complain of too little work, who hath a little world in himself to mend." It was of old complained, "No man repented him, saying, What have I done?" Every man upon earth may find in himself something that wants mending; and the work of repentance is to inquire, not only "What we have done?" but also, "What we have to do?" Frequent *self-examination* is the duty and the prudence of all who would know themselves, or would not lose themselves. The great intention of self-examination is to find out the points wherein we are to "amend our ways." A Christian that would thrive in Christianity, must be no stranger to a course of meditation. Meditation is one of the master's requisite to make a "man of God." One article and exercise in our meditation should be to find out the things wherein a greater conformity to the truths upon which we have been meditating, may be attempted. If we would be good men, we must often devise how we may grow in knowledge and in all goodness. Such an inquiry should often be made: "What shall I do, that what is yet lacking in the image of God upon me, may be perfected? What shall I do, that I may live more perfectly, more watchfully, more fruitfully before the glorious Lord?"

And why should not our meditation, when we retire to that soul-enriching work, of forming the right thoughts of the righteous, conclude with some resolution? Devise now, and resolve something to strengthen your walk with God.

With some devout hearers of the word, it is a

practice, when they have heard a sermon, to think, “What good thing have I now to ask of God with a special importunity?” Yea, they are accustomed to call upon their children also, and make them answer this question: “Child, what blessing will you now ask of the glorious God?” And charge them, then, to go and do accordingly.

In pursuance of this piety, why may not this be one of the exercises which shall go to make a good evening for the best of days? On the Lord’s-day evening, we may make this one of our exercises, to employ our thoughts seriously on that question: “If I should die this week, what have I left undone which I should then wish I had been more diligent in doing?” My friend, place thyself in dying circumstances, apprehend and realize thy approaching death. Suppose thy last hour arrived: thy breath failing, thy throat rattling, thy hands with a cold sweat upon them—only the turn of the tide expected for thy expiration. In this condition, “What wouldst thou wish to have done more than thou hast already done for thy own soul, for thy family, or for the people of God?” Think! do not forget the result of thy thoughts; do not delay to perform what thou hast resolved upon. How much more agreeable and profitable would such an exercise be on the Lord’s-day evening, than those vanities to which that evening is too commonly prostituted, and all the good of the past day defeated! And if such an exercise were often performed, O! how much would it regulate our lives; how watchfully, how fruitfully would it cause us to live: what an incredi-

ble number of good works would it produce in the world!

Will you remember, Sirs, that every Christian is a "temple of God!" It would be a service to Christianity, if this notion of Christianity were more frequently and clearly cultivated. But certainly, there yet remains very much for every one of us to do, that the temple may be carried on to perfection, repaired, finished, purified, and the top stone of it laid, with shoutings of "Grace, Grace!" unto it.

As a branch of this piety, I will recommend a serious and fruitful improvement of the various dispensations which the Divine Providence obliges us to take notice. More particularly: Have you received any special blessings and mercies from the hand of a merciful God? You do not suitably express your thankfulness; you do not render again according to the benefit that is done unto you, unless you set yourself to consider, "What shall I render unto the Lord?" You should contrive some signal thing to be done on this occasion; some service to the kingdom of God, either within yourself, or among others, which may be a just confession and remembrance of what a gracious God has done for you. This is what the "goodness of God leadeth you to." I ask you, Sirs, How can a good voyage, or a good bargain, be made without some special returns of gratitude to God? I would now have a portion of your property made a thank-offering, by being set apart for pious uses.

Whole days of thanksgiving are to be kept, when the favours of God rise to a more observable height.

Christians of the finer mould keep their private ones, as well as bear part in the public ones. One exercise for such a day is, to take a list of the more remarkable succours and bounties with which our God has comforted us: and then, to contrive some suitable acknowledgments of the glorious Lord, in endeavours to serve him, and this by way of gratitude for these undeserved comforts.

On the other hand; you meet with heavy and grievous afflictions. Truly, it is a pity to be at the trouble of suffering afflictions, and not get good by them. We get good by them, when they awaken us "to do good;" I may say, never till then! When God is distributing sorrows to you, the sorrows still come upon some errands; the best way for you to find that they do not come in his anger, is to consider what the errands are. The advice is, that when any affliction comes upon you, you immediately consider, "to what special act of repentance does this affliction call me? What miscarriage does this affliction find in me, to be repented of?" And then, while the sense of the affliction is yet upon you, solicitously inquire, "to what improvement in godliness and usefulness does this affliction call me?" Be more solicitous to gain this point than to get out of your affliction. O! the peace that will compose, possess, and ravish your minds, when your afflictions shall be found yielding the "fruits of righteousness."

Luther did well to call afflictions "the theology of Christians." This may be a proper place to introduce one direction more. We are travelling

through a malicious, a calumnious, and abusive world. Why should not malice be a "good informer?" We may be unjustly defamed; it will be strange if we are not frequently so. A defamation is commonly resented as a provocation. My friend, make it only a provocation to do good works! The thing to be now directed is this. Upon any reproach, instead of being transported into a rage at *Shimei*, retire and patiently inquire, "Has not God bidden such a reproach to awaken me to some duty? To what special instance or service of piety should I be awakened by the reproach that is cast upon me?" One thus expresses it: "The backbiter's tongue, like a mill-clack, will be still moving, that he may grind thy good name to powder. Learn, therefore, to make such use of his clack as to make thy bread by it; I mean, so to live, that no credit shall be given to slander." Thus all the abuses you meet with, may prove to you, in the hand of a faithful God, no other than the strokes which a statuary employs on his ill-shaped marble; only to form you into a more beautiful shape, and make you fitter to adorn the heavenly temple. Thus you are put into a way to "shake off a viper" most advantageously! Yea, I am going to show you, how you may fetch sweetness out of a viper. *Austin* would have our very sins included amongst the "all things" that are to "work together for good." Therefore, first, I propose, that our former barrenness may now be looked upon as our obligation and incitement to greater fruitfulness. But this motion is too general; I will be more par-

particular. I would look back on my past life, and call to mind what singular outbreakings of sin have blemished it, and been the reproach of my youth. Now, by way of thankfulness for that grace of God and that blood of his Christ, through which my crimes have been pardoned, I would set myself to think, "What virtues, what actions, and what achievements for the kingdom of God, will be the most contrary to my former blemishes? And what efforts of goodness will be the noblest and most palpable contradiction to the miscarriages with which I have been chargeable?" Yet more particularly, "What signal thing shall I do, to save others from dishonouring the great God by such miscarriages as those into which I myself once fell?" I will study such things; perhaps the sincerity and consolation of repentance cannot be better studied than by such a conduct.

You must give me leave to press this one more point of prudence upon you. There are not a few persons, who have many hours of leisure in the way of their personal callings. When the weather takes them off their business, or when their shops are not full of customers, they have little or nothing to do. Now, Sirs, the *proposal* is, "Be not fools," but redeem this time to your own advantage—to the best advantage. To the man of leisure, as well as to the minister, it is an advice of wisdom, "Give thyself to reading." Good books of all sorts may employ your leisure, and enrich you with treasures more valuable than those which the way and the work of your callings might have pro-

cured. Let the baneful thoughts of idleness be chased out of our minds. But then also, let some thoughts on that subject, "What good may I do?" come into them. When you have leisure to think on that subject, you can have no excuse for neglecting it.

SECTION XI.

On doing good in our domestic relations.

THE *Useful man* may now, with great propriety, extend and enlarge the sphere of his well-doing. My next proposal, therefore, shall be, Let every man consider the RELATION in which the sovereign God has placed him; and let him devise what good he may do, that he may render his *relatives* the better for him. One great way to prove ourselves really good, is to be relatively good. It is by this, more than by any thing else, that we "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour." It would be excellent wisdom in a man, to make the interest which he has in the good opinion and affection of others, an advantage for inducing them to engage in God's service. He that has a friend, will show himself friendly indeed, if he think, "Such a one loves me, and will hearken to me; to what good shall I take advantage from hence to persuade him?"

This will take place more particularly where the endearing ties of natural relation give us an interest. Let us call over our several relations, and

let us devise something that may be called heroidal goodness, in our discharging them. Why should we not, at least once or twice a week, make this *relative goodness* the subject of our inquiries, and of our purposes? Especially, let us begin with our *domestic relations*, and “provide for those of our own house,” lest we deny some glorious rules and hopes of the Christian faith, by our negligence.

First; In the CONJUGAL RELATION, how agreeably may those who are thus united, think on these words: “What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or, How knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”

The HUSBAND will do well to think, “What shall I do, that my wife may have cause for ever to bless God for having brought her to me?” And, “What shall I do, that in my deportment towards my wife, the kindness of the blessed Jesus towards his church may be imitated?” That this question may be the more perfectly answered, Sir, ask her to assist you in answering the question; ask her to tell you what she would have you to do.

But then the WIFE also will do well to inquire, “Wherein may I be to my husband a wife of that character—‘She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life?’”

With my married friends, I will leave an excellent remark, which I find in the memorials of *Gervase Disney*, Esq.—“Family passions cloud faith, disturb duty, darken comfort.” You will do the more good to one another, the more this remark is considered. When the husband and the wife are

always contriving to be blessings to each other, I will say with *Tertullian*, “Where shall I find words to describe the happiness of that marriage?”

O happy marriage!

PARENTS! O how much ought you to be devising, and even labouring, for the good of your *children!* Often consider, how to make them “wise children;” how to carry on a desirable education for them, an education that shall render them desirable; how to render them lovely and polite, and serviceable to their generation. Often consider, how to enrich their minds with valuable knowledge; how to instil into their minds generous, gracious, and heavenly principles; how to restrain and rescue them from the “paths of the destroyer,” and fortify them against their peculiar temptations. There is a world of good that you have to do for them. You are without natural affections, (Oh! be not such monsters!) if you are not in a continual agony to do for them all the good that lies in your power. It was no mistake of *Pacatus Drepanius*, in his panegyric to *Theodosius*: “We are taught by nature, to love our sons almost more than ourselves.”

I will prosecute this subject, by transcribing a copy of PARENTAL RESOLUTIONS, which I have somewhere met with.

I. At the birth of my children, I would use all due solemnity in the baptismal dedication and consecration of them to the Lord. I would present them to the baptism of the Lord, not as a mere formality; but, wondering at the grace of the in-

finite God, who will accept my children as his, I would resolve to do all I can that they may be his; I would now actually give them up to God, entreating that the child may be a child of God the Father, a subject of God the Son, and a temple of God the Spirit; that it may be rescued from the condition of a child of wrath, and be possessed and employed by the Lord, as an everlasting instrument of his glory.

II. My children would no sooner become capable of attending to my instructions, but I would often admonish them to be sensible of their baptismal engagements to be the Lord's; often remind them of their baptism, and of the duties to which it binds them.

Often I would say to them, Children, you have been baptised; you were washed in the name of the great God; now you must not sin against him; to sin, is to do a very filthy thing. You must every day cry to God, that he would be your Father, your Saviour, your Leader; in your baptism, he promised that he would be so, if you sought unto him. Child, you must renounce the service of Satan, you must not follow the vanities of this world; you must lead a life of serious religion: in your baptism, you were bound to the service of your only Saviour. What is your name?—You must sooner forget this name that was given you in your baptism, than forget that you are a servant of Jesus Christ, whose name was put upon you in your baptism.

III. Let me daily pray for my children with

constancy, and fervency, and agony; yea, let me daily mention each of them by name before the Lord. I would importunately beg for all suitable blessings to be bestowed upon them; that God would give them grace, and give them glory, and withhold no good thing from them; that God would smile on their education, and give his good angels charge over them, and keep them from evil, that it may not grieve them; that when their father and mother shall forsake them, the Lord may take them up. Most importunately would I plead that promise in their behalf: "The heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." O happy children, if by asking, I may obtain the Holy Spirit for them!

IV. I would early entertain the children with delightful stories out of the Bible. In the talk of the table I would go through the Bible, when the "olive plants about my table" are capable of being so watered. But I would always conclude the story by some lessons of piety, to be inferred from them.

V. I would single out some scriptural sentences of the greatest importance; and some also that contain special antidotes to the common errors and vices of children. They shall quickly get these golden sayings by heart, and be rewarded with silver or gold, or some good thing, when they do it. Such as

Psalm cxi. 10.—"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Matthew xvi. 26.—"What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

1 Timothy i. 15.—“ Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

Matthew vi. 6.—“ Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.”

Eccles. xii. 14.—“ God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.”

Ephesians iv. 25.—“ Put away lying, speak every one the truth.”

Psalms cxxxviii. 6.—“ The Lord hath respect unto the lowly, but the proud he knoweth afar off.”

Romans xii. 17, 19.—“ Recompense to no one evil for evil. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves.”

Nehemiah xiii. 18.—“ They bring wrath upon Israel, by profaning the sabbath.”

A Jewish treatise, quoted by *Wagenseil*, tells us, that among the Jews, when a child began to speak, the father was bound to teach him that verse, Deut. xxxiii. 4. “ Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.” O let me betimes make my children acquainted with the law which our blessed Jesus hath commanded us! It is the best inheritance I can confer on them.

VI. I would early cause my children to learn the

catechism. In catechising them, I would break the answer into many smaller and appropriate questions; and by their answer to them, observe and quicken their understandings. I would connect every truth with some duty and practice; and expect them to confess it, consent to it, and resolve upon it. As we go on in our catechising, they shall, when they are able, turn to the proofs read them, and tell me, *what* they prove, and in what manner. Then I will take my opportunity to put more nice and difficult questions to them, and improve the times of conversation with my family, which every man usually has, or may have, for conferences on religious subjects.

VII. Unsatisfied would I be, till I may be able to say of my children, Behold, they pray! I would therefore teach them to pray. But after they have learned a form of prayer, I will press them to proceed to points which are not in their form. I will show them the state of their own souls; and on every discovery inquire of them, what they think ought now to be their prayer. I will direct them every morning to take one or two texts out of the sacred Scriptures, and form them into a desire, which they shall add to their usual prayer. When they have heard a sermon, I will repeat to them the main subject of it, and ask them thereupon, what they have now to pray for. I will charge them with all possible cogency, to pray in secret, and often say to them, Children, I hope you do not forget my charge to you about secret prayer; your crime is very great, if you do.

VIII. I would betimes do what I can to form a

temper of benignity in my children, both towards one another and towards all others. I will instruct them how ready they should be to communicate to others a part of what they have; and they shall be encouraged when they discover a loving, courteous, and benevolent disposition. I will give them now and then a piece of money, that with their own little hands, they may dispense to the poor. Yea, if any one has hurt or vexed them, I will not only forbid all revenge, but will also oblige them to do a kindness, as soon as may be, to the vexatious person. All coarseness of language or behaviour in them, I will discountenance.

IX. I would be solicitous to have my children expert, not only at reading properly, but also at writing a fair hand. I will then assign them such books to read, as I may judge most agreeable and profitable; obliging them to give me some account of what they read; but will keep a strict eye on them, lest they should stumble on the devil's library, and poison themselves with foolish romances, novels, plays, songs, or jests, "that are not convenient." I will set them also, to write out such things as may be of the greatest benefit to them; and they shall have their blank books neatly kept on purpose to enter such passages as I recommend to them. I will particularly require them now and then to compose a prayer, and bring it to me, that so I may discern what sense they have of their own everlasting interests.

X. I wish that my children may very early feel the principles of *reason* and *honour* working in them;

and that I may carry on their education, chiefly on those principles. Therefore I will wholly avoid that fierce, harsh, crabbed usage of the children, that would make them tremble and abhor to come into my presence. I will treat them so, that they shall fear to offend me, and yet heartily love to see me, and be glad of my returning home when I have been abroad. I would have it looked upon as a severe and awful punishment for a crime in the family, to be forbidden for a while to come into my presence. I would excite in them a high opinion of their father's love to them, and of his being better able to judge what is good for them, than they are for themselves. I would bring them to believe that it is best for them to be and to do as I would have them. Hence I would continually state to them what a charming thing it is to know the things that are excellent, and more so to do the things that are virtuous. I would have them to propose it as a reward of good behaviour at any time; "I will now go to my father, and he will teach me something that I knew not before." I would have them afraid of doing any base thing, from a horror of the baseness of it. My first animadversion on a smaller fault shall be, an expression of surprise and wonder, vehemently expressed before them, that ever they should be guilty of doing so foolishly, with an earnest hope that they will never do the like again, and excite in them a weeping resolution that they will not. I will never use corporeal punishment, except it be for an atrocious crime, or for a smaller fault obstinately persisted in. I would ever proportion

the chastisements to the faults; not punish bitterly for a very small instance of childishness; and only frown a little for some real wickedness. Nor shall my chastisements ever be dispensed in passion and fury; but I will first show them the command of God, by transgressing which they have displeased me. The slavish turbulent manner of education too commonly used, I consider as no small article in the wrath and curse of God upon a miserable world.

XI. As soon as we can, we will advance to still higher principles. I will often tell the children what cause they have to love a glorious Christ who has died for them; how much he will be pleased with their well doing; and what a noble thing it is to follow his example, which example I will describe to them. I will often tell them that the eye of God is upon them; that the great God knows all they do, and hears all they speak, I will frequently tell them that there will be a time, when they must appear before the judgment seat of the holy Lord; and they must *now* do nothing which may then be an occasion of grief and shame to them. I will set before them the delights of that heaven which is prepared for pious children, and the torments of that hell which is prepared for wicked ones. I will inform them of the good offices which the good angels perform for little ones who have the fear of God, and are afraid of sin; how the devils tempt them to do bad things; how they hearken to the devils, and are like them when they do such things; and what mischiefs they may obtain permission to do them in the world, and how awful it would be to dwell among the devils, in

the "place of dragons." I will cry to God, that he may make them feel the power of these principles.

XII. When the children are of a proper age for it, I will sometimes closet them, have them with me alone, and converse with them about the state of their souls; their experiences, their proficiency, their temptations; obtain their declared consent to every article in the covenant of grace; and then pray with them, earnestly imploring that the Lord would bestow his grace upon them, and thus make them witnesses of the agony with which I am travailing to see the image of Christ formed in them. Certainly they will never forget such exercises.

XIII. I will be very watchful and cautious about the companions of my children. I will be very inquisitive to learn what company they keep. If they are in danger of being insnared by vicious company, I will earnestly pull them out of it, as brands out of the burning; and will try to find for them proper and useful companions.

XIV. As in catechising the children, so in the repetition of the public sermons, I would use this method: I would put every truth into the form of a question, to be answered with yes, or no. By this method I hope to awaken their attention, as well as enlighten their understandings. And thus, I shall have an opportunity to ask, Do you desire such and such a grace of God; with similar questions. Yea, by this I may have an opportunity to demand, and perhaps to obtain, their early, frequent, and, why not, sincere consent to the glorious articles of the

new covenant. The Spirit of grace may fall upon them in this action, and they may be seized by him, and possessed by him as his temples, through eternal ages.

XV. When a day of humiliation arrives, I will make them know the meaning of the day; and after some time given them to consider of it, I will require them to tell me, what special afflictions they have met with, and what good they hope to get by those afflictions. On a day of thanksgiving, they shall also be made to know the intent of the day; and after consideration, they shall inform me what mercies of God to them they take special notice of, and what duties to God they confess and resolve to perform under such obligations. Indeed, for something of this importance; to be pursued in my conversation with the children, I would not confine myself to the solemn days, which may occur too seldom for it; but, particularly, when the birth-days of any of the children arrive, I would then take them aside, and remind them of the age, which, having obtained help of God, they have attained; how thankful they should be for the mercies of God, upon which they have hitherto lived; and how fruitful they should be in all goodness, that so they may still enjoy their mercies. And I would inquire of them, whether they have ever yet begun to mind the work for which God sent them into the world; how far they understand the work; what attempts they have made to perform it; and how they design to spend the rest of their time, if God still continue them in the world.

XVI. When the children are in any trouble or sickness, I will take advantage of this, to set before them the evil of sin, the cause of all our trouble; and how fearful a thing it will be, to be cast among the damned, who are in unceasing and endless trouble. I will set before them the benefit of an interest in Christ, by which their trouble will be sanctified to them, and they will be prepared for death, and for fulness of joy in a happy eternity after death.

