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HOURS OF DEVOTION:

TRANSLATED

BY

MORRIS MATTSON.

Second American,

FROM THE THIRTEENTH GERMAN EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

JAMES KAY, JUN. & BROTHER, 122 CHESTNUT STREET.

PITTSBURGH: JOHN I. KAY & CO.

1835.

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P R E F A C E.

The following pages have been translated with the view to interest and instruct the American reader, more than for the purpose of spreading before the public a literal translation of the original. Some passages have occasionally been omitted on account of their idiomatical obscurity;—others because it was thought they contained but little interesting to the American public. In some instances, also, when the text appeared to be unnecessarily diffuse, it has been abbreviated, while at the same time great care has been taken to preserve the full meaning and spirit of the author.

The intelligent reader need scarcely be informed that there is, in many respects, a wide difference between the manners, and customs of Germany and America; and that these tend in a great degree to embarrass the translation of a work that was written solely for the moral and religious improvement of the former and its adaptation to the views, feelings, and circumstances of the latter. Under these circumstances it has been a particular desire, in the selection which compose the present volume, to choose such subjects as more particularly condemn the vices and immoralities, which, in a greater or less degree, our national and individual character partakes. With what success this task has been accomplished, it is for the public to judge.

Note.—Owing to the hurry of the press, a few typographical, and other errors were overlooked, until too late for correction; but none, perhaps, that will materially injure the sense.

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INTRODUCTORY REFLECTIONS.

I have visited alike, the humble cottage, the noisy camp, and the glittering palace. In all places I have found mankind disposed to religious conversation—anxious for an improvement of heart, and striving to live in this world, so as to secure a brighter existence in the world to come. But alas! those holy desires are too often neglected, or lost, in the pursuit of worldly pleasure and dissipation. It is thus that we sometimes assume entirely opposite natures. In the temple of God, we are full of meekness and devotion; in the bustle and crowd of the world, full of deceit and hypocrisy.

I have often found a pretension to religion, without its reality; the *fear* of God, without the *love* of him; a determination to do good deeds, without bringing them into practice; and an outward show of devotion to Christ, without being one of his disciples or followers.

A thousand voices are complaining of the decay of christianity. It is not without cause. On one hand I observe idleness, mockery and pride, leading away their victims in foolish pursuits, and weakening the warning voice of the inward judge;—on the other, I behold both young and old, from the sprightly youth to the hoary headed man, tormenting themselves with fearful doubts of the existence of a God, the realities of an eternity, and the future state of their souls; thereby depraving the public mind, and de-

stroying domestic peace and happiness ; accompanied with a thousand appalling circumstances.

The present decline of christianity, and destruction of moral order, is partly owing to the late wars ; as also, to many injurious and superficial writings, that unhappily, are often read with a superficial understanding. But there are also, many other sources, from which stream our misery. I will grieve no one by nameing them. I aim at a more exalted object ; and cheerfully will I close my eyes in the hour of dissolution, if I have, in the least degree, succeeded in furthering the cause of true religion, by restoring domestic piety and devotion.

Nothing inclines our hearts so much to the performance of good and christian actions, as a communion with God, in an hour of solitude. The soul is then free from the trammels of all earthly things, and returns to the fountain of eternal light and life, from which it had its origin. Could there be a more beautiful picture of domestic happiness, than that of the father and mother, in the circle of their beloved offspring, entertaining each other with rational ideas of their creator—his majesty and power—the sublimity of his works—the infinitude of his wisdom and goodness—the religion of Jesus Christ, and the prospect of happiness beyond the grave ? What a delightful sensation steals through their minds upon an occasion like this ; and with a tear of emotion, they inwardly resolve, while pilgrims on the earth, to live worthy of his name. Those who have already experienced these feelings, will acknowledge the truth of my words, and those who have not, should strive.

without ceasing, to possess themselves of so rich a treasure, which the world can neither give nor take away.

For the promotion and increase of virtue and happiness, these pages are intended to contribute. To the youth who go forth into the world, with a thousand anticipations of good and evil, they shall be warmly devoted. May they impart to them a proper sense of their own dignity—fill them with gladness and joy, and inspire them with religious courage in the hour of danger and difficulty. They shall likewise be devoted to the father and mother, who are quietly gliding down the pathway of existence; and may they tend to elevate their souls to God, and influence them so to train up their children in christian meekness and simplicity, as to render them an offering fit for heaven. To the aged and solitary, who, in the evening of their days look forward to the dawning of an eternal life, they are also designed to afford useful and salutary instruction.

NEW YEAR'S MEDITATIONS.

There is something very solemn in the commencement of a new year. It is like the stillness of the sabbath, when we pour out our souls in secret devotion, to the invisible creator. The pealing of bells, and sounding of trumpets, mingled with holy songs, welcome its approach. The youth are shouting with exultation. Friends and acquaintances are wishing each other happiness. Children are sending up prayers for the welfare of their parents—the poor for that of their benefactors—and the people, assembled in their churches, are more fervent in their supplications for the prosperity of their rulers.

The lapse of a year is equally important to all; to the king on his throne, as to the peasant in his cottage: to the father in the midst of his workmen, as to the mother in the circle of her children: to the old and wearied man upon his couch, as to the buoyant and sprightly youth, who is full of joyful expectations.

We look upon the past as a dream, and the future is spread out before us as the mist that hangs upon the mountain top. To the melancholy, there are forebodings of misery and wo: to the sprightly, there are anticipations of happiness and joy. Every one is looking eagerly forward, and anxious to read his destiny, that lays concealed in the dark and unrevealing future.

With uncertain hopes and expectations, every one now

resumes his business, and forms new schemes and projects. The christian, also, commences his life anew, under the influence of fear and hope. But with what sentiments does he enter upon the new year, that is to bring with it some new joy or sorrow? He seeks the depths of retirement and solitude, where his soul holds eloquent communion with itself, and pours forth his thanksgivings to the throne of the Eternal. Hear his prayer :—

“I am unworthy of the great love and mercy which thou hast shown me! Thou art the disposer of every blessing that I receive! Thou hast guided me through a thousand dangers of which I was ignorant! In all my sorrows and troubles, thou wast with me! Thou didst watch over me and my family, sinful and wicked as we were! Whatever may have appeared mysterious in thy providence during the past year, was no doubt, intended for my good! With what infinite wisdom dost thou govern the universe, and direct every thing so as to contribute to the happiness of man!

“Oh, God! thou art full of goodness and mercy! Watch over me, and my family, and my kindred! Do not desert us, even though we should forsake thy ways! Thy erring children, weeping and sorrowful, are ever glad to be restored to thy love.

“Oh Lord! thou hast ever guarded over and protected me! I pray thee still to extend to me thy tender mercies! Full of confidence, I look to thee for support! I will cling to thee, as the tender infant clings to the embrace of its parent! I will follow the precepts of thy beloved Son, and

be satisfied with whatever evil or good may attend me in the coming year !

“ Oh, most heavenly Father ! like an ignorant child I make known to thee my wishes, but thou wilt only grant me those which will be beneficial to me ! I will resign myself, and my kindred, and all who are dear to my heart, into thy hands, for Thou, alone, art God ! I will divest myself of every fruitless sorrow and vain hope, and rely only on thy providence for support !”

We should not anticipate too much of evil or good that may await us in the future. Both are equally pernicious. Neither be deluded by hope. It ever leads men astray. When they confidently expect to realize some good fortune, without any sure foundation, they are apt to regulate their projects in accordance with those deceitful views, and when it is too late, find they have been engaged in a blind and foolish enterprize. We seldom recollect how frequently we have already been deceived in our expectations.

When we are disappointed in our hopes, we grow peevish and are compelled to endure many bitter moments, which we might have easily avoided. Hopes deceived, are always accompanied with pain, sometimes rendering us unjust to our fellow men, and scoffers at the goodness of God. But we must blame ourselves alone ; it is the result of our own foolishness and imprudence.

Be not too ardent in your hopes, or you will be unprepared for any incidental evil that may befall you. If you flatter yourself with glowing prospects, it renders you effeminate, and you will be unable to brave the storm that

may unexpectedly break in upon you. The christian prepares himself for every extremity, and is armed with courage to stand fearlessly forth in the hour of peril, even as the unshrinking soldier in the presence of his enemy. He looks to heaven and is satisfied with its decrees. If he experiences an unexpected joy, or encounters an unexpected misfortune, he regards both with the same christian and exemplary spirit.

Hope only to earn thyself happiness by a just and virtuous conduct. This hope will seldom disappoint thee. Virtuous actions always have their reward. Leave off thy vicious habits, and thou wilt be respected by those who despise and hate thee. Thy amiable qualities—thy engaging manners—thy desire to serve others without selfishness—thy endeavour to speak good of every one—thy zeal in business that is entrusted to thee—a withdrawal from all indecent things; these, will secure to thee the confidence and love of those who now look with indifference and contempt upon thee. In what does our permanent happiness consist, but in so demeaning ourselves, as to be satisfied with our own conduct, and gain the respect and esteem of all good men? If thou art unhappy, it is thy own fault. Divest thyself of thy evil propensities, which render thee hateful to those around thee, and destroy thy peace and serenity of mind. Do not foolishly expect happiness at the hands of others, which thou canst better and more permanently create for thyself. If it seems too difficult for thee to correct the evil of thy ways, then cease thy bitter complaints, for thou hast not the courage or resolution to strive after happiness.

Hope only for that reputation and wealth, which thou canst honestly acquire by thy own industry and perseverance. Depend always on thyself and the goodness of God, rather than the assistance of other men, or on incidental circumstances. The more we learn to depend upon our own exertions, the more noble and exalted we become, and better able to accomplish every good. Why then shouldst thou hope for great riches? Is it not because it flatters thy vanity? Thou shouldst learn that he who is not contented with what he can acquire by his own industry, is not deserving of any greater blessing.

Hope only for that degree of joy in this world, which thy own prudence in human life will secure to thee. Be guided by thy own experience. God gave thee reason and understanding, to be the creator of thy own happiness. Avoid all hazardous undertakings; be prudent in thy expenditures; careful in the choice of thy friends; avail thyself of every means to profit honestly by thy trade or occupation; show a proper respect to those whose opinions or standing in society is different from thine own; then thou wilt avoid much uneasiness of mind, and the circle of thy friends will be unto thee a paradise, which will prove a far greater transport, than all those fanciful, but deceptive pictures of thy hopes.

Time is as an empty field, whereon grows neither good nor evil of itself. Like the husbandman, thou must cultivate it. What thou sowest, that shalt thou also reap. If thou scatterest the seed of prayer, and shalt nurture it by

thine own prudence and care, the dews and sunshine of heaven will reward thee with a golden harvest.

If thou shouldst meet with sudden happiness or good fortune, it will be the sweeter and more blessed to thy soul. Oh, how great is the goodness of our creator! In the coming year, he will shower upon us many unexpected blessings!

Do not live in constant *fear*. We suffer more from the anticipation of evil, than the misfortune itself. It poisons the health, and destroys many little pleasures which we might otherwise enjoy. Fear with some men becomes an evil habit; they are always complaining, and forever tormenting themselves with foolish apprehensions. In their madness, they deprive themselves of every worldly enjoyment.

Unnecessary fear renders us spiritless, and causes us to adopt a wrong mode of life. Prudence will teach us to avoid all fruitless anxiety of the mind, and calmly to partake of the enjoyments of the present. It will also enable us in the hour of affliction, to diminish our apprehensions of evil, and increase the brightness and fervor of our hopes. The mariner in the midst of the ocean, is delighted with a clear sky, and a favorable breeze. Then, should he torment himself with apprehensions of storms and shipwreck?—but clouds are gathering in the heavens!—a fearful storm is beginning to rage—the wind is howling and leaping through the sails, and the roaring and angry billows threaten him with destruction! Unnecessary fear would increase his danger. But he confidently trusts in God, who accom-

panies him through the perils of the deep; and, collecting his strength, he manfully contends with the wind and waves, and saves himself from the jaws of destruction.

Lessen thy fears, and if thou hast been hitherto unhappy or comfortless, experience will teach thee that life is never without its changes. If the morning is clouded, the brightness of noon may chase away the obscurity. Unmingled joy or sorrow, is seldom of long duration. Why should we despair at the setting of the sun, when we know he will smile upon us so soon again? Consider the whole extent of thy present adversity, and if every thing on earth is dark and desolate, remember that God will never forsake thee. Then do not despair!

Fear not, for God is always with thee. If thou shouldst be left without hope, or the enjoyments of life, thou hast still a treasure in the inexhaustible goodness of thy creator. If death has deprived thee of a relative or friend, do not give way to unavailing grief over their graves. Thou art also a wanderer to eternity, and will meet them in the skies. If thou hast suffered by the injustice of thy neighbors; if the malice of thine enemies hath afflicted thee; if the desolating hand of war hath deprived thee of thy property; let not thy courage forsake thee, for he who watches over the stars, will not fail to number thy tears. Strive to think that the sufferings thou hast endured the past year, were only a test of thy christian virtues; a lesson to govern thy future life. Thou wert born for another world, and not for this shadow of earthly existence. By virtue, and wisdom, and greatness of soul, thou wilt one day be fitted for the enjoyments of

heaven. The evils of this life, therefore, which exist but for a moment, tend to increase and strengthen the power of thy mind, and prepares thee for eternal glory.

Thou hast nothing but thyself to fear ; for thy imprudence and uncontrolled passions, are thy most formidable enemies. If thy present situation is painful to thee, encounter thy difficulties with christian fortitude. Consider, maturely, those means by which thou canst best relieve thy distress ; and thy heavenly father, who watches over the smallest worm, will give thee his assistance.

To thee, Oh, Lord, I cheerfully surrender myself, and whatever may happen to me in the ensuing year, shall not estrange my affections from thee. If thou art with me, why should I be terrified or discouraged ? With the new year, I will endeavour to live more worthy of thy holy name ; and whatever pain and struggling it may cost me, I will strive to lay áside my vicious inclinations, which secretly ruin me.

Should the present year be appointed for my death, may I be prepared to stand before thee, with a purified spirit, while the tears of my friends are bedewing my grave. I will prepare myself for the event, and look upon it as the signal, that is to call me away to the enjoyment of unmingled happiness, which thy infinite goodness has prepared for the righteous in the world to come.

FAMILY DEVOTION.

It is a beautiful thing to behold a family at their devotions. Who would not be moved by the tear that trembles in the mother's eye, as she looks to heaven, and pours forth her fervent supplications, for the welfare of her children? Who can look with indifference upon the venerable father, surrounded by his family, with his uncovered locks, kneeling in the presence of Almighty God, and praying for their happiness and prosperity? In whose bosom is not awakened the finest feelings, on beholding a tender child, in the beauty of its innocence, folding its little hands in prayer, and imploring the invisible, yet eternal father, to bless its parents, its brothers and sisters, and its playmates.

It can not be denied, that in former times, there existed more true piety, than at present; nor that there was more integrity and nobleness of soul; more philanthropy and domestic bliss; with less of selfishness, hypocrisy and foul-mouthed slander.

With what is termed the refinement of our manners, has partly disappeared our sense of religious duty. We think chiefly of wild and extravagant pleasures. We seek for happiness in the pomp and show of the world, when we might have found it in our own bosoms. There are certain persons who affect to believe, that a public manifestation of their religious feelings, would be a disgrace; but they do not hesitate to mingle in idle, indecent and riotous assemblies.

They would not be found reading their bible, but they are ready to peruse corrupt and immoral books. Thus the heart grows desolate, even in the midst of its fancied improvements; and in its desires, descends to the level of the brute.

The carelessness and immorality of parents, are frequently destructive of the peace and prosperity of their families. But many will yet return to the simple and exemplary life of our forefathers, and be reinstated in their virtues.

Public worship, is of inestimable value. But it often becomes a mere habit. In the dissipations of life, the heart grows cold, and ceases to employ itself with the things of heaven. How soon do those beautiful impressions vanish from our minds! How soon are the holy vows and repentant tears, which accompanied them, forgotten or despised! It seems we would only be christians on the Sabbath, as though every day in the week was not equally worthy of our devotion to God.

We should not make a vain show of our religion. Christian meekness will be found in a solitary corner; but the hypocrite sounds his trumpet, and goes forth into the streets, that he may have glory of men.*

How delightful, on the contrary, is piety and devotion, when brought within the limits of a single family. Here, the father and mother become the priest and priestess of the Almighty! Here is erected the temple of God! Here assembles the little family, after the labour of the day is completed! Here they look abroad into the heavens, and gaze upon the glittering stars—proclaiming the magnificence

* Matthew, vi. 2.

of their creator—and while they believe they can trace in them, the existence of other beings, similar to themselves, who may at the same time be worshipping God, they rejoice to think that their own prayers, will also ascend, in the stillness of night, to the invisible and all pervading spirit.

These devotions operate even upon the hearts of little children. They behold their parents full of humbleness and reverence, and their minds receive the impress of those feelings and emotions. Therefore, accustom your children to prayer in early life. They may not comprehend its meaning, but it impresses them with the idea of a superior being; and when their understanding is awakened, they will the more readily appreciate its importance.

Prayer, to have its proper effect upon the heart, must not always be the same. It must gush from the fountains of the soul, or otherwise, it becomes a task, merely for the memory, in which the feelings do not participate. And is not this a mockery? There can be but little devotion, when the mind wanders from the solemnity of those high duties. A single earnest thought of the Divine goodness, is worth a thousand passionless prayers.

If the father and mother be not always inclined to pray from the impulse of their own feelings, there are many excellent prayer books, written by pious and worthy men, that will embellish and improve the mind, and infuse into us their spirit and devotion. The prayers of our relations and friends, when assembled together, leaves a vivid impression upon the mind. It is good that the mother should instruct her children betimes, to return thanks to the

Creator, not by any written form of words, but rather by training their minds to good and virtuous impressions.

There are numberless inducements to engage in the simplicity of family devotion. It is not necessary to be always repeating the name of the Lord; lest it might become a pernicious habit. In our daily avocations, we should think only of our business; but in prayer, we should not suffer our minds to go astray: We will find it impossible to attend to two things at a time.

Hark!—the dull sounds of the muffled bell, break upon the ear!—The coffin of a neighbor is moving slowly and mournfully along. The husband grasps the hand of his wife—eternity opens more vividly to their view—they strengthen their faith, and rely with still greater confidence upon the goodness and providence of God. Here is domestic devotion!

The spring has returned and is scattering her flowers upon the earth; the lark is singing merrily in the skies; the nightingale is whispering its notes in the distant grove, and gladness and joy pervade the whole creation. The delighted father describes to his listening son the wonderful works of nature, and the order and regularity of its government, until their minds are lost in wonder and admiration. Here, indeed, is domestic worship!

A family passes away many lonely hours, without any other enjoyment, than that of their own society. Then, how pleasant it is to engage in cheerful conversation, and sometimes reflect upon the more serious concerns of life. Let some instructive book, or sermon, or chapter in

the bible; the songs of David, or the history of Jesus Christ, be read aloud, while the family listens with an attentive ear. The understanding is hereby improved; virtue appears in all her beauty and loveliness; vice, in its hideousness and deformity; the flame of devotion is enkindled in every heart, and the soul seems to have leaped into the more immediate presence of the Deity.

These few examples will show the manifold inducements to domestic worship. But it is not necessary to be always exhorting and entreating each other to be good. An excess of devotion will weary the mind. To the father and mother, and to the world at large, we would say, that the most effective sermon, is that of a virtuous and exemplary life. Your example will be more powerful than your words; your actions, more heeded than your instructions.

The tender and industrious parents, the obedient and affectionate children, the honest and faithful domestics; these are the constant worshippers of God. Their whole conduct is upright and just. The piety of their souls shines forth in all their actions. Other men may have thrown aside their devotional feelings in the bustle of life; they may have forgotten the high resolves and noble purposes of soul, which were sealed with a vow in the hour of tribulation; yet these remain with us, faithful to the last, and mingle their prayers and thanksgivings with our own.

There is a sublimity in private devotion, in which every one more or less participates. It increases our worth and respectability in the estimation of the world. It familiar-

izes us -with God; and we commune with him, not as strangers, but as little children with their parents.

The prayers which we offer to God in the stillness of solitude or in the midst of the family circle, seems purer and holier, and contributes more immediately to our domestic bliss and happiness. We avoid every immorality common to those who do not hold themselves responsible to the Almighty. A conscience void of reproach diffuses an inexpressible serenity over the mind, and imparts new pleasure to our existence.

O Lord, I am thankful that I am no stranger to thee! I would be unworthy of thy blessings, even for a single day, if I ceased to call upon thy holy name! Thy son prayed, even in the solitary garden of Gethsemane. I, too will go out into the lonely places of the earth, and though far from my home, I will worship thee in spirit and in truth; for thou art omnipresent and will be found amid the rocks and mountains, as in the temple that is consecrated to thy service.

In me, O Lord, thou reignest, and why should not thy precepts govern my household? Shall we profane with sin and wickedness, the chamber in which we have so fervently prayed? Shall we utter falsehoods and lies, on the spot where we have so often knelt in worship before thee? Shall we indulge in envy and slander and hatred, in the place where we have so often called upon thee to bless us? No! Where should we find peace or happiness on earth, if, by our transgressions, we convert our own cottage into a hell? I know the blessings that flow from domestic de-

votion, and will enjoy its delights. My thoughts O Lord, sleeping or awake, shall be upon thee; and when I lie down in the hour of death, and close my eyes for the last time on earth, I will awake to recollection in a better world, and rejoice in thy glory and magnificence. There thou wilt be no stranger to me! There I shall meet my family and kindred, with the spirits of the just made perfect.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

There would be no religion upon earth, without the ceremony of public worship. The king and his subjects partake alike of its blessings.

Shall public worship, in a christian country, receive the disapprobation and contempt of those, who boast of enlightened understandings? There are individuals who think it gives them a sort of public notoriety, to think and act differently from their christian brethren and sisters. Is our religion inferior to that of the heathens, that it cannot awaken those feelings of sublimity, which they experience in their idolatrous worship?

Examine well thy reasons, for withdrawing thyself from the house of God. Is it not a want of religious feeling that prevents thee from appreciating the beauty and holiness of prayer, and to look upon it as an idle and superfluous custom? Does thy vanity lead thee to suppose, that thy impiety will cause thee to be looked upon as more enlightened and intelligent than those around thee? Is it shame that keeps thee aloof? Dost thou fear thy society will not be courted by the rich and proud men of the earth, who might neglect or despise religious worship? Or, is it thy indolence that raises objections to the performance of so sacred a duty?

I hear thee say, "There is nothing I can learn at church that I do not already know." Yet, an indifferent speaker

may utter many useful and salutary truths; he may revive impressions that have been slumbering for a long time in thy memory; and recall thee unexpectedly to a sense of thy duty.

“But,” thou repliest, “I can worship God in my closet, as well as in the church.” Ah! but wilt thou do it? Art thou disposed to attempt it? Art thou not prevented by a hundred idle pursuits? Will not thy soul be more easily warmed into devotion, by mingling with thy fellow citizens in the church of God?

Again, I hear thee reply, “They would laugh at me, and deem me a hypocrite!” Then, is it not thy vanity and pride, which prevents thee from performing a duty, which thou owest, at least, to thy fellow men? If thou art more learned than they, and cannot add to thy stores of knowledge by attending the church, furnish them at least with thy good example, that they may have an opportunity to improve their hearts. Wouldest thou not censure him, who would cease to respect our government and laws, without which there could be no peace or security? Then, why wilt thou not censure thyself, for overturning the respect due to religious worship, without which the people would relapse into a thousand vicious and immoral habits.

To the christian, the Sabbath is a holy day. People in a thousand different languages, are worshipping God, whilst thou art standing alone, like the Indian of the forest, as though thou didst not belong to the great family of mankind. Thou art excluded from the fellowship of thy brethren, and no one accompanies thee in thy solitary way.

When the bells are ringing, and people are hurrying on their way to the churches, dost thou not sometimes feel religious emotions springing up in thy soul? Why dost thou exclude thyself from communion with christians? Cast thine eye through the dim and shadowy temple, and behold the altar, where thou wast first consecrated to God—where thou didst partake of the feast in commemoration of thy Saviour—where an innocent and lovely wife, united her destiny with thine, and ask thyself if it has nothing worthy of thy affections. Unhappy man! if here too thou art destitute of feeling, then I urge thee in vain, for the ennobling attributes of thy character have perished in the desolation.

The Sabbath is a day of rest, when all worldly business should cease. The plough remains undisturbed in the furrow, and the workshops are closed. Each one is seen in his best attire. Even these tokens of respect, insignificant as they are, have a salutary influence upon the mind, and incline it to cheerful and virtuous reflections. But let public worship disappear from the land, and in a few years we will observe a fearful change in the morals of the people. The poor man, spurned by his wealthy and avaricious neighbor, and weighed down by the miseries of life, will seldom find a leisure moment to think of his future destination. He is merely a creature, subject to the vicissitudes of this transitory life, without ever reflecting upon his immortality. The love and fear of God, no longer have an influence upon his actions—his religion will be that of deceit

fulness and hypocrisy—his heaven, the accomplishment of his own selfish desires.

The Sabbath recalls the wandering and unsettled mind, and the same zeal is now manifested for the welfare of the soul, as hitherto, in the accumulation of wealth. Every thing is silent and at rest, save the temple of God. And even though our hearts, should not be inclined to pious reflections, our example will have an influence upon those who are assembled about us, who share with us the common blessings of our country; and who, early or late, may follow our coffin to the grave, and shed over us the tears of friendship and regret. Finally, we shall all be again assembled in the presence of the Almighty, as members of the same devoted family. There the poor will be on a level with the rich! There all pride, all distinction is at an end. We are recognized only as children of the eternal Father.

Public worship also tends to exhibit the natural equality of man, and thereby to elevate the soul of the christian. It admonishes the proud to humbleness, and inspires the dejected with courage.

Sinner! wilt thou yet stand alone? Will not the thousands who are kneeling in prayer around thee, recall thee to a sense of thy duty? Will the holy songs that are ascending on wings of melody to the creator, have no effect upon thy mind? Ponder for a moment—At this hour, thousands upon the earth are worshipping before their God! Nations are hymning his praises in unison with each other! Princes have descended from their thrones, and are lifting

up their voices to the infinite Jehovah! Even on the solitary ocean, the mariner's prayer is heard amid the dashing of the waves! Yet, thou art silent, and will not unite thy voice with the rejoicings of the whole earth.

When thou art no more, thy seat in the sanctuary may be occupied by a tender daughter or dutiful son; a lovely sister or affectionate brother, who may think of thy memory, and moisten the place of thy footsteps with their tears. Look upon the assembled multitude before thee! There are the young and the old; the feeble and strong; the thoughtful and gay; the sorrowful and contented. In a short time they will all pass away from the earth, and their places will be filled by a new generation. Will not these reflections cause thee to relent? Will they not elevate thy soul to God, and point out the great importance of public worship? The exhortations which thou wouldst hear from the pulpit, might at least, awaken the religious impressions of thy earlier days; or, should they not be in accordance with thy taste, recollect that they may have a salutary effect upon the minds of others; and therefore, thou shouldst not be dissatisfied. Besides, thy presence in many respects is beneficial. Those who would be more likely to receive instruction and consolation from religious exercises, are not influenced by thy example to stand aloof.

By worshipping God, thou wilt secure in a higher degree the respect and confidence of thy fellow citizens. But if thou art a mocker and a despiser of the religion of Jesus Christ, thou wilt be an outcast from the affections of those around thee.

The Sabbath should be entirely devoted to the improvement of the heart; and not alone the brief hour of public worship. The day of the Lord is a day of rest. Thou shalt lay aside thy work; thy body shall receive new strength, and thy soul collect new powers. After these refreshments thou wilt engage more cheerfully in thy business. Thou shalt love to see thy servants taking their recreation, that they may the more willingly perform the duties assigned to them. Thou shalt not weary in good doing. If thy neighbor requires thy aid in a moment of danger, thou wilt hasten to his assistance. He who would let his brother perish on the Sabbath is an abomination in the sight of the Lord.* After thou hast returned from church repeat some interesting portion of the sermon, or read some instructive passages in thy bible. These pious duties will infuse a deep tranquillity into thy mind, and thus, the Sabbath is truly a day of the Lord.

I will go O Lord! to the sanctuary of my fathers, where they have so often prayed unto thee. There, the prince and the beggar kneel in thy presence. There, I can feel my own littleness and vanity; there I can behold the manifestations of thy majesty and power. There too, I will learn that we are mortals entirely dependent upon thy goodness; and in the midst of the songs that are resounding to thy praise, my soul shall ascend to thee on the wings of devotion and love.

* Luke vi. 9.

DOMESTIC PEACE.

The bonds which unite the husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, are, of all others, the most sacred. Woe to him, who severs them by his unkindness!

Where will our sorrows receive the same solace, as in the bosom of our family? Whose hand wipes the tear from our cheek, or the chill of death from our brow, with the same fondness and care as that of the wife? If the raging elements are contending without, here is a shelter. If war is desolating the country, here is unmingled peace and tranquillity. Blissful and happy hours, that unite us together in sweet and holy companionship, I bid you a joyful welcome!

The father, by this industry, ensures the prosperity of his family. When his daily labor is completed, he returns with gladness to their welcome and smiling embrace. If the whole world should be in arms against him, here he is soothed by the gentlest and holiest affection.

The earnings of the husband are not foolishly squandered by the provident wife. She is careful in attending to the duties of her household. She guards over those under her care or direction, with fidelity and love. She encourages domestic peace and love, and adorns her character with a thousand little charms.

The children, too, are playing innocently around; they

know of no enjoyment, beyond the confines of their home. They love to be obedient. With unspeakable delight they fondle on their parents. Even the servants are happy and contented. They are faithful to those who are so attentive to them. Instead of masters, they have found parents, whose prosperity is their chief delight.

Let there be mutual love. It is an indescribable charm. It gives to every thing a higher value and importance. If you are sick or afflicted, all are ready to offer you their assistance. The individual happiness of each, is the paramount concern of all.

Behold the lonely and destitute widow, who, in her solitude, is neglected by all the world. She has followed her husband and friends; one—all—to the silent grave. Poor and needy, she was driven from the ranks of the gay. In her distress, there are none who know her; none who share with her their society. But why should you pity her? She is happier than you can conceive! A pious daughter, who renounces the pleasures of the world, labors through the day, and by the burning of the midnight lamp, to add to the comfort and support of her aged mother. Why should you pity her, when she participates in heavenly joys, that gold cannot purchase?

Why do you sympathise with the aged man, who is languishing in prison, because his misfortunes have prevented him from discharging his debts? He is already liberated! A dutiful son, at the sacrifice of his own liberty, has bartered himself to the army, to procure the release of his helpless but beloved father.

How many blessings, even in affliction, spring out of family concord. How pleasant its consequences—how lasting its recollection. Domestic harmony may be likened unto heaven; but discord is only to be compared with hell itself.

How deplorable is the man who leaves the bosom of his family, in pursuit of happiness elsewhere! He is every where a stranger, even in his own dwelling! He must brood over his sorrows alone! There are none to share with him their sympathy! Cold civility is all he receives from the world! He complains with bitterness, that he ever pledged his hand at the altar! His children are to him as thorns that bear no fruit!

It is to be regretted that discord in families is increasing rather than diminishing. This is owing to the many inconsiderate marriages that are constantly taking place. Many people enter into a matrimonial alliance, without reflecting upon the importance of the subject, or studying each other's character or disposition. They contemptuously barter the happiness of a whole life, for a family name, or unnecessary fortune. But alas! no paltry wealth or ancestral honors, can atone for the tears of anguish, or desolation of the heart that it occasions.

There can be no happiness in the married state, only where there is a similarity of disposition, that will ensure mutual love, and enable the parties in case of misfortune, to rely solely upon each other. We have seen indigent families emerging from the depths of their poverty, and becoming great and illustrious by the virtue and industry

of the husband; or the innocence and economy of the wife. We have also seen the prosperity of affluent families, blasted by the discord of the parents, whose infirmities have extended over and given a hue, even to the characters of their children.

It is a great source of evil to the newly married pair, when, instead of seeking happiness in the society of each other, they resort to gay assemblies. Before they are aware of their own weakness, they find themselves already corrupted by their dissipations. The increasing thirst for those foolish pleasures, render the uniform peace of the house, tedious and oppressive. Their idleness leads to want, their prosperity is at an end, and they sometimes contract dangerous acquaintances, that is too often repented of with tears of blood.

And lastly: a more fearful evil is a contempt for religion. A pious man can never be entirely miserable. He will love those who are under his care—look with indulgence upon their faults—bear with their infirmities, and endeavour to correct their frailties. Where there is no domestic peace, there is an absence of religion. The precepts of Christ have given place to passion and defamation. Instead of tenderness and affection, we will find cold hearted selfishness; instead of confidence in God, there will be madness and despair! The children, too, instead of loving their Creator, are full of pride, presumption and mockery. Piety and virtue seems to have taken their flight.

