

Earnest appeals : in a series of letters, on subjects relating to the present and eternal happiness of the soul.

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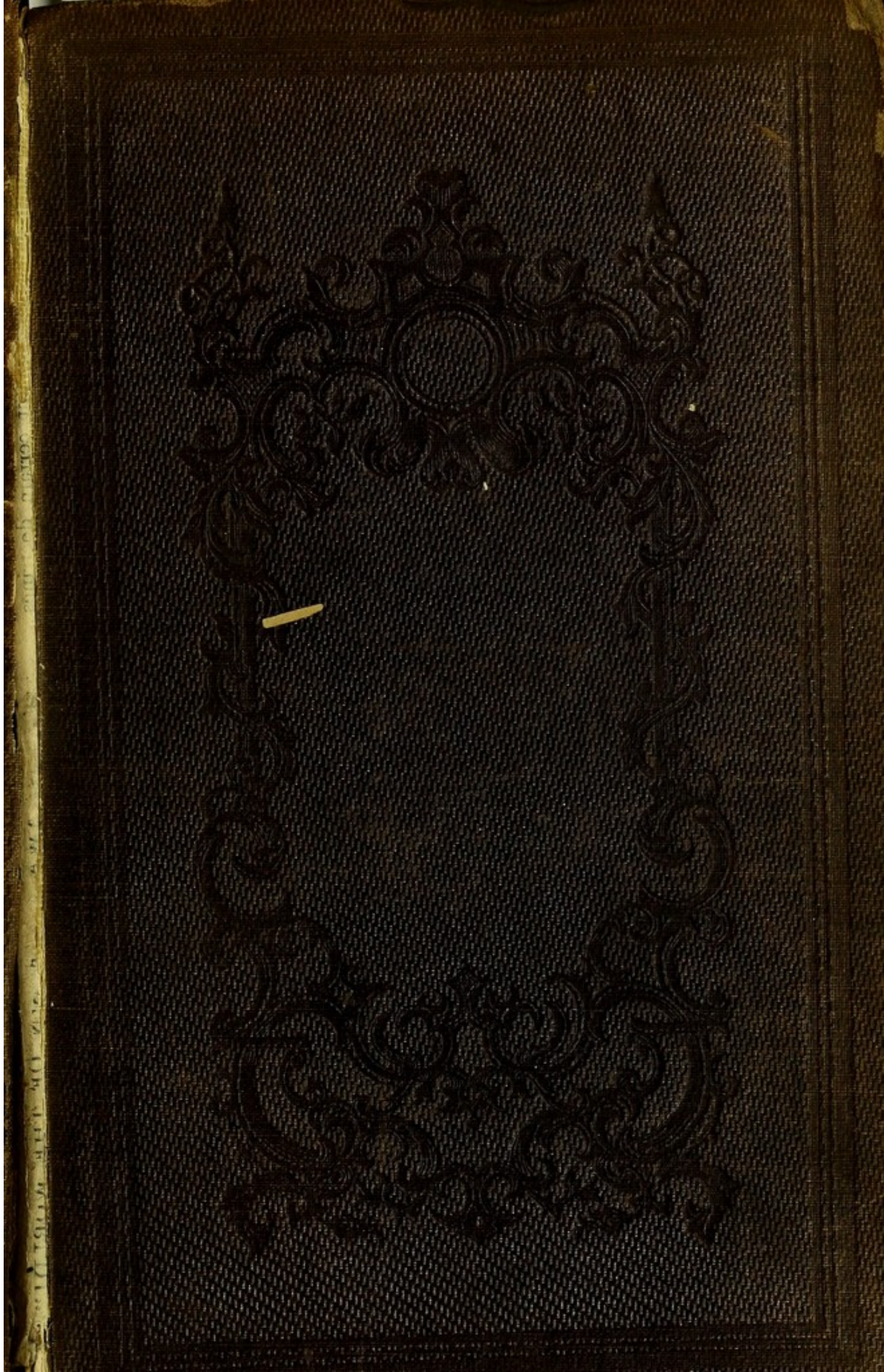
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OF

ROBERT BENTLEY TODD, M.D.

MARCH, 1860.

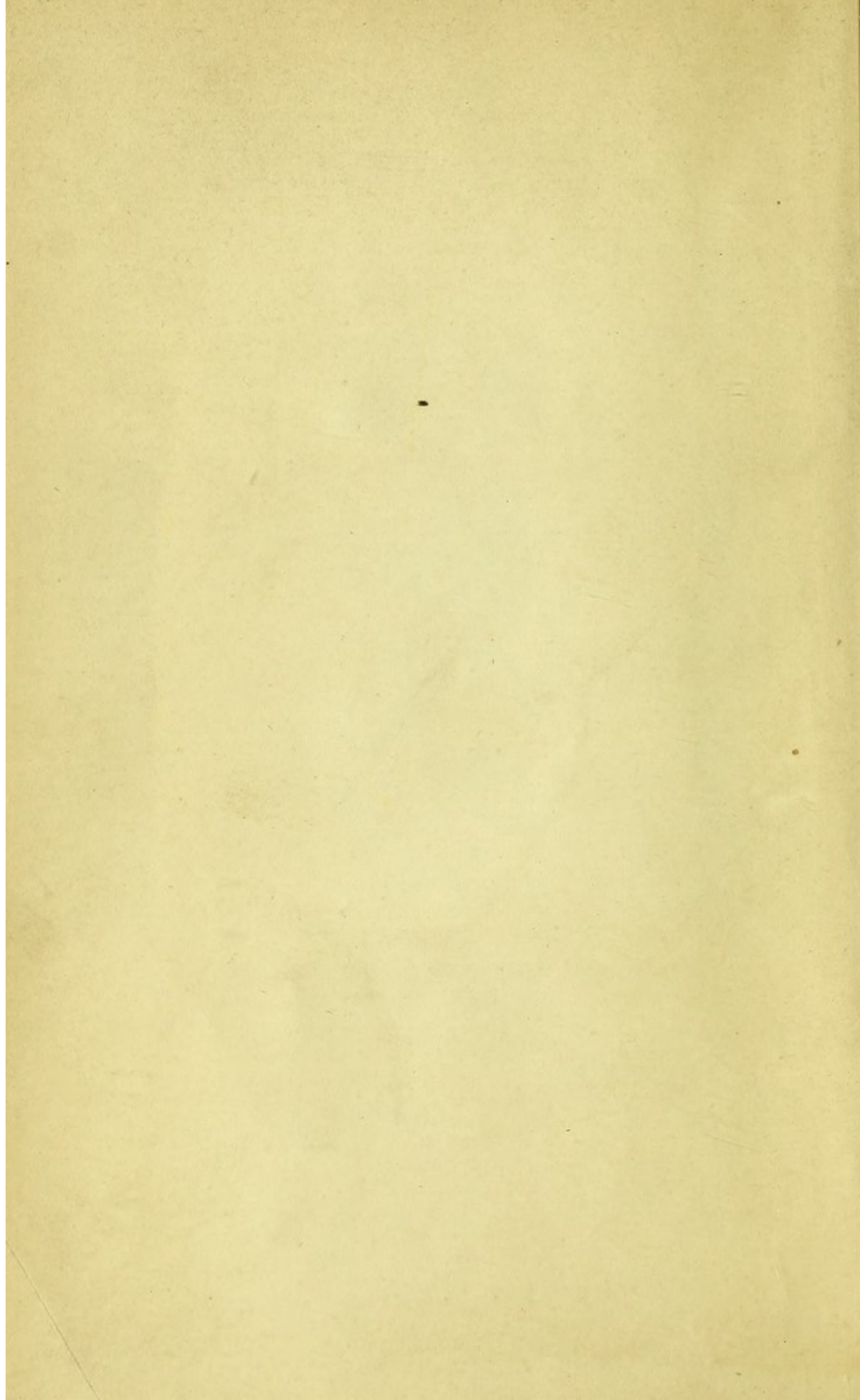
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EARNEST APPEALS.



VOL. III.

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EARNEST APPEALS:

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

ON SUBJECTS RELATING TO THE PRESENT AND

ETERNAL HAPPINESS OF THE SOUL.



VOL. III.

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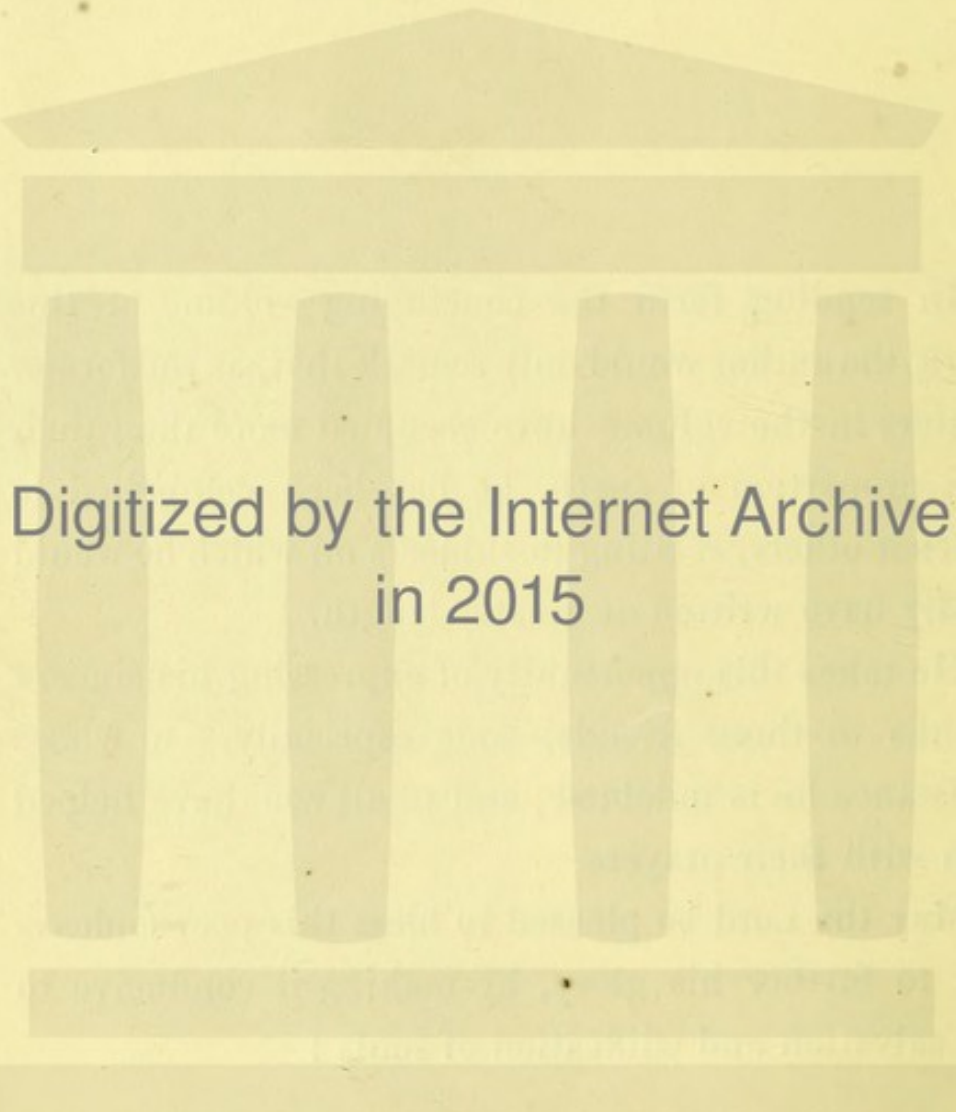
PREFACE TO VOL. 3.

In sending forth the concluding volume of this work, the author would only remark that, as the former Letters in the volume have occupied more than their due proportion of space, he has been compelled to shorten others, relating to subjects on which he would gladly have written at greater length.

He takes this opportunity of expressing his sincere thanks to those friends,—one especially,—to whose assistance he is indebted; and to all who have helped him with their prayers.

May the Lord be pleased to bless this poor endeavour to further his glory, by making it conducive to the salvation and edification of souls!

April 25th, 1854.



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ERRATA. (VOL. III.)

- Page 16, line 10, *omit that.*
Page 23, line 26, *for lesson, read lessen.*
Page 90, line 11, *for sacrifices, read sacrifice.*
Page 152, line 31, *for them read him.*
Page 158, line 23, (note) *for requisition, read acquisition.*
Page 168, line 25, (note) *after occurs insert in Gen. xxii. 24, or.*
Page 206, line 14, *for specil, read special.*
Page 228, line 26, *for the truth itself, read his true people.*
Page 246, line 5, *for calls, read call.*
Page 251, line 5, *for was, read is.*
Page 266, line 11, *after Church, insert giving rise to.*
Page 268, line 16, *for 481 read 451.*
Page 299, line 26, *erase period.*
Page 301, line 29, *add Other means used have since been made known, as the circulation of a book by Leang-Afa, containing extracts from Scripture.*
Page 302, line 1, *erase semicolon.*

OMITTED IN VOL. I.

- Page 14, line 11, *erase Cowper.*
Page 63, line 3, (note) *for Keane's, read Kaimes'.*

OMITTED IN VOL. II.

- Page 203, line 18, *for By the indwelling influence of his Holy Spirit, read He has given his Spirit to dwell in his people.*

ERRATA (VOL. II.)

Page 18, line 10, omit that
Page 22, line 20, for lesson, read lesson
Page 22, line 21, for lesson, read lesson
Page 22, line 21, for them read him
Page 22, line 22, (note) for repetition read repetition
Page 22, line 25, (note) after comma, insert in Gen. xxi. 21, 22
Page 22, line 24, for equal, read equal
Page 22, line 25, for the truth itself, read his true people
Page 22, line 26, for call, read call
Page 22, line 27, for was, read is
Page 22, line 28, of a Church, insert giving the
Page 22, line 29, for 281 read 281
Page 22, line 30, cross period
Page 22, line 31, and other means need have been made
known as the circulation of a book by
A. A. containing extracts from Scripture
Page 22, line 32, cross section

CONTENTS IN VOL. I.

Page 14, line 11, cross Chapter
Page 22, line 2, (note) for Kennen, read Kennen

CONTENTS IN VOL. II.

Page 202, line 12, for by the following John read of his Holy
Spirit, read He has given his Spirit to dwell in
the people

EARNEST APPEALS.

LETTER XXXVI.

ON PUBLIC WORSHIP.

FOUNDATION AND USE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.—ANCIENT AND UNIVERSAL PRACTICE.—TRACES OF ITS DEGENERATION INTO SUPERSTITION AND IDOLATRY.—TRACES OF IT IN THE SCRIPTURES.—NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES AMONGST CHRISTIANS.—IN WHAT IT CONSISTS.—APPEAL TO THE CARELESS.—TO THE NOMINAL PROFESSOR.—ADVANTAGE OF, TO THE TRUE CHRISTIAN.—THE DUTY URGED.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Every intelligent christian who reviews the history of God's dealings with mankind, must observe how the various dispensations of divine providence become subservient to the purposes of infinite wisdom, which combines the glory of God with the happiness of man. Through every stage of man's history we find he is under the superintending control of the divine Being, who is about his path, and taking cognizance of all his ways. And though man might at first have rendered to God that natural worship which was due

by the laws of his creation, yet since he has fallen from original righteousness, and forfeited every claim upon the divine favour, all acceptable worship in the sight of God must depend on his own voluntary choice and appointment. For he is not worshipped by man as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things ; nor can any ascription of praise add anything to the glory of his divine perfections.

‘Man is naturally a religious being,’* and public worship, as well as private prayer, is founded on natural religion, since the “deepest and highest feelings of our nature prompt to the exercise of it.” Admiration of the divine perfections, gratitude for his favours, as well as a sense of our dependence on him, call for united prayer and praise. Public worship is one great means of preserving the knowledge of a divine Being, by whose bounty and providence all live: and if even the heathen assemble to pay honour to those false gods which they ignorantly worship, assuredly it is the duty of every intelligent creature, to whom the true God is revealed, *publicly* to acknowledge him, and offer him that worship which himself has prescribed in his word.

It is interesting, though deeply humbling, to trace the various forms of idolatry into which men have fallen ; and it may be dwelt upon appropriately here, inasmuch as it serves to show that public worship is not confined to those who know the true God aright, but extends to the Mahometan and the heathen in their false worship. Men have differed in the manner in

* See Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation.

which they have observed the custom, but not in the custom itself.

‘In the primitive and patriarchal religion, as incidentally disclosed by Moses, we discover the leading character of that worship which was afterwards restored and guarded by the Jewish institutions: and which was calculated to preserve the knowledge of God, as the Creator of the world, as well as to inculcate the heinousness of sin, and typify the death of Christ, by the use of sacrifice. These simple ceremonies, together with the great rules of morality, and the prohibition of blood, formed the entire of the exterior religion of Noah. The higher we are able to trace the history of every ancient nation, and the nearer we approach the sources of eastern tradition, the plainer traces do we discover of this pure and simple worship; in which the father of a family acted as its priest, and assembled his progeny round the rustic altar of earth, to join in the sacrifice, and the prayers he offered to the Creator and governor of the world, to deprecate his wrath, and implore his blessing. But the corrupt imagination of men’s hearts would not permit them to rest satisfied with a religion so pure, and a ritual so simple: they looked to the sun* in its glory, they observed the moon and the stars walking in their brightness; they felt the benefits which through their influence were derived to men. They perhaps first considered them as the peculiar residence, or the chief ministers, or the most worthy representatives of the divinity; and in honouring and worshipping them, possibly conceived they

* Vide Job xxxi. 26, 27. Deut. iv. 19.

were honouring the majesty, and fulfilling the will of their Creator: but they soon forgot the Creator whom they could not see, and gave his glory to the creature whose existence was obvious to the sense, and captivating to the imagination. They seem to have conceived these luminaries to be moved and animated by distinct and independent spirits, and therefore fit objects of immediate worship. To represent them in their absence, they erected pillars and statues on the tops of hills and mountains, or on pyramids and high buildings raised for the purpose; as if they could thus approach nearer the presence of their divinities. They set apart priests and appointed times and sacrifices suited to the luminary they adored: hence the rising and the setting sun,—the different seasons of the year,—the new and full moon,—the quarters of the heavens,—the constellations and conjunctions of the stars,—acquired a peculiar sacredness, and were conceived to possess a peculiar influence. It now became the interests of the priests to persuade men that the pillars and statues set up as representatives of the host of heaven, partook themselves of the same spirit, and communicated the same influence, as the sacred objects which they represented. Thus degraded man, lowered down to the senseless image which he had himself set up, being deceived, could not say, “*Is there not a lie in my right hand?*” (*Is. xliv. 20.*) From similar principles, other men adopted different objects of worship; light and air, wind and fire, seemed to them active spirits, by whose beneficent energy all the operations of nature were conducted and controlled. Water and earth formed the univer-

sal parents, from which all things derived their origin, and to which they were still indebted for their sustenance. Thus these also became the objects, first of gratitude and admiration, next of awe and reverence. They also had their temples and emblematic images, their priests and worshippers.

‘ But the folly of idolatry did not stop here. Not satisfied with adoring the host of heaven and the elements of nature as the beneficent instruments of blessing, human weakness led man, first to tremble with horror, and then to bow down with a base and grovelling superstition to objects of an opposite nature, to every thing which seemed gloomy and malignant. The mixture of good and evil in the world suggested the idea of an evil principle, independent of and at war with the good, which it was necessary to soothe and conciliate. Darkness, storm, and pestilence, the fates, the furies, and a multitude of similar objects, were honoured with a heart-debasing homage by their terrified and trembling votaries. Nor was this yet the worst: gratitude to the inventor of useful arts,—to the wise legislator,—to the brave defender of his country,—combined with the vanity of kings, the pride of conquerors, and even private affection, and fond regret for the parent, the child, the consort, the friend, led men first to erect monuments to the memory of the dead, and then to worship them as divine. They sometimes transferred to these their fellow creatures, the names of the luminaries and elements of nature, whose utility and beneficence they conceived were thus best represented. Hence, in process of time, arose a communication of attributes and honours,

—of priests and worshippers; and to close the degrading catalogue of idolatrous absurdities, and verify St. Paul's assertion, that "*professing themselves to be wise they became fools*, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things,"—Egypt, the chief seat of ancient wisdom and policy, of arts and letters, introduced objects of worship, still more grovelling and base than any which had preceded. In some instances the policy of its kings led them to encourage the preservation of those animals whose labours they employed in cultivating the earth, or whose useful activity they saw exerted in destroying the venomous reptiles and destructive animals by which they were infested. For this purpose they sanctified them as emblematic of some divinity, or even worshipped them as in themselves divine: while on the other hand, the Egyptian priests, with an affectation of mysterious wisdom, expressed the attributes of God, the operations of the elements, the motions and influences of the heavenly bodies, the rising and falling of the Nile, and its effects, by symbolic representations derived from the known and familiar properties of animals, and even vegetables. Hence these became, first, representations of their divinities, and afterwards the direct objects of divine reverence. Thus man was taught to bow down to birds, and beasts, and creeping things,—to plants and herbs,—to stocks and stones. Nothing was too base for grovelling superstition to adore: the heavens, the earth, the air, the sea, each hill, each river, each wood, was peopled with imagi-

nary deities ; every nation, every city, every family, had its peculiar guardian gods. The name and reverence of the Supreme Father of the universe was banished from the earth ; or if remembered at all, men scrupled not to associate him with their basest idols ; and deeming him too exalted and remote to regard human affairs, they looked at these idols as the immediate authors of evil and of good ; they judged of their power by comparing the degrees of prosperity their worshippers enjoyed : was one nation or family more successful than another, their guardian gods were adopted by their rivals ; and every day extended more widely this intercommunity of folly and of blasphemy.*

We may draw another argument in favour of public worship from the nature of man, which prompts to the exercise of social affections ; and in the christian church we may further ground it upon the spiritual relationship in which each member of the church of Christ stands to all the other members. The value of retirement for the purposes of self-examination, meditation, and prayer, is great ; but ‘perpetual isolation must always be dangerous to the spiritual life,’ inasmuch as it fosters selfish and exclusive feelings, and deprives a man of the edification which he may derive from intercourse with believers. Must we not say ‘it is sinful and malicious?’ that thereby dishonour is done to Christ, the spirit of christianity opposed, and the real ends of the communion of saints subverted ? since it is the duty of each member to do his part in “making increase of the body unto

* See Dr. Graves’ Lectures on the Pentateuch, Book ii. chap. 1.

the edifying of itself in love." This involves mutual sympathy. It leads christians to rejoice to meet together to hear the common charter of their salvation, with one mind and one mouth to present their supplications, and to glorify God by offering him praise.

The gathering of all nations before the golden image set up by king Nebuchadnezzar in the plain of Dura,* and the cry raised in the tumultuous concourse at Ephesus, when all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," † no less than the public assemblies of the heathen in the present day, are sufficient proofs of the natural readiness of men to honour the objects of their worship publicly. Coldness and disobedience in such a service was deemed worthy of death. Nay, every object of interest, of whatever kind, drew crowds together proportioned to its supposed merit or excellence; and men so far from being ashamed of testifying aloud their wonder and delight, are prompt to do so; not only in order to give vent to their feelings, but fearing lest they may be deemed either ignorant or ungrateful, were they to withhold the praise which is deemed justly due. Apply this to the worship of him who by his excellent wisdom framed the heavens, and upholds all things by the word of his power; and who, when man fell, so loved us, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that he might open to the ungodly a way of restoration to his favour here, and to his presence in glory hereafter; and shall any one think it enough to say, "*I pray to God, and praise him at home?*"

* Daniel iii. 6.

† Acts xix. 34.

Many instructive lessons respecting public worship may be drawn from the conduct of the pious in all ages of the world. References to scripture may be profitably added. 'The worship of the earliest ages appears to have been very free from restraint, consisting for the most part of prayers, altars, sacrifices, tithes, and vows. (*Gen.* iv. 3, 4; viii. 20; xii. 7, 8; xiii. 4, 13; xiv. 20; xv. 8-20, &c.)*' The brief history of the lives of the antediluvians, furnishes us with only few particulars respecting their worship. A more full account, though still limited, is given of the patriarchs after the flood; but the little handed down to us, aided by a knowledge of human nature, and the character of God, does not leave us to doubt that, whether we look to the days of Enos, the son of Seth, and find it recorded, that "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord," †—or to Enoch, of whom we read that he "walked with God," and "prophesied," ‡—or to the "sons of God" before they were drawn to intermarry with the "daughters of men," §—or afterwards to what is said respecting the sacrifice which was offered by Noah, when he and his family came forth from the ark, || or respecting Abraham and his care for his household:—their desire to glorify God, and lead others to do so,** would prompt to united worship, to prayer, and praise, as well as instruction in the will and ways of the Lord.

What nature prompted to, or God expressly en-

* See Arch. Bib. a Jahn, sect. 304.

+ Gen. iv. 26.

‡ Gen. v. 24. Heb. xi. 5. Jude 14.

§ Gen. vi. 1, 2.

|| Gen. viii. 20.

** Gen. xviii. 19.

joined, in the earlier days, received not only the sanction, but the plain direction of God, under the Mosaic dispensation. 'As regards prayer, men were yet left to offer that which their inward feelings dictated. He however gave a pattern, after which thanks might be rendered to God, at the offering of the firstfruits. (*Deut.* xxvi. 3-10, 13-15.) 'Hymns were sung on remarkable occasions. (*Exod.* xv. *Judg.* v.) See also respecting prayer, 1 *Kings* viii. 14-21. *Psa.* lxxii. 19. *Neh.* viii. 6. The regulation for assembling together three times in every year, to offer sacrifices;*—the position of the altar in the outer court, where the animals offered were slain in the sight of all present;†—the appointment of a tribe whose duty "was to teach the people the law;"‡—the command to read the law publicly to all Israel, men, women, and children, and the stranger within their gates, every seventh year, in the solemnity of the year of release;§—the natural connexion of sacrifice with prayer and praise,|| and the promptings of the heart to pray in the place where God especially manifested his presence,** and where gifts were offered;—the instances of prayer offered;††—the apparent agreement, moreover, of times of prayer with those times for offering stated sacrifices in the temple;‡‡—the praise offered by persons appointed by David to sing

* *Exod.* xxiii. 14-17. *Deut.* xvi. 16; also xii. 5-7. 2 *Chron.* vii. 15, 1.

† *Exod.* xl. 6. † *Levit.* x. 11. *Deut.* xxiv. 8; xxxiii. 10. *Mal.* ii. 6-9.

§ *Deut.* xxxi. 9-13. || *Isa.* lvi. 7. *Luke* i. 9, 10; ii. 27-38.

** *Exod.* xxix. 43; xl. 34, 35. 1 *Kings*, viii. 10, 11.

†† 1 *Sam.* i. 9-17. *Luke* ii. 27-38; xviii. 2, &c.

‡‡ *Exod.* xxx. 7, 8. *Num.* xxviii. 9, 10. *Luke* i. 10. *Acts* iii. 1.

in the temple, and to thank and praise the Lord;* the promises to regard the prayers offered in the temple,† and to come and bless Israel in all places where he should record his name;‡—the houses of God, or assemblies of God,§ whether they denote schools of prophets, or places where men at a distance from Jerusalem might meet for religious purposes;—like the *proseuchæ*,|| or synagogues, (the name of which denoted public assemblies,) though the date of these may be in Ezra's time;—the words of God by Isaiah, afterwards used by Christ when he cleansed the temple, “Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people:” these are among the proofs that men assembled for the service of God, and that it was his will. The neglect of the duty at any period, be that period ever so long, is not a proof of the absence of the command, but of the sinful way in which it was disregarded; as in the case of the Israelites omitting the rite of circumcision for forty years, when passing through the wilderness. What is named of Ezra, Asa, and Jehoshaphat, shows the desire to return to duty; and the mention in the days of Asa, that there was “no teaching priest,” plainly implies the neglect of positive duty on the part of that order. (*Neh.* viii. 4-13. *2 Chron.* xv. 3; xvii. 7-9.)

Christ and his apostles, by their practice, strongly add their testimony to the important duty before us. Of Christ, we read that he went, *as his custom was*, into the synagogue at Nazareth, where he had been

* 1 Chron. xxiii. 30; xv. 1-3, &c. + 2 Chron. vii. 15. Isa. lvi. 7.
 † Exod. xx. 24. § Psa. lxxiv. 8. || Luke vi. 12. Acts xiii. 13-16.

brought up, and stood up for to read:* also that he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom.† The apostles also preached commonly in the synagogues, ‡ which were frequented on the sabbath day.

In the synagogues on the sabbath day, after private prayers, public prayer was offered,—part of the law of Moses was read,—and afterwards part of the books of the prophets: the ruler, or one appointed by him, expounded the scriptures,—praise was offered, and alms for the poor collected. §

The public service of the early christians differed from that in use in the synagogues, in that they had the breaking of bread. || They sang hymns also to Christ as God. Early mention is made of their assembling in houses for united service,** as the Jews are said to have done in places where there were not a sufficient number of persons to form a synagogue. After the ascension of Christ, we read of the apostles, with certain women who believed, assembling in an upper room, and continuing together with one accord in prayer and supplication. †† Ten days after they were all with one accord in one place. ‡‡ “And,” again, “continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to

* Luke iv. 16-32.

+ Matt. iv. 23; ix. 35; xii. 10. Mark i. 39. Luke iv. 44; xiii. 10. John xviii. 20.

† Acts xiii. 5, 14, 15, &c.; xvii. 4, &c. Col. iv. 15. See also Mark i. 21; iii. 1; vi. 2. Luke vi. 6. Acts xiii. 14; xv. 21; xvi. 2, 13; xvii. 1, 2; xviii. 4.

§ See Arch. Bib. a Jahn. Sect. 312, 397. Acts xiii. 14, 15, 27; xv. 21.

|| Acts ii. 42; xx. 7. ** Philem. 2. Rom. xvi. 5.

++ Acts i. 13, 14.

†† Acts ii. 1, &c.

house. . . . praising God.”* Again, it is said of the apostles, that “daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” †

Do we, then, find any difference made respecting public worship under the christian dispensation? No, the custom had prevailed. It received the sanction of Christ and his apostles. The natural desires of man as a religious and social being, remain;—God still demands public honour and acknowledgment, as the universal giver of all our blessings;—man has the same wants to be supplied; every argument in favor of public worship continues. It remains then for the objector to prove that it is abrogated; but no such proof is to be found. The words, “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together,” urge christians not to neglect this duty. The apostle speaks of the disciples *coming together* for religious purposes, as in 1 *Cor.* xiv. 23, 26, where the miraculous gifts vouchsafed by the Spirit were exercised: again, in 1 *Cor.* xi. 18, 20. when they assembled to commemorate the death of Christ; which act would imply a meeting together. The habit of preaching in the synagogues shows also that the apostles availed themselves of the means of advancing the cause of the gospel publicly. From that time, christians, although they have differed in their forms, as the varieties of liturgies testify, have continued to observe public worship. In their mode of worship they appear to have followed that in use in the synagogues: they sang hymns,—offered prayer,—read the scriptures,

§ Acts ii. 46.

† Acts v. 42; iv. 20, 23-33. See also Acts xii. 12.

and, at one time, some other pious works,—were addressed and exhorted: the service was concluded with the celebration of the Lord's supper, and a collection for the saints.

We may, then, ask again, When this universal custom of meeting together for the public worship of God is considered, and heathens, Jews, and christians, are found to agree in observing it, what precedent shall one who neglects it have to sanction him? What is left but that of unbelievers? and is he willing to be classed with them? Further, look to the lives and dispositions of such as voluntarily neglect this custom from choice; are they such as to encourage others to follow their example? Is such an one a professor of religion? Does *brotherly love* and *zeal for Christ* mark his conduct? Does he make no profession? How then are his sabbaths spent? Is he not withdrawing himself from the means of christian instruction and reformation?

II. It may be useful here to inquire, what is the character of the worship which is acceptable in the sight of God? 'As it has been observed, this worship may be divided into the internal, as between God and a man's conscience; and the external, as connected with the forms of the church as a public society. These latter may be distinguished into *principal* rites, as divinely instituted; and *inferior* or indifferent ones, as being of human appointment. These latter may have arisen as circumstances suggested their adoption to pious and holy men, in the different ages of the church; and thus when simple and in accordance with the word and tenor of the gospel, serve

to the maintenance of the spiritual life;’ and, constituted as man is, those who may be disposed to make light of them would do well to consider whether there be not great danger of their losing with them somewhat of the substance of religion itself. ‘But as Bishop Butler remarks, “Though mankind have in all ages been greatly prone to place their religion in peculiar positive rites, by way of equivalent for obedience to moral precepts; yet without making any comparison at all between them, the nature of the thing abundantly shows all notions of that kind to be utterly subversive of true religion.”’

‘The nature of the privileges of the christian worshipper may be brought to mind by contrasting him, as an eminent prelate of our church observes,* “with the Jew, seeking year after year, in his observance of the painful ordinance of the Mosaic ritual, to catch a glimpse as it were of better things to come through the veils and shadows of the ceremonial law; or, with the heathen, erecting an altar to the unknown God, sacrificing their sons and their daughters to devils; or with the fool that saith in his heart, There is no God; or with the man of the world,—earthly, sensual, devilish,—whose heart is in his treasure; or with the nominal professor, who saith with his lips, Lord, Lord, and makes a dull, and cold, and formal, subscription with his hand to truths which he virtually denies in thought, word, and action; or with the lukewarm and unstable, who are neither hot nor cold, wavering to and fro, carried about with every wind of

* Bishop of Winchester, Serm. on Phil. iii. 3.

doctrine. The christian who worships God in the spirit, has nothing in common with such characters." Nor can we suppose that the Lord was pleased with any but sincere worshippers under a former dispensation. Sincerity and truth must ever be essential characteristics of the worship of the all-seeing God. When the temple was consecrated, Solomon prayed that when they made their supplications before the Lord, and returned to him *with all their heart and soul*, that the Lord would hear their prayer and supplication, and maintain their cause.* Hence we have it in another place declared, "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."† So that instead of making a fair show in the flesh by a formal attendance upon the outward means, he that will serve God acceptably must worship him "in spirit and in truth." Jesus tells us that the Father seeketh such to worship him: and while the formalist worships in vain, those who offer the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit shall never be permitted to "seek his face in vain."

In public worship we are to hear the scriptures read and expounded; since faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. The preaching of the gospel has been one of the great objects of a christian ministry being raised up and continued in the church. Ministers being described as ambassadors for Christ, as beseeching sinners in his stead to

* 1 Kings viii. 48, 49. Jer. xxix. 12-14.

† Jer. lvi. 1, 2.

be reconciled unto God. Indeed, the preaching of the word, besides dispensing the provisions of the gospel to the Lord's family, has been especially honoured of God and proved effectual through the Holy Spirit's influence in turning sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. And do not the words of Christ, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them," mark the present dispensation? How carefully, then, should their privileges be preserved to them.

The men of the world despise these means, because they are strangers to their power. They call them foolish, because they have not the eyes of their minds enlightened to see their wisdom; but meanwhile, although the preaching of Christ crucified is to multitudes now, as to the Jews, a stumbling-block; and to multitudes in the present day, as to the Greeks, foolishness; it is, and has been in every age, to them that believe, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. While men by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, not by "wisdom of words," as men judge of wisdom, but "by the foolishness of preaching," as the natural man accounts of it, "to save them that believe."* Where are there most conversions? Is it not where the word is preached? There the sowers of the word are engaged in their spiritual work, and when fervent prayer attends it, the Spirit may be expected to cause the seed of truth to take root, and be quickened, and men to be begotten again thereby.

Seeing, moreover, that no worship can be acceptable, while the heart is not right towards God, a

* 1 Cor. i. 18-24.

just and scriptural view of our fallen state as sinners, should lead us to humble ourselves before him with deep sorrow of heart, and confess our sins unto him; and *confession of sin* becomes us when we meet together; and it may serve to humble us, to be brought to feel that we meet as fellow-sinners, before him with whom alone is the mercy, and the forgiveness, which our case requires.

Besides confession, *prayer* is an essential part of divine worship. Our state of dependence requires this; and on this ground when worshippers meet, union in prayer is one of their great duties, and high privileges. While writing on this subject, it may be well to ask, whether all communions are sufficiently alive to the importance and benefit of united prayer and supplication. How great might be the spiritual advantage if this were generally adopted. This would seem as eminently calculated to promote the edification of the saints, as the preaching of the word is for the awakening and conversion of sinners.

Another important part of divine worship is *thanksgiving*. When we reflect on the multiplied mercies we have received,—so unsearchable in their extent, and so astonishing in their effects,—feelings of gratitude should lead us to express our sense of the divine goodness and love in the congregation of his people. The worldly praise their idols; should not the song of praise rise from the public assembly of the children of God, as well as from their closets? It becometh well the just to be thankful. This was the language of the psalmist of old;—“Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion.” How elevating to the

spirit of the true worshipper, who engages in an act of devotion by which he is assimilated to, and is one in spirit with, the celestial choirs above, in lauding and magnifying the name of the Lord.

Further, divine worship includes the *christian ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper*. The observance of these is obligatory on all christians, inasmuch as they were appointed by Christ. By the one the believer binds himself to the profession of and obedience to the gospel,—to believe in the trinity of persons in the Godhead,—thereby acknowledging the Father as his Creator, the Son as his Redeemer, and the Spirit as his Sanctifier; and by the visible emblem of water, he is reminded of the provision made for his regeneration: and by partaking of the Lord's supper he testifies his continued faith in Christ, and has brought in the most lively and affecting manner to mind, the reality of that act of God's love, which was wrought on Calvary, when Christ gave his body, and shed his blood, for the remission of our sins.

Such being the character and privileges connected with public worship, it is a melancholy reflection that multitudes, even in this land of bibles, should neglect it, who have the opportunity of drawing from it the benefits it is eminently calculated to convey. The experience of believers will bear testimony to its value. How often has Christ, ever faithful to his promise, been present in spirit in the midst of his people, when the word preached has come home to their hearts with power and the Holy Ghost, and much assurance, so that they have been enabled to

say again and again, "It is good to be here ;" while multitudes who might have been present are following their idols. I trust you are enjoying the privileges of the former : if not, perhaps I am to address you as one whom some slight or trifling excuse, which would not have a feather's weight with you, were your worldly interest or even pleasure at stake, has frequently debarred from the privilege of worshipping in God's house ! Have you ever thought with seriousness, how often, on such occasions, the word read or preached,—the hymn sung,—or the prayers offered, might have suited your peculiar state ;—might have brought conviction or comfort to your soul ;—supported you in trials ;—warned you against dangers ;—given you light and guidance in difficulties ;—imparted to you clearer views of divine truth,—more perfect knowledge of the way of salvation ;—and in many ways have helped you forward in your christian course :—but other thoughts, cares, amusements, and visits, or, perhaps, disinclination, have furnished some frivolous plea, till like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears, you have been deaf to the voice of conscience which has warned you, or of ministers or friends who intreated you with tenderness to seek the Lord while he might be found, and to call upon him while he was near ? Probably, at present you are walking in spiritual darkness, while gospel light shines around you ; and loving to slumber, while the footsteps of the messenger may be heard at the door, or the knell of death sounding in your ears, "Prepare to meet thy God." It becomes you then, anxiously to reflect upon the obvious truth that you are answerable not only for a

right improvement of what you hear, but for the instruction which you might have received if you had been present.

But perhaps you are ready to say you are more regular in your attendance upon the public worship of the sanctuary,—that you are seldom absent, except when lawfully detained by some pressing circumstance. Allow me to ask, then, Is the character of your devotion in public worship spiritual? Do you come to God believing that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him? Have you a well-grounded hope that, instead of resting in outward forms or carnal ordinances, your religion is a living reality;—that you are aiming to draw from the means of grace strengthening and refreshing supplies in your upward and onward pilgrimage? Perhaps you are forward in defending the public services of your own communion, and call them unequalled; Are you always showing your sense of their excellence by earnestness, or even wakefulness? Do you hear the word preached with meekness? Do you love it? And are you endeavouring in simplicity and godly sincerity to direct your life in all things after it, and thus have your conversation in the world? How wretched and lamentable is the condition of a formal worshipper as described by Ezekiel: they “speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their

heart goeth after their covetousness.”* Oh, that men would consider that pharisaism abounds now, as well as when our Lord came! How forcibly his words apply to multitudes in the present day: “Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me,” &c. †

And yet to the true worshipper what can be more interesting than the times of refreshing he enjoys in public worship? He realizes the communion of saints. There he comes with joy to draw water from the wells of salvation: his willing soul would gladly linger where his impressions of the love of God were perhaps first received, and where they deepened as he heard of the provision made for poor sinners; hearing Christ preached, and believing, he is enabled to realize the truth that Christ is made of God unto him, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. His humility, also, is increased as he hears of the depravity of man, and his sin is brought to remembrance: he rejoices also in the setting forth of the influences of the Spirit, who teaches and sanctifies the people of God;—yea, sanctifies them wholly, and makes them meet to dwell with God.

An aged scripture reader expressed more than once the benefit he derived from public worship, in terms like these;—

I came as one who hungered, and was fed;
Thirsty, and water of refreshment found:

* Ezek. xxxiii. 30, 31.

† Matt. xv. 7-9.

Oh, that my neighbours hither might be led,
And hear the gospel's satisfying sound.

The believer's heart overflows at times in the blessed anticipation of the time when the glory that awaits the saints of God shall be realized; and while singing of divine mercy, the praises of God break on his enraptured ear, giving him a foretaste of the joys above, when the redeemed of the Lord out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation, forming a vast multitude which no man can number, shall unite in worshipping God, and ascribing praise, and glory, and honour, and power, and might, and dominion, and blessing, to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

Affectionately, then, and earnestly, I ask you to be regular in your attendance at divine worship. Hindrances may arise; expect them. You may see persons coming for a variety of unworthy motives: you may be disturbed by the inattention and irreverence of some who attend: but seeing the value of the ordinance, see that none of these things move you: neither suffer yourself to be offended by any peculiarity or infirmity in the minister; remember that, being a man, he is at best imperfect: let not any real or apparent want of refinement be suffered to lessen the impression of a faithful sermon, or deprive you of the full benefit of joining with the heart in the supplications. The blessing of the gospel ministry, depends on the unction and energy of the Spirit, not on excellency of man's wisdom. God giveth the increase. It must ever be borne in mind that it is "not by power, nor by might, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of

hosts.”* If the singing be indifferent, see to it that your own be good ; *i. e.* such as is for the glory of God, and for edification and comfort. Give up all selfish desires, and make allowances for a difference of taste and feeling, and defects arising from education, &c. Such hindrances in the way of devotion in public worship as are caused by the bad behaviour of careless persons, &c., it is the duty of such as bear office to remove, remembering that the attention which should be uninterrupted is easily diverted.

In all external ordinances, there is danger of abuse ; the mere habitual attendance may be regarded as having something meritorious in it, and justifying neglect at other times ; but may this never find a place in your thoughts. Heaven is a place of worship, seek then to make your attendance in the congregation as near like heaven as you can. And go with a prepared heart. Pray for the minister, for yourself, and your fellow-worshippers, and pray afterwards. Often supplicate the Holy Spirit’s presence, with his power and comfort. ‘God waits on the waiters ;’ he filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich he sendeth empty away.

I am

Yours faithfully,

H. S.

* Zech. iv. 6.

LETTER XXXVII.

ON THE SABBATH.

ORIGINAL INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH.—ITS OBLIGATORY NATURE.—CHANGE FROM THE JEWISH TO THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.—THE MANNER OF ITS OBSERVANCE IN THE JEWISH CHURCH;—IN THE EARLY AGES OF CHRISTIANITY.—PRESENT ABUSES;—CALL FOR REFORMATION.—ADVANTAGES OF THE SABBATH, AND DIRECTIONS FOR ITS OBSERVANCE.

Dear Friend,

That difficulties, arising from the carnal conceptions and worldly tendencies of the natural unregenerate heart, should beset the anxious inquirer in his pursuit after truth, is what a slight acquaintance with the nature of man prepares us to expect. But the simple and humble christian has for his defence against this and every error, the word of God, which enables him to detect what is false and without foundation, and by God's help to continue settled and grounded in the truth.

This is illustrated by the objections which some have endeavoured to raise against the obligatory nature of the sabbath. May the Spirit of God direct and enable me calmly to investigate it by the light of

scripture, so that the truth may commend itself to your heart and conscience.

I.—*The institution of the Sabbath.* This we find to have been immediately after the work of creation. It is written, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made.and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."* He has thus given this institution the powerful confirmation of his example. He could have caused the heavens and the earth, and all that they contain, to be created, by a single word, as easily as by several successive ones; but, providing a sabbath for man, he himself was engaged during the six days in the work of creation, and on the seventh he rested; thus, by what he himself did, affording the believer the comfort of indulging the reflection; 'during the six days I work with God, and on the sabbath I rest with God.'

The next mention which is made of the sabbath, is when the children of Israel gathered the manna in the wilderness, a few weeks previous to the giving of the tables of the moral law to Moses on mount Sinai. "To-morrow," said Moses, "is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord," &c. † It is to be regretted that some persons have raised objections to the sabbath, on the ground that the keeping of it is not distinctly referred to by the sacred historian when writing of the events which occurred in the days of

* Gen. ii. 1-3.

† Exod. xvi. 5, 16-31.

the patriarchs. Such persons do not perhaps consider the want of a sabbath in those days, neither bear in mind the brevity of the sacred record, or the fact that the book of the law, from Genesis to Deuteronomy, was not a history written by many successive historians, in different ages of the world, but by one man; and that the more frequent mention of the ordinance would not have served to reprove the neglect of it, or instruct in its observance, in the days that had passed. But they who object on this ground, have no proof for their assertions, and even if they could show that it was neglected or discontinued, for whatever length of time, this would not prove that the command to observe it was not originally given. It has been remarked, that the mention of a week, (שָׁבֹעַ) in *Gen.* xxix. 27., serves to show that time was divided into periods of seven days, and should we have expected this custom to have prevailed among so many nations, as it is said to have done, had the Jewish custom alone sanctioned it, and had it not existed previous to the dispersion at Babel?*

II.—*The institution of the sabbath is of perpetual obligation.* This has been dwelt upon in a former

* The period of seven days is also named in *Gen.* vii. 4, 10; viii. 10, 12.

A highly valued commentator, writing on *Gen.* ii. 3., remarks; "This is confirmed by the custom of measuring time by weeks, which has generally prevailed in the world, and which is most reasonably accounted for by supposing it to have arisen from an original tradition, handed down from Adam and Noah to all their descendants."—*Scott's Com.*

"See also Grotius de Veritat. Relig. Christ. lib. i., who speaks not only of this division of time into weeks, among the nations of the east, but even among the Greeks, Italians, Celtæ, Sclavi, and the Romans themselves; and that the seventh day was held in extraordinary veneration. This appears from Joseph. adv. Apion ii. Philo

letter,* but I would further remark, that it may be gathered from the reason given for its observance, viz. because God rested on the seventh day from the work of creation. This concerned not the Jews in particular, but all nations alike; and hence every child of Adam is bound equally to keep the sabbath holy. It forms a part of the moral law: and who, without express divine command, shall dare to put forth his hand and erase it from the tables of stone, written with the finger of God? More than mere human theory is needed for this; and whatever an open enemy of God might do, surely the hand of a friend would keep back as long as possible,—even if the supposition had some appearance of foundation,—from endeavouring to erase it. Only let such a one calmly reflect, how true a resemblance this earth without the sabbath, would bear to the tables of the law with this commandment erased: ‘and if it were permitted to cut out the fourth commandment, why not the sixth, or seventh?’ Further, it may be observed that the law, given long after the creation, so far from disannulling the appointment of the sabbath, in *Gen. ii. 1-3*, confirms it; and the same, it will be seen, may be said of the gospel.

Besides the command in the moral law, we find the sabbath mentioned in other places throughout the law of Moses: and although such injunctions may

de Creatione, Cleon. Alexand. Strom. lib. v. Though Helmoldus, lib. i. cap. 84., Philostratus, lib. iii. cap. 13., Dion. lib. xxxviii., Tibullus, Lucian, Homer, Callimachus, Suetonius, Herodotus, &c., who mention the septenary division of days, as very ancient, suppose it to have been derived from the Egyptians.”