XVII. I incline, that among all the branches of a polite education, which I would endeavour to give my children, each of them, the daughters as well as the sons, may have such an acquaintance with some useful trade or business, (whether it be painting, or the law, or medicine, or such other occupation, to which their own inclination may lead them) that they may be able to provide for themselves a comfortable subsistence, if they should ever be brought, by the providence of God, into destitute circumstances. Why should not they, as well as Paul the tent-maker? Children of the highest rank may have occasion to bless the parents who made such a provision for them. The Jews have a saying which is worthy of being remembered:—"Whosoever teaches not his son a trade, does, in effect, teach him to be a robber."

XVIII. As early as possible, I would instruct my children in the chief end for which they are to live; that so they may, as soon as possible, begin to live, and their youth not be altogether vanity. I would show them that their chief end must be to ac-

knowledge the great God and his glorious Christ, and to bring others to acknowledge him; and that they are never acting wisely nor well, but when they are so doing. I would show them what these acknowledgments are, and how they are to be made. I would make them able to answer the grand question, "For what purpose do they live, and what is the end of the actions that employ your lives? Teach them how their Creator and Redeemer is to be obeyed in every thing, and how every thing is to be done in obedience to him. Instruct them how even their diversions, their ornaments, and the tasks of their education, must all be designed to fit them for the further service of Him to whom I have devoted them, and how, in these also, his commandments must be the rule of all they do. I would therefore sometimes surprise them with an inquiry, "Child, what is this for? Give me a good account why you do it." How comfortably shall I see them "walking in the light," if I may bring them wisely to answer this inquiry; and what "children of the light" they will be!

XIX. I would sometimes oblige the children to retire, and ponder on that question: "What should I wish to have done, if I were now dying?" And having reported to me their own answer to the question, I would take occasion from it, to inculcate upon them the lessons of godliness. I would also direct and oblige them, at a proper time, seriously to realize their own appearance before the awful judgment seat of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to consider what they have to plead, that they may not be sent

away into everlasting punishment; what they have to plead, that they may be admitted into the holy city. I would instruct them what plea to prepare; first, show them how to get a part in the righteousness of him who is to be their judge, by receiving it with a thankful faith, as the gift of infinite grace to the distressed and unworthy sinner: then show them how to prove that their faith is not counterfeit, by their continual endeavour in all things, to please Him in all things who is to be their Judge, and to serve his kingdom and interest in the world. And I would charge them to make this preparation.

XX. If I live to see the children arrive at a marriageable age, I would, before I consult with heaven on earth for their best accommodation in the married state, endeavour the espousal of their souls to their only Saviour. I would, as plainly and as fully as I can, propose to them the terms on which the glorious Redeemer will espouse them to himself, in righteousness and judgment, favour and mercies for ever; and solicit their consent to his proposal and overtures; then would I go in to do what may be expected from a tender parent for them, in their temporal circumstances.

From these parental resolutions, how reasonably, how naturally may we pass on to say,

CHILDREN, the fifth commandment confirms all your other numberless and powerful obligations often to inquire, "Wherein may I be a blessing to my parents?" An ingenuous disposition would make this the very summit of your ambition, to be a credit and a comfort to your parents; to sweeten, and, it

may be, to lengthen the lives of those from whom, under God, you have received yours. And God the Rewarder, usually gives to such dutifulness, even in this life, a most observable recompense. But it is possible, you may be the happy instruments of more than a little good to the souls of your parents; (will you think how?) Yea, though they should be pious parents, you may, by some delicate methods, be the instruments of their growth in piety and in preparation for the heavenly world. O thrice happy children, who are thus favoured! Among the Arabians, a father sometimes takes his name from an eminent son, as well as a son from his reputable father. Truly, a son may be such a blessing to his father, that the best surname for the glad father would be, “the father of such a one.”

MASTERS, yea, and MISTRESSES too, must have their devices how to do good to their servants; how to make them the servants of Christ, and the children of God. God, whom you must remember to be “your Master in heaven,” has brought them, and placed them in your family. Who can tell for what good he has brought them? What if they should be the elect of God, fetched from Africa and the Indies, and brought into your families, on purpose that, by means of their situation, they may be brought home to the Shepherd of souls? O that the souls of our servants were of more account to us! that we might give a better demonstration that we despise not our own souls, by doing what we can for the souls of our servants, and not using them as if they had no souls! How can we pretend to Chris-

tianity, when we do no more to christianize our servants? Verily, you must give an account to God concerning them. If they be lost through your negligence, what answer can you make to "God, the Judge of all?" Methinks, common principles of gratitude should incline you to study the happiness of those by whose obedient labours your lives are so much accommodated. Certainly, they would be the better servants to you, more faithful, honest, industrious, and submissive, for your bringing them into the service of your common Lord.

But if any servant of God may be so honoured by him, as to be made the successful instrument of obtaining from a British parliament, an act for the christianizing of the slaves in the plantations; then it may be hoped, something more may be done than has yet been done, that the blood of souls may not be found in the skirts of our nation, a controversy of heaven with our colonies may be removed, and prosperity may be restored; at all events, the honourable instrument will have unspeakable peace and joy, in the remembrance of his endeavours. In the meantime, the slave trade is a spectacle that shocks humanity.

"The harmless natives basely they trepan,
And barter baubles for the souls of men;
The wretches they to Christian climes bring o'er,
To serve worse heathens than they did before."

I have somewhere met with a paper under this title, the RESOLUTION OF A MASTER; which may here be properly introduced:—

I. I would always remember, that my servants

are, in some sense, my children; and by taking care that they want nothing which may be good for them, I would make them as my children; and, as far as the methods of instilling piety into them, which I use with my children, may be properly and prudently used with my servants, they shall be partakers in them. Nor will I leave them ignorant of any thing, wherein I may instruct them to be useful in their generation.

II. I will see that my servants be furnished with Bibles, and be able and careful to read the lively oracles. I will both put Bibles and other good and proper books into their hands, and allow them time to read; but will assure myself that they do not mispend this time. If I can discern any wicked books in their hands, I will take away from them those pestilential instruments of wickedness. They shall also write as well as read, if I am able to bring them to it. And I will give them, now and then, such things to write, as may be for their greatest advantage.

III. I will have my servants present at the religious exercises of my family; and will drop either in the exhortations, or in the prayers, of the daily sacrifices of the family, such passages as may have a tendency to quicken a sense of religion in them.

IV. The business of catechising, as far as the age or state of the servants will permit to be done with decency, shall extend to them also. And they shall be concerned in the conferences in which, in the repetition of the public sermons, I may be engaged with my family. If any of them, when they come

to me, have not learned the catechism, I will take care that they do it, and give them a reward when they have done it.

V. I will be very inquisitive and solicitous about the company chosen by my servants; and with all possible earnestness rescue them from the snares of evil company, and forbid their being the “companions of fools.”

VI. Such of my servants as may be capable of the duty, I will employ to teach lessons of piety to my children, and recompense them for so doing. But I would, by a particular artifice, contrive them to be such lessons as may be for their own edification too.

VII. I will sometimes call my servants alone, talk to them about the state of their souls; tell them how to close with their only Saviour; charge them to do well, and “lay hold on eternal life;” and show them very particularly how they may render all they do for me, a service to the glorious Lord; how they may do all from a principle of obedience to him, and become entitled to the “reward of the heavenly inheritance.”

I add the following passages as an Appendix to these resolutions:—

“Age is nearly sufficient, with some masters, to obliterate every letter and action in the history of a meritorious life; and old services are generally buried under the ruins of an old carcass.” And “it is a barbarous inhumanity in men towards their servants, to account their small failings as crimes, without allowing their past services to have been virtues.

O God, keep thy servants from such worse than base ingratitude !”

But then, O SERVANTS, if you would obtain “the reward of the inheritance,” you should set yourselves to inquire—“How shall I approve myself such a servant that the Lord may bless the house of my master the more for my being in it?” Certainly, there are many ways in which servants may become blessings. Let your studies, with your continual prayers for the welfare of the families to which you belong, and the example of your sober carriage, render you such. If you will remember but four words, and attempt all that is comprised in them—OBEDIENCE, HONESTY, INDUSTRY, and PIETY—you will be the *blessings*, and the *Josephs* of the families to which you belong. Let these four words be distinctly and frequently recollected; and perform cheerfully all you have to do, on this consideration—that it is an obedience to heaven, and from thence will have a recompense. It was the observation even of a Pagan, “that a master may receive a benefit from a servant;” and, “What is done with the affection of a friend, ceases to be the act of a mere servant.” Even the MAID SERVANTS of the house may render an unknown service to it, by instructing the infants, and instilling into their minds the lessons of goodness. Thus, by Bilhah and Zilpah, may children be born again; the mistresses may, by the travail of their handmaids, have children brought into the kingdom of God.

I proceed—Humanity teaches us to take notice of all our kindred. Nature bespeaks what we call

a “natural affection” to all who are akin to us; to be destitute of it is a very bad character; it is a brand on the worst of men, on such as forfeit the name of men. But Christianity is designed to improve it. Our natural affection is to be improved into a religious intention. Make a catalogue of all your more *distant relatives*. Consider them one by one; and make every one of them the subject of your “good devices.” Consider: “How may I pursue the good of such a relative? By what means may I render such a relative the better for me?” It is possible you may do something for them which may afford them cause to bless God that ever you were related to them. Have they no calamity under which you may give them some relief? Is there no temptation against which you may give them some caution? Is there no article of their prosperity to which you may be subservient? At least, with your affectionate prayers, you may go over your catalogue; you may pray for each of them successively by name; and if you can, why may you not also put proper books of piety into their hands, to be durable remembrances of their duties to God, and of your desires for promoting their good?



SECTION XII.

On doing good to our neighbours.

METHINKS this excellent zeal should be extended to our NEIGHBOURHOOD. Neighbours! you

should stand related to each other; and you should contrive how others may have cause to rejoice that they are in your neighbourhood. “The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour;” but we shall scarcely consider him to be so, unless he be more excellent *as* a neighbour: he must excel in the duties of good neighbourhood. Let that man be better than his neighbour, who labours most to be a better neighbour—to do most good to his neighbour.

And here, first the poor people that lie wounded must have oil and wine poured into their wounds. It was a charming trait in the character which a modern prince had acquired—“To be in distress, is to deserve his favour.” O good neighbour! put on that princely, that more than royal quality. See who in the neighbourhood may deserve thy favour. We are told that “pure religion and undefiled (a jewel not counterfeited, and without a flaw) is, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.” The orphans and the widows, and all the children of affliction in the neighbourhood, must be visited and relieved with all agreeable kindnesses.

Neighbours! be concerned that the orphans and the widows in your neighbourhood may be well provided for. They meet with grievous difficulties, with unknown temptations. When their nearest relatives were still living, they were, perhaps, but meanly provided for: what then must be their present solitary condition? Their condition should be well considered; and the result of the consideration should be—“I delivered the orphan who had no

helper, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

In the same way—All the afflicted in the neighbourhood are to be considered. Sirs! would it be too much for you, once in a week at least, to think—“What neighbour is reduced to pinching and painful poverty, or impoverished with heavy losses?—What neighbour is languishing with sickness, especially if afflicted with severe disease, and of long continuance?—What neighbour is broken-hearted with sad bereavements, perhaps with the loss of desirable relatives?—What neighbour has a soul violently assaulted by the enemy of souls?” and then, think, “What can be done for such neighbours?”

You will *pity* them. The evangelical precept is, “Have compassion one of another—be pitiful.” It was of old, and ever will be a just expectation, “To him that is afflicted, pity should be shown;” and let our pity to the afflicted draw out our prayer for them. It were a very lovely practice for you in the daily prayer of your closet every evening to think, “What miserable object have I seen to-day, for whom I may do well now to beseech the mercies of the Lord?” But this is not all; it is possible, nay probable, that you may do well to visit them; and when you visit them, comfort them; carry them some good word, which may raise gladness in a heart stooping with heaviness. And, lastly: Render them all the assistance which their necessities may require. Assist them with advice; assist them by applying to others on their behalf; and if it be needful, bestow your alms upon them; “Deal thy bread to the hungry;

bring to thy house the poor that are cast out; when thou seest the naked, cover him:" at least, exercise *Nazianzen's* charity—"If you have nothing else to bestow upon the miserable, bestow a tear or two upon their miseries." This little is better than nothing.

Would it be amiss for you, always to have lying by you, a list of the poor in your neighbourhood, or of those whose calamities may call for the assistance of the neighbourhood? Such a list would often furnish you with matter for useful conversation, when you are conversing with your friends, whom you may thus "provoke to love and to good works."

I will go on to say, be glad of opportunities to do good in your neighbourhood: yea, look out of them! lay hold on them with a rapturous assiduity. Be sorry for all the sad circumstances of your neighbour which render your doing good to them necessary; yet, be glad, if any one tell you of them. Thank him who gives you the information, as having therein done you a very great kindness. Let him know that he could not, by any means, have more gratified you. Show civility to your neighbours, whether by lending, by watching, or by any other method you are able, and be happy you can do so. Do this willingly, and with a pleasant countenance; "Let your wisdom cause your face to shine." Look upon your neighbours, not with a cloudy, but with a serene and shining face; and shed the rays of your courtesy upon them, with such affability, that they may see they are welcome to all you can do for them. Yea, stay not until you are told of opportunities to do good, but inquire after them and let the inquiry be

solicitous and unwearied. The incomparable pleasure of doing kindness, is worth a diligent inquiry.

There was a generous Pagan, who counted a day lost, in which he had not obliged some one—“ Friends, I have lost a day!” O Christian, let us try whether we cannot contrive to do something for one or other of our neighbours, every day that passes over our heads. Some do so; and with a better spirit than ever actuated Titus Vespasian. Thrice in the Scriptures we find the good angels rejoicing; it is always at the good of others; to rejoice in the good of others, and especially in doing good to them, is angelical goodness.

In devising for the good of your neighbourhood, a particular motion I have to make is, that you will consult their spiritual interests. Be concerned lest the “deceitfulness of sin” should destroy any of your neighbours. If there be any idle persons among them, endeavour to cure them of their idleness: do not nourish and harden them in it, but find employment for them; set them to work, and keep them to work; and then be otherwise as bountiful to them as you please.

If any poor children in the neighbourhood are without education, do not suffer them to remain so. Let care be taken that they may be taught to read their catechism, and the truths and ways of their only Saviour.

Once more. If any in the neighbourhood are taking to bad courses, affectionately and faithfully admonish them; if any are enemies to their own welfare, or that of their families, prudently dispense

your admonitions to them; if there be any prayerless families, never cease to entreat and exhort them, till you have persuaded them to set up the worship of God in their families. If there be any service of God or of his people, to which any one requires to be excited, tenderly excite him to it. Whatever snare you perceive any of them exposed to, be so kind as to warn them of their danger. By furnishing your neighbours with good books, and obtaining their promise to read them, who can tell how much good you may do them! It is possible, you may, in this way, with ingenuity and efficacy, administer such reproofs as your neighbours may need, and this will not hinder your conversation with them on the same subjects, in which they require your particular advice.

Finally, if there be any bad houses, which threaten to debauch and poison the neighbourhood; let your charity induce you to do all you can for the suppression of them.

That my proposal “to do good in the neighbourhood, and as a neighbour,” may be more fully formed and followed, I will conclude with reminding you that much *self-denial* will be necessary for the execution of it; you must be armed against all selfish and sinister intentions in these generous attempts. You must not make use of your good actions as persons who pour water into a pump, to draw up something for themselves. This may be the meaning of our Lord’s direction—“Lend, hoping for nothing again.” To *lend* a thing, is, properly, to *hope* that we shall receive it again; and this probably refers

to the ERANISMOS, or Collation, usual among the ancients, of which we find frequent mention in antiquity. If any man by a fire, shipwreck, or other disaster, had lost his estate, his friends used to lend him considerable sums to be repaid, not on a certain day, but when he should find himself able to repay it, without any inconvenience. Now persons were so selfish that they would rarely lend on such occasions, to any, unless they had some reason to hope they should again recover their money, and that the persons to whom it was lent, should also *requite* their kindness, if they should ever need it.

But then, there is something still higher required of you; that is, “Do good to those neighbours who have done hurt to you.” So saith our Saviour, “Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.” Yea, if any injury have been done you, consider it as a provocation to confer a benefit on him who hath done it. This is noble! It will bring much consolation. Another method might make you *even* with your froward neighbours; but this will place you *above* them all. It were nobly done. If at the close of the day when you are alone, you made a particular prayer to God for the pardon and prosperity of any person, by whom you have been injured through the day; and it would be nobly done, if, in looking over the catalogue of such as have injured you, you should be able to say, (the only intention that can justify your keeping a catalogue of them) There is not one of these, to whom I have not done, or at-

tempted to do, a kindness. Among the Jews themselves, the Hasideans made this daily prayer to God, "Forgive and pardon all who distress us." Christians, exceed them: yea, Justin Martyr tells us they did so in primitive times—"They prayed for their enemies."

But I will not stop here; something higher still is required; that is, Do good to those neighbours who will speak evil of you after you have done it. "Thus," saith our Saviour, "ye shall be the children of the Highest, who is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil." You will frequently find *Monsters of Ingratitude*; and if you distinguish a person, by doing for him more than you have done for others, it will be well if that very person do not injure you. O the wisdom of Divine Providence, in so ordering this, that you may learn to do good on a divine principle—good, merely for the sake of good! "Lord, increase our faith!" God forbid that a Christian faith should not come up to a Jewish.

There is a memorable passage in the Jewish records. There was a gentleman, by whose generosity many persons were constantly relieved. One day he asked the question: "Well, what do our people say to-day?" The answer was, "Why, the people partook of your kindness, and then blessed you very fervently." "Did they so?" said he, "Then I shall have no great reward for this day. Another time he asked the same question—"Well, and what say our people now?" They replied, "Alas! good Sir, the people enjoyed your kindness to-day, and afterwards they did nothing but rail at you."

“ Indeed!” said he, “ then for this day I am sure that God will give me a good and a great reward.” Though vile constructions and harsh invectives should be the present reward of your good offices for the neighbourhood; yet be not discouraged; “ Thy work shall be well rewarded,” saith the Lord. If your opportunities to do good extend no further, yet I will offer you a consolation, which one has thus elegantly expressed: “ He who praises God only on a ten-stringed instrument; whose authority extends no further than his family, nor his example beyond his neighbourhood, may have as thankful a heart here, and as high a place in the celestial choir hereafter, as the greatest monarch, who praises God upon an instrument of ten thousand strings, and upon the loud sounding organ, having as many millions of pipes as there are subjects under him.



SECTION XIII.

Private associations for promoting religion.

WE cannot dismiss the offices of good neighbourhood, without offering a proposal, to animate and regulate private meetings of religious persons, for the exercises of religion. It is very certain that where such private meetings have been maintained, and well conducted, the Christians who have composed them have, like so many “ coals of the altar,” kept one another alive, and maintained a lively

Christianity in the neighbourhood. Such societies have been strong and tried instruments, to uphold the power of godliness. The giving up of such societies has been accompanied with a visible decay of godliness: the less they have been loved or regarded in any place, the less has godliness flourished.

The rules observed by some ASSOCIATED FAMILIES may be offered with advantage on this occasion. They will show us what good may be done in a neighbourhood by such societies.

1. It is proposed, That about twelve families agree to meet (the men and their wives) at each other's houses in rotation, once in a fortnight or a month, as shall be thought most proper, and spend a suitable time together, in religious exercises.

2. The exercises of religion proper for such a meeting are: for the brethren in rotation to commence and conclude with prayer; for psalms to be sung; and for sermons to be repeated.

3. It were desirable, for the ministers, now and then, to be present at the meeting, and pray with them, instruct and exhort them, as they may see occasion.

4. Candidates for the ministry may do well to perform some of their first offices here, and thereby prepare themselves for further services.

5. One special design of the meeting should be, with united prayers, to ask the blessing of heaven on the family where they are assembled, as well as on the rest; that with the wondrous force of united prayers, "two or three may agree on earth, to ask such things" as are to be done for the families, by "our Father which is in heaven."