If thou wouldest restore the peace and tranquility of thy family, thou must first awaken religious impressions.

When thou hast succeeded in this, then thou hast laid the corner stone of domestic felicity. Preserve the equanimity of thy temper; exercise kindness to those who are under thy control, and they will love and respect thee the more. Thus wilt thou establish the joy and happiness of thy household, and strife and jealousy will flee away.

Without mutual respect, there can be but little domestic happiness. Many newly married couples, lavish their affection upon each other for a few weeks, and then give way to disputes and quarrels. As they advance in their matrimonial existence, they become more negligent in their conduct; those little attentions by which they before rendered each other agreeable, are forgotten or despised; less attention is paid to their exterior; they grow more indifferent, and care but little whether they please or offend. Finally, rudeness will extinguish the last spark of respect; they will contend about trifles; exact unusual obedience; and seek, if possible, to revenge every trifling wrong.

You must govern your children and servants with proper respect and dignity. Let every censure, every command, every denial of their requests, be given without too much authority. If they have been guilty of error, do not reprove them before others; but show them their own unworthiness in private. They will love you for your delicacy; they will obey your commands with more cheerfulness, and their happiness will not be embittered by the ridicule of their companions.

Wouldest thou behold domestic misery? thou wilt find in

families where there is no discipline—where parents publicly expose the faults of their children—where brothers and sisters are permitted to quarrel and inflict blows with impunity—where a discontented wife is always abusing her servants. These indeed, are the abodes of misery.

He who would receive respect must show it to others. It is not our rank in society, but rather our exemplary virtues that must awaken the respect of others.

Where there is suspicion and distrust there can be no domestic peace. If we confide in the honesty of a person he is led to respect himself, and therefore would not willingly lessen our good opinion of him.

The husband and wife, who have entered into so sacred an alliance, should never make use of any little artifice or untruth, however innocent, to deceive each other. Let there be nothing concealed, one from the other; then your minds cannot be poisoned by unhallowed suspicion or jealousy, which, if once kindled, burns with all the raging and unquenchable fires of hell.

Do not lessen the confidence that your children may repose in you. Let them not conceal from you their faults. Do not make them deceitful by your severity. In whom shall they confide, if their hearts must be locked in the presence of their parents? If they hide from you their faults, it is because they have no reliance upon your affections.

Let there be an earnest desire to keep up a mutual confidence between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, masters and servants. Respect the present good qualities of the latter, and never accuse them of any former error. This would be an end to their re-

spect and esteem. Never encourage a disposition to recal past offences among your children or servants.

It should be a regulation of every house that its economy or domestic concerns should not be publicly exposed by its inmates. None—not even the nearest relations—should share in such secrets. It is destructive of all peace and happiness. Our home is a sanctuary too sacred to be invaded. Idle curiosity should not be admitted that it may go into the streets and highways, to unbosom our secrets to the gaping crowd.

Our children and servants ought not to make known the most trifling incident that occurs in the house. Not that there is always danger to be apprehended; but they should be accustomed to a proper degree of silence. Be careful to banish all tale bearers, tatlers, and slanderers from your presence! If you would have your own secrets respected, then respect those of others. Do not enquire too eagerly after the affairs of your neighbours; particularly if they do not concern you.

And, most merciful God, in whatever situation of life I may be placed, it will be my secret pride and happiness to encourage domestic peace and tranquillity.—Be thou a ruler of my own family! Guide and instruct us with thy wisdom, and take us all into thy protection! Blessed and animated by thee, we have already a sweet foretaste of heaven!

CONTENTMENT WITH OUR SITUATION IN LIFE.

A very common source of evil among men is the dislike they manifest for their standing or situation in life. Some, however, assume an aspect of contentment, because they would not betray their own weakness or pride; while in truth, they are just the reverse. In private they even curse the good qualities of those, who, in public, it is their policy to commend. Their own station becomes intolerable, and they long impatiently for that of another. There are, indeed, many men who are dissatisfied with any situation in which they may be placed. To them, every condition of life is equally disagreeable. At one time they are displeased with the business entrusted to their care; at another, they are exceedingly angry with those persons with whom they must necessarily be connected. We hear them constantly complaining. They are always striving after some good fortune. They undertake many wild projects, with which they soon become disgusted themselves; and at length, they dwindle away into utter insignificance. They seek to improve every thing but their hearts, and fain would instruct the whole world, which they affect most heartily to despise.

The discontented man, is the murderer of his own happiness. He quits the substance, and grasps at the shadow. He is maddened in his pursuit after happiness, and despises

the means by which it must be attained. He blindly destroys his enjoyment of the present; his folly becomes to himself a burthen, and to the world a curse.

Without contentment in this world, there can be no solid enjoyment. If thou wouldest live perfectly happy, learn to be satisfied with thy situation.

To be contented with our occupation in life, we must be contented with the advantages which we can reasonably expect to derive from it. It must be in the conviction, that by our frugality we can earn a decent livelihood;—that, not by splendor, or reputation, or wealth, we are to gain the respect of the world; but rather by the honest, upright and faithful discharge of our duties. In the conviction, too, that every situation in life has its disappointments; and that we, by prudence, can chiefly avoid them.

It is not to be infered, however, that we shall not improve our circumstances, if we find it in every respect practicable; that we shall reject the honors and emoluments of office, if they are placed within our reach; or that we shall not avail ourselves of every possible means to increase our prosperity or reputation. This would be despising the means, whereby we might confer as great a benefit upon others as upon ourselves. But, to forsake an honest business or calling, in pursuance of some wild or ambitious project, would be in the highest degree ridiculous.

Why is it that so many men at present are not contented with that which God hath given them? And, more particularly, why is it that so many are dissatisfied with their standing in society? It is too often owing to the ca-

price of parents, who select for their children occupations for which they have neither talents nor inclination. It is the duty of parents and guardians, to place those who are under their care, in such situations, as will enable them to acquire a subsistence in an independent manner. But, in order to do this, they should carefully examine the capacities and inclinations of the child, before the step is taken, that is to decide the fate of its whole life. In the youthful mind, there is an inability to choose judiciously for itself; it has neither experience, nor a proper estimate of its own powers. However, parents are frequently unable to bring up their children to that calling or profession, for which they may evince a particular ability or inclination. But, in such instances, it should at least be satisfactory if they can be instructed in a respectable occupation, for which they have no positive aversion. Besides, custom soon reconciles them to that, which at first seemed intolerable.

Another very common cause of discontent with many people, is a secret pride and ambition, which nothing can satiate. Their own folly, therefore, becomes their punisher. They would be discontented, even on a throne!

Perhaps it grieves you to remain in obscurity? Perhaps you think you have more experience, knowledge and ability, than those to whom the world has given a preference over you? But, you should learn that there are also others, who do not receive the attention due to their merits. Have you always endeavoured faithfully to improve your fortune? Are you more distinguished than others of the

same calling? And is your envy or foolish ambition honourable to you?

Do not aspire to things that are not within your reach, but be satisfied with the present good which you enjoy. If you are animated by a laudable ambition, let it be to excel in the profession you have already adopted; instead of sinking below mediocrity in some other.

If you feel conscious that you are worthy of a better situation in life, do not envy him who enjoys it; even though he is not deserving of the preference given to him. There is many a noble heart concealed in rags; as well as much human depravity hid beneath the ermine and purple of royalty. But, in the estimation of the judicious few, it is the virtue and not the rank of the man, that imparts to him a higher value. Endeavour to confer honor upon your profession, instead of believing that it will confer honor upon you.

Again, others are dissatisfied with their occupation, because it affords them no prospect of accumulating a fortune. They desire riches, that they may indulge in some vain pomp and show. Insatiable man! If you have hitherto earned a livelihood for yourself and family, why are you repining and discontented? We all have different capacities for enjoyment, and are designed to be dependent upon each other. If there are those who are richer than ourselves; there are others again, who are far more indigent. Do you desire that we all should be equally rich? Or, why do you ask that boon for yourself, which you are ready to deny to all others? Perhaps you are more worthy and deserving than your fellow mortals?

It may happen that your earnings are not adequate to your honest perseverance in business. War or famine may surround you ; but the industrious will never perish. If you are distressed in seasons of want, you have not been careful in your prosperity to provide for the future. You now suffer the penalty of your folly ! The want of economy has reduced you to misery ! But learn that in contentment there are great riches.

Many men are displeased with their situation in life, because it brings them in contact with those whom they despise for their principles, or way of thinking. Thus, their lives are converted into bitterness. They should, however, be thankful for the advantages which are even thus obtained. They have acquired many agreeable acquaintances and valuable friends, of which, otherwise, they would have been destitute. Observe, how the evil is always equalized by the good.

And finally, be courteous to those whom you do not like. Be careful if possible, to lessen their enmity towards you. Endeavour to overcome them by your generosity. Perhaps your own conduct has been the cause of their unkindness to you ? If so, correct the weakness and folly of your heart, and do not create for yourself any further unhappiness. It is within your own power to avoid the thorns which accompany the roses of life. If you cannot effect this in your present, you cannot in any other condition of life.

It is a common error of mankind, that they will not be persuaded that every calling or business, has its mixture of good and evil. They see the gilding of the object to which

they aspire, but not the canker within. Our seeming good fortune is often envied by those who can know nothing of the anguish we endure; as we envy that of others, whose trouble and anxiety do not afflict us.

We, therefore, vainly and foolishly torment ourselves without a reasonable cause. We show thereby, how little we know of the world—how little we are conscious that it is our heart, and not our situation, that requires improvement, and how little confidence we have in the providence of God!

Man has no greater persecutor on the earth than himself. Nothing can wound us so deeply as our own secret vices and foolish propensities, which we sometimes thoughtlessly unbosom to the world.

Observe the man who is not contented with his employment; to whom indeed, it is irksome, and hear how he curses his destiny! how he is distracted by a thousand miseries; and that too, without receiving the compassion of a single individual. He has not courage enough to overcome the infirmities of his character; or to rid himself of the phrenzy that is destroying his happiness. His petulance and ill humor, affect the gaiety of those with whom he is associated. He wearies us with his complaints and censures of every person he meets. His secret pride and ambition are betrayed in all his actions. He is dissatisfied with his fortune, because it will not gratify his passion for idle splendor and magnificence. He neglects his business, because his heart is set on other things. He is continually undermining the good, which otherwise

might be in store for him. He is daily sinking himself in the estimation of his friends. At length he becomes an object of suspicion and distrust, and finally, he is universally despised.

O, thou eternal and most heavenly father! thou giver of every good and perfect gift! thou, who canst dethrone kings, as well as exalt the peasant! I will supplicate thee for neither wealth, nor honor, nor power, but for a wise, contented and happy spirit. The situation which thou hast assigned to me in this life, is sufficient to afford me every needful enjoyment. I will partake of thy bounty with gratitude, and to render my happiness the more durable, I will accustom myself to think only of the good, and not the evil of my situation. Thus, misery will be deprived of its sharpest sting, and I will enjoy a serene and cheerful mind.

As I entered the world, so will I again leave it. There is nothing I can take with me, but a guiltless conscience, with the assurance, that in every situation of life, I have been useful to my fellow men. Ah! this is a treasure, which can never be taken away! this is a blessing which we will enjoy through countless ages of eternity. Let me strive for this, and do thou, most merciful and infinite God, crown my efforts with success!

THE PROPER SELECTION OF OUR ENJOYMENTS.

When all around are alive with joy, why should I restrain so sublime an emotion? I have had my moments of sorrow and weeping; why should I not have their opposites, of peace and serenity? The changes of time bring darkness and light—sunshine and tempest—transport and tears. But these vicissitudes will prove a source of instruction and improvement.

The creator, who struck the world from his hand, did not intend that it should be an abode of unqualified affliction. In the infinitude of his love, he desires the happiness of all his children. Therefore are they mistaken, who would recommend constant gloominess of character, which is so entirely at variance with the nature of our minds. God is a God of love, and rejoices in the welfare of his creatures.

“Rejoice evermore!”—says one of the apostles. A good conscience is the surest basis of a tranquil mind. The virtuous man would not willingly inflict pain upon others. If it were in his power he would communicate his own happiness to the whole world. He would dry the tears of the weeping and sorrowful. The wicked man can also be merry; but he cannot feel the deep and pervading joy of

the Christian. He can practise his dishonest propensities and schemes; and rejoice for a moment at their success; but an accusing conscience, soon darkens his guilty soul. His joy is not as the brightness of heaven; but like the lightning's momentary flash from gloomy and portentous clouds. Unmingled joy is only the companion of innocence, and therefore do we behold the constant gaiety of youth. Those harmless qualities disappear when the passions are developed and called into play. "Rejoice evermore!" we again exclaim with the apostle. And in what does it consist but innocent and cheerful thoughts—virtuous and exemplary conduct—with an unquestionable purity of heart in the presence of our maker.

To what end are chiefly our constant endeavors? To live happy! Wherefore do we endure days of toil? To enjoy the sweeter repose. Why do we undergo labor and fatigue? To harvest the richer joy.

Contentment inclines us to good actions. Innocent pleasures, also, have a healthful influence both upon the body and mind. As melancholy and grief wears away our strength, so is it proportionably increased by cheerfulness and joy. The mind would often sink under the weight of its sorrows, if it did not receive an impulse from some other source.

It seems not so difficult for many men, to remain firm and resolute in misfortune, as to preserve a proper degree of moderation in their pleasures. In affliction, our energies are collected, and we govern ourselves with proper vigilance; but in our pleasures, we often loose all self con-

trol, and give ourselves unreservedly, to the gratification of our senses.

The worldly man will not control his disposition to gaiety; the christian on the contrary, is master of his inclinations, and does not step beyond the boundary of prudence. The one becomes giddy and enervated—the other strengthened and improved. To the joys of one succeed debility and wretchedness—to the other, deep and lasting happiness.

How great is the empire of joy, which God designed for us in his infinite creation. We spring into existence, and the coloured seasons pass by us with their fruits, and flowers, and storms; and hope lends to us her enchanting hues, and friendship folds us warmly in her embrace; the wonders of the Deity are made manifest in our lives, and the unconscious stars reveal to us a future life of eternal happiness.

While we are revelling and exulting in such unbounded beneficence, why should we think of inflicting pain and ignominy upon others?—Who would lift the dagger to the bosom of his friend?—He that rejoices at the misfortune of others!—he that is full of deceit and hypocrisy!—he who would unjustly possess himself of the wealth of others!—he who would strike at female innocence and virtue!—he who rewards a favour with ingratitude!—he who is only happy in undoing those whom he may dislike!

Who would drink poison, to produce agreeable sensations? He, who seeks to distinguish himself from others by pride, and falls a victim to his own folly! He, whose heaven is the epicurean's feast, that hurries him rapidly on to the tomb! He who gives himself up to sensual enjoyments,

and moves about the earth as a skeleton between life and death! He, who quaffs at the maddening bowl, and sinks himself to a level with the brute! Miserable creatures—they wantonly reject the roses, and crown themselves only with the thorns of life!

Joy is the companion of innocence. The christian rejects every pleasure, out of which might grow the fruits of repentance. He participates only in those that are worthy of his character. He should therefore be careful in their selection, that he may not loose the respect of his fellow citizens, for if he sacrifice a good name, his province for doing good is proportionably lessened.

We should never indulge in any habits unbecoming our age, sex or condition. It is a duty we owe to others, not to choose an improper time or place for the exercise of our gaiety. We should also be careful in the choice of our companions, if we would not give offence to those whom we respect. Therein many men grievously err. They affect to think, that, if they are not guilty of any immoral conduct, they need pay but little regard to the company with which they associate. But they pay dear for their experience. They find they must avoid an appearance of moral depravity, with the same caution that they would avoid the reputation of a hypocrite.

If old persons participate in the follies of youth; if mothers and daughters so far forget the delicacy of their sex as to indulge in pleasure and sports that do not belong to them; then they offend against decency, and detract materially from their own worth and dignity. Persons of superior standing in society, should do nothing that is not in

accordance with the deference paid to them by inferiors. Parents should be careful in their conduct in the presence of their children, lest they excite their laughter and disgust. We should not visit scenes of dissipation, where the morals or conversation of the company may be questionable, or we will, thereby, sacrifice that public respect which should be dear to us, on account of the beneficial influence it would enable us to exert over others.

All commendable pleasures we should enjoy with moderation. They should be to us only an occasional recreation, or, otherwise, they will loose their highest relish. We should not become passionately fond of them, or we will neglect our personal and relative duties.

Pleasure to the mind and body is as a refreshing medicine. By excess, it is converted into a deadly poison. In gay assemblies the prudent man will retain his presence of mind. He will not permit his enjoyments to degenerate into extravagance. He derives a pure and substantial pleasure, without giving way to inconsiderate mirth. These are the delights that flow from a virtuous and well regulated life. The pleasure we impart to others we also feel ourselves. The handful of joys we scatter in the pathway of life will return to us, greatly augmented, after many days.

Thou fountain of every good! I will draw still nearer to thee, through the mediation of thy holy son! Enlighten my understanding, that I may worship thee in a more acceptable manner! This is the highest of all earthly pleasures! a foretaste of the joys of heaven—I am a wanderer upon earth, but trust that my name is already written in

heaven! The worm of the dust, as well as the seraph, thou has created for happiness! The smile of innocence—and the song of birds; the dashing of rivers and the murmuring of streams; all of this earth, or the innumerable worlds of thy infinite creation, are full of thy glory and magnificence! Then I will banish sorrow from my heart. I will glorify thee in spirit and in truth! thou, whose unfathomable love blesses all the works of thy creation.

FALSE ECONOMY.

The line that separates virtue from vice, or justice from injustice, is so minute, that man often thinks himself in the performance of his duties, when in fact, he is only hastening forward in the labyrinths of his destruction. We cannot, therefore, be too careful in the examination of our conduct, provided we feel an earnest desire for the improvement and perfection of our souls.

How many who think themselves liberal and philanthropic, are only wretched squanderers of their property; how many mistake the most disgusting avarice for frugality and economy. And, how often do we find in the same person a combination of prodigality and covetousness.

Can I be guilty of such faults? I scarcely believe it—yet, in my solitary devotions, I will inwardly examine myself, and endeavour to correct all my errors. It is important that I do not abuse the blessings which God has given me. It is, however, my right and duty, honestly to increase my fortune. He who neglects it, falls at last a burthen to others, and becomes a useless member of society. I will increase my property while I have yet the power. It is my duty to free myself as much as possible from anxiety and want, so that I may indulge the nobler feelings of my soul. If I have a sufficient income, then I am independent of the paltry benevolence of other men, who

would despise me in my poverty. If I have more than is necessary for my own wants, then I can be useful to others, without disadvantage to myself. I am bound also to educate and provide for my children, and contribute to the support of my poor relations.

The increase of riches, by industry and economy, is one of the relative duties of man. Unnecessary profusion, is like a bodily wound. He who dissipates his fortune, deprives himself of the means of doing good—strikes at the root of his liberty—becomes the slave of his own passions, and prepares for himself and family, a life of sorrow, pain, and ignominy. The only remedy against this, is industry, economy and temperance. These qualities will enable us to become truly amiable, and useful members of society. Many people, however, think themselves economical, who, if they do not augment, at least do not diminish their property. They censure the prodigal, whose fortune is every day growing less; yet they are unwilling to accuse themselves of a similar recklessness; although they lavish away their money in feasting and gambling, to procure a momentary pleasure, instead of appropriating it to the use of their children; or the furtherance of some benevolent object. There are others, who detest this manner of life, that are always striving with a miserly fondness, to accumulate additional wealth. But their only pleasure is in its possession. They increase their riches without an object. They do not make use of it as a means to procure to themselves enjoyment; or to benefit the world, They plunge into avarice; their industry is a restless passion for gain;

their economy is a shameless, corrupt, and niggardly parsimony, without the slightest regard to the welfare of others.

Unqualified avarice, is justly considered one of the most hateful vices. Its worst features, however, are not common to all. Here is one, whose covetousness is still struggling with the natural benevolence of his heart—another, who indulges in grandeur and pride—a third, who is fond of good living and social intercourse, but not without a great anxiety as to the expense—a fourth, will sympathize with the misery of others, without having the inclination to render them any assistance. But in all those gradations, it is the same unwearying desire to amass wealth, which leads not to the happiness of the possessor.

Never has the avaricious man enough. He is always eager for any lucrative office ; caresses and flatters the rich ; is cautious in lending out money to the poor ; complains of hard times ; is oftentimes penurious with his relations, whom he perpetually admonishes about prudence in expenditures ; assumes a very sanctified demeanour in church ; is constantly in apprehension of death ; has no relish for the blessings of life ; yet in his selfishness is still alive to the increase of his riches. He would deprive himself and others of the necessaries of life. He fancies himself to be indigent, and trembles with the apprehension that he may become still more so by accident. He is even poorer than the beggar who subsists upon alms. During his whole life he has seen nothing but rent rolls, and deeds, and mortgages. By degrees he withers away, and the

fruits of his toil are left to his heirs, who do not even respect his memory.

Only the contented are rich, therefore is the miser one of the poorest of beings. Only the wealthy are respected, who contribute to the comfort of those about them, therefore is the miser despised; because he withholds, in the abundance of his riches, from the happiness of others. His meanness connects itself with every thing about him. He is quarrelsome in his household; oppressive to servants; indifferent to his kindred, and an aversion to every body. He envies the prosperity of his neighbour, and his soul is consumed with jealousy. He sees he can profit by dishonesty, and he avails himself of the means, if he thinks he will not be detected. Virtue to him, is as nothing in comparison to wealth; therefore, a falsehood is pardonable; his integrity is a vendible commodity; his oath is as dust in the balance. For the sake of gain, he will sacrifice honor, friendship, gratitude, and reputation. He will become a liar, a flatterer and a calumniator! He will even insult heaven with his prayers!

As the shadows of evening thicken after the setting of the sun, so does the spirit of avarice grow with our years. The natural imbecility of age, will always create for itself new fears and vexations. There may sometimes be a longing after the opulence of this world, without our being able to recognize in it a single feature of avarice; yet, depend upon it, there is great danger that it will one day degenerate into this contemptible vice.

In our observations upon mankind, we will more fre-

quently find, instead of a single restless and engrossing passion; a combination of vices existing in the same person, which in some measure, qualify his character or reputation. For example; there is one, who is unmerciful to the suffering poor; indifferent to the misfortunes of his relations; without forbearance to his debtors; and all this for the desire of gain; yet he loves to attract the attention of the world, by the rich profusion of his table, or the splendor and magnificence of his equipage. Here, therefore, does one vice become the handmaid of the other, while the possessor is the contemptible slave of both. Such instances in life are by no means rare. Every where we see wealth heaped together by dishonorable means; sometimes by open fraud in defiance of the laws; sometimes by low and secret cunning; sometimes by taking advantage of the helpless and unprotected, and all for the purpose of subserving their arrogant and overbearing pride. Servants suffer by their cupidity; cruelty is extended to those who are dependant upon them for support; while at the same time, they are giving a luxurious banquet, the expense of which, would have contributed to the happiness of a poor family for several months. We sometimes see parents instead of educating their children, infamously hoarding up their treasure for the purchase of fine dresses, or fine furniture.

To every one God has given his portion, whereby he can thrive upon earth and contribute to the welfare of his fellow men. Of this, he must one day render a just and strict account. And woe to the faithless steward, who has been

indifferent to the wants of his brother, and accumulated wealth, only to sacrifice it upon the altar of his vanity.

The imperfect education of youth, frequently leads to avarice. They are not made acquainted with the proper value of wealth. They are taught to heap up riches without an object—without benefiting others. Their economy in early life may afford them pleasure; but it often degenerates into an insatiable thirst for gain. The little treasure already collected, creates a desire for greater. The mind thereby, is rendered insensible to more exalted pleasures. Therefore it becomes the imperative duty of parents, to watch over the passions and inclinations of their children. They should not encourage a principle of selfishness. If they sacrifice the enjoyments of youth, in the unwearying pursuit of wealth, they will become mean, selfish, and overbearing, in old age.

Teach your children in early life, to be contented with little; and to take pleasure in sharing that little with others. Teach them to be economical, yet always liberal to those who are less fortunate than themselves.

The true christian will regard the possession of temporal goods, rather as the great means for promoting human happiness. He endeavours, therefore, to add to his worldly possessions by laudable enterprize; but not to lock them up as a treasure to be applied only to his own wants and desires. He avoids all needless expenses for idle pleasures. His liberality does not identify itself with popular sympathy, but he is ever ready to render his assistance in the loneliness of sorrow and distress, where nothing but gratitude can

be his reward. He thinks only of rendering himself worthy of his creator. This is his great aim—the precious desire of his heart. He is anxious to lay up treasures, only “in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”

Have I, O Lord, acted thus worthy of thy name? Have I denied myself many pleasures, that I might become an angel of consolation to others? Have I not sacrificed the duty I owed to my suffering fellow men, to pride, vanity, and sensuality? I must acknowledge I am not what I ought to be. How often have I improperly exercised my liberality? How seldom have I followed up the golden rule of temperance? How foolishly have I contributed to my own selfish desires, when I might have been of infinite advantage to others? I blush for my errors; I tremble for their enormity! Henceforth, I will elevate my affections to thee, and endeavour to promote the welfare of my fellow mortals; and for this purpose, do thou grant me strength and power, and every good gift.

THE FATHER.

Before nations and empires sprung into existence, the united families that composed them, were almost distinct communities within themselves, with each a presiding chief, who was generally the father. After him is named the whole generation. He looks to their support, protection and happiness. He is the most respected among the number; and if he commands, he is cheerfully obeyed.

In all ages of the world, and among all people, the father has received a certain degree of respect and veneration. It is a feeling natural to the human breast. The prince shares it in common with the beggar. The family look to him as their representative; he defends their rights and commands their obedience. Every one, therefore, who is invested with this dignity, ought not to dishonour it by his unworthiness.

Man, so long as he stands alone in the world, is without restraint, and is concerned only about himself. When he has provided for his own necessities, he has little else to trouble him. When he dislikes his occupation, he quits it. If he take an aversion to his country, he exchanges it for another. With the father it is different. His parental duties bind him fast; yet he attends to them with cheerfulness, for they bring with them a rich reward. His wife, his children, his profession, and his servants, each require his attention. He must be the father, guardian, protector,

friend and adviser of them all. Whatever may oppress or become a burthen to him, he endures with patience. If he is torn with the thorns of life, he complains not, because there are roses blooming for his wife and children. Without their happiness he is miserable himself. Were he alone, he would fly the injustice of his country, where war and oppression deprives him of his property. But these are nothing to the endearments of a lovely wife, or helpless children. He remains faithful to his trust, and sacrifices every thing to their prosperity.

The father is always looked upon with higher respect than he who is unmarried. The world reposes in him a greater degree of confidence. It is enough to know that he has an offspring who look to him for support. This, alone, recommends him to the attention and indulgence of all.

But the father often lessens his own dignity. He often violates those tender and sacred duties which belong to his station. Thus, he becomes an object of the greatest contempt. A man may be unfortunate in the management of his affairs, public or private, and receive the sympathy of the public; but he who neglects his wife and children, and renders them miserable, has at once dried up the fountains of compassion, and is justly considered a disgrace to society. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how can he hope to have the respect and confidence of his fellow citizens?

Who is the wise, faithful, and christian father? He, who commands obedience in his family, and encourages indus-

try and devotion to God. These are the pillars of domestic happiness. A father in the midst of his family, is as a prince among his people. It is his duty to watch over and see that every one performs his duty with faithfulness and fidelity. Every member of the domestic circle should be well acquainted with the business assigned to them, and be alone answerable for its performance. Where a house is well regulated, the business of the day goes on without interruption. Every one attends to his or her business. A little friendly exhortation or encouragement, is all that is requisite to keep every thing in activity. Harsh commands or continued censure, will only produce disorder and sullenness.

Where harmony exists, there must be no foolish contradictions ; no disputing about trifles ; no quarrelling between man and wife ; no evil example for children and servants. If the heads of a family cannot agree within themselves, they loose at once the respect which is due to them. Therefore, should the father be very careful in the exercise of his domestic duties. He should not publickly differ in opinion from his wife, or contradict her in presence of others. Parents should always furnish a good example, particularly of economy. They should never become despotic ; neither should they claim any exemption from the discipline which they may have established, for the regulation of their household. Then, upon all occasions, they will be cheerfully obeyed.

A prudent father will always regulate his expenses according to his income. The situation of his affairs will

always be well known, so that he may avoid if necessary, any useless expenditure. The wife prepares for the present, and the husband for the future wants of their family. It is the duty of the latter to provide for his helpmate, should she become a widow; or children, should they become orphans. It is also the province of the father, to educate his children, so that they may honor his name, and be a blessing to him in the hour of death. "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Industry, therefore, is the main pillar of domestic happiness. Without it we cannot acquire that competence which renders life so agreeable.

We should always be useful and active. In a well disciplined house, no idler will be found. Each will contribute something to the welfare of the others, be it ever so trifling. The most industrious are the most deserving. He who has faithfully performed his daily labour, is always the most contented and cheerful.

The father is the mainspring of all activity in the domestic circle. His duties are the most arduous. He feeds, clothes, and educates his children; he pays his labourers and supports his servants. He must be the first in every difficulty; but he has the consolation of knowing, that by his unwearied diligence, he has acquired a competency that will place him beyond the reach of want. He keeps his children at some useful occupation, that will be advantageous to them in after years. Idleness is infamy for a prince's son, and laziness is the unerring path to poverty.

But where there is labor, there must also be recreation

and rest. Money will buy the work of hirelings ; but not their respect. Only that will be well done, that is done with cheerfulness, and from inclination. Therefore, it is prudent for the head of a family, to permit a little gaiety and pleasure at proper seasons, among the inmates of his house. It gives them new life and animation.

It is only when the father has obtained the confidence and esteem of the individual members of his family, (and how easily it is to be won,) that he can expect entire and willing obedience to his commands. Without this, no order or economy can exist. Although there may be an outward show of submission, yet it is not always of a profitable kind. Where servants act from fear, and merely perform the outline of their duty, there will always be more or less carelessness and treachery. They should always be influenced by a feeling of love and attachment ; from which flows habitual respect, and a desire to make themselves truly serviceable. The king himself, cannot command the love even of his most degraded subjects, without first rendering himself worthy of the gift.

It is the duty of children to manifest a willing submission to the dictates of their parents. Woe to the family, in which a child is permitted to have its own way. But to whom shall such conduct be attributed ? Is it not the result of bad education ? Was not the cause of this calamity, the too great tenderness and indulgence of the parents ? How careful, therefore, should be the father, in moulding the character of his offspring, and causing them to be properly instructed.

Parents should love their children with tenderness and

affection, but at the same time, command the strictest obedience, even from their earliest infancy. If you never permit them to have any dominion over you, neither by their tears, their entreaties, their obstinacy, nor their childish cunning; then it will become a well grounded habit. Every thing depends upon the formation of their characters in early life. If parents are weak and irresolute, they will be sure to attain the mastery. Too often is this repented of when too late. Obedience is a virtue, which is in a great degree the result of custom.

A thousand evils; sickness, war and famine; persecution, envy and fraud; malice and slander; all may impair the happiness and prosperity of a family; but a still greater curse is that of a degenerate child. And the very foundation of this infamy, was, perhaps, the too great indulgence of its parents. Then, it should be their great and paramount concern, to preserve their offspring from the foul pollutions of the world; without which, there can be no peace—no happiness. Vicious individuals in a family, are as thieves and robbers in a community. They poison every thing that they touch.

It is only the virtues which adorn the father, that he can expect to be imparted to those around him. Is he a drunkard? How can he reproach others for a similar vice? Is he an adulterer? how can he censure the same crime in another? how banish from his threshold the maddening tortures of jealousy? Is he peevish and quarrelsome? how can he expect the smiles and endearments of his wife and children? Is he a spendthrift or gambler? does he

prefer pleasure and dissipation, to industry and economy? is he proud? is he fond of worldly splendor—fine furniture and fine clothing? if so, how can he hope his children will avoid his dangerous example? or that others will not take advantage of his infirmities, and defraud him for the purpose of enriching themselves? Wretched and desolate is that family, where its ruler is the first to pollute its honor. There dwells not the blessing of God, but a bitter and destroying curse.

Simplicity of manners and irreproachable conduct, with virtuous and unyielding discipline; are the key stones of domestic felicity. Prosperity may forsake us, and storms rage abroad; still is the peace of a well regulated family comparatively unshaken. We may be divested of riches, but our hearts will still overflow with beatitude. There are many families, who, by this blessed spirit, soar triumphant above the billows of misfortune. It is then that the venerable father stands in the midst, as a high priest of God, receiving their benedictions for the sacrifices he has made on their account. They are united by the same love—the same faith—the same hope of eternity.