* Vol. i. pp. 118-24.

not, humanly speaking, be legally binding in the absence of recognition by the laws of the land, yet will the pious observe them, or at the least, the spirit of them, when the literal observance appears to be not required by the spirit of the gospel. It is important, therefore, to consider the way in which the Jewish sabbath was observed. We find, then, "the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death;" and it was to be observed throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. "It is a sign between me, and the children of Israel, for ever, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed."* The punishment of death was inflicted on the man who gathered sticks on the sabbath: † a fire was not to be lighted on the sabbath; ‡ there was to be a *holy convocation*; it was a *sabbath of rest in all their dwellings*; § concerning which it has been observed;—"As if to distinguish it from all other feasts which were to be kept before the Lord in Jerusalem only, whither all the males were to assemble for that purpose, on stated times in the year, the sabbath was to be kept in all places where they were." || Every sabbath the shew-bread was to be set in order before the Lord continually.** *Two* lambs were offered morning and evening, for a burnt offering, instead of the usual sacrifice of one lamb. † †

Lessons respecting the carrying out of the precept

* Exod. xxxi. 14-18; xxxv. 2.

+ Num. xv. 32-36.

† Exod. xxxv. 3.

§ Levit. xxiii. 3.

|| Poole's Annot. in loco.

** Levit. xxiv 5-8. 1 Chron. ix. 32.

† † Num. xxviii. 9, 10.

to sanctify the sabbath may be drawn from Jewish history. The wickedness of man led to its being neglected. We may reasonably believe that the neglect of this, as well as the other sabbaths, as some of the festivals were called, was named by Ezekiel among the marks of the sinful condition of the people.* The words of Amos may in the same way be regarded;—“When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?” † But there were those who kept the sabbaths; and blessings were promised to them. ‡ But I would confine my remarks to the sabbath of the seventh day. In the reformation made by Ezra, one of the oaths by which they bound themselves was to cease from buying and selling on the sabbath day.§ A remarkable expression is also used in address to God, thou “madest known unto them thy holy sabbath.” || Nehemiah set a noble example to persons in authority, to stop by violence the habit of profaning the sabbath by buying and selling on the sabbath day, and he was successful.** He also ascribed evil in the land to the profanation of the sabbath. The prophet Isaiah sets forth the way in which the sabbath was to be kept, which would not only serve to instruct the Jew, but meet the desires, and accord with the sentiments, of the sincere christian. Only let the sabbath on earth be so regarded and so observed by a spiritual mind, and it

* Ezek. xx. 12, 13, 16, 24; xxii. 8, 26. See note in p. 33.

+ Amos viii. 5.

† Isa. lvi. 1-7. Jerem. xvii. 21, 22., where the carrying of burdens out of their houses was forbidden.

§ Neh. x. 31.

|| Neh. ix. 14.

** Neh. xiii. 15-22.



will be felt to be an antepast of “the rest (*σαββατισμὸς*) that remaineth for the people of God.”* Let it be committed by every believer to memory, and followed in letter and in spirit;—“If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, *not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words*: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,” &c. †

At the time when Christ came, we find the Scribes and Pharisees so far from neglecting the outward observance of the sabbath, kept it with superstitious regard. It is well to observe what class of persons our Lord was addressing, since it prepares us to expect not reproof for neglect or profanation of the day, but for the abuse which he witnessed. Formality, which showed itself in their religious observances generally, was manifested very conspicuously in this matter, as is proved by the objections which they raised on several occasions to what Christ did on the sabbath, for which he reproved them. ‡

A minute examination of our Lord's words and conduct shows that he in no instance violated the spirit of the precept of the Mosaic law, or sanctioned his followers in doing so. § The Scribes and Pharisees had rendered the word of God void through their tradition: other commandments, no less than the

* Heb. iv. 9.

+ Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

‡ Matt. xii. 1-15. Mark iii. 2. Luke vi. 1-11; xiii. 10-17; xiv. 1-6. John v. 1-16; ix. 1-34.

§ Ibid.



fourth, required to be explained by their great law-giver, and have their spiritual extent pointed out.* He showed that to do works of necessity and of mercy was in accordance with the spirit of the law, and with the allowed practice of the Jews themselves. In this sense he and the Father work : † and to do this was in agreement with the declaration of the divine will;—“I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” ‡ He asserted his authority, as “Lord of the sabbath,” § to free it from the traditionary rules of the Scribes and Pharisees. “The sabbath was made for man,” as one of the most distinguished marks of the providential care of God for his best interests; and its blessings and privileges were not to be taken away: the order was not to be reversed, and man enslaved by the superstition of his fellow-man, as though man was made for the sabbath. ||

III.—It may be well here to notice the *change of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week*. The Jews were put in remembrance of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, as an additional obligation to the observance of the sabbath.** Christians have a far greater and more blessed act to commemorate, *i. e.* the resurrection of Christ, by which was effected their deliverance from the bondage of sin and the law. This took place on the first day of the week. †† Seven weeks after this event, the promise of the Holy Spirit, that other great gift of God, was also fulfilled on the first day of the week: ‡‡

* Matt. v. 17-48; xv. 3-9, &c. + John v. 17. † Matt. xii. 7.

§ Luke vi. 5. || Mark ii. 27. ** Deut. v. 15.

†† Matt. xxviii. 1-8. ‡‡ Acts ii. 1, &c.

and these two events, were, in a pointed manner, signified under the law. The waving of the sheaf of first-fruits at the feast of the passover, and of the bread of the first-fruits at the feast of weeks, being both observed on the first day of the week.* It may be observed also that our Lord's first appearance to his disciples, was on the day of his resurrection; † and the next recorded is "after eight days," or on the next first day of the week. ‡ We find mention made of Paul preaching in Troas on the first day of the week, when they met together to break bread. § Paul also enjoins the Corinthians to lay aside alms on the first day of the week; || and in the Revelation of John the "Lord's day" ** is mentioned.

The early christians appear at the first to have assembled both on the first and on the seventh days of the week, but to have gradually left the observance of the latter. 'In the times next following those of the New Testament, Ignatius expressly says, "Let us no longer sabbatize, † † but keep the Lord's day, on which our Life arose." Tertullian rejects sabbaths and new moons as foreign to christians; but speaks of the Lord's day and Pentecost, as christian solemnities. 'Besides, we may observe that there is no

* Levit. xxiii. 10, 11, 15-20. † John xx. 19. ‡ John xx. 26.
 § Acts xx. 7. || 1 Cor. xvi. 2. ** Rev. i. 10.

+ + The first day of the week was not then called the sabbath, but the Lord's day: the seventh day was called the sabbath. Some may have failed to observe sufficiently the distinction in some parts of scripture between the sabbath and the feasts which bear the name of sabbaths,—such as the seventh, or sabbatical, year;—the fiftieth year, or year of jubilee.

'Dr. Dwight remarks that *Col. ii. 16* refers to the ordinary holidays of the Jews, or at the most to the seventh day, and not to the christian sabbath.'

command in the New Testament, by which christians are obliged to observe the *seventh* day.'

It has been thought, and 'Mr. J. Mede, was of this opinion,'* that the Jewish sabbath was not the one at first instituted, but that it was given to that peculiar people as being the day on which the Lord brought them out of Egypt; possibly to keep them the more effectually from the heathen worship of the sun on the first day of the week; and that under the christian dispensation, the original sabbath is restored: and, indeed, 'the word sabbath, which is pure Hebrew שַׁבָּת and signifies *cessation* or *rest*, or as it was called by Philo, τῶν κόσμου γενέσια, the world's birth-day, well inclines to the reception of this opinion, when the rest of Christ from his work of redemption, and the gift of the regenerating Spirit, who first brooded over the dark chaos, (*Gen.* i. 2) and now gives life and energy to the church, are considered.' The design of the sabbath is accomplished when a seventh part of time is sanctified: and what true believer objects to the change of the day?

IV.—The next point of consideration is *the way of observing the Lord's day* or christian sabbath.

I have noticed in a former letter, † the practice of the early christians, with respect to public worship on the sabbath. 'After the apostles, the christians constantly observed the day for this purpose.' I noticed that mention is made of some other pious works being read; such were the writings of apostolical men, such as Clemens and Hermas. ‡

* Mede's Works, vol. 1, p. 56, &c.

† See pp. 12, 13.

‡ Page 14. Dr. Cave's Primitive Christianity, Part i. ch. ix.

The writer above quoted further observes: "As that day—*i. e.* the seventh day—was kept as a commemoration of God's sabbath or resting from the work of creation, so was this set apart for religious uses: and 'upon the day called Sunday,' says Justin Martyr, 'all of us that live either in city or country meet together in one place.' This, doubtless Pliny meant, when giving Trajan an account of the christians, he tells him they were wont to meet together *stato die*, upon a set certain day; and, from what he says, he can be reasonably understood to design no other but the Lord's day."*

The christian emperors distinctly recognized the obligations of the sabbath. "No sooner was Constantine come over to the church, but his principal care was about the Lord's day. He commanded it to be solemnly observed, and that by all persons whatsoever: he made it to all a day of rest, that men might have nothing to do but to worship God, and be better instructed in the christian faith, and spend their whole time, without anything to hinder them, in prayer and devotion, according to the custom and discipline of the church. . . . He moreover ordained that there should be no courts of jurisdiction open on this day, no suits or trials at law; but that for any works of mercy, such as emancipating and setting free of slaves or servants, this might be done. Theodosius the Great, A. D. 386, by a second law, ratified one he had passed long before, wherein he expressly prohibited all public shows upon the Lord's day, that

* Dr. Cave's Primitive Christianity, Part i. ch. vii.

the worship of God might not be confounded with those profane solemnities. Theodosius the younger confirmed and enlarged this law, enacting that on the Lord's day, (and some other festivals there mentioned) not only christians, but even Jews and heathens, should be restrained from the pleasure of all sights and spectacles, and the theatres be shut up in every place.*

The christians, on the Lord's day, offered their prayers standing; in explanation of which custom, one observed "that for six days we pray on our knees; it is in token of our fall by sin: but that on the Lord's day we do not bow the knee, does symbolically represent our resurrection, by which, through the grace of Christ, we are delivered from our sins and the powers of death." †

The early christians observed it as a day of holy joy; and such it remains. The believer takes up the words of the psalmist and says, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." But what constitutes the christian's joy? The unbeliever would say, Go to the world and its pleasures: the believer's joy, however, is from above, and is found in communion with God, and in holy exercises. During the six days it is his duty to labour, and do all his work; and ordinarily, in order to accomplish this, he is engaged more or less in secular duties; but from these the sabbath releases him, and he rejoices in its return. He carefully husbands his spiritual privileges, and loses them not in sloth. Not from a sense of duty only, but from

* Dr. Cave's Primitive Christianity, Pt. 1, ch. vii. † Ibid.

choice, he does not rob God of any of 'the hours he calls his own.' He finds not that God has said, Dedicate to me the morning hours, and spend the rest according to your pleasure: but that he begins the commandment with the word "*Remember*," as a caution, perhaps, because of the sinful tendency of man's nature to forget God, and choose his own way. "Remember, that thou keep holy the sabbath day." He is careful therefore to keep the *whole* sabbath holy.

"If we could suppose," says one, "an angel sent down to this lower world, to labour in some common occupation, and permitted every seventh day to return to his heavenly abodes, and spend that day in the employments suited to his taste, with what delight would he look forward to the stated returns of that day! So should it be with us; and so *will* it be, in proportion as we have attained to the view and dispositions of those blessed spirits." If it be objected that the restraints which thus accompany the sabbath would take away from man's happiness, it must be said in answer that holiness is essential to happiness, and in order to attain to holiness he needs discipline. The words of Christ hold good in the case of every child of fallen Adam;—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." In vain is happiness sought without resemblance to God, and submission to his will. To be a happy day, the sabbath must be a holy day; and no restraint is placed by God beyond what is required. To complain therefore of want of happiness on the sabbath argues a want of holiness, and should lead to

prayer for a heart renewed after the image of God, for in this is the secret of joy. Without this, holy exercises are wearisome ; with it they are a delight. This tests love : he who loves God, loves his word and his ordinances : if it were formerly a restraint to observe them, it is now a restraint to lose one of them.

The further the true believer is enlightened, the clearer the truth appears to his mind that "God is love." The following lines of Gambold are beautifully expressive on this point ;—

" I am apt to think the man
That could surround the sum of things, and spy
The heart of God, and secrets of his empire,
Would speak but love. With him the bright result
Would change the hue of intermediate scenes,
And make one thing of all theology."

One among the many proofs of the truth of these words, is the pure joy flowing from God which the believer increasingly experiences. He has not to be told that there are two distinct kinds of happiness, springing from two distinct sources, one of which is God, the other the world : the natural man knows only the latter, and is unable to attribute to anything but delusion the believer's aim, since he cannot discern the end he is so anxiously seeking to attain.

Mistakes also have arisen, I believe, respecting the nature of christian joy, from incorrect views of the character of the Mosaic dispensation. The law contained the shadow of good things to come. The realities of the eternal world, however revealed to the believing Israelite, forming the ground of his hope,

and encouraging him to acts of faith, were not so distinctly set forth, as were the rewards and punishments which were temporal. The same may be said of the atonement, and the precept respecting the typical offerings. In this sense the law of Moses forms a parabolical representation of the dispensation of Christ; and, as when our Lord would bring to mind the spiritual joys of the heavenly kingdom, he made use of the parable of the marriage feast, so under figures of happiness or greatness such as earth affords,* are set forth the spiritual joys and exalted privileges of true believers now, as well as in former days. For example, when Isaiah describes the blessings of a temporal kind which should be the portion of a Jew who kept the sabbath in the way he described, he teaches us how great is the spiritual joy experienced by the believer who keeps holy the sabbath day. A minute examination of the Mosaic ceremonial may afford fresh instruction on this head. When, for instance, Moses speaks concerning the feast of the passover, he commands, "Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord," † this well represents the comparative deprivation which the believer experiences when engaged in the pursuits which withdraw him from divine meditation, and the happiness he feels when on the returning sabbath these hindrances are removed. The same figure brings to mind the trials of the warfare with the world which the church is called to endure, until the Lord shall give her to taste of millennial joys. Well

* Isaiah xxv. 6; lviii. 14.

† Exod. xiii. 6.

were it if we had not too plain a proof, in the way in which village festivals are kept, of the mistake made in substituting sensual for spiritual enjoyments. A little reflection on the self-denial pervading the New Testament serves to substantiate this view. The exercise of the graces which are the fruits of the Spirit is still left to the believer; and this contributes, in a thousand ways to his happiness: against these there is no law; but to transgress them by excess or otherwise is sin.*

In his endeavour to spend the day with God, and in a manner acceptable to him, and profitable to his own soul, one exercise in which he will delight to engage is the worship of God in the congregation. Other exercises are, communion with God in prayer, and reading and meditating on the scriptures at home. He avoids all publications which are inconsistent with the holiness of the day. If he read other religious publications, he will seek such as are experimental, and tend to the improvement of his spiritual state; but they are wise who make the bible their one great sabbath study.

‘Dr. Chalmers well observes that every sabbath image, and every sabbath circumstance, is dear to the christian. He loves the quietness of that hallowed morn: he loves the church-bell sound, which summons him to the house of prayer: he loves to join the chorus of devotion, and to sit and listen to that voice of persuasion which is lifted in the hearing of an assembled multitude: he loves the retirement of this day from the din of worldly business, and the inroads

* Gal. v. 19-26.

of worldly men : he loves the leisure it brings along with it ; and sweet to his soul is the exercise of that hallowed hour, when there is no eye to witness him but the eye of heaven ; and when in solemn audience with the Father who seeth in secret, he can, on the wings of celestial contemplation, leave all the cares, and all the vexations, and all the secularities, of an alienated world behind him. Oh,

“ How sweet a sabbath thus to spend
In hope of one that ne'er shall end.”

Besides these means of personal edification and joy, there are family duties to be attended to. Parents and masters have on the sabbath a valuable season for instructing their children and households. Beyond this, the christian gladly avails himself of the opportunities of conveying spiritual instruction to children in schools, visiting a sick neighbour, or reading the scriptures to one who cannot read himself.

The sabbath is a day of rest for the body and refreshment for the soul. The natural man appreciates it on account of the first, and ‘a great boon indeed it is from God to the toil-worn labourer and mechanic, and all who are wearied on the six days with secular pursuits, as well as for the cattle.’* How many, whom covetousness has led, in their ignorance of God, to break this law, and to make their horses work on the seventh day, have, even from mere policy, changed their plan, and unconsciously added their testimony to the wisdom of the divine law.

Servants and labourers should have the rest of the

* Exod. xx. 8-11.

sabbath carefully preserved to them, and opportunities of attending public worship. Provision ought also to be made that, by means of the early payment of wages on the Saturday, if not on the Friday, and by the early closing of Saturday markets, or, better still, by markets on Saturdays and Mondays being stopped by local arrangements, the sabbath hours be not broken in upon. Still more to the shame of man, it is needful to caution both employer and employed, but more frequently the former, against that undue labour, from the desire of worldly gain, during the week, which so fatigues the body or mind, as to unfit a person for a profitable use and enjoyment of the blessings of the Lord's day. It is such conduct as this which indirectly affords a show of excuse to those who would argue that as men have employment on the six days, they should have other recreation on the Lord's day, than that which the day itself affords. The religious man will *begin* by keeping the sabbath holy, and regulate the work of the six days accordingly.

The christian legislators of a country, and each christian in his place, ought to stand up, and with the spirit of Nehemiah, do his part in seeing that the Lord is honoured, by a check and stay being put to the profanation of the Lord's day. Alas! there is a loud call for exertion in this cause in the present day. How painful to reflect on the multiplied examples of sabbath desecration which occur in the metropolis and other large towns of the empire;—in the running of public conveyances, steamboats, and railway excursion trains; in which engine and omnibus drivers, conductors and cabmen, are employed sixteen hours

sometimes, it may be, on the Lord's day! And though it has been said that if christians should abstain altogether from using such conveyances on the Lord's day, the evil as regards these men, would not be abated or removed; yet this affects not the principle in question. Alas, it is to be feared that, not only is the name of God blasphemed, but the sanctity of the sabbath violated, by the christian part of the community thus participating in the sins of others. Nor do these remarks apply to the poorer and middle classes only, but to the rich also. There is no respect of persons with God. His commandments are binding on all alike. If any of the latter ask for exemption, on the ground that they should be prevented by distance, age, or weakness, from attendance at divine service, yet it is their duty to see to it that the plea of mercy and necessity holds good in their case in the sight of God. The same investigation into motives should be conscientiously made by ministers and others going to places of worship. Each has to act as one who knows that he must give account of himself to God.

Let each who desires to obey and glorify God, and preserve to his fellow-creatures the means of seeking salvation, consider his duty, not weighing it in the balances of worldly expediency, but the safe ones of God's word. They will then see the inconsistency of allowing that man and beast are not to labour, while at the same time, the post-offices are kept open; railways permitted to be used; or travelling for business or pleasure in other ways sanctioned. Is not

each person employed in sorting or carrying letters, as well as each porter or other officer on a railway, a servant of the public? How, then, can any one who takes a part in employing them, hide from himself the fact that he is "a partaker of other men's sins?" It is written, "Thou shalt do no manner of work," &c. it is added, "nor thy *man-servant*."

One will say, I may desire to hear from or go to visit a sick or dying friend, nay, it may be a parent, at a distance. Have you not, it may be said to such a one, the faith to leave the care of a friend or parent, even in such circumstances, to him who appointed the sabbath, and commend him to him in prayer? Is he not better able than yourself to comfort, to sustain, to instruct, than you are? Can he not "make all his bed in his sickness?"*

Another may say, You would then stop all the secular business of the country. But is not the preservation of the sabbath hours from such business the end which a christian legislature will earnestly seek to attain to? 'Few worldly men exercise moderation and stop to reflect on the great facilities for travelling which, in the providence of God, have been added, of late years, by the discovery of new modes of applying the power of steam. But though distance is so greatly diminished, such persons are not content, but increase their sin, and still add the sabbath hours, or as many of them as decency allows, to those in which they seek their profit.'

Another profanation which covetousness also leads to, is the opening, or,—which betrays consciousness

* Psalm xli. 3.

of inconsistency,—the half-opening; on the Lord's day, of shops containing goods, for the sale of which there can be no plea; and the selling of fruit in the streets, especially of our cities and large towns;—but these evils reach also our villages:—customs which call for zealous interference. We have done without these violations of the divine law in days that are past, and has any new kind of necessity arisen, or can any excuse be offered in justification of the usage? 'Is it not owing to the concealed workings of unbelief, which in a less open, but far more subtle, and thereby more dangerous way than in some days gone by, is now operating so widely, under the attractive garb of charity, seeking, it pretends, men's convenience and worldly comforts, and making even the commands of God subservient to these ends; while in fact, so far from showing charity, they are cruelly robbing those who are duped by them of what conduces to their best, because eternal, interests;' and these remarks apply in a measure to all who sell, and all who buy on the Lord's day.

It will be said by such a one, I cannot get sufficient to live upon, unless I sell on the Lord's day. But to such it may be said, You are charging God with weakness or ignorance. What if he reason with you thus? I have given you a commandment, and cannot I enable you to keep it? This is mere unbelief. 'Honour me and obey, and doubt not. If you keep my word, I will show my power. Truly, you must prepare an excuse which will satisfy, not yourself, nor men, but God who gave the commandment. The Lord of the sabbath is still observing who keep

his words; he is the same Lord who required the sabbath breaker to be put to death; and though he may suffer transgressors to escape for a season, he will one day avenge himself on them. And he who caused the double portion of manna to be gathered on the sixth day, proves that he can make the produce of six days' diligent and honest labour, suffice for the wants of the seventh day. To prevent the gathering of manna, an order was given that each should abide in his place on the seventh day.*

Does any one still say, 'I must live?' Yes, it may be added, and you must die, and you must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to account for the deeds done in the body. 'Oh be drawn by the consideration of the love of God, to leave off this custom; or if this fail, be persuaded to refrain by the words; "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."'

Consider, further, for a moment. You speak of sabbath gains. Can there be *ultimate* gains from breaking a commandment of God? And even for the present, there is no commandment against the violation of which the Lord has appeared so often openly to manifest his anger, as the seventh, except it be the third; and there is no commandment, the observance of which, in the face of difficulty and persecution, God has so signally honoured in this present life: in no way has he more plainly fulfilled his words: "Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed."

* Exod. xvi. 29.

While speaking of work, it may be well here to remark that a christian will not permit a servant or any of his household to be deprived of the opportunities of spiritual improvement, by undue care about meals. So far from indulging on this day in pampering the body, the believer knows that the mind becomes thus the less disposed to attend to spiritual exercises; and surely if Martha was reproved for being careful and troubled about many things, when providing refreshment for Christ, a christian will feel shame if any unnecessary care for provision for the body be taken on his account, at the expense of profit to the soul; and he will seek that he and each of his may take the part of Mary, who sat at the feet of Jesus and heard his words.

There are various other profanations of this day,* such as seeking in it mere worldly pleasure, which has no reference to God or heaven. Surely, so far from affording additional facilities for spending the sabbath hours in such a way, by sanctioning the opening of places for the purpose of mere amusement, the legislature should seek to lessen them. How can such a mode of passing the day be justified? How can a day spent in worldly pleasure accord with the appointment of God when he sanctified it? And painful experience abundantly proves that the blessing and sanctifying of the day are inseparably united, and that he who, regarding the holy day as a weariness, seeks his pleasure in it away from God, returns unblest and unrefreshed. 'How many, on the other hand, after having been closely confined on

* See Vol. i. p. 133.

the six week days, have found perfect rest in attending to the public and private religious duties of the day:’ spiritual refreshment has supplied the place of mere mental and bodily recreation. Truly, it is one of the many paradoxes of divine truth, which the contrast between the sinfulness of the natural man and the holiness of God affords, that when we seek our pleasure, we lose it; but, when we deny ourselves for the Lord’s sake, we find it. The christian thus finds his account in spending the Lord’s day in the duties of devotion, and in labours of love; both of which will form the never ceasing enjoyment of the sabbath which the saints will spend in heaven.*

We may here see how hollow and delusive are the

* Mr. Moffatt, of Africa, in one of his letters, describes the beneficial effects of the sanctification of the sabbath, in striking contrast with the abominations of the heathen. One sabbath the christians at his station were together in the house of God, quietly seated at the Lord’s Table. It was a solemn and a happy season, both to the missionary and his flock;—remembering the former times of ignorance and misery, and thinking of the grace and sufferings of that Saviour whose love and death they called to mind. The deep sigh and the tear glistening on the sable cheek, testified the deep feeling of some who remembered that they were once as vile as those who were still fighting against God. While the christians were thus engaged, a party of heathens had gathered together in the open air near to them. They were dressed in the strangest clothes, and spent the time in dancing, shouting, croaking, and grunting, in the wildest manner. Such sounds are never heard but in Pagan lands. Just as they were making the air to ring with this horrible noise, the little christian band within the house of the Lord were singing a translation of Dr. Watts’ hymn,—

“Why was I made to hear his voice,
And enter while there’s room;
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?”

“The scene,” says Moffatt, “was animating as it was new. In one place hymns of holy joy were ascending, to mingle with the hallelujahs of the heavenly world. At about two hundred yards’ distance, Satan’s motley group were vociferating their discordant grating sounds.” Just at this time thick clouds covered the sky, peals of

speculations of those infidel philosophers of our day before alluded to, who boast themselves philanthropists, and yet, while professing assumed humanity for the working man and the artisan, would have him toil all the six days of the week as a beast of burden, and on the seventh exchange his bodily toil for mere *bodily recreation*. 'As an excellent writer observes,* "Even the plea of animal enjoyment is utterly base and delusive. 'In a country like this, it is impossible for the sabbath to cease to be regarded, and upheld as a divine institution, and yet be retained as a holiday. The first period of high commercial prosperity, when pressing and profitable orders came crowding in from foreign markets, would begin a system that would gradually bribe the pleasure hunters into the factory and workshop; and the barriers of the sabbath once broken, would never be restored. Then the working man, whose necessity or avarice had consented to the bargain, would discover when it was too late that he had "sold his birthright for a mess of pottage," and would find no place for change of mind in his master, though he "sought it carefully with tears." And then where would be the intelligence of our working men? where the social order of the kingdom,—the stability of its great institutions,—the permanence of its throne? Ignorance would be fol-

thunder crashed, and flashes of lightning gleamed over them, and then rain came down in rushing torrents, and compelled them to take shelter in their huts. Meanwhile, the christians sat still around the table of the Lord, and prayed that soon their heathen brethren might be brought to share in those feasts of joy and love.—*Juvenile Missionary Magazine*.

* Rev. Andrew Thompson, Edinburgh.



lowed by irreligion, and irreligion by anarchy, ruin, and despair. The history of our country and of our working men would resemble that of Sampson. It would be a tragedy in three acts. The first act would be the working man, like Sampson, resting in the lap of sensual pleasure. The second would present him grinding at the wheel, and treading his monotonous round of work, work, work, amid intellectual darkness and moral night. And when once this was the case, might not the third act of the gloomy tragedy soon be expected to follow, and the working man be seen seizing the pillars of the social edifice, and involving himself and his oppressors in a common ruin?"

It is well for a country when its rulers act upon the knowledge that, 'the more the sabbath is truly observed, the more christianity spreads; and the more christianity spreads, the more surely may they expect the blessing of him who alone can confer real prosperity.' Do not observation and experience prove that the order and morality of all classes,—especially of the lower,—bear an exact relation to their neglect or observance of the Lord's day? But, beyond external benefits, the Lord's day is blessed, because it confers spiritual privileges on the rich and on the poor.

Nor can indifference to the subject, on the part of a christian legislature, be justified by the plea that 'we cannot make men religious by act of parliament.' For, though no civil enactment can bind men to the service of God, yet if the standard of divine truth be so lowered or set at nought in the councils of our nation;—if the desecration of the sabbath be connived at or sanctioned by the state;—if no legislative

authority or influence be interposed to prevent the masses of our population from drifting along the stream of wickedness and vice, as the tide of custom or evil example may carry them down the current, in ignorance and contempt of God's law ;—if no effort be put forth by “the powers that be,” to stem the torrent so as to restrain the wickedness of the wicked and maintain the sanctity of the christian sabbath ;—I say, how can they escape the charge of unfaithfulness under such circumstances ? Oh let us pray that God may inform our rulers after his own will, that they may so rise to their solemn responsibilities, as to be a terror to evildoers, and a praise to them that do well ;—that they may never, from any motive, attempt to ‘base the happiness of a people on the violation of one of the commandments of God.’—but divine wisdom and knowledge may be the stability of our times, and for walls of salvation.

O, then, remember to keep holy the sabbath-day. Check all encroachments on its holiness. Take the words of Isaiah, before quoted, for your guide as regards the holy state of mind which you should seek to attain ; and, although the vision which John saw was an extraordinary one, yet may you pray earnestly for the Spirit's sanctifying power, so as to be enabled to say with the apostle, experiencing his ordinary influences, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.” Then will you not require, if indeed you now do, to be persuaded to keep the day holy. You will find, that to be in the Spirit on the Lord's day is the very soul of the christian sabbath : and in this view of the day any frivolous questions concerning

its observance would be answered. When objections are raised to circumstantials, it is generally found that the truths they relate to, are really the cause of offence. Love God and his truth, and difficulties are surmounted. Once, on questioning a man who objected that the day was changed, I did not find that he was willing to keep the Jewish sabbath: his objections lay, I fear, against any sabbath. What *can* I do? says one. I answer, Do what the true servants of God *will* do. Bend not to what is wrong. God will help you. "In short, we are going to spend a sabbath in eternity:" the christian will acquire as much of the sabbath spirit as he can: and his growth in piety will be sought, as by other means, so also by the diligent improvement of the Lord's day.

Thus seek that the wise provision of God in the appointment of the sabbath for your good, being duly appreciated, may be greatly instrumental in promoting your acquaintance with him, and attaining to a nearer likeness to him, and preparation for his kingdom; until, after having drawn comfort and nourishment, and support from him by the way, you are admitted into his presence, to be for ever in glory.

I will conclude this letter with the following admirable rules for the profitable attendance on the public services of the sabbath, suggested by the excellent missionary Schauffler, which are worthy of being dwelt upon, and kept in remembrance:—

1.—Cultivate day by day, simplicity of heart and humility, and a proper regard for the precious word of God.

2.—Compose your mind on Saturday evening or

night for the solemn exercises of the holy sabbath.

3.—On sabbath morning rise early. Let secret prayer and meditation be your first exercise.

4.—Keep in a still and uniform frame all the sabbath. Read little, except the bible; relish and digest what you read. But

5.—Take care that all this is done in a sweet and easy way; make no toil or task out of the service of God. Do all freely and cheerfully, without violent effort.

6.—Keep your heart with all diligence, as you go to the house of God; look not hither and thither unnecessarily, lest your mind be distracted, and your devotion lost. Much less look about in the sanctuary; for this is a mark of disregard.

7.—Ask either at home or in the sanctuary, for God's blessing upon yourself, the preacher, and all the hearers.

8.—When you retire after services, remember your obligations to God for having heard his word, and your responsibility for its improvement. Remember the perishing heathen, and ask that the gospel may be speedily preached unto every creature.

9.—During the sabbath, refrain from remarks of any kind on the preaching; and from censorious remarks refrain always, except when and where duty calls for them.

10.—Digest what you may hear, and do it, which will be the best preparation for the next sabbath, if you should live to see it.”

I am, Yours faithfully,
H. S.

LETTER XXXVIII.

ON BAPTISM.

BAPTISM AS SET FORTH IN SCRIPTURE :—GIFT OF THE SPIRIT AFTER THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.—IMPORTANT INQUIRY.

Dear Friend,

It is observable that there is a tendency in man to deterioration in spiritual things. The primitive knowledge of God was perverted, as the apostle Paul so clearly shows. (*Rom. i.*) The chosen race of Israel possessed many privileges, (*Rom. ix. 4, 5*) but they lapsed into idolatry. The same is seen in the christian church. The truth as it is in the word, is like a fair and perfect structure ; but men have raised up in front of the various parts of it, one building after another in succession, so as to conceal its true proportions ; and Satan, the leader of error, has shown his subtilty in causing the counterfeit so nearly to resemble the original, that multitudes, in their blindness, have been deceived : the visible has been substituted for the invisible ; the priesthood and mediation of Christ have been usurped by fallible man ; the attractions of ceremonies and formal service have been substituted for the worship in spirit and in truth, and the candlestick has been regarded as the light.*

* What Jesus Christ said of the Jewish teachers,—“They are

But, thanks be to God, while men are disputing, each claiming the knowledge of the truth ; and while many are looking to the dogmas of fallible man for what is pure, we have the fountain to go to, even the scriptures ; and as the dove, finding no place for the sole of her foot to rest on, returned to the ark and found one there ; so the christian who humbly and sincerely goes to God, and seeks by his aid to remove the strata of error by which primitive truth has been covered through ignorance or superstition, finds a firm foundation for his hope, which the varying opinions of men altogether fail to supply : and the experience of Baxter is that of sincere seekers in every age : when once in sickness far from home, he had the bible alone to read and study, he confessed that while in controversy he had striven to prove his opinions right, and even when reading the truth had not seen it, he now learned more in one week than he had before done in seventeen years of wrangling. In the present letter I purpose speaking of baptism ; and I humbly and earnestly desire the omniscient Spirit's help to guide me while considering this controverted subject : and may you ask his aid that you may know what is his mind respecting it.

I.—Baptism then has been used *as an outward symbol of initiation into discipleship*. In this sense we read that the Israelites were baptized unto Moses in

blind leaders of the blind,"—can, without any want of charity, be applied to the consistent teachers of the Romish church. I do not attempt to take the place of the Judge, and say that no Romanist can go to heaven ; but I do say that such as do are not saved by the distinctive doctrines of Romanism, but by the belief of the truth of the gospel, independently of them.

the cloud and in the sea.” Learned writers differ respecting the baptism of proselytes to the Jewish faith. John, the forerunner of Jesus, when he would make ready a people prepared for the Lord, *baptized with water unto repentance*; and they who came to his baptism professed thereby their readiness to receive the promised Messiah, when he should come.* When Jesus came, he used the same initiatory rite: and this was continued in the church by the apostles, and remains to this day. †

John, however, foretold, that Jesus should *baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, and Jesus, when about to ascend into heaven, commanded his disciples, when assembled together, “that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but,” saith he, “wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” ‡

The Spirit has, in all ages, given proofs of his sanctifying power; and, from time to time, when needed, he has endowed men with supernatural gifts, enabling them to work miracles, teaching the prophets, &c. § The gift of the Spirit, therefore, vouchsafed to the church after the ascension of Christ, was not unknown or unfelt before. ||

* Matt. iii. 11. Luke i. 17; iii. 16. John i. 31. Acts xix. 4.

† Acts viii. 38; x. 47.

‡ Acts i. 5.

§ Gen. xli. 38. Num. xi. 26, 29; xxiv. 2; xxvii. 18. 1 Sam. x. 10. Ps. li. 11, 12. Isa. xxxii. 15. &c.

|| In a very important sense, however, “the Holy Ghost was not yet given:” and the reason, as Scripture shows us, was “because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” (*John* vii. 39. see also *Acts* xix. 2.) This was in accordance with the design of God. The early saints received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that

It may be remarked that many mistakes have arisen from not distinguishing the communication of the

they without us should not be made perfect. (*Heb.* xi. 39, 40.) "Among them that are born of women," saith Jesus, "there hath not arisen a greater than John the baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he." (*Matt.* xi. 11.) The blessings, then, participated in by such as lived before the work of atonement was wrought on Mount Calvary were only as the twilight in comparison of the full light of the sun: so, likewise, the gifts of the Spirit before the day of Pentecost were but as the little rills compared with the "rivers of living water" to which the Lord compares the gift of the promised Spirit." (*John* vii. 38.)

We are thus enabled to understand the meaning of the prophecy of Joel, (ch. ii. 28-32) as fulfilled in the new covenant, which is distinguished as "the ministration of the Spirit." (*2 Cor.* iii. 8.) This gift was openly shown on the day of Pentecost to be vouchsafed to the church when Peter proclaimed, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," &c. (*Acts* ii. 16, &c.)

The gifts of the Spirit are various, as shown by the promises of Christ. (*Mark* xvi. 17, 18. *John* xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7-14. *Acts* i. 4, 5, 8) That he conferred miraculous power was seen in the gift of tongues, and afterwards in many others; * and his ordinary operations were witnessed in the effect produced on the hearers, who were pricked in their hearts as Peter spake the word and besought them, saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and Peter, in reply, exhorted them, saying, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." †

It is then an important question, What is meant by this gift of the Spirit thus promised? We find it to be a very common mode of God's dealing with men to require the performance of some act as a test of faith and patience, and to confer a blessing when the command is obeyed. It was so with Abraham. (*Gen.* xxii. 1-18.) Again, Jesus said to the blind man whose eyes he had anointed with the clay, "Go to the pool of Siloam and wash;" (*John* ix. 6, 7.) and to the lepers, "Go show yourselves to the priests." (*Luke* xvii. 14.) This may well serve to give us an insight into the nature of the joy experienced by the sincere adult believer coming to baptism. The favour of the Lord towards him, knowing as he does his heart, does not depend upon the mere act of baptism. He can dispense with it when hindrances occur to prevent the believer fulfilling his desire to come to it, instances of which the early christian writers regarded the thief on the cross, and believing catechumens hurried to a violent death by their perse-

* *Acts* ii. 4; v. 12, 15, 16; vii. 55; viii. 7, 15-17; ix. 17; x. 46; xiv. 8-10; xix. 6-12; xxviii. 5. *Rom.* xv. 19. *1 Cor.* ii. 4, 5; xii. 1-11, 28. *Heb.* ii. 4.

† *Acts* ii. 38, 39.

extraordinary gifts of the Spirit from that of his ordinary ones, inward sanctification. We are better able to mark the former, and we have proofs in scripture of these being vouchsafed at a period distinct from that of the baptism with water. We find that the Spirit was given to Cornelius and those who were with him, before baptism;* and to some converts at Ephesus, not at baptism, but after laying on of hands; † as it was also to some Samaritan converts, who had before been baptized in the name of the

cutors, to have been : but he requireth us to fulfil all righteousness, and until the command to be baptized be complied with, a measure of spiritual joy and establishment in the faith would seem to be withheld which is experienced by the sincere believer when he comes to baptism. (see *Acts* ii. 46, viii. 39. xvi. 34.) A more full sense of pardon or of comfort may be withheld, as in the case of Saul. He was a chosen vessel unto Christ : he had prayed, and professed his readiness to obey the Lord, but he had now to join the church : and any one who reflects on the daring persecutor, openly confessing the faith which once he destroyed, will see that this was no slight proof of faith.* It is not, perhaps, sufficiently considered that baptism in those days was different from baptism in a christian land, as may be learned from the baptism of a Jew now ; seeing that he is called literally to leave father and mother, and often temporal possessions, and to suffer persecution. In those days, to be baptized was far more synonymous with being a christian, than now : and the apostle could with far more reason then, than we can now, address a body of baptized persons as believers.

By the gift, then, of the spirit here promised, I would understand not only the ordinary gifts which although in a measure already granted to the true penitent believer, awaited his open confession of a crucified Saviour in order to its more full communication, but also that by thus uniting himself to the body of Christians he was, at the time when the apostle spoke, in the way to receive extraordinary gifts, which were bestowed by the laying on the hands of the Apostles. (*Acts* viii. 17. xix. 6.) The fulfilment of this, as of the promise in *Mark* xvi. 7, would appear to rest with the Spirit who "searcheth all things" and "divideth to every man severally as he will," for the "confirmation of the word with signs following," and emboldening and comforting the disciples.

* *Acts* ix. 6, 11, 15. *Gal.* i. 23.

* *Acts* x. 44-48 ; xi. 17.

+ *Acts* xix. 2-6.

Lord Jesus.* We see, then, that the Spirit might be vouchsafed either *before or after baptism*; while we have no instance on record of the Spirit having been given in the act of baptism; although it may be, as it may whensoever the Lord will. Even in the baptism of Christ, who was thus openly shown to be endowed with gifts for his office, any one who examines the passages in which the descent of the Spirit is recorded, will notice an interval between this and the act of baptism: it was when "being baptized," he was "straightway coming up out of the water," "and praying," that the Spirit was seen descending upon him. †

It may be remarked that the miraculous gifts might be bestowed on unworthy persons. ‡ They served to confirm the word preached, but did not necessarily benefit him on whom they were conferred. The establishment of the gospel rendered these unnecessary. Baptism remains according to the commission of Christ. By this rite, they who believe, and look for remission of sins through Christ, are required to come and join themselves to him. He who comes rightly is one who believes with all his heart, (*Acts vii. 37*) boldly confesses himself to be the Lord's, and casts in his lot with his despised followers; "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." § This rite also serves to remind the believer of the continual sanctification of his heart and affections which he is bound to seek.

* *Acts viii. 15-17.* + *Matt. iii. 16. Mark i. 10. Luke iii. 21, 22.*

‡ *Matt. vii. 22, 23. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.* § *Rom. x. 10.*

3.—The *baptism with fire* would appear to signify the energy and purifying power of the Spirit, as manifested when the cloven tongues, like as of fire, sat upon the disciples on the above named day of Pentecost.* There is also a baptism of which our Lord speaks, viz. that of martyrdom, (called by some a baptism of blood,) saying before his death, “I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.” †

It must be noticed that regarding a new birth of water in *John* iii. 5, 6, to relate to baptism, although it may be conceded that baptism by water is generally or, as it has been well expressed, generically, necessary to salvation, yet there is nothing to prove that the birth by water and the birth by the Spirit are simultaneous. Even strong advocates for what is termed baptismal regeneration admit that, as the early fathers noticed, unbelievers coming hypocritically to baptism receive not the Spirit; and thus they allow the separability of the one from the other: and the case of the thief on the cross, and others desiring baptism, but not having the opportunity, is regarded as a sufficient indication that the baptism of the Spirit may be given when the baptism of water is lacking. ‡

* Acts ii. 3.

† Luke xii. 50. See also Mark x. 38.

‡ “Augustine remarks, ‘*Si non nascitur ex Spiritu nisi qui veraci conversione mutatur, omnes qui sæculo verbis et non factis renunci- ant, non utique de Spiritu, sed ex aquâ solâ nascuntur.*’—*August. de Baptism. cont. Donat.*, lib. vi., c. 12, *Oper.* vol. vii., p. 63.”

“Quibus rebus omnibus ostenditur: aliud esse *Sacramentum Baptismi*; aliud *Conversionem Cordis*: sed salutem hominis ex utroque compleri. Nec si unum horum defuerit ideo putare debemus consequens esse ut et alterum desit, quia et *illud* sine *isto* potest esse in infante.”—*Ib.*, lib. iv., c., 23-25. *Oper.*, vol. vii., pp. 52. 53.

Texts are adduced by those who desire to prove that the Spirit necessarily accompanies baptism, as *Ezekiel xxxvi. 25-27*, but water may here be used figuratively, denoting by a sign (such as were common to the prophets, but especially to Ezekiel) the sanctification of the Spirit. In the passage in *John iii. 5*, the water mentioned cannot be shown to imply more than an outward emblem of purification ; and if it could be shown that baptism by water is there alluded to, it only could be proved to indicate that this baptism is the means of admission into the visible church, as the new birth by the Spirit is into the true family of God. Neither can the passage in *Titus iii. 5*, be proved to refer to baptism ; and if it do, it does not necessarily bear more than a figurative meaning. The same may be said of *1 Cor. vi. 11* : and it must be said generally, that the tying of grace to means is at variance with the spiritual character of the gospel, and the workings of God's sovereign grace ; though it is quite in accordance with the dealings of God to give outward signs of inward and spiritual grace, to confirm faith in his promises. Had I space, I might adduce here many extracts from writings of early Fathers and of Reformers and other eminent Divines, in confirmation of the opinion that the outward sign might be given without the Spirit, but I should thus extend this letter to an undue length.

It may also be noticed here, that wherever benefits are named in scripture, as belonging to baptized persons, there is always some mark of spiritual life named as evidenced by the individual. Had Peter said to the Israelites, Be baptized, and ye shall receive

the Holy Ghost, there might have been room for belief in the *opus operatum* ; but he prefaces his address by the word, "Repent." Had Ananias met Saul on his way to Damascus as a persecutor, and only said, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" ; the simple act of outward baptism might be regarded by some at first sight as attended with a spiritual blessing ; but, he had given signs of faith and repentance, and he is required to "*call* upon the name of the Lord." Had Philip, when the Eunuch asked him, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" said, Nothing ; any one might come, without reference to his spiritual state : but he showed that a previous state of grace was needed, saying, "If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest."* Had Peter said simply, 'Baptism doth save,' and stopped there, it might have been thought that the act of baptism with water would save, but he shows something more is required, in order to any thing beyond outward separation from the world, adding, "not the putting off the filth of the flesh," which water might effect, "but the answer of a good conscience towards God,"† which implied, again, a previous state of grace. And in no one place is a spiritual blessing spoken of as attending the mere outward baptism with water. Thus hath the Holy Spirit, as he is wont, with doctrines which men might by ignorance or design pervert, guarded the truth, so as to clear the way for such as humbly submit their judgment to his teaching, when those who seek not the truth in sincerity, may go on in darkness. We see, then, pre-requisites for baptism,—faith, repen-

+ Acts viii. 33-37.

+ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

tance, prayer, obedience to the Lord, the answer of a good conscience: and it were well if those who are taught to connect the thought of their being members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, with baptism, would, while the subject is fresh in their minds, ask themselves, What is required of persons to be baptized? and consider that if repentance and faith are wanting, their profession is an empty one.

II.—Baptism has been defined as not only distinguishing nominal christians from heathens, but as a sign of regeneration or new birth. This we draw by analogy from circumcision, which was an outward sign of inward grace, (*Rom. ii. 29*) and also a door of admission to privileges; but the absence of a divine declaration that the receiving of the sign shall be accompanied—and in every case—with the conferring of the thing signified, proves that we cannot say that any inward gift is vouchsafed. What, then, was circumcision? It was to Abraham, when appointed, “a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.”* It was an outward seal or mark by which the Lord reminded him that his faith was counted for righteousness. According to this analogy, then, baptism would be a seal of the righteousness of a man being yet unbaptized. But as the being circumcised verily profited the Jew if he kept the law; but if he brake the law, his circumcision was counted for uncircumcision;† so baptism is to be counted as of no avail to one who believes not: and as “he is not a Jew which is one outwardly;

* *Rom. iv. 11.*

† *Rom. ii. 25, 26.*

neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (*Rom. ii 28, 29.*) So it is with one baptized.

There is much reason, then, for comparing with scripture, ideas respecting baptism, and the way in which we express them. If by the term, baptismal regeneration, be understood a birth to a new state of privilege, this would appear just, since many privileges are vouchsafed : but if it be regarded as communicating a new moral character, or effecting a change of heart, this I believe to be beyond the word of God. * Again, baptism usurps the place of the atonement when made to place us in a state of salvation : this is done by Christ, before baptism is administered. (see *Rom. v*)

III.—The subject of *infant baptism* remains to be considered. † There are excellent christians who regard infants as unfit subjects for admission to this

* We practically act upon this principle in not admitting a heathen or a Jew to baptism, before we have what we deem satisfactory evidence that they really repent and believe, which are spiritual acts. A child may have the Spirit. (see *Jer. i. 5.*) If this be thought to apply to Jeremiah as a prophet, we know that he who confers one gift is the same who confers the grace that sanctifies and gives meetness for heaven.

† Infant baptism brings to mind early training. Pious fathers often see little of their children, and would do well to instruct them in Scripture daily at a given time ; some take an hour or half an hour before breakfast for this purpose. Let them in a day like this learn what true wisdom is from, *Job xxviii* and follow *Prov. xxiii. 4, 5.* If a child at different periods would be free from rule, let the parent as a skilful fisherman, let the line run lest it break, but keep his hold, and draw it in again. The young aim at manliness, let their attention be directed to godliness. Exhort them to love God. Intrust the care of children only to godly teachers. Beware, lest by taking a child abroad for instruction, he forget the language of Canaan. Teach him the value of the talent of time, and let it all be used for God.

rite, and I respect their scruples, and have no more doubt of their sincerity than of their piety. I am conscious that we have not a direct command to baptize infants, and any one who sees the value of the declaration that whatsoever is not contrary to holy scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation, will abstain from passing harsh censure on such ; and, while he regards 'the baptism of infants as in any wise to be retained, as being most agreeable with the institution of Christ,' he will not judge those who, taking the scripture for their guide, and sincerely desiring to know the will of God, arrive at conclusions contrary to his own ; especially when he considers the effect which may have been made on the minds of many by mis-statements of the nature of this rite.