6. The members of such a society should consider themselves as bound up in one "bundle of love;" and count themselves obliged, by very close and strong bonds, to be serviceable to one another. If any one in the society should fall into affliction, all the rest should presently study to relieve and support the afflicted person in every possible manner. If any one should fall into temptation, the rest should watch over him, and, with the "spirit of meekness," with "meekness of wisdom," endeavour to recover him. It should be like a law of the Medes and Persians to the whole society—that they will, upon all just occasions, affectionately give, and as affectionately receive mutual admonitions of any thing that they may see amiss in each other.

7. It is not easy to reckon the good offices which such a society may do to many others besides its own members. The prayers of such well-disposed societies may fetch down marvellous favours from heaven on their pastors; whose lives may be prolonged, their gifts augmented, their graces brightened, and their labours prospered, in answer to the supplications of such associated families. The interests of religion may be also greatly promoted in the whole flock, by their fervent supplications; and the Spirit of Grace mightily poured out upon the rising generation; yea, all the land may be the better for them.

8. The society may, on special occasions, set apart whole days for fasting and prayer before the Lord. The success of such days has been sometimes very remarkable, and the savour which they

have left on the minds of the saints who have engaged in them, has been such, as greatly to prepare them to “show forth the death of the Lord,” at his holy table, yea, to meet their own death, when God has been pleased to appoint it.

9. It is very certain, that the devotions and also the conferences carried on in such a society, will not only have a wonderful tendency to produce the “comfort of love” in the hearts of good men towards one another; but their ability will also thereby be much increased, to serve many valuable interests.

10. Unexpected opportunities to do good will arise to such a society, especially if such a plan as the following were adopted:—That the men who compose the society, would now and then spend half an hour by themselves, in considering that question, *What good is there to be done?* More particularly,

Who are to be called upon to do their duty, in coming to special ordinances?

Who are in any peculiar adversity; and what may be done to comfort them?

What contention or variance may there be among our neighbours; and what may be done for healing it?

In what open transgressions do any live? and who shall be desired to carry faithful admonitions to them?

Finally, What is there to be done for the advantage and advancement of our holy religion?

In the primitive times of Christianity, much use was made of a saying, which was ascribed to Matthias the Apostle: “If the neighbour of an elect or godly

man sin, the godly man himself has also sinned." That saying was intended to point out the obligation of neighbours watchfully to admonish one another. O how much may Christians associated in religious societies do, by watchful and faithful admonitions, to prevent their being "partakers in other men's sins!" The man who shall produce and promote such societies, will do an incalculable service to the neighbourhood.

He shall also do much good who shall promote another sort of society, namely, that of **YOUNG MEN ASSOCIATED**.

These, duly managed, and countenanced by the Pastor, have been incomparable nurseries to the churches. Young men are hereby preserved from very many temptations, rescued from the "paths of the Destroyer," confirmed in the "right ways of the Lord," and much prepared for such religious exercises as will be expected from them, when they shall themselves become householders.

I will here offer some orders which have been observed in some such societies.

1. Let there be two hours at a time set apart, and let two prayers be offered by the members in rotation; between which, let there be the singing of a psalm, and the repetition of a sermon.

2. Let all the members of the society resolve to be charitably watchful over one another; never to divulge each other's infirmities; always to give information of every thing which may appear to call for admonition, and to take it kindly when they are admonished.

3. Let all who are to be admitted as members of the society, be accompanied by two or three of the rest, to the minister of the place, that they may receive his holy counsel and directions, and that every thing may be done with his approbation; after which, let their names be added to the list.

4. If any person thus enrolled among them, fall into a scandalous iniquity, let the rebukes of the society be dispensed to him; and let them forbid him to come among them any more, until he suitably express and give evidence of repentance.

5. Let the list be once a quarter called over; and then, if it appear that any of the society have much absented themselves, let some of the members be sent to inquire the reason of their absence; and if no reason be given, but such as intimates an apostacy from good beginnings, and if they remain obstinate after kind and faithful admonitions, let them be dismissed.

6. Once in three months, let there be a collection, if necessary, out of which the necessary expenses of the society shall be defrayed, and the rest be employed for such pious uses as may be agreed on.

7. Once in two months, let the whole time be devoted to supplications for the conversion and salvation of the rising generation; and particularly for the success of the Gospel in that congregation to which the society belongs.

8. Let the whole society be exceedingly careful that their conversation, while they are together, after the other services of religion are over, have nothing in it, that may have any taint of backbiting or vanity,

or the least relation to the affairs of government, or to things which do not concern them, and do not serve the interests of holiness. But let their conversation be wholly on matters of religion, and those also, not disputable and controversial subjects, but points of practical piety. With this view, questions may be proposed, on which, in order, each may deliver his sentiments; or, they may go through a catechism; and every one, in rotation, may hear all the rest recite the answers; or they may otherwise be directed by their Pastor, to spend their time profitably.

9. Let every person in the society consider it as a special task incumbent on him, to look out for some other hopeful young man, and to use all proper means to engage him in the resolutions of godliness, until he also shall be united to the society. And when a society shall in this manner be increased to a fit number, let it form other similar societies, who may hold a useful correspondence with each other.

The man who shall be the instrument of establishing such a society in a place, cannot comprehend what a long and rich train of good consequences may result from his exertions.

And they who shall in such a society carry on the duties of Christianity, and sing the praises of a glorious Christ, will have in themselves a blessed earnest that they shall be associated together in the heavenly city, and in the blessedness that shall never have an end.

SECTION XIV.

Proposals to the Ministers of the Gospel for doing good.

HITHERTO my discourse has been a more general address to persons of all conditions and capacities. I have proposed few devices, but those which are equally suitable to private persons, as to others. We will now proceed to address those who are in more public situations. And because no men in the world are under such obligations to do good as the MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL, “it is necessary that the word of God should be first spoken unto them.”

Certainly they who are “men of God,” should be *always at work for God*. Certainly, they who are dedicated to the special service of the Lord, should never be satisfied, but when they are in the most sensible manner serving him. Certainly, they whom the Great King has brought nearer to himself than other men, should be more unwearied than others, in endeavouring to advance his kingdom. They whom the word of God calls angels, ought certainly to be of an angelical disposition; evermore disposed to do good, like the good angels;—ministers ever on the wing to “do His pleasure.” It is no improper proposal, that they would seriously set themselves to think, “What are the points wherein I should be wise and do good, like an angel of God? Or, if an angel were in the flesh, as I am, and in

such a post as I am, what methods may I justly imagine that he would use to glorify God?" What wonderful offices of kindness would the good angels delight to do for such their fellow servants!" We must call upon our people, "to be ready to every good work." We must go before them in it, and by our own readiness at every good work, show them the manner of doing it. "Timothy," said the Apostle, "be thou an example of the believers." It is a true maxim, and you cannot think too frequently of it—"The life of a minister is the life of his ministry." And there is another maxim of the same kind—"The sins of teachers are the teachers of sins."

Allow me, sirs, to observe, that your opportunities to do good are singular. Your want of worldly riches, and generally of any means of obtaining them, is compensated by the opportunities to do good, with which you are *enriched*. The true spirit of a minister will cause you to consider yourselves *enriched*, when those precious things are conferred upon you, and to prize them above any lands, or money, or temporal possessions. "Let my abundance consist in works; I heartily allow an abundance of riches to whoever desires them." Well said, brave Melancthon!

It is to be hoped, that the main principle which actuated you, when you first entered upon the evangelical ministry, was a hope to do good in the world. If that principle was then too feeble in its operation, it is time that it should now operate more vigorously, and that a zeal for doing good should now "eat up" your time, your thought, your all.

That you may be good men, and be mightily inspired and assisted from heaven to do good, it is needful that you should be *men of prayer*. This I presume will be allowed. In pursuance of this intention, it appears very necessary that you should occasionally set apart whole days for prayer and fasting in secret, and thus perfume your studies with extraordinary devotions: they may be also accompanied with the giving of alms, to go up as a memorial before the Lord. By such means, you may obtain, together with the pardon of your unfruitfulness (for which, alas! we have often occasion to apply to the great sacrifice,) a vast improvement in piety and sanctity; which is of great importance to form a useful minister: “Sanctify them in (or for) thy truth,” said our Saviour. They should be *sanctified*, who would become instruments for the propagation of the truth. You may obtain such an influence from heaven upon your minds, and such an indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as will render you grave, discreet, humble, generous, and men worthy to be “greatly beloved.” You may obtain those influences from above that will dispel the enchantments, and conquer the temptations which might otherwise do much mischief in your neighbourhood. You may obtain direction and assistance from heaven for the many services to be performed, in the discharge of your ministry. Finally, you may fetch down unknown blessings on your flocks, and on the whole people, for whom you are to be the Lord’s remembrancers.

Your public prayers, if well composed, and well adapted, will be excellent engines to “do good.” The

more judicious, the more affectionate, the more argumentative you are in them, the more you will teach your people to pray. And I would ask, how can you prosecute any intention of piety among your people more effectually, than by letting them see you praying, weeping, striving, and in an importunate agony before the Lord, that you may obtain the blessing for them?

The more appropriately you represent the various cases of your people in your public prayers, the more devoutly sensible you will make them of their own cases; and it will wonderfully comfort them.

The prayers you offer at BAPTISMS, may be so managed as greatly to awaken in the minds of the people, a sense of their baptismal obligations. What effusions of the Holy Spirit may your people experience, if your prayers at the table of the Lord, are as Nazianzen describes his father's to have been—
Made by the Holy Spirit of God.

Your sermons, if they be well studied, as they ought to be, from the consideration of their being offerings to God, the great King, as well as to his people, will “do good” beyond all expression. The manner of your studying them, may very much contribute to it. It is necessary that you study the condition of your flocks; and bring them such truths, as will best suit their present circumstances. In order to this, you will observe their condition, their faults, their snares, and their griefs; that you may speak a word in season;” and that, if any thing remarkable occur among your people, you may make a suitable improvement of such a providence. You may divide your people

into classes, and consider what lessons of piety may be inculcated on the communicants, on those who are under the bonds of the covenant; what should be addressed to the aged; to the rich, to the poor, to the worldly, and to those who are in public situations; what consolations to the afflicted; and what instruction to each, with respect to their personal callings. Above all, the YOUNG must not be forgotten; you will employ all possible means to cultivate early piety. Yea you may do well to make it understood, that you would willingly be informed, by any persons or societies in your flocks, what subjects they may wish to hear expounded. By giving them sermons on such subjects, you will at least very much edify those who requested them; and it is probable, many other persons.

In studying your sermons, it might be profitable, at the close of every paragraph, to pause, and endeavour with ejaculations to heaven and self-examination, to feel some impression of the truths contained in that paragraph on your own soul, before you proceed any farther. By such a practice, the hours which you spend in composing a sermon, will prove to you so many hours of devotion: the day in which you have made a sermon, will even leave upon your mind such a savour as a day of prayer commonly does. When you come to preach the sermon, you will do it with great liberty and assurance; and the truths thus prepared will be likely to come with more sensible warmth and life upon the auditory;—from the heart and to the heart! A famous preacher used to say, “I never dare to preach a sermon to others,

till I have first got some good by it myself." And I will add, that is the most likely way to render it useful to others. Let the saying of the ancients be remembered, "He who trifles in the pulpit shall wail in hell;" and let the saying of a modern not be forgotten, "Cold preachers make bold sinners."

How much good may be done, sirs, by your VISITS! It would be well for you to impose it as a law upon yourselves, "Never to make an unprofitable visit." Even when you pay a visit merely for the sake of civility or entertainment, it would be easy for you to observe this law: "That you will drop some sentence or other, which may be good for the use of edifying, before you leave the company." There have been pastors who were able to say, they scarcely ever went into a house among their people, without some essay or purpose to do good in the house before they left it.

The same rule might very well be observed with such as come to us, as well as with those whom we visit. Why should any of our people ever come near us, without our contriving to speak something to them that may be for their advantage? Peter Martyr having spent many days in Bucer's house, published this report of his visit—"I dare affirm, that I always left his table more learned than before." I make no doubt that the observation of this rule may be very consistent with an affable, and, as far as is suitable, a facetious conversation. But let it be remembered, that "What are but trifles in the mouth of the people, are blasphemies in the mouth of the priest."

But, sirs, in your visits you will take a particular notice of the widow, the orphan, and the afflicted, and afford them all possible relief. The bills put up in your congregation will assist you to find out who need your visits.

If any peculiar calamity hath befallen any of them, it is a suitable time to visit such a person, to direct and persuade him to hear the voice of God in the calamity, and to comply with the intent and errand upon which it comes.

Another very proper time for a visit is, when any special deliverance has been received. Those should be admonished to think of some remarkable manner in which they may express their thankfulness for the deliverance: nor should you leave them, until such a determination be made.

The handmaids of the Lord, who are near their hour, may on this account, be very proper objects for your visits. At such a time they are in much distress; the approaching hour of trouble threatens to be their dying hour. The counsels that shall exactly instruct them how to prepare for a dying hour, will now, if ever, be attentively listened to: and there are precious promises of God, upon which they should also now be taught to live. To bring them these promises will be the work of a "good angel," and will cause you to be welcomed by them as such.

CATECHISING is a noble exercise; it will insensibly bring you into a way to "do good," that surpasses all expression. Your sermons will be very much lost upon an uncatechised people. Nor will

your people mind so much what you address to them from the pulpit, as what you speak to them in the more condescending and familiar way of applying the answers of the catechism. Never did any minister who catechised much repent of his labour; thousands have blessed God for the wonderful success which has attended it. The most honourable man of God should consider it no abasement or abatement of his honour, to stoop to this way of teaching. Yea, some eminent pastors in their old age, when other labours have been too hard for them, have, like the famous old Gerson, wholly given themselves up to catechising; though there have been others, of whom that renowned chancellor of Paris, in his treatise, "Of Drawing Children to Christ," makes a sad complaint: "So degrading is it now esteemed by many, if any of our divines, or celebrated literary men, or dignitaries in the church, apply himself to his work."

Those pastors who so love a glorious Christ as to regard his word, "Feed my lambs," will vary their methods of carrying on this exercise, according to their various circumstances. Some have chosen the way of pastoral visits; and from the memorials of one who long since did so, and afterwards left his advice to his son upon this subject, I will transcribe the following passages on Pastoral Visits:—

You may resolve to visit all the families belonging to your congregation, taking one afternoon in a week for that purpose: you may give previous notice to each family, that you intend to visit them. And on visiting a family, you may endeavour, with as

forcible and respectful addresses as possible, to treat with every person particularly about their everlasting interests.

First, you may discourse with the elder people upon such points as you think most proper for them. Especially charge them to maintain family-prayer; and obtain their promise of establishing it, if it has been hitherto neglected; yea, pray with them, that you may show them how to pray, as well as obtain their purposes for it. You may likewise press upon them the care of instructing their children and servants in the holy religion of our Saviour, to bring them up for him.

If any with whom you should have spoken, are absent, you may frequently leave one or two solemn texts of the sacred Scripture, which you may think most suitable for them; desiring some one present to remember you kindly to them, and from you to recommend to them that oracle of God.

You may then call for the children and servants; and putting to them such questions of the catechism as you think fit; you may, from the answers, make as lively applications to them as possible, for engaging them to the fear of God. You may frequently obtain from them promises relating to secret prayer, reading of the Scriptures, and obedience to their parents and masters. You may also frequently set before them the proposals of the New Covenant, after you have laboured for their conviction and awakening; till with floods of tears, they expressly declare their consent to, and their acceptance of the proposals of the covenant of grace, which you have set before them.

Some of the younger people you may order to bring their Bibles, and read to you from thence two or three verses, to which you may direct them: this will try, whether or not they can read well. You may then encourage them to think on such things as you remark from the passage for their admonition, and never to forget those "faithful sayings" of God. You may sometimes leave with them some serious question, which you may tell them they shall not answer to you but to themselves: such as, "What have I been doing ever since I came into the world, about the great errand upon which God sent me into the world?" "If God should now call me out of the world, what would become of me throughout eternal ages?" And, "Have I ever yet by faith carried a perishing soul to my only Saviour, both for righteousness and salvation?"

You will enjoy a most wonderful presence of God with you, in this undertaking; and will seldom leave a family without many tears of devotion shed by all sorts of persons in it. As you can seldom visit more than four or five families in an afternoon, the work may be as laborious as any part of your ministry.

My son, I advise you to set a special value on that part of your ministry, which is to be discharged in pastoral visits. You will not only do good, but also get much good, by your conversation with all sorts of persons, in thus visiting them "from house to house." And you will never more "walk in the Spirit," than when you thus walk among your flock, to do what good you can amongst them.

In your visits an incredible deal of good may be

done, by distributing little books of piety. You may, without much expense, be furnished with such books to suit all occasions: books for the old and for the young—for persons under afflictions or desertions—for persons under the power of particular vices—for those who neglect household piety—for sea-faring persons—for the erroneous—for those whom you would quicken and prepare to approach the table of the Lord—for those who come to have their children baptized; and catechisms for the ignorant. You may powerfully enforce your admonitions, by leaving suitable books in the hands of those with whom you have conversed; you may give them to understand, that you would be still considered as conversing with them by these books, after you have left them. And in this way you may speak more than you have time to do in any personal interview; yea sometimes, more than you would wish. By good books a salt of piety is scattered about a neighbourhood.

Pastors, uphold and cherish good SCHOOLS in your towns! But then be prevailed upon occasionally to visit the schools. That holy man, Mr. Thomas White, made a proposal, “That able and zealous ministers would sometimes preach at the schools; because preaching is the converting ordinance; and the children will be obliged to hear with more attention than they often do in the public congregation; and the ministers might here condescend to such expressions as might work most upon them, though not so fit for a public congregation.” I have read the following account of one who was

awakened by this advice to do such things: “ At certain times he successively visited the schools. When he came to a school, he first offered a prayer for the children, as much adapted to their condition, as he could make it. Then he went through the catechism, or as much of it as he thought necessary; making the several children repeat the several answers: but he divided the questions, that every article in the answers might be understood by them; expecting them to answer, Yes, or No, to each question. He also put to them such questions as would make them see and own their duties, and often express a resolution to perform them. Then he preached a short sermon to them, exceedingly plain, on some suitable Scripture, with all possible ingenuity and earnestness, in order to excite their affectionate attention. After this, he singled out a number of scholars, perhaps eight or ten, and bid each of them turn to a certain Scripture, which he made them read to the whole school; giving them to see by his brief remarks upon it, that it particularly related to something which it concerned the children to take notice of. Then he concluded with a short prayer for a blessing on the school and on the tutors.”

While we are upon this subject, I would request that you visit the *poor* as well as the *rich*; and often mention the condition of the poor, in your conversation with the rich. Keep, Sir, a list of them; and recollect, that though the wind does not feed any body, yet it turns the mill which grinds the corn, which may feed the poor. When conversing with

the rich, you may do this for the poor who are on your list.

In visiting the poor, you will take occasion to dispense your alms among them. These alms, you will, with as much contrivance as possible, make the vehicles for conveying to them the admonitions of piety; yea, means and instruments of obtaining from them some engagements to perform certain exercises of piety. All ministers are not alike furnished for alms, but all should be disposed for them. They that have small families, or large interests, ought to be shining examples of liberality to the poor, and pour down their alms upon them, like the showers of heaven. All should endeavour to do what they can in this way. What says Nazianzen of his reverend father's alms-deeds? They will find that the more they do (provided it be done with discretion) the more they are able to do; the loaves will multiply in the distribution. Sirs, this bounty of yours to the poor, will procure a great esteem and success to your ministry. It will be an irrefragable demonstration that you believe what you speak concerning all the duties of Christianity, but particularly of liberality, a faithful discharge of our stewardship, and a mind weaned from the love of this world: it will demonstrate your belief of a future state; it will vindicate you from the imputation of a worldly man: it will embolden and fortify you, with much assurance, when you call upon others to do good, and to abound in those sacrifices with which God is well-pleased.

You will do well to keep a watchful eye on the

disorders which may arise and increase in your neighbourhood. Among other ways of suppressing these things, you may form societies for the suppression of disorders: obtain a fit number of prudent, pious, well-affected men, to associate with this intention, and employ their discretion and activity, for your assistance in these holy purposes.

One of the rules given for the minister is, "Give thyself to reading." Sirs, let Gregory's Pastoral, and Bowles's Pastor Evangelicus, form a portion of your reading. And then, if you read Church History much, (particularly the *Prudentia Veteris Ecclesiæ*, written by Vedelius,) and especially the lives of both ancient and modern divines, you will frequently find methods to do good, exemplified. You will then consider how far you may "go and do likewise."