How beautiful it is, to behold the aged patriarch kneeling in prayer, in the circle of his children, where all is piety and devotion. Perhaps one of the family is stretched upon the bed of death, and bidding a long—long farewell to his companions. But he looks confidently to heaven, and assures them that their separation will be only for a moment. The hand that brought them together, and guided them through the difficulties of this life, has the

same power to collect them together in the life to come. This is the picture of a christian family, where the father rules with gentleness and love. Let all who hold a similar station, compare themselves with him, and see wherein they are deficient. Ask yourselves if you have done every thing to promote the happiness of the domestic circle, of which you were the reigning chief. Have you encouraged that degree of piety and devotion, that will buoy us up in all the dangers and uncertainties of life? Answer for yourselves before the all-seeing, eternal, and heart-searching God!

THE MOTHER.

The christian mother, day and night, is full of anxiety ; not for herself, but for the welfare of those entrusted to her care. She is continually laboring for the support of her family. In the evening, overcome with fatigue, she sinks to rest, and gathers new strength for the approaching day. Her husband, her children, and all who belong to her, are full of the enjoyments of life, yet she seeks for no other pleasure or recompense, for her manifold cares, than the society of those whom she has made contented.

She belongs not to herself. She has united her destiny with one who is now her hope and her refuge. Whatever may be his situation in life, she is the last to complain. If he is poor, she shares in his poverty ; if he is sick, she nurses him ; if he is persecuted, she strives to lessen his afflictions.

Her children too, are the especial objects of her care. She is never weary in contributing to their health or happiness. If one of them is sick, she will be found watching at its couch when all are asleep. She observes the changes of its little countenance ; she listens to the heavings of its breath, and prays in the stillness and solitude of the hour for its recovery. No one, save the omniscient, knows any thing of her sufferings, her tears, or her midnight vigils. From him she will receive her reward. Though her own health may be impaired, still she watches

faithfully that of others. She is in the bosom of her family, as an angel of peace,—the tutelar genius of domestic order and happiness. Every thing relating to the affairs of the house, from the greatest to the smallest, equally receive her attention. Her conduct to all, is that of love and affection. She can never do them too much kindness, although ingratitude is sometimes her only reward.

What a combination of every thing that is beautiful, does the generous and devoted housewife present! A man may heap up treasures by his profession—his fame may resound throughout the whole earth—he may shake perhaps, half a world with his power; but can he soothe and comfort with the same enduring and holy affection as the amiable housewife, whose modest and unassuming conduct nobody will notice? No!

The happiness or misery of a house depends greatly upon the virtues or vices of the mother. Her conduct will influence the welfare of the whole family. A single fault can eclipse a thousand virtues, and a vicious temper will convert every thing into a hell. In vain will the honest father attempt to build up, when the perverse mother is always pulling down. Alas, that there are any of this description! or that we should find so many unhappy families among a people who profess the doctrines of Jesus Christ. Often, however, is this owing to the unworthiness of the father. In such cases, a tender mother will strive to sweeten the affliction which he has brought into the domestic circle. She will attend to those who need her consolation and protection. She will take upon her-

self all their sufferings, and bear them alone in her heart. But the weakness and frailties of the mother, are more serious in their consequences than those of the father. Therefore she should be more particular in avoiding them. She is ever present, and her example of either good or evil, will have a more certain influence.

In vain is the husband's frugality and enterprize, if the wife is fond of show; and to gratify her foolish propensities, scatters with one hand what he has collected with another. Misery is always the result; and instead of wealth, or even a competence, they are sooner or later reduced to want.

In vain, also, is the love and kindness of the father, when the mother fails to preserve the equanimity of her temper. Can she effect more by petulance and ill-humour than gentleness or friendly admonition? It is certain that the natural irritability of many women, incline them greatly to ill humour; but it is also evident that their sullenness is not of long duration, and that they can easily obtain the mastery over their feelings.

The man, who is accustomed to the storms of life, becomes imperious and authoritative. The woman has received no other arms to vanquish with, than gentleness and affection. By these she will prudently avoid every thing that leads to danger; by these, she can at length soften and overcome even the impetuous tyrant. If she endeavours to extort by rudeness and force what she should acquire by mildness and persuasion, she loses those charms and graces which nature has given her; and she be-

comes not only hateful to herself, but an abhorrence to others. Such too, is the mother; who, instead of promoting the happiness of her family, becomes by her vices an imbecility; a curse and torment to all who know her.

Wouldest thou be numbered with the most exalted of thy sex? wouldest thou desire the reputation of an amiable and christian wife? then ask thyself if all in the domestic circle, of which thou art the centre, are as happy as they might be; or if only one be discontented, whose fault it is. Hast thou not given occasion for this uneasiness? Hast thou done all in thy power to reconcile one to the other? Wast thou always impartial in thy kindness and love? Or wast thou sometimes the creature of thy own weakness and caprice?

Wouldest thou behold the true image of the christian housewife? It is described to thee by the apostle. "To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." In these few words is the substance of all thy duties, and the source of all earthly and future happiness.

Thou shalt be discreet; thy virtues shall be a model for the imitation of thy family. Without religion, however, thou canst not be truly in possession of virtue; but only the shadow of it.

There is no creature in human society so contemptible as the woman, who, with a little superficial reading, loves to play the philosopher and skeptic; more however, out of vanity than any solid reflection. On the other hand, nothing is half so prepossessing as the female, who, in addi-

tion to her other graces, and without bigotry, fanaticism, or hypocrisy, lives in the full belief and cordial expectation of a better home beyond the grave.

To this belief, the mother should strictly adhere. It alone, can keep her firm in the tempests of life. Without it she is worthless. She should impress it too, upon the minds of her children, and be to them a pattern of meekness and devotion.

Be thou chaste in thought and in deed. Purity of mind is the most valuable ornament of a woman. If it is once lost it can never be restored. If thou art faithless to the vow pledged upon the altar, the peace of thy household is forever forfeited, and thy happiness is wounded beyond the hope of a cure. Thou shouldst be careful to avoid every thing that might awake the slightest degree of jealousy—that fiendish murderer of domestic peace. If it but once fasten upon the mind, it will forever haunt you. Attend faithfully to these things, and let not the most trifling incident cast even a shadow upon thy reputation. Be not too fond of running abroad, and thereby neglect thy duties at home; but rather strive to save and prudently treasure up the earnings of thy industrious husband.

Cleanliness too, is of inestimable value. He who would assure himself of the perfection of a housewife, has only to enter her dwelling, and every thing that he sees will reveal some good trait of her character. It will not be a fine display of furniture, so much as it is order and regularity. It will not be that her commands are obeyed, so much as

the manner in which they are obeyed, that must test the excellency of her understanding and heart.

She should be economical, and kind to all, particularly to her husband; so that he will not go beyond the domestic circle in pursuit of pleasure. She should also, carefully avoid every thing that might tend to destroy their mutual good feelings; and to make the bonds of love the stronger, she should possess an utter guilelessness and simplicity of heart; and have no secrets or faults, even the most trifling, to conceal from him, which might awaken his suspicion or lessen his confidence. Once deceived, and there will be distrust for ever. Often a slight misunderstanding, because of too great an obstinacy to communicate freely with each other, is the cause of matrimonial unhappiness for a whole life. A single fault on either side, is sometimes succeeded by a thousand.

A good mother will be affectionate to her children. It is needless to exhort her to love for her little innocents; yet it is necessary to caution her against the improper use of it, that she may not show too great an indulgence to their faults, or evince a greater fondness for one than another. This preference has a very serious influence upon the mind of a less favoured child. She should, therefore, carefully guard against it.

She should be kind to her servants, without too much pride or haughtiness, otherwise she will excite their disgust, and they will only do their duty when they are vigilantly watched. She should also, be kind to all those who are in any way connected with her household. She will

overlook trifles, for the sake of preserving the mutual respect and harmony of her neighbors. She will always discountenance the gossip that is carried on between families; and although she may hear much in the circle of her friends, affecting the character of others; yet she will only listen to the good, and turn a deaf ear to the evil. The abject and degraded wretches of the earth, may propagate vile, malicious, and slanderous reports of others; but she will claim a more exalted rank in society, than to identify herself with such paltry and low lived drivellers. Such is the christian mother, as she is portrayed in the inspired volume.

DOMESTIC SORROW AND HAPPINESS.

We have somewhere said, that a fearful anticipation of evil is more to be dreaded than the misfortune itself. This we can learn from our own experience. It is seldom however, that we are disposed to profit by such experimental knowledge. Mankind generally, repose so little confidence in the providence of God, that they are thrown into consternation at the appearance of every trifling calamity. Although it is our duty carefully to watch the future, and guard against every possible evil, yet it is wrong to live in constant fear and anxiety. The happiest of men have their sorrows. None are exempt. We may look forward, but cannot tell what a day or an hour may bring forth. In the midst of prosperity we may sink into wretchedness and want.

Our unhappiness increases with our consciousness of the mutability of worldly riches. The child has but little uneasiness, because it is ignorant of the vicissitudes of life. It is happy in the possession of its toys, and looks not to the approach of evil.

Our sorrows increase with our love for wealth. He is the most unhappy, who has the most passionate inclinations. The ambitious, who value too highly the good opinion of the world, are always afraid of losing their reputation. The miser, who hoards up his riches, is always in terror, lest they should be taken from him. If you would lessen

your afflictions, you have only to diminish the violence of the passions which govern you. Learn to place a higher estimate upon those things which are of greater importance. Our happiness must not be such, that it can be destroyed by every trifling incident. Children are comparatively happy, because their attention is not taken up exclusively with one object. They deplore and forget, and find new pleasures. The changes of life, are to them only as a play that delights for the moment.

Our sorrows increase as we become more intimately connected with mankind. The more retired we live from the world, the less are our chances of misfortune. Our wants are diminished, and our hearts gayer and more elastic. But we will experience afflictions even in solitude, if we take with us a foreboding and restless spirit. Here a single evil may occasion us as much uneasiness, as before did the many. We give the coloring to our own calamities—for one which we do not seriously regard as such, can have but little influence upon our minds. Therefore it is, that some men are but slightly affected with the ills of life, while others give way to misery, anguish and despair.

People generally believe that domestic sorrows are the heaviest. For this reason we observe, particularly in cities, many persons who carefully avoid the matrimonial state. But such conclusions are founded upon a false view of life. They denote an absence of all true religion; they are an evidence of secret and devouring passions, that swallow up the better inclinations of our nature: they show a want of confidence in the words of holy writ,

“that all things work together for good to them that love God.”

He who avoids the matrimonial life through a fear of its burthens, subjects himself eventually, to much greater afflictions. He is always a stranger in the world. There are none to soothe his sufferings, or share with him his joys. In sickness, he must purchase the kindness of his attendants. In his old age he is solitary and wretched, without the endearing tenderness of a wife or children.

Domestic care is productive of domestic happiness. Only he therefore, who lives in accordance with the doctrines of our Saviour, is convinced “that all things work together for good to them that love God.” He who truly and conscientiously adores his creator, shows it by a strict performance of all his duties, and has nothing to fear in his tribulations. Whatever privations he may endure, he knows it is all for the best. Why then should he fall a prey to grief? The world endures only in the existence of an Almighty; and without an unerring belief in his providence, there can be no human happiness. This is the highest earthly wisdom, and forces upon us the conviction that one of our greatest evils is a too great indulgence of our appetites, in things that are temporal and inconstant.

A matrimonial life often inclines a man to pious deeds. The greater his affliction, the more often he communes with his God. He who has to provide only for himself, does not rely so confidently upon his maker. Love guides us, with a tender hand, to the paths of virtue, and leads us to a contemplation of heaven and eternity. The recollections

of an amiable wife and children, will often withhold a man from the perpetration of crimes, which in other circumstances he would have unhesitatingly committed.

Domestic happiness springs out of domestic cares. Who would be entirely without them? They add new pleasures to our existence. He must not be unacquainted with sorrow, who would experience rapture and delight. But we will find no happiness on earth equal to that which flows from a pure and virtuous mind.

We should not be too careless of the future. By attending only to our present circumstances, and forgetting every thing else in the possession of one object, we prepare for ourselves misery and ruin. We can enjoy no greater pleasure than that of improving our condition, by our own unwearied exertions. The inheritance of an unexpected fortune, does not afford us a tithe of the pleasure that would the earnings of our own industry. The more numerous therefore the difficulties we are obliged to encounter in promoting the welfare of our families, the more deep and lasting is the happiness we enjoy. A hundred trifles, which the eye of the stranger does not observe, are a source of joy, and we confidently feel, that domestic care is greatly productive of domestic happiness.

When our Saviour instructed us to "take no thought for the morrow," we are not to understand that he would recommend carelessness or inactivity. The whole course of his life proved the contrary to this. He provided for the happiness of the whole human family. He disclaimed against idleness and luxury. He taught his disciples not to "eat any man's bread for nought." He warned them

against a restless anxiety to heap up worldly treasures, which only tend to consume the noblest powers of the soul, and unfit us for elevating ourselves above the sordidness of earth.

A certain degree of care is very beneficial ; but too much solicitude is highly pernicious ; because we are thereby prevented from avoiding many misfortunes, or at least from counteracting in some measure their disastrous consequences. He who possesses sufficient firmness to accomplish this, has already obtained half the victory. To be prepared for danger, is to escape its worst results.

Conquer thyself, and thou hast conquered half the world.* Be temperate in thy wishes. Love nothing with so much earnestness as thy religious principles, then the loss of any earthly object will be the less painful to thee. Give thyself often to the reflection, that in a moment thou mayest be deprived of thy wife, thy children, thy friends, thy property, or thy reputation. Thou mayest also be deprived of that to which thou hast clung with too much fondness, and which hath hindered thee from raising the structure of thy happiness upon the basis of virtue and prudence. It is the will of God to call thy affections from the perishable things of earth, to those that are imperishable and full of glory. Prepare thyself for the greatest possible calamity, so that when the trying hour of peril comes, thou mayest not relinquish all happiness at a single blow. If thou lovest God, then thou art convinced that all things work together for the best.

* This is a German maxim, which means that it is easier to conquer half the world, than our own passions and imbecilities.

Parents, though bereft of their children, and doomed to poverty; though they may be compelled to toil for their bread in a strange land, and among a strange people; yet they are not entirely miserable when they can contemplate a better existence hereafter. The true christian possesses those attributes, which will enable him to triumph over every misfortune. He cares but little for the opinions of the cold and unfeeling world. Although sorrows may molest him, yet he remains undisturbed. He stands like the unyielding rock amid the buffeting of the heaving and angry billows. It is only to a mind like this, fraught with every thing that is pure and good, that domestic cares are productive of happiness: To the wise man, they are only as the beams of light that fall upon a beautiful picture, and increase its splendor and magnificence. Those by whom he is surrounded are the dearer to him, because they require his attention. No one esteems his health so highly, as he who has been a prey to sickness. How indifferent would many things appear, if they did not excite in us an interest. The fields are covered with innumerable flowers, but the single one we took care of and nourished, affords us more pleasure than all the rest. How sweet are the feelings of solicitude manifested by the mother for her babe! Would she be deprived of it, rather than undergo the anxiety which it occasions her? And thus, would the husband yield up his endearing wife? or the son his excellent father? No! Then domestic cares must be a source of the highest enjoyment. And even though they should occasion us much sorrow and trouble, they will be sweetened by the

power of love. Our afflictions are the lighter, when they are mutually borne by each other.

We again repeat, that our cares are productive of happiness: and every calamity we cannot thereby avoid, is the dispensation of providence. Therefore is fear and anxiety in vain. The only true misfortune is the possession of corrupt and dishonest principles; for we can never wipe away the remembrance of a crime. No arguments can throw a mantle over our guilt. No one can console us, where our own consciences upbraid us. Men may acquit us, but the anguish of our souls will still burn on as fiercely as ever.

THE EVILS OF POVERTY.

It is a very common error to judge of the excellency of individuals or nations, according to the wealth which they possess. The best and wisest governments, like some of our noblest and most learned men, have not always been the richest. Nor have the most opulent of either, been always distinguished for their praise-worthy qualities.

The wealth of a nation, any further than that which is necessary for her maintenance, does not contribute to the happiness of its individual members. On the other hand, the more a people have to toil, in order to procure a subsistence, the fewer are the opportunities for the improvement of their minds, and less attention is consequently paid to the pursuits of learning and science. It is therefore, no advantage to possess more or less than adequate means for support. A small fountain will quench our thirst as completely as the largest river.

Our sympathy for the poor man, because he sleeps upon a bed of straw, is entirely misplaced. There are many who even envy his happiness. The poor are only to be pitied, when their health is impaired from a want of the necessaries of life; or when they are obliged to labor so continually, that the improvement of their minds is entirely neglected, and they become thereby, mere walking machines. In both instances, the high purposes of their

existence is entirely forgotten. Their life is little more than an animal existence. They are like the hungry and devouring beasts of prey; and from among them comes forth mendicants and robbers. In this light we may consider the poverty of nations as well as individuals.

Nor are those people the less poor, who accustom themselves to so many artificial desires, that it requires their unceasing exertions to gratify them; thereby sacrificing the nobler pursuits and enjoyments of life. Thus it is with many nations of the present day, who are rich in agriculture and commerce; yet they are rendered extremely poor, by the number of fictitious wants which they have foolishly created.

An individual would always have enough and to spare, if he were contented with only the necessities of life. But when he gives a loose rein to his pride, and fancies that it is indispensable to have splendid houses, or costly entertainments in imitation of his superiors, he finds that all his efforts are scarcely equal to the task. Thus, his life is one of constant misery and servitude.

What was the design of our creation? Was it that we might participate only in low, sordid pleasures, and look with contempt upon the more ennobling attributes of our nature? Why did God give us an immortal spirit? why did his son come upon the earth? or why is there an eternity prepared to receive us? Is it that we may attend only to the fleeting and fickle things of earth? Is it that we may prostitute our minds and bodies to the worst possible purposes? Is it that we may engage in religious worship as a

cold formal duty? a mere idle and unnecessary custom? What an age of depravity, when the thoughts and affections of men rest only upon the transient and unstable things of the world.

Much is said about beneficial institutions, but scarcely a thought is hazarded as to the expediency of educating the poorer classes. Our philanthropic brethren affect to believe they have done all that is requisite by clearing the streets of beggars, and giving those who are able to work, an opportunity of supporting themselves by their industry. But this is only a small part of their duty. They must not merely reclaim the beggar from his idle habits, but if they would confer upon him a real and lasting benefit, they must also enlighten his understanding. If they would learn the true evils of poverty, then they would be the better able to choose a fitting remedy.

He who can earn enough to clothe and feed himself and family is far from being poor. In this case he ought to be satisfied, for his absolute wants are very few. To those who are unable to procure themselves a decent livelihood, we must distribute alms. But the wilful idler should be denounced, for he feeds upon the labour of other men without thanks.

In our charitable institutions, the bodily, but not the intellectual wants receive attention. Thus, the poor are made the most abject slaves. Their minds are unenlightened—their manners uncouth—their passions vicious and corrupt—their pleasures of the most degrading character. They are guilty of every species of crime, such as gamb-

ling, drunkenness, and robbery. Still they are our brethren, and creatures of the same God, while we scarcely think of ameliorating their condition.

We increase the evils of poverty by extending improvident help to those who are rendered poor by the number of their artificial wants. Improvident it must be, if we confer alms, without requiring an equivalent in labor; if we give employment without education or instruction, or either, without a proper sense of moral and religious duty.

Alms-giving is productive of idleness, and idleness is justly termed the parent of all evil. He who bestows unmerited charity upon a beggar, oftentimes makes him a voluptuary or glutton. His ideas of the true value of money are as vague as those of the affluent, who have always been accustomed to plenty. Neither of them take any thought for the morrow. They are both extravagant in their own peculiar way. The one relies upon the immensity of his wealth; the other upon the charity and liberality of the world.

Alms without labour are the seeds from which spring thieves and robbers. Feed the tiger and he will at length devour you. It would be an evidence of the greatest inhumanity on the part of a people, to permit a man, who cannot labour for his support, to wander from door to door soliciting alms. On the other hand, it would indicate a great want of public discretion, if a man, who is able to work, is withheld from industrious habits by misplaced charity.

To give employment without improving the mind, is converting freemen into slaves. Is the body superior to the soul, that it receives our exclusive attention? Let us look

at the neglected families of the husbandman. Like the beast of burthen, six days have they laboured. The seventh, allotted for their rest, is one of sordid pleasures. According to custom, they go to church and engage in its forms, without comprehending their import. They hear a sermon, without being able to fathom its meaning. They have eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear. Their religion is an idle ceremony; and their wisdom consists of a few superstitious notions. The revelation of God is to them a mystery. Therefore we cannot expect much piety of those, who mechanically pursue the same beaten track, without having their minds enlightened, and thereby divesting themselves of prejudice and error.

Let us examine the factories of our cities and towns, where a multitude of children are labouring from morning to night. They are excluded their whole lives, from any thing like refinement. They listen to the indecent conversation of those who are older in vice, and learn in time to imitate them. What benefit does their labour confer upon them? None!—For a trifling reward, they sacrifice both their bodies and souls. They are by the cruelty and selfishness of their employers, under the pretence of bettering their condition, hurled to the depths of infamy and degradation.*

If we would lessen the true evils of poverty, it must not be merely by a profusion of alms, or a rich remuneration of labour; but rather by instilling into the mind a love of

*This the reader will remember, refers to the factories of Germany, where their inmates receive no education.

virtue, and a proper degree of moral firmness. Then we will understand that to be contented with little, is the greatest riches. He who has many wants, would be miserable with unbounded wealth. Therefore, if you would enrich the poor, learn them to be moderate in their senses. Instruct them to become useful and beneficial to others without great affluence themselves. Awake their pride that they may be more independent of other men, whose assistance they do not necessarily require. Otherwise their existence is as a blank, and their lives a continued scene of sorrow and wretchedness. All that is great and good will appear to them as a vague and shadowy dream. Ignorance, prejudice and superstition will nestle in their minds, with a thousand guilty and overruling passions; and they will live in the world, without a consciousness of the love and mercy of their creator. These are the true evils of poverty, which unhappily have such a general existence, that the man in silken robes is oftentimes poorer than the beggar to whom he flings a moiety of alms.

And finally, how is it with myself? I have a home and every thing that is needful for me, yet am I much poorer than I appear. I have become the slave of unnecessary desires, and have thought only of personal gratifications; but henceforth I will endeavour to promote the welfare of my fellow men, and live in accordance with the holiness of God.

THE PLEASURES OF POVERTY.

Is wealth the only thing upon earth that can render us happy? Such would seem to be our conclusion, if we are to judge from the innumerable schemes and projects, which are entered into by men. What an increasing desire to amass wealth! For it the farmer and mechanic deny themselves all recreation—for it, the warrior perils his life in the field of battle—for it, the sailor careers upon the deep, and struggles in his fragile barque with the fury of the elements. And what does it avail, when the shadows of age are stealing upon us? What does it profit us, when a long life has been worn out in its accumulation, and we find ourselves feeble and exhausted? Will it give back to us the gaiety of our youth? Will it change the color of our hoary locks? Will it impart new colour to our faded and withered cheeks? Will it add a single hour to our existence? No: these things it cannot do; and we are obliged to part from our possessions, when we are just preparing to enjoy them.

What is the advantage of our great opulence? Can we do more than to satisfy our wants? Are the precious viands of the rich more delightful to our palates, than the simple meat of the industrious cottager? Will expensive cloths impart a more genial warmth to the body, than those with which we used to encounter the tempest. Are

we more attentive to the cries of suffering humanity, when we have increased our riches? Are we more worthy and honorable, now that fawning sycophants pour upon us their adulation?

It is a strange delusion for men to suppose, that happiness consists in riches. Contentment is not to be found in splendor and magnificence; or why is it that princes sometimes exchange the grandeur of a palace for the more simple enjoyments of private life? Why is the countenance of the rich man furrowed with thought and anxiety, while the poor go on their way shouting and exulting in the blessings which God hath given them? Why does the man who has grown in wealth, look back to the days of his poverty, and ask himself why he cannot now rejoice as heartily over the much, as he did over the little?

We are told by one of the wise men of old, that many are poor with great property; and many also are rich, yet hath nothing.* Every day's experience will attest the truth of the maxim. It is not whether we possess great or limited estates, that is to determine our wealth or poverty. It is the manner in which they are appropriated to our use. The labourer, with his crust of bread at the side of a clear fountain, is richer than the seaman who is starving upon the ocean for the want of food, with all the treasures of India. It is the rational enjoyment of our wealth that constitutes us rich.

Gaining is very properly termed an art. Children are instructed in it by their parents, as though it

* Prov. xiii. 7.

were the most important and indispensable part of their education. But to enjoy their gains, with wisdom and prudence, is an art of more inestimable value, which they know but little about.

The world may deem thee poor, because thou hast fewer earthly blessings than others. Of this thou shouldst not complain. Thou canst be rich, even in thy poverty. He only is poor who will not partake of the happiness that is prepared for him. Limit thy wants, and thou wilt possess every thing that is needful. A cottage will shelter thee as well as a palace. There are many things with which thou canst easily dispense. Do not imitate the foolish vanities of the rich. It will involve thee in expense and thou wilt only be despised by them for thy pains. Esteem only the friendship of those who respect thee for thy good qualities. All else are flatterers. Do not be afraid of being called a miser because thou art economical. It will enable thee to exercise thy benevolence, and assist those who are poorer than thyself. This will prepare for thee new happiness. Thou wilt despise the foolish recklessness of thy fellow mortals. Thy industry will support thee and thy family without being dependent upon others. Only then wilt thou feel a consciousness of thy own superiority. Only then wilt thou feel that peace and serenity of mind, to which thou before aspired in vain.

Those who are poor in earthly treasures, yet rich in contentment, are the most useful members of society. They are not trammelled by the prejudices of custom and education. The most distinguished and virtuous men of anti-

quity were poor. The pressure of circumstances, and the wonderful self-denial which distinguished their lives, seems to have added an increased grandeur and sublimity to their genius.

Our Saviour was an indigent wanderer upon the earth—still he was infinitely rich. He was the benefactor of all who came unto him. He was despised and neglected, but now he is worshipped by kings and princes. Often he knew not where to lay his head, yet he was able to give a ransom to the whole world. Neither were his disciples chosen from among the sons of the great and noble; but he sought them in the depths of poverty, and lo! a Peter and Paul came forth, and the idolatrous temple of the heathens disappeared, and the church of Christ rose upon its ruins.

He who understands the art of being rich in poverty, will escape its greatest evils. Where there is indigence, there is some other dispensation of providence which places the poor on a level with the rich. One is blooming with health, while the other is undergoing all the evils of idleness and luxury. The former is delighted with some trifling gift, while the latter is miserable with the most costly treasures. The poor man slumbers as sweetly upon his bed of straw, as the prince upon his couch of damask and silk. He has greater opportunities of enjoyment, because he has not so much care and responsibility to disturb his mind. The more varied our transactions in life, the more chances have we of trouble and anxiety.

The rich have more enemies than the honest and unas-

suming poor. Their faults are rendered more glaring by the station which they occupy in society. Envy does not seek its victims in obscurity. He, therefore, who lives a public life, makes a sacrifice of his domestic happiness. Poverty also tends to develop the noblest powers of the soul. But why do I extol its pleasures, or its advantages? No one can doubt of their existence, nor that our Creator has given a light for every shadow.

The world may think me rich; but notwithstanding all my industry, economy and enterprize, I am much poorer than I desire. I cannot benefit others, because I have so many unnecessary wants of my own. If I could live temperately, what abundance there would be in store for me. Why do I make myself unhappy by the multitude of my desires? Why do I not seek for contentment—the most inestimable of all earthly treasures? I will renounce every thing that is not essential to my existence. Custom may be difficult to overcome, but I will arm myself with a firm resolution. I will not heed the malice of my neighbors who may dislike me because I have forsaken their foolish ways. I will be better able than they to assist and comfort my needy friends. As my pride and sensuality diminish—as I learn to triumph over the grovelling pleasures of the world, so will my mind increase in purity and strength, and my soul be fitted for the enjoyments of heaven.

THE EVILS OF WEALTH.

Our Saviour came from Gallilee into the land of Judea, beyond Jordan. His fame had already spread far and wide, and people of every description, both rich and poor, respected and despised, learned and ignorant, went out to meet him on his arrival. Among the number, there came to him one day, a young man of great wealth and high standing, who enquired what he should do that he might have eternal life. He was told to keep the commandments. He replied that these he had obeyed from his childhood, but wished to become still more perfect. Then our Saviour was resolved to try the firmness of the youth, and answered—if thou wilt become perfect, thou must take courage and sacrifice every thing that thou hast. Thou art rich. Go, sell thy goods, give to the poor, and follow me. When the youth heard this, he went away sorrowful, and disappeared in the crowd. He placed great confidence in his own courage, but he could not comply with such an unexpected demand. Verily, “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

Supposing that the Almighty had decreed that his son, instead of appearing upon the earth two thousand years ago, should come among us at the present time, amid the altars we have erected to his worship, and require as heretofore, the same sacrifices and self-denial of the rich?

What would be the consequence? How many are there who would resign their professions, to follow him in his persecutions? Many believe they are ready to part with their wealth and take up the cross; but what is the result when they are brought to the trial? Are they firm, resolute and unwavering? Alas, no!

Wealth has a dangerous and paralyzing effect upon the mind, and greatly retards its improvement. Therefore did our Redeemer exclaim, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And still, at the present day, it seems to be the paramount concern of all to amass large fortunes. Each one is striving to be richer than his neighbor. They disregard the sacred precept: for what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" How often is innocence, truth and equity; life, liberty and the hope of eternal glory, contemptuously bartered for a handful of gold?

It is no wonder that avarice has become a prevailing vice of the age. The art of accumulating wealth, seems to be one of the most prominent features of our education. It is the first lesson that children receive from their parents. For this alone they are sent to school—instructed in the arts and sciences, or learnt a trade or profession. For this, mankind engage in the most degrading pursuits, and oftentimes mark their career with crime. For this, matrimony is entered into with all the critical nicety of a problem. Is there one man, who, in his poverty, despises wealthy, and weighs it as nothing in comparison to honest

virtue or intelligence? If so, how is he gazed at by the crowd, and derided as a fool. How is he pitied, even by those who pretend to admire the precepts of the wise king who prayed for wisdom instead of riches. But to them, this wisdom is a folly, and what they applaud in him they censure in others.

A desire for wealth, is the great moving principle of almost every family at the present day. They toil not for a decent livelihood, or a simple gratification of their wants; but like madmen, they heap up riches in the vain hope that it may add a lustre to their characters. They desire wealth, that they may have honor, influence and power. They think a man is esteemed in proportion to the amount of his gold. The learning and integrity of the poor are mere atoms in the scale with the ignorance and immorality of the rich. To be sure, there are some exceptions, but they are very few, and will be found modestly concealed in a corner. Well may it be said, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." They seem to think that they can attain the joys of heaven with the same ease that they would acquire a fortune. But they know not what they do. They trifle away their souls without heeding their danger. They live only for the enjoyments of earth; and make a sacrifice of their virtue, religion, and eternal salvation.

Wealth, if not a positive, is at least a very formidable barrier to our entrance into the kingdom of God. But why should it destroy the sublime and holy aspirations of

the soul? We answer that the children of affluent parents are so educated, that they receive at the commencement of life, a wrong bias to their minds. They are indulged and flattered by their teachers and others, on account of their parentage or wealth. They grow idle, luxurious, effeminate, proud, overbearing and haughty. These are the evils of wealth. It is common, therefore, to observe our most worthy and learned men, growing out of poverty and obscurity; while others, who have been accustomed to luxury and wealth, too often degenerate into all the vices and weakness of the age.

Iron necessity is the best instructor we can have. It drives us to the development of our own powers; it is the foster-mother of great and excellent minds. In glittering palaces and halls, we may look in vain for virtue or nobleness of soul. Ignorance and flattery stand as sentinels at the gates to guard against their entrance.

The marriages of the affluent (more frequently in consideration of wealth and power, than affection or love,) greatly contribute to the weakness and degeneracy of the age by the bringing up of their offspring in effeminate habits. Look at the children of the middle classes, and compare their glowing cheeks with the pale faces of the rich. It is true, the latter may be more polished in their manners, but does this give them a more benevolent disposition? Are not these formalities too often their exclusive aim? A decent deportment, without the affectation to assume an appearance of wisdom or virtue which does not really belong to us, should be one of the chief designs of our education.

Religion and piety are mere subordinate things, when a claim is laid to them only because custom seems to demand it.