The limited space afforded by a letter does not allow me to dwell long upon the arguments in favour of infant baptism. I will remark, however, that the most scrupulous mind cannot prove from scripture that it is contrary to apostolic usage, or the faith once delivered to the saints. Must we not admit that, in the absence of any prohibition to that effect, the initiatory rite of the Jewish dispensation may be regarded as analogous to the initiatory rite of the christian ? and may we not draw hence a strong scriptural argument for the authority of infant baptism as practised by the great majority of christians ? 'It may also be added, that children have had, as others, a propitiation made for their sins ; and that they who were born

of faithful parents, are called holy.' (1 *Cor.* vii. 14.)

Have we not in the circumcision of Abraham and Isaac, what is plainly analogous to the baptism of a believing Jew or heathen, who, having been admitted by baptism into the church, brings his child, and dedicates him to the Lord by this rite? If it be objected that, since faith and repentance were required of persons coming to baptism, an infant is not a proper subject for this rite, when he has not these requisites, it must be answered that, since the absence of such dispositions was not accounted a bar to the admission of infants into the Jewish church, but the command was, in every case, to circumcise a child when eight days old; it may be inferred that there is no impediment in the way of the admission of a child of christian parents, in infancy, to the body of professing christians. Otherwise, infants would have enjoyed a privilege under the old covenant, denied to them under the new.

Should it be further alleged that, if baptism be regarded as a seal of the righteousness imputed to the believer, it would not apply to infants; the fact that infants were circumcised meets this objection also.

It may be argued that the ceremony of adult baptism may be more impressive. But this should not be allowed to have any weight, except the mind of the Spirit be plainly in accordance with the course pursued. And it must be remembered, that the advantage derived from openly confessing Christ, may be supplied to the infant on his coming to years of discretion.

It must be allowed that no express mention is

made of infant baptism in Scripture ; but, on the other hand, nothing is said against it in the general commission of Christ to his disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;"* and must we not consider that habit would lead a convert from Judaism to dedicate his infant to the Lord? It is also reasonable to suppose that in the house of Cornelius, † Lydia, ‡ the jailer at Philippi, § or Stephanus, || there were young children baptized. We might expect to hear first of adults coming to baptism, as we do in our reports from new missionary stations ; but parents, when they embrace christianity, bring their children : and, from the words and act of Christ when young children were brought to him, ** we may gather that there is no hindrance in the way of the believing parent dedicating his infant child to the Lord.

But it is one thing to claim for the christian parent the privilege of offering his child to the Lord, and another, and a widely different one, to ascribe to the rite of admission into the visible church, a virtue which it was not ordained to communicate. There is a ceremonial holiness attaching to whatever is dedicated to God. The vessels of the Jewish sanctuary partook of this ; so does every baptized person. But if the heart remain unholy, it profits him not. † †

* Matt. xxviii. 19.

† Acts x. 48.

‡ Acts xvi. 15.

§ Acts xvi. 33.

|| 1 Cor. ii. 16.

** Mark x. 14.

++ The "running water" used in cleansing the leprous house, would have as little inherent efficacy as the blood of the sacrifice used with it ; (*Levit. xiv. 51-53.*) and it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins : these were only

As a Jew might be admitted into the Jewish church by circumcision, and yet be uncircumcised in heart and ears,* and ranked among the heathen;† so a baptized person may be unbaptized in heart.

Although a child be *made*, outwardly in the sight of men, a member of Christ, this avails him nothing, except the Lord, who alone can quicken the soul,‡ either of an infant, or an adult, grant his Spirit, and adopt him, as he only can, into his family.

The infant is admitted by baptism into the church, which, as our Lord has shown by parables,§ consists, as it ever has done, of good and evil. There were in the ark, we are led to believe, good and evil: and although all were saved from temporal destruction, yet only those in it who believed were saved from spiritual death. The exhortation has still to be made, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation;" but the outward separation saves not, if there be an evil heart within. It profited not Lot's wife to be led by the hand of the angel out of the city of Sodom, when she looked back. Ham, in the church in the ark, may have had his counterpart in Simon Magus in the christian church. 'The visible church

the symbols of better things, and would give a ceremonial purity, or "sanctify to the purifying of the flesh." In like manner, when the promise was given to the Jews, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you;" and afterwards the command was given to have "the body washed with pure water;" however this might affect men as regards church membership, it would leave all such in their sins, as were not inwardly sanctified, and had "their hearts purged from an evil conscience."

* Acts vii. 51. Levit. xxvi. 41. + Jer. ix. 25, 26.

† John v. 21. Ps li. 5. Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3.

§ Matt. xiii. 21-30, 47, 48; xxv. 1, &c.

contains in it some who are inwardly holy,' and those who are admitted into it, are addressed as saints. They are generally regarded as being what they profess to be: but it is the duty of each to examine his own state, and discover what it is.

Children, then, have occasion to examine themselves, forasmuch as personal sanctification is needed. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel:they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."† They must remember that, though regarded as christians in the language of charity, charity can take none to heaven, whether children or adults, without the sanctification of the Spirit, and the blood of sprinkling. They have occasion to be guarded against unscriptural opinions, and to be taught that it is vain to trust in promises, except they be in the condition of those to whom the promises are made. One great source of error and confusion respecting baptism is, that the blessings which are the portion of the adult believer, have been assigned to each infant without the plain warranty of God's word.

Being an ordinance of Christ, none are at liberty to neglect it, much less, despise it. He who does so cannot be following Christ, but is unworthy of him, and cannot look for the blessings covenanted to his people.‡ But there are some so ignorant as to

* John iii. 6.

+ Rom. ix. 6, 8.

‡ Matt. iii. 15. We may learn from this example of Christ, that

regard baptism as merely giving a child a name, without connecting that name with Christ, or really dedicating their child to the Lord. Obedience to Christ's commands brings the believer to baptism, and, therewith, to the privileges of a recognised covenant relation to God, which binds him to obedience; and of visible union with the members of Christ's church, which shows the duty of love, and binds to its exercise. Baptism thus supplies powerful motives, helping, moreover, to preserve the believer from the world, when he calls to mind the obligations under which he is brought by it.

Some, on the other hand, are not content with the privileges which baptism confers. It has been argued that, as baptism was appointed by Christ, great virtue must be expected from it, and it betrays a want of faith to doubt that certain blessings are conferred by it. This is true when limited to such blessings as Scripture authorizes, and in the case of worthy recipients: but it must not be said that Christ has given the church a *tabula rasa*, and said, Write on this whatever blessings you desire to be conferred by baptism, and I will grant them: make of baptism what you will, and I will confirm your act. When a plain promise is given, to doubt it is most sinful; but no one can be justly charged with want of faith who declines his assent when the Lord hath not spoken.

'The dedication of the infant to God, indicates not

having the Spirit "will excuse none from contempt or neglect of baptism by water, because it is the revealed will of God that all the members of his church should come under that ordinance; so as there is a *fulfilling of righteousness* in our case, as well as in Christ's, though in a different measure."—*Pool's Anot. in loco.*

his faith, but rather that of the parent ;' and when made sincerely and unfeignedly by a believing parent, such dedication cannot but be acceptable to him, and a blessing may be expected to attend it ; but a duty remains : the child must be taught, as his age permits, what his duty is : a parent can have no ground for the expectation of the favour of God on his child, if he leave him, without scripture admonition, exposed to the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and not directed to the Saviour, and instructed in the ways of God. And, unable as the parent is to look into the purposes of God respecting his child, it is his duty to set before him the promises of God, and to seek to lead him to embrace them, to come to Christ, that he may be washed from his pollution, to seek the Spirit's renewing influences day by day, that he may attain to the blessings which are the portion of the adult believer.

It is plain that infant baptism requires to be followed by an *open confession of faith*, voluntarily made with the mouth. The church calls for a personal pledge that what baptism implies is really wrought inwardly, before it admits to the privileges of full membership ; and this pledge ought not to be given without the consideration, the decision, and the sincerity, which its solemnity demands. Many can look back upon the time of their open confession, as that when they first decided for the Lord. A most precious opportunity is at such a time afforded to ministers and parents, to bring before a young person, at a deeply important period of life, his responsibility ;—the claim which the Lord has on his heart, on account of the

gift of his Son for our sins ;—the peril of indecision, by reason of the weakness and depravity of our carnal nature ;—the ensnaring character of the temptations which the world presents ;—the power and subtilty of the devil, who deceived our first parents, and has, doubtless, some bait for each of their children, suited to their peculiar state and disposition of mind ;—the awful end of the wicked ;—the joy and peace which are found in the believer's path here ;—and the glory, and honour, and immortality, which hereafter await those who overcome. Thrice blessed are they who, touched with a sense of the preciousness of Christ, come forward, not as the mere formal professor,—and have before felt in their hearts, what they declare with their mouth ;—that the Lord who knoweth all things knoweth that they love him ;—that they renounce all sin and wickedness ;—that they believe and receive the gospel ;—and that, by the grace of God, they will walk ever in his commandments. The giving of the heart to God in secret is the great act,—the choosing the Lord for his God, the unseen union of the soul to Christ. Without this, the outward dedication is a mockery, as a return to the former life and habits too plainly indicates. But when the heart is given to God, the open confession may serve greatly to strengthen and encourage the young in the Lord. That the act of self-dedication is sincere, and the world left in heart, must after be shown by spiritually walking with God : the reality of being baptized into the death of Christ, must be evidenced by the continual mortification of every corrupt affection, and answering every temptation by saying, “I am the Lord's.”

And deeply responsible is the office of those who receive their pledge. Great and lasting, by God's blessing, may be the effect of words of truth spoken in love and persuasion to the youthful heart: and, while the candidate looks beyond the minister for grace to him who alone is able to vouchsafe it, at such a time the minister is especially reminded of his duty to seek, by setting forth the way of life, and declaring the promises of God, to "*strengthen*"* (ἐπισηρῖζειν) the souls of the disciples, and "exhort them that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."† Happy is it for parents, and for the church, when the young *surrender themselves wholly to the Lord*: let both arise to a sense of their duty, and be in earnest in training them wholly for him.

Yet, how many parents, without consciousness of their inconsistency, teach their children to consider themselves bound to fulfil their baptismal engagements, and would think it a disgrace if they were kept back from making an open confession of faith, who are really training them up most effectually, by their example and conversation, in the way to embrace and follow the very things which with their lips they profess themselves resolved to contend against and flee from. Let them, then, weigh well their responsibilities, considering that these things relate to eternity: and, while they never cease to supplicate the favour of God, and his special grace, for their children, under a deep conviction that nothing short of this can bless and keep them, let them see to it that they do their part; or, if they fail in their duty, let them not won-

* Acts xiv. 22; xv. 32, 41.

† Acts xi. 23.

der if, admitted into the outward and visible church, their names,— although enrolled in a register of baptisms, to notify the fact,—be not written in heaven; and their end be among those who know not God, and who shall be destroyed with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified of his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

The apostle makes great use of baptism as giving occasion for reproof and admonition. The infant, as he grows up, may reasonably be reminded that he was dedicated to Christ, and be urged to a christian walk: but this may be done with more power, when an open confession of Christ has been made. I have read of a novice, on taking the veil, among other ceremonies, placing herself in a coffin, on which the lid was then laid, and earth, I believe, cast upon the lid. By this act she signified her death to the world. If one who had voluntarily done this, were to betray signs of a worldly spirit, her superior might make use of this ceremony, and say, You have signified your death to the world, how is it that you can desire to live any longer therein? Baptism signifies a death unto sin, and resurrection to a new life: and a baptized person is inconsistent, and shows that his baptism is formal, if he have love for the world. Several exhortations of the apostle to this effect are very important, as serving to teach christians how they must live, and where their affections must be, if they would realize personally what baptism implies. Of this nature are, *Rom.* vi. 2-14. *Gal.* iii. 27. *Col.* ii. 11, 12.

I am led to dwell longer on this subject, because it

is of very great importance what opinions we receive and hold respecting it. If we see that the being baptized with water does not prove that we have the Spirit, this view tends to encourage, in the sincere christian, the humility which the gospel inculcates. If we ascribe undue efficacy to the external act, the natural tendency of this view is to lift us up, and lead us to think less unworthily of ourselves ;*—to regard sin as not so deeply rooted and deadly an evil as it is ;—and to have lower views of the work of Christ. Hence arises a tendency to rely on works, outward purifications, and the acts of men ; the exigency being lessened, other saviours are had recourse to. Hence also, in addition to pride, is induced worldliness,—carelessness respecting exact observance of the purity of the divine law,—impatience of the narrow way, when one is marked out by the world which does not present the same restraints ;—indifference respecting sin, when there is a way of forgiveness, of man's discovering, near at hand. I speak of tendencies : the wise flee from what causes them. Many are unconscious of the amount of traditionary knowledge which they receive early, and class with scripture truth : these are often very closely amalgamated, and few are found to meet the difficulty attending the effort to separate them ; the more so, because such opinions are more congenial to human nature, and, also, it is humbling to allow that we have been in error. Many who do not believe that baptism is appointed as the means

* The use of water in baptism reminds us that we are defiled, and should stop our pride, and all high thoughts of ourselves, and lead us to examine ourselves, and see whether we are clean. (See *Prov.* xxx. 12.)

of spiritual regeneration, yet have indistinct ideas respecting this rite, and conceive that some spiritual gift is necessarily conferred by it; though, when questioned, they are unable to define it, or prove it from scripture. This circumstance, however, should surely lead them, in a matter of such importance, to examine their opinions, and, if they cannot find sure ground for them in scripture, to trace them to their source, and this they will, commonly, I believe, find to be impressions received from early education. In agreement with this it may be noticed, that there is a scriptural freshness and purity in the faith of a sincere convert from Judaism or heathenism, which is rarely found in those who have been trained from infancy in christian communions.

To the effect of early impressions may be traced the ideas which we are wont to associate with names given to the rite of baptism. The name, *sacrament*, given to the oath by which a Roman soldier bound himself to serve his general, was well applied to the rites by which we testify our resolution to serve Christ, and our continued adherence to him. 'Some instructive thoughts may be derived hence: as none would be allowed to take a commission, except he expressed his willingness to obey orders; and none would be sent on an embassy, who should decline the oath of allegiance to his sovereign, so no unbaptized person could expect to be endowed with the supernatural gifts of the Spirit, or be regarded by the church as entitled to membership.' It were well if the term, *sacrament*, which is not used in scripture, had been kept to its original simple meaning; but it has become

associated with ideas springing from errors by which the truth has in past ages been corrupted, and, unless divested of them, it brings mysterious thoughts into the mind, which mislead, and encourage superstition.*

Again, the term, 'means of grace,' has been applied to the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper with a sort of exclusiveness which serves to support these mysterious thoughts; and there is need of care, that the word ministered be "according to the proportion (*κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν*) of faith;"—that each doctrine have its proper place in the divine plan of man's salvation; and he is mistaken who thinks that he is glorifying God, or benefitting man, who so confounds them. While we must not detract one iota from any ordinance of God, we may not, as was noticed, countenance additions to it, and thus weakly "lie for God, and speak deceitfully for him:" how ignorant must one be to think he needs this; for his work is perfect; and who shall be his assistant? What, then, is the divine plan? Let scripture teach. The commission was, "Go ye therefore, and teach (*μαθητεύσατε*, make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them," &c.† The teaching comes first: scripture sets forth this order as that of God. By the act of Christ's atonement, God is reconciled to man;‡ still, each needs light and

* It may be well to notice here the perversion of truth made by the Church of Rome, respecting sacraments. Some of her palpable errors are shown in the "Sacrifice of the Mass." In the Creed of Pope Pius IV., (see page 270.) it is stated that in this Sacrament there is a conversion made of the whole substance of the bread into the body of Christ, &c. Now the wafer, when received into the stomach, is digested like other food; but the *body of Christ* "saw no corruption:" (see Acts ii. 25,-27,-31.) therefore *the wafer cannot be the body of Christ.*

† Matt. xxviii. 19.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 17-21. Col. 1. 20, 21. Eph. ii. 14-18. 1 Pet. 1. 3; ii. 24.

deliverance from Satan : * the word of reconciliation is preached, and every one who, through grace, believes, is born again of the Spirit ; † grace is increased in answer to prayer,—a most effectual means : baptism is the rite appointed by Christ, by which we join the church, and the forgiveness of sins is outwardly sealed to the believer ; the Lord's supper is that by which we testify our continuance in the faith. These are means of grace, because, when faithfully engaged in, they confirm our faith : but every act of faith, hope, love, praise, or self-denying obedience ;—christian intercourse ; ‡—‘every sanctified trial,’ is a means of grace. But, by some, baptism seems to be magnified into *the* means. Scripture bears its unvarying testimony to the fact, that the preaching of the word is the great instrument, in the hand of the Spirit, to effect regeneration § and sanctification. || The instrument by which the effect was made on the three thousand, (*Acts* ii. 37.) and on Cornelius, (*Acts* x. 44.) was not baptism, but the word preached. The church is cleansed figuratively “with the washing of water,” but instrumentally “by the word.”** The word gives faith also, and with it, justification. By Christ “all that believe are justified from all things :” what sins, then, remain to be remitted by baptism ? The gift of faith, vouchsafed through the instrumentality of the word, cannot be possessed without the operation of the

* *Acts* xxvi. 18-23.

+ *John* i. 12, 13. *Rom.* x. 17. *1 Cor.* iv. 15. *2 Cor.* v. 17, 18.
James i. 18. *1 Pet.* i. 23. † *Ephes.* iv. 29.

§ *Acts* xviii. 1-11, comp. with *1 Cor.* iv. 15. *James* i. 18.

|| *John* xv. 3 ; xvii, 17. *Ephes.* v. 26. *1 Pet.* i. 22.

** *Ephes.* v. 26.

Spirit ;—“no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;”—and to have this faith is required before baptism. Although, therefore, a more full realization of the power and comfort of the Spirit may be vouchsafed to one who makes a good confession of Christ in baptism, yet the Spirit must have wrought in him before, and there are not two Holy Ghosts, one given before, and another at or after baptism : “there is one Spirit.” It were well if the questions of the apostle to the Galatians were put by many to themselves in the present day ; “This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ? Are ye so foolish ? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh ? He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ?”* And if it be said, The miraculous operations of the Spirit are here meant ; it may be asked, Does not the Spirit in his ordinary and more blessed influences attend also upon the word ?

Undue prominence has thus been given by many to the rite of baptism, and injury must accrue to the church so long as this continues. It may be noticed, as an additional proof of this fact that Jesus Christ did not himself baptize;† and Paul baptized only a very few persons:‡ and, though it may be said with reason, that if they had baptized, some injury might have resulted, yet, did baptism possess so great excellency as to be the instrument to effect spiritual regeneration, would the administration of it have been in-

* Gal. iii. 2, 3, 5.

+ John iv. 2.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 13-16.

trusted to those who possessed offices of lesser dignity in the church? Paul's was a higher office, *i. e.* that which his Master had, of preaching. "Christ," he says, "*sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.*"*

The baptism with water is the act of man, and the Spirit is the gift of God, who maketh one to differ from another, and who must vouchsafe his electing grace, whether to an adult or an infant in order to his salvation. We commit a child to God, and, having prayed earnestly, we expect an answer. Still, is effectual fervent prayer always offered for the infant? Where does scripture authorize us to promise of each particular child that the prayers offered at his baptism, are answered in the inward communication of the Spirit? We must beware lest in our ignorance we make assertions which may prove unfounded. Rather let prayers be continually offered by the parent until a change of heart be evidenced, and then for its renewal day by day. †

If we wanted a proof that spiritual regeneration does not necessarily accompany the act of baptism with water, we have only to look to the lives and deaths of multitudes of baptized persons, and to compare them with the words of the apostle John;—"We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." "His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is

* 1. Cor. i. 17.

† It is chiefly, perhaps, because the Formularies of Baptism used by the established church declare specifically of each individual infant that the Spirit is vouchsafed in baptism, not satisfied with expressing a hope, or trust, to that effect, that many earnestly desire a revision of them.

born of God." And again, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 *John* iii. 9; v. 4; vi. 18.) But some one will say, The Spirit is given in baptism, but it may be quenched, and this quenching may be immediate:—only let scripture proof be given, and there is an end of doubt. But in the absence of proof, such reasoning seems to savour more of the speculations of those who will be wise above what is written, than to harmonize with those passages of scripture which denote the spiritual affections and life of a child of God, *e. g.*, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new;"* again, "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." 'Is there, attending the baptism of an infant, speaking generally, what answers to the being quickened from death, and raised up to newness of life? Does this fill up the measure of being "*created in Christ Jesus unto good works?*" Does this explain what is meant by putting off the old man and putting on the new man, "*created after God's likeness in righteousness and true holiness?*" Although we read of men "rebelling and vexing the Holy Spirit;" † and of the Scribes rejecting the counsel of God against themselves; ‡ where shall we find that any passage in which opposition to the Spirit is named affects the salvation of a child of God? Is not the above reasoning, moreover, opposed to the faithfulness of God? There may be the appear-

* 2 Cor. v. 17.

† Isa. lxiii. 10.

‡ Luke vii. 30.

ance of repentance, of faith, of life, without the reality: the righteous may fail, as David; but what scripture justifies the doubt that, where the incorruptible seed takes root, it will finally bring forth fruit to life eternal? How strong are the words, "My sheep shall never perish," and again, the words of the Psalmist should be pondered, "My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my truth to fail."* "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not fail David;" † and is not the true child of God encouraged, as the seed of the spiritual David, to expect the same upholding power?

The true believer derives assurance of the continuance of the love of God to those whom he hath chosen, from what is recorded of Israel as a nation, which appears to be typical in two ways: first, of the visible church of Christ, which possesses many privileges, ‡ and is a mixed community, § some of whom shall be saved: || and, secondly, of the individual members of the invisible church, or the mystical body of Christ, in that, although punished now for their iniquity, yet the Lord is mindful of them. "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" saith the apostle, "God forbid."** He hath an end in this, and is working his sovereign will. The apostle adds, "But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." †† "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." ‡‡

* Ps. lxxxix. 33. 2 Sam. vii. 12-16. + Ps. lxxxix. 35.

† Rom. ix. 4. § Ibid. 6, 7. See also 15, 21-33.

|| Rom. ix. 27. ** Rom. xi. 11.

†† Ib. xi. 11, 31-33. ‡‡ Ib. xi. 2.

“Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”* The Lord said to Moses, “I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion, and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.”† Is this portion of truth sufficiently borne in mind, when the doctrine of baptism is considered?

Nothing, however, here advanced, deprives the believer of the privilege of bringing his child to baptism. If it be objected, when the rite of baptism is spoken of as analogous to that of circumcision, that the being born of the seed of Abraham gave a right to the privileges enjoyed by the Jew under the old dispensation, the rite of circumcision would, at the least, admit a proselyte to those privileges, and in their case the analogy would hold good. But it is not necessary to strain this analogy, or to urge the performance of the rite of infant baptism beyond the plain commands of God’s word. The words of Christ’s commission to his disciples, may teach us a valuable lesson; “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved:”—faith comes first,—this brings to baptism,—and to keep away is to disobey the command of Christ; but “he that believeth not,” &c.—the absence of faith ex-

* Rom. xi. 25-29.

† Ib. ix. 15. See also Jer. xxxi. 3.

cludes,—not the absence of baptism,—which one may be without,—not because he despises the ordinance, but lacks the opportunity. There is no reason why this should make one dissatisfied with the ordinance, though it ought to be a warning to those who ground unscriptural hopes on the rite.* Man's utter need, and the mighty power of the Spirit must be borne in mind. The same Spirit, which at the beginning brooded over the face of creation, and out of darkness, disorder, and death, came forth light, and order, and life, must work a spiritual change of a like kind in our hearts, or we remain in our natural unconverted state. We need something more efficacious than water; the sprinkling of water on the body reaches not the heart: if poured on plentifully, still this remains the same: immerse the body, it goes no nearer to the seat of the disease; the purifying is only external, it is only a sign still.

'Let me beseech you to ask yourself, Am I converted? Am I really a child of God? Have I the

* It has been well observed, that "to be able to justify a practice is by no means the same as to be able to prove its apostolicity. Nor is it necessary to prove that every practice in our church must have had an apostolic origin. We shall lose nothing in the end by plainly acknowledging the truth. The aim of the remarks just made has been to point out the obscurity in which the whole subject is involved; how little is the aid which, in the investigation of it, we derive directly from scripture; how beset we are with difficulties on all sides; and, therefore, how unwarrantable it is, when the apostolicity of the practice itself of infant baptism cannot be proved from scripture, to elevate, as has been recently attempted, any particular view of its *effects* on the baptized infant into an article of faith. Where probable conclusions are, at least, all that can be drawn, it is idle, and worse than idle, to affix the brand of heresy to those who decline to hold more peremptory language than that which scripture warrants them to hold."—*Litton's "Church of Christ," Appendix.*

Spirit? Am I born from above? Am I walking in the Spirit? These are questions of vital importance.* Can you answer them in the affirmative with a safe

* The following remarks, extracted chiefly from a very excellent volume of Sermons, supply matter for serious and useful reflection.

If the question be put to you, Have you the Spirit? "Are you conscious of his presence with you, his assistance, his counsel? Consider in what a solemn position you are placed, whichever way you answer. If, after a glance inward on your soul, a hasty review of your tempers, and tastes, and affections, you answer, No: then you at once cast yourself away from all connexion with Christ, and all interest in him. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "Think of it again," Have you the Spirit? "It is, perhaps, a question that has never been thrust upon you thus nakedly and directly before; and it is one of those questions that men love to put out of sight, and leave unanswered. Do not so now; but search your hearts, and see if you cannot find there some faint spark of the sacred fire: and pray to this divine Spirit to come and help you to fan it into a holy and healthy flame.

"If, on the other hand, it is given to any one of you to feel and acknowledge the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in his soul, recognizing him by his work and influence; if you venture to say, I believe that I am a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in me; then reflect on all that this answer implies. How unspeakably solemn, and yet how sublime and happy a condition is yours. Happy you *must* be, in the possession of this earnest of future glory, and of all the delights and blessings that he brings with him,—the power of apprehending and appropriating all the treasures of the love of Christ,—the privilege of regarding God as a Father,—the sensible growth of high and heavenly affections in your heart,—the increasing consolation of that assurance of faith and of hope which is the best anchor of the christian's heart. Happy you must be, in feeling yourself now within the circle of light and warmth that radiates from the throne of God, to embrace and cheer his whole family in heaven and earth. But then, how solemn, how awful a thought, that your body, such as it is, is the temple of the Holy Ghost! If indeed he has taken up his abode with you, he has taught you, by this time, of what you are made,—that your tempers, your passions, your desires, are no fit materials to form a dwelling-place for the most holy God. Think of your ordinary tone of thought, think of the society in which you live, think of the occupation and conversation that is most attractive to you, the stream of life along which you are tempted to float; and then reflect that, whatever you are engaged upon, with whomsoever you are conversing, you have him in your company, who as really sees, and hears, and feels, and judges, as Jesus himself when he walked through the world by the side of his disciples. And let this

conscience before God? If not, except you be born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God.

Believe me to be

Yours affectionately,

H. S.

thought have its due and wholesome effect upon you. Let it encourage you to think that you have an Almighty Champion at your side: and let it warn you to "work out your salvation,"—not lightly or unsteadily, but as one who is under a high and supernatural influence,—with fear and trembling, for there is God dwelling in you, to will and to do of his good pleasure. . . . When the way of reconciliation through Jesus Christ alone has been announced, there yet remains for the preacher the task equally hard, of declaring the doctrine of the Holy Spirit of God, that he is the author of all life; that except a man be born of the Spirit here, he cannot enjoy the heavenly life hereafter; that he, too, is the author of all wisdom and of all knowledge; so that in the judgment of christians, because in the judgment of God himself, no knowledge and no wisdom is worthy of the name, beside that which the Spirit of God imparts to the faithful believer in Christ. That the same Spirit also is the author of all holiness; that no character and no conduct can satisfy the requirements of God, or undergo the sifting of his judgment, except that which is founded upon the principles and the motives of his own Spirit.

"The presence and influence of this divine person, as they form the condition and basis of our union with Christ, so they are the very foundation of all holiness; and this is a principle of wide and general application, because it becomes our duty to pronounce all those qualities which are called virtues in the common vocabulary of the world, to be no virtues at all, unless they spring from the knowledge and love of Christ, and the presence of his Spirit.

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. It is not enough, as some writers of the day seem to imply, that Christ has taken upon him man's nature,—this does not make all men his brethren, or partakers of the benefits which he came upon earth to bestow. They must be born of his Spirit, or they are not children of God in any higher sense than that of all created beings. They are not brethren of Christ; they are not heirs of his kingdom.

"Neither can they, even in this life, receive the moral teachings of Christ and his apostles, unless they are first, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, transformed from their natural state into a new being, and made one with Christ."—*Sermons by Rev. S. A. Pears, one of the Assistant Masters at Harrow School.* Preface, pp. 25-27, and Sermon xiii.

LETTER XXXIX.

—
ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

OUTWARD SIGNS VOUCHSAFED.—THE LORD'S SUPPER A MEMORIAL OF DELIVERANCE, LIKE THE PASCHAL FEAST.—CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER REFERRED TO.—DESIGN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.—TRANSUBSTANTIATION, &c. CONTRARY TO REASON AND SCRIPTURE.—PREPARATION REQUISITE FOR THE WORTHY RECEPTION OF THIS RITE.—HUMBLE BELIEVERS ENCOURAGED TO PARTAKE OF IT.—OBJECTIONS AGAINST RECEIVING IT WEIGHED.

Dear Friend,

It has pleased God, among the many marks of his consideration of our state, to give outward symbols of things spiritual, in order to confirm our faith in their reality. One of these I purpose to make the subject of the present letter: and it is my earnest desire to approach the consideration of the subject before us, in simple dependance on the Divine Teacher for light to guide me in setting before you the truth as it is in Jesus respecting it.

'External ordinances serve to keep up a sense of religion among men,' and aid the spiritual worshipper in testifying of Christ, who is the life of his people. Each has its appointed office. By the word, men are

“begotten again;” by prayer, grace is obtained for maintaining, and progressing in, the christian life; by baptism and the Lord's supper, the Spirit's regenerating grace and Christ's atoning blood are visibly set before the church, serving to confirm faith in those two gifts of God, of which they are the standing memorials. Baptism, denoting a burial, reminds true believers that they are planted, (*σύμφυτοι*) grown together with Christ, buried with him into the death of sin: and the Lord's supper shows that there is real nourishment for the soul, derived by faith in Christ who gave his flesh and blood a sacrifice for our sins, the price of our ransom from the power of Satan. But while it is our duty, no less than our privilege, to observe the outward signs, appointed, as they are, by Christ, it is at the same time of the greatest importance that we should be reminded that the mere use of them avails not, and that to have the Spirit, and receive Christ into the heart by faith, is *absolutely necessary*, since without a new heart, and a saving application of the blood of Jesus, and the imputation of his righteousness, there is no hope for perishing sinners.*

The Lord's supper was instituted by Christ after the celebration of the Paschal feast, and, like that

* It has been well observed in the instructions added to one of the formularies of the Church of England, that if the opportunity of communicating be wanting to one in extreme sickness, the minister shall teach “him, that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and stedfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the cross for him, and shed his blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving him hearty thanks therefore, he doth eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the sacrament with his mouth.”

feast, it is commemorative of deliverance and calls for thanksgiving. Our Lord's celebration of this feast is mentioned by three of the Evangelists, (*Matt.* xxvi. 26-29. *Mark* xiv. 22-25. *Luke* xxii. 19, 20.) and also by St. Paul. (*1 Cor.* xi. 23-27.) St. John alludes to circumstances taking place at the time our Lord appointed it, (*John* xiii.) but he had not occasion to speak at length upon what had been described by the other Evangelists. 'As the ceremonies practised at the celebration of the passover, throw light on the circumstances attending our Lord's appointment of this rite, I shall briefly refer to them here. We learn that this was the chief of the three Jewish festivals, and lasted seven days; being designed to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of the Egyptians, and the protection granted to them on the night when all the first-born of the Egyptians were destroyed:' as a typical institute, its object was to shadow forth the great facts and consequences of the christian sacrifice. (*1 Cor.* v. 7.)

'On the tenth day of the month Abib, the master of a family selected a lamb without blemish,* which was slain on the fourteenth day, between the two evenings, before the altar, † in the temple; and thus the feast could be only at Jerusalem, except under peculiar circumstances. ‡ During this time all leaven was carefully excluded from their houses; § the typical signification of which is evident from the admonition of the apostle, (*1 Cor.* v. 6-8.;) showing that the

* *Exod.* xii. 1-6. *1 Pet.* i 19.

† *Num.* ix. 9, 10.

+ *Deut.* xvi. 2, 5, 6.

§ *Exod.* xiii. 3-7.

heart must be purged from the corruption of sin, or it is vain to expect to partake of the salvation obtained by the death and passion of Christ our Saviour. The paschal lamb was to be roasted with fire, and the sacrifice had the nature, 1,—of a sin offering; (*John* i. 29.) and 2,—of a thank offering; inasmuch as it was eaten, and not merely offered to God on the altar, which was the case only with thank offerings under the Mosaic law. Probably the germ of all the other sacrifices lay, or were blended and united in it, as being the first Mosaical sacrifices.

‘The master of the family opened the feast with a thanksgiving, and then passed round a cup of wine mingled with water, to all present. (Compare *Luke* xxii. 17.) He then blessed for the washing of hands, after which the paschal lamb was set upon the table, together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, of which all partook with him. When the table was removed, he made a declaration of showing forth (*1 Cor.* xi. 26.) their deliverance out of Egypt, as commanded in *Exod.* xii. 17; xiii. 8. Then a second cup of wine was filled, and the son or other young person asked, according to *Exod.* xii. 26, what the service meant? The master who presided would then answer, that it was in memory of their deliverance from Egypt. Hereupon *Psalms* cxiii. and cxiv. were read or chaunted, and the second cup of wine was then drunk. After they had washed their hands a second time, the master of the family took bread, which he blessed, (which reminds us of the words in *Luke* xxii. 19.) according to a prescribed form, and

then distributed a piece to each around him. Afterwards, they partook of the passover. Then followed a third cup, properly the *cup of blessing*, a term which the disciples appear to have applied to the cup administered at the Lord's supper.* This was followed by singing *Ps.* cxiii. to cxviii. A fourth cup was then passed round, after which it was usual to recite *Ps.* cxviii. to cxxxvi. called the *Great Hallel*. It is said that no fourth cup seems to have been drunk by our Lord or his disciples, though hymns were sung at the close of the repast. After this, the Jews tasted nothing, unless they chose to fill a fifth cup, when, the Great Hallel and other hymns being sung, the sacred solemnity was concluded.†

II.—Let us now consider *the design of its institution* in reference to the christian church. The words of our Lord, “Do this in remembrance of me,” seem to imply that it was intended to be *a permanent memorial of his sufferings and death*, as the price of our redemption. The words of the apostle are to the same effect;—“As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.” It has been truly said that the sum paid for our redemption gives new emphasis to the feeling of its preciousness, and is a theme not to be so much expatiated on in words, as to be cherished and deepened in the solitude and devotion of one's thoughts.

Let us think of the King of kings, laying aside his dignity, and coming into our world, to submit to

* Matt. xxvi. 27. 1 Cor. x. 16. Luke xxii. 20.

† See Lightfoot *Hor. Hebr.* vol. ix. pp. 146-166, and xi. pp. 327-332. *Kitto's Cyclop. Bib. Lit.* vol. ii. pp. 478-479.

the lowest state of humiliation,—to humble himself to the very depths of our misery. Let us behold him baptized 'in' suffering, and overwhelmed with grief, crying out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Let us reflect on his bitter agony, when his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. While he plied his unwearied efforts to seek and save the lost, the contradiction of sinners, the sinfulness of the world, the unbelief and hardness of men's hearts, had long pressed and afflicted his soul with acutest suffering: but now, in his last moments, when treading the wine-press of divine wrath alone, the invisible agony of his soul is expressed in strong crying and tears;—while he seems forsaken of God, and struggling in fierce contest with the powers of darkness, which now seem to be let loose upon him, he implores his heavenly Father that if it were possible, the agonizing hour might pass away:—"Father save me from this hour:" but he checks himself by saying, "but for this cause came I unto this hour." Let us further behold him while, bearing his cross outside the gates of the city, followed by the wailings of the daughters of Jerusalem, he seems to overlook *his own* sufferings in his feelings of compassion for *them*, on account of the miseries which he foresaw coming upon them. And, when nailed to the cross, between two malefactors, a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men,—sinking beneath the weight of a world's sin, exposed to mockery and insult, amid the darkness of the heavens, in sympathy with her Creator's suffering,—the Prince of Life, having drank the cup which was put

into his hands, bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. Well might he exclaim, "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow:" and yet what multitudes there are, who look carelessly on, or pass by unconcerned.

And while we linger around these scenes, let us reflect on the cause of the Saviour's sufferings. Here we see *the exceeding sinfulness of sin* more clearly than if we witnessed the torments and heard the wailing groans of despair, wretchedness, and everlasting punishment the lost must endure. That *He* who was the brightness of the Father's glory, should suffer and bleed, and die, in order to appease the demands of Divine justice, to wash the stains of sin, and to open up a new and divine way to the mercy-seat, may well cause astonishment in the minds of angels, seeing that where sin has so abounded, redeeming grace and love have much more abounded. Indeed, the extent of the Saviour's sufferings can only be measured by the depths of misery in which the sinful race of man, which he came to redeem, was plunged. So that, in the supper of the Lord, 'we may appeal to the sacrifice of Christ against our own sin, to his grace against our own corruption, and to his love against our fears.' And what a ground of encouragement is this for us to come to the table of the Lord, in humble confidence, and most heartfelt gratitude.

2.—This ordinance may be, moreover, not inaptly called a sign and seal to the believer, of the covenanted blessings obtained by Christ for his church.

Circumcision, and the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice under the law, are regarded as signs and seals of God's covenanted mercy to the believing Israelite: and, from the analogy of the two dispensations, the Lord's supper and baptism may be regarded as signs and seals which God appended to the new covenant. It may be added, that a covenant implies the making of a mutual engagement. They who partake of the Lord's supper, virtually pledge themselves to dedicate to him their future life: while it reminds them that God is pledged to bestow spiritual blessings on his believing people. But we must beware of being led into the vain thought that the mere partaking of the ordinance profits, *opere operato*. There is danger of a kind of substitution of the rite for Christ himself. The blood-shedding of Christ is the means of deliverance; and the supper only a sign of it. Faith apprehends Christ, and realizes deliverance and pardon, and all the blessings he imparts: and in this, as in all devotional acts, it may be said to the recipient, "According to your faith be it unto you." Without this, the act of communicating is a mere ceremony. It may also be observed, that faith at all times realizes and enjoys what is here set forth. The believer is united to Christ, so as to be one with him; and without faith, the Lord's supper fails to give any real comfort; but to partake of the visible tokens of the death of Christ is calculated to confirm faith and increase love.

Hence, though Christ comes not down from heaven in his bodily presence to us as some vainly suppose, yet it is our privilege to ascend by faith,

in spirit, to him, when we partake aright of the bread and wine in memory of his sacrifice for sin, as he is there set forth under so simple and significant a figure as our Redeemer; while from the freeness of the invitation, we are assured that we are welcome to partake of the benefits of his death.

3.—Another benefit set forth by the appointment of the Lord's supper is *the spiritual strength and refreshment to our souls*. The elements are not only memorials of the mystery of our redemption, but affording, as they do ordinarily, strength to the body, they are also appropriate symbols of spiritual nourishment. When he approaches the table of the Lord in humility and faith, the believer realizes spiritual blessings, even communion and fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, an assured sense of his acceptance through the merits of the atonement, as well as fellowship with his people, who partake of the same ordinance, and are heirs with him of the same hope of immortality. 'As the pious bishop Leighton beautifully observes; "When a natural eye looks upon this sacrament, it finds it a bare and mean kind of ceremony. But, oh! what precious consolation and grace doth a believer meet with at this banquet! How richly is the table furnished to his eye! What plentiful varieties employ his hand and taste! What abundance of rare dainties! Yet there is nothing but one here; but that one is all things to the believing soul; it finds his love is sweeter than the richest wine to the taste, or best odours to the smell; and that delightful word of his, "*Thy sins are forgiven thee,*" is the only music to a

distressed conscience.”’ Thus we have exhibited anew the salvation which is by Christ, in its two leading particulars,—salvation from future wrath, through the merits of him who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities,—and salvation from the present power and dominion of sin,* since Christ not only died for our sins, but rose again for our justification, and, having ascended into heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us, by virtue of his redemption he has obtained gifts for men, even for the rebellious.

As to the superstitious abuse of this sacrament by the Romish Church, I may observe that the doctrine of Transubstantiation, by which the bread and wine are said to be changed, when the words of consecration are pronounced by the priest, unto *the real and substantial body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ*, was not so much as heard of in the christian church for the first six centuries. The real presence of Christ in the sacrament was only determined about the middle of the eleventh century. Nor was it decreed that the elements were actually changed, till the fourth Lateran Council, A. D. 1215. To sustain a doctrine so contrary to sense, reason, and scripture, and to solve the difficulties which beset them on the point, Romish writers have recourse to metaphysical subtleties, which, although they may serve to delude such as are in error, have no real weight in the absence of scripture proof. †

* Rom. vi. 14.

† It is assumed on this ground that all material bodies consist of two parts, *substance* and *accidents*; the substance being something

As to our Lord's changing the water into wine, it is sufficient for me to observe here, that this and every other miracle of Christ, quoted as proofs of his divine mission, were addressed to, and admitted on, the evidence of the senses. Thus the water, after it was changed, was *called* wine, and was seen, tasted, known, and declared to be "good wine;" but in the Lord's supper the elements are called bread and wine *after* consecration.* So that if they be not *changed*, there can be no miracle, and, consequently, no transubstantiation; and 'we are compelled to believe the bread and wine (though representing to us the death of Christ) to be such, upon the evidence of the reason and senses which God has given us in order to decide upon reality and truth.' †

invisible and impalpable, the accidents both visible and tangible. It is then asserted that this substance not coming under the cognizance of our senses, may undergo a transformation, the accidents still remaining the same.

* See Matt. xxvi. 29. 1 Cor. xi. 25-27.

† An anecdote illustrative of this truth may not be out of place here. It has been said that a poor Roman Catholic boy, having been instructed out of the scriptures, and ceasing to attend service at the Roman Catholic place of worship, was questioned by the priest, who, among other subjects, spoke of the sacrifice of the mass, and of the change which took place in the bread when consecrated: the boy remarked that this was contrary to the senses: upon which, the priest thrust his stick into a tub of water, and showing the boy that the stick appeared to be bent, remarked that our senses might be deceived; upon which, the boy put his hand to the stick where it entered the water, and said, Ah! but I *feel* it is straight. So, if in some cases one sense may be deceived, let it be tested by all the senses which can be applied to it, and a more proper judgment may be formed of its nature. In the Lord's supper which of the senses can be deceived? I see the consecrated wafer to be bread. On tasting it, I find it to be bread: I feel it to be bread: and, as far as the sense of smelling can aid me in discovering its nature, I am convinced that it is bread, unchanged by the act of consecration. Besides, his body was before the disciples, yet unbroken, when Jesus took the bread and brake it; and his blood not yet shed, when he gave them the wine to drink.

The passages of scripture most frequently quoted to support the doctrine in question, on the admission of some of the ablest Romish writers, utterly fail to sustain it. Thus our Lord's words, (*John vi. 53.*)* "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," when compared with ver. 35, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst," show that the same blessing and privilege are ascribed to faith; so that to eat the flesh of Christ

* It should be remembered that the words of Christ (*John vi.*) were spoken long before the last supper, and probably have no reference to it, though it has to the sacrifice of which the supper is a sign. Besides, the sacrifice of the mass is altogether wanting in the true marks of a sin offering. 'The wafer,' as every school boy well knows, 'is of the fruit of the ground. There is, moreover, no blood shed; whereas, "without shedding of blood is no remission."' It is a sacrifice, but only of praise and thanksgiving. An experimental knowledge also, of the power and dignity of Christ, will convince how derogatory it is to his attributes to suppose that there is any need of a repetition of his sacrifice. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Unlike the priests under the law, whom the Romish priests too closely follow in this matter, our great High Priest, "having offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God." Whence then the need of his being offered again and again?

It is well also to observe, that we are prone insensibly to make mistakes when we take a figurative passage or expression out of a book where figures are frequently used, as is the case with the scriptures, and insert it in one where the language is plain. The figurative expression is then naturally taken, as the context, in a literal sense, and mistakes thus easily arise. A very slight examination of the passage itself will convince any reasonable mind that the words of Christ in the last supper are not to be taken in their literal sense. In the Gospel of St. Luke, after saying of the bread "This is my body," Jesus says of the wine, "This cup is the new testament in my blood." We do not doubt that he means, This represents the sealing of the new testament in my blood, which being shed, the testament takes effect. No one supposes the cup is the new testament, and yet if the former expression is to be taken in a literal sense, why not the latter? And if the latter is not to be so interpreted, on what ground is the former? Had Christ, when he took the bread in his hand, said, This is *changed* into my body, we should not doubt it would be so, but he used no such words.

and drink his blood, is but another form of expression for faith in Christ. This is evident from our Lord's words, ver. 63, "*It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*"* So that, if the elaborate attempt to prove that the

* See Willett's Synops. vol. v. p. 195. Ed. Reform. Soc. 1852.

I cannot do better here than quote the reply of this able and excellent writer, to the oft repeated argument urged by Romanists in support of transubstantiation, drawn from our Lord's words, "This is my body," "This is my blood."

"Many things in the scriptures being spoken in borrowed and metaphorical words, are uttered with greater grace, and carry a fuller sense. When Christ said, "I am the door." *John* x. 9; "I am the vine," *John* xv. 1; he spake by a figure, as bread was not his body. Yet which of the apostles was there that understood him not when he called himself a vine and a door? Besides, it is no unusual phrase in the scriptures to say, "this is," that is, "*signifieth*;" as in *Exod.* xii. 11, the lamb is called "the Lord's passover," which it betokeneth only; (see also *Deut.* xvi. 50.) and St. Paul calleth the rock Christ, being only a figure of him. See also *Rev.* i. 20.; "The seven stars *are* the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest *are* the seven churches:" *Gen.* xli. 26, 27.; "The seven good kine *are* seven years; and the seven good ears *are* seven years:" *1 Cor.* x. 16, 17; "The cup of blessing which we bless, *is it not* the communion of the blood of Christ?" &c. In the same sense, Christ saith, *Τοῦτο ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμά μου*, "This is my body, *i. e.* exhibiteth and representeth unto you my body." *The sacrifice of the mass* is but a necessary consequence of the doctrine of transubstantiation. The deluded votaries of that corrupt system worship the wafer after it is consecrated, believing it to be Christ. So that the priest thus creates a Saviour who is continually offered in the mass, contrary to the express declaration of scripture. See *Heb.* vii. 26, 27; ix. 22, 28; x. 14. *Gal.* iii. 13. *1 John* ii. 1, 2. The Church of Rome has alike departed from the institution of the sacrament, *by withholding the cup from the laity* and non-consecrating clergy. This was first established as an article of faith in the Council of Constance, A. D. 1614, and is alike opposed to scripture, and the practice of the primitive church. See *Matt.* xxvi. 26-28. *Luke* xxii. 19, 20. *1 Cor.* xi. 26-28."

Our missionaries speak of the same use of the word *is* for *signifies* or *is like unto*, in the East, in the present day. I have heard a minister from the South of India say, that the members of his congregation would think he gave them credit for very little intelligence if he were to speak otherwise.

flesh of Christ is, in a literal sense, received and eaten, were successful, it would still be, as far as that is concerned, an unprofitable feast. To use the words of an excellent commentator; "It is not the carnal eating of my flesh that I intended; that is a very gross conception of yours; nor can any such thing as that do you good: but the words I speak unto you, they are spiritual, and such, by the belief of which you may obtain a spiritual and eternal life: for, by believing those words and obeying them, you shall come to believe in me; which is that eating my flesh and drinking my blood which I intended; not any corporeal or carnal eating."*

Besides, little reflection is needed to show how contrary to reason it is to suppose that the soul could be nourished and supported by eating bodily food.