How serviceable may ministers be, to one another, and to all the churches, in their several associations! Many things of general advantage to all their flocks might be devised. Indeed, it is a pity that there should ever be the least occasional "meeting of ministers," without some useful thing proposed in it.

Nero took it very ill, that Vespasian slept at his music: it is very much to be wished that the sin of sleeping at sermons were more guarded against, and your sleepy hearers reprov'd; if indeed they may be called *hearers*, who miserably lose the good of your ministry, and perhaps the good which you might have particularly designed for them, who, at the time of your speaking what you prepared for them, were seized with a horrible spirit of slumber before

your eyes. Will no vinegar help against the narcotics that Satan has given to your poor Eutychuses? or cannot you bring that civility into fashion among your hearers, to wake one another?

Finally, After all the generous essays and labours to do good that may fill your lives, your people will probably treat you with ingratitude. Your salaries will be meaner than even those at Geneva. They will neglect you; they will oppress you; they will withhold from you what they have promised, and you have expected. You have now one more opportunity to do good, and so to glorify your Saviour. Your patience, O ye tried servants of God, your patience will do it wonderfully! To bear evil, is to do good. The more patient you are under ill usage, the more you exhibit a glorious Christ to your people, in your conformity to your adorable Saviour. The more conformed you are to Him, the more prepared you are, perhaps, for some amendment in your condition in this world—most certainly for the rewards of the heavenly world, when you shall appear before the Lord, who says, “I know thy works and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience.”

This was the character, you know, of Ignatius, “that he carried Christ about with him, in his heart:” and I will say this, if to represent a glorious Christ to the view, and love and admiration of all people, be the grand intention of your life; if you be a star to lead men to Christ; if you are exquisitely studious, that the holiness and yet the gentleness of a glorious Christ may shine in your conver-

sation; if in your public discourses you do with rapture bring in the mention of a glorious Christ in every paragraph, and on every occasion where he is to be spoken of, and if in your private conversation you contrive to insinuate something of his glories and praises, wherever it may be decently introduced: lastly, if when you find that a glorious Christ is the more considered and acknowledged by your means, it fills you with wonderful satisfaction, with “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” and you exclaim, “Lord, this is my desired happiness!” truly, Sirs, you then live to good purpose—you do good emphatically!

There was a worthy minister, whom the great Cranmer designed for preferment, and he gave this reason of his design—“He seeks nothing, he longs for nothing, he dreams about nothing, but Jesus Christ.” Verily, such “men of Christ” are “men of God;” they are the favourites of heaven, and shall be favoured with opportunities to do good above any men in the world; they are the “men whom the king of heaven will delight to honour,” and they are the *Gaons* of Christianity.

If I reserve one thing to be mentioned after *finally*, it is because I doubt whether it should be mentioned at all. In some reformed churches they do not permit a minister of the gospel to practice as a physician, because either of these callings is generally sufficient to employ him fully, who faithfully follows it: but, the priests of old, who preserved in the archives of their temples the records of the cures which had been thankfully acknowledged

there, communicated from thence directions for cures in similar cases among their neighbours. Nor has it been an uncommon thing in later ages for clergymen to be physicians. Not only such monks as Aegidius Atheniensis and Constantius Afer, but bishops, as Bochelt and Albicus, have appeared in that character. Thus Herbert advises that his "Country minister" (or at least his wife,) should be a kind of physician to the flock; and we have known many a country minister prove a great blessing to his flock by being such. If a minister attempt any thing in this way, let him always make it a means of doing spiritual good to his people. It is an angelical conjunction, when the ministers of Christ, who do his pleasure, become also physicians and Raphaels to their people. In a more populous place, however, you will probably choose rather to procure some religious and accomplished physician to settle in your neighbourhood, and make medical studies only your recreation; yet with a design to communicate to your Luke whatever you meet with in reading worthy of his notice, and at times unite your counsels with him for the good of his patients. Thus you may save the lives of many, who themselves may know nothing of your care for them.

SECTION XV.

Schoolmasters have many opportunities for doing Good.

FROM the tribe of Levi, let us proceed with our proposals to the tribe of Simeon; from which there has been a frequent ascent to the former. The SCHOOLMASTER has many opportunities of doing good. God make him sensible of his obligations! We read, that “the little ones have their angels.” It is hard work to keep a school; but it is a good work, and it may be so managed as to be like the work of angels: the tutors of the children may be like their “tutelar angels.” Melchior Adams properly styled it—“An office most laborious, yet most pleasing to God.”

Tutors! will you not regard the children under your wing, as committed to you by the glorious Lord with a charge of this import? “Take them, and bring them up for me, and I will pay you your wages.” Whenever a new scholar comes under your tuition, you may say, “Here, my Lord sends me another object, for whom I may do something, that he may be useful in the world.” O suffer little children to come unto you, and consider what you may do, that of such may be the kingdom of heaven!

Sirs, let it be your grand intention—to instil into their minds the documents of piety. Esteem it as

their chief interest, and yours also, that they may so know the Holy Scriptures as to become wise to salvation, and know the Saviour, whom to know is life eternal. Embrace every opportunity of dropping some honey from the rock upon them. Happy the children, and as happy the master, where they who relate the history of their conversion to serious piety may say, "There was a schoolmaster who brought us to Christ." You have been told—"Certainly it is a nobler work to make the little ones know their Saviour, than know their letters." The lessons of Jesus are nobler things than the lessons of Cato. The sanctifying transformation of their souls would be a nobler acquirement than to be able to construe Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. He was a good schoolmaster, of whom the following testimony was given:—

"Young Austin wept, when he saw Dido dead;
 Though not a tear for a dead soul he had.
 Our Master would not let us be so vain,
 But us from *Virgil* did to *David* train.
Textor's Epistles would not clothe our souls;
Paul's too we learned; we went to school at Paul's."

CATECHISING should be a *frequent*, at least a *weekly* exercise in the school; and it should be conducted in the most edifying, applicatory, and admonitory manner. In some places, we are informed, the magistrate permits no person to keep a school, unless he produces a testimonial of his ability, and particularly of his disposition to perform the work of *Religious Catechising*.

Dr. Reynolds, in a funeral sermon for an eminent schoolmaster, has the following passage, worthy

to be written in letters of gold:—"If grammar-schools have holy and learned men set over them, not only the brains, but also the souls of the children might there be enriched, and the work both of learning and of grace be early commenced in them."

In order to this, let it be proposed, that you not only pray with your scholars daily, but also take occasion, from the public sermons, and from remarkable occurrences in your neighbourhood, frequently to inculcate the lessons of piety on the children.

Tutors in the colleges may do well to converse with each of their pupils alone, with all possible solemnity and affection, concerning their internal state, concerning repentance for sin, and faith in Jesus Christ, and to bring them to express resolutions of serious piety. Sirs, you may do a thousand things to render your pupils orthodox in sentiment, regular in practice, and qualified for public service.

I have read this experiment of a tutor. He made it his constant practice in every recitation, to take occasion, from something or other that occurred, to drop at least one sentence that had a tendency to promote the fear of God in their hearts. This sometimes cost him a great deal of study, but the good effect sufficiently recompensed him for it.

I should be pleased to see certain classical authors received into the grammar-schools, which are not generally used there, such as *Castalio* in the Latin tongue, and *Posselius* in the Greek; and I could wish, with some modern writers, that "a north-west passage" were found for the attainment of Latin; that instead of a journey which might be des-

patched in a few days, they might not be obliged to wander, like the children of Israel, many years in the wilderness. I might state the complaint of Austin, "that little boys are taught in the schools the filthy actions of the Pagan gods, for giving an account of which," said he, "I was called a boy of promise;" or the complaint of Luther, "that our schools are Pagan more than Christian." I might mention what a late writer says—"I knew an aged and eminent schoolmaster, who, after keeping a school about fifty years, said with a sad countenance, that it was a great trouble to him that he had spent so much time in reading Pagan authors to his scholars; and wished it were customary to read such a book as Duport's verses on Job, rather than Homer, &c. I pray God, to put it into the hearts of a wise parliament to purge our schools; that instead of learning vain fictions, and filthy stories, they may become acquainted with the word of God, and with books containing grave sayings, and things which may make them truly wise and useful in the world." But I presume little notice will be taken of such proposals as these. I might as well not mention them, and it is with despair that I do mention them.

Among the occasions for promoting piety in the scholars, one in the *Writing Schools* deserves peculiar notice. I have read of an atrocious sinner who was converted to piety, by accidentally seeing the following sentence of Austin written in a window:—"He who has promised pardon to the penitent sinner, has not promised repentance to the presumptuous one." Who can tell what good may be

done to the young scholar, by a sentence in his copy-book? Let their copies be composed of sentences worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance—of sentences which shall contain the brightest maxims of wisdom in them, worthy to be written on the fleshly tables of their hearts, to be graven with the point of a diamond there. God has blessed such sentences to many scholars; they have done them good all their days.

In the Grammar School also, the scholars may be directed, for their exercises, to turn into Latin such passages as may be useful for their instruction and establishment in the principles of Christianity, and furnish them with supplies from “the tower of David.” Why may not their letters be on such subjects as may be friendly to the interests of virtue?

I will add, it is very desirable to manage the *Discipline* of the school by means of rewards as well as punishments. Many methods may be invented of rewarding the diligent and deserving; and a boy of an ingenuous temper encouraged by the expectation of reward, will do his best. You esteem Quintilian. Hear him: “By all means be sparing of stripes, and rather urge on the boy by praise, or by the distinctions conferred on others.” If a fault must be punished, let instruction, both to the delinquent and to the spectator, accompany the correction. Let the odious nature of the sin which required the correction be declared; and let nothing be done in passion, but with every mark of tenderness and concern.

Ajax Flagellifer may be read in the school; he is not fit to be the master of it. Let it not be said of the scholars, they were brought up in "the school of Tyrannus." Pliny says, that bears are the better for beating: more fit to have the management of bears than of ingenuous boys, are those masters who cannot give a bit of learning without giving a blow with it. Send them to be tutors of the famous Lithuanian school at Samourgan. The harsh, fierce, Orbilian way of treating children, too commonly used in the schools, is a dreadful curse of God on our miserable offspring, who are born "children of wrath." It is boasted sometimes of a schoolmaster, that such a brave man had his education under him; but it is never said, how many who might have been brave men, have been ruined by him; how many brave wits have been dispirited, confounded, murdered by his barbarous way of managing them. I have met with the following address, and I will conclude with it as one of great importance:—

"Tutors, be strict; but yet be gentle too;
 Don't by fierce cruelties fair hopes undo.
 Dream not, that they who are to learning slow,
 Will mend by arguments in *Ferio*.
 Who keeps the *Golden Fleece*, O, let him not
 A *Dragon* be, though he *three tongues* have got.
 Why can you not to learning find the way,
 But through the province of *Severia* ?
 'Twas *Moderatus* who taught *Origen*,
 A youth who proved one of the best of men.
 The lads with honour first, and reason, rule;
 Blows are but for the refractory fool.
 But, O, first teach them their great God to fear;
 An *Euge*, so from God and them you'll hear."

SECTION XVI.

Proposals to Churches for doing good.

WE have already proposed to the PASTORS of Churches various ways of doing good; we shall now lay before the CHURCHES some proposals of well-doing, in which they may do well to join their pastors.

DAYS OF PRAYER, occasionally observed by the churches, for the express purpose of obtaining the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God on the rising generation, have had a marvellous efficacy in producing a religious posterity in the land, and “a seed accounted to the Lord for a generation.” Such an acknowledgment of the necessity and excellency of supernatural grace, would be a very probable preparative and introduction to the communication of it. And when the children see their parents thus earnestly seeking the grace of God for them, it would have a natural tendency to awaken them to an earnest seeking of it for themselves. The sermons also preached by the ministers on such solemn occasions, would, probably, be very awakening ones. That this proposal has been so little attended to, is lamentable and remarkable; but—“They all slumbered and slept.”

There is another proposal which has been tendered to all our churches, and attended to in some of them:—

That the several churches having, in an instrument proper for the purpose, made a catalogue of such things as have indisputably been found amiss among them, do with all seriousness and solemnity pass their votes. That they account such things to be very offensive evils, and that, renouncing all dependence on their own strength to avoid such evils, they humbly implore the help of divine grace to assist them in watching against the said evils both in themselves and in one another: and that the communicants frequently reflect upon these their acknowledgments and protestations, as perpetual monitors to them, to prevent the miscarriages by which too many professors are so easily overtaken.

It has been considered, that such humble recognitions of duty will not only be accepted by our God, as declarations for him, upon which he will declare for us; but also, that they are the way of the new covenant, for obtaining help to perform our duty.

A particular church may be an illustrious pillar of the truth, by considering what important truths, and what part of the kingdom of God, may call for special, signal, open testimonies; and they may excite their pastors to the composing, and assist them in the publishing of such testimonies. It is probable that God would accompany such testimonies with a marvellous efficacy to suppress growing errors and evils.

A proposal of this nature may be worthy of some consideration:—

1. It were desirable that every particular church should be furnished with a stock, that may be a constant and ready fund for the propagation of religion;

and that every minister would use his best endeavours, both by his own contribution, according to his ability, and by applying to well-disposed persons under his influence, to increase the stock; either in the way of collections publicly made at certain periods, or in the way of more private and occasional communications.

2. This evangelical treasury may be lodged in the hands of the deacons of the respective churches in which it is collected; who are to keep exact accounts of the receipts and disbursements; and let nothing be drawn from it, without the knowledge and consent of the church to which it belongs.

3. The first and main intention of this evangelical treasury is to be, the propagation of religion: and therefore, when any good attempts are to be made on unevangelized places, the neighbouring ministers may consult each of the churches, what proportion they may allow out of their evangelical treasury, towards the support of such a noble undertaking.

4. This evangelical treasury may be capable of being applied to other pious uses, and especially to such as any particular church may think proper, for the service of religion in their own vicinity. Such as the sending of Bibles and catechisms to be dispersed among the poor, where it may be thought necessary. Likewise, giving assistance to new congregations, in their first attempts to build meeting-houses for the public worship of God with scriptural purity, may be one object for this evangelical treasury.

Query—Our churches have their sacramental col-

lections, and it is not fit indeed that they should be without them. The primitive Christians did the same: Justin Martyr informs us of the "collections," and Tertullian of the "gifts of piety" which were made on these occasions. May not our churches do well to augment their liberality in their grateful and joyful collections at the table of the Lord, and to resolve that what is now collected shall be part of their evangelical treasury; not only for the supply of the table and the relief of the poor, but also for such other services to the kingdom of God as they may, from time to time see cause to countenance?



SECTION XVII.

Magistrates possess much power for doing good.

FROM ecclesiastical circumstances, which, in such a subject as the present, may with the utmost propriety claim the precedency, we will make a transition to POLITICAL. Now—"Touch the mountains and they will smoke!" O when shall wisdom visit princes and nobles, and all the judges of the earth, and inspire them to preserve the due lustre of their character, by a desire to do good on the earth, and a study to glorify the God of heaven! The opportunities which rulers possess for doing good, are so evident, so numerous, and so extensive, that the person who addresses them, cannot but be overwhelmed with some confusion of thought, where to

begin, when to conclude, or how to assign a fit order to his addresses. Indeed, the very definition of government is, "A care of others' safety." Sirs, from whom have you received this power? "You could have no power at all, except it were given you from above." Certainly what is thus received from God, should be employed for God. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear," lest you forget and offend him who has made you what you are. Kiss the feet of the Son of God, lest he be displeased at the neglect of your duty. Do not kindle the wrath of him who is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." What is the name of a magistrate? The name which he that made him has given him is, "the minister of God for good." His empty name will produce a sad crime, if he do not set himself to "do good," as far as ever he can extend his influence. Is he a vicegerent for God, and shall he do nothing for God? Gross absurdity! black ingratitude! Is he one of those whom the word of God has called gods? Gods who do no good, are strange gods, not gods, but another name too horrible to be mentioned, belongs to them: such rulers we may call gods "that have mouths but they speak not; eyes but they see not; noses but they smell not; and hands but they handle not!" Government is called, "The ordinance of God;" and as the administration of it is to avoid those illegalities which would render it no other than a violation of the ordinance; so it should vigorously pursue those noble and blessed

ends for which it is ordained—the good of mankind. Unworthy of all their other flourishing titles, be they what they will, are those rulers who are not chiefly ambitious to be entitled benefactors. The greatest monarch in Christendom, one who by computation has fourscore millions of subjects, and whom the Scripture styles, “The head over many countries,” is in the sacred prophecies called, “A vile person:” so indeed is every magistrate who does not aim to do good in the world. Rulers who make no other use of their superior station than to swagger over their neighbours, command their obsequious flatteries, enrich themselves with those spoils, of which they are able to pillage them, and then wallow in sensual and brutal pleasures, are the basest of men. From a sense of this the Venetians, though they allow concubines, yet never employ a tradesman whom they observe to be excessively addicted to sensual gratifications; esteeming such a character to be good for nothing. Because a wretched world will continue indisposed to the kingdom of the glorious and only Saviour, and say of our Immanuel, “We will not have this man to reign over us;” it is therefore very much put into the hands of such selfish, sensual, and wicked rulers. While the deserved curse of God remains upon an impious and infatuated world, but few rulers will be found who will seriously and strenuously devise its good, and seek to be blessings to it. Rulers also are often men whose lives are not worthy of a prayer, nor their deaths of a tear. Athanasius has well answered the question, Whence is it that such worthless and wicked men

get into authority? "It is," says he, "because the people are wicked, and must be punished with men after their own hearts." Thus, when a Phocas was made emperor, a religious man complaining to heaven, "Why hast thou made this man emperor?" received this answer, "I could not find a worse." Evil rulers are well reckoned by the historians among the effects "of divine vengeance;" they may go into the catalogue with the sword, the pestilence, and fire. One man may be worse than all three. Such bring up the rear in the train of the "pale horse"—"the beasts of the earth."

"O our God, our God, when will thy compassions to a miserable world appear in bestowing upon it good rulers, able men, men of truth, fearing God, and hating covetousness! O that the time were come, when there shall be a ruler over men, the Just One, thy Jesus, ruling in the fear of God! He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth; under him the mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness, and according to his word, make our exactors righteousness, and our officers peace. Hasten it in thy good time O Lord! How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge, and make the kingdoms of this world thy own, and remove them that corrupt the earth, and in a great chain bind up him who pretends that the kingdoms of the world are his, and those who are the rulers of the darkness of this world!"

All you that love God, add your Amen, to hasten the coming of this day of God.

In the mean time, it cannot be expressed how

much good may be done by the chief magistrate of a country who will make the “doing of good” his chief intention. Witness a Constantine, a Theodosius, or a Gratian. The first of these, notwithstanding the vast cares of the empire to engage his time, yet would every day, at stated hours, retire to his closet, and on his knees offer up his prayers to the glorious God. But then, that he might recommend this duty to the world, this admirable emperor caused his image on all his gold coins, and his pictures and statues, to be made in a praying posture, with his hands extended, and his eyes lifted up to heaven. O imperial piety! to behold such a prince, one would think were enough to convert a world! It would be so, if it were not for the dreadful energies of one, who is become by the wrath of God, “The prince of this world!” I say, the virtuous example of such a king is almost enough to reform whole nations; it carries with it irresistible charms, by which the whole world is attracted and won upon. A prince exemplary for piety, like the sun shining in his meridian strength, sheds the rays of heaven with a most penetrating force upon the people, “rejoicing under his wings.” Such an instance is now uncommon; but it will not be so in the approaching age, when “the Kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour” into the holy city. A little piety in princes makes a glaring show; the eyes of their subjects are dazzled, and their minds ravished with it. What would be done by a degree of piety in them, that should bear a proportion to the degree of their dignity, and if their piety were as much above that of other men as

their station? Roll on, ye ages, to bring about such admirable spectacles!