We only begin to think of God, when the world is beginning to forget us. After the body is worn away with sickness, then the soul claims our attention; and we enquire about the reality of an eternity, when our worldly ambition is blighted or withered away. The heart cannot be improved without a perfect consciousness of its wickedness and deceit; and he who has struggled with adversity, is the most inclined to rely upon his own strength and energy. Self-knowledge will more frequently be found among the poor than the rich. The latter are too much accustomed to adulation, and thereby overrate their powers. Their sycophantic friends are ever ready to exhibit their faults as insignificant, and to magnify some every-day act of charity into a great and unexampled virtue. They listen with an eager ear, and are willing to be deceived, because they are not acquainted with their own infirmities, and love to have their vanity gratified.

A life of affluence, divested of care and trouble, often produces an inequality of mind. Undisturbed repose is a barrier to great and exalted pursuits. Thus, we often find the children of the rich seldom acquainted with any thing that does not relate to the art of gaining wealth. The wisdom and beneficence of their Creator is a secondary; nay, even worthless reflection. While the poor man, struggling with adversity, turns to his God for consolation, they content themselves with the wise deductions of some

pseudo philosopher. Their rank and wealth, seems to have released them from the common faith or belief of mankind. Their superficial knowledge is regarded as well founded intelligence. Revelation they pronounce a fiction; and its advocates, whom they compare with the heathens, either deceived themselves or deceiving others. But, notwithstanding, they have a religion of their own. They become the founders of a creed that will make no inroad upon their sensuality, nor disprove the propriety of gratifying their carnal appetites. Unable to comprehend the grandeur and sublimity of true religion, their time is monopolized with wild and extravagant theories, until life is wasted away, and the soul is ready to depart from its withered tenement. Then, in the anguish of their repentance, they often become senseless bigots or irreclaimable fanatics. These are the unquestionable evils of wealth, which contains in itself a dangerous poison, by which the mind is corrupted, and frequently whole nations are sunk into utter oblivion.

The luxuries of life greatly tend to impair the energies of the soul. He, who gives himself up to worldly enjoyments, has but little pleasure in his existence, because there is nothing to which he can aspire. He forever grovels in the dust. The poor have not the same chances of evil. They look forward to the time when their sorrows shall cease; and here we may observe the wisdom of an ever-ruling providence, which assigns to but few men an abundance; but trouble and anxiety to the many.

It is an error of the higher and more wealthy classes to look with contempt upon their inferiors, and to regard

them as servile beings, created only to administer to their caprices and wants. But we are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves; for we are all children of the same eternal father; and this feeling is the most frequently cherished by the poor man, because it teaches him that kings and princes, in the estimation of God, are on a level with their meanest subjects. The rich, however, are so inflated with pride, and so completely the dupes of their own prejudices, that they pretend to deny all such equality, even in the land of spirits. Wealth and rank, in many instances, prevents the performance of christian duties. Therefore, may we again exclaim, with the inspired volume, it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Oh, thou infinite and adorable father of the universe, I pray thee to grant me wisdom instead of wealth, that I may live upon earth in accordance with thy holy will. Give me neither poverty nor great riches, so that I may avoid the evils incident to both. A competence is all that I necessarily require, and it is my own fault if it does not prove to me an abundance.

THE PLEASURES OF WEALTH.

In the dim twilight, the stiffened corpse of the Messiah hung loosely from the cross. His life, upon that day of terror, had been made a sacrifice. The gaping and indifferent crowd had dispersed. The enemies of Jesus, who had triumphantly witnessed his death, and satisfied their revenge with his blood, had retired to Jerusalem to celebrate their victory.

The timid friends of the Saviour did not dare to approach the sacrifice through fear of the mob. They withdrew, weeping and sorrowful, and concealed themselves in their rude houses. Lonely and deserted was Golgotha. But footsteps broke upon the silence of the hour ; and men came hurrying from Jerusalem, with hearts full of love. Among them was Joseph of Arimathea, one of the richest and most respectable citizens of Jerusalem, a member of the high council, and honored by Pilate the Roman governor. There also came one of the most worthy and estimable of the Pharisees, called Nicodemus, whose servants carried with them myrrh and aloes. The body was wrapped, with these spices, in clean linen, and carried to Joseph's garden, where it was placed in a new sepulchre, formed in a rock. And there followed, weeping, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, who beheld afar off the resting place of his beloved body.

While poverty is compelled to remain silent, the voice of the wealthy may still be heard. What could not be accomplished by the needy disciples of Christ, was easily performed by two rich men of the land. What the Roman governor would have denied to the tears of Mary, the mother of the crucified, he readily granted to a member of the high-council of Jerusalem. The inspired writers, instead of despising all to whom God has given great riches, seemed to have particularly honored the memory of these men, who distinguished themselves by such a provident use of their wealth; and to represent them as a counter-part to the youth, who enquired, what he might do to become more perfect, and went away sorrowful, because he was commanded to give up his worldly possessions. But our Saviour did not mean by this, that it was indispensable for a man to give up all his riches for the benefit of the poor, before he could enter into the kingdom of heaven: he only wished to make manifest the many dangers and hindrances arising from wealth, rather than that virtue and piety could not be associated with it. David was one of the most powerful and wealthy princes of the world, and at the same time possessed a noble and godlike mind. Then was it not foolishness—an enthusiasm of devotion, for kings and rich men of olden times, to give up their property and live in voluntary exile, to be more certain of heaven? Is it not also censurable at present, for bigots and fanatics, full of contemptible pride and unrelenting hate, to contend that the enjoyment of riches is a sin, or that its possessor cannot be a worthy disciple of Christ.

Every thing that we receive from God is a blessing, unless the sinfulness of our own hearts wantonly convert it into a curse.

It is not the business of men, to enquire into the manner that an individual shall make use of his property, provided it is not prostituted to the injury of social and civil order. In the latter instance it would be the province of the law to prevent and punish such pernicious use. It is common for those who possess only limited fortunes, to censure the conduct, generally, of the more wealthy, and to make them objects of their ridicule, because they enjoy a little more distinction than themselves. Every one judges of the other by his own arbitrary opinion. The miser looks upon him as a prodigal, whose expenses are equivalent to his income; the ignorant censure those who expend their wealth for promoting the arts or sciences, or encouraging useful institutions; while the epicure would consider it the very acme of foolishness, to appropriate his riches for any other object than that of savoury dishes.

Every affluent man in the world, who is governed by the precepts of wisdom and christianity, will consider his wealth as a loan from heaven; and that he is an agent, for the time being, to attend to its proper distribution. Soon or late, it must all be left behind. Our possessions, to day, were those of some other person in a former age; and when we have mouldered into dust, they will be claimed by generations for centuries to come, who will know as little of us, as we knew of our predecessors. The riches of the earth remain forever the same. They neither increase nor diminish, but constantly changed from one to another—some

receiving more and some less. Each one, however, has a share, which is given him for the promotion of his own, as well as the happiness of others.

He, therefore, who administers only to his necessities, and with the residue of his wealth contributes to the happiness of those who are less fortunate, is a good and faithful servant of the Lord. Nor could he enjoy a more exalted pleasure, than, by making use of the wordly advantages he has received, in adding to the welfare of his fellow beings. What an extensive field for benevolence and philanthropy is opened to him. By his unaffected kindness he seems to belong to a higher rank of beings—the immediate representative of God, appointed to scatter his blessings to all within his reach.

The individual who endeavours, with an intention like this, to increase his wealth, is not deserving of censure. He is not to be placed in contrast with those, who heap up riches for the sake of its possession only, or that they may indulge in the pomp and luxury of the world. He is not like the sensualist, who rejoices in his wealth, because it will gratify his pride, or cause his fawning parasites to bow, with submissive reverence, at the footstool of his vanity.

The true christian will estimate the advantages of his wealth, as a means afforded him, by the beneficence of the Almighty, to perfect the happiness of himself and others. Therefore, he takes no pride in his possessions, (which he rather considers as the property of God,) but asks himself how it may be disposed of so as most to benefit the world. In all of his suffering fellow creatures; he sees legitimate objects for his charity, and thinks himself the debtor of the whole

human race. He is truly the master of his own wealth, while others are its slaves. To the fool, therefore, either wealth or poverty may become a source of evil; but the wise man will be contented in either.

We sometimes observe an individual endeavouring to remedy the miseries of others without a corresponding means. He is unassisted by the rest of the world—his charitable designs receive not even a passing notice—and, with pain, he beholds the ignorance, selfishness and injustice of mankind. How exalted does the rich man appear, in an instance like this; when he is ready to alleviate the suffering of the needy—to fulfil the benevolent impulses of his bosom—or to attend faithfully to the voice of wailing and distress.

Unmitigated poverty makes us spiritless. He, who is destitute, is not esteemed as one of the common order of mankind. He is oppressed and insulted by the powerful. Nobody will listen to him. His advice is never asked or received. His sociability would be regarded as an indiscretion. He grows fearful—and he scarcely has the courage to insist upon his unquestionable rights. How enviable, in contrast, appears to us the man of wealth and power. To Joseph of Arimathea, Pilate freely delivered the body of the crucified Saviour; so that it might receive a decent burial, while the prayers and supplications of Christ's disciples, and even the tears and entreaties of his mother, were all urged in vain. The poor, be they ever so virtuous, are unobserved. If they perform a praise worthy deed, they may receive a cold smile of approbation, or otherwise, hear it spoken of merely as their duty. No one enquires who it

was or thinks him worthy of imitation. The eyes of mankind, generally, like to rest upon the splendor and magnificence of the world. It was only Christ who observed the poor widow casting her mite into the treasury,—the whole of her little property—and exclaimed that she had given more than the rich who contributed from their abundance. How unlike to this was the Pharisees, who went about the streets publicly distributing alms, knowing that they would receive the applause of the multitude, who judge chiefly from outward appearances. But the rich man, who exercises his benevolence in an unassuming manner, feels a far more enduring pleasure. The eyes of the world are upon him. He receives the meed of praise, and many endeavour to imitate his exemplary deeds. In this way much is effected by his good example. Thus we behold the pleasures of wealth. In the possession of a good man, it proves an inestimable blessing to society.

We must not forget, however, that wealth has greater inducements to sensual gratifications than poverty. Therefore the man who is not inflated with high rank; who is not overbearing with much power; and who is temperate with an abundance, is worthy of our highest esteem and reverence: because, to acquire these virtues, he had to contend with greater temptations, than he who dwells in obscurity. Christian virtue in purple robes; in the palace or on the throne, is not less estimable, as some would suppose, than that to be found in the abodes of misery; indeed, it often appears more resplendant, because its acquisition is attended with much more difficulty. Misfortune strengthens and elevates the mind, while its power and energy is diminished

by opulence. That individual is truly in possession of christian piety who retains the purity of his character, when surrounded by the ease and blandishments of life ; who does not become tyrannical in his authority ; who defends the innocent from the wicked, and the just from the unjust ; who, while he is elevated by this rank over thousands, looks upon them all as his brethren ; provides for their wants, and preserves, sacred and inviolable, their rights. He claims an empire that is not of this world ; he gathers his treasures for something more permanent than the enjoyments of earth.

Mankind, to be happy, must learn the secret of being poor in their wealth, or, like the widow who threw her mite into the treasury ; rich in their poverty.

THE RELIGION OF CHILDHOOD.

First Reflection.

There is much difference of opinion among men, as to the propriety of instilling religious ideas into the minds of children, before their judgement has been matured, or they are capable of judging for themselves. We often hear it made the subject of dispute in companies; and find christian parents divided upon this subject, when they are united upon every other. They are undecided as to the period when their religious instruction should commence, or the manner that it can be the most profitably taught at so tender an age.

Childhood and religion, to the reflecting mind, are both equally solemn and important considerations; and we cannot think too earnestly about their judicious combination. There are upright, and even pious men, who think they cannot warn us too faithfully against the practice of making children acquainted, at an early age, with the maxims and truths of religion. They point out, what they are pleased to term, the innumerable dangers and evil consequences arising from such a source. To what, they enquire, is owing the present fearful decline of christianity? Why is it so utterly neglected by young people? From whence comes their aversion or indifference to public worship? Why are they mockers of the godly, and deem them either weak-

minded or hypocritical? The mystery is solved in their estimation by answering that religious ideas were instilled into their minds before they were capable of comprehending them: that they thereby received unworthy or false opinions of the excellence of God, and of the truth of his revealed word: that the prayers which they were taught to repeat, were merely a task for the memory, about which the heart knew nothing; and consequently that they will look upon public or private worship as an idle ceremony, which is only observed for the sake of decency or custom; a work of the lips in which the feelings are not engaged.

Every day's experience attests the truth of what we have said. On the other hand, credit is due to those parents who avoid an error like this, under the conviction that the impressions of our childhood are infinitely more lasting than those of later years.

Where there are two extremes there is always a medium that will be chosen by the judicious few. Our Saviour says, "suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Then, why should we withhold them from a communion with their invisible Father? Why shall we intervene between them and their God? or entirely conceal his grandeur and glory from their view on account of their limited comprehension? Are we so enlightened—are our minds so capacious, that we can behold in a single glance, all the glorious attributes and perfections of the deity? If so, then why are we so selfish as to prevent little children from approaching the presence of their eternal ruler and preserver? While we sink into the dust, and worship be-

fore the infinite Jehovah, let them also cry, Abba, Father! Our Saviour says: "whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Let every one attend, faithfully, to this sacred injunction, and then they will not, either by evil example or improper instruction, estrange their minds from the contemplation of God.

This is the conduct to be pursued by christian parents in moulding the characters of their offspring. Nor is it less important to individuals in any other situation of life. We are all responsible to the Supreme Judge of the world for the example we afford to others. No man stands entirely alone in the world; we are all more or less connected together, as members of the same great family; therefore our actions have a corresponding influence upon each other.

What is the religion of childhood? Do we not observe it in the smile of the innocent babe? Can we not trace it in the love of children to their parents? in their first awakened feelings of respect and veneration, even though they know nothing of the mysteries of creation—or can comprehend but little of the beneficence of a bountiful creator? These are the almost hidden germs, which, if properly nourished, will soon expand with renovated life, and plentifully bring forth the fruits of devotion.

If religion has not grown up with us from childhood, it cannot have the same beneficial influence upon our characters. In this way it becomes indissolubly rivited upon the heart, and bears us up in all the difficulties of life. It soothes

us in the hour of affliction, and teaches us to look with calmness upon our ruined and blasted hopes. It will even pluck the suicidal dagger from our grasp, when we, in a moment of phrenzy and despair, but little heed the shame or ignominy that may settle upon our reputation. These are the good effects of religious instructions. Another very important reason why children should be instructed at an early age in those sacred principles, is, that it guards and protects them in after years from the inroads of doubt and skepticism. What the christian is taught by revelation—what the wise man learns by reflection and research—in short, all the practical and useful lessons of life should be explained to us, in some degree, at our entrance upon the pathway of existence. Then, after our judgement is matured, we will find a confirmation of those important truths. We will be prepared to resist the sophistry of the worldly wise. Nothing can shake our convictions of the existence of a God, or of the immortality of our souls; because, without these, life would appear to us a mystery—religion a phantom, and the whole universe a contradiction of itself.

The mind must be deeply imbued in religious principles at an early age, or its acquisition of them, in after years, is rendered difficult and oftentimes uncertain. It will become entangled in the mazes of doubt, and be obliged to combat with a thousand illusions and prejudices. Sometimes it is enfeebled in the pursuit, and loses its vigor, or sinks into utter hopelessness and despondency. In this situation we madly plunge ourselves into the whirlpool of passion and lust, while sensuality and debauchery are the only occupants of our thought, and we go through the world as de-

served and unpitied beings. These are indeed the lamentable consequences of an early neglect of religious instructions, by which the mind would be prepared to resist the vice and pollution of the world.

Take away religion, and you take away the foundation of much that is noble and exalted in man. He who possesses it, looks upon the world with an increase of admiration—he feels himself glowing with renovated love to his fellow creatures—he acknowledges the invisible and all pervading power of the eternal; he looks upon the moon and the stars that are glittering in the blue chambers of the heavens, and regards them as the evidences of a better and brighter world. Religion throws a brilliancy upon the morning of life; it embellishes the gay and fanciful dreams of childhood; and it steals, like a refreshing dew, upon the hearts of the young and innocent, softening their feelings and affections, without their knowing from whence it proceeds. Why then should we deprive them of this happiness? Why take from them these sources of earthly consolation? Why repress or blight those god-like energies of the soul, that will arouse them to an anticipation of eternal life? No; let us rather picture to them the great and exalted character of Jesus Christ, that they may endeavour to imitate the glorious attributes and perfections of him who exclaimed, in the infinitude of his love, “suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.”

Let us not neglect his commands. Let us consecrate them to him in whose name they were baptized, before they could understand the sublimity of his nature, or be made

acquainted with the blessings he achieved for us on earth. Let us illumine their infant minds with the light of eternal truth, and in time they will be able to look abroad and exultingly behold and appreciate the splendor and magnificence of the deity.

THE RELIGION OF CHILDHOOD.

Second Reflection.

Once more I return to the contemplation of childhood—those blissful and innocent moments of our existence. By religion, the heart is already chastened—the passions checked in their course, and piety reigns triumphant through all the changes and temptations of life.

In vain may you attempt to keep a child in ignorance of its maker. It feels his immediate presence—it questions you about the ruler of heaven and earth—it asks you who has caused the sun and moon and stars to shine—who launches forth the livid and glaring lightnings from the gloomy clouds—who makes the awful and terrific thunder to roll and mutter over our heads. Then, why will you conceal from it the existence of a God, or of his only begotten Son? It is all in vain. Your greatest precautions will avail you nothing. It will hear the name of its Creator lisped by its playmates, or pronounced among strangers, and thus uninstructed, it is in danger of forming erroneous or unworthy opinions. From the father and mother, therefore, the child should first learn the existence of a supreme and overruling power. They alone must mould its character, and instil into its mind such knowledge as is best suited to its age and capacity. Let it be taught that God is the father of us all—that, though invisible, he is every

where present—that without him, no grass could grow, nor fruits ripen, nor flowers bloom—that without him nothing could have existence. These lessons it will not easily forget, and its love for you will be partly transferred to the great friend and provider of the universe.

When the germs of religion are implanted in the mind of a child, its education is less difficult. You may forbid it doing any wrong; but it is only the recollection of an omniscient being that can restrain its evil thoughts. You may punish its disobedience to your commands; but other omissions must be dealt with by conscience alone.

It is for the parents to unlock the heart of a child, that a spirit of christian zeal may have entrance. For this purpose something more is required than a few formal precepts. Your advice may be remembered, but its good results will not be made manifest in its actions. Your exemplary conduct is worth more than all your heartless and measured instructions. Tell your children no falsehoods lest they might imitate your example. Use them with kindness and respect, and they will learn to conduct themselves in like manner to others. Touch not the property of your neighbors, if you would not contaminate their minds; and remember that to you may be traced their faults and imperfections; that their virtuous and amiable conduct, is nothing more nor less than a reflection of yourselves. Do not show yourselves indifferent to public worship, nor careless and thoughtless in your private devotions. Let your prayers be marked with the deepest reverence and solemnity. Although your children cannot

unite in thanksgivings with you, yet these external marks of homage and respect, will not be without a good result.

When a child has formed a rational idea of the love and power of the Deity, then let it be instructed to pray; not however, in a studied or written form, but with the zeal and spirit of devotion. The heart knows nothing of what is only repeated from memory. It becomes a habit, marked with the utmost indifference, and is little less than a complete profanation of all religion.

The christian mother will take her child occasionally into solitude. There she will tell it in the simple language of her heart, how many blessings it has and may still expect to receive, from the hands of a beneficent creator. She will kneel down in prayer, and learn it to follow her example, and to unite in her supplications; while the Omnipotent looks down and blesses them both. When time sweeps on, and she is trembling with age or infirmity; thus will her dutiful children, in remembrance of her precepts, implore for her, in like manner, the benedictions of the most High.

The devotion of children must be voluntary. Every constraint destroys the efficacy of worship. Nor should they be compelled to go at too early an age to church. Much injury has been done in this way, by pious and zealous parents. It is time enough to usher them into the temple of holiness, when they can comprehend the spirit and nature of religious exercises; when they will not be likely to feel an indifference on account of the often repeated custom. Beware of all impressions that may tend

to excite their disgust. It is not the altar alone that hallow and purifies the heart ; therefore, they should become worshippers of God, before they have passed the threshold of a church. Point out to them the deceit and hypocrisy of professing christians, who pray one moment and slander their neighbor the next, in order that they may avoid a similar error themselves. When assembled at the grave of a friend or acquaintance, let them know that while the body has gone down to mingle with the dust, there is an immortal spirit destined to live through all eternity. Let these ideas, however imperfect they may be at first, grow up with the child, and become firmly rooted in its mind. These instructions, however, should be in accordance with its years. When it can weep under the blood stained banner of Christ, with tears of love and gratitude ; when it can feel a thrill of joy, even in the thought of being called one of his disciples ; then make it acquainted with his sufferings, and the magnitude of the sacrifice he made for a sinful and wicked world. Thus, almost unconsciously, its intellectual character will be improved, and religion made the anchor of its hope, and the source of its peace and happiness, in the days of manhood and old age.

Do not suffer the religion of your children to become a mere shadow of the feelings. Do not deceive their imaginations, and be content with moving them to tears by some affecting narration. Such sensibility, however amiable it may appear, cannot from its nature, be of long duration. The ebullition of pious feelings are only as the buds and blossoms, and not the golden founts of religion. It is not

by listening to the word of Christ, but by attending faithfully to his precepts, that constitutes the true christian. He who will not perform works meet for repentance—he who is not meek, humble, and contrite in heart—he who is unwilling to sacrifice himself for the welfare of his brethren, as did the Saviour of the world, has not yet prepared himself for the enjoyments of heaven.

Fathers, mothers and christian parents! consecrate to the living and eternal father, the tender and beloved children which he has entrusted to your care. Infuse into their infant minds a spirit of pious and holy zeal, that they may receive strength and power to contend and struggle with every misfortune of life. And if death compels you to a separation for a short time on earth, you will have the blessed hope of being again united with them hereafter. When you are summoned before the judgment seat of God, you can say, here are the little ones which thou hast given us. They have indeed, travelled with you the same pathway to eternity. They have been animated by the same love and faith in life; and they have been made glad with the same triumphant hope in death. Oh, how sweet is the voice of revelation? Like distant music it steals into the soul, and ravishes it with ineffable transport and beauty.

THE NEWLY MARRIED.

How often with admiration and delight, have I perused the early history of mankind, as it has been given us by Moses. The same delightful harmony and order that pervaded the works of nature then, still continues to exist. Man, too, who was formed out of the dust of the earth; and woman, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, still remains the same.

The Lord said, it is not good that man should be alone. Solitude destroys every enjoyment. A pleasure which we cannot divide with others, is not worthy of the name; and an affliction which an amiable wife mutually shares with us is infinitely lighter.

The union of persons in a state of matrimony, is the decree of an all-wise creator. It is a custom peculiar, even to the most heathenish and unenlightened people of the earth. But all men are not in a condition to enjoy this happiness. It may be prudent for them to continue in a state of celibacy. So it happened with the apostles, who remained unmarried; not that they thought matrimony an evil, but because they could see little else than persecution in store for them, while they, without a resting place or a country, were determined at every sacrifice, to spread the truths of the gospel. Therefore, they re-

commended to others, who had undertaken the accomplishment of the same holy designs, to follow their example.

A matrimonial alliance is the most sacred of all others, and ought to be the most productive of human happiness. Other connexions may be broken off. Friendships may be severed in a thousand different ways; but the tie which unites man and wife, forever remains unaltered. They are the same to each other in adversity as prosperity; they share alike the sunshine and tempests of life. Although the sympathy of the world may have been entirely withdrawn from them, still they are happy in the existence of each other.

In the married life we have comfort in distress, advice in difficulties, attention in sickness, and consolation in the hour of death. But the man who stands alone in society; who has no partner in his joys, or companion in his sufferings, how miserable must be his situation. Who pities him when he is misjudged, or misrepresented by the world? Who watches him when death is stealing upon him? or weeps over his lonely grave? Alas! he is entirely deserted; he is a stranger among men.

Many are the sorrows of life; but labor and hardships are rendered lighter by conjugal love. Our efforts have then a direct object. We care not for the toils of the day, because it adds to the enjoyment of our family. Parents also, find new and unexpected delights in the existence of their offspring. A thousand joyful emotions swell in their bosoms, of which no one, save a father or mother, can ever experience.

Matrimony not only increases our happiness in this way, but it also inclines us to a greater degree of piety. Our faults not only affect ourselves, but those too, who have united their destinies with us. This leads us to a greater degree of caution. He who would ruin an innocent wife and children, by his wickedness and profligacy, is a monster of the most hideous kind. A single man is often indifferent about his conduct—sometimes guilty of the grossest immoralities, because there are none to whom he is accountable. The actions of the married on the contrary, are open to the inspection of each other. If either of them do any wrong, it will be observed, and the error may be corrected by a little friendly admonition. In this way the matrimonial life sets a limit to our evil propensities, and renders the dominion of virtue easy and pleasant. But unhappily, such is not the case in every instance. How many have brought misery upon themselves for a whole life, by pledging their hand at the altar, through some blind and passionate inclination, or perhaps an expectation of wealth, which is never to be realized. If, however, a matrimonial alliance is thus concluded, it remains in some degree optional with the parties, whether or not their whole existence shall be a continued scene of disappointment or disgust.

The good conduct of married people at the commencement of their career, is of the utmost importance. Their contentment and happiness depends entirely upon their mutual respect for each other. Whatever behaviour they may adopt at first, is likely to give a bias to their habits

ever after. They should therefore, be extremely cautious in their deportment. If they neglect this they will always repent of their indifference. They may have known each other for years, without sufficiently understanding their respective characters. When they are brought together as man and wife, divested of all artifice and dissimulation, they are surprised to find that their feelings, opinions and inclinations are widely different. There are a hundred unwelcome peculiarities of temper and disposition, which they did not expect to discover. Hence they accuse each other of deception, because they were satisfied with a confused idea of each other's supposed excellence, which upon a closer intimacy, they have found to be without foundation. For this reason, it is not uncommon to find even good and well disposed persons, less happy in the early part of their matrimonial life than after a lapse of years, when they have learned to understand and know each other better.

Where two persons have united themselves together for a whole life, there ought not to be any pride or obstinacy, but a mutual respect and indulgence of each other. The husband should rule by kindness and persuasion—he should endeavor, imperceptibly, to lead his wife to the faithful performance of her duties, without assuming an air of insolent authority. She on the other hand, should not desire to have any other influence, than what she can attain by gentleness and love—the most powerful weapons of her sex. Beware of all dissensions. It is better to suffer wrong than to commit it yourself. Petty quarrels, abusive words,

severe reproaches, and a disposition to represent faults in all their enormity, will eventually tend to incorporate with the mind, a spirit of enmity and bitterness which nothing can eradicate.

The newly married, if they would enjoy unanimity, must establish it as a governing and inviolable rule, not to conceal from one another any secrets. Even their minutest thoughts should be reciprocally known. Otherwise, misunderstanding and distrust will be the consequence. It is better to disclose the most trifling error, however painful it may be, than to envelope it in doubt and mystery. As there is nothing which ought not to be equally the concern of both, it should be their earnest endeavor to enjoy each other's confidence; and then no evil designed persons can create dissensions between them. When there is an attempt to hide a fault, one from the other, there is already a dissimilarity of feelings, which will sooner or later estrange their affections. Even in jest, they ought not to indulge in any light or trivial conduct, which is at variance with the character they have assumed. Let them attend faithfully to these duties, and they will find that matrimony is as a golden tie, locking their hearts together beyond the power of any thing but death to separate.

And finally, the surest foundation of connubial happiness—the most important of all other considerations, is religion. The husband who is destitute of this—who never makes a Deity the subject of his meditations, is more likely to run into the sins of vice and immorality; he would be more likely to abandon, or drive his family into misery

and despair. The wife also, whose heart is not warmed with religious emotions, is divested of one of her most inestimable charms, and is less capable of soothing the rugged sorrows of her husband. That woman, whose soul is not consecrated with the indwelling of a God, is not susceptible of those high perfections, which are so peculiarly the ornaments of her sex. Newly married people, if they prize their future happiness, should never regard this subject with indifference. If in one, religious feelings are extinct, the other may renew them by gentle reproofs and exhortations. Furnish at all times, an example of piety, and such will be the effect of habit, that in course of time, one will be imperceptibly led to adopt the sentiments and principles of the other, and at the same time think them the result of his own convictions. Only in this way can the happiness of wedlock be so immutably established, as to mitigate the evils incident to human life.

You who have united your destinies upon the altar, remember that you stand pledged to comfort and support each other in every extremity. As you journey on from time to eternity, your days of anguish will come, and without the same love, the same faith, and the same hope of eternal happiness, you cannot expect to triumph over your calamities.

MATRIMONY.

First Reflection.

We have already spoken of the sacredness of a matrimonial alliance. None are more important or venerable. It was sanctioned by the Deity himself. In the records of Moses, we are told of the Almighty creating for man in his solitude, a help-mate. There seems indeed, to be an irresistible impulse implanted in the human breast, which inclines us to lavish our affections upon each other. Guided by this holy and unchangable law of our nature, we see the woman in her weakness, relying upon the strength and power of the man for protection, while he in turn, is soothed and recompensed by her more amiable and gentle qualities.

The happiness of the husband and wife is mutually derived from each other. They partake alike of joy and sorrow ; glory and ignominy ; wealth and poverty. They are the same to each other in all the circumstances of life. The misfortune of one, is the misfortune of the other. Nothing but the grave can sever their connexion. Even the bonds which unite brothers and sisters, or parents and children, are far less enduring. The tender youth has grown into manhood. He is now contending with the difficulties of the world. He receives no longer the protec-

tion of a father or mother. The old are sinking into the grave around him. His only solace is the wife of his bosom. She, perhaps, has fled from her parental roof, willing to sacrifice every thing for his sake, and now clings fondly to him for protection and support. She, therefore, is his chief delight, and by her tenderness and love, can sweeten his toil and scatter sunshine in the pathway of his existence.

From matrimony may proceed either the greatest happiness or the greatest misery. Family peace makes us contented; domestic discord dooms us to continual wretchedness. The marriage vow dates a new era in the life of man. He stands no longer alone upon the earth. His existence is entwined with that of another. The present becomes more interesting, the past more instructive, and the future more important.

While it is admitted that matrimony is a source of public as well as private happiness, we must regret the existence of those luxurious and pernicious habits, which counteract a disposition to enter into the marriage state, and contribute to the advancement of vice and immorality. The pride and splendor which prevail at present among the higher classes and more particularly in our principal cities; the sensual enjoyments which they are unwilling to abandon; the frivolous amusements and dissipation to which the females are accustomed; all tend, for obvious reasons, to lessen the number of matrimonial alliances. These are the evils of luxury. It destroys the peace of families; it roots out the finest impulses of our nature; it blasts our noblest designs and wishes, and leaves us to writhe beneath the scorpion

stings of unnatural lusts, and uncontrolled passions. It separates man from man. It dissolves the union of a people, and deadens every equitable or patriotic feeling. Luxury is a murderer of connubial happiness, and as such, it will receive the unqualified hatred or contempt of every true christian; as such, it will be regarded by all wise men of every age and clime, as a bitter and destroying curse.

Next to this, in the catalogue of evils, may be enumerated the carelessness or inattention of the married man, who thereby contemptuously trifles with the importance of his situation, and prepares himself for a life of misery and pain. He should learn that by matrimony he will have advantages before unknown to him; that by it, his moral and intellectual nature will be rendered more perfect. This, however, cannot be effected without a fixed determination, on the part of the husband and wife, to divest themselves of every frailty that may be offensive to each other. In concluding this important union, not so much regard should be had to each other's particular virtues, as the imperfections which may be the result either of habit, or an erroneous education. The latter is a greater source of evil than the former is of good. We sometimes observe a man and wife neither of whom can boast of any very remarkable good qualities, and yet they are not unhappy, because their mutual intercourse is not embittered by the inequalities of temper and disposition, peculiar to many others. On the contrary, there are many married people, who, by an affectation of virtue, have been elevated to a preeminent rank in society, while at the same time, their imbecilities, which can only

be learned by a close intimacy with them, entirely destroys their domestic happiness.

Not unfrequently, our fondness for an individual prevents us from observing his defects, while he in turn, if he is ambitious to win our admiration, will carefully conceal all his infirmities.

If our affection for a beloved object is subject to the control of turbulent passions, or a sheer, calculating policy, the judgment will remain shackled, and our choice in such cases, will oftentimes be blindly and foolishly made. Regret will then be in vain. We have looked only at the bright hues of the picture; but it is too late to recal our error. Now that we have won the object of our pursuit, our love, admiration, or whatever else it may be termed, has changed into hatred and disgust.