The doctrine of the Lord's supper was very early corrupted, and this excites no surprise, when the natural tendencies of the human heart to exalt self by ascribing undue efficacy to external rites, are considered. Besides this, the dulness of men's understanding, when unenlightened by the Spirit of God, has often occasioned mistakes. We have instances of persons who heard the words of Jesus having been found to put an erroneous interpretation on them. Nicodemus, for example, when Jesus spake to him of the necessity of the new birth, unable to understand its nature, thought that he spake of a natural birth, not of a spiritual regeneration.† The woman of Samaria, when Christ called her attention to the water of life, was unable to raise her thoughts beyond the water

* Poole's Com. in loc.

† 1 John iii. 3, 4.

in the well.* The words which Jesus spake to Peter respecting John were misunderstood: "Then went this saying abroad," we read, "that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, he shall not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" So liable are we to err, when we leave the simple words of scripture; and put on them our own construction. When, again, Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," they understood not that he alluded to "the temple of his body." † So likewise when he spake of his giving his flesh for the life of the world, and compared the living in him by faith, to the support of the natural life by eating flesh, some received his words in a literal, and not a figurative sense; and said, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat? and they were offended." Jesus, however, guarded his disciples against this error, saying, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" If the carnal conceptions of these men makes it difficult for them to understand my words, now that I am present with you, how will their difficulty be increased when I shall have left you, and my body shall be removed hence? And then he solves the mystery in the words before quoted, (*John* vi. 63.) bringing their thoughts back to his doctrine, by which, when received by faith, the spiritual life begins and is maintained. Since these words were thus misinterpreted in the days of Christ, by those who heard him, more misinterpretations might be expected in after time; and we cannot wonder that, from

* *John* iv. 10-15.† *John* ii. 19, 21.

ignorance and design, errors thus springing up should by degrees be stereotyped, and thereby the faith be corrupted.

Moreover, the converts to christianity from among the Jews, accustomed as they were to sacrifices, would thankfully invest the appointed memorial of the death of Christ with a sacrificial character. Unable to realize by faith the sufficiency of the one offering made for sin, and thus to derive support for the life of their souls, such would gladly seek to pacify their consciences by a continuation of sacrifice. They would thus, moreover, find the way open for realizing another object of desire,—the continuation of a human priesthood under the gospel, which would be helped forward by modelling the christian ministry after that appointed under the Mosaic law. It is difficult to discover which of these two was the *πρῶτον ψέυδος* in the Church, but the one would lead to the other. If there were a sacrifice, there must of necessity be a priest (*ἱερεὺς*) to offer it: or, the doctrine of the priesthood being received, a sacrifice (*hostia*) would follow.* These ideas once gaining ground, and the way of gospel truth once being left, what could be expected, but still wider and wider departures from it? Accordingly multiplied corruptions of doctrine followed. The spiritual character of the doctrine of the gospel was more and more lost sight of, and forms substituted for it. Christian ministers, instead of seeking spiritual attainments, and, with earnest supplication for the Spirit's aid, using the word of God as the instrument of bringing souls to Christ, relapsed into

* See Litton's "Church of Christ," Book iii. Ch. ii. S. 2.

the more easy mechanical service of the Jewish priesthood, and rested in the performance of external rites; the minds of men becoming more carnalized, the ideas of religion were made to assimilate with their view; spiritual agency was gradually more and more disregarded, and the spiritual life merged in formal obedience to the letter of the law.*

Such being the fearful consequences of a first departure from the simple following of the word of God, and errors respecting this doctrine being so inveterate, it is easy to see how careful one should be to seek the truth; or, if he has wandered from it, carefully to retrace his steps, seeking the Holy Spirit's help. It becomes such, painful and difficult as the task may be, to seek to remove the rubbish which has

* Romanism in the present day, as a system,—for there are, it is hoped, those who have knowledge beyond their teaching,—is found by those who take the trouble of investigating its character, to show the truth of these remarks. Talk to a Romish priest of the new birth, and you may expect him to direct you to the water of baptism; speak of the means of supporting the spiritual life, and he will point to the Lord's supper: but if you press the necessity of a change of heart and daily renewal by the Spirit, you may expect statements to this effect, though made in the words of scripture, to be ridiculed, or the question of Nicodemus to be repeated, "How can these things be?" In such a case as this, charity constrains me to make the humble and earnest endeavour to enlighten the mind so dark and deluded, and answer such by the question, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" and give the faithful rebuke, If you are unconscious of a change wrought by the Spirit of God in your own soul, and of the work of renewal carried on by the same Spirit, you are yet in darkness, and can have no scriptural ground for hope of salvation; and, as regards those whom you may be called to instruct, you are to them a blind leader of the blind. Seek the Spirit. Let not age or anything in your state keep you back. The power of the Spirit is almighty. Marvel not at the words, "You must be born again." Be not satisfied with the administration of external rites. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (*John* iii. 7, 8.)

gathered round the simple surface of truth, and there take his stand against error. If he incautiously leave this ground, and contend with other weapons than those which the Holy Ghost has furnished, however good and powerful they may appear in the eyes of men, he may have to bewail their earthly temper, and find himself foiled, because he has not simply honoured God, by trusting the defence of his truth to "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" and, as regards ourselves, since love to the truth is the surest safeguard against error, this must be exhibited by our imbibing the spirit of the gospel, and carrying out its precepts in the performance of every duty: and if we would discern the Lord's body, distinguish this from an ordinary repast, and avoid sin in communicating, we should consider the state of heart in which consists our *preparation* for this ordinance. We would not come to a king's feast without thought, and a humble feeling of the honour done to us; and shall we come to the Lord's table unprepared? The admonition of the apostle is very needful here: (1 *Cor.* xi. 28.) "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup;"—'not to find some reason for absenting ourselves, but that after self-examination, and consciousness of our heart's being right with God, and our lives according to his word and will, we might commemorate the Lord's death in a proper manner.' We should remember, that 'Christ hath spread the table for his friends, and, since we cannot expect to derive any benefit from coming to the table of the Lord in ignorance, we should examine whether

we have a right or spiritual perception of the nature of that ordinance. And, since the benefit of communicating is limited to the worthy partaker, we should examine our state. The following questions are important ones, as helping to enable us to form an opinion as to whether we are prepared to go. Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do I love the brethren? 'Do I cordially hate sin, and have I forsaken it? Is my alone confidence in the merits of Christ for salvation? Am I fully purposed to serve God in holiness?' If any humble penitent christian can answer these questions conscientiously before God, it is his duty and his privilege to go. Love to the Lord and the brethren best recommends us. As regards the latter, we are reminded of this duty of union among the children of God, by the words of the apostle; "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." The necessity of holiness, also, is shown in the same place; "What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." So, to come to the Lord's supper, and live a worldly or carnal life, is an act of such inconsistency as might

be expected to strike all who are guilty of it; but many do not ponder this, nor consider that the Lord instead of looking on with acceptance, must abominate and punish such outward pretence to communion with him. It becomes the lovers of the world, and all that is in the world,—such as are conscious that they are influenced by “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,”—to consider that they also are, in spirit, idolaters, and that what is addressed to the Corinthians, is also applicable to them. As the pure in heart see God, so the worldly and carnal mind must be changed, and the eyes of our understanding enlightened by the Spirit, in order to our realizing our union of soul with Christ, and his presence with us. It is only when we know Christ and come to *him*, that our coming to his table is a source of consolation or of strength to our souls. As a memorial of Christ dying for us, we should receive it with a grateful and loving heart;—as a means of reminding us of the benefits purchased for us through his atonement, and as betokening, in a figure, the blessings of the new covenant, we should receive it in faith;—under a deep sense of our own unworthiness to take even the crumbs which fall from the Master's table, while invited to eat the children's bread, we should come with deep humility of heart, depending on the merits of Christ alone for acceptance with God; and coming thus to this ordinance, we shall be acceptable guests, and find our souls spiritually refreshed. Engaging in a visible ordinance of Christ's own appointment, the believer receives renewed evidence of the certainty of the blessings

purchased for his people; he knows that, believing, he is justified; his knowledge that Christ bare his sins in his own body on the tree, is renewed; his perception that the burden of them is fallen off, is quickened; and he goes on his way rejoicing.

Yet notwithstanding the privilege of partaking of this memorial of Jesus' dying love, and the comfort and spiritual establishment which it imparts, it is truly painful to reflect upon the apathy and indifference with which multitudes treat the affecting invitation of the Saviour, "This do in remembrance of me." Some who would regard it as a mark of base ingratitude in another if he were to omit to observe the dying request of a friend, do not reflect that they are condemning themselves,—that against themselves the charge of base ingratitude is with reason to be brought,—if they turn away when a simple service is before them to be observed, which was appointed by the best of Friends, on "*the night in which he was betrayed.*" Some seem to make a merit of abstaining from the Lord's table, on the ground of their unfitness; but will this make their case better? Such should remember that we do not go there to give, but to receive,—not to tell Christ how good we are, but how good he is,—not because of any fancied worthiness, but because, utterly empty of all that merits favour, or can claim acceptance, we know that, believing, we shall be acceptable guests, being clothed in the spotless robe of the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to us;—that his invitation is a sufficient warrant to encourage the most timid to draw nigh.

We should reflect, besides, that the admission of

our unfitness to approach the table of the Lord is too frequently the *acquiescence* on our part, of that alienation of heart, which keeps us at a moral distance from God, and which, if persisted in, must eternally exclude us from all the prospects of a blissful eternity. It has been frequently observed that if we are unfit for the Lord's table, we are unfit to die, and unfit to appear before God in judgment. Indeed, it must be a miserable refuge for those who plume themselves on being free from the guilt of hypocrisy on this ground, while they are testifying the absence of meetness for the presence of the Lord, and of love to him, and regard to his word. Strange that the most ignorant should need to be reminded that the absence of hypocrisy does not shield them from the punishment of guilt. Let the timid disciple, moreover, be comforted by the reflection, that his Lord would not have laid down his life for him, and just when about to do so, have appointed a rite which would be as a snare, injurious to his true followers: nor let the humble disciple be kept away by a superstitious thought which, not scripture, but tradition gives rise to, and which is deep, because long entertained; that round this rite there is a barrier within which something more than simple faith and holiness is required to give them entrance; or that there is not room for repentance for those who are betrayed into sin after observing it. It may be well to notice that the words addressed by St. Paul to the Corinthians,* which probably have deterred many, were called for by the sinful excess, and want of spirituality of mind and

* 1 Cor. xi.

brotherly-love, which marked their observance of this divine ordinance. It would seem that this, as other sins in the early church, was caused by the converts from Judaism mixing their own customs with what Christ ordained. They appear to have continued the paschal feast, or something resembling it, bringing provisions of their own,* taking each before other (*προλαμβάνων*) his own supper, so that the richer would have abundance, while the poor would hunger; and a divinely-instituted rite was changed into a carnal feast. Light is thrown upon the flagrant profanation named by the apostle, viz. excess in drinking. Notice has been taken of the four cups of wine which Dr. Lightfoot states they partook of at the paschal feast; and Büxtorf says it was the custom to be quite drunk at the feast of the Purim.† It is unnecessary to remark that such a violation of the precepts of the gospel, and especially at such a time, would be visited with no ordinary marks of divine wrath. Were such sin to be witnessed in a christian assembly now, should we think any reproof of it too strong? Can we wonder that, in the days of the first establishment of the christian church, when, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Elymas, &c., the presence of the Lord was made known by punishment speedily following transgression,—that for the sin in question “many should be weak and sickly among them, and many should sleep” the sleep of death? But the apostle does not name the subject in the Epistles to other churches, and it does not apply to those who come and partake

* 1 Cor. xi. 21, 22, 34.

† Whitby, p. 85. Scott's Com. on 1 Cor. xi. 21.

with faith and love and a spiritual mind. Even in the case of the gross offenders at Corinth, the word *κρίμα*, rendered in our translation by "damnation," was not, it appears, necessarily unto condemnation, but rather for a warning. They were "judged that they might" repent and thus "not be condemned with the world."* Nothing, however, which is said of them ought to discourage one who comes 'with a penitent heart, renewed by the Spirit, and realizing faith, love, and a full resolution to glorify God in the life;' it does not apply to such: it is their privilege and their duty to obey the invitation of Christ. It is a feast which imparts joy to the Lord's people. If others partake of the elements ignorantly, they may well return empty; if presumptuously, they may well suffer punishment. Come, then, first to Christ, and then come to his table, and you will find that his "flesh is meat indeed," and his "blood is drink indeed;" that faith in the sufficiency of his sacrifice communicates joy and peace to the soul. You will then barely require to be admonished to come as opportunity offers. The disciples are considered to have broken bread, at first, in their daily meetings,† in remembrance of the death of their Lord. How is it, then, that the young christian does not claim this privilege, and thankfully avail himself of it? But, alas! how many, even of those who would be acceptable guests, think themselves too young. Let the pious youth be encouraged. Do you think Christ would not love to see you there? Are you willing to allow that your youth would keep you from Christ, and fellowship with

* 1 Cor. xi. 32.

† Acts ii. 42, 46.

him? If not, should it keep you from his table? And how many live even to an advanced age without ever coming. Oh! let such make inquiry wherefore this is, and no longer suffer either ignorance or superstition to keep them from showing themselves to be the friends of Christ. There is no charm in the rite: the simplicity of the gospel is opposed to such a mode of acting. But the exercise of faith and love imparts fresh peace to the mind of the enlightened. Let not a true believer then deny himself the privilege any longer.

In conclusion let me address you in the words of an excellent writer on this subject.* “Think not to say within yourself, I am not clean, therefore I cannot come to the feast. If you are not, why are you not? Is there not a fountain opened? Have you not been many times called to wash and be clean? You are unready, and therefore excuse yourself from coming; but is not your unreadiness your sin? and will one justify another? Can a man’s offence be his defence? You think you are not serious enough, nor devout enough, nor regular enough in your conversation, to come to the sacrament, and perhaps you are not, but why are you not? What hinders you? Is more required to fit you for the sacrament than to fit you for heaven? Be persuaded therefore to put on the wedding garment, and then come to the wedding feast. Consider further, that your unworthiness can be no barrier to the undeserved love and mercy of God, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith you approach the table of the Lord;—while you

* Matthew Henry.

think of the demerit of sin which required such a sacrifice as is there represented, think of the greatness of the love which provided such a Saviour."

Believe me to be,

Yours faithfully,

H. S.

LETTER XL.

TO THE YOUNG.

RELIGION THE ONLY SOURCE OF REAL AND ABIDING HAPPINESS. — YOUTH THE SEASON FOR IMPROVEMENT.—EARLY SURRENDER OF THE HEART AND LIFE TO GOD A MEANS OF ESCAPING EVILS THAT ARE IN THE WORLD.—THE DUTY ENFORCED, FROM THE CONSIDERATION THAT WE ARE NOT OUR OWN.—EFFECTS OF EARLY DEDICATION OF SELF TO GOD EVIDENCED BY A DESIRE TO GLORIFY GOD, AND READINESS TO BEAR REPROACH FOR HIS NAME.—PRACTICAL DUTIES — OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS. — PRAYER.—PUBLIC WORSHIP.—OTHER DUTIES.—WARNING AGAINST SINS OF IMPURITY;—EVIL COMPANIONS. — SERIOUSNESS ENJOINED — THE WHOLE TO BE SANCTIFIED BY THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER.

Dear Friend,

It may be unnecessary to remind you of the fact that happiness is that which all are in pursuit of: yet it is well to keep before the mind that there are two sources and two kinds of it. The one source is *God*, “the Father of lights,” from whom every good and perfect gift proceeds,—the “fountain of living waters;” the other is the *world*, with its empty and deceitful pleasures, compared in Scripture to “broken cisterns

which can hold no water." From one or other of these sources every one is seeking happiness. Let me ask you from which of these are you seeking it? This is no idle question: it tests the state of the heart. Examine, then, this matter with me, and ask God to be your guide while doing so. I do not attempt to deceive you, by asserting there is no such thing as pleasure in the world. My desire is to set before you the two kinds, that you may weigh the one against the other, and, by the grace of God, make choice of that which is best.*

* The following are some of the many texts, which show that God is the source and giver of peace: Job xxii. 21. Ps. iv. 6-8; xxi. 6; xxix. 11; cxxxviii. 7; cxliv. 15. Is. xii. 1-3; xxvii. 5; liv. 10; lxi. 1-3; lxvi. 12. Zech. ix. 9. Matt xi. 28. John iii. 29; vi. 67, 68; xiv. 27; xvi. 33; xvii. 3, 13. Acts ii. 28. Rom. xv. 13, 33; xvi. 20. Gal. v. 22. Phil. iii. 3; iv. 4, 7. 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17; iii. 16. 1 Peter i. 6-9. It is the portion of the righteous:—Ps. xxxii. 9-11; lxiv. 10; lxxviii. 3; xcvi. 11. Is. lvii. 1, 2. God is the object of it:—1 Chron. xvi. 31. Ps. v. 11; xliii. 4; lxiii. 7; lxvi. 1, 4; lxx. 4; lxxxix. 15, 16; cxliv. 15; cxlix. 2. Is. xii. 1-3. Phil. iv. 4, 7. It springs from the knowledge of the mercy of God, and his salvation:—Deut. xxxiii. 29. * 1 Sam. ii. 1. Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; li. 12; xc. 14. Is. xii. 1-3; xxv. 9. Luke ii. 29-30. From faith:—Acts xvi. 34. Rom. xv. 13. 1 Peter i. 8. From obedience:—Lev. xxvi. 3, 6. Ps. xxxvii. 37; cxxxviii. 5. Isa. xlvi. 18. 1 John ii. 17. From being instrumental in, or witnessing, the conversion and holiness of others:—Prov xxiii. 15, 24. Matt. xviii. 13. Luke xv. 7, 10. John iv. 36. Acts xx. 22-24. Phil. ii. 16. 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. From heavenly dispositions and exercises:—Ps. xxxiii. 21; xxxvii. 11. Isaiah xxix. 19; xxx. 18. Matt. v. 3-12. Rom. viii. 6. Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xiii. 6. Phil. ii. 17, 18. From suffering for Christ:—Matt. v. 11, 12. Luke vi. 22, 23. Acts v. 41, Acts xx. 22-24. Heb. xi. 26-27. 1 Peter iv. 12-14. The word of God gives joy:—Job xxiii. 12. Ps. i. 2; cxix. 14, 16, 24, 47, 72, 97, 111, 165, 167, 174; cxxxviii. 5. Prov. xxix. 18. Rom. vii. 22. Rom. xv. 4. It is disturbed by sin from within and from without: Rom. vii. 23, 24. Phil. iii. 18. 1 Peter i. 6-8. Also, by sorrow:—Jer. ix. 1. Jer. xiii. 17. John xi. 35. It is consistent with present trials, which are the lot of the righteous. (Christ says, "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword:—Matt. x. 34.) Luke vi. 21. John xv. 20; xvi. 33. Rom. viii. 17, 18. 2 Cor. i. 7. Heb. xi. 25. It is not only present, but in anticipation:—Luke xxi. 28. Rom. v. 2. Rom. viii. 18.

1.—To begin, then ; both kinds end with their object. Spiritual pleasures are *lasting*. God is eternal, so are the joys of the righteous. The joys of the world are fleeting and transient, for the fashion of it passeth away. 2.—The happiness which has God for its object, is not only present, but anticipative ; and so far from being disturbed or eclipsed by death, is only then consummated. The righteous “enter into peace.”* Death puts an end to all the joys of the wicked, and their lamp is extinguished in darkness. 3.—In the joy of the righteous there is a *fulness* and continuance, even amidst earthly trials ; their “peace flows as a river.” The joys of the world, though gilded with its ensnaring fashions, never fully satisfy, and are only

Rom. xii. 12. 2 Cor. iv. 8-18. It is abundant :—Jer. xxxiii. 6. Ps. xxxvii. 11 ; lxxiii. 5 ; lxxii. 7. Phil. iv. 7. It is lasting :—Ps. xvi. 11. Matt. vi. 20. John iv. 13, 14 ; xiv. 20-22. 1 Thes. iv. 14 ; v. 16. 2 Thes. ii. 16, 17. 1 Peter i. 4. 2 Peter i. 11. 1 John. ii. 17. It is found in death :—Ps. xxiii. 4. Is. xxv. 8. Mat. xxv. 21. Luke xvi. 22-25. 1 Thes. iv. 13-18. 2 Thes. i. 6-10.

The righteous must not be surprised that they find so many trials and disappointments ; all their happiness drawn from earthly sources is transient and liable to interruption ; that drawn from God is alone permanent. The contemplation of the love of God is especially calculated to win the heart's affections. The self-denial and sufferings of Jesus should awaken love in every heart :

“O what that froward heart can move
That melts not at a Saviour's love ?
What can that sluggish spirit raise,
That will not sing the Saviour's praise !”

Since love draws the youthful mind : what love is there to be compared to the love of God ? Have father or mother ever loved like him ? Love designed, and love executed the plan of salvation. Our duty is fulfilled in love. Every endearing title recommends God to you, as Father and Friend. Jesus is our peace, propitiation, Saviour, shepherd, brother. Oh, close with the offer of life *now*. Why delay another hour to be happy, when it may be your last. Time is too precious and too short to admit of any portion being lost : God is too good to be neglected and despised.

Contrast with the joys of the righteous, those which sin and the

* Is lvii. 2.

“for a season.” 4.—Spiritual joy is pure and without alloy; that of the world partakes of its corrupt and polluting influences. The one leads to heaven; the other to hell. The one, flowing from a spiritual and divine source, and of close affinity to heaven, elevates and purifies the affections; the other debases man, as it panders to the corrupt propensities of fallen corrupt nature. Happiness was lost by sin: then sorrow was the decreed portion of our first parents, (*Gen.* iii. 16, 17.) it is regained by Christ, who is “our peace,” (*Is.* liii. 5. *John* xiv. 27; xvi. 33. *Luke* ii. 11-14. *Rom.* v. 11. *Eph.* ii. 11-17.) and is conferred on all who embrace his invitation, “Come unto me all ye that

world present. The wicked are strangers to peace:—*Isa.* xlvi. 21, 22; lvii. 20, 21; lix. 8. See *Ps.* v. 10, 11; xx. 7, 8; lxviii. 2-4. *Isa.* lxxv. 13, 14. *Rom.* iii. 17. The wicked promise themselves pleasure in vain:—*Deut.* xxix. 19, 20. *Isa.* xxx. 10-17; xlvi. 10, 11. False prophets promise in vain:—*Jer.* vi. 14. *Ezek.* xiii. 10-16. Their joys lead them away from God: Prosperity,—*Deut.* vi. 8-12; xxxii. 15. *Neh.* ix. 25-38. *Prov.* i. 32. *Jer.* v. 28; xxii. 21. Riches,—*1 Sam.* xv. 17. *Jer.* xvii. 11. *Mark* x. 23. *James* ii. 6. *1 Tim.* v. 6; vi. 9, 10. *2 Tim.* iii. 4. Increase bringing woe,—*Isa.* v. 8-14. Gratification of selfish desires,—*Numb.* xi. 31-35. *Ps.* cvi. 15. Friendship of the world,—*James* iv. 4. *Luke* vi. 25. Feasting and drinking to excess,—*Job* i. 5. *Joel* i. 5. *Prov.* xxiii. 29-35. *Ecc.* vii. 4. *Isa.* v. 11, 22; xxiv. 9. *Hab.* ii. 15. The pride of life and the lusts of the flesh,—*James* iv. 4. *1 John* ii. 15, 16. Worldly wisdom,—*Gen.* iii. 6. *Job* li. 13. *Isa.* v. 13, 21; xlvi. 10. *Jer.* viii. 9. *Ecc.* ii. 21. Empty mirth,—*Prov.* xiv. 13; xv. 21. *Ecc.* vii. 2-6. Sin is followed by sorrow:—*Prov.* xiii. 31. *Jer.* v. 25, 29; vii. 34; xvi. 9; xxv. 10. *Ezek.* vii. 25. *Luke* xix. 42. The joys of the wicked soon end:—*Gen.* iii. *Esther* v. 13; comp. with vi. vii. *Job* xx.; xxi.; xxiv.; xxvii. 11-23. *Ps.* lxxiii. 2-20. *Isa.* xxiv. 5-8. *Heb.* xi. 25. Death destroys them all:—*Matt.* viii. 12; xxv. 46. *Luke* xvi. 25. The words of king Solomon, after trying so many means,—wisdom, riches, planting, building, &c.—are instructive, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” When enjoyed to the greatest extent, a sinful passion destroys them, and of every earthly source it must be said, “All this availeth me nothing.” (*Esther* v. 13.) “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.” “Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest, because it is polluted.” (*Micah* ii. 10.)

labour, and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest.*"*
The following lines are expressive on this subject.

1. "Joy is a fruit that will not grow
In nature's barren soil :
All we can boast till Christ we know,
Is vanity and toil.
2. But where the Lord has planted grace,
And made his glories known,
There fruits of heavenly joy and peace
Are found, and there alone.
3. A bleeding Saviour, seen by faith,
A sense of pard'ning love ;
A hope that triumphs over death,
Give joys like those above.
4. To take a glimpse within the veil,
To know that God is mine,
Are springs of joy that never fail,
Unspeakable ! divine !
5. These are the joys that satisfy
And sanctify the mind ;
Which make the spirit mount on high,
And leave the world behind.
6. No more, believers, mourn your lot ;
But, if you are the Lord's,
Resign to them that know him not,
Such joys as earth affords."

In urging upon your attention the subject of early piety, I am free to admit that those who seek the Lord, even at the eleventh hour, *may* find him ; yet how many deeply important considerations should lead the young to seek the Lord early. Dr. Watts, in one of his expressive hymns encourages them ;—

* Matt. xi. 28.

“A flow’r, when offered in the bud,
Is no vain sacrifice.”

The young have an opportunity of showing that they prefer God to the world, when the latter offers them many enjoyments; and they have, humanly speaking, a longer period before them in which to make what return they can to God for his mercies shown to them. With what endearing kindness does the Saviour speak of little children who were brought to him for his blessing: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” As the good shepherd, he gathers the lambs in his arm, and carries them in his bosom;” and heavenly wisdom gives the encouraging invitation, “I love them that love me, and they that *seek me early* shall find me.”

As you are now come to years of discretion, and have the privilege of openly testifying the dedication of yourself to the Lord, I feel it my duty to lay before you some considerations, which, through the divine blessing, may help you to choose the good part, and to decide, in the strength of the Lord, to be not only a christian by profession, but to consecrate yourself, body, soul, and spirit, to the service of the Saviour who died for you: in other words, to be *altogether a christian*, not merely in name and word, but in deed and truth; for you are to remember that true religion is not shadowy, but real and substantial. You have only to reflect on what you are, a sinner against God, and that eternal life or eternal death is your sure portion hereafter, in order to convince you that a life of vanity

does not become you, but that religion must be a serious, sober, practical principle.

“Man should be serious in a serious cause.”

You have probably heard what has been related of Secretary Walsingham, a great statesman in Queen Elizabeth's time, who retired from public life in his latter days, and gave himself up to serious thought. His former gay companions came to visit him, and told him he was becoming melancholy; “No,” he replied, “I am *serious*, for all around me are serious. God is serious in observing us,—Christ is serious in interceding for us,—the Spirit is serious in striving with us,—the truths of God are serious,—our spiritual enemies are serious in their endeavours to ruin us,—poor lost sinners in hell are serious,—and why then should not you and I be serious too?” When man points out one way of happiness, and God another, may you hesitate which to choose? Often even a misjudging or indulgent parent may go to the world for pleasures for you, and place before you such as are really injurious, in order to make you happy as they think, not looking beyond the present, but scripture says, (*Lam. iii. 27.*) “It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.” And every disciple of Christ must comply with the precept, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”—*Luke ix. 23.* I trust, therefore, that in endeavouring to set before you the nature and source of true happiness, and the advantages of early piety, as drawn from the revealed word

of God, the truth will commend itself to your serious consideration.

Right reason shows the wisdom of following the admonition of scripture, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," &c. It is verified by the experience of mankind in every age. "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." A life of godliness does not lessen the energy, the gladness, the liveliness, the hope of youth, but it directs them to proper objects; and holiness is ever found to constitute true happiness. All search after happiness, personal or social, as I have already stated, which would leave God out of the question, points its eye towards the passions. They are flattered, gratified, stimulated: yet the object evades the search. "True happiness is the bridling of the passions; their subjugation to the law of God; their amalgamation with affections which he implants and hallows." Worldly wisdom rises betimes still higher, and makes happiness to consist in the gratification of the tastes and feelings cultivated and refined by the philosophy of the schools. But this gratification is so dependent on "a fortunate combination of external circumstances," that the tastes and feelings must expire the moment these combinations are broken up; as the lake dries up of itself when the springs and streams which supplied it are exhausted or cut off: and whatever has not reference to God cannot be expected to impart the happiness he alone can give.

We are not left to human reasoning on this important subject, or on whatever concerns our true interests. The question is put by the Psalmist,

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” showing that he walks in a polluted world; and the answer is given, which every one should lay to heart and practically act upon; “By taking heed thereto, according to thy word.” It is an unspeakable benefit that while there are ever temptations to false doctrine and unholy living on every side, as at this time when they may be expected to increase, we have an unchanging test to which we can bring both our religious opinions and daily life; and putting them side by side with the rules of God, seek by his grace to acquire a growing conformity thereto. It is on this account that I refer you to many passages of scripture bearing upon many parts of the subject before us, and may the Lord fill you with love to his word, and give you grace to mould your faith and practice after it. Appealing, then, to the law and to the testimony, we find true happiness consists in a change of heart, or conversion, pardon of sin, and an assurance of God’s favour through the merits of Christ; communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit; leading to a life of devotedness, love, trust, and full complacency in him, and the enjoyment of a filial relation to him. Thus it rises in dignity above human speculations and theories. “It ennobles man, whilst it makes him humble; it produces the highest attainments in grace, and invigorates the mind with true wisdom, while it purifies the heart.” It is essentially fixed in the mind which has been renewed in the image of God; and is substantially independent of worldly circumstances. Though the “fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be in the vine,”

yet the true christian can "rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation."—*Hab.* iii. 17, 18.

This happiness, moreover, is but preparatory to, and the foretaste of, the fulness of joy and abiding "pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore." Thus while God has appointed, as it has been truly said, limits and restraints on the pursuit of earthly pleasures and sensual enjoyments, he has placed no limit to the pleasures and enjoyments of true religion, which affords a conscious hope of eternal joys above. The more the taste for its pleasures and enjoyments is exercised, the stronger does the desire for them become;—the taste grows with the growth of the renewed mind, and the means of gratifying it are not only as large as, but infinitely beyond our capacities, and exceeding our conceptions, for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."* How happy the true believer who can say, "Thy favour is life, and thy loving-kindness is better than life." "O Lord, thou art my God; early will I seek thee." "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul." Or, as our blessed Lord expresses it, "This is *life eternal*, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." As it has been well said, "To seek God is to desire happiness, and to find him is that happiness."

II.—As duty and blessing are leagued together in the divine economy, if we would possess this happiness, and obtain the promises connected with it, we

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

must, as was observed, make the word of God the rule of our conduct, and the regulating principle of the emotions of the heart; the mind and all its feelings must be brought under its dominion.

1.—In pointing out, further, the advantages of early piety, I would observe that, as in nature so in grace, if we would reap and gather fruit to life eternal, it behoves us to take advantage of the present time, and sow the seed in the morning of life, for we know not what shall be on the morrow. All mornings should be diligently improved, “the morning of the day by early rising, meditation, reading the word and prayer,—the morning of the week, the morning of the year, and, so, the morning of life.” Each season has its peculiar trials and advantages. The attractions of pleasure seem to be the besetting temptation of youth, while the cares and anxieties of life absorb and engross the thoughts and attention of those of more mature years. Nor does the ruling passion abate or lose its force in the decline of life. Where the heart has not been pre-occupied by the sanctifying power of divine grace, the acquired tendencies and habits of former years, too often, assume a greater intensity, and sway such dominant influence over the powers and faculties of the unrenewed mind, as to make the danger great indeed that death eternal will be the result. How frequently is the word of God fulfilled in the misery of impenitent sinners, who have neglected or abused the time of their visitation. “Because I have called, and ye refused,” &c.*

2.—Recollect that an early beginning promises the

* Prov. i. 24-29.

highest attainments. Let us look at Joseph, Samuel, David, Josiah, Obadiah, Abijah, Timothy, and others, whose names will be had in everlasting remembrance. How many of the bright examples recorded in the word of God, as well as of those handed down to us in the history of the Church to the present time, are known to have "*feared the Lord from their youth.*" Would you lead a life of real happiness and usefulness on earth, and "follow those who through faith and patience inherit the promises:"—then consecrate the energies of your youthful affections to that God who "is love," and thereby possesses the perfection of attractiveness. It confers happiness to feel ourselves to be the objects of the love of others, and to possess objects of affection, and this in proportion to the worthiness of the objects of our affection: so it is perfect happiness to be loved of God, and to love him.*

3.—While early devotedness to God sheds a lustre on human character, and gives consistency and dignity in this world, it tends greatly to preserve it from the evils which are in the world. This point I would urge with especial force on your attention. Alas! how many a fine vessel, laden with reason, intelligence, and noble faculties, has been drifted, and shattered, and wrecked in passing through the Scylla and Charybdis of youthful pleasures and sensual enjoyments. It has been truly said, we but little know the secret agonies which swell the bosoms of many who, led aside from the paths of virtue by the examples of "evil men and seducers," have had their minds cor-

* The joy of God over his people is shown in Deut. xxx. 9. Isa. lxii. 5; lxxv. 19. Zeph. iii. 17. Jer. xxxii. 41. Luke xv. 5, 10.

rupted by false principles, and have sown for themselves seeds of misery, from which have sprung up a rank and wretched crop: destitute of self-control,—ignorant, yet conceited,—the victims of passion and caprice,—they are obliged to eat the fruit of their doings; and either they have laid up in store for themselves the bitterness of remorse, or have gone without repentance and without hope to their last account. On the other hand, how different is the case of those who have early responded to that gracious call, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls.” They who in early life have come to Christ for salvation, are able to look with calmness on what perplexes the children of this world, and, above all, are waiting for the Lord they serve, at whose coming their trials shall be over.

III.—Having laid before you the nature of true happiness in connexion with the entire consecration of your youth to the service of God, let me urge this on you as your bounden duty. The command, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength,” is as plain a precept as “Thou shalt not steal;” and to neglect it is as much a sin, as to violate the other. If it be said, it must be the work of the grace of God; assuredly it must, but that grace must be sought; by contemplation on the perfections of God,—by the study of his word,—by obedience to it, and by constant prayer. Further, this imperative duty will appear evident, when I remind you, on the authority of holy writ, that *you are not your own*, but bought with a price,—

redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, that you should be his peculiar property; so that when you withhold yourself, or anything you possess, from the service of God, you commit, as it has been said, the monstrous injustice of robbing him to whom you owe every thing, of the moral property which belongs to him, in the obedience and affections of his children. But while God deserves and demands the heart, there are numerous competitors for it, and many of these, alas! very dangerous ones. The path of youth, as I have already pointed out, is a very slippery one, and beset with snares and temptations continually, on the right hand and on the left. The evil spirit who tempted our first parents, has still the same power through his subtle wiles; he is the prince of this world, and, doubtless, is encouraging in it whatever may serve to keep his captives from Christ and liberty: and we may rest assured, he stays no efforts to retain possession of the young, and keep them back from the service of the Lord. The world has also its attractions and delusive charms, which, as the idols of the heathen, are worshipped and served in the place of the true and living God, and serve to keep up the delusion. There are, besides, the enemies within, the evil heart of unbelief, and the roots of bitterness springing up: the carnal mind is enmity against God. All these hindrances must be removed, all these enemies overcome, through faith in Christ, and the strength of divine grace: and we require to be arrayed in the whole armour of God, continuing instant in prayer, that we may be enabled to stand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. O seek to feel

your weakness, your danger, and the safety which those have who come to Christ, and experience the leadings and strength of his all-sufficient grace. Pray for strength to flee from the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to cast yourself upon almighty love and power.*

IV.—I will now refer you to some of the effects or evidences of the consecration of the heart to the service of God. The aim of the young disciple who would follow the steps of his Saviour on earth, will be to glorify God in his body and spirit, which are God's; to confess Christ openly before men; to be ready to endure reproach and even persecution, for his name. For, though we do not live in times of persecution and trial for the name of Christ, yet is not the offence of the cross ceased. As in early days, "he who was born after the flesh, persecuted him who was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."* The antagonism between light and darkness, between being of the world and being not of the world, still

* I will here refer you to some texts, showing your duty to God. Love him:—Mark xii. 32, 33. Have no other God:—Ex. xx. 3; xxxiv. 14. He is a jealous God:—Ex. xx. 5. Deut. iv. 24; xxxii. 16. You owe him obedience:—John vi. 38; xiv. 15, 21, 23, 31. 1 John v. 3. Fear:—Ps. ii. 11; xiv. 5; Prov. ii. 5; iii. 7. Matt. x. 28. Trust:—Ps. xx. 7, 8; lx. 11; lxii. 8; cxliii. 9. Is. xxvi. 4. Honour:—1 Sam. ii. 30. Mal. i. 6. Praise:—Col. iii. 17. Heb. xiii. 15. Glorify him:—1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; x. 31. Follow him fully:—Num. xiv. 24. Jos. xiv. 9. 2 Cor. vi. 16-18. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, &c. Ps. cxix. 2. Matt. x. 37, 38. Luke xvi. 13. John xv. 14. Acts xxvi. 28, 29. Rev. xiv. 4. Be decided*for God:—1 Kings xviii. 21. Josh. xxiv. 14, 15. 2 Cor. vi. 16-18.

Consider *the claim which God has on your service*:—Deut. xxxii. 6. 1 Sam. xii. 24. 2 Sam. vii. 19. Ps. xlviii. 11; ciii. 12. Is. v. 1-7; xliii. 25; xlv. 22; xlvi. 5; l. 6; lii. 14; liii. 10; liv. 5. Matt. xxvi. and xxvii. Rom. v. 6. 1 Cor. vi. 19. Col. i. 21. 1 John iii. 1; iv. 10. Let your resolution be like the following:—Ps. xxvii. 8; lxxiii. 25. Jer. iii. 4. John vi. 67, 68.

remains, however effective may be Satan's efforts to blind men's eyes to the truth. He that will follow the Saviour, and prove faithful to him, must count the cost, and be prepared betimes patiently to bear mockery and insult for the name of Jesus. Many interesting and affecting instances have occurred, of some who endured a youthful martyrdom at schools, from ungodly associates, because they would not swear out, omit to say their prayers, pass the Sabbath in a careless way, or, in other ways, cease to live godly in Christ Jesus.† Not improbably in some known instances, and in how many hidden ones God only knoweth, the persecuted boy may have passed to a premature grave. How brightly will the countenance of the Saviour beam upon such youths when they appear before him in the great day! How awful the contrast, as respects their blind and ignorant persecutors! Oh, then, dare to be singular in serving God; preserve tenderness of conscience, though others may disregard it; and, wherever the lines of his providence may cast your lot, consider yourself called on to be his *witness*, at school or elsewhere. Shrink not from confessing his name with your lips, and ever let your life be showing forth his praise. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths.‡ He has said, "Them that honour me I will honour;" and scripture and later history testify how much *one*, even in youth, may do

* Gal. iv. 29.

+ Patient endurance of trial is seen in the interesting memoir of John Lang Bickersteth, a pupil at Rugby, pub. by the Rel. Tr. Soc.

‡ Prov. iii. 5, 6.

for God. The folly of those who reject the claims of religion in early life is no less apparent than the wisdom of those who choose the service of God. "They that despise me," saith he, "shall be lightly esteemed." Alas! could angels weep, it were at such a sight. Such are like a person holding a pair of scales in which he is weighing a wedge of pure gold against some valueless dust; and yet, as if his vision were beclouded by some optical illusion, the latter appears, in his eyes, of greater weight and value. Yet this is but a faint and feeble illustration of the folly of him who refuses to choose the good part in time, while such powerful inducements conspire to decide his choice; while the gospel is sounding in his ears, a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. How will the youth who has turned his back to the counsel and warning of the Lord on this subject, mourn at the last, when the evil principles within, like the seemingly dead snake, have been warmed into vitality and inflicted the sting of remorse, and conscious guilt which will compel him to exclaim, "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!" How is the righteous made partaker of glory, and honour, and immortality, while I am cast out. Oh that such would be wise and learn to obey the warnings and instruction of heavenly wisdom on this subject, before they be obliged to weep tears of unavailing regret, when there may be no space for repentance. How frequently does experience engrave upon the heart, as with a pen

* Prov. iii. 5, 6.

of iron and the point of a diamond, the painful conviction, that beneath the outward glitter of worldly fashion, the pride of intellect, the boasted pleasure of the sensualist, and the noisy mirth of the lovers of pleasure, there is an aching void, which only mocks, instead of satisfying, the earnest longings of the heart; so that the more eagerly they are pursued, the more incapable they become of affording pure enjoyment or real happiness to the mind.

I have dwelt on this part of my letter longer than I intended, but the importance of the subject cannot be overrated. I know that many young persons at your age imagine that religion imposes such restraints on human conduct, that they hesitate while conscience urges decision; and halt between two opinions on the subject, that they may be more free, as they think, to follow the counsel of their own heart, and the desire of their own eyes. It is, alas! a besetting temptation with youth to be impatient of restraint, but the restraint which religion imposes, is not only that which brings the *body* into subjection, but also keeps the passions and tempers under the government of reason, and controls and regulates the inclinations and affections of the heart by the sanctifying influence of christian principle, as set forth in the revealed will of God;—not a restraint from real happiness, but a restraint from sin, and misery, and death,—from the path that leads to hell. For, however flowery the paths of sin may appear to be, the experience of those who tread them testifies again and again, that “destruction and misery

* Eph. vi. 1-3. Col. iii. 20. Lev. xix. 3. Prov. i. 8; vi. 20; xxiii. 22.

are in their way, and that there is no peace to the wicked." But I must hasten to offer some practical remarks, by way of application.

1.—I know I have not to teach you, for the first time, the duties enjoined on you by the solemn sanctions of the word of God. But let me recommend to your attention the precept, "Honour thy father and thy mother."* How instructive is the example of Christ our Saviour on this point. He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to Mary, his mother after the flesh, and Joseph, her husband. His example also shows that filial duty is not to lose its hold on the mind when advanced to the age of manhood. Amid the agony of his sufferings on the cross, he cared for, and sympathised with, his bereaved and afflicted mother, whom he commended, almost with his dying breath, to the care of the beloved disciple.

Disobedience to parents is one mark of the Gentiles, (*Rom. i. 30*) as also of the "perilous times in the latter days," foretold by the Apostle, (*2 Tim. iii. 1, 2.*) I admit, indeed, that, in case of wicked and froward parents, the young christian is liable to be often brought into painful straits and perplexities, when obedience to their commands would involve a dereliction of principle, or disobedience to the commands of his heavenly Father. But, in such cases, the rule of duty is plain. While we should pay all dutiful respect and submission to every lawful command of our earthly parents, beyond that we must not go. Inclination must yield to duty;—"we must obey God, rather than man," however painful and trying may be the conse-

* *Ex. xx. 12.*

quences.* Neither may the example of a wicked father be followed in whatever he transgresses the law of God.†

Do not mistake me, however, on this point, as if I meant to encourage or countenance your setting up *your own will* against the commands of your parents at any time. The plain command is, "Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.‡ Nothing less than the positive injunctions of *God's revealed will* can excuse a child from obeying the dictates of parental authority. Experience proves that, *in general*, parents are the most disinterested counsellors, and the best friends. Slight veneration for a parent leads to lack of reverence for God himself. The ball continues to move in the line of its projection. "Our duty to God, or submission to parental rule cannot consist with the indulgence of headstrong will or fitful impulse. The habits of obedience to wise and equal rule calls forth the immediate exercise of some of the virtues; it teaches self-control, patience, docility, self-denial; it tells also indirectly upon others, keeping the mind, temper, and dispositions in a quiescent state, favourable to their development. The greatly good have seldom been taken from those who were early lawless."§ What excellent fruit has followed the early learning of the lesson to obey: how much practical usefulness has been based upon docility in youth.

The sad influence of a perverted understanding

* Luke ii. 49. John ii. 4. Acts iv. 19; v. 29. 1 Cor. vii. 23.

† Ezek. xviii. 14-18.

‡ Col. iii. 20.