What a vast influence might such princes have on the reformation of the world, and consequently on its felicity, by dispensing preferments and employments to none but such as were recommended to them by their virtue! If good men generally were put into commissions, and none but good men made commanders at sea, or on shore, what a mighty change for the better would the world immediately be blessed with! I will beg leave to say that it would be a most comprehensive service to a nation to get them unfettered from any *test* that may render honest and faithful men incapable of serving them. And I will take the liberty of saying, that *displacing a few officers* on account of their being vicious, would do more to improve the state of a depraved nation, than a thousand *proclamations against vice*, not followed with any enforcements.

Good laws are important engines to prevent much evil in the world; indeed, they reach none without doing some good to them; all, therefore, who have any share in the legislation, should be concerned to enact such laws as may prove of permanent advantage. The representatives of a people, in their parliaments or assemblies, will do well to think "What is there still defective in our laws, leaving the iniquities or the necessities of men unprovided against?" and "What further laws may be proposed, to advance the reign of righteousness and holiness?" There have been laws (and sometimes none of the best, which have rendered the names of those who enacted

them immortal: but the remembrance of “the man who first proposed a *good law*,” is far more honourable than a statue erected to his memory. But, Sirs, if your fellow-men forget such an action, it will not fail of a recompense in God’s remembrance, or your own. You know whose prayer it was—“Think upon me, my God; for good, according to all that I have done for this people.”

Magistrates may do an unknown good by countenancing worthy ministers. To settle and support such “men of God” in a place, is to become, I may say, the *grandfathers* of all the good which those men do in the place. Their consultations and combinations with able, faithful, zealous ministers, may produce better effects than any astrologer ever foretold of the most happy conjunction. When Moses and Aaron unite to do good, what cannot they effect? Queen Elizabeth admired the happiness of Suffolk, in her progress through the country, where she observed a remarkably good understanding to subsist between virtuous magistrates and faithful ministers.

Briefly: We will observe a decorum in our proposals, and not suppose inattention or incapacity in those to whom we offer them. It shall only be proposed, that, since magistrates are usually men of abilities, they would sometimes retire to a serious contemplation on that generous question, “What good may I do in the world?” and (assisted by the implored grace of heaven,) observe what they are themselves able to find out as part of that good which they are to perform in serving their generation.

If I mistake not, old Theognis had a maxim,

which ought never to be forgotten—"When the administration of affairs is placed in the hands of men, proud of command, and devoted to their own private gain, depend upon it the people will soon become a miserable people." I propose that this maxim be carefully remembered, and this mischief avoided.

I have yet one thing more—"Thinkest thou this, O man that judgest, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"—Let the judges of the people remember that God will one day bring them into judgment. O that rulers would realize this declaration to themselves—that they must give an account to God of the administration of their government! Sirs, the great God, before whom the greatest of you all is but as a worm of the dust, will demand of you—"Whether you were faithful in the discharge of your office?—What you did for his kingdom in your office? Whether you did what you could that the world might be the better for you?" If you would often take this awful subject into your consideration, and O what reason have you to do so, it could not but quicken you to the performance of many actions, which would be "no grief of heart" to you another day. He was one of the best rulers in the world, who thus expressed himself—"What shall I do when God riseth up; and when he shall visit, what shall I answer him?" Even Abubeker, the successor of Mahomet, when his people expostulated with him for walking on foot, when he took a view of his army, said, "I shall find my account with God for these steps." He has less Christianity than a Mahometan, who is utterly unmindful of

“the account he must give to God for the steps which he takes.”

How prosperously did the affairs of Neo-Cæsaria proceed, when Basil, who lived there, could give this account of the governor—“That he was a most exact observer of justice; yet very courteous, obliging, and easy of access to the oppressed: he was equally at leisure to receive the rich and the poor; but all wicked men were afraid of him. He utterly abhorred the taking of a bribe; and, in short, his design was to raise Christianity to its primitive dignity!” A Mahometan captain-general, whose name was Caled, once said to a Christian—“It does not at all become men in eminent stations, to deal deceitfully, and descend to tricks.” It is a miserable thing indeed, when Christians in eminent stations will do such things!



SECTION XVIII.

The opportunities of Physicians for doing good.

THE PHYSICIAN has also many opportunities of doing good, and of rendering himself “a beloved physician;” we shall also offer our advice to him that he may become so.

Zaccuth, the Portuguese, who, among many other works, wrote “A history of the most eminent physicians,” after he was settled in Amsterdam, submitted to circumcision, and thereby evinced, that for the

thirty preceding years of his life, he had only dissembled Christianity at Lisbon; yet, because he was very charitable to poor patients, he was much esteemed. We now apply ourselves to those whose love to Christianity, we hope, is “without dissimulation.” From them there may be expected a charity and a usefulness, which may entitle them to a remembrance in a better history than that of *Zacutus Lusitanus*—in that “book of life,” in which a name will be esteemed far more valuable than any which are recorded in the “*Vitæ Illustrium Medicorum*”—The lives of illustrious physicians—where Peter Castellanus has embalmed so many of that profession.

By serious and shining piety in your own example, you will bear a glorious testimony to the cause of God and religion. You will glorify the God of nature, and the only Saviour. Your acquaintance with nature will indeed be your condemnation, if you do it not. Nothing is so *unnatural* as to be *irreligious*. “*Religio Medici*” (the religion of the physician) has the least reason of any under heaven to be an “irreligion.” They have acted the most unreasonable part, who have afforded occasion for that complaint of Christians—“Where there are three physicians, there are three atheists.” It is sad to observe, that when we read about the state of the *Rephaim* in the other world, the *physicians* are, by so many translators (they think with too much cause) carried into it. It is very sad to reflect that the Jews imagined they had reason to say—“*Optimus inter medicos ad gehennam*”—“The best of the

physicians go to hell." For this severe sentence, they assign the following cause—"For he is not warned by diseases; he fares sumptuously, and humbles not his heart before God; sometimes he is even accessory to the death of men, when he neglects the poor, whom he might cure."—A sad story, if it be true!

Sirs, you will never account yourselves such adepts as to be at a stand in your studies, and make no further progress in your inquiries into the nature of diseases and their remedies. "A physician arrived at his full growth"—looks dangerously and ominously. Had the world gone on with nothing but an *Esculapius*, furnished only with a goat whose milk was *pharmacy*, and a dog, whose tongue was *surgery*, we had been in a miserable state. You will be diligent and studious and inquisitive; and read much, think more, and pray most of all; and be solicitous to invent and dispense something very considerable for the good of mankind, which none before you had discovered. Be solicitous to make some addition to the treasures of your noble profession. Though you may not obtain the honour of being a *Sydenham*, yet "to do something" is a laudable ambition.

By the benefit they expect from you, and by the charms of your polite education and proper and prudent conversation, you are sometimes introduced into the familiar acquaintance of great men. Persons of the first quality entertain you with freedom, and friendship, and familiarity. Probably you become, under the oath of Hippocrates, a kind of confessors to them, (as indeed for several ages, the confessors were usually the physicians of the people)

—With what an advantage for doing good does this furnish you! The poor Jews, both in the eastern and western parts of the world, have procured many advantages to their nation by means of their countrymen, who have risen to be physicians to the princes of the countries in which they resided. Sirs, your admission “to feel the pulse” of eminent persons, may enable you to promote many good interests: you are persons of that education that you need not be told that: you will soon perceive excellent methods in which good may be done, if you will only deliberate upon it:—“What good proposals may I make to my patient, that he may do good in the world?” If you read what Gregory Nazianzen writes of his brother Cæsarius, a famous and respectable physician, you will doubtless find your desires excited to act in this manner. You know how ready the sick are to hear of good proposals; and how seasonable it is to urge such upon them, when the commencement of recovery from sickness calls for their gratitude to the God of their health. And for persons also who are in health, you may find “seasonable times to drop a hint.”

Physicians are frequently men of universal learning: they have sufficient ability, and sometimes opportunity, to write books on a vast variety of subjects, whereby knowledge and virtue may be greatly advanced in the world. The late epic poems of a Blackmore, and *Cosmologia Sacra* of a Grew, are recent examples: mankind is much indebted to those learned physicians; the names of such noble men are immortalized; they need no statues, nor need

they mind the envy of a modern Theophrastus. A catalogue of books written by learned physicians, on various subjects, besides those of their own profession, would in itself almost make a book. In the great army of learned physicians who have published their labours on the “word which the Lord has given,” and for the service of his church, and of the world, I humbly move that the incomparable Zuinger and Gesner may appear as field-officers. A city *Tauris* were too mean a present for physicians of such merit. I propose them to imitation, that many may follow such examples. You know that Freher has brought on his theatre, nearly five hundred famous physicians with some account of their lives and works; there are very few Britons among them, and none at all that lived to the end of the former century. What a vast addition might there be since made to that “list of honour,” from the British nations! May an excellent ambition to be enrolled in it, excite those who have ability, to “do worthily!”

Physicians have innumerable opportunities to assist the poor, and cure them *gratis*. It was a noble saying of Cicero—“Fortune can give nothing better than the power, nature nothing more excellent than the will, to save many.” But I will set before you a higher consideration than that, with which a Pagan Kirker was ever acquainted. Sirs, the more charity, compassion, and condescension with which you treat the poor, the nearer will you approach to the greatest and highest of all glories; I say the greatest and highest of all glories—I mean

an imitation of your adorable Saviour. You will readily say, "Why should I think that mean in me, which was decent in Christ?" In comparison of this consolation, it will be a small thing to say to you, that your coming among the poor, will be to them like the descent of the Angel of Bethesda. We will not presume to prescribe to you, what good you shall do to the poor, and by what generous actions you shall bear their sicknesses and infirmities; but we enter an objection against your taking any fees for your visits on the Lord's day, because the time is not yours, but the Lord's.

When we consider how much the lives of men are in the hands of God; what a dependance we have on the God of our health, for our cure when we have lost it; what strong and remarkable proofs we have had of angels, by their communications or operations, contributing to the cure of the diseases with which mortals have been oppressed, of which I could relate astonishing instances; and the marvellous efficacy of prayer for the recovery of a sick brother who has not sinned a "sin unto death,"—what better thing can be recommended to a physician who desires to "do good," than this—To be a man of prayer. In your daily and secret prayer, carry every one of your patients, by name, as you would your own children, to the glorious Lord our healer, for his healing mercies: place them, as far as your prayers will do it, under the beams of the "Sun of Righteousness." And as any new case of your patients may occur, especially if there be any difficulty in it, why should you not make your par-

ticular and solicitous application to heaven for direction:—"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, nor is it in man that walketh, to direct his steps; nor in man that healeth, to perform his cures." Hippocrates advised physicians, when they visited their patients, to consider whether there might not be something supernatural in the disease. Truly, in some sense, this is always the case, and should be so considered. "What a heavenly life might you lead, if your profession were carried on with as many visits to heaven, as you pay to your patients!" One Jacob Tzaphalon, a famous Jew of the former century, published at Venice, a book intitled, "Precious Stones." There are several prayers in the book, and among them a pretty long one, "For physicians when they go to visit their patients." That expression of the Psalmist, "Thou hast made me wiser than mine enemies," may be read—"Thou hast made me wise *from* mine enemies." "We should learn, even from an enemy." "O Christianity, thou wilt certainly outdo Judaism in thy devotions!"

We read that "Heaviness in the heart of man, maketh it stoop; but a good word maketh it glad." "A cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth up the bones." Baglivi is not the only physician who has made the observation, "That a great many of our diseases, either arise from, or are fed by a weight of cares lying on the minds of men. Some diseases that seem incurable, are easily cured by agreeable conversation. Disorders of the mind first bring diseases on the stomach; and

so the whole mass of blood gradually becomes infected; and as long as the mental cause continues, the diseases may indeed change their forms, but they rarely quit the patients." Tranquillity of mind will do wonderful things towards the relief of bodily maladies. It is not without reason that Hofman, in his dissertation, "Des Moyens de Vivre Long-temps," insists on tranquillity of mind as the chief among the "ways to live long;" and that this is the meaning of that passage, "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life." They who have practised the "art of curing by expectation," have made experiments of what the mind will do towards the cure of the body; by practising the "art of curing by consolation." I propose then, that the physician endeavour to find out, by all possible ingenuity of conversation, what matter of anxiety there may have been upon the mind of the patient, and which has rendered his life burdensome. Having discovered the burden, let him use all possible ways to take it off. Offer him such thoughts as may be the best *anodynes* for his distressed mind; especially the "right thoughts of the righteous," and the means of obtaining composure upon religious principles. Give him a prospect, if you can, of some deliverance from his distresses, or some abatement of them. Excite in him as pleasing thoughts as possible: scatter the clouds, and remove the loads with which his mind is perplexed; especially by representing and magnifying the mercy of God in Christ to him. It is possible, Sir, that in this way also, you may find out occasions for the abundant exercise of goodness, by

doing yourself, or by bringing others to do kindness to the miserable.

What should hinder you from considering the *souls* of your patients; their spiritual health; what they have done, and what they have to do, that they may be on good terms with heaven! You may, from their natural disorders, affect your own mind and theirs also, with a sense of our corresponding moral ones. You may make your conversation with them a vehicle for conveying such admonitions of piety, as may be most needful for them; that they may be found neither unprepared for death, nor unthankful and unfruitful, if their lives should be spared. This you may do, without any improper intrusion on the office of the minister; on the contrary, you may at the same time do many a good office for the minister, as well as for the patient; and may inform the minister, when, where, and how he may be very serviceable among the miserable, with whose condition he might otherwise not be acquainted. The "art of healing" was, you know, first brought into a system by men who had the "care of souls," and I know not why they who profess and practice that noble art should wholly cast off that care. Perhaps you remember to have heard of a king who was also a physician, (for other crowned heads, besides Mithridates, Hadrianus, and Constantinus Pogonatus have been so,) and who gave this reason why the Greeks had diseases which remained among them so much uncured—"Because they neglected their souls, the chief thing of all." For my part, I know not why the physician should wholly neglect the souls of his patients.

I will detain you no longer. You are not ignorant, that medicine once was, and in many unevangelized parts of the world is still, esteemed a thing *horribly magical*. Celsus relates, as a part of the Egyptian philosophy current in his time, that the body of man was divided into thirty-six parts, each of which was the peculiar allotment and possession of a demon; and this demon was invoked by the Magi to cure diseases of the part that belonged to him. Even in Galen's time we find Egyptian Legerdemain practised: he himself writes of it. From Egypt other countries became acquainted with this art: hence medicine were called *pharmaca*. The Oriental nations had their Teraphim for the cure of diseases: hence the same Greek word signifies both to worship and to cure; and the "cure of diseases" is reckoned by Eusebius one main article of the Pagan theology. God used all proper means to prevent his people from having to do with such sort of men or of means. He recommended to them the study of nature, and of natural remedies. Thus, after the example of Solomon, they studied botany, and had their apothecaries, who were to furnish them with materials for medicines. The princes of Judea had, as Pliny informs us, their medicinal gardens. Probably Naboth's vineyard might have such a one in it; which might be the reason why Ahab so coveted it. Joram, the son of Ahab, repaired thither to be cured of his wounds. An excellent physician, in a late composition with which he has favoured the public, supposes that the sin of Asa, when he "sought not unto the Lord, but unto the physi-

cians," was both occasioned and aggravated by this, that there were at that time none but magical physicians. But others have thought that some of Asa's ancestors had been medically disposed, and were students in the art of healing. From hence might come the name of Asa, which in 'Chaldee, means physician. On this account, perhaps, this king might have the greater esteem for those who were skilled in medicine, and might put such a confidence in them as to neglect the glorious God, the only author and giver of health. What I aim at in this paragraph is, shortly to encourage a conduct the reverse of all this; that my honourable Asa, (such the son of Sirach has taught me to call him) would himself continually go to God our Saviour, and as far as possible, bring all his patients to him also.

Finally.—An industrious and ingenious gentleman of your profession, has a passage in a preface to his Pharmacopœia Buteana, which I will here insert, because very many of you can speak the same language; and by inserting it, I intend to increase the number:—

“I know no poor creature that ever came to me, in the whole of my practice, that once went from me without my desired help, *gratis*. And I have accounted the restoration of such a poor and wretched creature, a greater blessing to me, than if I had obtained the wealth of both the Indies. I cannot so well express myself concerning this matter, as I can conceive it, but I am sure I should have been more pleased, and had a greater satisfaction in seeing such a helpless creature restored to his desired health,

than if I had found a very valuable treasure. As I can never repent of the good which I have done in this way, I resolve to continue it, for I certainly know that I have had the signal blessing of God attending my endeavours."



SECTION XIX.

Ladies and men of wealth have the means of doing much good.

"I WILL get me unto the RICH MEN, and will speak unto them," for they will know the ways to "do good," and will think what they shall be able to say when they come into the judgment of their God. An English person of quality, quoting that passage, "The desire of a man is his kindness," invited me so to read it, "The only desirable thing in a man is his goodness." How happy would the world be, if every person of quality were to become of this persuasion! It is an article in my commission, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." In pursuance thereof, I will remind rich men of the opportunities to "do good," with which God, who gives power to get wealth, has favoured and enriched them. It is a very good account that has been sometimes given of a good man: "He knew no good in the wealth of this world, but the doing of good with it." Yea,

those men who have had very little goodness in them, yet in describing "the manners of the age," in which perhaps they themselves have had too deep a share, have seen cause to subscribe and publish this prime dictate of reason: "We are none the better for any thing, barely for the propriety's sake; but it is the application of it that gives every thing its value. Whoever buries his talents betrays a sacred trust, and defrauds those who stand in need of it." Sirs, you cannot but acknowledge that it is the sovereign God, who has bestowed upon you the riches which distinguish you. A devil himself, when he saw a rich man, could not but make this acknowledgment to the God of heaven: "Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." It is also to be hoped, that you are not forgetful that the riches in your possession are some of the talents of which you must give an account to the glorious Lord who has intrusted you with them: and that you will give your account with grief, and not with joy, if it should be found that all your estates have been laid out to gratify the appetites of the flesh, and little or nothing of them consecrated to the service of God, and of his kingdom in the world. It was said to the priests of old, when the servants were assigned them; "Unto you they are given as a gift for the Lord." The same may be said of all our estates; what God gives us, is not given us for ourselves, but "for the Lord." "When gifts are multiplied on our head, the reasons for gifts from our hand are also multiplied." Indeed there is hardly any professor of Christianity so vicious

that he will not confess that all his property is to be used for honest purposes, and part of it for pious uses. If any plead their poverty to excuse and exempt them from doing any thing this way,—O thou poor widow with thy two mites, eternized in the history of the Gospel, thou shalt “rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it;” and let them also know, that they take a course to condemn and confine themselves to eternal *poverty*.

But the main question is, what proportion of a man’s income is to be devoted to pious uses? And now, let it not seem a “hard saying,”—if I tell you that *a tenth part* is the least that you can bring under a more solemn dedication to the Lord; for whom indeed, in one sense, we are to lay out our all. A farthing less would make an enlightened and considerate Christian suspicious of his incurring the danger of sacrilege. By the pious uses for which your tenths are thus challenged, I do not intend only the maintenance of the evangelical ministry, but also the relief of the miserable, whom our merciful Saviour has made the receivers of his rents; together with all that is to be more directly done for the preserving and promoting of piety in the world. Since there is a part of every man’s revenues due to the glorious Lord, and to pious uses, it is not fit that the determination of *what part* it must be, should be left to such hearts as ours. My friend, thou hast, it may be, too high an opinion of thy own wisdom and goodness, if nothing but thy own carnal heart is to determine how and what proportion of thy revenues are to be laid out

for Him, whom thou art so ready to forget when he has filled thee. But if the Lord himself, to whom thou art but a steward, has fixed on any part of our usual income for himself, as it is most reasonable that he should have the fixing of it, certainly a tenth will be found the least that he has called for. A tenth is the least part in the first division of numbers, which is that of units. Grotius remarks it, as the foundation of the law of tithes: "Almost all nations reckon by tens." It is but reasonable, and the very light of nature will declare for it, that the great God, who with a seventh day is owned as the Creator, should with a tenth part be owned as the possessor of all things. We do not allow him so much as *the least*, if we withhold a tenth from him: less than that, is less than what all nations make the *least*. Certainly to withhold this, is to withhold more than is proper. Sirs, you know the tendency of this. Long before the Mosaic dispensation of the law, we find that this was Jacob's vow: "The Lord shall be my God, and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." It seems that we do not sufficiently declare that "the Lord is our God," if we do not give a tenth to him. And how can we approve ourselves "Israelites indeed," if we slight such an example as that of our father Jacob. I will ascend a little higher. In one text we read of our father Abraham "giving Melchizedek the tenth of all." In another text we read of our Saviour Jesus, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." From hence I form this conclusion—The rights of

Melchizedek belong to our Jesus, the royal high priest now officiating for us in the heavens. The tenths were the rights of Melchizedek; therefore the tenths belong to our Jesus. I do in my conscience believe that this argument cannot be answered; and the man who attempts to answer it, seems to darken the evidence of his being one of the true children of Abraham.