A thoughtlessness in selecting the partner of your bosom, is a great indiscretion, inasmuch as it is foolishly trifling with your happiness for a whole life. Unless you are indifferent about your future welfare, you will observe the utmost precaution in a matter of so much moment. You may moderate the violence of your desires, by prudence. You need conclude no alliance, unless you find that the object of your affections is worthy of you. Before you estimate too highly the good qualities, learn to examine more attentively the imperfections of your choice. We have already said that matrimonial happiness is not so much increased by the former, as it is diminished by the latter.

With what sordid motives do parents sometimes compel their children to enter into the married life; and that too, with those whom they may have hitherto regarded with

cold indifference or even disgust. Mutual affection is seldom made the subject of inquiry. It is enough to know that their wealth or power will be increased, and for that they are ready to make every sacrifice. They heed not the grief or sorrow that they bring upon their devoted offspring. They little think of the tears of anguish that they cause to flow. Sooner than be disconcerted in their ambitious schemes, they will doom them to unmitigated wretchedness—to all the gnawing agonies of despair. Remember, there is an eternal and all-seeing God who is watching over you! He hears the groans which you are extorting by your cruelty. You may accomplish your designs, but you will not escape the dread retribution of punishment. When you are stretched upon the bed of death, you will not forget the wrongs you have inflicted upon those who should be dearer to you than all the world beside; and these reflections will torment you like so many fiends, until the last pulses of life have ceased.

In no instance have parents a greater responsibility than in the disposal of their children in marriage. At this age they only expect advice—they do not wish to be driven into measures which their own judgment or feelings will not sanction. It should be remembered that their happiness is at stake for life, and this should weigh down all petty or trivial objections of the parents. Yet it is their unquestionable duty to refuse their consent to the marriage of a son or daughter, which they think might terminate in misery or disgrace. Such engagements are generally entered into, when the mind is controlled by the phrenzy of youthful passion, when the recklessness of love hurries them on to their

own destruction—when their knowlege of men and things has not yet arrived at maturity. Here shall the more experienced parents endeavour to curb the bold impetuosity of their children, by tender entreaties and reproofs, and show them the false glare of unwonted love that is burning within them. They are, alike responsible to their God, for compelling them to a matrimonial connexion through a motive of pride or selfishness, as for an inconsiderate approval of it, when it is entirely obvious that the most disastrous consequences will be the result.

The choice of a husband or wife, therefore, is of infinite importance. And yet, with what indifference is it regarded. If there was greater precaution—if it was looked upon with that degree of solemnity to which it is entitled, how many repentant tears would cease to flow—how many wailings and lamentations would subside—how many a withered form would bloom with new life and vigor—how many fearful and maddening resolutions would be avoided.

Look round upon the world, and observe how comparatively few are the number of married people, who, by their unalterable love and attachment, are prepared to look with calmness upon the frowns of fate; and though they might be deprived of the smiles or friendship of the world, yet remain happy in the existence of each other. On the other hand, how many are there whose lives become a burthen—who seldom terminate a day without peevishness or ill-humour—who are always longing for a better lot; whose discord is displeasing and painful to their children, who

may eventually be inclined to imitate their unhallowed example.

And what is the cause of these extended evils? Why is the husband or wife not happy in the midst of the domestic circle? Why is it that a secret worm, which is concealed because it cannot be removed, is eating away and destroying the welfare of so many families? Let experience answer.

STEP PARENTS.

On that day of terror and persecution, when Christ was suspended from the cross, and his wounds were streaming with blood, he saw around him many of his dearest kindred and friends, who were unwilling to separate from him even in the hour of death. Among them was his weeping mother, whom he must now leave behind. He turned to John, his disciple, whom he tenderly loved, and said, "Behold thy mother;" and to her, "Woman, behold thy son." Henceforth he was to her as a dutiful child. He protected her, provided for her wants, and shared with her his dwelling.

This simple event awakens many sober and profitable reflections in the minds of christian parents. It reminds them of the agony they must undergo, when the hand of death is laid upon them, and they are obliged to separate from their children. Hearts that are thus united, cannot easily be severed. Hear the mother upon her dying couch, as she gazes for the last time upon her tender offspring: "To whom must I now consign you? Who will take care of, and provide for you as I have done? Upon whose breast will you now weep away your grief? or who will comfort you in your troubles and afflictions?" But we trust that her fears are unnecessary. Who is there upon earth who would not assist the deserted orphan; and more especially

when he earns for himself such a glorious title by becoming its protector? It is a truth deeply to be regretted, that a child is often the most miserable under the care of a step father or step-mother. In all languages these names are proverbial to express something that is detestable. Then it should be the duty of those, who have assumed the appellation, to conduct themselves in such a manner as not to deserve the odium which is generally cast upon them.

But whence arises this apathy; this unkindness, which is so often manifested by step-parents towards the children of others, which they must necessarily adopt? It is easily explained. Let us observe for a moment, a family wherein this evil prevails. We will find it is owing to the increased love which the father or mother very naturally feels for his or her own immediate offspring. Heretofore, the son or daughter-in-law may have received the utmost kindness and attention; but suddenly this affection ceases, and it is lavished upon one of their own descendants, which seems to be the exclusive object of their care. There is nothing left undone to render it happy. They love to see it caressed and flattered by others. But if the step-child is admired for its amiable and agreeable qualities, then their envy, hatred and jealousy are excited. There is a wonderful deterioration of its supposed excellencies; and the faults which they hitherto endeavoured to forget or amend, have now become insufferable. They see in every little offence, a great crime; in every action, a secret or malicious design; in every tear, deceit, hypocrisy, and wickedness. Thus, by the imprudence of a parent, who

may be estimable in every other respect, the peace of a family is forever broken up and destroyed.

Let us trace the cause of these melancholy results. Do they appear at once in all their enormity; or are they the growth of years? In the first place, we find that parental love is chilled, and then it degenerates into hatred and persecution. Tenderness for the step-child is sensibly diminished, indifference follows, and in their turn, malevolence, injustice and cruelty. Consequently, all domestic happiness is at an end. Discord arises between the husband and wife. The former sees the child of his bosom iniquitously neglected or despised by the latter; or the mother is compelled to notice without a murmur, the inhumanity which her offspring, of a former marriage, are obliged to endure. At first they kindly remonstrate with each other; and then a quarrel ensues, which terminates in unceasing strife and contention. Relatives engage in the dispute. Older brothers and sisters are also enlisted in the contest; and they sometimes uphold the caprice of their parents and imitate their example, until their own hearts are alike wicked and corrupted.

Every casualty that may happen to a child, will sooner or later pass away unremembered; but the cruelty which is inflicted upon it in its helplessness, will never be forgotten; it will remain deeply engraven upon its heart, even to the latest period of existence.

If God has entrusted to thy care an orphan, be unto it what the worthy disciple was unto the mother of Christ. Then thou hast given an evidence that thou art guided by

the wisdom and goodness of God ; that thou art not to be numbered with those who so wantonly abuse their parental authority. If thou hast united thyself at the altar to one whose children require thy friendly attention, remember the solemn promise thou hast made, to atone as far as possible, for the irreparable loss they have sustained. Be unto them in reality, a kind and benevolent parent.

Supposing the angel of death should summon thee away, and thou hast children who must fall into the hands of strangers? Wouldest thou not pray to the Almighty to shield them from cruelty and oppression? Then, why wilt thou treat thy step-child with so much scorn and neglect? Do not forget that the eye of the omnipotent is upon thee—that he sees all thy actions, both good and evil. Go, therefore, and fold in thy embrace the weeping and wronged orphan, that it may have confidence in thy affection. Look with indulgence upon its faults, which may have been the result of thy own unkindness. All the care thou canst bestow upon it, will not repair its inconsolable loss. Be thy love ever so pure, it cannot gush from the same deep and hallowed source, as did that of the deceased father or mother.

Is it impossible for the wife to conceal the fondness which she may feel for her own, in preference to her step-children? She should at least, make every effort to accomplish it. She will, thereby, not only secure the respect, but the higher love and admiration of her husband. The child in its infancy has but few objects to claim its attention, and every smile or frown of its parents is closely

noted, and interpreted into an omen of esteem or dislike. Excite their jealousy by the thoughtless caresses of their more favoured rivals, and you turn the whole current of their affections into bitterness.

When step-children, whom you have nursed with care and fidelity, have grown into maturity, and carefully appreciate your kindness to them in early years, then will they pour out their souls in love and gratitude. And it is not unfrequently the case that they are more grateful to their foster-parents, than their immediate descendants. What the latter regard only as parental duty, the former are willing to acknowledge as disinterested kindness, and their grateful hearts makes a rich return of all the good they have heretofore received.

Christian parents ! if you have assumed the title of step-father or mother, let it be your constant and most earnest endeavour, to make it one that will be venerated, not only by your children, but all with whom you are associated ! Do not forget your duties to the deceased, whose offspring may be under your control, and remember that God is continually watching over you. In the hour of death, you will be consoled by those whom you made happy through life—they will kneel at your grave in their loneliness and sorrow, and offer up their prayers for your eternal beatitude.

MATRIMONY.

Second Reflection.

Hard, indeed, in this life, may be the fate of man, yet there is no misfortune—no burthen so great, but friendship has the power to sooth his sorrows. Without sympathy, pain is more poignant ; and pleasure is diminished, when we participate in it alone.

Matrimony is the holiest, and most enduring bond of friendship, consecrated alike, by nature and religion. A change of circumstances ; difference of opinions ; a conflicting interest ; an inequality of rank or wealth ; a change of residence ; a long absence ; a thousand things, in short, may lessen the confidence and respect of friends and associates, or render the heart cold and indifferent ; but man and wife forever remain the same ; inseparable ; undivided ; actuated by the same motives, and sharing in the same joy or misery. Their union can only be severed by the unrelenting hand of death, whose blighting and withering touch destroys all earthly ties. Accustomed, as they have been, to live continually in each other's presence, they would otherwise be unhappy ; and when they are surrounded by a prattling and cheerful offspring, who witness with delight, their devotion and love to each other, there seems to be a new and uncontrollable sympathy that links their hearts and affections still more closely together.

Who protects the timid and unresisting wife with the same firmness and resolution as the husband, who, for her sake, gives forth in his strength, and manfully contends with the billows and storms of life? Who, but the faithful husband, regards her with the same pure and undiminished love, when the bloom has departed from her cheeks? or who places a higher estimate upon her still existing virtue and gentleness? And who rewards him for his anxieties, his troubles, his sacrifices, with the same fondness and zeal as the amiable wife, when she looks upon him as her only true friend and protector? Who knows better how to console or comfort him, when he has been scorned or satirized by the world? For whom does she strive to be economical? For whom is she always endeavouring to increase the order and regularity of her house? For whom does she invent new sources of pleasure, if not for him, without whom she herself would be joyless and forsaken? For what does the husband struggle for wealth, reputation, or the respect of the world, if it is not to share them with a being, who delights in his prosperity as much as her own? Who can so calmly endure the weakness and infirmities of age, as those who shared their happiness with each other in the buoyancy of youth? If sickness comes upon us, what hand administers so faithfully to our wants, as that which we received at the altar? A stranger may endeavour to console us, but his eye does not beam with the same tenderness and compassion. He may, indeed, mourn for our sufferings, but he cannot feel the sympathy of a husband or wife. The matrimonial state, therefore, where harmony exists, is the most

envious of all others. It affords a rapture; a delight; which neither wealth, nor honor, nor power can give.

But why is it that we observe so many unfortunate marriages? Why is it that there is so much domestic calamity and discord? or why is there so many divorces and voluntary separations? The cause of these evils has its origin, chiefly, in the injudicious choice of consorts. Often are they hurried by the heat and phrenzy of passion, into the consummation of their nuptial vows, without ever reflecting about each others faults. They see the delights but not the anxieties of a matrimonial life. But when the fountains of their imagined bliss are broken up, then follows satiety and disgust. At first, they used every effort to create an impression in their favour; now, they stand before each other without attempting to conceal a single imperfection. Their expectations are mutually deceived. Their bad qualities, hitherto veiled by artifice, now become more glaring and odious. Their fancied pleasures, have given place to indifference. They accuse each other of deception, when at the same time, they foolishly deceived themselves. Reproaches ensue, which terminate in gainsaying, obstinacy and aversion.

There are others who engage in matrimony with motives of a more studied and less imperious character. They think only of wealth or family distinction, and not the vices or virtues, by which their long journey through life is to be made painful or agreeable. Their union is consummated. Their avarice has not been disappointed in its aim; their ambition for ancestral honors has been gratified. But all the wealth of the world will avail but little, when existence

is rendered intolerable, or life a burthen. Proud or titled connexions, cannot atone for the sufferings of an anguished heart, which can only terminate with public ignominy or death.

Riches are at all times desirable, yet there is no happiness more enviable than that of the poor man, who has gained nothing at the altar but a pure and devoted heart. Is a tear of sorrow and despair the less agonizing, because it is shed in a palace? Is not wealth compared with a tranquil mind, a paltry; a worthless bauble? Or can reputation or splendor, heal the wounds of a lacerated and bleeding heart?

A discordant, matrimonial life, is perhaps, the most deplorable of all others. The remedy which we would choose in other situations, is denied us in this. Nothing but death can break the shackles that bind us to the object of our hatred. Each day brings with it some new grievance or chagrin, and one avoids the other as they would a leprosy.

These evils, however, are not always attributable to an imprudent choice of consorts. They may have been fitted to render each other happy, had they not permitted themselves to grow careless and indifferent, or give way to some trifling reser^{ment}ment, which, indeed, the eye of a stranger may not discern, but which is ultimately destructive of family peace.

If domestic happiness is a desirable object, let it be the first endeavour of a man and wife, to divest themselves of every trait of character, which may be displeasing to each other. The husband will not require that perfection in his wife which he does not possess himself. He will not con-

demn her for a fault, of which he himself is guilty. Nor will she accuse him of always being in the wrong, but acknowledge that she is sometimes in error also. If she is not loved by her husband, she will not censure him for a want of affection, but conclude that she has not taken sufficient pains to make herself amiable and agreeable in his presence.

To preserve peace and harmony in matrimonial life, we must adorn ourselves with all those social and engaging virtues, which never fail to make an agreeable impression. A certain degree of reserve and modesty, is indispensibly requisite. Without these we would soon become objects of disgust. We should always be complaisant in our words and actions, and even though it may be feigned in the first instance, yet, with a little exertion, it will eventually settle into a habit. Love and respect cannot be enforced; they must be the voluntary offerings of the heart. Wouldest thou possess either? then render thyself worthy of them.

The husband and wife should always avoid negligence of conduct towards each other. They may be heedless in their intercourse with strangers, but it will not be productive of the same evil consequences. To be beloved by those with whom we are constantly associated, we must use our constant endeavours to please. Rough or indelicate expressions, should never for a moment be tolerated. It is impossible to wipe them away from the recollection; consequently they become a source of misery.

The happiness of a matrimonial life is increased, where consorts make it an inviolable rule always to manifest a

mutual respect for each other ; and even though they may sometimes differ in their opinions, never to give way to petulance or ill-will. Even feigned anger in the married life, is not only in the highest degree censurable, but oftentimes dangerous.

One of the most salutary laws of the connubial state, is, that the husband and wife shut out, even from their bosom-friends, all knowledge, whatever, of their own private affairs. There must be an entire openness of heart ; an unquestioned sincerity, of all that relates to them as consorts or parents. The first secret which one conceals from the other, will prove the inevitable destruction of mutual confidence. A single falsehood, will create suspicion for years. He who deceives others, is fearful that they will also practice deception. Those who have been once deluded, can never entirely rid themselves of distrust. This, too, affords an opportunity for tattlers, or pretended friends to excite suspicion and jealousy. There can be no greater offence in the married state than that of perfidy. The adulterer is an aversion to all good men ; he is a perjured, blasphemous wretch, who recklessly violates the oath which he solemnly plighted in the presence of his God. We need not recount the anguish, the ignominy, nor the maddening tortures which flows from a crime like this. They can be understood. Neither should consorts be suspected, even of impure thoughts or inclinations. Therefore they must not regard others with undue courtesy or attention, lest unpleasant feelings might be the result, and the sanctity of the heart forever profaned. Hear the words of Christ : “ whosoever

looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

There is many a worthy husband, who, by his imprudence, caprice, or a spirit of contradiction, has become the destroyer of his own domestic happiness. By some childish indulgence; trifling unkindness; or unnecessary exercise of his authority, the affections of his wife are often chilled or alienated. Then, he foolishly makes a sacrifice of his peace and tranquillity for life. Only one remedy remains; and that is—**LOVE**. This, alone, can create reciprocal confidence and esteem, or look with indulgence upon the faults of others, and choose a fitting time for their correction. A proper degree of self love, will induce us to throw aside our weaknesses, and adopt new virtues in their stead; to respect the world, and be contented with the enjoyment of life.

Love and religion hallows the bonds of matrimony. The husband and wife, who are under their influence, will sink at last, with the same hope into the arms of death. They behold the same eternity prepared for their reception; they offer up the same prayers to the father of the universe.

UNMARRIED LIFE.

First Reflection.

In the dawn of christianity, many of the disciples of Christ were actuated by a holy zeal to refrain from matrimony, for the sake of disseminating the word of God more generally among the people. The apostles had many difficulties to encounter, and to this may be attributed their advice, so frequently given to those who were engaged in the work of the Lord, to remain unmarried. Paul writes to his Corinthian friends : “ I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord.” But in succeeding ages these words were misunderstood. Here and there fanatics affected to believe that matrimony was almost a sin. Men and women from a mistaken zeal, withdrew to cells and cloisters, to devote their lives to prayer and spiritual reflections. However strong may have been their faith—however noble their intentions ; still their self-denial was foolish and unnecessary. Neither Christ nor his disciples went into the desert ; but remained in the throng and crowd of the world, so as to add to the happiness of mankind.

Celibacy at the present day, is no uncommon thing ; but it is owing to other reasons than those which governed the

apostles. It does not arise from a zeal for religion, but from causes of a more melancholy character, which are too important to remain unnoticed. It is not unusual to see young men and women consigned by their unfeeling parents to a solitary cloister; not that they believe such sacrifices will make them more acceptable in the sight of heaven, but to provide for younger sons and daughters, who cannot hope for a rich inheritance, or even a decent livelihood*. What a profanation of religion; when it is used for such vile and mercenary purposes. Many salutary laws however, have been wisely instituted, by which these evils have in some measure, been diminished.

Another very glaring error, arising from a mistaken view of religion, which prevails in different countries at the present day, is, contrary to the doctrine of Christ and his disciples, a belief that matrimony should not be tolerated between persons of different confessions of faith. Why should such unjustifiable prejudice interpose between hearts that feel as if they were created for each other? Why should there continue to be so much ignorance of the truths of God, when not even a village is without a teacher of his law.

“Of a truth,” says the apostle Peter, “I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted

* We need scarcely inform the intelligent reader, that the laws regulating the descent of property in Germany, are much the same as those of other governments whose features are essentially aristocratic.

of him." Paul has spoken still more explicitly upon this subject. "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and if she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? But as God hath distributed to every man; as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk: and so ordain I in all churches."

Thus spake the apostles nearly two thousand years ago: Yet, notwithstanding, many professing christians still insist upon what they term the impropriety; nay, the crime of intermarriages between persons of a different belief. Can there be more than one true and heartfelt religion? Did not the same Christ suffer for us all? Then, where is the iniquity of wedlock between those who acknowledge the same God, and the same Saviour, although they may worship them in a different manner? Such prohibitions are at variance with the spirit of christianity; they are the relics of an infatuation, which characterized a dark and barbarous age. Therefore have the laws very properly abolished all such ecclesiastical rules and regulations. Still

it is very difficult to root out prejudice from the minds of an ignorant people.

But matrimony has a still greater enemy in the avowed skepticism that is so prevalent throughout the country. As a consequence of this disbelief of the divine word, we see the people departing from their original simplicity, and growing more and more studied and artificial in their manners; and also, the introduction of luxury and the creation of innumerable wants. Many an honest man, by attending to the suggestions of his ridiculous vanity and pride, is rendered unable by his exertions, to support even himself, let alone a wife or children. In vain is he urged by reason, religion and experience, to be contented with little. The fetters of custom cannot be broken; and the follies and conceits of the age, usurp the place of common wisdom and prudence. Men degenerate into the most abject slaves, in striving to amass wealth, which they are sometimes willing to acknowledge will not prove to them a source of happiness. And not unfrequently, for the sake of paying their tribute at the imperious shrine of fashion, they become guilty of dishonesty and fraud.

The frivolous education of daughters is far from being favourable, either to the increase of marriages, or domestic peace. Parents squander their money to obtain an apparent distinction, which they cannot long maintain. Out of an unpardonable vanity, one family endeavours to rival another in grandeur, to the manifest destruction of both. By this extravagance, a daughter is deprived of those endowments, which alone, could render her a worthy and

deserving wife. She is neglected, forgotten ; and all this she cannot but attribute to the reprehensible conduct of her parents. There is also another error which often attends their bringing up. They are prepared to occupy a station in life, which they cannot reasonably expect ever to attain. When they are disappointed in their hopes, they have recourse to every little artifice and trivial accomplishment within their reach, to effect their design. They dress gaily, dance elegantly, and are proficient in music ; they can also recite poetry, and talk about the fashionable novels of the day ; all of which but illy accords with their indifferent circumstances. They compose the number of those who are not suited for the realities of life. Their constant perusal of fictitious narratives, or wild and improbable legends, have filled their imaginations with extravagant phantoms—destroyed all delicacy of feeling—changed the natural gush of tenderness and sensibility into a silly affectation. Their heart is poisoned—their conscience polluted—their understanding unenlightened—and the simple grace and elegance of manner, turned into frigid coquetry. What sober thinking man would pledge his hand to an object of such moral deformity ? Or, should he be so unfortunate, upon what foundation does he expect to build up his domestic peace ?

This method of educating a daughter, has a pernicious influence upon the opposite sex. A man rejects all notions of a matrimonial life, because he perceives that he is not in a situation to gratify the excessive vanity of a female, with whom, otherwise, he believes he might be happy.

He scatters his money in sensual pursuits, because his affections are not likely to be centered in a wife or children. His greatest familiarity is with outcast and abandoned women. He ruins the virtue of an innocent female and calls it a triumph. He sinks down at last, a self-immolated victim of his own vices: or if he should for a time escape the abyss into which he is fast precipitating, and remain a little longer in the world, with ruined health and a shattered constitution; it is to heap curses upon those whom he may have been instrumental in consigning to ignominy. Perhaps, in the evening of his days, he may blindly take upon himself the responsibilities of a husband, and if so, with what horror and disgust he must observe his own infected and poisoned blood, creeping through the veins of a prematurely contaminated offspring. Away with such unhallowed wretches from society. Why should my devotions be sullied with their memory?

Let us not, however, censure with too much severity, the man who seemingly prefers an unmarried life, without, in the first place, fully comprehending his motives. Perhaps he is fearful of bringing poverty and distress upon a virtuous and amiable wife; perhaps it requires all his exertions for the support of indigent parents, or for some other equally laudable purpose. The ardor of his youth may have been chilled by misfortune—his affections blighted by the fickleness of some unworthy object. We cannot judge of the thousand causes which may govern his conduct.

Thou who art without the cares of a family, who art without a wife or children to claim thy attention, shouldst

devote thyself more exclusively to the common good of thy fellow beings—the welfare of thy country, or the furtherance of scientific knowledge. Such were the objects of the learned men of by-gone ages, who remained unmarried. Let the happiness of the whole human family, in imitation of them, be unto thee as a fondly cherished bride. Divest thyself of the immoralities that too often accompany a single life. Secure to thyself the esteem of all with whom thou art connected; render thyself worthy of the praise and gratitude of the poor, and thou wilt fulfil thy high calling and verify the words of the apostle, “he that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord.”

UNMARRIED LIFE.

Second Reflection.

Many christians in former times, were obliged to flee to the deserts, on account of the cruel persecutions of the heathens; while others voluntarily denied themselves all intercourse with men, and withdrew to monasteries in order as they supposed, to devote themselves more exclusively to God. Many women from similar motives followed their example, until eventually, a monastic life was considered the most sacred of all others. The country was filled with cloisters; and their inmates, who pretended to renounce the pleasures of the world, and solemnly promised to live in the greatest poverty and abstinence, were now rioting in all the pomp and splendor that wealth could procure. Here too, instead of harmony and love, was enmity, injustice, and oftentimes cruelty.

The females, who were thus cut off from society, were more particularly deserving of sympathy. They were frequently the unwilling sacrifices of the cupidity of their parents. They were persuaded or compelled to seal the irrevocable vow, at an age when they had but a limited knowledge of the world; or when they were unable to comprehend the importance of the step, which could never be retraced. They found, alas! when repentance was too late, that they had been infamously deceived. Nature and ex-

perience taught them that they were not fitted for such uninterrupted seclusion. But they complained in vain—their sighs and lamentations were unheard. They mourned constantly over their hapless condition, and thus their lives passed away joyless and sorrowful.

The wise regulations of the Creator for the continuation of the human race, has, and will ever remain the same. The impulses which we have thus received—which have been rooted and stamped in our nature, can never be annihilated. We may disobey them, but it will not be without the certainty of punishment.

But to return to our subject. Women generally, are better suited for domestic happiness; and for the performance of social and tender duties. To make themselves and others happy, seems to be their chief delight. There are many, however, who have denied themselves this opportunity. They die, lonely and neglected. They either preferred the unmarried state; or vainly forfeited the respect of those men, who, under other circumstances, would have been willing to become their companions for life. In the latter instance we may perceive the evil effects arising from the defective education of females, which prevails in our principal towns and cities. And how just are the complaints of this degeneracy by reflecting and sober thinking men, who would select a prudent, faithful and economical wife, instead of one who is a worshiper at the shrine of fashion, delighting to exhibit herself to the gaze of a stupid but admiring crowd; one who has collected her wisdom and experience solely from the dreamings of poets and romancers; one who prefers splendor to simplicity, or self adoration to ami-

ability or modesty ; one whose ideas of dignity and propriety are such, that she would consider the performance of her household duties as something too vulgar and contemptible to be even thought of. Well may it be said that there are many, who, by the faults they have acquired, either by long habit, or the dangerous instruction of their parents, have rendered themselves unworthy and unsuitable for that station which it should be their pride to become the ornament.

A man, on the contrary, whatever may be his situation in life, can always be useful. He will find something to engage his attention, either in the service of his country, or some domestic or scientific pursuit. Even though he should remain unmarried, he has numberless chances of making himself useful in the world, by a proper use of the capacities and powers which his creator has allotted to him ; so that he may finally exult in the glory of his career, notwithstanding he has no wife or children to comfort him. He feels that he has not lived in vain upon earth. Far different is it with woman. There are not so many objects to call forth her zeal and activity. If she remains unmarried, her services are rendered for the benefit of some other family—services that would be in reality a pleasure rather than a pain, if they were intended to cheer and exhilarate a family of her own ; but as it is, no husband is gladdened after the toils of the day are over—no children are nourished to be unto her a support in her age and infirmity.

From this source arise many evils which are often characteristic of unmarried females. The want of some engrossing pursuit or object to employ their minds, causes

them to seek amusement or gratification in things, which in other situations, they would think unworthy of their characters. They grow talkative, restless and ill-humoured, and are unusually severe in their remarks upon those of their sex who have been more fortunate than themselves. They still expect the flattery with which they were greeted in the bloom of youth. By their untimely coquetry, they make themselves ridiculous and disgusting. Others, who may avoid these errors, we see amusing themselves with some bigoted or fanciful theory of religion. They are regular in their attendance at church ; but in their general intercourse with society, they thoughtlessly wound the feelings of others, and break through the restrictions that are imposed by decency and sobriety. These, however, are the errors of an uneducated mind, rather than any natural wickedness of heart, and consequently are the more pardonable. They have sought after contentment, and endeavoured to reconcile themselves with their present condition, but in this they have been disappointed. They are sufficiently punished by the mockery of the unthinking. But you, who look upon them with a sneer, should not forget that you are committing a crime of still greater magnitude. Not that their faults should pass unnoticed, nor that you should not make them sensible of their defects ; but in doing this, you run into an error yourself, by forgetting the respect that is due to them in all cases, and under all circumstances.

Why will you increase the misery of her who has renounced the happiness of a matrimonial life ? Are you qualified to judge of her motives ? Do you know what disgust she may have felt for the deceitfulness of man ? Were you

a witness of her agony—her burning tears—the grief that secretly devoured her, when the spell of her affections were broken? when the vows of love proved a deceiving and lying oracle? when the joys of life fled quickly away, and existence became to her a curse—a torment? And yet, you despise her—you, who do not possess an atom of her nobleness of soul—you, whose passions, whose lusts, are all unrestrained. As she advances in years, her friends, one by one, desert her—friends, who in her youth, manifested the warmest attachment. But there are those by whom she will not be forsaken—those who are imbued with the spirit and love of a true christian. It should now become her especial care to attend faithfully to the requisitions of God. “The unmarried woman,” says the apostle, “careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.” The sphere in which the former now moves is more circumscribed; she does not mingle so much with the world; therefore she should feel more deeply concerned about the truths of religion; not alone by habitual praying and pious exercises, which may be only an outward demonstration of her devotion—but rather by kind, charitable and humane actions, whereby those will be benefited who may require her assistance. Let her avoid every thing that might create a dislike for her among men. Only she who knows how to obtain universal respect and esteem can have the same opportunity of doing good. Then it is essential to avoid the imprudence of those who injure themselves by light and trivial conduct; who express their hatred on every occa-

sion of the opposite sex ; who surrender themselves to the gaieties and dissipations of life ; and become notorious for their bigotry and prejudice, as if there was nothing else, more worthy, to engage their attention.

The unmarried female, who is advanced in years, if she would lead an exemplary life, will care only for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and mind. And in order to this, she will throw aside every foible. She will not be extravagant in her dress, nor propagate malicious or slanderous reports of others. She will be meek in spirit, and like the poor widow, cheerfully cast her mite into the treasury. As far as her circumstances will permit, she will be charitable to the poor, without ostentation. The happiness of others will be her greatest care and concern. She will be as a guardian angel to the young and inexperienced, whose love and confidence she has obtained, and who may profit by her instructions. She will advise, comfort, assist, and in every way contribute to the welfare of her friends, and thus she will be prepared to enter into the joys of her Lord.

OLD AGE.

A serene, virtuous old age, is the ultimate desire of every heart. For the attainment of this are all our cares and anxieties. Behold, at last, the old and venerable man, who is resting after the toils of a wearisome life. He is like a reaper in the evening, who leans upon his sheaf, and surveys the wide field in which he has been pleasantly engaged. His bodily strength is worn away ; but still his wisdom and experience is of infinite value. His children surround him with delight. When they were helpless he supported them. Now they are busy in endeavouring to lessen his troubles, whatever they may be, and to reward him for his parental kindness. The blooming girl and high-minded youth may be objects of admiration ; but the silvery locks of the old and decrepit man will inspire a feeling of reverence that was before a stranger to our bosoms. To him, however humble, kings and princes have delighted to do honor. Every where he receives a certain degree of respect ; a deference which seems to be only due to one of his years.

The aged man looks back through the vista of time which he has passed, as upon a varied and almost unremembered dream. He sees the storms which he buffeted in his manhood ; and beyond them, the pleasing delights of his earlier years. He forgets not the friends or associates of

his youth, who now are slumbering in the quiet grave. Like them his race will soon be at an end. Eternity seems to be opening at his feet. The morning of his existence, with all its glories, has passed away; the sun of life has set, and every bright and radiant hue is fading into a dim and shadowy light, which darkness will soon envelope. The dawn of an immortality bursts upon his view, and he looks forward with ineffable rapture to the appointed time, when his ransomed spirit will be numbered with the just made perfect.

Every period of life has its joys. The burthen of years, some have said, is wearisome and oppressive. To him who is wicked and debased, it may be so; but far otherwise to the christian. We have seen the father, old and infirm, happy in the embrace of his children, even in the depth of poverty. We too have seen the noble and wealthy in all their splendor and magnificence, who were full of misery and despair. Old age says one, is weak and imbecile. It is true, that the body may be worn out with the labor of years; but there is an increase of strength and power imparted to the mind. The fire and the impetuosity of youth, enervates the spirit more than all other causes combined. The old as well as the young, may be dull, spiritless and ill-humoured; but it is entirely their own fault. The former may be gloomy, quarrelsome, distrustful and avaricious; but these are the vicious inclinations and habits of early life, which have been encouraged and matured in after years.

Men who are dissatisfied with their lot in the commence-

ment of their career—men who suffer themselves to be led away with vanity and pride, will in old age, be invariably peevish and fretful. If they have not accustomed themselves to look with reverence upon those who are bowed down with the weight of years; if they have not made it their study to promote the happiness of their fellow beings, they will finally experience the same want of attention and solicitude themselves.