§ Parents' Great Commission.

and depraved propensities in the youthful mind, when unrenewed by divine grace, are well exhibited by an able writer, "Early trained to it under the domestic roof," says M'c Cosh, "the person regularly engaged in prayer, during childhood and opening manhood. But as he became introduced to general society, and began to feel his independence of the guardians of his youth, he was tempted to look upon the father's commands in this respect, as proceeding from sourness and sternness; and the mother's advice as originating in an amiable weakness and timidity. He is now careless in the performance of acts which in time past had been punctually attended to. How short, how hurried, how cold are the prayers which he now utters! Then there come to be mornings on which he is snatched away to some very important or enticing work, without engaging in his customary devotions. There are evenings, too, following days of mad excitement, or sinful pleasure, in which he feels utterly indisposed to go into the presence of God, and to be left alone with him. He feels that there is an utter incongruity between the ball-room or the theatre, which he has just left, and the throne of grace, to which he should now go. What can he say to God, when he would pray to him? Confess his sins? No, he does not at present feel the act to be sinful. Thank God for giving him access to such follies? He has his doubts whether God approves of all that has been done. But he may ask God's blessing? No, he is scarcely disposed to acknowledge that he needs a blessing, or he doubts whether the blessing would be given. The practical conclusion to which he comes

is, that it may be inconsistent in him to betake himself to sleep without offering to God what he feels would only be a mockery. What is he to do the following morning? It is a critical time. Confess his error? No, cherishing as he does the recollection of the gay scene in which he mingled, and with the taste and relish of it yet upon his palate, he is not prepared to acknowledge his folly. Morning and evening now go and return, and bring new gifts from God, and new manifestations of his goodness; but no acknowledgement of the divine bounty on the part of him who is yet ever receiving it. No doubt, there are times when he is prompted to prayer by powerful feelings, called up by outward trials or inward convictions; but ever when the storms of human life would drive him to the shore, there is a tide beating him back. His course continues to be a very vacillating one; now seeming to approach to God, and, anon driven farther from him, till he obtains from books or from lectures a smattering of half-understood science. He now learns that all things are governed by laws, regular and fixed, over which the breath of prayer can exert as little influence as they move on in their allotted course, as the passing breeze of the earth over the sun in his circuit. False philosophy has now come to the aid of guilty feelings, and hardens their cold waters into an icicle, lying at his very heart, cooling all his ardour, and damping all his enthusiasm. He looks back, at times, no doubt, to the simple faith of his childhood, with a sigh, but it is as to a pleasing dream or illusion, from which he has been awakened, and into which, the spell being bro-

ken, he can never again fall." What a warning is herein also afforded not to depart from first love of God, or first works, but to seek daily to grow in grace. Grace alone can keep us, and without faith we cannot be established.*

2.—Let me especially urge upon your attention the warnings of scripture against those "youthful lusts which war against the soul." "I would not dwell upon this, did I not know that purity will suffer more by the silence of shame, than by the honest voice of truth." And, truly, if the frequency of warning against any sin measures the liability of man to that sin, then none is worse than impurity. In many separate passages is the solemn warning against the "*strange woman*" given with a force which must terrify all but the innocent or incorrigible, and with a delicacy which all will feel but those whose modesty is the fluttering of an impure imagination." Holy writ speaks, indeed, trumpet-tongued on the subject, though time and space will not permit me more than to refer

* Children are required to honour their parents,—Levit. xix, 3. Exod. xx. 12. Matt. xv. 5, 6; xix. 19. Heb. xii. 9. We learn how contrary conduct is regarded and punished,—Gen. ix. 22-25. Deut. xxvii. 16. Prov. xv. 20. Isa. iii. 5, &c. Ezek. xxii. 2-7, &c. 2 Tim. iii. 1. Eph. vi. 2, 3. Children must attend to parents' instruction and reproof, and obey them,—Prov. i. 8, 9; vi. 20-23; xiii. 1; xv. 5; xxiii. 22. John xiv. 31; xvii. 4. Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 20. Effects of evil conduct,—Prov. xvii. 21, 25; xix. 13; xxiii. 22, 24, 25; xxix. 3. Exod. xxi. 15, 17. Levit. xxi. 9. Punishment of wicked and disobedient children,—Deut. xxi. 20, 21. 1 Sam. ii. 12-25. 2 Sam. xv. 10, comp. with 2 Sam. xviii. 14. 1 Kings i. 5-10, comp. with 1 Kings ii. 23-25. Prov. xxx. 11, 17. Encouragement for the good,—Exod. xx. 12. Prov. xiii. 1; xv. 20; xxix. 3. Eph. iv. 3. Duty of succouring parents,—Gen. xlv. 9-11, 18; xlvii. 12. Mark vii. 7-13. John xix. 26, 27. 1 Tim. v. 4. Duty of submission and respect to such as are in authority over us, holding the place of parents,—Esther ii. 20; iv. 4, 5. Jesus was subject, not only to Mary, his mother, but also to "Joseph, the husband of Mary,"—Mat. i. 16. Luke ii. 51.

to some passages, * to which I must beg your attention. It will be found how attractive Satan makes sinful pleasures at first, but the veil of their seductive influence is soon stripped off, when the deluded victims are led to feel the sentence of righteous retribution

* God desires sanctification,—1 Thess. iv. 3-7. Titus ii. 12. The punishment of sins of impurity here and hereafter,—Num. xxv. 17, 18. Rom. viii. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 9-20; x. 8-13. Gal. v. 16-19. Eph. v. 3-14. Col. iii. 6. Heb. xiii. 4. 2 Peter ii. 4-22. Rev. xxi. 8; xxii. 11. They are sins of the Gentiles,—1 Thess. iv. 3-7. A *mother's* counsel to escape temptation and flee fleshly lusts,—Prov. xxxi. 1-3. Rom. xiii. 12-14; 2 Tim. ii. 22. 1 Peter ii. 11. The state and character, as well as the folly of those who do not resist temptation,—Prov. ii. 10-19; v. 1-20; vi. 20-35; vii. 1-27; xxii. 14; xxiii. 26-28. Eccles. vii. 26. Temptation successfully resisted,—Gen. xxxix. 9-12. Purity of heart required,—Matt. v. 8. Phil. i. 27. Titus ii. 12. A mark of christians,—1 John iii. 3. The senses to be guarded,—Job xxxi. 1. Cognizance taken of desires,—Matt. v. 28. Rom. viii. 1-13. Duty of mortification of sinful desires,—Col. iii. 5-9. Not to converse about these things,—Eph. v. 3-13. Avoid what may lead to temptation: be plain and modest in dress,—1 Tim. ii. 9. Avoid unemployed hours,—Prov. vi. 6-11. Beware of the attraction of beauty,—Prov. xxxi. 30, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain." Favour and beauty are envied possessions, but often prove snares to their possessors and others. Of Jesus it is written, "There is no beauty in him, that we should desire him," and his followers will not covet it. It has been well remarked, "as moths and tiny insects flutter around the bright blaze kindled for no harm, so the foolish young fall down burned and destroyed by the blaze of beauty. As the flame which burns to destroy the insect is consuming itself, and soon sinks into the socket, so beauty too often draws on itself that ruin which it inflicts upon others. If God hath given thee beauty, tremble; for it is as gold in thy house: thieves and robbers will prowl around, and seek to possess it. If God hath put beauty before thine eyes, remember how many strong men have been cast down, wounded by it. Art thou stronger than David? art thou stronger than mighty patriarchs, than kings and princes, who by its fascinations have lost peace, and purity, and honour, and riches, and armies, and even kingdoms? Let other men's destruction be thy wisdom; for it is hard to reap prudence upon the field of experience." Never wait to parley with tempters to any sin,—Gen. iii. 1-6. Betake yourself to prayer,—Matt. vi. 13. Satan will flee from you if you resist him,—James iv. 4. Comfort, after successful resistance,—Matt. iv. 11. Exhortation to repent, and go and sin no more,—Isa. lv. 7. John viii. 11. Encouragement,—2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

inflicted on them by God. Experience proves, as any who visit lunatic asylums will find, that disease, insanity, and premature death, are the too frequent results of licentious indulgence. Not only guard against vicious indulgence, but against whatever may lead to it. Guard against a *morbid or impure imagination*. "Pure and undefiled religion" implies the active exertion and consecration of all our powers in the service of God; "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world." If you would give no place to impure thoughts or desires, study to be diligent in improving opportunities of usefulness; instead of idling or whiling away time, *substitute active habits and pursuits in the cause and service of God*. Guard against *evil companions*.* Bear in mind that decaying fruit corrupts the neighbouring fruit. You cannot make your head a metropolis of base stories, the ear and tongue a highway of immodest words, and yet be pure. Another, as well as yourself, may throw a spark on the magazine of your passions. An impure man is every good man's enemy,—*your* deadly foe; and all the worse if he hide his poisoned dagger under the cloak of good fellowship: therefore select your associates, assort them, winnow them; keep the grain and let the wind sweep away the chaff. Beware also of *evil books* and *evil pictures*. The depraved heart is well said to be "a vast continent on which are mountain ranges of powers, and dark deep streams, and pools, and morasses. If once the full and terrible

* 2 Chron. xx. Ps. i. 1; cxix. 63. Prov. i. 10; iv. 14-19, 23-27; xix. 27. 2 Cor. vi. 11-18.

clouds of temptation do settle thick and fixedly over it, and cast down their dreadful stores, may God save whom man can never! Then the heart shall feel tides and streams of irresistible power, mocking its control, and hurrying fiercely down from steep to steep, with growing desolation. Your only resource is to guard against the uprising of your giant passions."*

While speaking on this subject, let me urge you to *avoid staking any money in play*: you may think this harmless at first, but its tendency is to fearful crime. On the contrary, use every talent, even money itself, in testifying your love to God, by helping your neighbour. Never suffer selfishness to be fostered, but devise liberal things to the extent of your power: "he that winneth souls is wise." Avoid emulation, and cultivate a contented mind; and, without labouring in order to outstrip others, endeavour to improve your talents, seeking "the praise that cometh of God only."

3.—If you would grow in grace as you grow in years, give yourself much to prayer and watchfulness. Let every morning and evening find you earnestly engaged in this duty; and accustom yourself, even in the midst of your studies or engagements, to send up silent and fervent ejaculations to heaven, that you may continually realize a sense of the divine presence, and be kept in the hour of temptation. Examine yourself frequently, and see what progress you are making in faith and holiness. Choose some seasons especially for this exercise, such

* See a valuable and interesting little work entitled "The Vices, or lectures to young men, by the Rev. H. W. Beecher."

as the beginning of a year, or a birth day ; and see that you examine yourself narrowly, not by the opinion of men, but by the word of God, as the test by which we shall stand or fall in the great day of account. Conscious of your proneness to cover your defects, take the prayer of the psalmist with you on these occasions ; “ Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Remember the words of our blessed Lord to his disciples, “ Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.”* The remark is not more frequent than true, that one without the other is useless. It is far easier to shun the occasions of sin, than the sin when occasion presents it. To watch without prayer were presumption, and to pray without watching is hypocrisy. Watch against every carnal thought ; and in all your intercourse with others be thoughtful, and carefully avoid in word or manner anything which may tend to injure your own soul or theirs. See that you make not only religious duties, but also every study, pursuit, and attainment, a matter of earnest prayer to God. Learn to regard him not only as a righteous Governor, but also as a tender Father, who has made provision for his children’s wants, who is interested in their welfare, and is ready to bless them in all things pertaining to life and godliness. Let me recommend the following prayer to you, before secular study, if you have no other at hand :

* Matt. xxvi. 41.

O LORD God, give me grace, I beseech thee, to apply my mind diligently to my appointed studies, and use all my talents for thy glory. May I count all knowledge but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. May I not feel pride on account of any attainment which I may possess, and which others may be destitute of; but may I be thankful if I have anything which I can give up for thee, or use for thy glory; and may I ever testify my readiness to do this, by the Spirit's power, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

4.—Be regular in your attendance at the house of God; and, when there, pray that the spirit of grace and supplication may rest upon you. Seek to pray with an attentive and devout mind, that instead of allowing wandering thoughts, you may worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. Pray that you may hear the word in faith; that you may receive it in the spirit of meekness and pure affection, and that it may bring forth in you the fruits of holiness to the praise of God.

5.—Whatever may be your employment or occupation in life, rejoice if you are permitted to serve under those who fear God and keep his commandments, and where you may serve God without distraction. This you can do without neglecting any duties in life; nay, your duty to God and your neighbour binds you to the performance of these duties. Religion is not as a patch sewn on a garment. It pervades the whole life and shows itself in every action. Only take heed that your engagement or occupation is in accordance with the rule of life as laid down in the word of God, namely, "Whatsoever things are true,

whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things.”* Recollect, moreover, how important is such a period of life to you when removed from your parents’ roof, and their anxious eye is no longer present with you to watch over you; or their voice or hand near you to warn and restrain you from evil. How needful is it at such a time, and under such circumstances, that you should commit yourself anew wholly to the guidance and protection of a God and Father whose watchful eye and guardian care is able to guide and defend us. How comforting is the promise, “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.”

6.—Let your walk and “conversation be as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Weigh well your words; and endeavour amid the care and anxiety connected with your earthly duties, to have your affections fixed on things above; remember, it is the believer’s high privilege to have his conversation or (*πολίτευμα*) citizenship in heaven. Learn, moreover, to call things by their proper names. Every transgression is sin; “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.” † Our calling evil good, and good evil, does not in the

* Phil. iv. 8.

† Isa. v. 20

least *alter the nature of sin*, though it tends greatly to alter our view of it. What may be looked on as youthful indiscretion or foibles, which are but of trifling account in man's estimation, is called sin in the scriptures, and, as such, is abomination in the sight of God. Again, to tell a lie, is called telling a story, and the idea of its sinfulness is thereby lessened. Many other instances might be adduced.

7.—Let me suggest a word of advice respecting places of amusement. Abstain from indulging your inclination, however strongly it might prompt you to go, wherever you cannot ask God's blessing to attend you, or if you have any reason to doubt the wisdom or propriety of your going. It has been well said, that our inclinations very often suggest to us what is wrong. We begin by wishing it to be right, and we soon conclude that it is so, generally speaking. "I can receive no injury by abstinence, while it is possible that I may be much injured by indulgence; I may be injured by going, but it is quite certain that I am in safety if I stay away."

8.—Finally, let me intreat you, as of the greatest importance, ever to bear in mind your lost and perishing condition by nature; that you are born in sin, and shapen in iniquity; that your confession should be, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;" that you need, as well as others, faith in the atoning blood of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit, that you may escape the corruptions that are in the world, through lust, and "preserve a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards men;" that you have a heart prone to evil, which

needs to be renewed; an understanding which requires to be enlightened; that you are encompassed with weakness and infirmities, and require to look to the strong for strength and grace to help you in every time of need. Let all you do be sanctified by the word of God, as well as prayer.

9.—Read the word of God *daily*, with prayer for a blessing, and make it your constant endeavour to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Let the scriptures be “a lamp to your feet, and a light to your paths:” store your mind with the rich treasures of heavenly wisdom,* and, in every difficulty, ask, What saith the Lord? “Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto God, My father, thou art the guide of my youth;” † and, if you join yourself to him, doubt not he will be your “guide, even unto death,” and, amidst earthly sorrows, you will be comforted by reflecting upon the exceeding great and precious promises which the study of the scriptures serves continually to bring before you; and, among these, the words of Jesus to his disciples, shortly before he left them; “Let not your heart be troubled, neither

* “Farewell!” says Bishop Ridley, with much pathos and beauty to the place of his education,—“Farewell! in thine orchard, the walls, the butts, and the trees, if they could speak, would bear me witness, I learned without book almost all St. Paul’s Epistles, and I ween, all the canonical Epistles.....of which study, although a great part did depart from me, yet the sweet smell thereof, I trust, I shall carry with me to heaven; for the profit thereof I think I have felt in all my lifetime ever after.”—See *Matutina*, by Rev. Geo. Reinaud, p. 217.

† Jer. iii. 4, &c., also Ps. xxvii. 8.

let it be afraid." "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*

Earnestly praying that you may be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

I remain,
Yours affectionately,
H. S.

* John xiv. 2, 27.

LETTER XLI.

TO PARENTS.

STATE OF SOCIETY IN PATRIARCHAL TIMES.—THE EXAMPLES OF NOAH AND ABRAHAM.—PRIEST AND PROPHET UNITED IN THE HEADS OF FAMILIES.—THE NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF EARLY EDUCATION.—THE MODE OF GIVING INSTRUCTION.—INSTRUCTION MUST BE SUITED TO THE CAPACITIES OF CHILDREN.—PARENTS SHOULD LOVE THEIR CHILDREN; AND PROVIDE FOR THEIR TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL INTERESTS.—REPROOF AND CORRECTION.—PARENTAL INSPECTION, REMARKS ON.—CHARACTER OF PARENTAL RULE.—THE FORCE OF INFLUENCE.—PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.—ENCOURAGEMENT.

My dear friend,

It has been stated that those dispositions of mind and principles of conduct which both directly and indirectly tend to promote the good order of civil communities, are produced or strengthened by religion. It was a remarkable and characteristic feature of society in the patriarchal times that the heads of families united in themselves the offices of priest and prophet or teacher. While Noah, exercising the priestly function, builded an altar and offered sacrifice to the Lord, he was also, doubtless, a preacher of righteousness in his own family, as well as to the

world of the ungodly around him ; and, after his deliverance from the waters of the deluge, we need not doubt he would anxiously press upon his immediate descendants the righteous anger of God against the wickedness which so lately had swept the earth of its sinful inhabitants. In the course of time, however, wilful ignorance and depravity again made fearful inroads on the ancient families of man, so that in the time of Abraham, the piety and simplicity of the patriarchal religion was fast fading away, while ignorance and idolatry, with its corrupting superstitions prevailed to a lamentable extent.

Where, however, does patriarchal piety appear to greater advantage than as we see it exemplified in the character of this eminent man in the bosom of his family, and in the government of his household ? This called forth one of the noblest testimonies of the divine approbation we have on record ; “ I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment ; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”* And parents should still exercise this office, and not only rule their households as regards their outward conduct, but also instruct them in the knowledge of the salvation provided for them in Christ Jesus. The believer in divine revelation recognizes his responsibility in every relation of life, and acts upon the conviction that, while God “ setteth the solitary in families,” and commits to their care immortal beings, the fruit of that relation ; he has designed the influ-

* Gen. xviii. 19.

ence and authority parents possess under the divine sanction, should be used and improved so as best to conduce to the glory of God, and the best interests of those thus bound to them by such close and endearing ties.

1.—It may be well, in setting forth the duties of parents, first to consider the time when *education should begin*. For this purpose, the inspired precept, which they are commanded to follow, “Train up a child,” or as the clause (הִנָּךְ לַנְּעַר עַל-פִּי דַרְכּוֹ) may be rendered, *initiate the child at the opening (the mouth) of his path*, “in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it,”* should be carefully studied by every christian parent. We should commence *at the opening of the way of life*, and instruct the child how he is to conduct himself. The parent may be reminded of an important duty by the word of the prophet Isaiah; “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.” (*Is. xxviii. 9.*) An encouraging lesson may be learned from the blessing which attended the dedication of Samuel to the Lord by his mother: and parents should devote their children to the Lord from the womb. They should instil the lessons of heavenly wisdom into their minds from

* The verb הִנָּךְ in the above clause is rendered by lexicographers, *initiauit, imbuit. De homine docere cœpit, instiuit paulatim*: and the passage is thus translated, “*Institue puerum juxta viam suam.*” Hebræi exponunt, *Juxta capacitatem animi sensim instilla ei sapientiam, nam, Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem Testa diu.*

Qualibus fuerint artibus imbuti juvenes, et qualibus disciplinis educati, tales fere futuri sunt senes. Vid. Crit. Sacr. in loco.

the earliest dawn of reason. "Even before their childish comprehension has learned the nature or recognized the meaning of the inspired precept, we may begin to educate. The hallowed spirit of it must be infused before the principle may be understood as a moral duty; before there is intelligence to comprehend the urgent motives on which it rests." The domestic establishment should be made a nursery for heaven. They who neglect or defer so important a duty as the education of children, till their capacities become more expanded, and their understanding more matured, are certainly wise above what is written. If they neglect to pre-occupy the mind with instruction in the ways of the Lord, evil and corrupt principles will take early and deep root in the weak and treacherous heart of youth. Satan and an ensnaring world will educate the carnal mind and convey food most congenial to its propensities. In the Jewish church a child received the sign of circumcision in his infancy; and Jesus, in the gospel, blamed the disciples who would have kept children from him. Nor was this all that was demanded of the Israelites. They were required to teach their children, and acquaint them of God's dealings with them as a nation; to show them his statutes and remind them of the acts of mercy and deliverance wrought for them. See *Deut.* iv. 4-10; vi. 5-9; xi. 18-21; xxxi. 12, 13. *Ps.* lxxviii. 5, 6. The words of the law of God were required to be "in their hearts," and they were commanded by God to speak of them when they sat in the house, and when they walked by the way, when they rose up, and when they

lay down. So should it be with christian parents.*

2.—The mode of giving instruction may be next considered. The solemnity, dignity, and importance of the sacred subject of religion must be instilled so as to inspire reverence; and the beauty that is in Christ, so as to win their love.† A parent may try to convince their reason, and also accustom them to obey without reasoning. Neither mode is omitted by God, and neither need be omitted by the parent. Scripture and right reason teach that instruction should be adapted to the capacities of a child. A babe must not be fed on meat. What is needful, however, for life and godliness, so far from being inaccessible to the infant mind, interests and attracts it.

* Dr. Chalmers well observes that “a child may rightly feel the ethics of the relation between itself and God before it rationally apprehends the object of that relation. Long anterior to the possibility of any sound conviction as to the character or existence of God, it may respond with sound and correct feeling to the mere conception of him. So that on this principle, the practice of early, nay, even of infantine religious education, as I have above observed, may, in opposition to the invectives of Rousseau and others, be fully and philosophically vindicated. Though they are not yet capable of appreciating the proofs which decide the question, it is a great matter that, long before they have come to this, they can feel the moral propriety of giving it solemn and respectful entertainment. Anterior to a well grounded belief in the objects of religion, there is a preparatory season of religious scholarship, commencing with childhood, and reaching onward through successive stages in the growth of the intellect,—a very early and useful season of aspirations and inquiries prompted by a sense of duty to the yet unknown God. Many have been trained to think of him amidst a thousand associations of reverence. Some, under a roof of piety, have often lisped the prayers of early childhood to this unknown being, and on the oft-repeated sounds of morning and evening orisons, they have become familiar to his name.”

+ Want of reverence may betray ignorance respecting the fear of God, in which sound conversion seems so often to have its spring. A conviction of sin, and a sense of deserved judgment, when blest of God, prompt the enquiry, “What shall I do to be saved?” and the revelation of Christ leads to the “love which casteth out fear.”

Only care is required as to the way of breaking the bread of life. Scripture supplies the matter for instruction, affording, as it does, such simple, affecting, and beautiful illustrations; and the terms of scripture afford the best vehicle for its conveyance. The dry erudition and scholastic expressions used in defending the orthodox doctrines of christianity are quite unsuited here. The main truths, *ruin* by sin, *redemption* by Christ, *regeneration* by the Spirit, and *adoption* by the love of God; also the duties of *love to God*, and to *our neighbour*, and of *personal holiness*, may all be brought before the child. Weariness must be avoided; and, since instruction is received in proportion as attention is arrested, and the mind is prone to wander, great patience, love, and gentleness are to be exercised. Let precept be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. And as to the spirit which the parent must seek, Jesus shows this, whose attractive qualities he should strive to possess, so as to be able to say with him, "Learn of me, for I am *meeke and lowly in heart.*" He is, further, sent to the husbandman, for a lesson in patience. (*James* v. 7.) The parent's fruit is infinitely more precious, and patience in him of proportionably greater moment. He has to sow in hope, and wait. The nature of the soil in which the seed is sown, and of the hindrances to its reception, vary in children of the same family. Where the trials of the spiritual husbandman have been the most severe, the effect is often the greatest. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bring-

ing his sheaves with him."—*Ps.* cxxvi. 6. The apostle writes, "We shall reap, if we faint not."—*Gal.* vi. 9.

3.—The principles which should guide the parent call for attention. "God is love;" the parent should endeavour to be so too: this principle is of universal application. Scripture indicates the need of urging this duty, showing the possibility of a "mother forgetting her sucking child;" (the apostle, also, when mentioning the duties of "aged women," exhorts them "to teach the young women to love their children;" (*Titus* ii. 3, 4.) and experience proves that, through the selfishness of the human heart, such an admonition is needful. Love is shown in providing for the temporal wants of children. We learn this from the providence of our heavenly Father. Instinct prompts irrational animals to teach their young how to provide food suited to them. And Scripture points out to man his duty, "If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." The christian parent, however, sees the curse of God, and not his blessing, attending money saved from the poor and the cause of God, and hoarded for the purpose of making fortunes for children, or raising them above their station. He sees that "emulations" are among the works of the flesh. *Gal.* v. 20. (See also *Matt.* xix. 23. *1 Cor.* i. 26, &c.) and he seeks to banish ambitious views respecting his children from his own mind and theirs, and to follow the admonition, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (*Col.* iii. 2.) He endeavours so far as circum-

stances will permit, to set before them the means of obtaining an honest living, and suits their education, and (consulting their inclination and capacity) their profession, to their station in life. The love of God is seen, not only in providence, but in grace; and the parent will "seek first" for himself and his children, "the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and not doubt that all that is necessary "shall be added unto him." He is led to make this decision by urgent motives. His child's life here may be short, and he views present things in the light of eternity. He sets himself to make his child such as he would have desired him to be, if he were to die suddenly. The well-being of society mainly depends as far as human agency is concerned, on the training of children. The honour of God also, is, in a measure, in the parents' hands. Such as the child sees the parent to be in justice and mercy, such will be the opinion which the child forms of these attributes in God. A christian parent must not look to the world for guidance in this matter, but to the word of God. A little reflection upon the present state of society, and upon one main cause of it, suffices to show the need of a reformation in education; and that such as seek the glory of God and the good of souls, should strive after it. Satan is "the prince of this world." The rules of a kingdom resemble its ruler. The aid of one stronger than he can alone bring men to follow God. A christian parent is not blinded and deterred from his duty to train his child for God, by any traits of moral goodness which may appear in them. His child has been entrusted to him of God; and,

being his parent in the flesh, he earnestly seeks to be instrumentally his father in Christ, knowing that 'he needs nothing less than to be born again of the Spirit, and to have the righteousness of Christ imputed to him.'

4.—God shows his love by salutary discipline; so will the wise christian parent. God is the author of order, and the parent takes example from him. We read, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (*Heb.* xii. 5-7.) See also *Deut.* viii. 5; *Job* v. 17; *Prov.* xiii. 24; *James* i. 12; *Rev.* iii. 19. The motive also is learned from God; he chastens, "not for his pleasure, but for our profit;" and the high object is stated, viz.—"that we might be partakers of his holiness: no chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (*Heb.* xii. 10, 11.) So the parent's motive in chastening should be purely the glory of God, and his child's good. Before he corrects, he should betake himself to God for wisdom to direct him in the selection of a punishment, and ask also for a suitable spirit. He remembers the words respecting God, that "he knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust." (*Ps.* ciii. 14.) He may have put up the petition himself, "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing;" (*Jer.* x. 24.) and he will not correct in a passion. There is a gradation of punishments, from the look of tender expostulation, to the infliction of the rod. The punishment which suffices for one child

will have no effect upon another ; “ a reproof entereth more into a wise man, than an hundred stripes into a fool.” (*Prov.* xvii. 10.) The motive prompting has to be considered much more than the offence itself. The character of the offender, the frequent occurrence of his offences, the malignity manifested, the willingness to confess the fault, the signs of contrition, have also to be taken into consideration. The parent will not regard his wisdom as greater than that of the wise man, and discard the use of the rod when it is needed, as if it were unsuited to the present age ; for he knows the heart of man remains the same. (*Jer.* xvii. 9.) See *Prov.* xiii. 24 ; xix. 18 ; xxii. 15 ; xxiii. 13, 14 ; xxix. 15-17. It is important to observe that the word *παιδεία* rendered by *nurture*, in *Eph.* vi. 4, denotes rather the office of a schoolmaster, than of a nurse ; the same word is in *Heb.* xii. 7, 8, rendered by *chastening*. Litton, in his valuable work, “ the Church of Christ,” compares the period of childhood to that of the Jewish Church. (*Gal.* iii. 24-29 ; iv. 2, 3.) His remarks are, in effect, as follows : ‘ In childhood and youth the character has to be moulded ; principles to be inculcated : resistance on the part of a child is to be expected by reason of his nature : in proportion as his judgment is acted upon, and his reasoning faculties are brought into play, he arrives at a state answering to that of the liberty that is in Christ ; then principles inculcated develop themselves in his acting ; and hence we may see the necessity of taking all advantage of the seed-time, for how, otherwise, can there be a harvest ? Before reason acts, or while it acts feebly, obedience has to be

obtained by restraints and correction.' As regards rewards, obedience brings its own reward : to reward a child for simply doing his duty fosters the selfish principle. The approbation of parents, and the rewards which God gives and proposes, *i. e.* a sense of his favour here and glory hereafter, are sufficient, and none else are needed.

'Two evils have to be avoided, *i. e.* the separate exercise of parental affection and parental authority. Parental affection *alone* degenerates into foolish fondness ; and parental *authority* frequently degenerates into brutal tyranny when standing by *itself*. The first sort of parents will, in ordinary cases, be loved without being respected ; and he who laughs with his child in the way of folly may have to mourn over him in his sins, and bewail his own conduct. The second sort will be *dreaded* without being regarded with due tenderness of filial affection. Although, as Cecil observes, when the heart and conduct of a parent are right in the main, much is passed over in his conduct without affecting the child's regard. In the first case, the parent literally *spoils* his child : his hand, obedient to a mind misled, has loosened the rein ; and the child, default a better guide, has followed every passion that spake within him, every influence that acted without him. In the second case, rigid exaction to the stern voice of authority has rendered obedience almost impossible ; and the smallest delinquency being often punished with the extreme of torture, has hardened the mind, and rendered duty a matter of perfect indifference.' But more depends on the *manner* of punishing them, than on the punish-

ment itself. 'Punishment without reason and without love shows the principle of revenge in the heart of a parent. But if a child under correction perceives that the parent acts from a principle of *affectionate concern*, which can measure the temptations, weigh the propensities, and feel for the weakness of the child, loving him through his very sin, such a correction is not likely to occasion a violation of this precept, "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:" but without mitigating the offence, palliating the evil, or lowering the standard of authority, it is calculated to penetrate the soul, soften the callous heart, and prepare the way for reform.' *

Parents, then, in the performance of their duty to "*rule their own households and their children well,*" and "*keep their children in subjection with all gravity,*" must avoid the crimes of remissness and severity. "There must be rule; and this should be affectionate, firm, prompt, uniform, gentle, and holy: *affectionate,*

* 'Finney, an American author, mentions the case of a father who had a stubborn and rebellious son, whom he tried long to subdue by chastisement. He loved him, and longed to have him virtuous and obedient, but the child seemed to harden his heart against his repeated efforts. At length the poor father was quite discouraged, and burst into a flood of convulsive weeping; "My son, my son, what shall I do? Can I save you? I have done all that I could to save you, what can I do more?" The son had looked at the rod with a brow of brass, but when he saw the tears rolling down his father's furrowed cheeks, and heard the convulsive sobs of anguish from his aged bosom, he too burst into tears, and cried out, "Whip me, father, do whip me as much as you please, but don't cry." Now the father found the way to his heart. To subdue the stubborn spirit of his son, he let out his soul before him, instead of holding over him the iron hand of law. And what was the result? The rushing tears of his father's love broke him down to true submission to his father's will.'

Cecil remarks of his ungodly conduct in his youth, "My mother used to warn me with tears. I flung out of the house with an oath into the street, but when I got there, I wept too."

or it will grate on the sympathies of life; *firm*, for obedience will be prompt and cheerful only when paid to power which is unwavering and unyielding: *prompt*, for so it can only meet the necessities of the governed; *uniform*, for thus alone will they anticipate and respect its demands; *gentle*, for harshness withers love, and provokes rebellion; *holy*, for so alone will it find sanction from heaven.* The exercise of such discipline, when blessed of God, removes impatience of restraint, 'causes the youth on leaving home to enter on his duties in the world to shed tears of regret;' and constrains him even when he arrives at manhood, and as long as his parents are spared to him, to love to obey the reins of government.

Before I dismiss the subject of parental discipline, it is important that I should call attention to one exercise of it: I mean the necessary duty of *inspection*. The father of a family must constantly maintain absolute authority in the management of his household. He must make no compromise, but be willing to sacrifice his own feelings, and to offend his dearest friends, rather than allow his child to be led into amusements or pursuits which he believes to be injurious. A wife, moreover, should never oppose his efforts, by giving comfort when he reprovcs or chastens a child. This inspection should extend to the studies of his children;¹ their manners, habits, and pursuits;²

* See Parent's Great Commission.

¹ Parents must judge of the comparative advantages of home and school instruction, with a single eye to the glory of God. The all-important point to be considered in coming to a decision is, Which of the two, under the circumstances, will conduce most to that object by offering the greatest spiritual advantages to the child? If school be

their companions;³ domestics;⁴ their dispositions and tendencies.⁵

chosen, a child should not be sent away from home without having acquired some settled principles of conduct; and all possible advantage should be taken of opportunities of affording christian instruction during the vacations, and by faithful and wise correspondence. Perhaps justice is not done to the female mind by the ordinary custom of removing daughters from school early, when they begin to value instruction. How injurious also to open a door of access to the vain amusements and fashions of the world, at a period of life when so many turn either to Christ or the world. The christian parent's object being to train his child so as to please God, he desires to keep him from the contamination of the world, and to guide him to the practice of christian benevolence. (*James i. 27.*) As regards secular instruction of females, and the acquirement of some pursuit which may interest them at home, the following conversation extracted from a work by Mrs. Hannah More, may be introduced here:

"I really believe that one reason why women are so frivolous is, that the things they are taught are not solid enough to fix the attention, exercise the intellect, and fortify the understanding; they learn little that inures to reasoning, or compels to patient meditation.

"I consider the difficulties of a solid education," said Mr. S— "as a sort of preliminary course, intended perhaps by Providence as a gradual preparative for the subsequent difficulties of life; as a prelude to the requisition of that solidity and firmness of character which actual trials are hereafter to confirm. Though I would not make instruction unnecessarily harsh and rugged, yet I would not wish to increase its facilities to such a degree as to weaken that robustness of mind which it should be its object to promote, in order to render mental discipline subservient to moral.

"How have you managed with your other girls?" said —, 'for though you vindicate general knowledge, you profess not to wish for general learning in the sex.'

"Far from it,' replied Mr. —, 'I am a gardener, you know, and accustomed to study the genius of the soil before I plant. Most of my daughters, like the daughters of other men, have some one talent or at least, propensity; for parents are too apt to mistake inclination for genius. This propensity I endeavour to find out, and to cultivate. But if I find the natural bias very strong, and not very safe, I then labour to counteract, instead of encouraging, the tendency, and try to give it a fresh direction. L—, having a strong bent to whatever relates to intellectual taste, I have read over with her the most unexceptionable parts of the Roman classics. She began at nine years old, for I have remarked that it is not learning much, but learning late, which makes pedants.

"P—, who has a superabundance of vivacity, I have in some measure tamed, by making her not only complete mistress of arithmetic, but by giving her a tincture of mathematics. Nothing puts

‘As children grow up we should point out to them the duties, dangers, and blessings which are before

such a bridle on the fancy as demonstration. A habit of computing steadies the mind, and subdues the soarings of imagination. It sobers the vagaries of trope and figure, substitutes truth for metaphor, and exactness for amplification. This girl who, if she had been fed on poetry and works of imagination, might have become a Miss Sparkes, now rather gives herself the airs of a calculator, and of a grave computist.

“I must however explain to you that the use which I made of these dry studies with R—— was precisely the same which the ingenious Mr. Cheshire makes of his steel machines for defective shapes, to straighten a crooked tendency, or strengthen a weak one. Having employed these means to set her mind upright, and to cure a wrong bias; as that skilful gentleman discards his apparatus as soon as his patient becomes straight, so have I discontinued these pursuits, for I never meant to make a mathematical lady.

“The little one who brought the last nosegay has a strong turn for natural history, and we all generally botanize a little of an evening, which gives a fresh interest to our walks. She will soon draw plants and flowers pretty accurately. L—— also has some taste in designing, and takes tolerable sketches from nature. *These we encourage, because they are solitary pleasures, and want no witnesses.*

“Thus each girl is furnished with some one source of independent amusement.”

Such pursuits and avocations, however, though used in many cases in educating the minds of the young, and as a means of keeping them from an attachment to pursuits which are positively injurious, are not for a moment to be regarded as the business of life, which consists in nothing less than the entire dedication of the heart and soul, and every faculty, to the glory of God, and to be used in serving him in any station in life, and doing good in our generation.

² It is in vain to instruct well, if children be left to contract bad habits, and to indulge in proud, unkind, or wayward tempers. A parent will caution his child to avoid all acts of uncleanness. The devil loves these sins. He is an “unclean spirit.” A parent will also avoid periodicals which are merely humorous, and in which are immodest pictures; also all such music as inflames the passions, or lowers the tone of mind. He will also caution his child to avoid all excess in food.

³ How much good has been unlearned, how much evil has been learned, by a well instructed child, in the first few days of his being at school, by his forming a friendship with a wicked boy, who ridiculed goodness and obedience to authority, and practised iniquity. Youths if unwarned, are attracted by the boldness and cleverness of wicked boys, instead of the godly, who, whether equal in courage or not, fear to sin, and are often more retired. Children should be warned against forming a friendship with an ungodly child. How much injury also has resulted from admitting an ungodly associate at home as a com-

them in the path of life they have to tread. We should endeavour to fix these in their minds by daily inculcation, so as to make a lasting impression; and then lead them to practise by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, and seek to make each impression a strongly radicated habit.'

The duty of inspection should be accompanied with sincere and holy attention to the worship of God. Let religion be the business of life, family prayer and reading of the word be regularly attended to, and in an earnest and spiritual manner. Let the parents be careful to keep the whole sabbath holy. Let them

panion. A parent will also give his children a word of caution respecting marriage, as Abraham was careful respecting Isaac, and Isaac gave instructions to Jacob.

4 Care should be taken in the selection especially of those to whom the care of children is at any time intrusted. "The formation of character makes rapid strides in the nursery."

5 The parent has to endeavour to ascertain to what sins each child is prone, and to instruct him accordingly. One may be prone to question truth: and, while the spirit of inquiry of the humble with a view to know the truth, is to be commended, the pride and presumption of an inclination to cavil is to be carefully pointed out, and guarded against. Another may want reverence: a third may require to be guarded against superstition. So every sin,—want of love, corrupt affections, envy, anger, uncleanness, intemperance, pride, foolishness, vain conversation;—every evil disposition has to be brought to the law and the testimony; exposed, and shown to be sinful; and the christian disposition, to which it is opposed, set forth. It is needful to instruct children to be humble to others, and to be pitiful and courteous, avoiding all rudeness of manner to inferiors, knowing that God "is no respecter of persons."

The child is also to be directed to the fountain opened for sin; he is to be exhorted to pray in secret, humbly and heartily to confess sin, to pray earnestly for pardon, and again and again for grace to overcome. The parent, also, taking always the part of a bold reprover, should not think he has nothing now to do, when he has directed his child to pray, but should join with him, and also intercede for him in secret; and he may draw a lesson from the words of Jesus to his disciples, when they could not cast out the foul spirit which had afflicted the young man from a child, and add fasting to prayer. (*Mark ix. 29.*)

see you doing this. Let them *see you* earnest in prayer, regular in reading the scriptures, careful in avoiding evil companions.

It is well remarked, "The exercise of influence is the education of conscience.* Influence is the busiest, the most pervading principle in life. It is the education of the child. It is the acting of the man. The influence of the individual is the education of his neighbour. The influence of the eminent is the education of the inferior. The influence of society is the education of the future. The influence of the female sex is the education of the man. The influence of the legislator is the education of the subject. The influence of the church is the education of the nation. But, more than all, the influence of the parent is the education of the child. . . . Man in the outline of his character is early formed. A mother looks with pity on her child in the cradle, and his education is begun, and thenceforth there is no period at which it ceases. Perhaps a mortal never descended at seventy to the grave, having lost all trace of the moral and mental traits which were budding in him at seven.†"

'If then we cannot fly the responsibility of educating our children, let us apply ourselves to the task. Shall the vessel toss upon the waves, and shall there be no eye to watch its course, no hand at the helm? Shall the foundation of the character of immortal be-

* This is illustrated in a simple manner by the comparison of a child of an ancient Spartan with one of a believer; the former being accustomed to think fortitude shown in suffering occasioned by the concealment of a theft, will easily be led to think little of a departure from truth; while the conscience of the latter will accuse him of the least falsehood.

+ Parent's Great Commission.

ings destined to receive an unending sentence, either to happiness or to misery be laid, and shall there not be care taken that it be a good one?' Let not any be kept back by a sense of inability; the Lord looks on the sincerity of the parent, and will, when he sees this marking his efforts, doubtless overrule all mistakes.* If he have erred, either in remissness or severity, let him confess this to his children, and retrace his steps, though it may occasion trouble at the

* It may serve as a great discouragement to pious parents to hear of not unfrequent cases of children departing from the ways in which they have been trained. It must, however, be considered that in some cases the profession of the seemingly religious parent has been only in appearance, and when the mask, worn abroad, has at home, as it is wont, been thrown aside, the exhortations to a religious life have produced disgust with the gospel, which is seen to have so little effect on those who urge them. The Rev. Thomas Robinson, in his excellent work, "The Christian System, or a Series of Essays on the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity," quotes in the Essay on the fifth commandment, a remark of Abp. Tillotson, that the parent who gives good precepts to a child, but sets him a bad example, is like one who "beckons to his child with his head in the way to heaven, while he takes him by the hand to lead him in the way to hell." In other cases in which, notwithstanding the efforts of a pious parent, a child has wandered from the path in which he has been led, the other parent may not have been of the same mind; and a child will naturally cling to a parent who indulges him, even for a time after he is convinced that the other is instructing him aright. A godly parent must expect that a child in his natural state will be alienated from him, being alienated from God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;" and, in proportion as the parent frames the rules of the household in conformity to the word and spirit of the gospel, in such proportion will he be despised, neglected, disregarded. Let him not think it strange if such be his lot: but let him pursue his course. If both parents strive for the spiritual good of the child, and he fall into bad ways, 'this does not show that the power of influence is not great, but that it has been overcome by one more powerful.' We may need, moreover, to be reminded that it is the Lord who "maketh" one "to differ" from another. But in how many instances has the seed been found to spring up afterwards; and the parent, though dead, has yet spoken. Instructive examples are given in the case of James and Robert Haldane, (see their Memoirs,) also of Rev. R. Cecil, (see his Life and Remains.)

first. Let him look at the examples which Scripture affords:—such as Abraham; Job; Hannah; Lois and Eunice; Eli; Herodias; and let him “command his children and his household after him, to do justice and judgment;” let him intercede for them; let him early teach them the Scriptures; let him “restrain” his children from evil, and not only admonish them; and let him not instruct them in vain accomplishments. Do you feel your weakness? Cast yourself upon the Lord. Consider the case of the woman of Canaan; the nobleman; the father of the lunatic. And, finally, think of him who in the days of his flesh poured out strong cries and tears, and was heard in that he feared; and, doubt not,

“He will deliv’rance give
In every trying hour.”

Believe me to be

Yours affectionately,

H. S.

LETTER XLII.

DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

THE BIBLE INSTRUCTS IN EACH RELATIVE DUTY:—FAR IN ADVANCE OF THE SYSTEM OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY.—THE DIVINE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE.—POLYGAMY AND CONCUBINAGE NOT SEEN IN THE BEGINNING.—MARRIAGE STATE IN THE TIMES OF NOAH;—ABRAHAM;—MOSES.—THIS RELATION VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.—IMPORTANCE OF REASON AND PRUDENCE IN FORMING ATTACHMENTS.—MARRIAGES TO BE CONTRACTED ONLY IN THE LORD.—EVIL AND MISERY OF INDISCRIMINATE MARRIAGES.—CASE OF MINISTERS CONSIDERED.—DUTIES ARISING OUT OF THIS RELATION;—UNITY, LOVE, AND FIDELITY REQUIRED OF BOTH PARTIES;—SUBJECTION AND REVERENCE ON THE PART OF THE WIFE;—PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE ON THAT OF THE HUSBAND.—ALL TO BE SUBSERVIENT TO FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

Dear Friend,

It is a cause of thankfulness that the message of God's revealed will reaches us in every relation of life. Like the sun, whose line goes out into all lands and the light of whose beams penetrates the most dark and distant parts of the earth, so the rays of divine truth, beaming from the effulgence of the Deity, and reflected in the word of God, lighten every man

of every caste and clime, condition and calling, whom its sound reaches.

‘In this respect, it is frequently observed to be far in advance of all the systems of ancient philosophy; the instructions they contained being so defective and inefficient, that they could never reform the world, or keep together any considerable number of men in the knowledge and practice of virtue. Their precepts were delivered to their own immediate pupils, in which case the lower orders of the people could derive no advantage from them, though these latter generally constitute the great mass of society. Besides, the ethical systems of the philosophers were too refined for the common people; most of their discourses upon morals being rather *speculative* and *learned*, nice and subtle disputes, than *practical* and universally *useful instructions*; and even the most plain and necessary duties of life, however clearly they might explain them, they had not sufficient authority to enforce and inculcate upon men’s minds, so as to influence and govern the general practice of the world. They could present no motives sufficiently powerful to stimulate the mind to the practice of true virtue, and support them under the calamities of life.’

On the other hand, how encouraging it is to find in the volume of divine revelation, that there is “help laid upon one that is mighty,” to sustain us under every trial, and to strengthen us for the discharge of those duties which arise from our various conditions and callings in life, in the performance of which we may have the testimony of an approving conscience, and enjoy an assurance of the divine favour.

In calling attention to the subject of the present letter, I shall not stop to discuss the question as to the relative advantage or disadvantage of marriage or celibacy, except to remark that marriage is the rule, celibacy the exception. The command was given, "Be fruitful and multiply;" (*Gen. i. 28.*) and the Romish church would appear plainly to err in pressing celibacy so unduly. The rules of God can never be broken with impunity, and the evils attendant upon the monastic system bear no inconsiderable testimony to its unscriptural character. On the other hand, marriage appears to occupy in the minds of many an undue prominence, when its importance is considered in relation to the great end of man's existence. "Every man has his proper gift: one after this manner, and another after that:" and, while celibacy is the exception, and to be avoided by persons whom it might lead into sin, yet, to use the apostle's words, "He that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will," † appears to be left at liberty to choose a single life. It is not necessary that an unmarried person should enter a convent; and some, "serving God without distraction" in a single state, || have been among the most useful members of society. The time at which Paul wrote to the Corinthians, (*1 Cor. vii.*) was one of peculiar trouble on account of persecution, and it would add greatly to a man's trials under such circumstances, either to witness the sufferings of one bound to him in so near and tender a relation as a wife, or to be

* *1 Cor. vii. 7.* See also *Matt. xix. 10-12.* *1 Tim. iv. 3.*

† *1 Cor. vii. 37.*

|| *Ib. v. 35.*

united to one who might seek to withdraw him from the confession of Christ. The apostle admonishes them; "This I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not. . . . and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."

1.—Marriage is an institution ordained of God while man dwelt in Paradise before the fall. This is recorded in *Gen.* ii. 18-25., and *Matt.* xix. 4, 5: whence it appears that woman was made after man to be "a help meet for him:" and the intimate union of a man and his wife is shown in that they are, by virtue of it, declared to be "no more *twain*, but one flesh." The indissoluble character of this union, except by God, as in the case of fornication, (*Matt.* xix. 9.) is also therein declared. The Lord Jesus Christ gave his sanction to this rite, by performing his first miracle at a marriage. Moreover, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled."—*Heb.* xiii. 4. An alteration in the condition of woman would appear to have been made after the fall, in consequence, it appears, of her sin, as regards her subjection to her husband. (*Gen.* iii. 16., comp. with *Num.* xxx. 6-16.)

The customs afterwards mentioned, even among the patriarchs, of polygamy and concubinage, do not appear to have been contemplated by God at any period, though they were suffered by him, and a law is given to prevent the evil consequences of it; (*Deut.* xxi. 15.) and perhaps the nearest opinion to this truth is,

that they are to be regarded in the same light as divorce under the Mosaic dispensation, of which our Lord said, "For the hardness of your hearts he gave you this precept, but from the beginning it was not so." (*Matt. xix. 8.*) The New Testament both directly, and, in various places, incidentally, shows that it is the will of God that marriage should be the union of one man and one woman. (See, for instance, *1 Cor. vii. 2.* *1 Tim. ii. 2, 12.*)*

2.—Marriage affords the means of many illustrations to the writers of Scripture. The prophets

* The history of man before the flood is so brief that few incidents which might throw light upon this subject are to be expected in it. 'Adam and Eve were the first pair.—*Gen. ii. 20-24.* The mention made of Cain would seem to show that he had but one wife. (*Gen. iv. 17.* Before Lamech, the eighth from Adam, no mention is made of any man having two wives. (*Gen. iv. 19.*) The degeneracy of mankind by the carelessness of the children of God in contracting marriages, is mentioned in *Gen. vi. 1-7.* At the time of that catastrophe Noah had but one wife, (*Gen. vii. 7.*) and so each of his sons, (*ver. 13.*) Job next appears to be the husband of one wife. *Job ii. 9; xix. 17.*) Reference is made to the adulterer, who is represented as in terror, and amazed. (*xxiv. 15-18.*) The wicked man is represented as leaving widows behind him; whence his polygamy may be inferred. (*xxvii. 15.*) Job expresses his abhorrence of fornication, (*xxxi. 1.*) and of adultery, (*ver. 9.*) which appears in his time to have been punished by the judges. (*ver. 11.*) Again, Abraham is introduced as having one wife. (*Gen. xi. 29.*) From the narrative of Abraham's equivocation, it may be gathered that marriage was held sacred in Egypt. (*Gen. xii. 11-20.*) The words of Pharaoh afford most honourable testimony to the views of marriage entertained by him at that period. The same, respecting Abimelech, may be gathered from *Gen. xxvi. 11.*, respecting Isaac and Rebekah, when they were at Gerar.

2.—The first mention of concubinage, or the condition of a legal though subordinate wife, occurs in the case of Hagar, Sarai's Egyptian handmaid, whom Sarai, still childless, after a residence of ten years in Canaan, prevailed on Abraham to receive into that relation. (*Gen. xvi. 1-3.*) The desire for offspring, increased we may believe by the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, appears from the histories of Rachel, (*Gen. xxx. 1.*) and Hannah, (*1 Sam. i. 6, 7.*) and seems to have been Sarah's motive for adopting this procedure, not unusual, it is said, in the East. The miseries

employ it to represent the relation of the Jewish church to Jehovah; and the apostle Paul that of the christian church to Christ. The applications they make of the idea constitute some of the boldest and most touching figures of the Scriptures. The Lord is the husband of his people. He is jealous. To depart from him and follow idols, is termed adultery. (*Ps.* lxxviii. 58. *Is.* liv. 5. *Jer.* ii. 2, 20; iii. 14; xxxi. 32. *Ezek.* viii. 3, 5; xvi.; xxiii. 27.) The eternal union of true believers with Christ, is called a marriage; (*Rev.* xix. 7.) and the new Jerusalem which we regard as representing the society of the redeemed, is termed the bride, "the Lamb's wife." (*Rev.* xxi. 9.) The state becomes ennobled and sanctified by being introduced in the New Testament, as affording a striking illustration of the near "union that is betwixt Christ and his church."* That a relation instituted and sanctioned by himself, should be capable of conferring a high degree of happiness, is what we might reasonably expect; but more especially when the parties are united *in the Lord*, and set themselves stedfastly, in dependance on divine help, to fulfil the duties arising out of that relation,

"Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure."

naturally consequent upon it, are amply portrayed in the history of the patriarchs. (*Gen.* xvi. 4-10; xxx. 1, 3, 15.) Lot appears to have had but one wife, and it would appear from the instance of Potiphar's wife that monogamy was practised in Egypt. (*Gen.* xxxix.) The giving of the law acquaints us with many regulations concerning marriage which were different from the practices of their progenitors, as regards marriage with near kindred; as in *Gen.* xx. 12; *Exod.* vi. 20; and from those of the Canaanites, to whose land they were approaching. (*Levit.* xviii.)'

* *Ephes.* v. 22-33.