I renew my appeal to the light of nature: to nature thou shalt go. It is very certain that the ancient Pagans used to *decimate* for sacred uses. Pliny tells us, that the Arabians did so. Xenophon informs us, that the Grecians did so. You find the custom to be as ancient as the pen of Herodotus can make it. It is confirmed by Pausanias and Diodorus Siculus; and a whole army of authors besides Doughty, have related and asserted this. I will only introduce Festus, to speak for them all: "The ancients offered the tenth of every thing to their gods." Christian, wilt thou do less for thy God than the poor perishing Pagans did for theirs? "O, tell it not"—but this I will tell; that they who have conscientiously employed their tenths in pious uses, have usually been remarkably blessed in their estates, by the providence of God. The blessing has been sometimes delayed, with some trial of their patience. Not for any injustice in their hands; their prayer has been "pure." And their faith of the future state has been sometimes tried, by their meeting with losses and disappointments. But then, their *little* has been so blessed as to be still a *competency*; and God has so blessed them with contentment, that it

has yielded more than the abundance of many others. Very frequently too, they have been rewarded with remarkable success, and increase of their property; and even in this world have seen the fulfilment of those promises—"Cast thy grain into the moist ground, and thou shalt find it after many days." "Honour the Lord with thy substance: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty." History has given us many delightful examples of those who have had their conscientious *decimations* followed and rewarded with a surprising prosperity of their affairs. Obscure mechanics and husbandmen have risen to estates, of which once they had not the most distant expectation. The excellent Gouge, in his treatise, entitled, "The surest and safest way of thriving," has collected some such examples. The Jewish proverb, "Tithe, and be rich," would be oftener verified, if oftener practised. "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not pour out a blessing upon you."

But let the demand of "liberal things" grow upon you; a *tenth* I have called the *least*; for some it is much too *little*. Men of large estates who would not "sow to their flesh, and of the flesh reap corruption," may and will often go beyond a *decimation*. Some rise to a *fifth*; and the religious Countess of Warwick would not stop at any thing short of a *third*. Gentlemen, who are my readers, would perhaps excuse me if I were to carry them no higher than this, and to say nothing to them of a Johannes Eleemosynarius, who annually made a distribution of *all* to pious uses; and having adjusted his affairs,

said, "I bless God that I have now nothing left but my Lord and Master Christ, whom I long to be with, and to whom I can now fly with unentangled wings." Yet I will mention to them the example of some eminent merchants, who, having reached moderate and competent estates, have resolved never to be richer. They have carried on brisk and extensive trades, but whatever profits raised their incomes above the fixed sum, they have entirely devoted to pious uses. And were any of them losers by this conduct? Not one.

The Christian emperor Tiberius II. was famous for his religious bounties: his empress thought him even profuse in them. But he told her that he should never want money so long as, in obedience to the command of a glorious Christ, he should supply the necessities of the poor, and abound in religious benevolence. Once, immediately after he had made a liberal distribution, he unexpectedly found a mighty treasure, and there were tidings brought to him of the death of a vastly rich man, who had bequeathed to him all his wealth. Humbler men can relate very many and interesting anecdotes of this nature, even from their own happy experience. I cannot forbear transcribing some lines of my honoured Gouge on this occasion:

"I am verily persuaded that there is seldom any man who gives to the poor proportionably to what God has bestowed on him; but, if he observe the dealings of God's providence towards him, he will find the same doubled and redoubled upon him in temporal blessings. I dare challenge all the world to produce one instance (or, at least any considera-

ble number of instances) of a merciful man, whose charity has undone him. But, as living wells, the more they are drawn the more freely they spring and flow; so the substance of charitable men frequently multiplies in the very distribution: even as the five loaves and few fishes multiplied, while being broken and distributed, and as the widow's oil increased by being poured out."

I will add a consideration which, methinks, common humanity will feel as a powerful motive. Let rich men, who are not "rich towards God," especially such as have no children of their own to make their heirs, consider the vile ingratitude with which their successors will treat them. Sirs, they will hardly allow you a tombstone; but wallowing in the wealth which you have left, complain that you left it to them no sooner; they will insult your memory and ridicule your economy and parsimony. How much wiser would it be for you to do good with your estates while you live, and at your death to dispose of them in a manner which may embalm your names to posterity, and be for your advantage in the world to which you are going. That your souls may enjoy the ease and the good of paradisaical reflections, at the same time that others are inheriting what you have left to them.

I will only annex the compliment of a certain person to his friend, upon his accession to an estate: "Much good may it do you; that is, much good may you do with it."

I hope we are now ready for *Proposals*; and we shall set ourselves to "devise liberal things."

Gentlemen! It is said of old, *res est sacra miser.*

To relieve the necessities of the poor is a thing acceptable to the compassionate God, who has given to you what he might have given to them, and has given it to you that you might have the honour and pleasure of imparting it to them; and who has said, "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord." The more you regard the command and example of a glorious Christ in what you do this way, the more assurance you have that in the day of God you shall joyfully hear him saying, "You have done it unto me." And the more humble, silent, reserved modesty you express, concealing even from the left hand what is done with the right, the more you are assured of a great reward in the heavenly world. Such liberal men, it is observed, are generally long-lived men; and at last they pass from this into everlasting life. "The fruit acquits the tree."

The true *Lady* is one who feeds the poor, and relieves their indigence. The name of a Lady in the original has the following signification:—It was at first Leafdian, from Leaf or Laf, which signifies *a loaf of bread*, and D'ian to *serve*. So that the term implies *one who distributes bread*. In the days of primitive Christianity, ladies of the first quality would endeavour to find out the sick, visit hospitals, see what help they wanted, and assist them with an admirable alacrity. What a "good report" have the mother and sister of Nazianzen obtained from his pen, for their unwearied bounties to the poor! Empresses themselves have stooped to relieve the miserable, and never appeared so truly great as when they thus stooped; and when they stooped, it was to do some good to others. Angels they do so.

A very proper season for your alms is, when you keep your days of prayer: that your prayers and your alms may go up together as a memorial before the Lord. Verily, there are *prayers in alms*; and, “Is not this the fast that I have chosen, saith the Lord?” The expression of the beggar among the Jews was, “Deserve something by me:” among us it might be; “Obtain something by me.”

There is a certain city, in which every house has a box hanging by a chain, on which is written, “Think on the poor;” and they seldom conclude a bargain without putting something into the box. The deacons have the key, and once a quarter go round the city, and take out the money. When that city was in imminent danger, a man of no great character was heard to say, “That he was of opinion, God would preserve that city from being destroyed, if it were only for the great charity which its inhabitants express to the poor.” It is the richest city of the richest country, for its size, that ever existed: a city which is thought to spend, annually, in charitable uses, more than all the revenues which the fine country of the Grand Duke of Tuscany brings in to its arbitrary master. “The hand of the poor is the treasury-box of Christ.”

When you dispense your alms to the poor, who know what it is to pray, you may oblige them to pray for you by name, every day. It is an excellent thing to have “the blessing of those who have been ready to perish,” thus coming upon you. Observe here a surprising sense in which you may be “praying always.” You are so, even while you are sleep-

ing, if those whom you have thus obliged are praying for you. And now look for the accomplishment of that word—"Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth."

Very frequently your alms are dispersed among such as very much need admonitions of piety. Cannot you contrive to mingle a spiritual charity with your temporal bounty? Perhaps you may discourse with them about the state of their souls, and obtain from them (for which you have now a singular advantage) some declared resolutions to do what they ought to do. Or else you may convey to them little books, which they will certainly promise to read, when you thus entreat them.

Charity to the *souls* of men is undoubtedly the highest, the noblest, and the most important charity. To furnish the poor with Catechisms and Bibles, is to do for them an incalculable good. No one knows how much he may do by dispersing books of piety, and by putting into the hands of mankind such treatises of divinity as may have a tendency to make them wiser or better. It was a noble action of some good men, who, a little while ago, were at the charge of printing thirty thousand of the "Alarm to the Unconverted," written by Joseph Alleine, to be all given away to such as would promise to read it. A man of no great estate has been known to give away, without much trouble, nearly a thousand books of piety every year, for many years together. Who can tell, but that with the expense of less than a shilling, you may, Sir, "convert a sinner from the

error of his ways, and save a soul from death." A worse doom than to be "condemned to the mines," lies upon that soul who had rather hoard up his money than employ it on such a charity.

He who supports the office of the evangelical ministry, supports a good work, and performs one; yea, in a secondary way, performs what is done by the skilful, faithful, and laborious minister. The encouraged servant of the Lord will do the more good for your assistance: and what you have done for him, and in consideration of the glorious Gospel preached by him, you have done for a glorious Christ; and you shall "receive a prophet's reward." Luther said, "What you give to scholars, you give to God himself." This is still more true, when the scholars are become godly and useful preachers.

I have read the following passage: "It was for several years the practice of a worthy gentleman, in renewing his leases, instead of making it a condition that his tenants should keep a hawk or a dog for him, to oblige them to keep a Bible in their houses for themselves, and to bring up their children to read and to be catechised." *Landlords!* It is worthy of your consideration, whether you may not in your leases insert some clauses that may serve the kingdom of God. You are his tenants in those very freeholds in which you are landlords to other men. Oblige your tenants to worship God in their families.

To take a poor child, especially an orphan left in poverty, and to bestow education upon it, especially if it be a liberal education, is an admirable charity; yea, it may draw after it a long train of good,

and may interest you in all the good that shall be done by him whom you have educated.

Hence also, what is done for Schools, for Colleges, and for Hospitals, is done for the general good. The endowment or maintenance of these is at once to do good to many.

But alas! how much of the silver and gold of the world is buried in hands where it is little better than conveyed back to the mines from whence it came! Or else employed to as little purpose as what arrives at Hindostan, where a great part of the silver and gold is, after some circulation, carried as to a fatal centre, and by the Moguls lodged in subterraneous caves never to see the light again. “A Christian of good faith and hope does not such things.”

Sometimes elaborate compositions may be prepared for the press, works of great bulk, and of greater worth, by which the best interests of knowledge and virtue may be considerably promoted in the world: they lie, like the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda; and are likely to remain neglected, till God inspire some wealthy persons nobly to subscribe to their publication, and by this generous application of their wealth, to bring them abroad. The names of such noble benefactors to mankind ought to live as long as the works themselves; and where the works do any good, what these have done towards the publishing of them, ought to be “told for a memorial” of them.

I will carry this subject still farther. The saying may seem to carry some affront in it, that, “idle gentlemen, and idle beggars, are the pests of the

commonwealth." But they who are offended at it must quarrel with the ashes of a bishop, for it was Dr. Sanderson's. Will you then think, Sirs, of some honourable and agreeable employment? I will mention one. The Pythagoreans forbade men's "eating their own brains," or, "keeping their good thoughts to themselves." It is an observation of the incomparable Boyle, that "as to religious books, in general, those which have been written by laymen, and especially by gentlemen, have (*cæteris paribus*) been better received, and more effectual, than those published by ecclesiastics. We all know Mr. Boyle's were so. It is no rare thing for men of quality so to accomplish themselves in languages and science, that they have become prodigies of literature. Their libraries also have been stupendous collections, approaching towards Vatican or Bodleian dimensions. An English gentleman has been sometimes the most "accomplished person in the world." How many of these (besides a Leigh, a Wolsely, or a Polhill) have been benefactors to mankind by their incomparable writings! It were greatly to be wished that persons of wealth and elevated conditions would qualify themselves for the use of the pen as well as of the sword, and deserve this encomium—"They have written excellent things." An English person of quality, in his treatise, entitled, "A View of the Soul," has the following passage—"It is certainly," says he, "the highest dignity, if not the greatest happiness, of which human nature is capable in the vale below, to have the soul so far enlightened, as to become the mirror, or conduit, or conveyer of

God's truth to others." It is a bad motto for men of capacity—"My understanding is unfruitful." Gentlemen, consider what subjects may most properly and usefully fall under your cultivation. Your pens will stab atheism and wickedness more effectually than other men's. If out of your "Tribe" there come "those who handle the pen of the writer," they will do uncommon execution. One of them has ingenuously said—"Though I know some *functions*, yet I know no *truths* of religion, which, like the Showbread, are only for the priests."

I will address to you but one proposal more, and it is this—that you would as Ambrosius did his Origen, wisely choose a friend of shining abilities, of warm affections, and of excellent piety (a minister of such a character if you can,) and entreat him, yea oblige him to study for you, and suggest to you, opportunities to do good. Make him, as I may say, your monitor. Let him advise you, from time to time, what good you may do. Let him see that he never gratifies you more than by his advice on this subject. If a *David* have a *seer* to perform such an office for him, who may search for occasions of doing good, what services may be done for the temple of God in the world!

There seems no need of adding any thing but this, that when gentlemen occasionally meet together, why should not their conversation correspond with their superior station? Methinks they should deem it beneath persons of their quality to employ the conversation on trifling impertinences, or in such a way that, if it were secretly taken in short hand,

they would blush to hear it repeated—" Nothing but jesting, and laughing, and words scattered by the wind." Sirs, it becomes a gentleman to entertain his company with the finest thoughts on the finest themes; and certainly there cannot be a subject so worthy of a gentleman as this—What good is there to be done in the world? Were this noble subject more frequently started in the conversation of gentlemen, an incredible good might be done.

I will conclude by saying—You must accept of any public service, of which you are capable, when you are called to it. Honest *Jeans* has this pungent passage: "The world applauds the prudent retirement of those who bury their parts and gifts in an obscure privacy, though they have a fair call, both from God and man, to public employment; but the terrible censure of these men by Jesus Christ at the last day, will discover them to have been the most arrant fools that ever lived on the face of the earth." The fault of not employing our talent for the public good, is justly called, "A great sacrilege in the temple of the God of Nature." It was a sad age of which Tacitus said, "Indolence was wisdom."



SECTION XX.

The duty of Men in Public Stations to do good.

It will be recollected, that one of our first proposals was, that every one should consider "What is

there that I can do for the service of God and the welfare of man?" It is to be hoped that all OFFICERS, as such, will conform to what has been proposed. It should be the concern of all officers, from the *emperor* to the *enomotarch*, to do all the good they can; there is, therefore, the less occasion to make a more particular application to *inferior officers* of various kinds, who all have opportunities to do good, more or less, in their hands. However, they shall not all have reason to complain of being neglected.

In some churches there are ELDERS, as in primitive times, the church had its elders, who "rule well," though they do not "labour in the word and doctrine." It becomes such elders often to inquire, "What shall I do to prevent strife, or any other sin, that may become a root of bitterness in the church; and that Christ and holiness may reign in it; and, that the ministry of the pastor may be countenanced, encouraged, and prospered?" Their *visits* of the flock, and their endeavours to prepare the people for special ordinances, may be of great advantage to religion.

There are DEACONS also, to whom the *temporal affairs* of the church are intrusted. It would be well, if they would frequently inquire:—"What may I do that the treasury of Christ may be increased? What may I do that the life of my faithful Pastor may be rendered more comfortable? What members of the flock do I think deficient in their contributions to support the interests of the Gospel, and shall I say 'with great boldness in the faith' to them?"

In the STATE there are many officers, to whom

the most significant and comprehensive proposal that can be made would be, *To consider their oaths*. If they would seriously ponder, and faithfully perform the duties to which their oaths oblige them, a great deal of good would be done. But we must a little particularize.

As the REPRESENTATIVES of any place have opportunities to do good to the people at large, they should accordingly consider what motions to bring forward for their good, and they should be particularly solicitous for the good of that place which has elected them.

Those whom we call the "SELECT MEN" of a town, will disappoint just expectations, if they do not diligently consider, "What shall I do that I may be a blessing to the town which I am now to serve?"

GRAND-JURYMEN may very profitably consider, "What growing evils or nuisances do I discover which I shall do well to make known?" They should hold their consultations upon these matters, as men in earnest for the good of the country. Indeed all jurymen should be *good men*. Our old compellation of a neighbour by the title of good man, has this origin; it was as much as to say, one qualified to serve on a jury. Let them, therefore, maintain this character, by doing good, and by contriving how they may do it.

Why should CONSTABLES be excused from these obligations? Their name (Constabularius) was first derived from the care of "making unruly horses stand well together in the stable." Sirs, you have many opportunities to do good by being "masters

of restraints," in your walks and otherwise, to unruly cattle. What are vicious persons, though perhaps, in honourable stations, but like the beasts! Well-disposed constables have done wonderful things in a town, to maintain good order. I entreat you, therefore, to turn your thoughts and your consultations to inquiry, "What good may I do?"

Where TITHING-MEN are chosen and sworn, they may do more than a little good, if they will conscientiously perform their duty. Let them well study the laws which lay down their duty, and let them also often consider, "What good may I do?" Let them consult with one another at certain times, in order to find out what they have to do, and to assist and strengthen one another in doing it.—I have done with the *civil list*.

MILITARY COMMANDERS have their opportunities to "do good." They do this in an eminent degree when they cherish exercises of piety in their several companies and regiments, and when they rebuke the vices of the camp with due severity. Might not societies to suppress these vices be formed in the camp, to very good purpose, under their inspection? And if the soldiers ask, "What shall we do?" all my answer at present is, Sirs, consider what *you* have to do.

COMMANDERS AT SEA have their opportunities also. The more absolute they are in their command, the greater are their opportunities. The worship of God seriously and constantly maintained aboard, will be of great importance. A body of good orders hung up in the steerage, and carefully enforced, may produce consequences for which all

the people in the vessel may at least have reason to be thankful. Books of piety should also be taken aboard, and the men should be desired to retire for the perusal of them, and for other pious exercises.

But whilst our book seems to have so far discharged its office and design of a *counsellor* as to leave no further expectations, a considerable number of persons present themselves to our notice, who might justly complain, if among these proposals to do good, they should remain unnoticed. Some whom we do not find among those who addressed the blessed morning-star of our Saviour for his directions, yet are now found among those who inquire, "And what shall we do?" I refer to the GENTLEMEN OF THE LAW, who have that in their hands, the end of which is, "To do good;" and the perversion of which from its professed end is one of the worst of evils.

Gentlemen, your opportunities to do good are such, and your liberal and gentlemanly education gives you such advantages, that proposals of what you may do, cannot but promise themselves an obliging reception with you. And even with common pleaders at the bar, I hope that maxim of the law will not be forgotten: "The situation of a lawyer is so dignified, that none should be raised to it from a mean condition in life." Things are not come to such a state that an *honest lawyer* should require a statue, as the *honest publican* of old did, merely on the score of *rarity*. You may, if you aim at it, be entitled to one on the score of universal and meritorious *usefulness*.

In order to your being useful, Sirs, it is neces-

sary that you should be skilful; and that you may arrive at an excellent skill in the law, you will be well advised what authors to study. The well advised on this point may have much wisdom. The knowledge of your own *statute-law* is incontestably needful. The same may be said of the *common-law*, which must continually accompany the execution of it. Here, besides useful dictionaries, you have your Cooks, and Vaughan, and Wingate, and Daltons, and Kebles, and many more, with whom you may converse. I am sorry to find a gentleman, about the middle of the former century, complaining of the English law, “that the books of it cannot be perused with any deliberation, under three or four years, and that the expense of them is very great.” I do not propose so tedious and difficult a task; for the *civil law* must also be known by those who would be well acquainted with *legal proceedings*. Huge volumes, and loads of them, have been written upon it; but among all these, two small ones, the *Enchiridion* of *Corvinus*, and *Arthur Duck’s* Treatise *De usu et autoritate juris civilis*, at least, should be consulted, and digested by every one who would not be an *ignoramus*. I will be still more free in declaring my opinion. Had I learning enough to manage a cause of that nature, I should be very ready to maintain it at any bar in the world, that there never was known under the cope of heaven, a more learned man, than the incomparable ALSTEDIUS. He has written on every subject in the whole circle of learning, as accurately and as exquisitely as those who have devoted their whole lives to the cultivation of any one particular subject.