It is a foolish but common belief, that old age, be it ever so virtuous or honorable, is rendered miserable from a constant apprehension of death, which necessarily must be near at hand. Thus, in our short-sighted wisdom, we abuse the goodness and providence of God. How few are the number who pass the meridian of life. In the midst of all their hopes and expectations, they are suddenly cut off. The man of fourscore may outlive them all. Then we are all subject to the same doubt—the same uncertainty.

Why shouldst thou believe that the hope of a long life will increase the happiness of thy youth? Here the wisdom of God is eminently displayed. He has diffused peace and tranquility in the minds of the aged. Between them and the grave he has interposed a veil, so that they can only contemplate a life of eternal glory. As their perceptions are weakened, they think less of the things of the earth. Their strength passes imperceptibly away; they grow more and more feeble; and at last their existence is terminated, like the rays of a dim and expiring lamp. They are gone; but they felt not the terror—the agony, which

startled them so fearfully in the days of their infancy or manhood. They would rather exclaim, with Simeon of old : “ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.” Therefore, thou shouldst love and venerate those who are sunken in years ; and forget not the divine command : “ Thou shall rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man.” They have underwent severe toil—they have performed many good actions ; and now they deserve comfort and rest. Be then to them kind, indulgent and forbearing. They will remain with us but a short time : and who is so cruel as to grieve them in the last moments of their existence ? Who is so destitute of feeling as not to soothe their sorrows or lighten the burthen of their afflictions ?

Our veneration for old age is still holier and more praiseworthy when it is manifested for relations or parents. We thereby render the gratitude which we owe ; we give back the love which we have already received. He who refuses the respect which is due to aged parents, or despises them now they can no longer be of any service to him, is a monster in human shape, and justly the abhorrence of mankind.

Do not despise the aged ; for one day thou mayest grow feeble thyself, and thy own locks be silvered with the touch of time. Then it will be like balm to thy spirit to receive that kindness and attention which thou hast shown to others. It will console thee to be a recipient of the indulgences of thy children. It will be to thee an inexpressible delight to find that they have followed thy good

example, and thought it worthy of imitation. And you, aged and beloved christians—who may feel a consciousness of the wisdom and piety which you have acquired in your trials and difficulties through life—you should furnish to the young and rising generation, an evidence of your resignation and fortitude in every calamity. You must be unto them advisers and friends. But do not deny them the little joys and pastimes to which their youth entitle them. Weary them not with contrasts between the present and former times; nor deprecate the want of morality in one, and extol the virtues of the other. Remember that society may undergo many changes without always being for the worse. Do not think, because you have lost all taste for amusement, that they must necessarily partake of a similar disposition. Censure them not too severely for every trivial offence; but make allowance for their thoughtlessness and inexperience. Thus, you will obtain their confidence and affection, and when you are summoned to the enjoyment of unmingled happiness beyond the grave, they will separate from you with tears; their prayers will accompany you to the throne of the Eternal; and you will still continue to live in their memories.

Almighty Father! to me thy will is unknown. I cannot tell when it may please thee to call me away; whether in the strength of my years, or not until I am trembling with the infirmities of age. Always will I be prepared; and if my life should be prolonged, I will endeavour to

perfect myself in holiness, and become more worthy of a better world.

My latest breath shall glorify thy name; and though my body should loose its strength, my soul will increase in energy and power.

THE ART OF REACHING AN OLD AGE.

First Reflection.

There are but few men who do not wish to live to an old age. To be sure, there are some exceptions, but even these, although they apparently evince but little fear of death,—are willing to defer the moment of dissolution to the latest possible period. When they grow old, they will not acknowledge their gradual decay, and often fancy that they still possess the strength and ardor of youth.

The love of life is a primary law of our nature; and operates upon all created beings the same. There are, however, some instances to the contrary; men who grow weary of existence from various causes; and suffer their minds to become disordered and confused in a thousand different ways;—some through despair and fanaticism; others on account of bodily infirmities, or disappointment in the anticipation of renown; some one thing, and some another; but all attributable to a species of mental delirium. Even a deliberate and long premeditated suicide has its origin in a diseased and phrenzied brain.

In all ages there has been many wise maxims in relation to the art of prolonging life. The prevailing and engrossing desire to keep death as far in the distance as possible, has led men into the most absurd and ridiculous habits.

That simple and invaluable precept—to be temperate in all things, they entirely overlook, and have recourse to some secret and infallible nostrum, that probably, has acquired a reputation for the certain cure of every malady peculiar to the human race. But all precautions are useless that are not in conformity with the plain and unerring dictates of nature and common sense. And even then we have no certainty of realizing our hopes; although we need not diminish them by intemperance and debauchery. Man, like a plant, has a certain duration allotted to him, beyond which he can never pass; and if he would not prematurely decay, he must avoid all excesses in early life.

Why do we desire so eagerly to prolong our existence? Is it that we believe there is any contentment or happiness in old age? Look at the men who are stricken in years, and observe how they struggle with their infirmities; how they have fallen a burthen to themselves and others. Their sense of enjoyment is deadened, and the world has no longer for them any charms. In what does their pleasures consist? They love to recount the delights of their youth, and think that then every thing was infinitely better than at present. They are gloomy and desponding; and there is nothing which does not appear to them displeasing or irksome. There may be some of a contrary disposition; but it is seldom that we find old persons possessing that warmth of feeling, that generous love, or that indulgence to the faults of others which were heretofore peculiar to them. All this, however, is entirely owing to their own neglect. They were anxious to lengthen their

years, but thought not of preparing themselves for cheerfulness and tranquility. He, therefore, who wishes to live long, should faithfully consider how he may live happy. In the wane of life, we are deprived of so many sources of joy that sparkled and shed a lustre upon our youth, that we must devise some other means, whereby the equilibrium of our happiness can be preserved. Without this our old age would only be a scene of constant trouble and vexation.

“Happy is the man;” says Solomon, “that findeth wisdom. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” But such wisdom is only to be derived from pure and undefiled religion—religion that purifies the soul, and takes away the terrors of death—religion that makes us contented here, and inspires us with the hope of a glorious existence hereafter.

Should I be permitted to reach an old age, it will be my own fault if I am unhappy. I will not desire one, without endeavouring to avoid the other. To the first, therefore, all my efforts shall tend, nor can I begin my preparations too soon. We sow in the spring what we expect to harvest in the autumn. We will never want if we are frugal in the days of plenty.

Contentment in old age, depends not upon the mind alone, but also upon the proper management and condition of the body. It is the foundation upon which rises the structure of human happiness. The preservation of our

health, therefore, should be one of our chief concerns. Without it, life is at best burthensome, and old age intolerable. And to accomplish this, we must avoid all excesses in our early years. But in relation to this we can offer no definite rules. The occupations of men are different, and what would be adapted to the temperament of one, might be highly injurious to another. What, for one, is too little, would probably be for the other too much. Then we should not blindly pursue the same beaten track of others, under the belief that what is not hurtful to them cannot be injurious to us. We should examine ourselves with scrupulous attention. Every thing that produces uneasiness, or debilitation, is pernicious to our health, and should be immediately discarded.

We do not always feel the evil effects of our excesses upon the instant. Years will sometimes elapse before they are fully developed; and, perhaps, long after we have entirely forgotten the causes from which they proceed. The only means of escaping them, is, in all cases, to contribute only to our natural wants. Every one, therefore, should form a correct estimate of his constitutional powers, and whatever he may find defective, he should apply himself sedulously to remedy. A disease, though trivial in its nature, should not be neglected because it does not prove troublesome at the present moment. The merest trifle, if unattended to, may finally terminate in a destructive malady.

Our habits of life must be simple and uniform. This is indispensibly requisite to health and longevity. Excessive

eating and drinking will always be found an infallible mode to shorten existence. Nothing further is required to poison the body, than the epicurean's feast. He, alas! can seldom boast, even of good health; much less, of long life. Such men blindly and wilfully rush upon their own destruction.

Idlers, and those accustomed to luxury, never live to a great age. Too much labor without a proportional degree of rest, is equally pernicious. Those of sedentary employments should exercise daily in the open air. The atmosphere of a room will soon become impure by respiration, and consequently very unwholesome, unless properly ventilated.

Cleanliness too, is not only a great ornament, but absolutely essential to our health. Therefore did Moses and other wise men of old, enjoin and recommend frequent ablutions of the body. Occasional bathing—temperance in eating and drinking—enjoyment of pure air—and a proper proportion of activity and rest; these are the surest auxiliaries to long life.

If we would enjoy a cheerful mind, we must be contented, and learn to accumulate enough in manhood, to support us in after years. The fear of falling a burthen to others in old age, is ruinous to our peace and tranquility. Let there be no cause for such a disaster. Then we shall not be disturbed by a bitter anticipation of it. Sorrows in early life, produce premature exhaustion both of mind and body.

On every side I behold men conspiring against their own lives, by indulging in dissolute habits. Here is a youth,

offering up his health, a willing sacrifice, upon the altar of sensuality ; there another, whose energies are unconsciously blasted by the destroying banquet, or whose nerves are shattered by the effects of ardent and corroding drinks. What a multitude of persons are anxious for long life, and yet, cut it short by their own imprudence. How few of such who ever realize their wishes ; and if so, what infirmities are they obliged to endure.

THE ART OF REACHING AN OLD AGE.

Second Reflection.

We may preserve our health, and accumulate riches; but these alone, will not insure us happiness, nor an old age. A still more difficult task, is to control or subdue our evil passions, which consumes unobserved, our strength and vigor. "A merry heart," exclaims Solomon, "doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones."

If you would enjoy a smooth and tranquil existence, you must avoid all violent outbreakings of your temper. Nothing is more injurious. Grief, sorrow, fear, terror, or excess of joy, are all alike destructive to health. Consequently, persons of a cold, phlegmatic temperament, are the most likely to be long lived. Let nothing, therefore, in any circumstance whatever, disturb the serenity of your mind. Give not way to violent or contending emotions. Can your misfortunes be amended by immoderate grief or anger? It may be difficult to restrain your feelings; but a resolute determination will enable you to remove that which may have appeared impossible.

This self-dominion we must commence at an early age. Each neglected day makes the struggle more difficult. We can begin the exercise in the pursuance of our daily avo-

cations. We should not forget that there is a possibility of losing every thing upon which we may place our affections here below. By such a preparation, the loss does not appear so intolerable. An unexpected misfortune is always the greatest. If any unpleasant occurrence should excite our petulance, let us consider whether it would be prudent or necessary to sacrifice our good humour, even for a moment. If we are called upon to express our disapprobation of the conduct of an individual who may in some way or other be connected with us, we should do it without too much irritability. There are many, who, from a singular ambition of giving themselves an air of importance in the eyes of the world, are loud, boisterous and vehement, upon every occasion. What in the beginning was only artificial, becomes at length, a permanent custom. There are others, who suffer their minds to become effeminate; who indulge every idle humor; who affect to be more unhappy than they really are; who constantly complain with the hope of enlisting the sympathy of their friends; who in short, seem to avoid every thing that would in the remotest degree increase their happiness. Such persons thereby prepare for themselves an early grave; or if they should approach the verge of old age, they experience little else than bitterness and sorrow.

If we would appear otherwise than we are, it should be more serene and cheerful. Show yourself at least artificially gay. In course of time, this assumed gladness will become habitually natural. Then you have triumphed over your melancholy disposition. While others in their afflictions,

lose all presence of mind, and make the evil greater than it really is, you, more prudent and reflecting, will endeavour to lessen a misfortune which you can not wholly avoid. You will also be more attentive to the future, that you may secure to yourself happiness in the evening of your days. If you have children, remember that their treatment of you in your old age, will correspond with the instructions you have given them in their youth. If you are unjust and cruel with them, the less obedience and reverence you must expect in return. Treat your friends with kindness, and if you should be in need of their assistance, they will the more cheerfully grant it to you. Conduct yourself towards your neighbors and fellow-citizens generally, as will be most likely to insure their friendship and good will. If you should expect from them in your old age something more than cold civility, then exercise benevolence and complaisancy. Do not quarrel about trifles, nor make yourself ridiculous by sneers, reproaches, or vain-boasting—nor hateful by indelicacy, obstinacy or malicious remarks. Ungrateful men may forget the kindness which you have shown them, particularly if their memory be not enlivened by frequent repetitions; but they are certain not to overlook any injury you may have done them. Wrongs of every kind are written in the memory, as upon tablets of stone, never to be effaced.

The aged man may survive many or all of his friends and acquaintances. A new generation will spring up around him. Without obtaining their friendship, he remains lonely and forsaken. This he can only accomplish

by his virtues, which do not fail to awaken confidence and respect. A social or amiable disposition will never be without admiration.

If you have collected great wealth, do not think that that alone will purchase you contentment. Perhaps your heirs, in consequence of your riches, are impatient for your death, in order that they may share your property.

When you have leisure, neglect not the treasures of your mind, which will make your life the more valuable. Be industrious, and give yourself often to reflection. Increase your knowledge by intercourse with intelligent people, or by the perusal of rational and instructive books. An enlightened mind is never unoccupied—it is never without fellowship—it holds communion with the whole universe. What is gathered in youth, will be in old age a banquet. Do not complain that your business or profession gave you no time for improvement. You have had your idle moments. You have wasted many evenings in gay assemblies or foolish recreations. You should learn, therefore, to be a miser of your time, and devote it more especially to intellectual pursuits.

A healthy and vigorous body ; moderate riches that will exempt us from want ; obedient and well educated children ; friends upon whom we can always depend ; an ever cheerful temper ; a pure heart and a refined understanding ; these are the requisites to happiness in old age, without which, life on no account is desirable.

Religion, to every one, is the surest and safest guide. It gives us courage to encounter and overcome the heaviest

misfortunes. It warns us against idleness and effeminacy. It teaches us to feel a spirit of universal benevolence. It imparts to us a consolation in the hour of peril, which man cannot give. It keeps us humble in our prosperity, because it shows us the inconstancy of earthly things. The truly pious old man, is a blessed and enviable being.

Oh, God! thou art our only strength and reliance. Aid us with thy holy spirit, that we may not be indifferent to our own welfare—that we may control our evil propensities—that we may omit no opportunity of increasing our wisdom; for he who finds it, is promised long life on one hand, and wealth and honor on the other.

THE FARMER.

It has been often repeated that few men are satisfied with their situation in life. They long after that of another, because they think it is preferable to their own. The soldier in his warlike profession, envies the merchant or mechanic who quietly pursue their peaceful occupations. The latter, also, think that there is no happiness so complete as that of the rich, who live in abundance and receive the homage and praise of the multitude. But even kings groan beneath the burthens which their situation imposes; they are scarcely ever relieved from the misery occasioned by the enmity, and sometimes perfidy of their subjects and advisers—misery of which the lower classes can know nothing about. The deference which is paid to them, is often a cold and heartless ceremony. The beggar, to them, wears an aspect of contentment, which they in vain seek to possess. Thus it is with nearly all men. We must learn therefore, that it is not the peculiar business we follow; nor the extent or limitation of our possessions; nor the palace or cottage in which we reside; nor the importance with which we invest ourselves in the presence of others, that can bring to us peace or contentedness; but the proper discipline of the heart that is to influence our temporal happiness.

A farmer's life, to the citizen, appears one of felicity. The

occasional rambles of the latter into the country fill him with a romantic idea of its enjoyments. To till the ground, though laborious, is to him evidently one of the greatest pleasures. In some respects he is not mistaken. We find indeed, but very few who are not fond of cultivating a garden, or small parcel of ground—to scatter seeds and flowers, and to watch them in their growth. No labour is more conducive to health. It counteracts the evil effects which accrue to those who are confined by a sedentary life. The farmer, when he has finished his day's labour, rests cheerful and happy. The bread which he has earned by the sweat of his brow, is to him far sweeter than the greatest delicacy is to the palate of the rich. His manner of life is simple—he has but few cares to distract his attention. A thousand things that may disturb the tranquility of others, he knows nothing about.

The life of the husbandman, notwithstanding, has its anxieties and troubles. Disease may kill his flocks, or unfavorable weather may destroy his industry for a whole year. His profits are comparatively small, and a loss that would be trifling to many, is very serious to him. From this arises many domestic sorrows. An accumulation of debts and taxes, which his moderate income will not enable him to discharge, become at length, almost insupportable. In short, the farmer, whose lot oftentimes appears so enviable, suffers the same uneasiness, the same privations, as the prince and philosopher, or the merchant and mechanic. The advantages which he may be allowed to possess, are not in consequence of his pursuing the original,

and as some contend, the most useful occupation of man—for in social life, all are equally dependent upon each other—but because he is more closely assimilated to nature, and does not accustom himself to as many unreal wants. He knows but little of the glitter and trappings of the fashionable world; but little of the petty ambition which awakens such envy and jealousy; but little of the restraint that is imposed by stiff and artificial rules of courtesy; but little of the gilded pleasures which poison and destroy the soul. He quits not the substance to catch at the shadow. He remains satisfied so long as his efforts will afford him a competency, together with uninterrupted health.

While mankind, in the early part of the world, were chiefly confined to agricultural pursuits, they seemed to be more intimately associated with the Deity. With the building of towns, all patriarchal wisdom and simplicity was in a manner lost. Less attention was paid to those things that were the most solemn and important. At length we find royalty itself retreating to the solitude of a country life in search of happiness. Men became more canting and hypocritical. They learned to praise where they should censure; to decorate their persons without attending to their health; to increase the splendor of their houses, without regarding the welfare of its inmates; to gather money, but not to enjoy it; to seek for titles and honorary distinction, but not to reflect that honesty is the most praiseworthy of them all.

It is to be regretted that the farmer is often incapable of appreciating the advantages to be derived from his situation. Ignorance, brutality and superstition, too often blunt the

finer feelings of his nature ; eating and drinking to excess is perhaps the height of his pleasures ; and when he has earned his bread, he feels no desire for the improvement and understanding of his heart. Hear the words of the inspired volume : “ Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field ; and afterwards build thy house.” Man lives not alone for his food and clothing. He who performs no more than this, overlooks the glorious designs of his Creator, and places himself on a level with the brute. The meanest peasant has the same hope of immortality, as the most powerful potentate of the earth. The glittering palace and the beggar’s hovel, are regarded without distinction by the equal eye of God. Therefore, prepare thy work without, and then administer to thy mental wants, that thy mind may become more vigorous and active.

We are not to reproach the farmer for his ignorance, so much as the wilful neglect of those who assume the duties of monitors, without evincing the least solicitude for the social or moral welfare of the former ; and at the same time, in their exceeding philanthropy, look upon his insensibility as a result to be expected from the natural order of things. Observe those men who control the affairs of the government. They consider the husbandman as a public beast of burthen ; they promote his welfare that they may reinforce their armies, or wring from him a greater amount of taxes. Public schools are the last things they would think of establishing. The education of youth throughout the country, gives them but little trouble ; they do not think it worth while to arouse a spirit of emulation, by promised donations or legislative encouragement ; while large premiums are offered

for the superior growth of cattle; which, indeed, they make a principal and every day business.

Such is the power of custom and prejudice, that people often persuade themselves that education would make the farmer discontented with his lot; that any knowledge, apart from his avocations, would be deleterious in its effects; that learning, of right, should not belong to him who is a breaker and tiller of the earth. But will any one pretend that such inequalities—such gross ignorance—such a perversion of the intellectual powers, will have a tendency to make him the more industrious, economical, or obedient to the laws? On the other hand, do they not render him the worse husbandman—the more disorderly parent—a faithless and uncertain subject? That which is corrupt, can never be made an auxiliary to good. Look at the youth who has been instructed in some of our principal schools and colleges. When he has arrived at the age of manhood we find him more circumspect in business—more kind and benevolent to his fellow-citizens, and more zealous for the honor and welfare of his country.

Jesus Christ, in his sojourn upon the earth, shed abroad the light of true wisdom; not only in the palaces of the great, but also in the cottages of the poor. He exposed the errors and false conceits of the age—he exhorted every one to live in contentment—he instructed us to seek after things that are above, and not after those things that are below. If we have food and raiment, says the apostle, let us be therewith satisfied.

Wealth is not essential to godliness. The mind must

be expanded so that it can comprehend the truth of the divine word. Ignorance is the parent of every excess ; it feeds alone on brutal pleasures. Only he, whose reason and understanding has been enlightened, will be ashamed of those vicious and debauched habits that disgrace the human character ; he alone will feel a desire to avoid the pernicious effects arising from the undue gratification of his passions.

What a melancholy aspect is that of uneducated people in general. Their ideas of God are confused and indistinct ; and they understand but little of the end and aim of their existence. Children grow up under the discipline of ignorant parents ; they become tainted by their corrupt example, and confirmed in their superstitious notions. Perhaps they are occasionally sent to school, where a teacher, without learning or ability, renders his instruction for a trifling pittance, for the want of better employment. If they learn to read and write ; and, together with the acquisition of these rudiments, they become adepts in every species of vice and indecorum ; then they are considered sufficiently accomplished. On the Sabbath they are driven to church, without any attempts being made to enable them to comprehend the sermon. In this respect, however, the preacher is often culpable. He is more anxious about his salary, than the improvement of those who are entrusted to his care. Thus he suffers them to remain in their blindness, and contents himself with believing that he has performed the sacred functions allotted to him, by administering the sacrament, or pronouncing a few passion-

less prayers. People thus neglected, think only of laboring from morning till night, that they may be more opulent than their neighbours. They gratify, without reserve, their sensual and wicked inclinations. And at last, when they are overtaken by death—when they are about to be ushered into an awful eternity; then they begin to enquire for what they have lived.

Oh, how much there is for christian men to perform. Would you assist in building up the kingdom of God? Then go to the hovels of the poor, in imitation of the Messiah, and light up the spark of intelligence in their dark and bewildered minds. To clothe the naked, or to feed the hungry, is but the work of a moment; but to administer to their mental and spiritual necessities, is the scattering of a seed from which they will reap an eternal harvest. If you have wealth, unite it with that of others, that you may increase the knowledge and piety of your fellow beings. He who has snatched even one soul from ruin, has not lived in vain,

THE MECHANIC.

The Creator in his infinite goodness, has given to the beasts and birds, a covering to shield them from the storms; and furnished them with the means of self-defence. He has also endowed them with an instinct to provide for their own necessities; while man is sent helpless into the world, possessed however, of those capacities, by which he is enabled to make every thing contribute to his own peculiar benefit.

With the refinement of the human intellect, the arts and sciences increased in perfection, and became essential to the comfort and welfare of man. Mechanics therefore, are honoured in all countries, and by all people. They are in many respects, a particularly favoured and happy portion of the community. They possess neither poverty nor riches. If they cannot boast of excessive refinement, they are far removed from grovelling ignorance. We find among them, generally, the most religion, virtue, rectitude, industry, patriotism, and practical good sense. It was from among this grade of people, that Jesus Christ chose his first disciples. Here he found unaffected piety and devotion. They had not the arrogance or presumption of the higher, nor the recklessness and degeneracy of the lower classes.

The mechanic, from his being accustomed to procure a

subsistence by his own exertions, does not feel the same degree of dependance as many others. While the mutilated warrior, the banished prince, or the man who is unexpectedly deprived of his wealth, are compelled to sue for the charity of a cold and unfeeling world; he, under almost any circumstances, can find employment and thereby relieve his wants. This advantage causes his life to flow smoothly and pleasantly along. He is distinguished by a simplicity of behaviour, which imparts to him an additional value, and secures to him universal respect and approbation.

The man, who, through pride, despises his trade or profession, and is indifferent to the benefits he may reap from them is an enemy to himself. Let us, in the language of the apostle, be satisfied with food and raiment. Let us not struggle for affluence; but rather a perfection of heart. He who is displeased with one occupation, will be equally so with another, because a discontented spirit accompanies him. Such individuals sometimes fancy that they possess superior abilities, which, in their opinion, eminently qualify them for a higher station; and hence they aspire to posts of honor and emolument, without setting any limits to their ambition; when in fact they are barely capable of attending to their ordinary business.

Pious and prudent mechanics will think only of the faithful performance of their duties, and if they are gifted with a greater degree of intellect than their neighbors, they will adapt it to the improvement of their trade, or the embellishment of their domestic life. In this way they

will be certain to acquire wealth, honour and reputation; while the haughty and self-conceited are ruined by their overleaping ambition, and must remain content with the scoffs and derision of mankind. The latter, truly verify the words of the proverb: "Pride goeth before a fall, and a haughty spirit before destruction."

Throughout the country we find almost innumerable mechanics who have entirely renounced the prudence of their forefathers. As we have before remarked, they are ashamed of their calling, and aspire to something which they believe to be more respectable. They complain of the small amount of their profits, and tell us that much more was realized by their predecessors. In this we hear the language of pride, avarice and discontent. But there is a striking contrast between the past and present. Mechanics, in former times, devoted themselves entirely to their business, without wishing to become distinguished for their learning, literature or politics. He was the most respected, and enjoyed the greatest share of confidence, who was the most honest, enterprising and industrious.

In the present day it is widely different. Those who are brought up to mechanical business, too often spend their time in other pursuits, whereby they forfeit the advantages they might reasonably hope to obtain. They are anxious to grow rich, but they neglect the means by which it is to be accomplished. They forget that the first step is frugality and contentment. They are fond of splendor and luxury. When the labors of the day are at an end, they indulge in expensive recreations. To all this, they soon find that

their earnings are inadequate, and as a last resort, they practice deception, or make an exorbitant demand for their work, until they are without the confidence even of their friends. Poverty is the result; and then we hear them bitterly complaining of hard times.

The education which mechanics frequently give to their children, causes them to be discontented. Their youth is passed away without labor; their pride is gratified; there is no indulgence which they do not receive; and when they have arrived at manhood, they are displeased with every thing about them; they blindly engage in various occupations, with the expectation of suddenly reaping a fortune; but disappointment follows disappointment, until finally, they are overwhelmed in ruin. Others have their sons instructed in the higher branches of learning, believing it will better qualify them to gain a subsistence, than any mechanical business. But they do not consider that it is the integrity, perseverance, and moral firmness of the individual, which alone can control his fortune, or insure his success, without any regard to his particular profession.

Similar errors prevail in the education of daughters. They are dressed and decorated like those of the rich. They are instructed in the arts of drawing and painting, music and dancing, as if their very existence depended upon the sketching of a landscape, or their graceful movements in the ball-room. Instead of improving their minds, they are corrupted in many different ways. Thus they are prepared for misery. They have flattered themselves that their trivial accomplishments will enable them to form a

matrimonial alliance with those who are superior to them in rank and wealth; but they do not reflect that the latter have the same exalted opinion of themselves, and are also looking forward to a similar good fortune.

If you are anxious to acquire wealth, reputation, and domestic happiness in the situation in which God hath placed you, then do not despise it—but rather be ashamed of your vanity, your idleness, your unworthiness. Learn to pursue your calling with that zeal and industry that will prevent other persons from excelling you. If your Creator has given you peculiar strength and powers of mind, let it be your endeavour so to apply them, that you may be the most distinguished of all others in your occupation. Then you will not be tormented with that jealousy which is common to most mechanics, and which often leads to very melancholy results. You will have no cause for envy if you attend faithfully to the improvement of your abilities, and avoid every thing that is not essential to your welfare. Only in this way can you accumulate riches. Vain-boasting makes you ridiculous; and expenses that do not correspond with your income, create the suspicion of your neighbors; but economy will never fail to establish their confidence in your well doing. Plain furniture and simple nourishment brings no shame; but unpaid debts, arising from extravagance, is a disgrace. A fashionable dress will procure you no reputation; but the quiet and exemplary habits of your domestic life, will gradually build you up in the good opinion of your friends.

Always endeavour to live consistently with your rank

and fortune. He who heedlessly squanders all that he earns, will find himself a beggar if he should be overtaken by any unexpected misfortune. Educate your children with care and fidelity. Warn them against the imprudence and danger, of encouraging a too lofty and arrogant spirit. Accustom them, at an early age, to useful labor; but do not on that account, neglect the improvement of their minds. Indulge them not in pleasures and enjoyments, which they will not hereafter be likely to procure by their own exertions; and remember, that piety is the foundation of every good. Without this all your trouble will be in vain.

When we see a mechanic, regularly employed at his work during the week; and upon the Sabbath occupying his seat in the church, instead of resorting to the tavern, or mingling with riotous assemblies, we may safely conclude that he is far removed from poverty or want.

When there is no fear of God, there can be but little prosperity. Then will industry be without its reward, and enterprise without profit. What the hand gathers, is consumed in dissipation. The love and fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom; it keeps alive our benevolence towards our unhappy brethren—it gives us courage in danger and difficulty—it renders us comparatively cheerful in the severest suffering: and in death, it fills us with a blessed and certain hope of a glorious immortality. What is all the wealth and reputation that the world can afford, in comparison to a treasure like this?

PHILANTHROPY.

If a stranger visits us, we offer ourselves as guides, to conduct him through our towns. We show him our sanctuaries, and our charitable institutions. We inform him that these were established by the benevolence of our forefathers. We lead our children before the statues of great and distinguished men, and while we recount their glorious deeds, we feel the fire of emotion secretly kindling in our hearts. Here is one who perished in the field of battle ; and another who died a martyr to his religious opinions. Yonder is the statesman, who enjoyed the highest honours of his country ; but dwindled away in poverty, after having sacrificed every thing for the welfare of his fellow-citizens. The scholar, too, claims our attention. His days and nights were consumed in scientific researches. His wealth--his friends ; every thing, in short, was given up, that he might confer honour upon his country. We are ever ready to proclaim the greatness of a by-gone age. We dwell with pride upon the heroic actions of a former period. We speak of our ancestors as a different and more exalted race. And who were they, that they should be so highly extolled ? Were they more nobly descended than we ? Did they possess any inherent qualities of the mind that to us are denied ? Were they not the same perishing mortals that mankind are, and ever will be ? Then, why is it that we do not emulate their virtues ; their prudence ; their patriotism ; their philan-

throphy? Were they richer than we, that they should build assylums for the destitute? or establish academies for the education of the poor? or had they greater facilities than we enjoy, of increasing their intelligence, their wisdom, or their piety? One thing, however, is morally certain; and that is, that they practised a greater degree of philanthropy. If we look around upon mankind, how few will we observe who imitate their example; who are animated with the same love for their fellow beings.

Whence arises this degeneracy of the present day? Why has religion become a mockery? Why are thrones tottering and crumbling to dust, or nations on the verge of ruin and desolation? Is it not owing to the selfishness of man? This, indeed, is the prolific source of innumerable evils. It destroys the bonds that should unite friends and kindred together. It divides and separates the members of a community, the moment they are subject to its influence. The man who comes within the limits of its controul, heeds not the distresses of complaining millions, provided his own desires are gratified. Selfishness keeps alive the flame of mutual hate and discord between families; and renders them indifferent to every thing but their own immediate welfare. One has but little regard for the other. They will not assist in time of public distress, if it is not, ultimately, for their own advantage. If a personal sacrifice is demanded for the good of the country, their murmurings are heard above all others. They despise their connexions who are struggling with poverty; and envy those who are more fortunate than themselves. But in affliction they will again be united in harmony and friendship. Then they no

longer are influenced by their prejudices. They learn that one is dependant upon the other ; that individual selfishness will bring destruction upon the whole. Behold the hardy seamen who are threatened with shipwreck !—whatever may have been their previous dissensions, they now forget them all, and combine their efforts for each others preservation. Through the medium of tribulation, domestic peace is re-established, and that happiness is built up which was so unthinkingly destroyed.

But what, may we inquire, is to be understood by philanthropy? “Whosoever will be great among you,” says Christ to his disciples, “shall be your minister. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Philanthropy, therefore, may be considered as a perpetual, unwearying desire, to promote, as far as possible, the general welfare of mankind, even though it should prove a personal sacrifice. If this love was more prevalent in society, there would be fewer chances of unhappiness. We should then be blended together as a peaceable brotherhood ; as a great and harmonious family, without pride, envy or jealousy to disturb our tranquillity.

If you would be philanthropic, you must reflect how you can best render your assistance, so as to be of the greatest benefit to those who may require your support. You must constantly add to your stores of knowledge, and use every honourable means to increase your wealth. The more you possess of either, the greater are your opportunities to become useful.

When you are about to perform the part of a philanthropist, do not conclude that you must necessarily neglect your own private business, to engage in the work of benevolence ; but let it rather be a warning to prepare yourself, by degrees, for the fulfilment of a beneficent inclination. Without this, you yourself may become a burden to others. Do not suppose that your prayers, alone, can effect the happiness of your fellow beings. Christ and his apostles prayed for us all ; but they did not rest content with this ; they travelled through the country healing the sick, and instructing the ignorant. When we have acquired enough to satisfy our own wants, then it should be our duty to attend to those of others. All this the christian will perform in a quiet and unassuming manner. “ And when thou prayest,” says the saviour “ thou shalt not be as hypocrites are : for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.”