Morality and affection alone afford but an unstable basis. I would also observe that 'every inferior blessing must be enjoyed with chastened feeling, seeing they can afford but a partial and temporary happiness; and that marriage must not take off the mind from the full and final happiness we are professedly seeking for.' "It is the nature of all good things," as Howe expresses it, "that have only the goodness of the means, and not of the end; that their goodness is variable, and by misapplication may degenerate into a hurtful evil. Within the compass of such things is the truth of those words to be compared; '*Nil prodest, quod non lædere posset idem.*' It is beyond the measure of any created good to be universally so. That therefore, which in its own place is a real good, applied to the particular purpose which it is capable of serving; out of that place, and being trusted, valued, and delighted in beyond the measure which God and the nature of the thing have stated and set, may become a hurt to us."

II.—To call attention to the duties of husbands and wives is not only necessary for the admonition of such as are married, but of others who may hereafter be called to fulfil those duties. It is one of the marks of man's folly, and of the greater readiness to follow the rules imposed by the world, than to obey the precepts of God, that before one is judged competent to enter into a profession or employment, a course of study and labour, even for several years, is willingly submitted to, as being reasonably required, and especially if the happiness or well-being of others is affected thereby; whereas a person thinks it not strange

to enter upon such responsible duties as those of marriage without diligently acquainting himself with them, as well as with the dispositions which are requisite for happiness in it.

Again, to form a friendship with a casual acquaintance, without any knowledge of his character, is justly deemed unwise, and may lead to much unhappiness; and yet many form a connection for life without such knowledge. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" is a question to be well pondered by all, not only before an engagement to marry is entered into, but before one suffers the affections to be set upon another. No prudent person will allow himself to do this until sufficient time has been afforded for testing the real state of his heart, not trusting first impressions; for acquiring a knowledge of the temper, disposition, and habits, whether there be a similarity of taste and sentiments in matters of importance; and, especially, learning the moral and religious character. It cannot be wondered at that there are so many unhappy married persons, because so many enter the estate from wrong motives and without consideration; led by the imagination, without consulting their judgment. 'He who marries in haste may reasonably expect to repent at leisure.' The passions of men serve to blind them in respect of marriage. Satan, doubtless, is subtilly beguiling many in this matter, and leading to much error. A person is often not only blind to the defects of one to whom he desires to be united in marriage, but even makes them the cause of increased attachment. Some will say, "Marriages are made in heaven." The

scriptures say, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing."* It is also written, "A prudent wife is from the Lord;"† and again, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband;"‡ how important then in this relation are prudence and virtue. The Lord is doubtless ordering all events; but in this estate, as in all their decisions and acts, men are required to use the reasoning faculties he has given, to follow his rules, and beseech his guidance; and thus, and thus only, can happiness be expected. The christian who desires to walk worthy of his high calling, and to adorn the doctrine of God, must weigh well the duties and responsibilities of a husband or wife before they are undertaken.

If care should be taken by christians as to their partner for life, who more than a minister of religion is called to observe this? Rules are given both in the Old and New Testament.§

But if the happiness of married persons depends

* Prov. xviii. 22.

+ Ib. xix. 14.

† Ib. xii. 4.

§ Levit. xxi. 7, 13-15. 1 Tim. iii. 11. Some good remarks on this subject are contained in 'Bridge's Christian Ministry,' in which an observation of Baxter's is quoted, showing ministers the 'need of serious deliberation, and urging them to think, think, and think again, before they enter into marriage; adding, "*Quod statuendum est semel, deliberandum est diu.*" Not only is their personal comfort affected by marriage, but their ministerial usefulness depends greatly upon it, and thereby the glory of God, and the spiritual good of so many. What hindrances are in the way if a minister marry a worldly wife. His energy and efficiency may be greatly impeded; he may lose his savour of spiritual-mindedness and zeal and love, and become another man.' Cecil makes some good observations on this head, (see his Life, &c.) to the effect that 'the husband and the wife have two different provinces, and the husband may suffer much in many respects by entering into the wife's pursuits.' It is a happy union for minister and people when the wife of the minister delights to engage in such duties as become her in that relation.

upon their union in the Lord, not only should care be taken before marriage that this be so, but that being thus begun, it be ever thus continued also. Let each daily pray for the other; and is it not well also that they should, besides their private and family reading of the word of God and prayer, pray and read a portion of the scriptures together? This may remind of any neglected duty. It may be well also to read over together the passages which relate to the duties of married persons on each return of the wedding day. What firmer cement for their union can there be than united prayer and study of the word?

III. I must proceed to point out the duties of the husband and the wife. Some belong to both:

(1.) *Unity*. This duty is seen on referring to the first institution of marriage, before alluded to: the woman was taken out of man, formed of one of his ribs, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh; *Gen. ii. 20-24*, where their mutual dependance is named which should lead to unity; and by the remarks of the apostle, (*1 Cor. xi. 8, 11, 12. Eph. v. 31.*) where it is proved by the resemblance of marriage to the mystical union existing between Christ and his church: 'one Jesus Christ, one husband; one church, one wife; one spirit and one heart in the husband and in the wife by conformity of the thoughts and will, as there is but one spirit and one heart in Christ and in the church, doing all in both.'

The husband is called "to leave father and mother and to cleave to his wife;" and applicable to the wife are the beautiful verses, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider; incline thine ear; forget also thine own

people and thy father's house: so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty." (*Ps.* xlv. 10, 11.) As far as earthly happiness is concerned, the husband and wife should seek it in each other's society; they should zealously watch over their hearts, and not suffer any near relative or friend, even a parent, to usurp in the least measure the supreme attention and care due to their partner. Parents should observe this also with regard to their children, and see that the attention they bestow on them be always in subservience to that paid to their partner's happiness and comfort. If a believer were to suffer any one, even a husband or a wife, to engage in any measure the service due to Christ, it would be idolatry; so in the case above named, there would be the sin of "inordinate affection" and comparative idolatry.

The unity must be unbroken, and obedience to the gospel in proportion as it is carried out in the heart and life of married persons, brings them back to that oneness which demands no law of subjection, but produces order by the cheerful voluntary subjection of the will to the will and mind of God. Further, if it be the duty of all believers to be one in spirit, (*John* xvii. 20-23.) surely it is unnecessary to use any arguments to show that it should exist between two persons bound together by so near a tie.

(2.) *Love.* If this principle, not mere natural affection, but that which is wrought by the Spirit,* be rooted inwardly in the heart, the fulfilment of other duties is the result: and here again we may notice that since each is bound to love his neighbour as

* Gal. v. 22.

himself, love is plainly bound on the husband and the wife. And it becomes all who contemplate marriage seriously to consider and learn that real personal affection must be mutually felt, or marriage ought not to be entered into. Prudence and common sense will show that marriage is not an estate to be entered upon lightly. The young should not, from any vain or proud thoughts, hide from themselves the benefit to be derived from matured experience, but consult their parents.* The counsel of a discreet and disinterested christian friend may also be asked, instead of confiding

* The believing parent will notice that Abraham took care that a wife should not be taken for his son from among the wicked nations of the land of Canaan where he dwelt. (*Gen.* xxiv. 1-6, 38.) Isaac took the same precaution. (*Gen.* xxvii. 46; xxviii. 1-7.) Samson's father and mother also reasoned with him respecting a hastily-formed desire to marry one of the daughters of the uncircumcised. (*Judges* xiv. 1-3.) It was the desire of God that the Israelites should be preserved as a distinct people; yet a valuable lesson may be gathered from marriages with persons of other nations being prohibited. A consequence of disregarding this command is given, which applies in spirit to any marriage with an ungodly person; "Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. *For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other Gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.*" Another reason for this separation is also given which will have weight with the righteous. "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God," &c. (See *Deut.* vii. 1-6. *Josh.* xxiii. 12. Also *Num.* xxv. 17, 18. *Neh.* xiii.) The effects of making marriages with the ungodly are painfully evident in the case of the sons of God before alluded to. We read "they saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took wives of all which they chose." They consulted not the Lord, but followed their own imaginations, and abounding wickedness was the natural result. A few verses after we read, that men became men of renown, giants it would seem, not only in stature, but in iniquity; and the Lord brought a flood upon the earth, and destroyed the whole race of man, save eight persons. (*Gen.* vi. 1-7.) It is seen again in the case of Job, whose wife urged him to "curse God and die;" (*Job* ii. 9, 10.) of Solomon, of whom we read, that his wives, themselves idolaters, turned away his heart; (*1 Kings* xi. 3, 4.) and who was led to remark "Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thou-

in thoughtless or interested persons. But let none bestow their affections on another, or allow themselves to encourage another to imagine that they do, before the Lord has been consulted, and his mind respecting the matter diligently sought.

The love to which the husband's attention is especially called in scripture, is none less than that which Christ has shown for his church: "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and *gave himself for it.*" His is the love of the "saviour of the body," the deliverer, the protector, the nourisher; (*Eph. v. 23, 29.*) the wife's that of the help-mate: and she is beautiful in proportion as she observes the rules of God, and is meek and subject to her husband. The duty of love on the part of the husband, which should be 'tender, pure, vigilant, and faithful,' is also enforced by the apostle in *Col. iii. 19*, the husband is expected also "not to be bitter against" his wife. The consideration of the wife's dependant situation will stimulate the husband to continual watchfulness, lest there be any thing in his word or manner which might occasion unnecessary pain or anxiety. He should rule by the law of kindness. Is this never neglected? Alas! are there no

sand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." (*Eccles. vii. 28.*) of Ahab, whom "Jezebel his wife stirred up" to exceeding iniquity; (*1 Kings xxi. 25.*) of Jehoram, of whom it is recorded, that "He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: *for the daughter of Ahab was his wife:* and he did evil in the sight of the Lord;" (*2 Kings viii. 18.*) of Herod, who contracted an incestuous marriage, and was led by his wife, against his will, to command the murder of the forerunner of our Lord; (*Matt. xiv. iii. 12.*) and surely, if to any connexion, to that of a believer's marriage, the words apply, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," &c. (See *2 Cor. vi. 14-18.*)

broken hearts? none pining in sickness, though love suffer not the grief to bewray itself to the casual observer? Every sacrifice which truth permits should be made to secure peace at home. It is of great importance that, as was remarked, the affections of husband and wife, as far as earthly objects may engage them, centre in home;* for it is an unfailing mark of real love that it seeks happiness in the object beloved; as the chief joy of the believer is the presence of his Lord. (See also *John* xiv. 21.) The affections should be holy. The wife is taught by what is said of the church that it should be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.† “The Lord our God is holy,” and the husband has to follow the precept, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” The Lord “sanctifies” the church “with the washing of water by the word.” Let the scriptures be the

* If happiness is to be found it must be sought for. It is not to be expected to come without seeking and it must be sought for in the way in which God gives it, *i. e.* in obedience to the gospel. ‘It has been observed, that “too much stress cannot be laid upon companionableness, or being agreeable at home. Nothing so surely and so certainly wears out the happiness of married persons as that too common bad effect of familiarity, the sinking down into dulness and insipidity; neglecting to keep alive the flame by the delicacy which first kindled it; want of vigilance in keeping the temper cheerful by christian discipline; and the faculties bright by constant use. Mutual affection decays, even where there is no great moral torpitude, without mutual endeavours not only to improve, but to entertain. This is one of the great arts of *home enjoyment*. That it is so little practised, accounts in a good measure for the undomestic turn of too many married persons. Numbers of the lower classes from this cause resort to the ale-house, and many of the higher classes go to the club houses, when they should be at home. The man meets with amusement, and the woman with attention, to which they are not accustomed in their own family circle; whereas a capacity to please on the one part, and a disposition to be pleased on the other, would make other society appear dull, and render home the happiest place, which there is no desire to leave, except as duty calls.”’

* Eph. v. 27.

husband's and the wife's daily companion. Let married persons also be ever careful to observe a chastened manner towards each other, that they suffer not a diminution of their affection or esteem.

(3) *Fidelity.* This also is a duty which scripture and reason imperatively demand of the husband and the wife. The preparing of men for the happy re-union with Christ by faith is thus expressed by the apostle : " I am jealous over you with godly jealousy : for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a *chaste virgin* to Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 2.) The wife is here reminded of the perfect chastity which she must ever *possess*.* The husband has to purify himself even as Christ is pure. A heathen may teach a lesson. Abimelech said to Sarah respecting Abraham, " Behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other : thus she was reprov'd." (Gen. xx. 16.) See also Gen. xxxix. 9. Exod. xx. 14, 17. Lev. xviii. 20. Num. v. 12-31. Deut. xxii. 22. Job xxxi. 9-12. Mal. ii. 14, 15. 2 Cor. xi. 2. Rev. xxi. 2. Unchastity before marriage was punished with death. Deut. xxii. 13-21.

This duty of fidelity is to be kept in the heart, and how needful here is the admonition, " Keep thy heart with all diligence ;" for " out of the heart proceed murders, adulteries," &c. The discovery of the least feeling of unlawful affection for another, or undue satisfaction in their company, or of estrangement from the proper object of love, should lead to humiliation, and prayer for pardon ; and each should abstain

* See also Titus ii. 5.

from all appearance of evil, and willingly make sacrifices to do so, and the more carefully if the partner have a jealous temper, for "jealousy is cruel as the grave," and this feeling is prompted in many by love; and when there is cause, (though suspicion ought not to be otherwise allowed) it is inseparable from love. The Lord is "a jealous God," he will abominate idols; and if sinful tempers have caused love to decay, let it not be thought that the endeavour to revive it is hopeless. So long as the promise remains, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and again, the declaration "with God all things are possible;" let the believer not doubt that, even amidst trials, affection can be maintained, and recovered when lost, if only grace be continually and faithfully asked in earnest and sincere prayer. Amid the fluctuating changes which have occurred in the history of the church in every age, the love of Christ has throughout been unchangeable. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He looked with compassion on his people through their very sins and failings, and "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Again, we read, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew."

(4) It may be well also, in pointing out the mutual duties, to name that of *forbearance*. The Lord bare with the provocations and rebellions of Israel in the desert, and in the days of his flesh he "endured the contradiction of sinners against himself," and the infirmities of his disciples, nay even the perfidy of his "own familiar friend whom he trusted." So, in like manner, should husbands and wives bear and forbear

with each other. "They should bear in mind that their union is not that of two angels, but of two poor sinful creatures," partners of suffering humanity, and that so far from being wise in expecting perfection, they must prepare to meet with infirmities of temper, decay of personal attractions, and a variety of other circumstances, which call for the exercise of true and unvarying attachment. They should check every unkind, and every disparaging word, both when together, and in the presence of others; and every disparaging thought. Mutual forbearance will be promoted by the recollection, on the part of each, of their own failings.* They should repress self-seeking, and avoid the too common use of the words, 'This is mine;' but rather follow the gospel, "All are yours." They who would "walk in love," must be "kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another." Where there is unhappiness, both are commonly in fault: the "soft tongue," and the "soft answer" that "turneth away wrath," † will be generally found wanting,—the warmth that melts down anger to love. The silence, not of sullenness or of pride, but of patience and love, meeting an angry and impatient word, is, moreover, calculated to produce a return of kindness, while resentment and recrimination add

* It has been asked, "Where is the difficulty of consulting each other's weakness, as well as each other's tempers; each other's infirmities, as well as each other's health; each other's comfort, as well as each other's character? Alas! it is by leaving the peace at home to chance, that so many homes are unhappy. It is deserving of notice that any one can be courteous, and forbearing, and patient in a neighbour's house. If any thing go wrong, or is out of tune, or disagreeable there, it is made the best of, not the worst, and, surely, they should be so at home."

† Prov. xc. 1; xxv. 15.

fuel to the fire of anger. If one party be treated with unkindness or anger, let the other "give place unto wrath," and show unremitting attention. Where wrath and anger are indulged, all relations are embittered: the husband becomes a tyrant; and the wife, who should be a help meet for the husband, becomes a thorn in his eyes, and a goad in his sides. "Two indeed are better than one," but it is when they "by love help one another." 'Take away the fear of the Lord from husband and wife, and there remains nothing but fire, fire.' Scripture portrays the wife who departs from her duty in this respect, and it is right that such should see the picture. "For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear: . . . for an odious woman when she is married."* "A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike."† "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." "It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman."‡ How different is the description given in *Prov.* xxxi. The wise man says, "One man in a thousand have I found, but a woman among all these have I not found."§

IV.—The duties which belong to both parties have been alluded to, it remains to call attention to some which especially belong to each. And first to the wife: for it is observable that in scripture the relative duties of those who are in subjection are first stated; and it may be drawn hence that such are not to wait

* *Prov.* xxx. 21, 23.

† *Prov.* xxvii. 15.

‡ *Prov.* xxi. 9, 19.

§ *Eccles.* vii. 28.

and see if the superior does his duty, and imagine that the performance of duty must depend on this, which sad experience teaches us is too often the case; but rather that by the performance of duty the one who is subject may, if needful, seek to win the other.

(1) Besides the duties of love, constancy, and forbearance, the scripture especially demands *subjection* on the part of the wife. God said to the woman, after she had eaten of the forbidden fruit, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall *rule* over thee."* The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, shows the subjection of the woman with regard to instruction in spiritual things: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."† Again, writing to the Ephesians; "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."‡ The fitness of subjection "in the Lord" is also shown in *Col.* iii. 18. This and other duties are required to be observed, "that the word of the Lord be not blasphemed."§ The subjection of the wife is enjoined by Peter, for a most

* Gen. iii. 16, comp. with Num. xxx. 3, 6-16. + 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

† Eph. v. 22-24.

§ Tit. ii. 5.

noble and exalted end, even the salvation, it would appear, of the husband;* and, assuredly, it becomes the wife to bear in mind the important consideration, that it was through the woman yielding to the tempter that sin came into the world; as it is written, "For Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."† She there, further, is taught the duty of living "in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."‡ She is also reminded that "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church."§ The apostle writes, "The man. . . is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man." "I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God."|| Submission is to be paid by the wife to the husband, "as to the Lord." It is to be universal;—"in every thing."**

Here it may be noticed, that while oneness should be earnestly sought, God has appointed whose duty it is to yield, when the two cannot agree; and undoubtedly while each should strive to agree, the duty of subjection on the part of the wife demands of her especially the continual effort to conform to her husband, and, only that she violate no rule of God or conscience, that she seek to assimilate her views to those of her husband, and come to agreement in plans, for peace and love's sake.††

* 1 Pet. iii. 1.

+ 1 Tim. ii. 14.

† 1 Tim. ii. 15.

§ Eph. v. 23. See also 1 Pet. iii. 5.

|| 1 Cor. xi. 3, 7, 8.

** Eph. v. 22, 24.

†† It is true a wife may, in some cases, have superior judgment to

A higher feeling than that which prompts to submission to one possessing greater authority, is demanded of the wife. The reverence with which

her husband, yet she is not to think that intellect changes the divinely appointed order, and confers power to rule. Were this the case, an intellectual servant might command his less gifted master; an intellectual child his less gifted parent; an intellectual subject his sovereign; an intellectual subaltern his commanding officer; but it has been well observed, that it is not intellect but the word of God which establishes the authority to govern. Yet as a commanding officer, in cases of difficulty, would thankfully avail himself of the counsel of a skilful subaltern, so a wise husband will thankfully avail himself of the wise and faithful counsels of his wife. On the other hand, if the subaltern should see his commanding officer about to make a mistake, he would humbly offer counsel, but if it were not taken, would obey orders; so in like manner, the faithful wife will suggest prudent counsel betimes, with meekness of wisdom, conscious of her subject situation, and, at the same time will, after giving counsel, and praying to the Lord to guide her husband as he sees best, leave the matter, and learn in subjection to yield to the authority of her husband, as required in the Lord.

The force of these sentiments has been well expressed :

“The heavens themselves, the planets, and their centre,
Observe degree, priority, and place.
How could communities,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic place ?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And mark what discord follows.”

Mr. M'c Kenzie observes ; “If the husband is obliged to issue a command, he may be certain it is a signal that the happiness of his fireside is almost at an end. Where confiding love and mutual esteem bind their hearts in sympathy together, the husband's wish will be the wife's law, and the wife's ‘good to edification,’ will be the husband's aim.

“In heaven no authority will be felt, nor emblems of power seen. The government is all perfect there. God is the sole ruler, and ‘God is love.’ One will sways every bosom. Love is the universal element. A happy christian family is a little heaven on earth. The husband's conduct is ruled by love; the wife does well in following him as he follows Christ. The wife will secure his love, by striving to make herself lovely: the husband will show that his headship consists in greater efforts to promote their mutual good. If the wife sees his love allay, she will examine herself to find and remove the cause: if the husband finds his wife reluctant to comply, he will enquire whether his will be not in fault.”—“*Married Life,*” a suitable marriage present.

the church regards her Lord and Master, affords the wife an instructive lesson as to the way in which she should regard her husband and conduct herself towards him. Peter shows that her christian "conversation" should be "coupled with fear;" and sets Sarah as an example for a wife to follow; where, after pointing out the duty of subjection, he adds, "even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord."* This reverence is not barely the feeling of one in an inferior position towards a superior; it is not only compatible with, but almost an essential part of, the love that casteth out fear. As the end of Christ's coming was that the church "might serve him without fear," so Peter adds, when alluding to Sarah, "whose daughters ye are so long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."† Paul also says, "Let the wife see that she reverence her husband."‡ Although this part of a wife's duty is as plainly recorded as others, yet multitudes pass it by, thinking, it may be, it argues a mean spirit. The christian wife, however, who obeys it, shows the excellence of the divine rule, and tastes and imparts the happiness which ever results from humbly and gladly following the ways of God, whose wisdom is infinite, and who, while he shows the vanity of attempting to form other rules than his, causes peace to spring up in the path of self-denying and cheerful obedience.

Other rules are added in scripture; and let not the wife think she is doing her duty, if she neglect one of them. She is instructed to be "discreet." This shows that she should avoid all thoughtlessness and empty

* 1 Pet. iii. 6.

+ Ib.

‡ Eph. v. 33.

and frivolous conversation. She is required also to be a "keeper at home." The character of a wife must suffer if she neglect this rule: such neglect is calculated to lessen the respect of her husband,—as well as to mar his happiness, if it injure not his peace of mind: wives who depart from this duty see their picture in the apostle's description of some widows in 1 *Tim.* v. 13; and how can the duty of "ruling the house" in subservience to her husband,—conducting such household matters as are within her province, or of caring for children, if she have any, be observed, if she neglect the rule in question? Her dress is also regulated. The apostle Paul enjoins "that women adorn themselves in modest—decent, *κοσμίως*—apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." The opinion entertained of a wife by a christian husband depends in a far greater degree than many may think upon the way in which she dresses. The outward dress is a fair index of the state of the mind and heart. The apostle, continuing his direction, adds, "not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."* Whatever exceeds the rule of modest apparel is forbidden: this must include all immodest exposure of the person: braided hair, and gold, and pearls, and costly array, are forbidden; and therefore the christian wife will not think she may wear them. The apostle Peter adds his testimony, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the

* 1 *Tim.* ii. 9, 10.

heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands."* While many lavish time and money in vain amusements, and being destitute of any plan of glorifying God, deprive themselves of the means of doing so, for the christian wife who seeks to approve herself to God, and looks for the praise that cometh of him only, it is enough that she bestow her care upon the dress of the inner man, and that she have "a meek and quiet spirit:" and if we but compare two wives, the one plainly clad, *i. e.* according to her station in life, humbly seeking to do good;—the other approving herself to the vain and thoughtless, and having nothing for the relief of the spiritual and temporal wants of the destitute around her;—a moment's consideration will suffice to show which is nearer to the christian pattern, and therefore the more estimable. †

V.—The duty of husbands remains to be considered. Love has been mentioned, but I would here remark that this duty is more especially bound by scriptural injunction on the husband, and that of

* 1 Peter iii. 3-5.

† Allusion is made to this subject in a note in vol. 2, pp. 54, 55. A mere accomplished wife may gain more admiration, as a wild vine looks more attractive in its unrestrained luxuriance and beauty than a fruitful one; but how is it in the time of vintage? This should be observed in the education of females. The future should be looked to, rather than the present time. Much time and labour are spent in acquiring accomplishments which are laid aside after marriage, and more useful attainments, tending to the glory of God, the good of neighbours, and personal edification are neglected.

subjection on that of the wife. The wisdom of God is herein seen. Without love the husband might tyrannize over his wife; without subjection on the part of the wife, all order would be interrupted, and domestic peace destroyed. The love of rule comes in, and the wife, being seen to depart from her duty, is in danger of losing the esteem of her husband.

In addition to the general acquirements before named, to the husband falls the duty of *protection and maintenance*. Even if it cost much self-sacrifice, he should be liberal as Christ. He is to nourish and cherish his wife as Christ does the Church.* The words of Scripture would urge him also to care for the spiritual good of his wife, as "heirs together of the grace of life". (See *Eph. v. 23-27. 1 Pet. iii. 7.*) To nourish and cherish would include a provision for a wife's temporal wants. How many there are who occupy for their own selfish purposes what is really needed by a wife. While the christian is stimulated by the thought that the wife is the "weaker vessel," † such should consider that while the wife is subject to her husband, they have a Head also who witnesses their conduct, and to whom they shall give account.

It was noticed that when any cause of dissension arises it is the duty of the wife to yield. So in the matter in question. There may be cases in which a wife may desire to spend money in vanity. The husband should be liberal after his power. He should not cause his wife to regret leaving home, but not pander to love of vain and expensive show. He

* *Eph. v. 29.*

+ *1 Pet. iii. 7.*

is a steward for God, responsible for the manner of disposing of his income, and God is to be honoured before his wife.

Finally, let each make it their first and constant endeavour to be united to God in spirit. His love and constancy to his spouse the church, and thereby to each member thereof, has been alluded to. His words by Hosea are calculated to comfort and establish the believer, "I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord."* Union with God gives happiness in every estate, independently of every other object; and, beginning here, this happiness abides hereafter, when the cause for earthly union, which God has ordained here, and which, when formed and carried out in him, are sources of much happiness and comfort, terminate; and the redeemed shall enter that state where they "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." †

Believe me to be

Yours faithfully,

H. S.

* Hosea ii. 19, 20.

† Matt. xxii. 30.

LETTER XLIII.

ON THE DUTIES OF MASTERS AND SERVANTS.

THE CHARACTER OF THE DIVINE BEING AND HIS RELATION TO MANKIND ILLUSTRATE THE DUTIES INCUMBENT ON US IN EVERY RELATION OF LIFE. — THE DIVINE PRECEPT OF DOING TO OTHERS AS WE WOULD THEY SHOULD DO TO US, VIEWED IN REFERENCE TO THIS.—THE DUTIES OF SERVANTS ;—DILIGENCE AND ATTENTION ;—PERFECT HONESTY ;—PATIENCE ;—RESPECT AND REVERENCE FOR THOSE UNDER WHOM THEY SERVE ;—CONTENTMENT ;— THANKFULNESS AND JOY IN THE CONSIDERATION OF CHRIST BECOMING A SERVANT FOR OUR DELIVERANCE.—THE DUTIES OF MASTERS ;—CARE FOR THE TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF THEIR SERVANTS ;—PURITY, KINDNESS, EQUITY, TRUTH ;—FAMILY INSTRUCTION AND DEVOTION.—THEY HAVE A MASTER IN HEAVEN.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

My dear Friend,

“There are many views of the divine character revealed to us in the word of God. His glorious perfections are set forth in a manner calculated to awaken within us unspeakable gratitude for the blessings of his goodness. Though dwelling in light inaccessible he makes heaven his throne, yet we are informed that he also maketh earth his footstool ;

while the relations in which he manifests himself to us, should lead those, who as christians are partakers of the divine nature, to reflect the divine image in their conduct. He that doeth what he will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth, in the exercise of his sovereign power, shows us, at the same time, that his will is not the mere arbitrary mandate of authority, but is directed by infinite wisdom and goodness. He manifests himself in this world as a righteous governor; not only as the Parent of a family, but as a Master over servants,* as well as a King over subjects; and while he governs according to his *will* and *pleasure*, he governs according to *law* and *reason*, which, though on earth, they are two opposite forms of government, yet, with God, they are but two different names for one and the same thing." †

In addressing myself to the subject of this letter, in which I propose to lay before you the duties of masters and servants, I must, of necessity, be brief, and confine myself chiefly to the directions laid down in the word of God on these points, as the polar star of divine revelation is the safest and surest guide in every matter of faith and practice. The divine rule "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you do ye even so to them," when properly understood, is of universal obligation. Not that christianity levels the distinctions which take place in society; on the contrary, it recognizes and sanctions them, seeing they are inseparable from and bound up with the existence of the social system; even as the various

* Mal. i. 6. Eph. vi. 9. Col. iv. 1.

† See Wardlaw's Christian Ethics.

members in the human body have not all the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. So that, though in one sense, rich and poor, bond and free, are all one in Christ Jesus, at the same time, he who is no respecter of persons, has revealed to us the relative duties incumbent on each, whether as parents and children, masters and servants, governors and subjects, &c., each is bound to do *his* duty in that *station in life* in which the providence of God has placed him. And here we may notice the extreme simplicity of the gospel; this is seen in its precepts, as well as its doctrines. God in Christ is the sun and centre of all. All our obligations spring from him,—all our duty is to be done as unto him. This we shall have occasion to notice as we proceed, and this ennobles each station, from the lowest to the highest.

The *duties of servants* are clearly pointed out in in the word of God. 1.—Thence we learn that obedience to the commands of their masters is a duty of essential and paramount importance on their part. From this there is no appeal in the word of God. The apostle writes, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling.” How different is this from the pertness and carelessness which many servants now manifest. Their masters have a portion of God’s authority assigned to them, and God is to be honoured and obeyed in them. Their orders are to be regarded as coming from God. The apostle adds the encouraging words, “in singleness of heart, as unto Christ.”

(*Eph.* vi. 5.) To the same effect are the admonitions in *Col.* iii. 22, *Titus* ii. 9. Peter also writes, "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear." (1 *Pet.* ii. 18.) But while it is the duty of servants to "obey their own masters, and to please them well in all things," yet, they are to remember, when the commands of their earthly master are plainly contrary to the revealed will of God, it becomes their bounden duty to "obey God rather than man." I know this is a trying and sifting point with many, and, alas! multitudes in the present day play false with their own convictions on this ground, and nothing can excuse their guilt in doing so. They ought at once humbly but firmly to remonstrate with their masters, seeking help from God; and in a multitude of cases, such faithful conduct would doubtless succeed;* but if not, their heavenly Master will, without

* Many facts are recorded which illustrate the truth of the divine word, "Them that honour me I will honour." I may mention one, however, in connection with this part of the subject. A correspondent of one of the public prints relates the following instance: "My honoured deceased parent held a situation in Southampton buildings, and his employer told him to come on Sunday. He, without making any reply, went to his usual place of worship on Sunday, and returned to business on Monday, as usual. On the following Saturday he was again told to come on Sunday. Again he acted as before. A short time after he was told he must leave. He politely inquired the reason. With some hesitation, his master said, 'You have not enough of the devil in you for me.' A banker's clerk happened to call, who told him of a vacancy in Fuller's, Lombard Street; he went, they required £1000 security; he, poor fellow, long an orphan, could only muster about £150 security. Mr. Fuller inquired his reason for leaving; he told the words of his employer. The banker then inquired where he went on a Sunday? 'To the Rev. Rowland Hill's,' was the reply. The banker told him he would call on his late master. He did so, and afterwards took him without a penny security; and sent him to the bank next day, for £20,000. He became beloved and honoured by the firm, and some years after, on his marriage, they got him a superior appointment."

doubt, "take them up." Faith reasons simply thus; I am encouraged to ask of God for daily bread, and he knoweth I have need of it; and cannot he who provides for all the creatures of his hand, and upholds the heavens by his power, provide for me? Besides this, a servant who sins to please his master, is encouraging his master, and becomes a partaker in his sins, and, doubtless, in his punishment. At the same time it must be admitted that the cruel pressure and the unrighteous exercise of authority and influence in the case of masters and employers, causes many in dependant situations to violate the command of God, for the sake of worldly interest. Again, what if a master abuse his power, and prevail upon a female servant in his house, or in his employ, to submit to his unlawful desires, and he violate her chastity! Oh, the awful time of reckoning, when they two shall stand at the coming day of trial, and "give account of the deeds done in the body," and the servant shall point out her master as having instigated her to the commission of damning crimes! In both cases, the influence of the master greatly aggravates his guilt.

2.—Another essential characteristic of a christian servant is *perfect honesty*. The apostle writes, "Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity."* They have to "obey their masters, not with eye-service, as menpleasers: but in singleness of heart as unto Christ." (*Col. iii. 22, 23.*) David writes, "He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." (*Ps. ci. 7.*) This should be pondered by masters. Servants, the happiness or unhappiness of employers is much in

* Titus ii. 10.

your hands. Eliezer teaches you a lesson when sent on errands, or employed about your business.* Many opportunities are frequently afforded to confidential servants of showing fidelity; and if they would preserve a conscience void of offence, they must carefully avoid, not only "purloining" or embezzling, but all wasteful extravagance of their master's substance. They should ever recognize that the eye of God is upon them, when that of their master may be far off. If a heathen could reason thus, "The moon sees thee, the stars dart forth their eyes and bear witness," shall the christian overlook the penetrating eye of him to whom the darkness and light are both alike? Nothing belonging to their master or employer should be taken without leave. A minister once told me of a poor family under his care, who were turning to the Lord; and mentioned, as one reason for his hope respecting them, that the mother would not allow them to take a pin; but if one were found they were told to try to find the owner. Moreover, this principle should overlay the whole of servants' duties, not only as respects their master's substance, but also their own time. They should take a conscientious interest in what concerns their employer, and be as careful to promote his welfare, as their own. Listeners are not honest: they are using their ears to steal information to which they have no claim. Instead of indulging in idle or indolent habits, servants should husband and economise time to the best advantage, as a talent to be employed in their master's service; remembering the word which says, "He that is faith-

* Noticed in Vol. ii. page 288.

ful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in that which is least, is unjust also in much.* Each act of dishonesty must appear against them, except it be washed out in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

3.—Another important requisite in the character of a servant is *patience*. Considering their position and relative duties, and the temptations to depart from them to which they are frequently exposed, the words of the apostle are peculiarly applicable in their case; “Ye have need of patience.” Especially when placed under froward masters, they must frequently be subject to oppression and wrong; in which case, instead of seeking hastily to put off their burden, they should look up for grace to sustain them under it, so that “patience may have its perfect work.” While patiently enduring present trials, they would do well to bear in mind the instructive admonition,

“Beware of desp’rate steps, the darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have pass’d away.”

They know their duty is plainly laid down in such cases:—“Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.” (1 *Pet.* ii. 18.) Jesus is their example. “They spat in his face and buffeted him,” (*Matt.* xxvi.

* Joseph’s example may instruct and encourage faithful servants. He diligently used his wisdom for his masters, the keeper of the prison, Potiphar, and Pharoah; and it was no small mark of the respect that was entertained for his character, that when his brethren came, instead of being regarded as burthensome, or exciting envy, their coming seemed to give joy to Pharoah and his servants. *Gen.* xxxix. 3, 4, 22; xlv. 16.

67.) and "it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord." What then is the servant's duty? Meekly and patiently to submit, and commit himself to God. (See 1 *Pet.* ii. 23.) Herein the servant learns also how to obey the precept given him, "not answering again." (*Tit.* ii. 9) Of the servant's Example it is further written, "Neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 *Pet.* ii. 22.) The best way to learn obedience is by suffering.*

4.—Further, servants should ever regard those under whom they serve with *due respect and reverence*. It is laid down by the highest authority as a duty of incumbent obligation, that "as many servants as are under the yoke should count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." † Those who act contrary to this precept are said to be "proud, knowing nothing," &c., and it is further given as a mark of those who are carnal and devilish, that they "despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." The christian servant, therefore, while he stands on the same level as his master with respect to christian privileges,

* 'Leighton well observes, that "a christian servant will not be beaten out of his station and duty of obedience by all the hard and wrongful usage he meets with, but will take that as an opportunity of exercising the more obedience and patience, and will be the more cheerfully patient because of his innocence. Men look upon this as a just plea for impatience, that they suffer unjustly, which, yet, is very ill logic; for, as the philosopher said, 'Would any man that frets because he suffers unjustly, wish to deserve it that he might be patient?' It is true, desert of punishment may make a man more silent, but innocence, rightly considered, makes him more patient; and the apostle declares that to suffer undeservedly, and withal patiently, is glorious to man, and acceptable to God."—*Commentary on 1 Pet.* ii. 20.

† 1 *Tim.* vi. 1.

(since, as I have already observed, in Christ Jesus there is no distinction between bond and free,) will, instead of considering himself absolved from the duty of respectful submission to every lawful command, recognize the truth that it is God who hath made him to differ with respect to his position and circumstances here, and requires him, on the same ground, to render "fear to whom fear, and *honour* to whom *honour*" are due.

5.—Servants should cultivate *contentment* with their situation and circumstances. They are not to presume they could do God good service in some place of command, when their duty is to serve him as becomes them in that which is by far the easier, the place of obeying wherein he hath set them.* And not only contentment should be felt by servants, but *thankfulness* and joy of heart. Let them but reflect that their position and office has been sustained by their Saviour, of whom the apostle Paul writes, that "though he thought it not robbery to be equal

* It is well observed, that "in general it is better to hold forth the word of truth in our lives, rather than in our language, and by our tempers, rather than by our tongues. The case of professing servants especially require this distinction. One of these was speaking to a minister of her master and mistress, and complained, "Nothing I say to them seems to do them any good." To whom, knowing the class of the individual, he replied, "What *you say* to them! But this is not the way you are to expect to do them good, but by early rising, by neatness, and order, and diligence; by "not answering again;" by not purloining, but by showing all good fidelity; it is thus that you are to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." (*Jay's Lectures.*) "How important is it for christians therefore in this situation to offer up themselves and their bodily labour as a sacrifice to God, and say, Lord this is the station wherein thou hast set me in the world, and I desire to serve thee in it. What I do is for thee, and what I suffer I desire to bear patiently and cheerfully for thy sake, in submission and obedience to thy will." (*Leighton.*)

with God, yet he took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself. . . . even to the death of the cross." He also washed his disciples' feet. In all their sufferings servants can look to his, and, wanting no other encouragement, thankfully and joyfully submit to the Lord's will. He was tempted as they, and can sympathize with them in any unjust sufferings. If they would discharge their duty with "singleness of heart," as servants of Christ, and their service is done "heartily as to the Lord, and not to men," they have the comfort of knowing that they have not only wages of their earthly master, but "of the Lord they shall receive the reward of the inheritance." (*Col.* iii. 23, 24.) However humble and obscure their station, they are as precious in the sight of God as the highest ruler. Therefore, instead of flying in the face of circumstances, and giving way to discontented feelings on every trifling occasion, they should seek continually for grace to enable them to bear every trial, and fulfil every duty. The words of the angel to Hagar, when flying from the face of her mistress, Sarai, who had "dealt hardly with her," may teach some a lesson: "Return to thy mistress," said the angel, "and submit thyself under her hands." (*Gen.* xvi. 6-9.) Let them consider this is but the period wherein our faith and patience are tried; that time is short; and the day of account not far distant, when those who are faithful in a few things will have "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ;" where there shall be nothing to offend,—where the wicked cease

from troubling, and the weary are at rest,—where the sufferings and trials of the present shall be exchanged for the glory which shall be revealed, which is such as “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.”

II. The duties of masters to servants next demand attention, and may be divided into two heads, those which relate to their temporal, and those which relate to their spiritual condition. While we admit the force of the divine precept which commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to “honour all men,” we must not make an exception in the case of servants, because they are in a dependant situation. It is observed that “there are not a few precepts which, when they are applied to the conduct of others, we instantly understand and approve ; which we like not so well, and are consequently dexterous in controverting, when they bear upon ourselves ;—precepts of which we like better to be the *objects* than the *subjects*. In these different circumstances, selfishness prompts to diversity of interpretation, and to consider that as unreasonable for others to expect from us, which we should deem it quite fair and moderate for us to expect from them. A rule may in itself be admirable both for its justice and its simplicity, although it is not beyond the possibility of being twisted and tortured by a selfish policy.” The example of Christ comes in here, and shows the believing master that he is ennobling himself, not losing ought of true greatness, by humility. He will remember the words, “I am among you, as he that serveth ;” * and

* Luke xxii. 27.

again, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."* He will condescend to his servants, endeavouring to do them good, and consider their condition, ministering to their real interests, temporal and spiritual. In the apostolic epistles we have the various relative duties of social life laid down with much clearness and precision. Thus, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal;" † "forbearing threatening," (ἀνιέντες τὴν ἀπειλήν) or, avoiding haughtiness of manner and expression in seeking to maintain authority over them. Though placed above them in human society, you have the same nature and infirmities as servants, and must appear with them before the same judge and rewarder at the same tribunal: not that masters are to do the same particular offices as their servants, but according to general rules of right reason, that which by the law of God, nature, and nations, is common to and incumbent on all relatives. ‡ They are therefore to give unto their servants (τὸ δίκαιον) that which is right, § that which is their due, for soul and body; with respect to work, that it be neither too much nor too little; || to food, that it be convenient for nourishment, not luxury; ** to wages and recompense, that they be not defrauded or oppressed, for One hears their cry. †† On the other hand, it must not be supposed that it is a kindness to remunerate unduly:

* John xiii. 14.

+ Col. iv. 1. Eph. vi. 9.

‡ Rom. xiii. 7, 8. Gal. v. 13.

§ Gen. xviii. 19. Col. iv. 1.

|| Prov. xxix. 21; xxx. 21.

** Prov. xxxi. 15. Luke xii. 42.

†† James v. 4.

many cannot bear this, but are injured by it, and become less diligent and attentive to their duties. The apostle, in the passage referred to, further adds *καὶ τὴν ἰσότητα*, *equity and kindness*; that which is equitable as well as just: as they are expected to serve with good will, so they should be governed wisely;* and be treated with kindness and gentleness; allowed reasonable rest and refreshment, and shewed favour in sickness as well as in health.† He will remember the duty to walk in love towards all, and will endeavour by kindness to sweeten the cup which in servitude is often liable to have in it some bitter ingredient. The motive to influence us in this respect is plain and forcible; “Knowing that ye also have a master in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.” If you expect favour at his hands when he comes to punish and reward, look to your own service of God generally, and show yourself kind, merciful, and compassionate now to your inferiors, who will then appear as your fellow servants, when you must give an account of your stewardship.‡ By comparing this with *Matt. vii. 12*, we have the scriptural standard of duty: the rule of faith and practice from which there is no appeal.§ And how often

* Ps. ci. 2. + 2 Kings v. 5, 6. Prov. xiv. 35.

† Matt. xxiv. 49-51. Luke xvi. 2. See Poole's Annot. in loc.

§ “Let a man give himself up to a strict and literal observance of the precept, and it will impress a two-fold direction upon him. It will not only guide him to certain performances of good in behalf of others, but it will guide him *to the regulation of his own desires of good from them*. The more selfish and unbounded his desires are, the larger are those performances with the obligation of which he is burdened. The more he gives way to ungenerous and extravagant wishes from those who are around him, the heavier and more insupportable is the load of duty which he brings upon himself. The

may a master be benefitted by listening to a servant who desires his good;* and if in temporal things, so in spiritual.

Even inferior motives, it might be thought, would urge mere worldly masters to the performance of the duties which are required of them towards their servants, since their own domestic happiness and comfort is so clearly bound up with the faithful or unfaithful discharge of the duties which enter so largely into the social economy of families. Even these would require that the spiritual interests of their servants should be carefully attended to, as well as their temporal condition. But believers act from a desire for the salvation of their servants, and seek that they may derive spiritual blessings while under their care, and may leave their service better than when they entered it. While God has charged servants to obey, and set before them the highest motive to influence their conduct and regulate their walk as becomes their station, masters may gather from scripture what reason itself teaches, that they should command and instruct them in the fear of God and the duties of religion.†

commandment is quite imperative, and there is no escaping from it; and if he, by the excess of his selfishness, should render it impracticable, then the whole punishment due to the guilt of casting aside the authority of this commandment follows in that train of punishment which is annexed to selfishness. There is one way of reducing this precept to a moderate and practicable requirement; and that is just to give up selfishness,—just to stifle all ungenerous desires,—just to moderate every wish of service or liberality from others down to the standard of what is right and equitable."

* 2 Kings v. 2, 3, 13, 14.

† Servants are placed by contract under the commanding and governing power of their masters; and, it has been well observed, *that power infers care, and principally about their souls.* There is

Hence household arrangements should be so ordered, that servants may have time and opportunity not only to join in the family devotions, but also to keep holy the sabbath day, and attend public worship.* It should be borne in mind that the precept which forbids heads and members of families to attend to secular duties on the sabbath, except in cases of actual necessity, includes *the man-servant and the maid-servant, the cattle, and the stranger within our gates.* †

Nor are motives and examples wanting in the Bible to enforce the moral claims of servants on masters and heads of families. The latter are reminded that they have "a Master in heaven," who is just as well as powerful, and will treat them as they treat their servants, since he is "no respecter of persons:" he will not spare the one because in the order of his providence they are masters, nor punish the other because they are servants. We see this fully recog-

some truth in the sentiment of an old puritan divine, "Wherever thou goest," says he, "thou wilt hear men crying out of bad children and bad servants; whereas, indeed, the source of the mischief might be sought a little higher; it is bad parents and bad masters that make bad children and bad servants; and we cannot blame so much their untowardness as our own negligence in their education." We do not expect that servants should serve only with their hands: we expect that they should serve with their minds and understandings, as well as with their limbs. Surely then their inward man,—their souls should be cared for by us, as well as their outward man,—their bodies. We would not have them do us *only* such service as we can receive from the beasts which perish; and therefore we are morally bound to take care of their spiritual as well as their temporal welfare.

* See Letter xxxvi.

† A chaplain in a place of confinement for criminals at Baltimore states that during twenty-five years which he had passed there, he had made a point of inquiring into the cause of their crime, and found that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it originated in sabbath-breaking.

nized and acted upon in the conduct and character of Job. We have a view of the domestic rule and government of this pious patriarch, who, at the head of a numerous household had, at the same time, an eye to the relative situation in which he stood towards his heavenly master. "If I did despise," he observes, "the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not *one* fashion us in the womb?"* Another bright example of patriarchal piety in this respect we have in the case of Abraham, who we read commanded and (צִוָּה) *instructed* † his children, and *his household* after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, to do what was just, right, and good, to be serious and devout in the worship of God, and to be honest in their dealings with all men. And God marked with especial commendation his conduct in thus making a conscience of his duty at the head of his family. The fruit of this we see in the pious conduct of the steward of his house, Eliezer of Damascus. And, in still later times, in the case of Cornelius, ‡ a devout man, who feared God *with all his house*, whom doubtless he instructed in like manner, and was blessed with faithful service from them in return. In fact, numberless examples speak in loud and telling accents to those placed at

* Job xxxi. 13-15.

+ See Levit. xiv. 5. Deut. xx. 18; xxvii. 4, for this acceptation of the verb, צִוָּה

‡ Acts x. 2, 7.

the head of families. "Go and do thou likewise;" determine in the strength of divine grace to say with Joshua, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

Let then the desire for the spiritual good of servants be first sought, and the whole of the household arrangement be constituted so as to minister to this end. How honourable an employment for a master or mistress to teach their servants on a sabbath, if they be ignorant. Let the master, like the Psalmist, desire the Lord's presence and say, "When wilt thou come unto me? I will walk in my house with a perfect heart." (*Ps. ci. 2.*) Let him make the selection of a new servant a matter for special prayer. Let him also ever bear in mind that the example of a superior has great weight. It is a great inducement to good or evil, to be able to say, 'My master did this or that.' Let him have constant regard to truth. Some masters will tell a servant to report them absent when they are at home; while, though directly encouraging and commanding falsehood, they would perhaps dismiss a servant whom they found telling a lie. These and such like falsehoods, they may call 'white lies,' by which means Satan covers darkness with light. Servants will also notice whether their master is cold and careless in family devotions, and mark the personal unholiness shown in his life.

Let the conduct be such that servants may feel grief when leaving the house, as a refuge from the sins and vanities of the world, where they have been provided, not only with the necessaries of life, but where the first care has been for their immortal souls.

Happy the meeting of such masters and employers with their servants in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts; and to that day let them have respect in all their actions; then may they look for the approving sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Believe me to be,

Yours affectionately,

H. S.

LETTER XLIV.

DUTIES OF GOVERNORS AND SUBJECTS.