The only reason why his compositions are not more esteemed is, the *pleonasm* of his worth, and their deserving so much esteem. To hear some silly men, with a scornful sneer, talk as if they had sufficiently set him at nought, by a foolish pun on his name—*All's tedious*, is to see the ungrateful folly of the world; for *conciseness* is one of his peculiar excellencies. They might more justly charge him with any thing than tediousness. This digression only serves to introduce a recommendation of this excellent man's "Jurisprudentia," as one of the best books a lawyer can be acquainted with. I shall wrong it if I say, "It is much in a little:" I must say, "It is all in one."

A lawyer should be a scholar. It is vexatious that the emperor *Justinian*, whose name is now on the laws of the Roman empire, (because it was by his order that *Tribonian* made his hasty, and some say fallacious, collection of them, from the two thousand volumes, into which they had been growing for a thousand years) is by *Suidas* called "Analphabetos—one who scarcely knew his alphabet." It is vexatious to find *Accursius*, one of the first commentators on the laws, fall, through his ignorance, into so many gross mistakes: and when a sentence of Greek occurred in the text, unable to afford any better gloss than this,—"This is Greek which can neither be read nor explained." Though the thing was but a trifle, it was no honour to those writers on the *Pandect* not to know of what gender the name was. It was strange, that when the subject was "Of the signification of words," the great interpreter of it should leave as a maxim, *De verbebus non*

curat Juris consultus. However, a Bartolus has not so roughened your study, as a Budœas has polished it.

But, Sirs, when you are called upon to be wise, the chief design is, that you may be wise to do good. Without such a disposition, “doth not their excellency which is in them go away? They die even without wisdom.” A foundation of piety must first be laid; an inviolable respect to the holy and just and good law of God. This must be the rule of all your actions; and it must particularly regulate your practice of the law. You are sensible that it was always the custom of the civil law to begin with —“A Deo optimo maximo”—“To the most high and gracious God:” nor was it unusual for the instruments of the law to begin with XP the first two letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, the name of Christ. The life of the lawyer should have its beginning there, and be carried on with a constant regard to it. The old *Saxon laws* had the *Ten Commandments* prefixed to them—*Ten Words*, in *Two Tables*, of infinitely greater value than the famous *Twelve Tables*, so much admired by *Tully* and other writers of antiquity; in the fragments of which, collected by *Baldwin* and others, there are some things horribly unrighteous and barbarous. These are to be the *first laws* with you; and, as all the laws that are contrary to these are *ipso facto* null and void, so, in the practice of the law, every thing disallowed by these must be avoided. The man whom the Scripture calls a lawyer, was a *Karaite*, or one who strictly adhered to the written law of God, in opposition to Pharisee and the *Traditionist*. I know not why

every lawyer should not still be, in the best sense, a *Karaite*. By manifesting a reverence for the divine law, both that of reason, and that of superadded Gospel, you will do good in the world beyond what you can imagine. You will redeem your honourable profession from the injury which bad men have done to its reputation; and you will obtain a patronage for it, very different from that which the Satyr in the idle story of your Saint Evona has assigned to it.

Your celebrated *Ulpian* wrote seven books, to show the several punishments which ought to be inflicted on Christians. It is to be hoped that you will invent as many services to be done to the cause of Christianity; services to be performed for the kingdom of your Saviour, and methods by which to demonstrate that you yourselves are among the best of Christians.

I am not sure that our Tertullian was the gentleman of that name, who hath some *Consulta* in the Roman *Digesta*; which Grotius and others will not admit: yet Eusebius tells us that he was well skilled in the Roman laws: and in his writings you find many law terms, particularly “Prescriptions against Heretics,” which were, as we learn from Quintilian and others, the replies of defendants to the actions of the plaintiffs. I propose that others of the faculty study all possible “Prescriptions” against those who would injure Christianity, and “apologies” for the church and cause of our Saviour. But, Sirs, it must first of all be done in your own virtuous, exact, upright conduct, under all temptations.

The miscarriages of some individuals, however,

must not bring a blemish on a noble and useful profession.

But, yet many will be ready enough to allow the justness of the following censure, which occurs in a late publication, entitled, "Examen Miscellaneum:" "A lawyer who is a knave, deserves death more than a robber; for he profanes the sanctuary of the distressed, and betrays the liberties of the people." To avoid such a censure, a lawyer must shun all those indirect ways of "making haste to be rich," in which a man cannot be innocent: such ways as provoked the father of Sir Matthew Hale to abandon the practice of the law, on account of the extreme difficulty of preserving a good conscience in it. Sir, be prevailed upon constantly to keep *a court of chancery* in your own breast; and scorn and fear to do any thing but what your conscience will pronounce consistent with, and conducing to—"Glorry to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill towards men." The very nature of your profession leads you to meditations on "a judgment to come." O that you would so realize and antedate that judgment, as to do nothing but what you verily believe will be approved in it!

This piety must operate very particularly in the pleading of causes. You will abhor, Sir, to appear in a dirty cause. If you discover that your client has an unjust cause, you will faithfully advise him of it. The question is, "Whether it be lawful to use falsehood and deceit in contending with an adversary?" It is to be hoped that you have determined it like an honest man. You will be sincerely desirous that truth and justice should take place.

You will speak nothing which shall be to the prejudice of either. You will detest the use of all unfair arts to confound *evidences*, to brow-beat *witnesses*, or to suppress what may give light in the case. You have nothing to object to that old rule of pleading a cause: "When the guilt of the party is clearly proved, the counsel ought to withdraw his support."

I remember that Schusterus, a famous lawyer and counsellor, who died at Heidelberg in the year 1672, has an admirable passage in his epitaph:

"Morti proximus vocem emisit;
Nihil se unquam suasisse consilio,
Cujus jam jam moriturum peniteret."

"When at the point of death he could say, I never in the whole course of my practice gave an opinion of which I now repent." A lawyer who can leave the world with such language as this, is a greater blessing to the world than can be expressed.

I cannot encourage any gentleman to spend much time in the study of the *Canon law*; which *Baptista a Sancto Blasio* has found to contradict the civil law in two hundred instances. The *decrees*, the *decretals*, the *clementines*, and *extravagants*, which compose the hideous volumes of that law, would compel any wise man to make such an apology for his aversion to it as one once made: "I cannot, Sir, feed on that which is vile." Agrippa, who was a doctor of that law, said of it, "It is neither *of* God nor *for* him: nothing but corruption invented it; nothing but avarice has practised it." Luther began the Reformation with burning it. Nevertheless, there is one point much insisted on in the canon law, which well

deserves your serious consideration; that is—**RESTITUTION**. When men have obtained riches not by right, or have heaped up wealth in any dishonest and criminal ways, a restitution will be a necessary and essential part of that repentance which alone will find acceptance with heaven. The solemnity of this thought may stand like an “angel with a drawn sword” in your way, when you may be under a temptation to go after the “wages of unrighteousness.” Our law was once given to us in French. Many of you, gentlemen, know the *modern* French as well as the *ancient*. Mons. Placette has given you a valuable treatise of Restitution, in which there is a chapter, “Of the cases in which counsellors are obliged to make restitution.” In that chapter some persons will find a sad *Bill of Costs taxed* for them: and, among other very true assertions, this is one: “S’il exige une recompense excessive et disproportionnee a ce qu’il fait, il est obligé a restituer ce qu’il prend de trop.” In plain English: “Excessive fees must be disgorged by restitution.” This should be thought upon.

It is an old complaint, “that a good lawyer is seldom a good neighbour.” You know how to confute it, gentlemen, by making your skill in the law a blessing to your neighbourhood. It was affirmed as long ago as in the time of Sallust, “Towns were happy formerly, when there were no lawyers; and they will be so again when the race is extinct;” but you may, gentlemen, if you please, be a vast accession to the happiness of your neighbourhood.

You shall have some of my proposals for it, in a

historical exhibition. In the life of Mr. John Cotton, the following passage is related concerning his father, who was a lawyer: "That worthy man was very remarkable in two most imitable practices. One was, that when any of his neighbours wishing to sue another, applied to him for advice, it was his custom, in the most persuasive and obliging manner, to attempt a reconciliation between both parties; preferring the consolation of being a peace-maker, to all the fees which he might have obtained by blowing up the differences. Another was, he was accustomed, every night, to examine himself, with reflections on the transactions of the past day; and if he found that he had neither done good to others, nor got good to his own soul, he was as much grieved as ever the famous Titus was, when he complained in the evening, "My friends! I have lost a day."

What a noble thing would it be for you to find out oppressed widows and orphans; and as such can appear only "in forma pauperis;" and are objects in whose oppression "might overcomes right," generously plead their cause! "Deliver the poor and needy, and rid them out of the hand of the wicked"—it will be a glorious and a God-like action!

Wealthy persons, about to make their wills, frequently ask your advice. You may embrace the opportunity of advising them to such liberality in behalf of pious purposes, as may greatly advance the kingdom of God in the world. And, when you have opportunity, by law, to rescue "the things that are God's" from the sacrilegious hands of those men that would "rob God," it may be hoped that you

will do it with all possible generosity and alacrity. O excellent imitation of our glorious advocate in the heavens!

Is there nothing to be amended in the laws? Perhaps you may discover many things yet wanting in the laws; or mischiefs in the execution or application of them, which ought to be better provided against; or mischiefs which annoy mankind, against which, no laws are yet provided. The reformation of the laws, and more laws for the reformation of the world, are greatly called for. I do not say that our laws could be so reduced, that, like those of Geneva, they might be contained in five sheets of paper; but certainly the laws may be so corrected, that the world may more sensibly and generally enjoy the benefit of them. If some lawyers, that are "men of an excellent spirit," would employ their thoughts this way, and obtain the sanction of the legislature to them, all the world might feel the benefit of it. An honest gentleman, more than fifty years ago, wrote "An Examination of the English Laws," worthy of your consideration in the present day.

Your learning often qualifies you to "write excellent things," not only in your own profession, but also on numerous other entertaining and edifying themes. The books which have been written by learned lawyers, would, in number, almost equal an *Alexandrian Library*. Judge by a Freherus's catalogue, or by a Pryn's performances. What rare and valuable works have been written by a *Hale*, a *Grotius*, and a *Selden*! Sirs, you may plead the cause of religion, and of the reformation, by your

well-directed pens; and perform innumerable services. There is one, at this day, who, in his "History of the Apostles' Creed," and of his accounts of the primitive church, has obliged us to say, "he has offered like a KING to the temple of the King of heaven." May the Lord his God accept him!

But I must come to a close. Should you be called, Sir, to the administration of justice, in the quality of a JUDGE, you will prescribe to yourself rules, like those which the renowned Lord Chief Justice HALE so religiously observed, as to become a bright example for all who occupy the seat of judicature. The sum of those rules were—

"That justice be administered uprightly, deliberately, resolutely.

"That I rest not on my own understanding, but implore the direction of God.

"That in the execution of justice, I carefully lay aside my own passions, and not give way to them, however provoked.

"That I be wholly intent on the business I am about.

"That I suffer not myself to be prepossessed with any judgment at all, till all the business, and both parties, are heard.

By such methods to do good, to serve the cause of righteousness, and introduce the promised age, in which "the people shall all be righteous," the least of those glorious recompenses will be, the establishment of your profession in such a reputation, as many incomparable persons in it have deserved, and that the most prejudiced persons in the world,

when seeking to find blemishes in it, will be forced to bring in an *Ignoramus*.

SECTION XXI.

Societies for the reformation of manners.

REFORMING Societies, or Societies for the Suppression of Vice, have begun to grow into esteem, and it is one of the best omens that appear in the world. "Behold, how great a matter a little (of this heavenly) fire kindleth!" Five or six gentlemen in London associated, with a heroic resolution, to oppose that torrent of wickedness which was carrying all before it in the nation. More were soon added to their number; and though they met with great opposition from "wicked spirits," incarnate, as well as invisible ones, and some in "high places" too, yet they proceeded with a most honourable and invincible courage. Their success, if not proportioned to their courage, was yet far from contemptible. In the punishments inflicted on those who transgressed the laws of morality, many thousands of sacrifices were offered to the holiness of God. Hundreds of houses, which were the porches of hell, and the scandal of the earth, were soon suppressed. A remarkable check was given to the raging profanity; and the Lord's day was not so openly and horribly profaned as before. And among other essays to do good, they scattered thousands of good books, which had a ten-

dency to reform the evil manners of the people. It was not long before this excellent example was followed in other parts of the British empire. Virtuous men of various ranks and persuasions, became members of the societies. Persons high and low, Churchmen and Dissenters, united; and the union became formidable to the kingdom of darkness. The report of the societies flew over the seas, and the pattern was imitated in other countries. Men of wisdom in remote parts of Europe, made this joyful remark upon them, "That they occasion unspeakable good, and announce a more illustrious state of the church of God, which is to be expected in the conversion of Jews and Gentiles." America, too, begins to be irradiated with them.

I shall here recite an account, formerly presented to the public, of what may be effected by such societies:—

"What incredible advantages will accrue to religion from reforming societies, if the disposition to promote them should not unhappily languish! And if religion flourish, and iniquity dare no longer show itself, what prosperity of every kind, and in every thing, would be the consequence? A small society may prove an incomparable and invaluable blessing to a town whose welfare should become the object of their watchful attention: they may be as a garrison to defend it from the worst of its enemies; they may speedily render it "a mountain of holiness, and a dwelling of righteousness, that shall enjoy the most gracious presence of the Lord." The society may assist in promoting the execution of those wholesome

laws, by which vice is discouraged. Offenders against those laws may be kept under such vigilant inspection, that they shall not escape a due punishment for their offences; the effects of such chastisements may be, that the rebuked and censured sinners will be reclaimed from their sins; or, at least, the judgments of God, which may be expected where such sins are indulged, will be diverted. “When we judge ourselves, the judgments of God will be averted.” Swearing and cursing will not infect the air. Men will not reel along the streets, transformed into swine by drunkenness. The cages of unclean birds will be dissipated. They whom idleness rendered dead while they lived, will have an honest employment provided for them, by which they may earn an honest livelihood. And the Lord’s day will be visibly kept holy to the Lord, which will irradiate a place with a most lovely holiness and happiness.

“Vice is a cowardly thing; it will soon shrink before those who visibly and boldly oppose it. If any laws, necessary to remedy what is amiss, be yet wanting, the society may procure the legislative power to assist them, that due provision for their execution may be given by our lawgivers. What is defective in the bye-laws of the town may soon be supplied. The election of such officers as may be faithful and useful to the public, may be very much influenced by the society. If any persons be notoriously defective in their duty, the society may, by suitable admonitions and remonstrances, cause those defects to be amended. If any families live without family worship, the pastor may be

informed by the society, who will visit them, and exhort them no longer to remain in their atheism. If any are in danger of being led away by seducers, or other temptations, care may be taken to warn them. Schools of various kinds may derive advantages from such a society. Charity schools may be erected, inspected, and supported. Books, containing the salt of heaven, may be sprinkled all over the land, and the "savour of truth" be diffused about the country. Finally, the society may find out who are in extreme necessity, and either by their own liberality, or that of others, may procure assistance for them.

"We know that a small society may effect these things, because we know that they have been done, and yet the persons who did them have been concealed from the world. To minds with any generosity or ingenuity, which elevates them above the dregs of mankind, no other argument to form such a society will be needful, than the prospect of so much usefulness. These things will strongly recommend themselves to well-disposed men, and they will think it an honour to belong to a society that pursues such excellent designs."

The recital of these passages may be sufficient to introduce the following proposal:

That a proper number of persons in a neighbourhood, whose hearts God hath touched with a zeal to do good, should form themselves into a society, to meet when and where they shall agree, and to consider—"What are the disorders that we may observe rising among us; and what may be done,

either by ourselves immediately, or by others through our advice, to suppress those disorders?" That they would procure, if they can, the presence of a minister with them; and every time they meet, present a prayer to the Lord to bless, direct, and prosper the design. That they would also procure, if possible, a Justice of the Peace, to be a member of the society. That half-yearly they choose two stewards, to despatch the business and messages of the society, and manage the votes in it, who shall nominate their successors when their term is expired. That they would have a faithful treasurer, in whose hands their stock of charity may be deposited; and a clerk to keep a suitable record of their transactions and purposes; and, finally, that they carry on their whole undertakings with as much modesty and silence as possible.

In a town furnished with several such societies, it has been usual for them all to meet together once a-year, and keep a day of prayer; in which they have humbled themselves for doing so little good, and entreated the pardon of their unfruitfulness, through the blood of the great Sacrifice; and implored the blessing of heaven on those essays to do good which they have made, the counsel and conduct of heaven for their future attempts, and such influences of heaven as may bring about that reformation which it was not in their power to accomplish.

I will conclude this proposal by reciting those *points of consideration*, which may be read to the societies, at their meetings, from time to time, with

a proper pause after each of them, for any member to offer what he pleases upon it.

1. Is there any remarkable disorder in the place, which requires our endeavours for the suppression of it? and, In what good, fair, likely way may we attempt it?

2. Is there any particular person, whose disorderly behaviour may be so scandalous and notorious, that it may be proper to send him our charitable admonition? or, are there any contending persons whom we should exhort to quench their contentions?

3. Is there any particular service to the interests of religion, which we may conveniently desire our ministers to take notice of?

4. Is there any thing which we may do well to mention and recommend to the Justices, for the further promotion of good order?

5. Is there any sort of officers among us unmindful of their duty, to such a degree that we may properly remind them of it?

6. Can any further methods be devised that ignorance and wickedness may be more chased from our people in general; and that domestic piety, in particular, may flourish among them?

7. Is there any instance of oppression or fraudulence in the dealings of any sort of people, which may call for our efforts to rectify it.

8. Is there any matter to be humbly recommended to the legislative power, to be enacted into a law for the public benefit?

9. Do we know of any person languishing under

severe affliction, and is there any thing we can do for the succour of that afflicted neighbour?

10. Has any person a proposal to make, for our further advantage and assistance, that we may be in a better and more regular capacity for prosecuting these intentions?

My Reader—"Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them;" yea, tell first the leaves of a Hyrcanian forest, and the drops of the Atlantic ocean—then tell, how many good things may be done by societies of men, having such points of consideration always before them.

And yet, when such societies have done all the good they can, and nothing but good, and walk on in a more unspotted brightness than that of the moon in heaven, let them expect to be maligned and libelled as "a set of scoundrels, who are maintained by lying, serve God for unrighteous gain, ferret whores for subsistence, and are not more zealous against immorality in their informations, than for it in their own practice; avoiding no sin in themselves, and suffering none in others." I suppose that they who publish their censures on "The manners of the age," *will* thus express their malignity, because they *have* done so. Sirs! "add to your faith, courage," and be armed for such trials of it.

SECTION XXII.

A catalogue of desirable objects for the zeal of good men to prosecute.

WE will not propose that our *Essays to do Good* should ever come to a close; but we will now put an end to our tender of proposals for them; I shall therefore conclude with a *Catalogus Desideratorum*, or a mention of some obvious and general services for the kingdom of God among men, to which it is desirable that religious and ingenious persons should be awakened.

A catalogue of desirable objects for the zeal of good men to prosecute:—

I. The propagation of the holy and glorious religion of Christ; a religion which emancipates mankind from the worst kind of slavery and misery, and wonderfully ennobles it; and which alone prepares men for the blessedness of another world. Why is this no more attempted by its professors? Protestants, will you be outdone by Popish idolaters? O the vast pains which those bigots have taken to carry on the Romish merchandize and idolatry! No less than six hundred clergymen, in the order of the Jesuits alone, have, at several times, within a few years, embarked for China, to win over that mighty nation to their bastard Christianity. No less than five hundred of them lost their lives in the difficulties of their enterprise; and yet the survivors

go on with it, expressing a sort of regret that it fell not to their share to make a sacrifice of their lives in attempting the propagation of their religion. "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God!" It were but a Christian, a grateful, and an equal return, and who can tell what prosperity might be the recompense, if our trading companies and factories would set apart a more considerable part of their gains for this work, and would prosecute it more vigorously. The proposal which Gordon has made at the end of his "Geography," that all persons of property would appropriate a small part of their wealth to this purpose, should be more attentively considered. What has been done by the Dutch missionaries at Ceylon, and what is doing by the Danish missionaries at Malabar, one would imagine sufficient to excite us to imitate them.