Philanthropy always implies a certain sacrifice, because it cannot be exercised without more or less self-denial. It directs us to the peace and well doing of our acquaintances and friends, while we partially overlook ourselves. It urges us to devote our time and property to the common good of our country.

Let us travel back to ages that have past, and observe the characters of those venerable and worthy men, who have long since gone down to the tomb ; men, who fought and bled for the liberty we now enjoy ; who voluntarily suffered every privation that they might purchase happiness for their fellow men. Their names are recorded by the

ever living God ; and their philanthropic deeds are carried down to posterity, and transmitted to future generations.

A man may not have it in his power to imitate in every respect, the great and good actions of his prototypes ; still he is not prevented from exercising a certain degree of benevolence. If he is a competitor for an office, and sees among his rivals one who is more active and intelligent than himself ; one who is likely to discharge the duties of the station with more zeal, ability, and advantage to the country, he will, if he is governed by laudable motives, resign his claim, and not aspire to that distinction for which he is not fitted. If there is a scheme proposed for the amelioration of some public or private calamity, he will cheerfully offer his assistance. He will not stop to inquire what honour it may confer upon him, or what advantage he may personally derive ; but immediately identify himself with the cause of suffering humanity, and afford relief by his timely interposition. This is that pure philanthropy--that nobleness of soul, which will always be recognized as a primary excellence of the human character. If war has laid waste the country--if she is thrown into some unexpected difficulty, we hear the selfish man continually murmuring in consequence of the pecuniary losses he must necessarily sustain ; while in such an extremity, the philanthropist is willing to make every possible sacrifice for the public good. He limits his expenses, and substitutes water for wine ; a crust of bread for costly dishes ; and if he complain at all, it is because of the sufferings of his fellow creatures.

The philanthropist does not ask to be rewarded for his

generosity. He is not influenced by any sordid motives. He exerts himself cheerfully for the good of mankind. If God has given him wealth, he willingly appropriates a part of it for the relief and education of the poor, or some other equally charitable purpose.

Let us all imitate the example of our celestial pattern, Jesus Christ, who expiated his life upon the cross, for the redemption and happiness of all who believe in his name. Then we will not be tormented by a guilty and upbraiding conscience. We will feel the blessed assurance that our lives have been spent in usefulness; and when we die, it will be with the joyful hope of inheriting the kingdom of eternal glory.

NIGHT.

Silent and solemn night! Thou art ever sacred to my feelings! Thou art the benefactress of the afflicted, whose tears thou driest! Thou art the friend of the unfortunate whose sorrows are forgotten in thy gentle dreams! Thou art the mother of the weary, who seek to repose in thy arms, and receive from thee new life and vigor. Thou art an evidence of the majesty and power of God—of his unfathomable wisdom, and ineffable goodness!

Thou art worthy of my meditations; for by thy enchantment, the whole universe, as far as the eye can reach, is changed. With thy shadows, sleep falls upon the world. At thy approach, a myriad of stars are seen to glitter in the firmament, before to us invisible.

Where is the man who remains unmoved, when he walks forth in the solitary night, and beholds innumerable worlds spread out before him? when the stillness of death reigns in the streets, which, but a few hours before, were alive with the throng and bustle of the crowd? when the gardens, and groves, and habitations of men are silent? when the trees, and the flowers, are enveloped in darkness, or seen in the pale and uncertain light of the moon? The soul shudders with an involuntary fear. There are none who do not feel an inexplicable awe creeping over them at a time like this. What thoughts—what feelings crowd upon the mind! How insignificant would appear the earth,

if she did not receive a charm from the splendors of the midnight heavens! Where is the strength of the mighty chief, when weariness comes upon him, and he is bound in the arms of sleep? What are all the riches of the earth, when their possessor, like unto one that is dead, slumbers, unconscious of them all?

Thus it is, that night disposes us to serious meditations. It collects the wandering and distracted mind, and forces it into a common with itself. The solemnity of night inclines the fickle to useful and salutary reflections—it has recalled many a skeptic to faith in the ever living God—and many a scoffing sinner to the paths of rectitude and virtue.

As in every season of the year, so at different periods of each revolving day, the deity is made manifest in a peculiar and varied manner. The freshness of morning, the splendors of noon, the calmness of evening, and the majesty of night, are all the result of his beneficence. Every thing that we behold; the air, the earth and the waters; the rocks, the hills and the valleys, and every living thing, proclaim to us the wisdom and omnipotence of an all wise Creator. Then, weak and discontented mortal, cease thy attachment to things that are terrestrial, and contemplate the grandeur and sublimity of the eternal. At all times, and under every circumstance, remember that thou art destined for a higher sphere than that of the brute—that thou shall not live for the body alone, but chiefly for the spirit.

At night, the love of the deity is made known to us in many different ways. When the sun leaves our horizon,

to light the other half of the globe, every thing sinks into tranquillity that nothing may disturb our rest. The universal darkness that reigns over the face of nature, is favourable to our slumbers. Nothing distracts the mind, or arrests our attention. As we remove a light from the cradle of the infant, or the bed of the invalid, or quiet a noise that might break in upon their repose, so does the paternal care of God watch over the slumbers of his children, and take them all into his friendly protection. The faculties that were impaired, are now restored to their wonted vigor; and the body that was languishing, is strengthened and prepared for its ordinary duties.

When nature invites us to repose, we should attend to her request. No one can disobey her laws with impunity. Nothing destroys the health so speedily, as the wilful changing of night into day, and the consequent deprivation of rest at the proper time. When the sun disappears, the state of the atmosphere is sensibly changed, and many of the plants fold up their leaves and flowers. The animals grow weary, and conceal themselves in their lairs. The blood of the healthiest man is more excited, and his nerves irritable. The situation of the sick is also more critical; they manifest a greater degree of langour and restlessness.

Long and oft-repeated vigils, from an inordinate love of amusement, is an infallible method of shortening life. The mind is less acute, in consequence of the body being relaxed and overcome by unnecessary exertions. The bloom departs from our cheeks. The pallied features and lustreless eye, too plainly show that we have been sinning against

the laws of nature. Sinning, did we say? It is indeed a truth, that we grievously sin against our Creator, and set at nought his precepts, when we ruin ourselves by dissipation, and thereby number our days upon the earth. Yet, so foolish is man, that he, for the gratification of his senses, will devote the midnight-hour to unhallowed revelry, at the risk of prematurely falling a victim to his excesses, or dragging a diseased and infirm body to the grave.

The christian fully appreciates the blessings which he receives at the hands of his maker. After a well spent day, how refreshing to him are the slumbers of the night! He is forbearing in his judgment of those who needlessly waste those hours in rioting, that should be appropriated to their rest. He pays a strict regard to that inestimable jewel—health—without which he feels conscious he would be unfit for any useful enterprize. Are we accountable to God for the proper use and management of those blessings which he has allotted to us while sojourners here below? Then the preservation of our life and health is an awful responsibility.

As night throws a shadow upon every object, and removes each obstacle that might disturb our repose, so should we banish from our minds every tumultuous passion. With the garments of which we divest ourselves on retiring to rest, we should also endeavor to renounce the cares and anxieties of the day, that we may attend only to the things of the Lord. A clear conscience, and the assurance that God will watch over and protect us, prepares for us a downy pillow. We again return into all the weakness and

insensibility of infancy. Before the hand of God quickened us into life—before our lips were taught to lisp his name, he prepared us for happiness beyond our hope or anticipation. With thee, O Lord, “the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee”. Thine eyes did see me yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my days were written that were to be, when as yet there was none of them.*

Fear and anxiety is unbecoming the Christian. Men often suffer themselves to be tormented, during the night, by phantoms that are conjured up by their own distorted imaginations; but all these the pious man will prudently avoid. What? can it be supposed that he who watches over us through the day, will forsake us in the vigils of the still night? Why, at this hour, do we tremble at the thoughts of hell? or fancy that we can almost hear the groans and agonies of the damned? Why do we tremble with the fear of apparitions, that are only the inventions of weak and ignorant men? Why do we imagine the return of a departed spirit, whose body has long been mouldered into dust? Is it not the effect of a badly disciplined mind? It may be said, however, when darkness has spread her mantle upon the earth, that the eye no longer can render its accustomed services—that every unusual noise produces a vague and inexplicable terror—a sort of despondency; and therefore, danger is easily apprehended, where, in reality none exists. There are many persons, notwith-

* Psalms, cxxxix, 16.

standing the clearness of their intellect—their religion—their rational ideas of the Deity; and we might add, their entire disbelief of apparitions, who are, at the same time, greatly annoyed by superstitious terrors at the approach of night. This can only be occasioned by pernicious impressions, that were allowed to fasten upon the mind in early youth. It becomes therefore, a sacred and paramount duty of parents, not to increase, either directly or indirectly, the superstition of their children. It is a common and very dangerous practice to relate frightful stories in their presence; or to awe them into submission, by threatening them with some supernatural appearance. These things are written indelibly in their memory, and when they arrive at the age of maturity, they find with all their reason and philosophy, they cannot wholly eradicate them.

When parents are careful to improve the understanding of their children, then their bigotry, in a measure, will cease. Those who have been brought up in ignorance, are the most likely to imbibe superstitious opinions; and to adhere tenaciously to them.

There is another error, peculiar even to the well-informed, that may be comprehended in our present subject. It is that of dreams, and the undue importance which is frequently attached to their interpretation. Who, of common sense, will ascribe to them a prophetic power? Whence came this belief among christians? It is a relic of the dark and barbarous ages. But who for a moment will suppose that we are enabled by our nightly visions to foretell future events? It would be in contradiction of God

himself. It is in direct opposition to reason and revelation.

It is certainly probable, among the variety of our dreams, that some of them may seem to be the precursors of events that follow. This might incline a weak minded person to the belief, that they are sure presages of good or evil. It would, however, be still more remarkable, if, among the innumerable fancies that flit through the brain while we are asleep, none of them should bear a resemblance to subsequent occurrences.

In the sacred writings, mention is frequently made of wonderful dreams, whereby God "made revelation" of himself, but to all others we are expressly commanded to pay no attention. "If," says Moses, "there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul." Shall we, therefore, blindly adhere to those errors that are disproved by the word of God? Shall we thus abuse our imaginations? Shall we endeavour to establish a coincidence between our dreams and actual events, instead of endeavouring to trace the latter to natural causes?

Far from me, at least, be such degradation!—such a perversion of the understanding! Far from me be all su-

perstitious terrors that are engendered by the night. God dwelleth in eternal light ; before him there is no darkness. His love and care for me are at all hours the same. I will confide in his goodness, and then the night will be clothed in light.

PATRIOTISM AND DEATH.

Behold the graves of the illustrious dead, who delivered their country from bondage. Let them slumber peacefully on. Their blood has not flowed in vain. The sacrifice of their lives has restored liberty to the community; and while their bodies are reposing in the earth, millions are rejoicing over the victory they have achieved.

Let us go to the house of mourning. There we shall hear the lamentations of a disconsolate family. A sister has been deprived of a brother; a wife of a husband; a mother of a son. Their cheeks are pale and haggard with weeping. They wring their hands in the wildness and agony of despair. But why should they mourn for those who have died upon the field of battle? They are dwellers in the courts above, where, in a few fleeting years, the friends they have left behind, will be re-united with them.

Our entrance into, and exit from the world, are matters of necessity. Thousands are daily perishing; but it excites but little attention, because it is the inevitable fate of all. Death, however, in many instances ceases to be indifferent—its aspect is materially changed, either by the vices or magnanimity of the deceased. The execution of a murderer—the death of a voluptuary—or the suicide of a debauchee, fill us with horror and disgust. Their existence is prematurely terminated by atrocious crimes. They are

without sympathy; and every one would involuntarily shudder at the thought of sharing a similar fate. With far other feelings were member the man who courageously offered up his life in defence of his rights, his honor, or his innocence. We cannot but admire him, notwithstanding our regret for his untimely end. His virtues are recorded in our memory. His example has a beneficial influence upon society, although the sacrifice was entirely for himself. The ardor with which he combatted injustice and oppression is praiseworthy, notwithstanding it may have conferred but little advantage upon others: but it is more difficult for one to exert himself in like manner, for the happiness of a friend. He who encounters death with such a motive, is worthy of the highest praise. Therefore it is that we honor him who resolutely springs into the boiling flood to save the life of a fellow creature. Few men are capable of performing such a magnanimous part, even for one of their most intimate connexions. On the contrary they are so degraded and parsimonious, that it is the smallest number who are willing to contribute a mite from their abundance, to alleviate the sufferings of those who are daily perishing before their eyes.

If the risking of life, in order to save a single person from danger or destruction is deserving of such commendation, how much more so is it when voluntarily offered for the well being of a whole country--friends as well as foes--men, women and children of whom we know nothing about. It is as glorious as the opposite extreme--cowardice, is contemptible. Behold the traitor and coward,

how they are hooted and hissed by the crowd. The former is not only despised by his countrymen--but also by those who were benefitted by his treachery. But the brave and heroic warrior is honored even by his bitterest enemies.

We ought, says the apostle, to lay down our lives for our brethern. Our saviour, by his own death, has furnished us the example. But we can only imitate it to a certain degree. He did not die the infamous death of the cross for one person--nor a particular community of people--but for the whole human race.

What can be more laudable than the efforts of the patriot who struggles against the oppression of a tyrannical power, that seeks to overwhelm him and his country in ruin? At the price of his own blood, he purchases, inch by inch, that liberty which he hopes to transmit, unimpaired, to posterity. Such a man has gloriously fulfilled his duties on earth--and he will not be without his reward. His death ennobled a life that was, perhaps, hitherto almost unnoticed. He gave, in his last moments, an evidence of that power that lay concealed within him. His slumbering energies were called into action. He may have been careless of himself, and indifferent to others, but the hour of peril filled his soul with courage and intrepidity. He takes up the panoply of war, and all his former defects are forgotten in his subsequent brilliant exploits. He is justly the pride of all who behold him; and the multitude go out to meet him on his way, and strew flowers in his path. Therefore has it become proverbial, that he who nobly dies in the defence of his country, throws an oblivion mantle over the deeds of

a previously ill spent life. He may be compared to the splendors of a sunset, that succeeds a gloomy and tempestuous day. He requires no idle ceremonies--no high sounding epithets--no jargon of senseless and unmeaning praise--no proud monument, to perpetuate his name, or keep him alive in the remembrance of the people. He has been consecrated by his own blood--and his death becomes the pride and glory of the whole nation. The recollection of his valor adds to its further security. Enemies will respect a people who have had such a fearless champion of their rights. His virtues never die--they are transmitted from one generation to another.

The warriors have preformed their duty. By their exertions--their self sacrificing love and patriotism, we are free--we now expect the renewal of our happiness and prosperity; and the establishment of a permanent peace. Let us not forget the tribute that is due to the memory of those who periled their lives for our welfare and glory. Not heartless and qualified admiration--not a whining and mawkish sorrow--not cold and artificial eulogy;--no! none of these; but gratitude--gratitude made manifest by every word and action--gratitude that springs from the depths of the soul. We will give them from that abundance which they have heaped upon us: we will not fail, at least, to give them in proportion to the enjoyments their heroism has obtained for us. Let not their names sink in oblivion. Honor their memory! but not alone by magnificent statues and mausoleums: they may be broken down and scattered upon the earth. We should rather look about us for their widows and orphans, and instead of lavishing

our munificence for monumental inscriptions, appropriate it for their comfort and support. Show them the marks of love and affection, which we believe is due their husbands and fathers, who maintained the rights of their country, even unto death.

This was the custom of a former age, after a glorious and successful war. In this way a love of country was enkindled in every heart—and nations rose in dignity and power. But gratitude and veneration soon disappeared before the sweeping march of envy. She spared neither the living nor the dead. She aimed her poisoned arrows at all within her reach. She was ever ready to pluck the laurels from the hero's brow, and trample virtue in the dust. Patriotism was gradually diminished. There were mercenary troops—but no inspired warriors, impatient for the contest. The government was maliciously censured—but cheerful obedience to the laws seemed to be a matter of but little importance. Factions arose without any definite arm. Empires were crushed; and nations broken up. Finally, we behold a change. One extremity produces another—and when a people have reached the lowest point of misery and degradation, there is a reaction—a building up anew of what they themselves have destroyed.

As the gratitude of a noble mind evinces itself for a benefactor, so should that of a nation be manifested for her deliverers. But if it is publicly refused—if there is an apathy—a coldness—freezing up the current of affection and veneration; then the Christian must be more alive to his duty—he must shake off that insensibility that is chilling every thing in its course. He cannot be prevented from

obeying the manly and generous impulses of his nature, although the world may sink back into barbarism. He cannot be deprived of those feelings with which piety and patriotism inspire him. He will give advice, assistance, and comfort to those who require them. He will protect the widows and the orphans of those that fell heroically in the struggle for liberty. For thy security, O christian friend, the warrior shed his blood. Thou art blessed with prosperity—thou art surrounded with thy family, and every thing that can make life agreeable; but thou owest them to those who underwent the fatigues and perils of war. Had they deserted thee—had they left thy property as a spoil to some infuriate conqueror, where would have been all thy boasted peace? Would thy gardens have bloomed with the same flowers? would thy fields have smiled with the same verdure? would thy children have gathered around thee with the same laughing and joyous exultation? They, indeed, have laid down their lives—their every thing for thy sake; and all the respect and benevolence thou canst show to the friends and kindred they have left behind them, will, after all, be but a poor equivalent for the sacrifices they have made.

HARMONY AMONG CITIZENS.

People who live in discord, one with another, prepare the way to their own destruction. They are, in truth, but little better than slaves. They would establish their own welfare upon the ruins of their country. This discord, arising from pride or selfishness, effectually tends to destroy the fabric of government in whatever form it may exist, and to deliver over a people, an easy prey, to their enemies.

Such was the fate of the Jews. Moses led them from the bondage of the Egyptians; but their dissensions soon involved them in new captivity—and at last under the oppression of the Romans, they were but little better than vassals. Their city was broken down—and they became wandering outcasts upon the earth, without a home or country. This people, by their vicissitudes, still more clearly establishes the truth; that it is easier to break the shackles of oppression, than afterwards to maintain an independence. How powerful and victorious were the arms of David! how rich and flourishing the people in the reign of Solomon! But their prosperity engendered luxury and pride—these again, the enmity and dissonance of the tribes. They separated—became violent enemies, and freely shed each other's blood. They spurned the laws—disregarded oaths—and were more willing to confederate with other powers, than to remain united among themselves. “The

earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof,"—says the prophet Isaiah "because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." These words were spoken in reference to the Jews, but they are equally applicable to all nations, and more particularly, in the present century, to our own immediate country. The desolation of war is not yet at an end—and if harmony does not prevail—if there is not a common aim, and a common interest, that is held inviolable by all; we must perish; ruin must overwhelm us, and our history be blotted out from the annals of nations. But the words of Isaiah seems to be spoken in vain. They cannot quell the madness of rebelling passions. His wisdom is as foolishness to the leaders of a faction, who assume to be acting in accordance with the dictates of prudence; who set at nought the welfare and happiness of the public; and who contemptuously reject the truths that are taught by the experience of by gone ages.

What has been obtained by the blessings of providence, in a national point of view, can only be preserved by the public harmony of citizens. It is in vain we flatter ourselves that all danger is over; that no new change is to be apprehended; or that we may give ourselves up, unreservedly, to pleasure. The fortunes of a community are eternally varying. A trifling incident may work a spirit of change in society and government—a change that may have a fearful influence upon the destinies of millions. He who left him-

self to the vain conceit, that security was certain, may now deplore his simple credulity. What was gained by unanimity, is now destroyed by contention.

Discord is destructive of power. The weak may sometimes gain a victory over the strong; while mighty empires are crushed even as the moth, if they are perfidious to themselves.

He who feels a pride in being the member of a community that commands the respect of the world—that has gloriously maintained its rights in the heat and noise of battle;—he who values his domestic happiness, and knows it cannot be attained only through the welfare of the whole people, will strenuously exert himself to advance public harmony, and keep alive the germs of patriotism. Therefore the most obscure individual should not look upon himself as utterly insignificant, or ask what he can effect in opposition to the will of others. We hear a number of questions propounded by the pseudo lover of his country. How can I, alone, stem the current of public opinion? What would it avail, were I to sacrifice myself, while those around me persevere in their selfishness? Would I not bring down ruin upon my own head? Would I not be derided? Would I not be singled out as a victim for the shafts of contempt and ridicule? Such a man is a monster in society. He suffers himself to be awed into silence by the judgment of base and designing men, and makes use of their depravity as a veil for his own faults.

Let us be unto our own country, what we are to ourselves; ever ready to advance her interests—always de-

vising some new method to increase her welfare, and at all times prepared to defend her from any innovation upon her rights. Have a particular regard to public and private devotion. Carefully remove every opposing obstacle. One of the greatest impediments is mutual jealousy and distrust that too often exists between man and man, as well as particular portions of the community. It is a mean, selfish pride—a fancied superiority, destructive of equality, and terminating in ignominy.

The ambitious man, to accomplish his low desires, wantonly abuses his neighbor who stands higher in the estimation of the public than himself. Families of wealth and rank have recourse to every little expedient to distinguish themselves, one above the other. It would seem, indeed, as if their whole time was taken up in striving who shall have the finest equipage, the most extensive park, or magnificent country seat; but they seldom evince much rivalry in their contributions to the poor, or the diminution of any public burthen. There are innumerable causes that lessen the harmony that should exist among citizens, and prove destructive to social and civil order. It is the province of the good man, carefully to examine into their nature and results, and as far as is practicable, to correct the evil.

Man from his infancy, is undergoing a continual change. Every succeeding day develops some new trait in his character or disposition. So it is with people in different ages. Their customs and habits are different. Herein we may trace the features of a government. It does not for

a long time remain the same. It assumes new aspects. At one time it is oppressive—at another, liberal. It cannot be accommodated to all classes. One complains of its extravagance—another, of its rigid economy. And all this is owing to a want of harmonious feeling among its members.

The lover of his country, therefore, if he understand his duty, will endeavor to promote public order, and discountenance popular commotions. If heavy taxes for a time, are necessary for the common welfare, he will urge his fellow citizens cheerfully and mutually to assist in supporting the burthen, that it may, thereby, be the more easily sustained. He will invoke the Father of mercies to aid him in suppressing tumult and disorder, wherever they may be found, and to substitute harmony and love, for jealousy and hatred.

THE CALAMITIES OF NATIONS.

Is there a God who watches over, and governs the hearts of men? And if so, why is there such dreadful havoc between nations? Why are thousands of innocent beings wantonly sacrificed by fierce and unrelenting men? What error has been committed by the industrious laborer, that he must loose in a single hour, the property he has been toiling for years to accumulate? What is the crime of the tender infant, that it must fall a victim to the direst cruelty? Why is it that the villain, without a single redeeming virtue, prospers in many of his undertakings?

How unsearchable are the ways of providence! Fleets are sunk in the ocean, and their crews perish, while, perhaps, their friends—far—far away, are offering up prayers for their safety, or looking anxiously for their return. An earthquake swallows up villages and towns; and the righteous as well as the wicked, sink into one common grave. The most flourishing countries are scattered by the iron hand of war, and the unpitying sword reeks with the blood of the innocent as well as the guilty. Why should such things be? Some have said, that out of our misfortunes, happiness will accrue to our posterity. But can there be truth in this? Must our wounds bleed, that those who follow us may know no pain? Must we shed tears of anguish, that a future generation may live in peace and tran-

quility? Or would there be any consolation in believing that our moments glide the more blissfully along, because our ancestors endured misery and wretchedness? Who can answer? Who can unlock the secrets that meet us on every side? A thousand questions crowd upon my mind! I know what I have already experienced, but what is there yet in store for me? Can I protect myself from the disturber of my peace? Can I overcome the might of injustice and oppression? If I am comparatively happy, why are thousands, more virtuous than myself, writhing with the agony of grief and affliction? Do we not behold relentless destiny stalking through the earth, and destroying the beautiful and the pure, as well as the vicious and corrupt? As it regards our earthly existence, how inexplicable is the past! and how uncertain the future! But let us prepare ourselves to exclaim with Paul: "we are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair."

It may be that we have not courage enough to enable us to meet the trials and difficulties of life without despair. But we can avail ourselves of that energy, that patience, that resignation, which comes alone from God. He will give us strength to bear up in every misfortune, so that, like the apostle, we need not despond, although we are perplexed.

Although the dispensations of providence may appear unjust, still it is not for us to weigh them in the scale with our weak and erring judgment. 'The limited mind of man cannot comprehend the ways of Him who rules the universe—him to whom nations are but as a shadow—worlds

only as atoms, and eternity as a speck. Who knows the will of the Almighty, that they dare censure him as unjust? The inexperienced child may often condemn its parents for those things which it will subsequently acknowledge to have been intended for its good. Shall a father or mother renounce their authority on account of the prejudices of their children? Or can they always satisfactorily explain why they cannot, in every instance, accede to their requests? Thus it is with the whole human family considered as children of the Most High. Kingdoms are subject to his control as well as the meanest beggar. Without his knowledge the worm cannot die, nor a sparrow fall to the ground. We must not unthinkingly call in question his wisdom and mercy; but compare ourselves to the child, who thinks that its parents exercise unnecessary severity.

The evil that may befall a nation, comes from the hand of the creator. But it is arrogant to suppose that the sufferings which a people are compelled to endure, is a visitation for their sins. A scourge, however dreadful, that may be laying waste the earth, is not to be regarded as a punishment from the hand of God. We cannot comprehend his designs. It is presumption, therefore, to say that this or that country deserve their afflictions, because they are wicked or disobedient. Were these the faults of the quiet, industrious and unoffending citizen, whose house was burnt to the ground? Was the old and venerable man, a benefactor, perchance, of his people, criminal in any of his ac-

tions, that he must perish by the unmerciful sword? Those devastations that are produced by war, famine, or disease, instead of being manifestations of the divine wrath, will be regarded by the intelligent as a means of ultimately promoting our welfare.

Men are frequently the authors of their own calamities. They may enervate themselves by luxury—or lose the confidence of their friends by perfidy. In such instances they must only censure themselves. But misery that springs from another source, must be patiently endured. God does every thing for the best. If we are engaged in war, it undoubtedly brings upon us many misfortunes. But in what do they consist? Are they any thing more than a deprivation of those blessings which might be taken from us in any other situation? War excites more terror, because it brings destruction on a greater number of people at the same time. If thousands perish in a single battle, is it, after all, any thing more than death?—death which is the inevitable fate of all—and, perhaps, under other circumstances, might be attended with ten-fold horror. Villages and towns may be levelled with the dust—they may entirely disappear before the hand of the destroyer—men, women and children may be reduced to poverty—but forlorn and miserable as may be their condition, still there are millions upon the earth, who are comparatively destitute of food and clothing, and yet enjoy a happy and contented life. He who would despair, because he is without a few of his accustomed pleasures, richly deserves all the pain he suffers. Let him

place a higher value upon those treasures that are imperishable—piety, virtue and magnanimity. These, alone, are permanent, and will never lose their worth.

THE DEPARTURE OF WINTER.

Spring is returning! She begins to struggle for the ascendancy over winter. The ice is quitting the rivulet, and the meadows are putting on their verdure. Flowers, here and there, are already blooming, and the tender foliage is trembling in the breeze. Merrily the lark pours forth her notes in the sky, and every thing around seems to be alive with joy.

Each succeeding day invites us to a ramble in the fields. We are impatient to walk forth, and enjoy the beauties of the season. Before the swelling buds have blossomed, or the landscape appears in all its glory, we find ourselves threading the thicket, or clambering the mountain's top. How many ardent hopes are pictured to our adoring souls! We think of the many pleasant days we shall enjoy, either in excursions through the country, or in the society of those we love! What fragrant mornings await us! and what delicious evenings—full of delight—when the fresh breath of flowers float upon the air—and the moon pours down her magic and silver light upon the rocks, and streams, and quiet habitations of men! We think of the joys that are past, and contemplate those that are to come! We are

ready to repeat with David: "bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

I am never weary of beholding the magnificence of God, or praising his manifold and wonderful works. From my infancy I have surveyed the changing seasons as they pass by me, and in them I always behold the same beneficent and adorable Creator. As I increase in years, the more smiling and blissful to me is every returning spring and summer, and more replete with happiness the autumn and winter. Who indeed is like unto the Lord our God?

When spring returns, all is life, motion and activity. Every thing, too, undergoes a change. Plants that were dead, are quickened into life, and all that has vanished, now re-appears. The dismal and melancholy waste is clothed with flowers—and deserts of ice and snow are blossoming with the rose. But the history of a year, with its blossoms, and fruits; sunshine and snow, is but the history of a single moment. This seeming change is but an illusion. The sun that appears to move through the heavens, is stationary. Noon and night; morning and evening; summer and winter—all exist at the same time. If we could take the wings of an angle, and soar above the earth, into the immeasurable regions of space; then would the globe we inhabit move onward in its course, and as it plays in the beams of the sun, we would observe light and shade, and all the variety of the seasons at the same instant. The evening splendor of one country, is the morning light of its antipodes. One half the world is lost in slumber, while the other is

busy and active. Here is quiet and repose—there is mirth and festivity. Here is the brightness of noon; there the solemnity of midnight. On one side we behold the earth covered with snow and ice, the inhabitants half benumbed with cold—on the other, the plains smoking, the plants withering, and the animals dying with the intensity of heat. In one place we see the blossoms of spring—in another, the ripe and mellow fruits of autumn. What order! what beauty! what enchantment! And this is called by man, who occupies but a small portion of the globe, the change of the seasons.

As we cast our eyes abroad, we behold innumerable worlds filling the immensity of space. The beings who dwell upon their surface, have, like us, their divisions of the day, and changes of the year. To them, our earth appears as a mere speck—a grain of sand upon the sea shore. And we who people it—what are we? What is all our imaginary wealth and splendor? What are all the thrones, the empires, and the legions of armed men, before whom we are accustomed to tremble?—aye, tremble, while we scarcely regard the Creator, who called them into existence. How exalted, and how insignificant—how mighty and how weak, does man appear at the same moment!

While I rejoice in the return of spring, I also rejoice in the harmony that pervades the works of nature. Whatever changes may seem to present themselves, still, the power that controls and governs them, forever remains the same. The blasts of winter may sweep over the plains,

but they will be succeeded by the warm and fragrant breath of summer. Man is fickle and inconstant, but God is firm and immoveable. Then, why do I not rely more confidently on his assistance? Why do I follow the advice of erring and short-sighted mortals, rather than the wisdom of him who is eternal? whose word endureth forever?

Imperishable are the works of the Creator! Nothing that we behold can be annihilated! The constituent parts of the universe may gradually decay; but in this very corruption, we perceive the source of new life. Every thing that disappears, is re-produced in a new form. There is an intimate connexion observable throughout the whole natural world. The drop of water that falls to the ground will in time find its way to the ocean, whence it is again taken up, and cast upon the earth. What unfathomable goodness is every day unfolded to our view? Century upon century has passed away, and yet every thing, save man, remains almost unchanged. The rose and the lilly that we gather in our fields, are like unto those that bloomed in the gardens of the wise king, nearly three thousand years ago. The birds and the beasts, are the same now that they ever have been; the moon and the stars look down upon the earth with their wonted brightness and beauty. Only man has increased in intelligence. He derives instruction from every thing around him. Nations perish, but the learning and wisdom of their sages and philosophers are handed as a rich legacy to succeeding ages. But the human mind is as a flower which only in

eternity can unfold itself in perfection. There we must be holy, as God himself is holy!

O Lord, thou giver of all life, fill me with thy spirit, that I may serve thee better, and love thee more. Wherever I turn my eyes I behold thee, and my soul is filled with adoration! And I cheerfully acknowledge that thou art the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever.

THE POWER OF PRAYER.

In ancient times there was a peculiar class of men distinguished by their learning and wisdom, who received universal respect and homage. Their advice, which seldom deceived--their predictions, which were often fulfilled--their abstinence, when they could enjoy every luxury--their courage, when every one was in despair--their contempt of those things which were the delight of others; every thing, in short, seemed to proclaim them as a superior race of beings. It was believed by many that they had direct intercourse with God; that to them the Deity made known all that was to befall the human race.

When Moses went up to the mountain top to speak with the infinite Jehovah, the people regarded him with awe and reverence. When the children of Israel fought against superior numbers of their enemy, and their leader offered up his prayers to the prince of battles, they were certain of proving victorious. The belief among the Jews and Heathens, that their wise men held communion with God, had an influence upon all their undertakings, and on that account, they were considered as persons of a more exalted and sacred character.