RELATIVE DUTIES COMPREHENDED IN THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.—DOCILITY AND INSUBORDINATION TRACED TO EARLY TRAINING.—GOVERNORS ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD.—THE NEED OF GOVERNMENT.—PERVERSION OF THE TERMS, LIBERTY, FRATERNITY, EQUALITY.—DUTIES OF SUBJECTS;—HONOUR;—OBEDIENCE;—PAYMENT OF TAXES;—PRAYER.—OUR CONSTITUTION A CAUSE FOR THANKFULNESS.—DUTIES OF GOVERNORS;—ATTENTION TO PERSONAL SALVATION NEEDED BY THEM AS MUCH AS BY THEIR SUBJECTS;—SUBMISSION TO CHRIST;—HATRED OF COVETOUSNESS;—PURITY;—TEMPERANCE;—JUSTICE;—PROMOTION OF RELIGION.—CONCLUSION.

Dear Friend,

The fifth commandment teaches all who are in subjection their duties to their superiors. A child is to be trained in habits of submission to his parents; and, as he grows older, he is placed under others, to whom obedience and subjection of a similar kind are due;* and a spirit of peaceableness and docility, as well as of insubordination, manifested by him in any relative situation, may with reason be commonly traced to the way in which he was trained in his youth.

* See Robinson's Christian System, Essay on the Fifth Commandment.

Nor is the person to whom God delegates the authority of a superior left to exercise it in an improper manner, for selfish purposes, or to gratify ambitious desires; but for the preservation of peace and order under God, to whom he is now subject, and shall hereafter give account.

I.—Before proceeding to name the duties of governors and subjects, it is important first to notice the need in which mankind stands of government. Reason teaches this; and history, sacred as well as profane, testifies the same. We are told of some of the evil acts which were perpetrated when “there was no king in Israel, but every one did that which was right in his own eyes.”* Like effects have followed like causes in succeeding ages; and they who are wise will ever thankfully acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of God in giving laws to both governors and the governed. Prone to evil, man naturally desires to cast off restraints, and to be his own master; ignorant of the fact that he thereby becomes the slave of his own tyrannical lusts.

It may be well also to allude to the abuse of some terms bearing on the subject before us; and, (1st,) *liberty*. This has been so perverted that many have been led to fear even the name, and to limit even the proper acceptation of the term. To what is miscalled liberty we may apply the words used by the apostle in defining the wisdom of the world;—“earthly, sensual, devilish.” It is taken for freedom from laws, human and divine: and leaves men open to obey the impulses of the so-called *social* affections;—its

* Judges xvii. 6.

advocates, undermining the foundations of morality as well as of piety, and daring to raise up the banner of love and fellowship, as if they were followers of the gospel; Satan appearing as "an angel of light," and his ministers as "the ministers of righteousness."* They who are thus deluded should be instructed in the admonition of the apostle Paul; "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of Christ;" † and an effort should be patiently made to lead them to seek that high privilege which is enjoyed by believers, who, "justified by faith," are even now "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." ‡ Civil and religious liberty leaves men to follow the dictates of an enlightened reason and conscience; and in its highest sense, liberty is freedom from sin,—its love, dominion, and condemnation. § In the scriptures it is used sometimes to denote deliverance from the bondage of the ceremonial law. || This liberty is purchased by Christ.** Patriots are wont to be highly valued by those whose cause they have advocated, especially if they have suffered for their sakes. Is Christ valued aright, who willingly became a martyr that he might set us free? † †

(2nd.) The term *fraternity* is also perverted. This is a privilege of believers, whose duty it is to acknowledge one another as brethren, and to love one another as such. Jesus said to his disciples, "One is your

* 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15.

+ 1 Pet. ii. 16.

† Eph. ii. 19. Phil. iii. 20. Heb. xii. 22, 23.

‡ Rom. vi. 2, 5-22; viii. 1.

|| Acts xv. 10. Rom. vii. 1-6; viii. 2. Gal. ii. 4; v. 18.

** John viii. 32-36.

+ + Gal. i. 4.

Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.”* To know and to enjoy this union constitutes one of the believer’s highest present blessings : but the exercise of this privilege leaves the distinctions of ranks as they are. It relates to what is higher than earthly things, a kingdom of which Christ tells us that it is “not of this world.” †

(3rd.) *Equality* is another perverted term. This is enjoyed by the followers of Christ ; and it is obtained, not by abolishing the distinctions of rank and station ; these are appointed by God : and many require to be reminded that when they murmur because one has more wealth, or is raised higher, than another, they are murmuring against God. It is written that “the Lord maketh poor and maketh rich : he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.” ‡ Nor does subordination lessen happiness ; it leads to harmony and peace : but discontent and rebellion produce disorder, and interrupt happiness. There is subordination in heaven : the inanimate works of creation around us are not put by God on a dead level : in the firmament above, “there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory :” § and shall we wonder or complain if it be so on earth ? While, however, worldly distinctions are essential to government during man’s present state, these do not affect the spiritual

* Matt. xxiii. 8.

+ John xviii. 36.

† 1 Sam. ii. 7, 8.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 41.

and best gifts. "God is no respecter of persons." * "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." † Not that men have no duties to perform, no masters to obey; freedom and service are the portion of believers of every station: "he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also, he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant:" ‡ and the title which a king has occasion to prize the most highly is that of a 'servant of Christ.' This reminds us of the duty of mutual subjection: "all of you be subject one to another, and be *clothed with humility*: for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." § Humility well becomes the ruler, for it leads him to temper his rule with kindness: it disposes him to obey the precept "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them." He not only thereby the better ensures obedience to human authority, but he recommends also obedience to God by the justice and firmness as well as mildness and love displayed in the rule of his vicegerent.

The terms which denote some of the greatest privileges we enjoy here have thus been misused, and, linked together, have constituted a popular cry, whereby the principles of self-interest and impatience of restraint have been fostered, and men have been hurried on to seek the abolition of order, not thinking 'that the work of destruction of what is established is speedy, and attended with disastrous effects; that

* 2 Sam. xiv. 14. † 1 Cor. xii. 13. Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11.

‡ 1 Cor. vii. 22.

§ 1 Peter v. 5.

of re-construction, amid the ruins of anarchy, is tardy, and few are found qualified to accomplish it. The former has well been said to be man's work; the latter, that of God'.

II.—The duties of the governed have first to be considered. They have to submit to those who are placed over them, as being appointed by God who is the source of power; "There is no power but of God:" the ruler is "the minister of God."* "Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one and setteth up another."† He removeth kings, and setteth up kings.‡ He made known this exercise of his power, both in the case of his own people,§ and of the heathen.|| And "he changes not;" although he may see fit to hide himself more at one time than at another. Obedience, then, is required to be paid by subjects to their rulers, as to the Lord, whose delegated authority they see in their rulers. They regard them as ruling in his stead, and thereby they are told not to account unworthiness in the rulers as affording any plea for disobedience or neglect of duty on their part.

1.—Subjects should *honour* their rulers. It is written, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."** It is a mark of the wicked that they "despise dominion," and are "not afraid to speak evil of digni-

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 4. + Ps. lxxv. 6, 7.

† Dan. ii. 21. Prov. viii. 15, 16.

§ Deut. xvii. 15. 1 Sam. xii. 13. 2 Sam. xii. 1. 1 Kings xi. 11. 1 Chron. xxviii. 4-6.

|| Ex. ix. 16. Ezek. xxix. 19. Dan. v. 18. ** Acts xxiii. 5.

ties." * There may ever be found persons of this character. At some periods, such are more abundant; many, moreover, are led to "follow their pernicious ways," and their "love waxes cold." A spirit of independence of control is reigning. It is seen in the careless bearing of the lower classes, especially in large manufacturing towns. Our newspapers, which are in a measure an index of the tone of thought of the readers, so far from observing scripture rules, speak too lightly of the characters and acts of persons in authority. Some do this avowedly; and multitudes of seditious tracts and publications foster a spirit of disaffection, which, if permitted to take its course, though it may be covered for a season, yet a fitting opportunity may develope. The believer keeps aloof from all such incentives to what is evil; he obeys the precept, "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change." † Again, "Fear God; honour the king;" ‡ "Render to all their due: fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour," §

2.—*Obedience* is due to governors. How plain is the command, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." Again, "Ye must needs be subject." || "Put them in mind," saith Paul to Titus, "to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates," &c. ** Peter writes, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors as

* 2 Pet. ii. 10. Ex. xxii. 28. Job xxxiv. 18. Prov. xxv. 6. Jude 5; also, Eccles. viii. 4.

+ Prov. xxiv. 21.

† 1 Pet. ii. 17.

§ Rom. xiii. 7.

|| Rom. xiii. 1-5.

** Titus iii. 1.

unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.”* All commands are to be obeyed, except such as are contrary to those of God and conscience, as in the case of Daniel (*Dan.* vi. 10.); of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, whose words, while they betray no want of respect for kings, show a resolve to suffer, which should be pondered and imitated (*Dan.* iii. 16-18); and the apostles. (*Acts* v. 29) What an example we have of the duty of a subject when suffering from a tyrannical prince, in the case of David. Although he had been anointed by Samuel, yet when Saul was seeking to destroy him without a cause and was twice in his power, and David was pressed by his followers to kill him, he refused to stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed. And the secret of patient endurance in persecutions may be learned from the reasons he assigned: he looked to God as the judge, saying to Saul, “*The Lord judge between thee and me, and the Lord avenge me of thee; but mine hand shall not be upon thee*” Again, “*The Lord. . . . see and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.*” † From these words, and from the expedients in the power of God for obtaining deliverance if he see fit, the believer, seeing him who is invisible, learns to endure; and leaving life, property, and all things in his hands, to trust in him. David's words also in the hill of Hachilah, when Saul lay helpless before him, buried in sleep, are instructive; “*As the Lord liveth,*” he said, “*the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle*

* 1 Peter ii. 13, 14.

† 1 Sam. xxiv. 1-15.

and perish.”* It is simply want of faith which leads any one to stretch forth his hand to slay his persecutor. It argues a want of knowledge that God is ordering all things, and can do all things, and therefore by a single volition of his will, change the heart of a persecuting or tyrannical ruler. It betrays also a want of humility, for God may have an especial object in sending or continuing such rulers, for the just punishment of rebellious nations or individuals, or to make his power known, or to exercise the faith and patience of his saints.† But we have a higher example than that of David, even that of our blessed Saviour, teaching us what the conduct of his followers should be, when persecuted: “Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”‡ The believer’s sure resource is here shown; he, in like manner, leaves all to the righteous Judge, in whose “hands are the hearts of kings as the rivers of water: he turneth them whithersoever he will.”§

The command to obey is made very stringent. The apostle writes, “Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.” He then re-assures the good, adding, “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is

* 1 Sam. xxvi. 10.

+ Exod. ix. 15, 16. 1 Sam. xxviii. 19. Ps. lxxviii. 58-61. Ezek. xi. 16-19; xvi. 27-43. Rev. xiii. 10.

‡ 1 Peter ii. 23.

§ Prov. xxi. 1.

good, and thou shalt have praise of the same : for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain :” (the power of capital punishment upon malefactors would appear to be here plainly implied,) “for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” Conscience is also mentioned as a motive prompting to obedience rather than the fear of wrath.* ‘We cannot disturb government without great danger; one rash act may lead to great excesses. The early christians submitted at a time when it is said they might, by their numbers, have successfully opposed their adversaries:’ and when the command above-named was given, the governors were heathen; and persecuting emperors were to be obeyed as others. And shall not christian rulers be readily obeyed ?

Further, the duties to rulers are due to their delegates,—magistrates and officers appointed by them to aid in discharging the functions of their office. In whatever country the believer is, he observes these duties ; and a higher one is taught him by the command given to the Jews to seek the peace of the cities whereto they were carried captives.†

3.—The *payment of taxes* for the support of government, is also a duty on the part of subjects. The apostle writes, “Render to all their dues ; tribute to whom tribute is due ; custom to whom custom.” “Rulers,” he says, are “God’s ministers attending continually upon this very thing.” ‡

* Rom. xiii. 2-5. 1 Pet. ii. 19.

+ Jer. xxix. 7.

‡ Rom. xiii. 6, 7.

We have also the precept of Jesus, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."*

4.—*Prayer* is another duty enjoined by Scripture; it is to be offered "for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."† Such is the power of prayer; let it not be cold and formal, but earnest and effectual.

Many have to be reminded that kings and governors are men of like passions with themselves, and that they have no grounds for expecting perfection either in men or in human laws; but, calling to mind the imperfection of all things in which man takes a part, let us contemplate with thankfulness our constitution and the excellence of our laws. We cannot expect to find the exact medium, but let us be thankful that we are privileged to enjoy so great an amount of civil and religious liberty. Crime is punished, and life and property protected. We have to remember that excess of freedom promotes licentiousness, no less than the want of it does tyrannical power; and both lead to confusion. But above all, we can never praise God enough for the free enjoyment of the privilege of an open bible. Only let us see to it that we acknowledge the goodness of God, and make what return we can; let us manifest contentment, and aim at a quiet and peaceable life, and the good of those in other stations, or we may be deprived of our blessings, and have our candlestick removed out of its place, since the beacon light of history testifies in the case of other

* Matt. xxii. 21.

+ 1 Tim. ii. 1.

nations and churches, that there is still a God who judgeth righteously.

III.—The duties of *governors* have next to be considered, and those relating to the government of themselves. Good might be expected if both the governor and the governed were diligent on this point. The governor would be better qualified for his office, and the governed would find within themselves a sphere of labour demanding more than all their care, and leaving them no room for desiring or aiming at the place of rulers. Kings, rulers, and magistrates, “Ye must be born again;” the salvation of your souls demands as much your care, as that of the meanest of those in subjection does theirs. Likeness to Christ constitutes your fitness to govern, both as regards wisdom, and the temper of your minds. You must make it your constant prayer and endeavour to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your mind, and all your soul, and all your strength, and your neighbour as yourself.”* You must, as ever you would follow Christ, “deny yourselves, and take up your cross daily.” †

There is not one standard of piety for a king or ruler, and another for one in subjection, only the former have some relative duties which the others have not. The common duties of christians are bound on both alike. There is no room for supposing that, however difficult or impossible a work it may be for the rich and great, if unaided, to enter into the kingdom of God, it is not possible with God; or that the station of a king puts it out of his power to do his duty as

* Deut. vi. 5. Matt. xxii. 36-40.

+ Luke ix. 23.

a follower of Christ. The grace of Christ, where sought, is sufficient. Rulers are set in slippery places: they may seldom be told their true character, or hear the reproof of a faithful counsellor. They may commonly be surrounded by self-interested people, who may gain by flattering them. If the poor knew that ease does not increase with wealth or high station, but rather their weight of responsibility and care, they would not envy them, but be content; and would, moreover, sympathize with them, and find herein fresh occasion for prayer to God in their behalf. To submit to Christ, listen to instruction, and serve the Lord with fear, is required of kings and judges; lest the anger of Christ be kindled, and they perish from the way.*

2.—Several valuable lessons are learned from other instructions given by God through Moses, respecting a king, guarding against excess in his possessions: it was also required of him to write him a copy of the law and read therein, that he might fear the Lord, and not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left.† He is guarded against oppression and covetousness by the questions which Samuel put to the people.‡ He should pay such strict and constant attention to his duties, and so preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, that he may appeal to God as a witness, and be acquitted, as Samuel was, by the voice of the people;—"Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand." Jethro's counsel

* Ps. ii. 10-12.

+ Deut. xvii. 14-20.

† 1 Sam. xii. 3-5. See also Num. xvi. 15.

given to Moses respecting the qualifications of judges, is to be pondered. He was to "provide able men, men of truth, hating covetousness."* Moses also required that "wise men" should be chosen.† Herein rulers are reminded of the duty of asking God for a wise and understanding heart, to judge the people, and discern between good and bad, regarding this as being before riches and honour, and victory over enemies, as Solomon, (1 *Kings* iii. 1-15, &c., also *Prov.* xxviii. 16.) conscious of inability for the work without the grace of God.

3.—They may learn from the advice to Lemuel to be pure and temperate, and to consider the poor and destitute. (*Prov.* xxxi. 1-9.)

4.—Invariable attention is to be paid by them to justice, in framing and administering the laws. (See *Exod.* xxiii. 2-7. *Deut.* i. 16, 17; xvi. 18-20; xxi. 1-9. *Prov.* xvi. 13; xxxi. 8.) They should discourage evil; (*Prov.* xvi. 12; xx. 8, 26.) favour the good. (*Prov.* xiv. 35; xvi. 13; xxii. 12.) Those in subor-

* *Exod.* xviii. 21-22.

† How carefully should kings and rulers train their subjects for the Lord, that if spared they may rule in righteousness. Lessons may be learned from a distinguished heathen. Cyrus noticed that a ruler should be more wise and virtuous than those he governs; a loving example to his people. He further noticed, that liberality is a virtue truly royal. I have, he said, prodigious riches, but they are as much yours as mine. The value of them he considered to consist in their conferring the opportunity of rewarding those who served the public faithfully, and relieving those who would make known their wants and necessities to him. He also paid very great attention to the interests of religion; and after victory did not give way to an effeminate or luxurious way of living, but continued to give due attention to the duties of government. (See Rollin's *Ancient History*, Book iv.) Some also may be shamed by the morality of heathens,—as for instance by the continence of Scipio, the self-devotion of Regulus: but they should aim at higher attainments, actuated by gospel principles, and consider the question, "What do ye more than others?"—*Matt.* v., 47.

dinate stations should be faithful to their sovereign. Good examples;—Joseph; (*Gen.* xli. 33, &c.) Daniel. (ch. vi. 4, 5.) Rulers should choose good counselors, (*2 Chron.* xxii. 3. *Prov.* xxxv. 5.) avoid the council of the vain and inexperienced; (*1 Kings* xii. 1-20.) and not be misled by the people when giving evil counsel, or both will be punished; (*Ex.* xxxii. 21, 25, 35. *Deut.* ix. 20. *John* xix. 8-16.) nor follow evil precedents in order to be consistent, but give attention, and endeavour to remove what is contrary to God's word in past administration.

5.—They should promote religion; acknowledge God as ruling all events, and over-ruling all for his people's good; proclaim fasts and thanksgivings, when needed; (*Jonah* iii. *Ezra* x. 1-9.) and ever remember their own littleness. Man in vain attempts to possess absolute power: God is over all.

Scripture affords examples of good kings,—David; Asa; (*1 Kings* xv. 11.) Jehoshaphat; (*1 Kings* xxii. 43. *2 Chron.* xix. 3, 4.) Amaziah and Azariah; (*2 Kings* xv. 3.) Hezekiah; (*2 Kings* xiii. 3.) Josiah, who not only begun well when young, but continued to manifest zeal for God and the interests of religion. (*2 Kings* xxii. xxiii. *2 Chron.* xxxiv. 3.) Kings have also wicked rulers to warn them; as the sons of Samuel; (*1 Sam.* viii. 3-4.) Pilate; (*Matt.* xxvii. 24-26.) the magistrates at Philippi; (*Acts* xvi. 22, 23.) Gallio; (*Acts* xviii. 16, 17.) Felix; (*Acts* xxiv. 26.

Finally, set before you the honour of God and the best interests of those in subordination to you as your continual object. Forget self. Observe the words of

king Jehoshaphat," (2 Chron. xix 5, 6.) "Take heed what ye do; for *ye judge not for man, but for the Lord*, who is with you in the judgment." He is the same God, and will be with you also, if you seek him: and prepare for your account; that you may meet those over whom you rule with joy before the Lord, at the great day.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

H. S.

LETTER XLV.

DUTIES OF MINISTERS AND PEOPLE.

RELATIVE DUTIES IN THE CHURCH, AS IN THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE STATE.—THE VISIBLE CHURCH.—THE TRUE CHURCH.—GOVERNMENT;—NOT EXACTLY DEFINED, LIKE THAT OF THE JEWISH CHURCH.—AARONIC PRIESTHOOD SUPERSEDED.—THE DUTIES OF THE LAITY;—TO REGARD THE MINISTERS OF CHRIST AS GOD'S MESSENGERS;—ATTEND TO THEIR INSTRUCTIONS;—LOVE, HONOUR, HELP, AND PRAY FOR THEM; NOT DO AFTER THEIR WORKS, IF EVIL. TEST DOCTRINE BY SCRIPTURE;—EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH;—NOT REST IN HEARING, WITHOUT CONVERSION.—DUTIES OF MINISTERS;—THEIR OFFICE, ONE OF LABOUR AND DIGNITY.—THIS SHOWN BY TITLES GIVEN TO THEM IN SCRIPTURE.—PERSONAL HOLINESS NEEDED.—LOVE TO CHRIST AND TO SOULS, THEIR CONSTRAINING MOTIVE.—PUBLIC PREACHING.—PRIVATE VISITATION.—CONTINUANCE IN PRAYER.—EARNESTNESS NEEDED.—ALL THEIR STRENGTH, IN GOD.—CONCLUDING EXHORTATION.

Dear Friend,

The church, like the household and the state, places her members in a relation to each other involving the performance of important duties. Her con-

stitution and the duties of her ministers and laity, form the subject of the present letter. May her great Head be pleased to guide me in discussing each of these points, so far as the narrow limits of a letter may give space.

I. 'The church, in the original, (*ἐκκλησία*) would appear to be derived from *ἐκκαλεῖν*, to *call out*; though the learned Mintert chooses to deduce it from the Hebrew *קָהָל*, *an assembly*, for which in the Septuagint the word *ἐκκλησία* is often used.' All who bear the name of Christ are called to be not of the world, but to be a separate people unto the Lord, as they of whom Jesus said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (*John xvii. 14, 16.*)

II. The constitution of the Christian church may perhaps be best ascertained by marking its origin and progress. The Jewish church was preparatory to it. John, the fore-runner of the Messiah, prepared a body of men, who professed their readiness to receive him when he should come. When the time for his manifestation was fulfilled, John pointed him out "as he walked, and said, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Two disciples, one of whom was Andrew, followed Jesus: Andrew called his brother Peter: Philip and Nathaniel were next called: (*John i. 29-51.*) and thus the mustard seed began to grow; the leaven to spread: and well were it if Christians would now, like Andrew and Philip, bring their brothers and friends to Christ. It may be remarked here, that the united declaration of Andrew, Philip, and Nathaniel, form the confession which Peter afterwards made. On

this confession—or rather on him who was thus confessed—our divine Saviour and Mediator—the church was built.* He is at once the Head of the church (*Eph.*

* Proof is wanting in Scripture that pre-eminence was given to Peter above the other apostles. The church of Rome should prove that it was given not only to him, but also to his successors. Many texts militate against such a view. (See *Matt.* xvii. 18; xxiii. 8-12. *Luke* xxii. 24-30. *John* xx. 22, 23. *Acts* xv. 6-35. *Ephes.* ii. 20. *Rev.* xxi. 14.) In *1 Cor.* xii. 28, the first named order of ministers is *Apostles*: no chief is named. The Lord retains the keys. (*Rev.* ii. 7.) In a matter of so much importance, would scripture be silent if it were an appointment of God? Would Peter himself leave no word to this effect? Would Clement? Is there nothing significant in the expression of Christ, "Call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven," when the name of Pope, from *papa* or *father*, is assumed by the bishop of Rome? What claim has the church of Rome to that of Mother or Mistress of Churches? Certainly the church at Jerusalem (or that of Antioch,) should be preferred, if any, as having been founded earlier. Its rise was gradual. Its situation in the metropolis of the Western Empire gave it great advantages. The Emperor Justinian, (whose aim it seems to have been, during a long reign, to overawe the West by the means of the spiritual power of the bishop of Rome) and afterwards Pepin and Charlemagne, led to the full development of the little horn of Daniel, by giving temporal authority to the bishop of Rome, who has assumed the title of the "seer;" (*ἐπίσκοπος*) shown himself a blasphemer of the most High, and made war against the saints. The bishop of Rome was once a Patriarch, together with the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch. At a later time he appears to have disputed the pre-eminence with the bishop of Constantinople. John, bishop of Constantinople had the title of Universal Father, and it were well if Romanists kept in mind whence the title came;—that the wicked Phocas, who waded to the imperial throne through the blood of the preceding emperor Mauritius and five of his sons, gave it to Boniface III., bishop of Rome; although Gregory I., the preceding bishop had said that he who took this title should be the *forerunner of Antichrist*. And to this day the Greek church assumes the title of Catholic, equally with the Romish, thus cancelling each other's claims: while each gives additional proof, by corruption of doctrine, of its inability to stand the test of Vincent of Lirin, "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*" It is remarkable—as arming the mind of the humble and diligent inquirer after truth—that more errors are recorded of Peter (whose successors the bishops of Rome affect to be) than of the other apostles. (See *Matt.* xiv. 30; xvi. 22. *Luke* ix. 33; xxii. 33, 34. *Gal.* ii. 11-16.) It is also remarkable that in *no bull of any Pope, or decree of any general Council, or any authoritative canon or article, has the church*

i. 20-23) and the foundation, the corner-stone. (*Is.* xxvii. 16. *1 Cor.* iii. 11. *Eph.* ii. 20. *1 Pet.* ii. 6.)

The church was thus like seed which a man sowed, and which grew and sprang up, he knew not how. (*Mark* iv. 27.) We are not told what was the exact number of disciples, when Jesus chose twelve out of them, whom also he named apostles, and sent them forth with power to work divers miracles, and commanded them, as they went, to preach, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and they departed and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel and healing every where. (*Matt.* x. 1-42. *Luke* ix. 1-6.) Afterwards he sent forth other seventy. (*Luke* x. 1.) By his preaching and miracles he led many to believe, (*John* ii. 23; iv. 1; xi. 45; xii. 18, 19.) and such was the effect, that the chief priests and Pharisees expressed their fears that all men would believe in him.* (*John* xi. 47, 48.)

After Jesus' conversation with the disciples concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and his ascension, the promise of the Spirit was ful-

*of Rome asserted her infallibility: and, failing to prove this, her claim to be the teacher of the church is lost. If any should wonder that doctrine and morals should become so corrupt as it did, an examination of the scriptures alone will painfully exhibit the fact that man has ever marred the blessings of God. The mystery of iniquity was already working in the apostles' days: perilous times were foretold: the messages to the angels of the seven churches, (*Rev.* ii., iii.) show painful deterioration. And what is the state of those churches now? Too soon was there a departure from "first love" and "first works." (See also *1 Cor.* v. 1; vi. 8, 9. *Gal.* i. 6-9. *2 Thess.* ii. 1-12. *1 Tim.* i. 18, 20; iv. 1-8. *2 Tim.* ii. 16-20. *1 John* ii. 18, 19; iv. 3. *Jude* 3-19.)*

* Among the chief rulers, also, many believed, though, through fear of man, they durst not confess him. (*John* xii. 42, 43, comp. with ii. 1, 2.)

filled, and the church became churches. (*Acts* ii. 41-47; v. 14; vi. 7; xi. 21-24.) Many branches grew out of the mustard plant. (*Acts* i. 14; ii. 41-47; iv. 32; viii. 1-4; x. 30-48; xi. 19-26. *Rom.* xvi. 4. *2 Cor.* xi. 8, 28. *Rev.* i. 4. &c.)

The visible or professing church, being the aggregate of particular churches, is a mixed community. The Jewish church was the same. Moses spake of the whole body as the people of God, even in their rebellion, (*Deut.* iv. 20; vii. 6; ix. 29; xxxii. 9, &c.) and the Lord hearkened unto him; yet multitudes perished in the wilderness. (*Numb.* xiv. 26-38. *Deut.* xxxii. 9-43. *1 Cor.* x. 1-11.) "All are not Israel which are of Israel." (*Rom.* ix. 6.) "There is a remnant according to the election of grace." (*Rom.* xi. 5.)

The Lord can call a nation to privileges, as the Jews; and he can choose out of that nation a people for his name. So they who are baptized, and constitute the visible church of Christ, are called to privileges: and out of these the Lord has a people, not professing only, but true. Such are his flock, kept by his power through faith unto salvation, who shall never perish.

The promise of Christ's continual presence, (*Matt.* xxviii. 20.) and of perpetuity, (*Matt.* xvi. 18.) was made to the truth itself; not to any place where, or any one particular visible church by which, the truth may at any given time be maintained.

In the true church, *i. e.* the aggregate of true believers, who have been, are now, or shall hereafter be, on the earth, there is true unity. "This consists not in the sameness of external rites and ceremonies, but in

the truth and unity of the catholic faith." They are, by faith, in living union with Christ the Head; and partake of the sanctifying influences of the Spirit. They realize the communion of saints, being one in feeling, object, and desire with one another. Part of these are militant, still fighting against sin; part triumphant, having overcome through grace, and died in the faith.

It is well stated that, 'as we acknowledge no other head of the church than Christ, so we do not admit the claim of every church to be a true church, but we say that that is a true church in which are found the notes of a true church. We condemn some churches as corrupt, which are not in this respect what they ought to be, however much they may boast of their succession of bishops, of their unity, and of their antiquity.'*

III.—The government of the church comes next to be considered. We do not find any exact form pre-

* So far from being a true branch of the church, the church of Rome must be considered as a corrupt one. She cannot lay claim to the title of "Catholic," even as regards catholicity in forms, for she has perverted in a great measure such as are divinely appointed, and added new ones. She must wholly fail in any attempt to prove herself catholic or apostolic in doctrine, as the creed of Pope Pius IV., when compared with scripture, testifies. Again, let the omission of the second commandment in the decalogue be accounted for, (see Dr. Butler's Catechism) and the errors in their English translation of the Scriptures. Dr. Cumming has remarked with the Hammersmith Discussion, that in the later alterations made in the Douay version of the Scriptures, the text has been made more to accord with that of our authorized version, which they repudiate and burn. If she lay claim to sanctity, the lives of the Popes and of the clergy, and the consultations respecting reformation of morals in the Council of Trent, will show such a claim untenable. If to unity,—any one who reads a history of the said general Council, and marks the differences of opinion between the leaders of the Dominican and the Franciscan parties in the debates on the doctrines of original sin, or

scribed in the New Testament as in the Jewish church. (*Exod.* xxv. 9, 40 ; xxvi. 30 ; xxvii. 8. *Acts* vii. 44. *Heb.* viii. 5.) We find not any pattern like that shown to Moses in the mount. The apostles appear to have derived their church government and their mode of conducting public worship from the synagogue :* we

the exception of the mother of Jesus, &c., will need no further proof, or he might have sufficient adduced in General Council opposing General Council, (See pp. 268, 269,) pope opposing pope; nay, there being three rival popes at one time.

Not that the Church of Rome is the only church that has corrupted her way. One has only to take a cursory survey of the map of Christendom, and he will see the Greek Church bearing a lamentable resemblance to her, in many of her great errors. Nor can the eye rest with satisfaction on the Eastern Churches: and when the state of England, of America, or other protestant countries is considered, it is evident that purity of doctrine is only comparative; that all fall short in some way or other of the purity of the gospel. None can say, I am clean, without fault. Perfect purity knows not where to set her foot on earth without defilement.

* Jahn, in his Arch. Bibl., s. 372, after remarking that the דְּרָשָׁן, or orator *synagogarum*, appears not to have had any officer resembling him, named in the New Testament, unless it were a reader, or person qualified to instruct the people, by knowledge and power of addressing them, (see *Luke* iv. 16-21, &c.) adds, "Alii ministri *synagogarum* erant: I. Antistes *synagogæ*, ἀρχισυνάγωγος, ראש הכנסת, qui coetum regibat, lectores et oratores invitabat, nisi quipiam se sponte obtulissent, quos acceptaret, (*Marc* v. 22, 35-38. *Luc* viii. 41. *Act. Apost.* xiii. 14, 15 ; xviii. 8, 17.) II. Seniores *synagogæ*, זקנים, πρεσβύτεροι, antistiti a consiliis, erant potentiores et doctiores populi; hinc etiam ἀρχισυνάγωγοι dicuntur. (*Act. Apost.* xiii. 15.) Hic Senatus non modo de institutionibus *synagogæ*, sed etiam de transgressoribus Legis agebat, et pœnam 40 ictuum demto uno decernebat, aut etiam peccatorem communionem excluderebat. (*Joh.* ix. 12 ; xii. 42 ; xvi. 2. 2 *Cor.* xi. 24.) III. Collectores eleemosynarum, גְּבִיאֵי צְדָקָה, δάκονοι, (*Act. Ap.* vi. 1, seqq.) IV. Minister *synagogæ*, קָזָן ὑπηρέτης, (*Luc* iv. 20.) qui libros prælegendos porrigebat et recipiebat, et alia hujusmodi servitia præstabat. (*Luc* iv. 20.) V. Apostolus seu legatus *synagogæ*, שְׁלִיחַ צְבוּר, alius erat, qui a *synagogis* exteris missus, eleemosynam Jerosolyma deportabat? (*Phil.* ii. 25. 1 *Cor.* xvi. 1-4.) alius, qui a *synagogis* ad propagandam religionem delegabatur; (*Act. Ap.* xiv. 4. *Rom.* xvi. 7. 2 *Cor.* viii.

find not minute directions given by Christ; and in the times of the apostles the government shows no marks of being modelled after any superinduced form, but appears to have been gradually framed as circumstances rendered its expansion necessary to meet the wants of the growing church; as in the case of the appointment of Stephen and the six others to attend to the daily ministration of alms; (*Acts* vi. 1-6.) also in Paul leaving Titus in Crete, and giving to him, and to Timothy, instructions for the exercise of authority over other presbyters in certain cases, he being himself absent. It is to be lamented that apostolic precedent, unattended with express injunctions for uniformity, should have been made by particular churches, the ground of dissensions. If the episcopalian feel satisfied that he is right, pointing to the gradual formation of his order, and its continuance; there being bishops, it is said, in every church, during fifteen centuries;—the presbyterian, the independent, and other denominations of christians may point to the election of Stephen, and believe they see other points of resemblance to their own order in the primitive church. Where views are retained from a conscientious conviction, let it be done with modesty, and let each seek to “preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”

It may be remarked here that the priesthood of Aaron's line is, as was predicted, (*Ps.* cx. 4. *Heb.* vi. 20, and ch. vii.) superseded by Christ, “a Priest for

23.) alius denique, qui preces publicas in synagoga, nomine coetus recitabat, a coetu ad id delegatus, qui nunc *cantor* nuncupatur cf. *Apoc.* i. 20; ii. 1, 8, 12, 18; iii. 1, 7, 14. ἀγγελος τῆς ἐκκλησίας.—*Vitringa de Synag.* Vet. L. III. P. I. c. 1 et 2. P. II. c. 1-3.

ever after the order of Melchisedech." The term *ιερεὺς*, or *sacrificing priest*, is never applied in the New Testament to the ministers of Christ. He is the appointed Head of the church, which constitutes "a holy priesthood," composed, not of ministers alone, but of ministers and laity, whose duty and privilege it is, relying on the merits of the one perfect and sufficient sacrifice offered once for all,—to "offer up spiritual sacrifices," prayer and praise.

IV. That the forms of church government be suitable and according to the will of God is of great importance; the inner life of the church, however, is of still greater; and I proceed to speak of the duties of her members. We find that *order* is observed, and the distinction marked out in the scriptures between the people, who are represented by the "building" and the "husbandry;" and their ministers, who are called "builders and labourers." (*Matt.* ix. 37. *1 Cor.* iii. 9, 10. *2 Cor.* x. 15. *1 Thes.* ii. 9.)

(1.) It is the duty of the laity to honour the ministers of Christ, regarding them as God's messengers; and to "esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake," (See *Luke* x. 16. *2 Cor.* viii. 7. *Phil.* ii. 29. *1 Thess.* iii. 6; v. 13. *1 Tim.* v. 17.) but not to exalt them unduly, so as to look off from Christ to them. (*Acts* iii. 12-16. *1 Cor.* iii. 5-7; iv. 1-6.)

(2.) *Obedience is due to them.* The office of ministers as ambassadors, shepherds, stewards, teaches the duty of attending to their scriptural instructions and admonitions. (See *1 Cor.* iv. 1. *1 Thess.* v. 12, 13. *Heb.* xiii. 7, 17.)

(3.) *They should help* (*Rom.* xvi. 3.) *and support*

them. This was provided for by the law given to Moses ; and the apostle says, "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel ;" and he adds, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things?" (Compare *Levit.* vi 16-26 ; vii. 6, &c. *Numb.* v. 9, 10 ; xviii. 8-24. *Deut.* x. 9 ; xviii. 1. 2 *Chron.* xxxi. 4, with *Rom.* xv. 27 ; 1 *Cor.* ix. 7-14. *Gal.* vi. 6. 1 *Tim.* v. 18.) This was practically carried out by the faithful women who ministered to Christ of their substance ; (*Luke* viii. 3. *Matt.* xxvii. 55.) and by the Philippian converts, who supplied the wants of Paul. (*Phil.* iv. 9-18.)

(4.) *Prayer* for ministers is another very important duty. The godly members of the church can perhaps in no way so effectually contribute to the success of the ministration of the word, as by meeting together at stated times, and supplicating the Lord for the blessing of the Spirit on their ministers, on themselves, and those around them. Let them, also, continually make this the subject of prayer in private. If an inspired apostle earnestly asked his converts to pray for him, for utterance and boldness, (see *Rom.* xv. 30. 2 *Cor.* i. 11. *Eph.* vi. 19. *Heb.* xiii. 18.) do not ministers now require the same ? It may be well here to guard against the danger of thinking less of the gospel because the message may not come with excellency of speech. The gospel may often be preached in weakness, since the treasure is in earthen vessels : yet it is not on that account to be despised. If a man come to a place of worship in a cavilling and fastidious spirit ; if the pew be made a judgment hall, and the occu-

pant a judge ; he will hear without profit. The Lord can overthrow the strongholds of Satan by the sound of the ram's horns, as easily as by that of the silver trumpets. Cecil observes : "A man may preach blunderingly, absurdly ; and yet his word may be made the power of God to the salvation of souls." All man's ability and eloquence is of no avail, except the Spirit accompany the word, prepare the heart, and quicken the seed : hence the need of prayer for the Spirit, before, during, and after the hearing, as well as the reading, of the scriptures.

(5.) The caution of Christ is most important, "*Take heed how ye hear.*" Many hear without profit ; and to multitudes the word preached is "the savour of death unto death." The mere attendance at public worship and at the Lord's table may become superstitious acts, and we may, almost insensibly, ascribe some merit to them ; yea, even to our private prayers, and reading the scriptures. We should be careful to make prayer a real spiritual service : if every petition were offered with real earnestness of feeling and desire ;— if we were thus to "prove God" in secret, in the congregation, and in social prayer, doubtless he would open the windows of heaven, and pour out showers of gospel blessings on congregations, that there should not be room enough to receive them.

One means of doing good, which the laity ought to use has been named, that of prayer for ministers and people ; they are also taught to pray for the spread of the gospel ; (see *Luke* x. 2.) and "one for another ;" the apostle James is not here directing ministers alone ; and he adds the encouraging words, "The effec-

tual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (*James* v. 16, see also *Gal.* vi. 1.) In the same place he adds a privilege which the clergy in one communion would confine to themselves, "Confess your faults *one to another.*" (*James* v. 16.) Let the laity also care for each other's spiritual state, and show their care. The apostle Paul writes to the Romans, "I myself am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, *able also to admonish one another.*" (*Rom.* xv. 14.) Let this ability be used by such as possess it in social intercourse, and on behalf of friends and others,—the fallen, the tempted, the wicked : and how great is the encouragement given in *Dan.* xii. 3. Numbers of the laity do not use or exercise their privileges. Many are not aware that an opportunity is given of objecting to an improper candidate for the ministry in the Church of England, notice being previously given of the intention of such as offer themselves candidates for ordination, in the church where they reside. Churchwardens also should perform their duties.

While the laity have the examples of godly ministers before them, for their imitation as far as they follow Christ, (*1 Cor.* iv. 16; xi. 1.) they are not to do after their works, if they obey not. (*Matt.* xxiii. 3, &c.) False prophets and teachers were to arise. (*Matt.* xxiv. 11. *2 Pet.* ii. 1, 2.) It is a layman's duty, then, to test doctrine by the scriptures,* and to "cease from hearing the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." (*Prov.* xix. 27.) It is his duty also "to contend earnestly for the faith." (*Jude* 3.)

* See vol. ii., pp. 242, 243.

Let him use his gift of reason with prayer, in his search after truth from scripture. If he do this in sincerity he may make some errors in judgment, but light will be given for salvation.

V. The duties of *ministers* have next to be considered :

(1) Much instruction may be drawn respecting them from the figures by which we find them set forth in scripture : warning also and encouragement are thereby afforded. The title of *watchman* was given to prophets under the Old Testament dispensation ; and how can such as now profess to be called by the Holy Ghost to take the office of ministers of the gospel, and, voluntarily offering themselves as candidates, are admitted thereto, escape the application of what is said of the watchman's duty to themselves ? It is the watchman's part, then, to hear the word of the Lord, and warn the people from him. If he warn the people faithfully and constantly, and they perish, he is pure from their blood. If he see evil coming upon them, and omit to warn them, he must give an account. (See *Is.* lii. 8 ; lvi. 9-12 ; lxii. 6. *Ezek.* iii. 15-27 ; xxxiii.) They are also called *shepherds*. In this they have the example of Christ, the good Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep ; and the under-shepherds should lay down their lives for the brethren. (*John* x. 1-29. 1 *John* iii. 16.) What if the shepherd slumber or seek his pleasure, and the sheep go astray ? Paul teaches valuable lessons in his charge to the elders of the church at Miletus, (*Acts* xx. 17-35.) the whole of which should be pondered well by ministers. He tells them, "grievous

wolves should enter in among them, not sparing the flock." (See verses 28-31. *Prov.* xxvii. 23. *Isa.* xl. 11; lvi. 11. *Jer.* xxiii. 1-4; 1, 6, 7. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 2-26, *Amos* i. 2. *Zech.* x. 2, 3; xi. 3-17.) The titles, *labourers* and *builders*, have already been alluded to. (1 *Cor.* iii. 9; xv. 10. 2 *Cor.* x. 8. *Eph.* iv. 12.) The word *minister*, or servant, also denotes labour. Here again, Christ gave himself as an example: he was a minister; and the more truly humble a minister is, the more he resembles his Master: his unaffected, humble service is his true honour; he knows not his office, except he can say from the heart with Paul, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves *your servants* for Jesus' sake." (*Matt.* xx. 28. *Luke* xxii. 24-27. 2 *Cor.* iv. 5.) Faithful ministers are also spiritual *fathers*; and none should think it enough to be "*instructors*" only, but labour in prayers and endeavours that "Christ should be formed in" their people. (1 *Cor.* iv. 15. *Gal.* iv. 19. 1 *Thess.* ii. 11.) Their care is also shown to be that of *nurses*. (1 *Thess.* ii. 7.) They are also called "*ambassadors for Christ*," (2 *Cor.* v. 18-20.) and "*stewards of the mysteries of God*;" and, as such, faithfulness is required of them. (1 *Cor.* iv. 1, 2.) It is their duty to publish the glad tidings of salvation to all nations. (*Isa.* xl. 9; lii. 7. *Mark* xvi. 15. *Rom.* x. 15-18.) They may have occasion to exclaim with the prophet, "Who hath believed our report?" (*Isa.* liii. 1.) and this is not a strange thing: the Lord said unto Ezekiel; "The house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me." (*Ezek.* iii. 7.) Still it is their duty,

“though briars and thorns be with” them, and they “dwell among scorpions,” “not” to “be afraid” of men, even the “rebellious,” but to set their “face as a flint,” and “tell the people their transgressions,” and “their sins, . . . whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.” (*Isa.* lviii. 1. *Ezek.* iii. 9, 10.)

(2) It is obvious, then, that *personal holiness* is needed. How important, hence, is the admonition of the apostle, “*Take heed unto thyself.*” The office is shown to be an eminently high and holy one: so should be the character of one who bears it. He is to be pure, (*Isa.* lii. 11. *1 Tim.* iii. 9; iv. 12. *2 Tim.* ii. 22.); holy, (*Levit.* xxi. 6. *1 Thess.* ii. 10. *Tit.* i. 8.); temperate, (*Tit.* i. 8.); humble, (*Acts* xx. 19.); patient, (*2 Cor.* vi. 4-10. *2 Tim.* ii. 24.); blameless, (*1 Thess.* ii. 10. *1 Tim.* iii. 2.); “ruling his children and his house well,” “having his children in subjection with all gravity,” (*1 Tim.* iii. 4-12.); meek, (*1 Tim.* vi. 11. *2 Tim.* ii. 25. *Titus* iii. 2.); gentle and affectionate, (*2 Cor.* x. i. *1 Thess.* ii. 7, 8. *2 Tim.* ii. 24.); bold, (*Num.* xxv. 1-13.); disinterested, (*1 Cor.* ix. 12. *2 Cor.* xi. 9; xii. 13-19. *1 Thess.* ii. 5, 6.); not seeking the praise of men, (*Gal.* i. 10. *1 Thess.* ii. 6.); not using flattering words, (*1 Thess.* ii. 5.); self-denying, (*1 Cor.* ix. 27.); a lover of good men, &c. (*Titus* i. 8.)

A minister has, further, great need to “take heed unto himself” respecting his conduct when in company with others. He is always to give evidence, by his bearing and manner, of the sacredness and solemnity of his office. There is to be inscribed on all he has and is, “Holiness to the Lord.” This should

show itself in his dress, pursuits, manner of life, &c. The character of the wife of a minister should also comport with the sacredness of the office.* In all it should be seen that he is separate unto the Lord. Not that a layman may rest in a lower standard of holiness than a minister;—each has to seek none other than that of God himself;†— but that such as are chosen to be ministers should be of the holiest: and this should be manifest, that the ministry be not blamed, and the Lord thereby dishonoured. Great sobriety becomes this office. One desiring to inquire what he should do to be saved, may go away, and return to the world, if he witness in one who should be his spiritual guide, the noise of revelry, or the careless bearing which marks the worldling. The minister has many regarding him,—the godly for an example, the wicked for an occasion of reproach of the gospel, and encouragement to sin.‡ His work is more than sufficient to occupy his time. Many who would lead him to society, do so with a view to sanction their own worldly habits; and seeming friends would betray him into inconsistencies. He has the care of the souls of the rich, as well as of the poor: and his intercourse should all be regulated with a view to this end. He should not “entangle himself with the affairs of this world,” (2 *Tim.* ii. 4.) and the words of Nehemiah often become him, when solicited to do what is vain in society; “I am doing a

* See p. 172.

+ Matt. v. 48. 1 Pet. i. 15-16.

‡ ‘It was Chrysostom’s opinion that few ministers would be saved.’ Let none deceive themselves by supposing that the being engaged in sacred duties can take one who is unconverted to heaven.

great work, that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, that I should come down to you?" (*Neh.* vi. 3.)

(3.) The minister is also cautioned to "*take heed unto the doctrine.*" He is told to "*hold fast the faithful word.*" (*Titus* i. 9.) The Lord chose Moses, "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and Paul, "who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel;" and all knowledge bearing on the various duties of a christian minister may be of service, if devoted to the Lord. Yet it must be remembered that while what is of man may affect the outward conduct, the word of God is the honoured instrument, through hearing of which the soul is saved.* 'The Lord is able to bless those who may be regarded as the weak things of the world, when they look to him, and he will do so.† He is able to fill them with his grace, and grace will outrun gifts in the end. We look for gifts and are satisfied, and we are left cold, and empty, and miserable.‡ Much of the simplicity of gospel

* Let the word of God be the continual study of the minister; let him seek to know Christ more and more perfectly: this is an inexhaustible source of wisdom and delight. Herein is the Church of Rome especially shown to be unscriptural, nay, opposed to the early fathers, that she keeps back the word of God.

Bishop McIlvaine remarks respecting ministers, "How studious they ought to be in reading and studying the scriptures; and for this self-same cause, how they ought to forsake and set aside, as much as they may, all worldly cares and studies, giving themselves wholly to the office whereunto it hath pleased God to call them, so that, as much as lieth in them, they may apply themselves wholly to this one thing and *draw all their cares and studies this way*, and continually pray for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost, that *by daily reading and weighing the scriptures*, they may wax riper and stronger in their ministry." Charge on "On Ministerial Faithfulness."

+ 1 Cor. i. 25-29.