If men of zeal for evangelizing and illuminating a miserable world, would learn the languages of some nations which are yet unevangelized, and wait on the providence of heaven to direct them to some apostolical undertakings, and to bless them therein, who can tell what might be done! We know what Ruffinus relates concerning the conversion of the Iberians, and what Socrates mentions concerning the things done by Frumentius and Aedesius in the inner India.

On this subject there are two things worthy of remark.

1. It is the opinion of some Seers, that until the temple be cleansed, there will be no general ap-

pearance of the nations to worship in it. And the truth is there will be danger until then, that many persons, active in societies for the propagation of religion may be more intent on propagating their own little forms, fancies, and interests, than the more weighty matters of the gospel. Yea, it will be well if they be not, unawares, imposed upon, to injure the cause of Christianity where it is well established, while places in the neighbourhood wholly unevangelized may lie neglected. Let us therefore do what we can towards the *reformation* of the Church, in order to its *enlargement*.

2. It is probable that the Holy Spirit will be again bestowed on the Church for its enlargement, in operations similar to those by which, in the first ages, Christianity was planted. The Holy Spirit who has withdrawn from the apostate Church will come and abide with us, and render this world like a "watered garden." His irresistible influences will cause whole "nations to be born in a day." He will not only convert, but unite his people. By him, God will "dwell with men." Would not our "heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit" if he were more earnestly entreated of him!

II. It is lamentable to observe the ignorance and wickedness yet remaining, even in many parts of the British dominions: in Wales, in the Highlands, and in Ireland. Are the *Gouges* all dead? There are pretended shepherds in the world, who will never be able to answer before the Son of God, for their laying so little to heart the deplorable circumstances of so many people whom they might, if they were

not scandalously negligent, bring to be more acquainted with the only Saviour. And there might be more done, that some of the American colonies may no longer be such Cimmerian ones.

III. Why is no more done for the poor Greeks, Armenians, Muscovites, and other Christians, who have little preaching, and no printing among them? If we were to send them Bibles, Psalters, and other books of piety in their own language, they would be noble presents, and God only knows how useful ones.

IV. Poor sailors, and poor soldiers call for our pity. They meet with great troubles, and yet their manners seldom discover any very good effects of their trials. What shall be done to make them a better set of men? Besides more books of piety distributed among them, other methods must be devised. "An ass falls, and the first who comes lifts him up: a soul is on the brink of ruin, and not a hand is stretched out." Let Austin awaken us.

V. The *Tradesman's* library should be more enriched. We have seen "Husbandry Spiritualized;" the employment of the "Shepherd Spiritualized;" "Navigation Spiritualized;" and the "Weaver," also furnished with agreeable meditations:—to spread the nets of salvation for men in the way of their personal callings, and to convey pious thoughts in the terms and branches of their daily business, is a real service to the interests of piety. A book also that shall be an "Onomatologia Monitoria," a "Remembrancer from names," and shall advise people how to make their names become the monitors of

their duty, might be of much use to the *christened* world. And a book which shall be “The Angel of Bethesda,” giving instructions in what manner to improve in piety, by the several maladies with which any may be afflicted; and at the same time informing them of the most experimental, natural, and specific remedies for their disorders, might be very useful to mankind.

VI. *Universities* which shall have more *Collegia Pietatis* in them, like those of the excellent Franciskus in the Lower Saxony. O that such institutions were more numerous! Seminaries in which the scholars may have a most polite education, but not be sent forth with recommendations for the evangelical ministry, till upon a strict examination it be found that their souls are fired with the fear of God, the love of Christ, a zeal to do good, and a resolution to bear poverty, reproach, and all sorts of temptations, in the service of our holy religion. Such characters would be the wonders of the world; and what wonders might they do in the world!

Let *Charity Schools* also “increase and multiply.” Charity schools which may provide subjects for the great Saviour, blessings for the next generation. Charity schools, not perverted to the ill purpose of introducing a defective Christianity.

VII. It is the part of wisdom to observe and pursue those things which, so far as we understand by the books of the sacred Prophecy, are to be *the works of our day*. When the time had arrived that Antichrist should enter his last “half-time,” one poor monk proved a main instrument of wresting

from him half his empire. Thus to fall in with the designs of Divine Providence, is the way to be wonderfully prospered and honoured. One feeble man thus seizing the opportunity may do wonders.

The works of our day I take to be as follows:

1. The revival of Primitive Christianity; to study and restore every thing of the primitive character. The apostacy is going off. The time for cleansing the temple comes on. More EDWARDS would be vast blessings, when the primitive doctrines of Christianity are corrupted.

2. The persuading of the European powers to shake off the chains of popery. Let this argument be used: there is no popish nation but would, by embracing the Protestant religion, not only introduce itself into a glorious liberty, but also would double its wealth immediately. It is strange that this has not been more attended to. Sirs, let it be prosecuted with more demonstration. A certain writer has shown, that the abolition of popery in England, is worth at least eight millions sterling to the nation annually. Let this argument, arising *from interest*, be tried with other nations.

3. The formation and quickening of the people who are to be "The stone cut out of the mountain." In this, as in some other things, "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." God will do his own work in his own time and in his own way; and Austin says, "It is advisable to withhold part of what I meant to say, because of men's incapacity to receive it."

CONCLUSION.

“THE zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform these things:” a zeal inspired and produced by the Lord of Hosts in his faithful servants, will put them upon the performance of such things. Nothing has yet been proposed that is impracticable; “I mention not things of great difficulty, but such as are possible.” But Eusebius has taught me, “It is truly noble to do great things, and yet to esteem yourself as nothing.” Sirs, while pursuing such a course of actions, which have a true glory in them, and which are far more glorious than all the achievements of which those bloody plunderers whom we call conquerors have made a wretched ostentation; and, perhaps, made inscriptions, like those of Pompey on the temple of Minerva,—still humanity must crown the whole. Without this they are all nothing: nothing, without a sense that you are nothing, and a consent to be so considered. You must first, most humbly acknowledge to the great God, “that after you have done all, you are unprofitable servants;” and make your humble confession that you have not only done that “which was your duty to do,” but also, that you have fallen exceedingly short of doing your “duty.” If God should abase you with very dark dispensations of his providence, after all your indefatigable and disinterested “essays” to glorify him, humble yourselves before him; yet abate nothing of your exertions. Persevere, saying, my God

will humble me, yet will I glorify him. Lord, thou art righteous. Still will I do all I can to serve thy glorious kingdom. This act of humiliation is indeed comparatively easy. There is one to be demanded of you, of much greater difficulty; that is, that you humbly submit to all the discredit which God may appoint for you among men. Your adorable Saviour was one who always "went about doing good." Mankind was never visited by such a benefactor: and yet we read never was any one so reviled. Had he been the worst malefactor in the world, he could not have been treated in a worse manner. He expostulated, and inquired, "For which of my good works do you thus treat me?" Yet they persevered: they hated him, they reproached him, they murdered him. Austin very truly said, "A sight of our Lord's cross is a certain cure for pride." It will also be a remedy for discouragement: it will keep you from sinking, as well as from being lifted up. You are conformed to your Saviour in your watchful endeavours to "do good," and to be "fruitful in every good work." But your conformity to him yet lacks one thing; that is, to be "despised and rejected of men;" and patiently to bear the contempt, the malice, and the abuse of a "perverse generation." One of the fathers, who sometimes wanted a little of this grace, could say, "Nothing makes us so agreeable in the sight of God and man, as to rise high by our good actions, and yet sink low in humility."

It is an excellent thing to *come to nothing* in your own esteem. If you hear the hopes of unfriendly men that you will come to nothing; hear it with as

much satisfaction as they can hope for it. In this sense embrace *exinanition* and annihilation. A person who had been a famous "doer of good," was much affected with the picture of a devout man, to whom a voice came down from heaven, "What wouldst thou have me do for thee?" To which he replied, "Nothing, Lord, but that I may be permitted to suffer contempt for thy sake." Sirs, let it be seen somewhere else than in *picture*: be yourselves the *reality*: and thus "let patience have its perfect work."

I hope you have more discretion than to imagine that because you are never weary of well-doing, you will therefore be universally well spoken of. No; it will be just the contrary. To do well, and to hear ourselves evil spoken of, is the common experience, and should be our constant expectation. And for this *unreasonable* thing, many *reasons* may be given. It will be impossible to do much good, but some persons will account themselves injured by what you do. You will unavoidably serve some interests to which others are indisposed. It is also the nature of *mad men* to take up strange prejudices against their best friends, and to be averse to none so much as to them. Now we may every where see those concerning whom we are told, "Madness is in their hearts." This will appear in their unaccountable prejudices against those who most of all seek to do them good. Then "he teareth me in his wrath who hateth me; he gnasheth upon me with his teeth: mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me." A benefactor will perhaps be honoured as the

Lindians worshipped Hercules, by cursing and throwing stones. The wrath of God against a sinful and miserable world, has likewise its operation in this grievous matter. If men who are always intent on doing good, were so generally beloved and esteemed as they ought to be, they would become instruments of doing more good than the justice of heaven can yet allow to be done for such a world. The world is neither worthy of them, nor of the good which they endeavour to perform. To deprive the world of that good, mankind must be permitted to entertain a strange aversion to those persons who would fain do it. This cramps and fetters them, and defeats their excellent purposes.

Nor is the devil idle on this occasion. The man who shall do much good, will thereby do much harm to his empire. It would be surprising if the devil should not "seek to devour," or take an exquisite revenge upon such men of God. And unless God should lay an uncommon restraint upon that "wicked one," such is "the power of the adversary," and so great an influence has he over the minds of multitudes, that he will powerfully and bitterly revenge himself upon any remarkable "doer of good:" he will procure him a troop of enemies, and whole volleys of reproaches. But, O thou servant of God, by Him thou shalt "run through a troop;" by thy God thou shalt "leap over a wall." We should be so far from wondering that wicked men are violently disaffected at the man who does much good; that they spread so many false reports, and write so many libels to his disadvantage, as even the incom-

parable Calvin suffered from them; that we ought rather to wonder the devil does not make this world hotter than a Babylonish furnace for him: too hot for his continuing in it. Sirs, if you will do much, it is very likely that the devil may sometimes raise upon your opportunities to do good, such a horrible tempest as may threaten their utter ruin. You may fear to have your serviceableness—the “apple of your eye” struck out: you may be driven to prayers, to tears, and to frequent fasting in secret on this account. Prostrate in the dust, you must offer up your supplications with strong crying and tears, to Him that is able to save your “opportunities of doing good from death:” you must cry out, “O deliver my soul,” my serviceableness, “from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog!” The words of the great Baxter are to the purpose, and worthy to be introduced on this occasion:

“The temptations and suggestions of Satan, yea, and often his external and contrived snares, are such as frequently to give men a palpable discovery of his agency. Whence is it that such wonderful successive trains of impediments are set in the way of almost every man that intends any great and good work in the world? I have, among men of my own acquaintance, observed such wonderful frustrations of many designed excellent works, by such strange unexpected means, such a variety of them, and so powerfully carried on, as both of itself convinced me that there is a most vehement invisible malice permitted by God to resist mankind, and to militate against all good in the world. Let a man have any

work of the greatest natural importance, which tends to no great benefit to mankind, and he may proceed without any extraordinary impediment. But let him have any great design for the common good, in things that tend to destroy sin, to heal divisions, to revive charity, to increase virtue, to save men's souls, yea, or to the public common felicity; and his impediments shall be so multifarious, so far-fetched, so subtle, so incessant, and in spite of all his care and resolution, usually so successful, that he shall seem to himself like a man that is held fast, hand and foot, while he sees no one touch him; or that sees a hundred blocks brought and cast before him in his way, while he sees no one do it."

I have transcribed this passage for the purpose of preparing you to expect opposition. O thou doer of good, expect a conflict with wicked spirits in high places, to clog all the good thou dost propose to do. Expect their ceaseless endeavours to overwhelm thee by instilling into the minds of men vile ideas concerning thee, and by putting into their mouths calumnies against thee. These will be some of their devices to defeat all thy proposals: "Be not ignorant of Satan's devices."

Yea, and if the devil were asleep, there is malignity enough in the hearts of wicked men themselves, to render a man who wishes to do good very offensive and troublesome to them. They are the offspring of him who "slew his brother, because his works were righteous;" and they will malign a man because he is useful to other men. Indeed, "To be spoken ill of by the wicked is to be praised."

Wicked men will curse a man because he is a blessing. O base and wicked disposition!

I happened once to be present in the room where a dying man could not leave the world until he had lamented to a minister, whom he had sent for, the unjust calumnies and injuries which he had often cast upon him. The minister asked the poor penitent what was the occasion of his abusive conduct; whether he had been imposed upon by any false reports. The man made this horrible answer: "No, Sir; it was nothing but this; I thought you were a good man, and that you did much good in the world, and therefore I hated you. Is it possible, is it possible," said the poor sinner, "for such a sinner to find pardon?" Truly, though other causes may be assigned for the spite and rage of wicked men against a fruitful doer of good, yet I shall not be deceived if I fear that frequently a secret antipathy to the kingdom of God lies at the bottom of it. Or, in proud men it may frequently be pale envy, enraged that other men are more useful in the world than they, and vexing themselves with worse than *Sicilian* torments, at the sight of what God and man do for other men. "They see it and are grieved." "Sirs, he is not a good man who has not goodness enough to call forth envy and hatred." But, now for such causes you must not "think strange of the trial," if men "speak evil of you," after you have done good to many, yea, to those very persons who thus speak. It will not be strange if you should "hear the defaming of many;" if the men who do not love the holy ways of the Lord in his churches,

should have no love to you; if javelins should be thrown at you with the most impetuous rage; and if pamphlets filled with falsehood and slander should be published against you. God may wisely and in much faithfulness permit these things, "to hide pride from you." "O, how much of that deadly poison, pride, still remains within us; for which nothing short of poison is an antidote!" Alas! while we still carry about us the grave-clothes of pride, these rough hands are the best that can be employed to pull them off. If you should meet with such things, you must bear them with much meekness, much silence, great self-abasement, and a spirit to forgive the worst of all your persecutors. "Being defamed, you must entreat." Be well pleased if you can redeem any opportunities to do good. Be ready to do good even to those from whom you suffer evil. And when you have done all the good in your power, account yourself well paid if you escape as well as the crane did from the wolf; if you are not *punished* for what you do. In short, be insensible of any merit in your performances. Lie in the dust, and be willing that both God and man should lay you there. Have your spirit reconciled to indignities. Entertain them with all the calmness and temper imaginable. Be content that *three hundred in Sparta* should be preferred before you. When envious people can fix upon you no other blemish, they will say of you, as they said of Cyprian, that you are a proud man, because you do not jog on in their heavy road of slothfulness. Bear this also, with a yet more profound humility. It is

the last effort usually made by the dying "pride of life," to bear the charge of pride with impatience.

Ye useful men, your acceptance with your Saviour, and with God through him, and your recompense in the world to come, are to carry you cheerfully through all your "essays" at usefulness. To be "reprobate for every good work," is a character from which it will be the wisdom of all men to fly, with the greatest dread imaginable. But then, to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord" is the truest and highest wisdom. It is the "wisdom which is from above, full of mercy and good fruits." The sluggards who do no good in the world, are "wise in their own conceit;" but the men who are diligent in doing good, can give such a reason for what they do, as proves them to be *really wise*. Men "leave off to be wise," when they leave off to "do good." The wisdom of it appears in this: it is the best way of spending our time; that time is well spent which is spent in doing good. It is also a sure and pleasant way, effectually to bespeak the blessings of God on ourselves. Who so likely to *find blessings* as the men that *are blessings*? It has been said, "He who lives well, always prays." And I will add, "He who acts well, prays well." Every action we perform for the kingdom of God, is, in effect, a prayer for the blessing of God. While we are at work for God, certainly he will be at work for us and ours: he will do for us far more than ever we have done for him; "more than we can ask or think." There is a voice in every good thing that is done; it is this: "O do good unto those that are good!"

Thus my *Bonifacius* again comes to bear the name of *Benedictus*, also. Yea, and there may be this more particular effect of what we do: while we employ our invention for the interests of God, it is very probable that we shall sharpen it for our own. We shall become the more wise for ourselves, because we have been "wise to do good." And of the man who is compared to a "tree that brings forth fruit," we read, "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Nor can a man take a readier way to "live joyfully all the days of the life of his vanity, which God hath given him under the sun:" for, in this case, our life is not thrown away in "vanity," nor do we "live in vain." My friend, "Go thy way," and be joyful, "for God accepteth thy works." Our "few and evil days" are rendered much less so, by our doing good in every one of them, as it rolls over us: yea, the Holy Spirit of God, who is the quickener of those who "do good without ceasing," will also be their "Comforter." Every day in which we are active for the kingdom of God, will be in some degree a day of Pentecost to us; a day of the Holy Spirit coming upon us. The "consolations of God" will not be small with the man who is full of contrivances for God, and for his kingdom. In short, we read, "the valleys are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing." We may be in low circumstances, but if we abound in the fruits of well-doing, and if we bless many with our services, we shall find our valley "covered over with corn." When this is the case, we shall "shout for joy, and also sing." The consciousness of what we

do, and of what we aim to do, will be a "continual feast" to us. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." "And a good action is its own reward." Yea, the pleasure of doing good is inexpressible, is unparalleled, is angelical: it is a most refined pleasure, more to be envied than any sensual gratification. Pleasure was long since defined, "The result of some excellent action." It is a sort of *holy Epicureanism*. O most pitiable are they who will continue strangers to it!

When the useful man comes to his *Nunc dimittis*, then he who lived beloved, shall die lamented. It shall be witnessed and remembered of him, "That he was one who did good in Israel:"—an epitaph, the glory of which is beyond that of the most stately pyramid! Then the calumniators who once endeavoured to destroy his reputation, shall have only the impotence of their own defeated malice to reflect upon. And a *Thersites* will not have a more disadvantageous article in his character than this, "That he was an enemy to such a *Ulysses*." But what shall be done for this good man in the *heavenly world*! His part and his work in the city of God are at present incomprehensible to us: but the "kindness" which his God will show to him in the "strong city," will be truly "marvellous." Austin, writing on this city, exclaimed, "How great will be the felicity of that city, where no evil will be seen, no good concealed." His attempts to fill this world with "righteous things," are so many tokens for good to him, that he shall have a share and a work in that world wherein shall dwell

nothing but "righteousness." He will be introduced into that world, with a welcome from the mouth of the glorious Jesus, which will be worth a thousand worlds—"Well done, good and faithful servant!" And, O! what shall be done for him! He has done what he could for the "honour of the King of Heaven;" and every thing shall be done for him that can be done for one whom the "King of Heaven delighteth to honour."

I will give you the whole summed up in one word: "Mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good." Children of God, there is a strain of "mercy and truth" in all the good that you devise. You devise how to deal mercifully and truly with every one, and to induce every one to do so too. And the mercy and truth of God, which are now for ever engaged on your behalf, will suffer you to "lack no good thing," and will hereafter do you good beyond what the heart of man can yet conceive. A faithful God, a Saviour of great faithfulness, has promised it—"The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

I have not forgotten the words used by the excellent Calvin, when the order for his banishment from ungrateful Geneva was brought to him: "Most assuredly, if I had merely served man, this would have been a poor recompense: but it is my happiness that I have served Him who never fails to reward his servants to the full extent of his promise."

I will conclude with a testimony which I will ever adhere to. It is this: Were a man able to write in seven languages—could he daily converse with

the sweets of all the liberal sciences to which the most accomplished men generally make pretensions — were he to entertain himself with all ancient and modern history; and could he feast continually on the curiosities which all the different branches of learning may discover to him: even this, and much less the grosser delights of sense, would not afford the ravishing satisfaction which he might find in relieving the distresses of a poor miserable neighbour; and which he would find much more in doing any extensive service to the kingdom of our great Saviour in the world, or by his efforts to redress the miseries under which mankind is generally languishing.

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