These things are laughed at by some in the present day, as pious superstitions. But truth remains forever the

same. It cannot be overturned by derision. It will prevail, notwithstanding all the efforts to suppress it. We know there are many persons who consider prayer unnecessary; and do not like to engage in it, lest they might be looked upon as bigots. It is probable, indeed, that they are liberal enough to admit that it is very well suited to people of ordinary understanding—and as such, will not be likely to receive any harm—or as a sort of trade or business for the clerical profession. They say that the regulation of divine wisdom cannot be changed, therefore their prayers will avail them nothing. All that is necessary for their wants they think to receive without asking—and as God is acquainted with their necessities, that he will certainly require no entreaties in order to a distribution of his blessings. Such may be the expression of their sentiments, although their conscience frequently upbraids them. But there are those who think differently—who are persuaded of the efficacy of prayer, and that it will produce the most happy results. If such a conviction does not rest upon some sure foundation, why was it so strongly recommended by Christ? Although he tells us that our Father knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him, yet, says he: “Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish,

will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

We are not to believe, on that account, that our prayers will effect miracles. Much, indeed, may be accomplished of an extraordinary character, yet it will be perfectly consonant with the nature of belief. Our prayers may not always be immediately answered; but if we trust confidently in God, he will not fail, sooner or later, to attend to our requests. Let us make known to him our secret wishes—our inmost desires. And this is a spiritual intercourse with the Father, whereby we increase in strength, and improve in wisdom. But if our wants are not always realized, we should feel not the less thankful, because experience may afterwards teach us that every thing has been ordered for the best.

I have an assurance that my prayers have a salutary and holy influence upon my character and destiny. When I approach the throne of the Almighty with my supplications, I feel more sensibly the magnitude of his power, and of my sole dependance upon him for protection and support. My confidence, in his goodness and mercy, increases. I know that he will give me strength and power for every good action. Then, nothing will be impossible. A serene conscience in the presence of God, will arm me with the strength of a giant—and I am thereby rendered invincible to sin and temptation.

It is almost incredible what a man may accomplish by an unwavering faith, and a consciousness of his purity and innocence. Wealth, artifice, and superiority of rank may effect much, but that energy and resolution of soul, growing out of a love of virtue and magnanimity, will soon outstrip them all. Who, that is acquainted with the history of the past, cannot recount the numberless men who started from their obscurity, and were enabled by their prayers to triumph over their enemies, and sometimes to conquer a nation or prostrate a throne? When God was with them, who could be against them? Can we not remember here and there a comparatively insignificant man, without wealth, or rank, or family influence, who, by his pious and indefatigable zeal, in despite of every obstacle, finally accomplished some humane and charitable undertaking? Behold the remnant of an army—spiritless and broken down, who are flying before their pursurers! Escape is impossible. Now their enemies are upon them, who, alas! are greatly their superiors in strength and discipline! They tremble for their country, and see the inevitable ruin that awaits them! In this dread and solemn moment they kneel to the all seeing God in the presence of their adversaries! They pour out their souls in prayer! Their devotions could not be disturbed, even by the thunder of the enemy's artillery! They spring to their feet, and the clangor of their arms is heard preparing for the combat! Now they are other men! Courage is depicted in every countenance! Without fear or trembling they advance! God is with

them, and every man has become a hero! The charge is given. The battle rages, and blood is streaming on every side! Finally, the contest is over, and the hitherto despairing and shattered troops have proved victorious!

Do you yet doubt of the power and influence of prayer? Without it, there can be no courage—no great and philanthropic enterprises—no energy or resolute purpose of soul.

This communion of mortals with the holy spirit, begets within them the highest of all earthy wisdom—the entire perfection, we may add, if there moral natures. Then they view with abhorrence the sinfulness and injustice of the world. As man improves in knowledge by mingling with the more intelligent of his fellow beings, so does his soul become more sanctified by spiritual intercourse with the Almighty. We cannot pray with proper devotion, if we do not feel ourselves operated upon by the majesty and holiness of our Maker. And he who truly possesses this devotional feeling, will not be guilty of an impure action. He, therefore, is not a good man, who would pray, and at the same time deceive his neighbour: nor he who would prefer wealth, honor and reputation, to the things of the Lord; for it is impossible to serve two masters at a time.

Devotion elevates and purifies our desires—and hence, the treasures of earth are nothing in comparison to the soul. He, who is imbued with the spirit of prayer, takes no pleasure in those things which cannot increase his happiness. His conduct will be essentially different; for that which he before esteemed as the most important, he

now regards as the most, trifling and mean. And in pursuance of these principles, he daily increases in piety and wisdom.

Christ prayed in Gethsemane, and fearlessly stood before his accusers who condemned him to the cross. Stephen, who was furiously stoned by the mob, asserted, notwithstanding, his belief in the Saviour, and died a martyr to the faith. There were hundreds also who followed his example. The Jews were astonished and almost confounded by the heroism which these men displayed. Their contempt of death, excited alternately, their pity and admiration—until, finally, many of them became believers themselves, and the temples of the heathens disappeared before the march of Christianity.

What self-love often renders desirable, ceases to have a charm when we are more immediately associated with God. In the light of his holiness, we blush for the selfish hardness of our hearts—which, can alone be sanctified by our devotions.

The greater number of the calamities which happen to us are the consequences of our own indiscretions. We expect far different results from a wise and virtuous life, than one of debauchery and crime—and while prayer fills us with peace and tranquillity, we must rationally conclude that it exerts a beneficial influence upon our conduct, generally.

Resting under this conviction, let us never engage in an important undertaking, without first devoutly addressing ourselves to the Deity. Then, in view of all his perfections, our desires will be purified; we will not subject ourselves

to the control of violent passions; and our moral powers will be strengthened and improved.

May all mankind engage deeply and fervently in prayer. It was commanded by our Saviour, who, himself, prayed for the redemption of a sinful and wicked world. If we ask, it will be given us: if we seek, we shall assuredly find. Where will we find refuge, if we are forsaken by God? or where comfort without his mercy? In our afflictions, he is the anchor of our hope. In our temptations, he will protect and bless us.

THE DANGER OF HASTILY FORMED PIOUS RESOLUTIONS.

The friends of Christ were assembled about him at the passover. Among them was the traitor who rewarded the love of his master with treason and ingratitude. When they all had eaten, they sang a hymn of thanksgiving, and Jesus went into the mount of Olives, near Jerusalem. His disciples followed. He revealed to them the danger with which he was threatened. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep of the flocks shall be scattered abroad." They were terrified by the mystery of his words. Peter answered: "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." And when Jesus told him, that before the cock crew, he would deny him thrice, the disciple, who thought himself capable of any sacrifice, replied: "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." But how soon was the solemn promise broken! A vast multitude, armed with swords and staves, came at midnight, with Judas at their head, and forced him away, a prisoner, to be condemned by sinners. His disciples disappeared like sheep who had lost their shepherd, and even Peter, who had made such protestations of his fidelity, also violated his pledge.

Few people, however, at the present day, who call themselves followers of Christ, can boast of the same degree of magnanimity, as the generous and high minded Peter. Although in a moment of terror and threatened persecution, he denied his beloved master, yet we are told of his bitter repentance: and that regardless of the insults which were heaped upon him, and the dungeons which were open on every side to receive him, he fearlessly went among his enemies, proclaiming his belief of the Saviour. His vows were faithfully kept, and after a joyless though virtuous life, he suffered an ignominious death at Rome, as the penalty of adherence to his divine belief. How many christians can now be found who resemble Peter? They may censure the rash promise which he made on his way to Gethsemane; but it is probable, if they have not already acted in like manner, that they never formed a truly noble or pious resolution. We hear of such men calling on God to deliver them from some eminent danger, and making declarations of the charitable intentions, which they may honestly fulfill; but what unworthy ideas they must have of the Deity to suppose that they will make themselves more worthy in his estimation, merely by a few beneficent actions! There are others deserving equal censure, who affect to believe if they pursue the path of rectitude, and obey, in some measure the precepts of Christ, that God will require nothing further at their hands. They perform no more than their convenience will warrant. They pray daily, and are thinking perhaps, at the same moment, how they can be revenged of him, who may casually have omitted to show them due

respect, or any other trifling offence. They frequently go to church, but they never give their mite for the relief of their fellow men, unless, indeed, they are likely to acquire some notoriety by their benevolence. They promise in their prayers to amend their faults, but the promise, alone, they seem to think quite sufficient. They slander and defraud their neighbours—they are guilty of almost every impiety, and publicly boast of their artifice, rather than regret their want of truth and veracity. Such degraded beings should be awakened from their slumbers—they should be aroused to the danger that awaits them; for their prayers are an abomination, and God is ready to judge the wicked every day.

Man is never more inclined to occupy his mind with contemplations of the Deity, than in moments when he perceives the instability of all earthly things. Who, after a long sickness, has not come to the determination to correct the error of his ways? Who has not resolved to live a pious and exemplary life, if, by some unexpected misfortune, they are reduced to poverty and want? Or, is it not natural for us all, when standing at the grave of a beloved friend, and eternity brought still more vividly to our view, to resolve upon a new mode of life, and as far as possible, to divest ourselves of evil? Such are the resolutions, thus hastily formed, that seldom possess any permanence of character. They, too, have their dangers. Every effort to increase our perfection, is undeniably praiseworthy; but it is folly to suppose that it can be attained on the instant. We must accomplish the task by degrees. We must prepare the

foundation, and carefully erect the structure. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Man, in a fit of excitement, rarely weighs the powers of his mind, and therefore, every thing seems easy to accomplish. But when his enthusiasm has passed away, he finds that he has been deceived. Former habits are impatient to resume the sway. There are schemes of profitable speculation presented to his view. Posts of honor may be obtained. The voice of adulation is sounding abroad. To all these he cannot remain entirely indifferent. His ambition is on the alert. The company with whom he associates, awakens feelings and desires, which his principles do not approve, and he struggles to overcome them. Hence the difficulty—cooly and deliberately to resist the importunities of pride and prejudice, ambition and passion; and to persevere in that God-like purpose of soul, which, before, in the heat of prayer, appeared so easy to accomplish. We may desire to grow better, but it is vain and futile to expect an improvement of our moral nature the moment we have set about acquiring it. Such hopes are liable to be wrecked by every trifling difficulty. A man presents a widely different aspect in quiet and sober reflection, than when he is under the operation of any violent emotion. In the one, he beholds things as they are—he sees all the dangers attendant upon any new resolution; but in the other, his reason and judgment are partially overthrown, and he becomes the dupe of an ardent and misdirecting fancy.

And what is the consequence of this weakness and over-

sight? It frequently leads to a sudden and bitter repentance. Then we again prostrate ourselves before the Deity, and with the deepest contrition implore his mercy and forgiveness—solemnly promising, as before, that we will be more watchful for the future, and earnestly endeavour to avoid the paths of sin and wickedness. We go again into the crowd; we resume our business; we begin our intercourse with men; we successfully conquer our vicious inclinations, and when we are about to proclaim ourselves triumphant disciples of Christ, we find, in a single unguarded moment, that we have relapsed into our former vices. In this situation, we not only doubt the possibility of perfecting ourselves in happiness; but we even despair of improving, in the smallest degree, our moral condition. Such are the results of a broken resolution. Finally, we persuade ourselves that human frailty is a barrier to the acquisition of virtue, and we grow reckless of amendment. We think we have done all in our power, and now we will trust divine indulgence. Our self-love flatters us that we are not the worst of men—that there are assuredly many others less righteous than ourselves. We gradually progress in vice and immorality, and conclude at last, that those amiable qualities, and that purity to which we before aspired, have no existence save in the imagination.

Parents, teachers, and the proclaimers of the Christian faith, have a very important duty to perform, who have the instruction of youth. We often find them resorting to various means to produce an excitement in their young and inexperienced minds, and, if possible, to wring from them

a declaration that they will in the future, live a pious and holy life. Nothing is easier than to awaken those ebullitions of feeling, or during their excitement, to exact the most solemn promise, that they will renounce the pleasures of the world, and care only for the things of the Lord; but how seldom do they fulfil the resolution they have made, and if broken, how difficult is the task to inspire them again with religious emotions.

In nature, every thing goes quietly and smoothly along. The day gradually changes into darkness, and the summer is mellowed by degrees into autumn. There are no fits and starts—no inequalities—but a regular and sure progression of all we behold. This is a lesson from which all may derive instruction. If man, therefore, would elevate his condition in a religious point of view, he must, in the first place, root out the most dangerous of his vices. If he is inclined to anger, he must lessen its violence; if he is a voluptuary, he will deny himself his accustomed luxuries; if he is ambitious, he will learn to accord that praise to others, which he has so exclusively claimed for himself. He who would entirely rid himself of every fault, will carefully avoid every occasion that might tend to call them into play; and when he is the victor over one, he has power to subdue the others.

A man may free himself of those defects for which he has been reproached, and yet be very far from perfection. He still has almost innumerable difficulties to encounter. He may not be proud of his wealth, talents, or high station; he may not be lewd, avaricious or quarrelsome in his dispo-

sition; nor a thief, defrauder or spend thrift; yet is he humane, just and charitable from principle? from a settled conviction, we may add, that it is his indispensable duty? Is he ready to assist his fellow beings notwithstanding it would require a personal sacrifice? Does he confer benefits upon those who have offended him? Does he terminate each day with the consciousness that he has performed some christian duty?

With every succeeding year there are some new traits developed in our characters of which we were before ignorant. Therefore we must continually guard against those causes that might predispose us to evil. A virtuous youth may degenerate into a sinful man; an aimable female, into a dissolute woman. And as every age has its good and evil propensities, we should not suffer, our exertions to cease, when we have cleansed ourselves from one sin. Our wicked inclinations will assuredly return, perhaps with a still more flattering tongue, and our designs will be eventually frustrated if we rest in too great security.

“Watch and pray; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” How often have I reflected upon these expressive words, and in moments of enthusiastic devotion, I have fancied how easy it would be to endure the sufferings, of Christ and become like unto him in holiness. But my resolution, I fear, is often like that of Peter’s, who said he would rather die, than prove faithless. Still, let me follow his example, and never despair of making myself worthy of a Redeemer’s love. Let me persevere in the ways of holiness, that I may become more and more perfect every day. I will break

asunder the chains that have bound my soul in bondage. I will root out the iniquity that has poisoned the virtuous impulses of my nature. There is a glorious immortality before me—a high prize, to which my aspirations shall tend, and may God arm me with strength to accomplish my purposes.

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH.

Our minds are frequently perplexed and confused by listening to the various opinions of men in regard to religion. One individual will confidently assert that we need only believe in the sacrifice and atoning blood of Jesus Christ in order to sanctification : another, that salvation does not rest in belief, unless that belief is made manifest by purity and holiness of heart. We hear these contradictions, even in the house of the Lord. What one rejects, another piously recommends. While one urges faith, as the only true foundation of Christian piety, the other only requires a moral and virtuous conduct, as the substance and ground-work of religion.

These disputes produce many uncharitable feelings, and often divide and separate congregations. The weak man, at last, begins to waver, and thinks only of administering to his carnal appetite. He leaves off all religious ceremonies, and is contented with the common prudence of life. He only performs those duties that will contribute to his immediate advantage, and his future destination he leaves altogether to accident.

If I am correct in my observations of men, particularly those who rank as the more intelligent and enlightened, I find that they generally have an aversion to all religious

creeds or matters of faith. They know nothing of them, except what they occasionally hear at church, to which they now and then resort as a matter of decency, or in conformity to general custom. Thus it becomes, every day, more and more the fashion to consider religious worship, not as a thing of great or paramount importance, but merely as one of the moral duties of life. Man often flatters himself that he discovers in it a degree of pride, pomp and splendor; deceit, hypocrisy and fanaticism, over all of which he claims a more elevated station.

A consequence of this evil is, that such people seldom, if ever, communicate with their children upon religious subjects. It would seem as though they considered it almost degrading to talk seriously of the truths of Christianity. Their offspring, therefore, are left to choose and examine for themselves, when their judgments are more fully matured. They think they have done all that is requisite, by training them up in the path of decency and sobriety, without reference to the eternal welfare of their souls. Public devotion they either neglect or despise. The whole universe, they say, is the temple of God, and the exercise of honest and benevolent principles, the most acceptable worship.

Thus it is! But he who is resolved to be a christian, must shake off such indifference. We have a choice to make—either of infidelity, or faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And why has he enjoined the latter upon us as indispensably requisite to our salvation, if it could be accomplished by the force of moral rectitude alone? How foolish it would be in poor, finite man, to disregard the doctrines that were propa-

gated by the saviour and his disciples, and in confirmation of which, they fearlessly encountered death in its most appalling forms! "Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to him must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

If virtue alone is sufficient to impart consolation to the sufferer, or hope to the despairing, why appeared Christ upon the earth? Had not Greece and Rome her teachers of the moral law before his birth? Yet he came, and "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

What is the advantage of faith? Why is it essential to our salvation? Why, without this, are all other virtues insufficient to promote our true happiness? The pious and ingenuous heart alone can truly answer.

Take away the Creator from the midst of his works, and what then would the Universe appear? A mysterious combination of matter singularly regulated by the most harmonious laws! And what the purpose of our lives? Must we reply that they seem to be without any definite aim? Where is the man who is not awed by such reflections? And do we not feel the necessity of a faith that changes darkness to light—that puts to rest every seeming contradiction. Without it, indeed, no true wisdom can exist; for it is founded upon something more than the common maxims of life. Without it, we are lost to that grandeur and sublimity of soul, which we would otherwise experience. Without faith in our immortality, existence is as a shadow. Without faith, how easily would every noble principle be prostrated by the influence of passion! It gives

strength to our reason, and keeps alive our piety, even at the risk of ignomy and persecution.

Such is the influence that is exercised by christian faith upon the human heart. What are all our beneficent deeds without it? Merely the offspring of a benevolent disposition without anticipation of any other reward than that of men.

Without faith, there can be no solid comfort or consolation. In the day of adversity, when poverty and sickness come upon us, nothing else can tranquillize our minds. Only the belief in a wise providence, who governs and directs the whole universe, can elevate the mind beyond the reach of despair.

See the husband, who is destitute of faith, standing at the sick bed of a beloved wife. The faint smile that plays upon her lips, or the feeble pressure of her hand, denote that in a little while she will be in eternity. What can console him? The hope of joining her in the land of spirits, imparts no gladness to his gloomy soul, because he indulges not in those blessed anticipations. And when he approaches the threshold of the tomb, into which he will shortly descend, what must be his feelings when he reflects for a moment that his body is about to be given up a prey to the insatiate worms, and his existence be for ever terminated! Alas! poor mortal man! Thy youth has been marked by folly—and thy riper years wasted in vain pursuits. And yet thou will sometimes boast of thy benevolence and virtue—without possessing an atom of either. Away with such vain conceits, for the Son of God hath said:

“He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also.” He, alone, is the pillar of the good man’s hopes. He hears every prayer—he counts every repentant tear; and all who call upon his name, and rely faithfully upon his power to save, will be rewarded with eternal life.

LOVE AND FEAR OF GOD.

First Reflection.

When I look upon the past, when the earth was without form, and the sun gave no light, my soul is wraped in a mysterious awe. The centuries that have elapsed since the creation, have all been marked by some particular event. Nations and empires have been broken up—but the earth remains as an immsense tomb of all who appeared upon its surface. The dust which I move by my footsteps, is the decay of a former age. But I leave these things, and return to a contemplation of myself. Out of nothing was I created; the body, which, to day, I am so careful to protect, may to-morrow be reposing in the grave. Friends will assemble and weep over me, as I have wept over those who have gone before me; and while this frail tenement—the body—returns to primeval dust, the spirit which it enshrines, will survive its wreck, and under the guidance of an omnipotent power, will be ushered into a new kingdom. Who, by such reflections, is not filled with fear and astonishment? Who can thoroughly comprehend himself, or the world, or futurity? Still we must not give ourselves up to doubt, or skepticism. Let our spirits take a hue of gladness from the glory and magnificence of the Universe. If we visit.

the chamber of the dead, the silence that reigns, will turn our thoughts to the infinite Jehovah. If we look forward to eternity, we shall behold, instead of endless night, the bright and radiating throne of the Eternal.

Holy, holy is the Lord God of Israel! He is the light and perfection of our nature—the beginning and end of the world. I continually enjoy his blessings, unworthy as I must appear in his sight. He is a merciful judge, and I will pour out my prayers for his acceptance. I will cleanse my heart of wickedness, and lessen the multitude of my sins. The love of the Saviour will never die, and while the tears of my repentance continue to flow, I have an assurance of happiness beyond the grave.

Such are the feelings, which we naturally experience, when we contemplate the character of God. It is a secret reverence, amounting almost to awe, arising from a consciousness of his greatness and glory; but mingled, at the same time with the recollection that he is our kind and beneficent Father. The fear of God, therefore, which is spoken of in the sacred writings, is not accompanied by despair. It is only the respect and humility that the creature should manifest in the presence of his Creator. "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father."

He, who would cherish other feelings than these, is not imbued with a christian spirit. He, who would subject himself to the operation of the same fear, in relation to his Maker, that controls him in the presence of an avenging

enemy, is far from fulfilling the precepts of Christ : for, says the apostle, “ God is love,” and “ in love there is no fear ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment.”

It is with regret that I behold such an infinite number of professing christians, who from some cause or other, have imbibed a wrong notion of the Deity, and altogether mistaken the nature of his attributes. Every attempt to worship him, is not from choice, but rather a misgiving of his wrath. They are less thankful for his mercies, than they are affrighted by the expectation of his punishment. They resemble the heathens who offer sacrifices to their Gods—not from a feeling of love ; but with the hope of appeasing their anger. Let us, therefore, cease to encourage those superstitious fears, which, even at the present day, are attempted to be instilled into the mind by those who represent God as a cruel, merciless and implacable being. It cannot be denied that they do exist in an eminent degree. Observe those, for instance, who worship God as though it were a painful duty. We may hear them uttering prayers, without giving any other proof of their holiness. They live only for the pleasures of the world ; they enjoy the blessings of their heavenly Father, but do not return him their thanks. And they are the first to tremble, if, as they fancy, his wrath is about to come upon them. If the elements are threatening them with destruction—if a storm is raging in the heavens, and the lightnings are darting from the gored bosom of the clouds—then, indeed, they betake themselves to prayer—then they fall down in penitence before the living God, and earnestly entreat his

pardon and forgiveness. But the tempest passes away, and with it their anguish, their contrition, their promises. All is forgotten; and their wickedness resumes its sway. They even laugh at the recollection of their fears, while they were thus menaced.

If such miserable creatures find themselves in some unexpected embarrassment or extremity;—if the life of some dearly cherished friend is threatened with disease—if some favourite project is likely to prove abortive—if, perchance, they are cast upon a bed of sickness, and despair of recovery—then, like the heathens, they offer up prayers and vows, as if they supposed nothing further was requisite. But this is the timidity of a mean and govenling spirit, and not the true, rational and christian like fear of God.

The more we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, the more clearly we comprehend the extent of his wisdom and goodness. Without a proper understanding of his perfections, we would be lost to that degree of love and reverence which he would otherwise inspire. But with this knowledge, our righteousness increases, and our faith is established on a sure foundation.

The fear of God, is the beginning of wisdom. Without this, there can be no piety, and without piety there can be no solid peace or happiness.

It would seem as though mankind had but little regard for each other. We see, almost every day, some fraudulent transaction carried on before our eyes. One man will deceive or impose upon his neighbour—and each will alternately flatter or deprecate as may best suit his interest

or inclination. "He who loveth God, loveth his brother also: and if a man say he loveth God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

There are abundant proofs in the conduct of men, to show that there is a defect in their religious principles--that they but seldom occupy their minds with the things of the Lord. If we go into certain societies, notwithstanding their pretensions to intelligence, we hear them ridiculing the idea of a Saviour--as he is represented in the inspired volume--and laughing to scorn all who would presume to assert such a belief. If we enter the courts of justice, we may there behold an individual taking a solemn oath with the same indifference that he would address a friend upon some light and trivial subject--or another laying perjury to his soul, through some interested motive, and at the same time calling on God to witness the solemnity of his vow. Verily, we might almost suppose that the world had relapsed into barbarism. Even the heathens had a greater reverence for the idols which they were accustomed to worship, than many christians of the present day, have for the living and true God. "Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

The fear of God, is the source of every virtue. In moments of temptation, it is the safeguard of our innocence--it enables us to counteract many unholy desires. When ambition prompts us to some improper conduct--when

pleasure allures us from the path of rectitude ; here is a warning voice—a power that withholds us from the jaws of destruction.

God is perfect, and the unrighteous he drives from his presence. Let us, therefore, live holy, that we may stand before him, as we would stand before an old and venerable friend, whose feelings we would not injure, or whose respect we would not forfeit.

THE LOVE AND FEAR OF GOD.

Second Reflection.

Important and indispensable as are the duties which a man owes to his fellow beings in society, still none of them can ever become paramount to that love and obedience which is due his Creator. Friends and acquaintances may be hurried away by death; but God forever remains with us. The former may forget their friendships--their promises of love and fidelity; but he continues just and faithful to the end. The beauty and flush of youth may vanish--pleasures may flee away—we may no longer receive the smiles and approbation of men; yet is God, notwithstanding, unchanged and immutable.

Ideas in relation to the supreme being are varied in different people, according to their peculiar temperament, disposition or circumstances. Here is a set of men, calling themselves christians, who are continually complaining that God will not grant their prayers—that he will not, with all their entreaties, comply with their wishes. There are others, who do not hesitate to ask his assistance even for the accomplishment of some infamous purpose--infamous, we repeat; for we cannot speak in less qualified terms—and it is to be regretted, that we behold men in an enlightened age, who would feign make God an instrument to

effect a project dictated solely by their ambition, their malice, or their lust. The prayer of an untamed animal, had it a knowledge of a higher being, could not be less characteristic of its brutal and ferocious nature.

He, who is of a gay and cheerful turn, looks upon God as a being full of mercy and love, and who certainly will not punish his children with undue severity. On the contrary, a gloomy, melancholy, and easily provoked mind, lends itself to believe that he is forever angry, jealous and vindictive; visiting the sins of the father upon the third and fourth generation, and testing the faithfulness of his creatures by every variety of suffering, before he receives them into the kingdom of glory. Such are the differences of opinion among men in relation to the omnipotent. One stands before him as an awed and trembling slave: another approaches him, as a dutiful child approaches its beloved parent. But every misconception of this great and important subject will be rectified by a proper understanding of the divine law. This is the only true light to direct our wandering footsteps. It teaches us to repose confidence in our heavenly father. "For verily I say unto you" saith Christ to his disciples, "that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." He also says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it,

namely, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self. There is none other commandment greater than these." This is of more value than burnt-offerings and sacrifices; and he who faithfully attends to these things, is "not far from the kingdom of God."

So taught Christ, and his disciples. The scriptures, also, frequently exhort us to fear the Lord. By this, however, we do not mean the terror that is experienced by the wicked; but simply the keeping of his commandments, and a strict observance of all his precepts. Therefore, is the fear of God, nothing more than the love of him, whereby our affections are chastened, and we partake, in some degree, of his purity and holiness.

How few can boast of having rendered themselves thus far perfect! We pray to God; but not with hearts overflowing with love and gratitude; and we often neglect, even the ceremony, until we find ourselves menaced with some calamity or danger, and know of no other hope or refuge than the Almighty.

To love God, we must fully understand him, and in order to do this, we have only to observe the wisdom he has displayed in his creation—the order and regularity with which he governs the world, and the kindness which he bestows upon all his creatures. Nor should we ever neglect an opportunity of making ourselves still better acquainted with his character. Then will he appear to us with increased sublimity; and his goodness and mercy, and compassion more infinite.

How often have I deceived myself with the impression

that I was one of the chosen of God, when, indeed, my heart was full of envy and bitterness! How often also under the guise of sanctity, have I given a loose reign to my unholy desires, or exercised cruelty towards my fellow beings. But henceforth I will love them all—I will banish hatred and jealousy from my breast—I will have no enemy upon the earth. If they persecute me, it shall be without cause; if they have no respect for me, it will not be for the want of my endeavours to deserve it.

And in order to this, oh, most merciful Father, inspire me with thy love, that I may not waver in my efforts—that I may belong to thee, and thee only, both now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER.

He, who, in the fulness of his heart, silently worships the adorable creator, enjoys a pleasure that earth cannot give; his spirit leaves this scene of doubt and perplexity, and revels, for a moment, in the empire of etherial bliss.

There are few who do not engage in prayer. It is not confined to the christian alone; but even the savage, who roams along the solitary streams of India, humbles himself before a superior being. Although he is enveloped in mental darkness, yet his heart is full of religion; and if he lifts his voice in supplication to the stars, he will not be overlooked by Him who numbers even the flowers of the field.

The wisest, as well as the most ignorant; the strongest, as well as the weakest, have, all alike, participated in prayer, because they felt an irresistable desire to be associated with God. The king, notwithstanding the imperial grandeur with which he is surrounded, and the adulation that is paid to his station by venal courtiers, cannot but feel that he is as a worm of the dust, and therefore, offers up his prayers to heaven. With the same spirit does the philanthropist go forth rejoicing, with the hope of lessening the burden of human affliction. The youth, who quits for a time, the bustle of the world to which he has been accustomed, and retires into silence and meditation, sees at a distance the gathering

storm with which he must contend, and his thoughts centre almost involuntarily upon his Maker. He knows of no friend who will be more faithful; no father more kindly; no protector, more powerful. Such, too, is almost the only solace of the rude soldier, who knows not how soon his bleeding corse may be stretched upon the field of battle. The mother prays in the midst of her children; and the widow, over the grave of her beloved husband; and, at last, the vicious and abject wretch, who, unexpectedly, is laid upon the bed of death. He sees that he is but a shadow of his former self; and he now shudders with the same abhorrence at the thought of trifling away his time, as he was before pleased to deride and sneer at the devotions of the true christian.

But there is one we have not yet enumerated. This is the skeptic. In the midst of all he stands unmoved, as though his heart was of adamant. He is a monument of human wickedness and corruption, from whom the good man turns aside in disgust.

We must not pray merely for the purpose of acquiring a reputation for being a pious and orderly citizen. Miserable is the man, who, in his devotions, only thinks of the respect and honor of men. He is a pitiful hypocrite, who deserves no respect.

Nor should we pray simply because we were so taught in our childhood, or because it was the practice of our ancestors. We adhere to the form, while we neglect the spirit of those religious exercises. With us, they are often senseless and unmeaning words, which issue from our lips, and vanish

unheeded, in the air. We address ourselves to the Almighty, but in so negligent a manner, that we are scarcely conscious of what we have uttered. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." Only that prayer, which springs from the inmost fountain of the soul, is acceptable to the heavenly father.

The best of us, while our spirit abides in the tabernacle of clay, are but poor feeble mortals. We must, therefore, turn our thoughts to God, and partake of the gladness which he has prepared for his obedient children. And we will hold communion with him, as we are accustomed to do with our kind and affectionate parents, friends and protectors, who will love and cherish us; albeit we should not make known to them our wants, and necessities.

By prayer, we are enabled to look beyond the shadow of this earth, and behold glimpses of that kingdom that will never pass away. We approach nearer to the Deity. We feel that we are standing securely upon the rock of ages. We can now distinguish between the substance and shadow, between that which is perishable, and that which is eternal. The whole world is presented to us in another light. The earth upon which we tread, seems to be but one step in the great drama of existence. We look upon the starred heavens, and see but a trifling portion of the Almighty's works, and we glow with ecstasy and transport; an ethereal rapture thrills through every vein, and changes the very elements of our being. Such is the power of prayer.

The child that kisses the hand of its parent, acknowledges

a feeling of love and gratitude that is kindled in its heart. Why, then, shall I not revere my Creator and Preserver with filial tenderness and affection? If he has designed me for a higher sphere, why should I not worship him with all the fervor of an angel? as a being, in short, who lives in the anticipation of a better and more beautiful world? He hears the faintest whisper that escapes my lips; and he beholds every penitent tear that I shed, even as the mother beholds the smiles of her first born.

As an unworthy sinner, I will throw myself at the footstool of repentance, and supplicate the forgiveness of an offended Deity. I have already felt the punishment of my transgressions. But he will give me new strength, and new power, to regain all that I have lost. He will hear my prayers; he will be a witness that I am contending with the prince of darkness, and struggling to rid myself of the bonds of iniquity.

That man is far from being under the influence of prayer, who lives in discord with his neighbors, and is more willing to expose their faults than to extol their goodness; or who, himself, is characterized by his falsehood rather than truth; perfidy than faithfulness; cruelty than tenderness; or deceit than openness and candor.

Who does not remember an hour when he knelt before God with a burdened heart; when, indeed, his soul was weighed down with care and anxiety; and the world appeared to him a dreary and desolate waste; and, at the same time, did not feel an emotion of joy springing up in

his breast—a holy influence that could only be derived from the one, unvarying source, of all our good? O weak and perishing mortal, never cease thy prayers, nor weary in thy Devotions.

THE END.



APR 25 1933