‡ Dr. Chalmers speaks of labouring for twelve years to lead the

truth is often lost by its admixture with scholastic erudition. There is often a freshness in the piety of poor uneducated christians, and a vivid truthfulness and force of expression in their conversation and prayers, from which a minister derives more edification than from those of many to whose education much time has been devoted, and in whom, in many cases, a reception of a form of sound words is rested in, although simple confidence in Christ be absent. There is a spirit of exclusiveness in many ministers which leads them to seek to limit direct aggressive spiritual exertion to themselves. The work is so great and momentous, and the necessities of souls so urgent, that a minister should gladly avail himself of all appliances which scripture allows. His time should be wholly devoted to the work; but others can devote a part, and teach a neighbour who is sunk in sin, or read the scriptures to one in sickness, and offer prayer by them. The apostles, as has been noticed, did not shrink from telling the converts of their spiritual privileges, and calling for their exercise.* Is not the help of laymen sanctioned by them? and what scripture forbids it, or prevents what is so desirable for the benefit of those who seek the spiritual good of others

* Page 235.

dishonest, the untruthful, the drunkard, and such as by their conduct are the disturbers and pests of society, to leave their sins, and never considering that if he had prevailed upon them to do so, the dishonest might have walked in integrity, the untruthful been true, the drunkard sober, and yet they might not have been partakers of saving grace: and states that while he thus earnestly sought their reformation, he witnessed no effect of his preaching. How many have added their testimony to the same truth, and learned in the cottages of the poor the simple truths of the gospel, by the reception of which the soul is saved, and the life reformed.

and of those whom they would warn and instruct ?

Prayer and the reading of the word are the great means in the use of which the minister seeks to acquire fitness for his office. He should also give a part of each day to the reading of scripture for the good and instruction of his own soul ;* since a servant may starve while handing food to others. Prayer, also, should have much time devoted to it. A minister may, in thought, pass about his flock, and call to mind such as especially demand prayer, and offer suitable petitions. In his preparation also of subjects and matter for sermons, success may doubtless be expected according as prayer is devoted to them. It is well when addresses are prepared by him on his knees. In the same way should preparation be made of portions of the scriptures for the sick, and matter for reproof, instruction, edification, and comfort. If this were so, of how much more frequent conversions, how much more holiness, might the Lord make us the honoured instruments. Prayer for ministers should also be offered : † Jenks's "Prayer for Ministers" affords good matter for this purpose.

* A Bible with good marginal references is found useful by many. The small "Scripture Text Book," published in Dublin, may also prove a help.

† The following prayer a minister may find it profitable to offer for himself, and other ministers, of whatever denomination :

O LORD, I beseech thee, be present with thy ministering servants, and give them thy blessing : change the hearts of such as are unconverted ; build up those who are in any measure sanctified ? grant to those who are in sickness or affliction that their trials may be sanctified to the eternal good of their souls ;—to those who are in sin, repentance unto salvation never to be repented of ;—to those who have no faith, a true and saving faith in Christ, that they may be saved from the power and dominion of sin here, and from its condemnation hereafter. May we show diligence, care, and prayerfulness in

It must ever be remembered by ministers that all their strength is in God ; and that their sole reliance is to be placed in him. Their word is of no avail without the Lord, yet this does not change their duty:

“ God alone the heart can reach ;
 Yet the ministers must preach :
 'Tis their part the seed to sow,
 And 'tis His to make it grow.”

Thus their office is one by which the Lord exalts them, but in which they should humble themselves, seeing their utter insufficiency, and that the *whole praise* awarded to success *is his*, of whom alone cometh either the power or the will to labour.

And let them be reminded by some of the titles given to their office, already alluded to, of their need of love. Jesus, before he said to Peter, “Feed my lambs,. . .feed my sheep,. . .feed my sheep,” asked him, “Lovest thou me ?” The great constraining motives which a minister should continually seek for are *love to Christ, and love to souls*.

the instruction of children: give us wisdom, knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, zeal, faith, patience, temperance, self-denial, charity; boldness to rebuke vice, and to speak the truth; humility, that we may follow the example of him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Grant that we may be willing to spend and be spent in thy service;—to abase ourselves in order to exalt the Saviour;—that we may rejoice when we are called upon to suffer for Christ's sake and the gospel;—that those of us who have the privilege may give ourselves wholly to the duties of our office;—that we may seek not to preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus our Lord; and that our continual prayer and endeavour may be that we may know the truth as it is in Jesus; preach it to our people, and save ourselves and those entrusted to our care; that we may glorify thee in our bodies and in our spirits, which are thine, and go before our people in the way in which they are to follow, holding forth the word of life in our conversation, as well as in our doctrine. Grant these blessings, by the Spirit's power, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Among his flock, the minister's great duty is "to *preach the word.*" Having waited on the Lord in private, as his steward, for instruction in "things new and old," he goes forth and delivers his truth, and gives to each his portion in due season. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 *Pet.* iv. 11.) He is, "by sound doctrine," to seek to "convince the gainsayers." (*Titus* i. 9.) Again, Titus is exhorted "in doctrine to show sound speech, that cannot be condemned." (*Titus* ii. 8.) He is to preach "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;" to "keep nothing back," but "declare the whole counsel of God," the faith and life of the believer. (*Acts* xx. 20, 21, 26, 27. *Titus* ii. ; iii. 1, 2.)

Besides "uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity," and other dispositions, before named, *earnestness* is especially called for. The pious and earnest Baxter, in his most valuable work, "The Reformed Pastor," writes as follows: "If we were duly devoted to our work, it would be done more vigorously, more seriously, than it is by most of us. *How few ministers do preach with all their might, or speak about everlasting joys and everlasting torments in such a manner as may make men believe that they are in earnest.* It would make a man's heart ache to see a company of dead drowsy sinners sitting under a minister, and not hear a word that is likely to quicken or awaken them. *Alas! we speak so drowsily, and so softly, that sleepy sinners cannot hear!* The most of ministers will not so much as exert their voice, and stir up themselves to an earnest utterance. But if they do

speaking loud and earnestly, how few do answer it with weight and earnestness of matter! and yet, without this the voice doth little good. It would grieve one to the heart to hear what excellent doctrine some ministers have in hand, *while yet they let it die in their hands for want of close and lively application.* What fit matter have they for convincing sinners, and how little they make of it! What good they might do if they would set it home, and yet they can not, or will not do it! *Oh, brethren, how plainly, how closely, how earnestly, should we deliver a message of such importance as ours, when the everlasting life and everlasting death of our fellow-men is involved in it. Methinks we are in nothing so defective as in that of seriousness; yet is there nothing more unsuitable in such a business than to be slight or dull. What! speak coldly for God, and for men's salvation! Can we believe that our people must be converted or condemned, and yet speak in a drowsy tone? In the name of God, brethren, labour to awaken your own hearts before you go to the pulpit, that you may be fit to awaken the hearts of sinners!*"

And, as the apostle, he should be diligent in *private visitation*, using the same faithfulness and earnestness therein; watching and "warning every man night and day," that no one may say, No one cared for my soul. (*Acts xx. 20. See also Eph. iii. 14-21. 2 Tim. ii. 24-26; iv. 5-7. 1 Thess. iv. 17.*)

Finally, let it encourage you to consider how much time, ability, labour, yea, and life also, has been freely spent in the cause in which a minister is engaged, even by prophets, apostles, martyrs, saints of

God, yea, and by the Son of God himself. Can any higher or holier employment be chosen? Can the highest talents be better occupied? Consider, also, how great the privilege that while the duties of such as are engaged in secular employments call them more or less into the world, the minister's daily duties respect spiritual and heavenly things. Consider, moreover, how momentous is your office, how great your responsibility, and seek to follow Christ. "Bear all things for the elect's sake," so that you may be able to say, whatever trials you are called to endure, "None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself: so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

I am

Yours faithfully,
H. S.

LETTER XLVI.

DUTIES OF PERSONS IN DIFFERENT STATIONS.

THE GOSPEL ENLISTS THE SOCIAL AFFECTIONS IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST.—DISTINCTIONS EXISTING IN SOCIETY.—GRACE, THE HIGHEST DISTINCTION, BESTOWED IRRESPECTIVELY OF STATION.—LOVE, THE MOTIVE WHICH PROMPTS TO THE FULFILMENT OF RELATIVE DUTIES;—THIS MUST BE IN DEED, NOT IN WORD ONLY.—THE RELATIVE DUTIES OF FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, RICH AND POOR, &c.—SPIRITUAL, ECCLESIASTICAL, AND CIVIL UNITY;—CHARITY, THE BOND OF EACH.—DISPUTES IN POLITICAL MATTERS TO BE AVOIDED.—CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

Dear Friend,

‘The christian religion implies a cordial and practical recognition of the various claims of God upon our veneration, love, and obedience. It frequently operates most upon those of whom the world knows least; and its benign influences are chiefly to be traced in private life: they are, however, diffused over every relation and position in society. Its divine Author manifestly designed that it should be characterized, not by isolation, but communion; not by selfishness, but sympathy. It is not merely a revela-

tion of certain truths to be received, and practical rules to be observed, by persons living in a state of independence of each other. It was to be a combination of men who should be united to Christ, the Head of the body, and every one members one of another, pleasing each his neighbour for his good to edification; brethren of one holy family, building up one another in their faith. Social affection, mutual attachment, and co-operation, are natural to man; the gospel sanctifies these, and enlists them in the cause of Christ: and, in order to produce its proper effect, the gospel must be the basis of every social arrangement, the cement of every conventional union, the crown of every subordinate form of earthly government.'

In discussing the subject of this letter, I would observe that while the scriptures recognize the distinctions which exist in society, we must beware of falling in any degree into the errors of those who in their blindness attribute these things to chance, but ever bear in mind that they result from the silent operations of God's providence. "He hath made us, and not we ourselves." Our Saviour, addressing the disciples, said, "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father." In Jesus Christ there is neither rich nor poor, high nor low, but a new creature. And while the gospel requires honour and fear to be rendered to those to whom they are due, God's choicest gifts are bestowed irrespectively of such temporal distinctions as rank, wealth, authority, and influence of those in high stations. In things spiritual, grace alone distinguishes true christians as all brethren of

the same family, and enjoying the same purchased privileges. 'Great changes take place in the new man, but the greatest is the change of heart,' exhibited in christian conduct in the station in life to which the believer may be called.

1.—The principle which prompts to the fulfilment of the relative duties, I need not say, is *love*;—the mark by which the disciples of Christ are distinguished. (*John* xiii. 35. 1 *John* iv. 20, 21.)

2.—This principle must *be carried out in practice*. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," is the gospel requirement. (*Matt.* vii. 12.) The acknowledgment of the duty will not suffice. The faith of a christian, when true, produces fruit; (See *James* ii. 15-17. 1 *John* iii. 18.) and the performance of relative duties according to the gospel, and under the influence of the Spirit, is one of the plainest tests of godliness. Some err in losing sight of the interests of near relatives, in their zeal for the comfort and salvation of those at a distance: others forget the wants of all except the members of their own families, and their immediate connexions. The command, however, of Jesus to act with charity one towards another, as the Samaritan did towards the wounded Jew, reminds us that true christian catholicity of spirit leaves none outside the range of active benevolence. It is true the relative duties run into each other: it has been observed; "Classification in natural philosophy, much more in metaphysics, cannot be rigorously exact: and the various relations in which man stands to man may, in some cases, be distinguished by gradation,

rather than by lines of demarcation." They vary in nearness, as is seen by enumerating the chief of them *i. e.* that of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, governor and subject, and, in things spiritual, ministers and people; and, besides these, the less recognized ones of brothers and sisters, —friends and neighbours, —fellow-townsmen, —fellow-countrymen: nor does the bond stop here; its existence is felt and acknowledged between those who inhabit the same continent, and ceases not till it includes every fellow-creature. Mankind resembles a piece of mechanism in which a movement in one part affects that which is most remote.

3.—*The rich and great*, although they may derive satisfaction from attention paid to them in affliction by christian persons higher in station than themselves, do not, with this knowledge of human nature, consider the cheering and beneficial effects of their own visits to the dwellings of some of their neighbours who are lower in station; if they show sympathy, and give of their abundance to the supply of the wants of such as are in trouble. And, above all, if they speak to them of the way of salvation, not addressing them as lords over them, but as fellow-sinners, children of the same stock, and, if both be believers, fellow-heirs of the same inheritance,—the result of such visits will be seen in eternity; and the richer, while communicating of what they have, may often thus witness a simplicity of faith and life in their poorer neighbours, opposed to the ostentatious spirit of the world; and find themselves gainers a hundred-fold; as it is written, "He that watereth others, shall be watered also

himself." 'How greatly would it conduce to the order, harmony, and peace of society, if the men of wealth were to show real sympathy for the men of labour,—go amongst them in the spirit of him who was King of kings, and Lord of lords,—encourage and manifest christian sympathy; and by the real exhibition of their love, the impression were left on the minds of the poor visited by them, that they had those above them who take an interest in their temporal, and still more their spiritual, condition.' Many plans may be contrived by which much seasonable comfort may be administered, and many real necessities relieved, if the rich would "consider the poor." Let not a Lazarus have to wait, perhaps in vain, for the crumbs which fall from their table, but let a portion be sent him. Plans of benevolence can and ought to be adopted, which do not tempt to, or encourage, idleness, or weaken the spring of honest exertion for the purpose of gaining a maintenance.

4.—It may be here remarked, that it is well when each labours in the performance of the duties of his own station. It is the daily work of some to "labour in the word and doctrine." Well were it if such were at liberty to give themselves "continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word," and there were others whose office it should be to "serve tables." To each is assigned his peculiar duty, and beyond these, on all such as hold secular offices, the duties of christian charity devolve, according to the time, means, and opportunities with which each may be intrusted by God.

While a neighbour has a claim on our christian

sympathy and kindness, how tender should be the affection mutually felt and manifested by *brothers and sisters*. This has been alluded to before,* but I would here notice, that this relationship gives an important opportunity of spiritual usefulness. Elder children in a family are generally looked up to by the younger, and their example is followed. Let them then use their influence, and seek that, by a holy walk and pious admonitions, they may glorify God, and do good to the souls of those who are so nearly bound to them.† Personal holiness avails much in this, as in every relation in life. Let each who seeks the benefit of others, take heed unto himself.

True friends are such as seek each other's best interests, not the gaining of selfish ends. The same must be said of *good neighbours*. Christian admonition and rebuke become both: and well is it when that duty is fulfilled in meekness, faithfulness, and love. (See *Levit.* xix. 17. *Matt.* xviii. 15. *Luke* xvii. 3. *Gal.* vi. 1. *Ephes.* v. 11.) Let there be christian courtesy also, without the hollow insincerity which is too often its counterfeit.

5.—There is *spiritual* unity between the true members of Christ; *ecclesiastical* unity between members of one external communion; *civil* unity between the members of one state or kingdom. In each relation the christian has to follow the rule, "Let all your things be done with charity." This blessed principle is to breathe through his own conduct. A too fre-

* Vol. ii. pp. 283, 284.

† See Essay on the Duties of Brothers, in Mr. James's "Family Monitor."

quent cause of a breach of unity is difference of view in political matters, especially at contested elections; but scripture makes no exception with reference to such subjects, or at such times. Order is needful to be observed. The poor should consider the many free blessings they enjoy, and the many cares and trials of the rich which they commonly think not of. Also, let them consider that idleness and vice are, in many cases, the causes of poverty; and let them not envy others what has fallen to them in the way of honest industry. *And let each pray for the other.*

Finally, let me remind you that the faithful discharge of relative duties is not only enjoined by the example and precepts of our blessed Lord and his apostles, but is besides closely connected with the best interests of private families and large communities;—of the Church, and the world. What can be better calculated to draw out the energies and sympathies of the soul, to excite the fervour of zeal, or the yearnings of compassion in the heart, than to recommend the truth as it is in Jesus, embodied in living words in our own life and conduct, to those with whom we have to do in the business of every day life. Were those in the humble walks of life to recommend the truth by a faithful and diligent attention to the duties of their station; were they so to let their light shine, as the little maid in the house of Naaman, the Syrian general; and in the spirit of meekness, to act well their part in the position in which they are placed; though the honours and rewards of the world may be beyond their reach, yet they would enjoy a far richer recompense in the testi-

mony of their own consciences, and the honour that cometh from above. And were those in high stations so to use the influence they possess as to bring it to bear upon the spiritual interests of their relatives and dependants,—were they as anxious that their neighbours and friends might enjoy the privilege of an acquaintance with Christ, as Andrew, when he found his brother Simon, and communicated the joyful news that he had found the Messiah; or as the nobleman at Capernaum, the Roman centurion, or Lydia of Thyatira; would they not show, as becomes true christians, tenderness of affection, and bowels of compassion in behalf of their respective households and acquaintances? Were the usual mode of salutation of a master and his servants like that of Boaz and his reapers; were the address of friends proceeding from the abundance of their hearts, when they meet together like that of the psalmist, “O come let us magnify the Lord, let us exalt his name together;” “Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul;”* might we not expect that many who are living as strangers and foreigners, and without God, would by his blessing, be won to the cause of truth, and become fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. As Dr. Owen observes, “the best security we can possibly have that others will perform their duty in obedience is the witness of our own conscience that we have discharged our duty towards them, in seeking their good by our own trouble, and not our own advantage in their trouble.” And when we think of the con-

* Ps. lxvi. 16.

descending mercy of our God towards us,—of his patience, long-suffering, and compassion in bearing with our innumerable failings and provocations, we must surely feel that pity, mercy, pardon, and patience, not envy, malice, passion, or revenge, should influence us in our daily walk and conduct one towards another. If he who is Lord of all said to his disciples, “I am among you as he that serveth,” truly the greatest might feel it an honour to perform the meanest real service to the meanest saint; since it is neither riches nor poverty, but true humility, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is most acceptable and of highest account in the sight of God. The progressive advancement of the kingdom of grace in the hearts of men reflects the character of Him who is “kind to the unthankful and the evil.” Were this, through the mercy of God, realized, we might expect the gospel to have more free course, and diffuse its blessings, so that envy would depart from among followers of Christ, and the adversaries of the truth would be put to silence; Ephraim would not envy Judah, nor would Judah vex Ephraim. Were believers to show themselves good stewards of the manifold grace of God; were their light to shine, their faith and love towards each other to abound, God would be glorified, and would, doubtless, glorify his people.

I am

Yours faithfully,

H. S.

LETTER XLVII.

DUTY TO THE HEATHEN.

THE EFFECT OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.—THE WORK IS OF GOD.—THE CONVERSION OF THE HEATHEN, AND THE MISSION OF CHRIST FORESHOWN.—MISSIONARIES IN ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES.—RAPID SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL IN THE FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES.—CALL FOR MISSIONS TO THE MAHOMETANS:—RISE AND CONTINUANCE OF THEIR RELIGION ALLUDED TO.—THE CORRUPT STATE OF THE HEATHEN:—CALL FOR MISSIONS TO THEM.—WANT OF ZEAL AND SELF-DENIAL.—THE MISSIONARY ENCOURAGED.—THE CHRISTIAN URGED TO EXERTION.

Dear Friend,

While multitudes in the present day are idolizing secular knowledge, it is refreshing to the believer to reflect that, as regards the spread of the gospel, "many are running to and fro, and knowledge is increased;"—that knowledge which "maketh wise unto salvation." The work of Christian Missions is one, compared with which the greatest schemes and enterprises which are in the world, sink into insignificance. It is the means of building up out of the ruins of human nature a heavenly city, the stones of which are gathered out of "every kindred, and tongue, and

people, and nation." It calls into exercise christian love and zeal; and to be engaged in it with proper views, enlarges the mind, and tends to lessen religious party feeling. This insensibly operates on those who aid at home, but more still on such as labour among the heathen. If a man have love in his heart for his fellow-creatures, the minor differences among professing christians find little room for controversy, when he contemplates the souls around him ignorant of Christ: and there is often a cheering freshness of zeal and simplicity of truth in the address of a missionary visiting his native land, to stir up those at home to exertion, or to renew his strength.

The work of missions is of God. The early scriptures show that it was contemplated, and point to the divine Person who should prepare the way by his atonement. (See *Ps.* ii. 8; xxii. 27, 28; lxxii. 8-11. *Isa.* ii. 4; xi. 9; xlii. 10-12; lii. 15; lx. 3. *Dan.* ii. 44; vii. 9, 27. *Mal.* i. 11. *Luke* ii. 32. *Acts.* xiii. 47.) But this was foretold earlier in the promise made to Abraham, (*Gen.* xviii. 18) and the announcement of a Saviour made to our first parents was irrespective of the distinction between Jew and Gentile, then unknown, except to the omniscience of God.

We take a very limited view of the field of missionary labour, if we confine it to the heathen: it extends to all in every age. Noah, a "preacher of righteousness" to those who lived "while the ark was preparing," took the part of a missionary. (1 *Pet.* iii. 20. 2 *Pet.* ii. 5.) The word missionary, denoting 'one sent,' quite applies to the prophets whom God sent to warn his people, "rising up early and sending them." (*Jer.*

vii. 25; xxvi. 5.) Jonah was sent to the Ninevites to declare the judgments of God to them. (Ch. i. 1, 2; iii. 1-4.) John the Baptist was "sent from God" to prepare the way for the Lord. (*Matt.* iii. 2. *Luke* iii. 1-18. *John* iii. 25-36.) Jesus Christ was the great missionary. (*Isa.* lxi. 1. *Mark* i. 14, 15, 38. *Luke* iv. 18, 19; viii. 1. *Eph.* ii. 17.) He commissioned the apostles, whose title also denotes *persons sent*, to preach the gospel, saying, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (*John* xx. 21. See also *Matt.* xxviii. 18, 19. *Mark* xvi. 15. *Luke* ix. 2.) Other seventy were sent by him; (*Luke* x. 1-20.) and it is shown by the apostle Paul to have been the design of God that the gospel should first be preached to the Jew, and afterwards to the Gentile. (*Rom.* xi. 11-36.) The part taken by Jehovah in the work is shown in the bestowal of gifts by the Holy Ghost, in sending Paul, &c. (See *Matt.* ix. 38. *Acts* xiii. 2, 4; xiv. 27. *Rom.* i. 1. *1 Cor.* xii. 1-11. *Gal.* i. 15; ii. 9. *Ephes.* iii. 8, 9. *1 Tim.* ii. 7. *2 Tim.* i. 11.) After the ascension of Jesus, we find this work progressing; (*Acts* v. 19, 20; viii. 4, 40; ix. 15; xiii. 49; xiv. 21; xv. 6-20; xvii. 10-14; xviii. 4, 19-28; xxii. 21. *Rom.* xi. 13; xv. 19. *1 Cor.* ix. 17. *2 Cor.* x. 16. *Gal.* i. 16; ii. 7-16.) and it is stated, that 'towards the close of the second century the gospel had been preached throughout the Roman empire. Churches were established in Gaul, Lyons, and Vienna. At Carthage, the chief seat of christianity in Africa, the professors of the christian faith were so numerous in the time of Tertullian, as to form a tenth of its population: in the East, at the same

early period, christianity was planted at Edessa: and Eusebius relates, that Pantœnus went from Alexandria, about A. D. 190, to proclaim the gospel in India.'

While the preaching of the gospel is wholly, in its true sense, a missionary work, there are others besides the heathen whose state is generally acknowledged to demand attention, *i. e.* the Romanist, the Jew, and the unconverted at home. It is purposed that separate letters shall, if it please God, be devoted to each of these missions. There is, however, another very large body whose claims have of late begun to be acknowledged, *i. e.*, the followers of Mahomet; and many of the hindrances in the way of their hearing the christian missionary, are now removed.

A few remarks on the religion of Mahomet may be permitted here. 'It commenced in a dark period; and commentators on prophecy regard it as a plague sent by God to punish the church for her corruptions of the doctrines, and neglect of the precepts, of the gospel. (See *Rev. ix.*) Not only was its rise assisted by this cause, but, perhaps, still more its subsequent progress. The zeal, enthusiasm, and valour of the hardy and warlike Arabians, easily gained them the victory over the degenerate christians, and their triumphs were indeed great. Of these victories and these triumphs the propagation of the new faith was the professed object and design: by violence and bloodshed the false prophet finally established his religion among his countrymen; and thus he expressly commanded his followers to extend it over all the regions of the earth.' If any one be disposed to wonder that

this imposture should continue so long, a little reflection will lead men to see that, humanly speaking, this is only what might have been expected. Mahometanism like Popery, which was established about the same time, is suited to the propensities of human nature, and its religious and political interests are intimately blended. Of Mahomet it is observed, that "his voice invited the Arabs to freedom and victory, and to the indulgence of their darling passions in this world, and the other." Thus there was enough to allure the licentious follower, nor were there wanting attractions for the devotee. Their religious observances were chiefly four,—prayer, including purifications, &c., alms, fastings, and pilgrimages to Mecca. These rites would serve to restrain the unruly, and keep them in subjection. 'In almost all those countries which acknowledge the authority of Mahomet, so intimate is the connexion, so absolute the dependance, of the civil government on religion, that any change in the latter must necessarily and inevitably involve the ruin and overthrow of the former. The Koran is not only a religious, but also a political system: on this foundation the throne itself is erected; from hence every law of the state is derived; and by this every question of life and of property is finally decided. It is obvious, then, that in any country where Mahometanism has been once received and established, the circumstance now mentioned must have operated with uncommon weight to crush any important innovation in religion; since from this inseparable connexion between the sanctions of religion and those

of the state, every such innovation in religion would be considered in no other light than as an attempt to overturn the civil government; to loosen the bands of society; and to destroy every privilege of law and every security of property.

‘The main articles of the Mahometan faith are:

1st.—There is no god but one God.

2nd.—Mahomet was sent of God. It is held by them that he was the last of all the prophets whom God would ever send; that as the Jewish religion ceased at the coming of Messiah, so the christian at the coming of Mahomet. They own Moses and Jesus Christ to be great prophets, but hold Mahomet to be “The prophet,” who was commissioned to purge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and to restore the law of God to its original purity.’

It is obvious that this creed substitutes a man for the Christ of God, conquest for brotherhood, and the gratification of lustful passion for the spiritual life. Every one then who desires to bring his fellow-creatures to the true knowledge of Christ, who alone is able to save, must feel it to be his duty to send the gospel to the Mahometan. And while this is evident, and Christ has said, “He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day,”*—let all who bear the name of Christ, but dishonour him by taking away from his dignity, tremble when they think of their appearance before him whom God hath appointed to be the Judge of quick and dead.† Let the friends of

* John xii. 48.

+ Acts x. 42.

truth endeavour to lead such to a scriptural view of their natural depravity; the deity of Christ; the necessity and sufficiency of his atonement; and of their need of faith in him.

A view of the state of *the heathen* will also show that christians have great cause for earnest effort to declare to them the truth of the gospel. In a former letter, the gradual fall of the nations into idolatry, was alluded to.* It is asked by some, if it be not more charitable to leave the heathen in ignorance, than to send the gospel, when they might thereby incur the awful responsibility of rejecting it? But the answer is obvious: The only way of salvation revealed is through the faith of Christ; and the command of the Lord to preach the gospel to all the world, is plainly given. Others again may ask, if it be for the good of the inhabitants of distant shores to interrupt them in what they would term their primitive simplicity. Any one, however, who is acquainted with the human heart, and the value of the gospel, knows there is one only remedy for the evils to which man is subject; and that there is no true peace without the knowledge of Christ; and, even on reading the reports of voyagers, such might see that these doubts arise from ignorance of the real condition of the heathen. 'The pantheism which is inculcated by the religious books of the Brahmins confounds the Creator with the creature, and undermines the very foundations of all morality.† In some of the Islands

* Letter xxxvi. pp. 2-7.

† See an interesting work, "Protestant Missions in Bengal," illustrated, by T. S. Weitbrecht.

of the Pacific, where the beauties of nature are seen in rich variety, cannibalism and every species of cruelty is practised. In the Feejee Islands the mother is said to rub the lips of her child with a portion of the flesh in her desire to train him up to the same revolting practice. The Hindoo is found living in indolence and slavery, under the imperious priests raising themselves almost to the rank of divinities; and the maintenance of caste is well calculated to obliterate every feeling of brotherhood. Again, the Chinese, astute in worldly matters, and courteous in manners, are blind in spiritual things, with their numberless objects of worship. The North American Indians and the wild Australian tribes, in their ignorance of the true and living God, in whom "they live and move and have their being," believe in evil spirits.* Doubtless the description of the apostle to the Romans, ch. i. ver. 20-30, still holds good, and "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." For a season, the descendants of those who separated at the tower of Babel would retain such knowledge as they then possessed: but these traces were gradually lost, or nearly so; and now, perhaps, they are, after the lapse of centuries, without revelation to guide them, sunk as low as human nature may be expected to sink; and the words of Isaiah may be applied to their state, as to those of a diseased body: "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores."*

* It is difficult to estimate the population of the earth, the comparative amount of the heathen, &c. The following are calcula-

Is the christian then permitted to be languid or indifferent? May he suffer his hands to hang down, or his knees to be weak? Every true believer must see he may not; and if he might, he could not. The work of plucking brands out of the burning admits of no delay, and no selfishness. But what is the case? When the man of Macedonia appeared in a vision to Paul, and said, "Come over and help us," immediately he and those with him endeavoured to go. (*Acts* xvi. 9, 10.) What are we in England doing? If it be said, Much; it must be in comparison with the efforts of most others, not with gospel requirements. The sums given by all the Protestant churches for missions to the heathen may be, perhaps, computed at about £700,000, raised by about thirty-seven Missionary Societies of different denominations. What are the heathen doing for their God? Mr. Medhurst in his "China and the Chinese," states, that the gold and silver paper burned annually by the Chinese to their gods, exceeded *one hundred*

tions, from some writers on the subject:

	Pop.	Heathens.	Mahometans.	Jews.	Christians.	Millions.
Londerman	1000	631	160	9	200	Millions.
Weihlman	900	500	110	8	260	Ditto.
Raumer ...	650	310	110	5 to 9	228	Ditto.
Gosner	800	455	140	2 to 5	200	Ditto.

The christian population is thus divided by Gosner:

Roman Catholics,	80	Millions.
Protestants	70	Ditto.
Greek Church.....	50	Ditto.

Millions may convey an indefinite idea to most men; it may be well therefore, in order to give an idea of the probable number of the heathen needing the gospel, to say that if they were to pass by in a valley, and one were to count them at the rate of sixty in each minute, for six days in the week, and twelve hours in the day, to count 541,000,000, would occupy the space of forty years.

THE WORK ADMITS OF NO DELAY.

times that devoted to the work of Protestant Missions.*

The faithful Christian Missionary, who loves his Master and his fellows, may take cheering encouragement. The Lord whom Paul found to stand by him in trial, and strengthen him, (*2 Tim.* iv. 17.) is the same now. 'If he go to some desert land, and convert one soul, and die, that soul might convert many.' If he fail, his zeal may stimulate others.

Let us each seriously betake ourselves to the throne of grace, and confess our short-comings, in the duty of spreading the gospel of peace and salvation universally: let us acknowledge that the blood of our brethren perishing for lack of knowledge, may well cry against us from the ground, and earnestly ask for grace that we may rise to the level of our responsibilities, (*See Rom.* i. 14.) fulfil the great simple precepts of the gospel,—love our neighbour as ourselves,—deny ourselves,—take up our cross daily, and follow Christ. The importance of the work, respecting, as it does, the soul and eternity,—the honour of God,—the certainty of final success,† all urge us: let us up and be doing.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

H. S.

* An Indian Chief compares the gospel to an axe, Missionaries to the handles, and the mass of Hindoo superstition to a Banian tree; and he desired that the natives might be employed as handles.

† *Psalm* ii. 8.

LETTER XLVIII.

DUTY TO A ROMANIST.

THE BELIEVER, A DEBTOR TO ALL.—HIS DUTY TO TEACH SUCH AS BE IN ERROR.—DIFFICULT FOR PERSONS WHO HAVE RECEIVED A PERVERTED GOSPEL TO EMBRACE THE TRUTH.—INSTRUCTION TO BE GIVEN IN MEEKNESS AND LOVE.—THE NICENE CREED CONFIRMED BY SUCCEEDING COUNCILS.—THE CREED OF POPE PIUS IV., CONTAINING TWELVE ADDITIONAL ARTICLES;—SOME OF THESE CONTRASTED WITH SCRIPTURE.—CHARACTER OF ROMANISM.—THE PROTESTANTS GUARDED AGAINST POPY AND TENDENCIES TO IT.—IMPERSONATION OF THE CHURCH, A MOST DANGEROUS DOGMA.—REVISION OF THE FORMULARIES OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH CALLED FOR.

Dear Friend,

The believer is taught by the Scriptures that he owes a debt to all, the debt of love; and the best and holiest exercise of love is to bring souls to the Saviour. The apostle Paul says, "I am a debtor to the Greek and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise." And he shows his way of discharging his debt by adding, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you," &c.*

* Rom. i. 14, 15.

We are thereby put in remembrance that missionary effort does not terminate in the heathen: all who are in error and ignorance claim the care and consideration of every one whom God has in mercy brought to "salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." It is generally found that persons who have followed a perverted system are with greater difficulty led to embrace truth than those to whom the system is altogether new. This is the case with such as have received a perverted gospel; *e. g.* the Unitarian, the Romanist, and those who have a tendency to their errors. They also, who have been much exercised in studying their peculiar tenets, are more reluctant to allow themselves to be ignorant of the truth, than the simple and uneducated, who hold the same errors. Learning, when applied to a false system, tends to confirmation in error. The Brahmin is not brought to embrace the gospel as easily as the Pariah. The Pharisees rejected the truth, while the common people heard Jesus gladly. In endeavouring to show the duty to a Romanist on the part of such as know the truth; the way of Christ is to be followed. The vanity of following mere human teaching, is to be boldly denounced, and the Scriptures are to be opened to him: and this must be done as the apostle teaches us, "*in meekness,*"* "*speaking the truth in love.*"† It is most important that one should not despise, but pity him who has been held captive by this delusion, and always make a distinction between the system and one who has been

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

† Ephes. iv. 15.

educated in it; loving the soul of the Romanist, while he eschews and hates his errors.

As the creed of Pope Pius IV. is that which Roman Catholics now receive, it may be well to enumerate its several articles, that it may be seen whether such of them as are distinctly Romanist will bear the test which alone ought to satisfy a christian, *i. e.* that of Scripture.

The Nicene creed, composed by the Bishops assembled at the council of Nice, A. D. 325, having been confirmed by the second general council, held at Constantinople, A. D. 381; and again by the third general council, held at Ephesus, A. D. 431, (where it was decreed that *no one might write or compose any other form of faith;*) also, at the fourth general council, held at Chalcedon, A. D. 481, has received more confirmation than perhaps any other ecclesiastical document, and formed the creed of the Catholic Church. It will be seen, then, that any additions which might afterwards be made would be new in comparison of this older confession of faith.

It has ever been found that streams lose somewhat of their purity in passing through the corrupt channels of human nature. So it is with the gospel. The "mystery of iniquity" was already working in the apostolic age.* The form of godliness gradually was attended to, to the neglect of the spirit of the gospel. Constantine's favour tended to increase corruptions. Each age added new perversions of truth, till the success attending Luther's efforts caused the Church of Rome, in order to maintain her ground, to

* 2 Thess. ii. 7.

convene a general council at Trent, A. D. 1545, and establish the creed of Pope Pius IV, A. D. 1564, eighteen years after Luther's death. While, therefore, the former articles are old, all those which distinctly have relation to Romanism had never been embodied in a creed; though several had been previously established by general or provincial councils, as they gradually rose in the church: but others were established by this council for the first time; so that the latter twelve articles may be well called novelties compared with what are called Protestant doctrines, not only because these, (however liable to perversion when formed into creeds,) are pure, since according to the well known saying of Chillingworth, "*the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants,*"—but because this creed was not completed in Luther's days: and the question, which is easily replied to by a Protestant, a Romanist may well find it difficult to answer; viz. 'Where was your religion before Luther?'

The creed of Pope Pius IV. is as follows:

'Article I. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible,' &c.

Here follow articles very similar to the Nicene creed, twelve in number. The following are then added:

'XIII. I most firmly believe and embrace the apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, and all other observances and constitutions of the same Church.

'XIV. I do admit the Scriptures in the same sense that Holy mother Church does, whose business it is

to judge of the true sense and interpretation of them, and I will interpret them according to the unanimous consent of the fathers.

‘XV. I do profess and believe that there are seven sacraments, truly and properly so called, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all of them to every one, viz. baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony; and that they do confer grace; and that of these, baptism, confirmation, and orders, cannot be repeated without sacrilege. I also receive and admit the received and approved rites of the Catholic Church, in her solemn administration of all the aforesaid sacraments.

‘XVI. I embrace and receive every thing that hath been defined and declared by the holy council of Trent, concerning original sin and justification.

‘XVII. I do also profess, that in the mass there is offered unto God a true and proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the quick and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is a conversion made of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood; which conversion the whole Catholic Church calls *transubstantiation*.

‘XVIII. And I believe that under one kind only, whole and entire, Christ is taken and received.

‘XIX. I do firmly believe that there is a purgatory, and that the souls kept prisoners there do receive

help by the suffrage of the faithful. That the souls of the patriarchs and holy men, who departed this life before the crucifixion of Christ, were kept in a prison, in an apartment of hell, without pain. That Christ did really go into local hell, and delivered the captive souls out of this confinement. The fathers assert that our Saviour descended into hell, went thither especially, and delivered the souls of the fathers out of that mansion.

‘XX. I do believe that the saints reigning together with Christ are to be worshipped and prayed unto, and that they do offer prayers unto God for us; and that their relics are to be had in veneration.

‘XXI. I do firmly believe that the images of Christ, of the blessed Virgin the mother of God, and of other saints, ought to be had and retained, and that due honour and veneration ought to be paid unto them.

‘XXII. I do affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is very beneficial to Christian people.

‘XXIII. I do acknowledge the holy catholic and apostolic Roman Church to be the mother and mistress of all churches; and I do promise and swear true obedience to the bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, and vicar of Jesus Christ.

‘XXIV. I do undoubtedly receive and profess all other things that have been delivered and defined by the sacred canons and œcumenical councils, and especially the holy synod of Trent; and all other things contrary thereunto, and all heresies condemned, re-

jected, and anathematized by the Church, I do likewise, condemn, reject, and anathematize.'

Thus the foundation is, in part, laid on the sand of tradition; and when the human is put on a level with the divine, the natural result is that the former rises in estimation, the latter falls.

Space and time only allow of my referring you to a few texts showing the unscriptural character of the creed:

Article XIV. See 1 *Cor.* x. 15. 1 *Thess.* v. 21. 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. Notice the construction in the original, "ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς. . . ἐν οἷς. . . τινα," &c., compared with 2 *Tim.* ii. 17, 18.

XV. Dr. Doyle, in his catechism, says respecting three of the sacraments, that the time of their appointment by Christ is uncertain, whereas, according the Roman Catholic definition of it, a sacrament must be ordained by Christ.

XVII. See *Deut.* xii. 32. *Matt.* xxvi. 29. *John* vi. 63. *Acts* iii. 21. 1 *Cor.* x. 16-21; xi. 25-28. *Heb.* x. 1, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13. Notice the word, "ἐφάπαξ," (in verse 10) 'once for all, a complete, perfect sacrifice.'

XVIII. *Matt.* xxvi. 26. *Mark* xiv. 22. *Luke* xxii. 19. 1 *Cor.* xi. 23, 24.

XIX. *Rom.* v. 1, 2, 10, 11; viii. 33, 34. *Ephes.* i. 7. 1 *John* i. 7. *Rev.* v. 9; xiv. 13.

XX. The veneration of relics it is needless to refute. Witness the conduct of Hezekiah, in destroying the brazen serpent, and calling it "*Nehushtan.*"

XXI. *Ps.* cxv. 1-9. *Matt.* iv. 10. *Luke* viii. 20, 21. *John* xvi. 23. *Acts* iv. 12; x. 25, 26; xiv. 13-15. *Rev.* xix. 10; xxii. 9.

XXIII. *Dan.* vii. 25. *Matt.* xvi. 19; xviii. 18. *Acts* xv. 19, 20, 28. *Rev.* xiii. 5. *Heb.* vii. 16, 17.

In other parts of this publication some of these doctrines have been alluded to.* In a former letter also I took occasion to speak more fully on this subject.† I must refer you to other works, and beg your prayerful consideration of this—I must call it—devilish system. It bears not the test of Scripture, of history, or of sound reason, and is inconsistent with itself. The farther you look into it prayerfully, with a view to the glory of God, its abominations will be uncovered, and you will see that it usurps the prerogative of God, dishonours Christ, debases and enslaves mankind, led on by the desire of power and money, deceiving and being deceived.‡

While efforts are being made to open the scriptures to those who are deluded, and to *lead them to read them with prayer for the Spirit's teaching*, another solemn duty remains for others, viz., to avoid being deceived themselves, or aiding in deceiving others. The tendency of the natural heart to this system should ever be borne in mind, lest he who would teach others, should be himself beguiled by the subtilty of Satan, who thus deludes souls. Popery has

* Letter xv. xxvii. p. 106. xxxiii. pp. 241-247. xxxviii. xxxix. xlii. pp. 166. xlv. pp. 225-232.

† "The Age we live in, and our Peculiar Dangers." Seeleys.

‡ Rev. Hobart Seymour's "Pilgrimage to Rome," "More Mornings with the Jesuits," and "Lecture on the Novelty of the Peculiar Doctrines of the Church of Rome." Maurette's "Farewell to the Pope." Bishop Newton "on Prophecy," (especially on Daniel and Revelation.) Elliott's "Hor. Apoc." Fleming "on the Papacy." Habershon's "Dissertations on Prophecy." Meek "on the Errors of the Church of Rome." Stanford's "Hand-book to Popery."—Dublin. "Brief View of the Roman Catholic Religion."—Dublin.

a bait for each. It accommodates its external forms and its customs to all the propensities of human nature. Except a man be really rooted and grounded in Christ, and the Spirit have made him a new man, and influence his mind, tastes, and habits, he is in continual danger of being entangled more and more in the net of popery. A man must be born again. And when this change hath been wrought, let all approaches to popery be guarded against. One source of error by which very many are perplexed and misled is the following: an impersonation is given to the church, by the title of "Mother Church:" by degrees the church is made to supersede Christ; and the clergy—identifying themselves with 'the church,'—usurp the power of Christ: the orders of the church are regarded as the orders of Christ: and the idea of infallibility attaches to her. Many may be unconscious of the steps they are thus taking: and many, justly condemning Rome for proceeding on this system, are doing the same thing themselves, and retaining all the doctrinal statements, and all the rites and ceremonies of their own communion with the same reverence as if they were the very words or commands of Christ, while they may be "rendering the word void through their traditions." * Love desires the perfection of the object beloved,

* Chemnitz well states the protestant rule regarding rites and ceremonies; "Ritus qui scripturæ consentanei sunt, rectè retineri, qui vero cum scripturâ pugnant, justo judicio, et nullâ temeritate rejici et aboleri. Quod si de adiaphoris ritibus, qui cum scripturâ non pugnant quæstio est, simplex et plana est responsio: si non *proponantur cum opinione necessitatis, cultus, et meriti*, sed tantum ut ordini, decori et ædificationi serviant, et cum Christianâ libertate non pugnent, posse de illis statui prout ecclesiæ videbitur conveniri." Examen. Conc. Trid. loc. 2, s. 8.

and some of the truest friends of the Church of England are they who anxiously desire to purge out from her any of the old leaven that may still be found remaining, and especially to remove from her formularies whatever cannot be reconciled with simple scriptural truth. In making this statement, I allude particularly to the Baptismal services, and the Church Catechism, which have proved so fruitful of controversy and contention, and which contain statements that trouble many conscientious minds, and wound many tender consciences.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

H. S.

LETTER XLIX.

DUTY TO A JEW.

THE JEWISH NATION EMINENTLY DISTINGUISHED.—
 ABRAHAM CALLED.—PROMISES MADE, AND PRIVILEGES
 VOUCHSAFED TO THE ISRAELITES, AND ABUSED BY
 THEM.—PUNISHMENT FOR THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS.—
 THEIR PRESENT CONDITION.—THEIR FUTURE PROS-
 PECTS.—MODERN JUDAISM.—ABSURD LEGENDS.—CALL
 FOR EFFORTS TO BRING THE JEWS TO THE KNOWLEDGE
 OF CHRIST.—A CONVERSATION WITH A JEW, CONTAIN-
 ING SOME ARGUMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE USED.

Dear Friend,

Whether we consider the past history of the Jewish nation, their present condition, or what is revealed respecting their future prospects, it far exceeds any other in interest. If we turn to their past history, we find their ancestor, Abraham, eminently distinguished by the favour of God, called to go out from his "own country, and his kindred, and his father's house, unto a land which the Lord should show him;" and the promise was made to him, the fulfilment of which extends to every age: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

(*Gen.* xii. 1-3. *Acts* vii. 3.) This promise was renewed. (*Gen.* xiii. 14-17, xv. 18, xvii. 6-8.) Promises were also made to Isaac, (*Gen.* xxvi 2-5, 24) and to Jacob, (xxviii. 12-15,) also to their descendants. (*Exo.* vi. 7-8; xix. 5-6. *Deut.* xxvi. 18-19.) The Israelites are the people of God, (*Duet.* xxxii. 9; *2 Sam.* vii. 24.) separated and distinct from other nations, (*Exod.* xix. 4-6; xxxiii. 16. *Num.* xxiii. 9.) the objects of God's choice, (*Deut.* vii. 6.) care, (*Deut.* vii. 8.) and protection; (*Ps.* cv. 15. *Zech.* ii. 8.) and with them God established a covenant. (*Gen.* xvii. 6-8. *Exod.* vi. 4; xxiv. 6-8: xxxiv. 27.) The Apostle enumerates their peculiar privileges: "To them pertained the adoption," (*Exod.* iv. 22. *Deut.* xiv. 1. *Jer.* xxxi. 9) "and the glory," (*1 Sam.* iv. 21. *1 Kings*, viii. 11. *Ps.* lxxviii. 61.) "and the covenants," (*Acts* iii. 25; *Heb.* viii. 8-10.) "and the giving of the law," (*Ps.* cxlvii. 19.) "and the service of God;" (*Heb.* ix. 1.) "and the promises," (*Acts* xiii. 32. *Rom.* iii. 2. *Ephes.* ii. 12.) "whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." (*Jer.* xxiii. 6. *Is.* ix. 6. *John* i. 1; xx. 28. *Acts* xx. 28. *Rom.* ix. 4-5. *Col.* i. 15-19. *1 Tim.* iii. 16. *Titus* ii. 13. *Heb.* i. 8. *1 John* v. 20.) The same apostle in another place puts one of their privileges prominently forward, viz: "that unto them were committed the oracles of God," (*Rom.* iii. 1-2. See also, *Ps.* lxxvii. 1-2.) Notwithstanding, however, the promises of God to them, and his threatenings, they kept not his covenant. In their prosperity they forgot God their Saviour. They rejected him as their King: they worshipped other gods, even

the idols of the nations among whom they dwelt, and evil entreated the prophets whom he sent to warn them. For their iniquities the Lord delivered them into the hands of their enemies, (*Ps.* lxxviii. 56-65,) and though they were humbled, it was only for a season. Their temple was at length destroyed, and for seventy years they were in captivity at Babylon, till B. C. 536. From this period they appear to have forsaken and abhorred idolatry, on account of which they had suffered so much. But the time was yet future, when the prophecies which spake of rest were to receive their accomplishment. Their temple, and the walls of their city were built in troublous times. Afterwards they suffered from the Samaritan division, B. C. 332, the trials they endured under the successors of Alexander the Great, especially Antiochus Epiphanes, B. C. 175 to B. C. 163, and from intestine feuds. Nor did their trials cease when the Romans gained power. The time soon after was fulfilled when Christ should appear. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not:" while a remnant believed, as a nation they rejected him. At his death the types respecting the Messiah were fulfilled by their antitype. The rending of the veil showed that the Jewish ceremonial was at an end; and the destruction of the temple followed. The denunciations of God's wrath against them have since been receiving their accomplishment. They have been scattered among the nations. (*Deut.* xxviii. 64. *Ezek.* vi. 8; xxxvi. 19.) despised by them; (*Ezek.* xxxvi. 3.) their country trodden under foot by the gentiles, (*Deut.* xxviii. 49-52. *Luke* xxi. 24.) their house left desolate, (*Matt.* xxiii.

38.) and themselves deprived of civil and religious privileges ; (*Hosea* iii. 4.) and the fulfilment of prophecies respecting them, especially those relating to their dispersion among the nations, and their preservation as a distinct race, afford a continual evidence of the truth of the inspired writings.

Gentile nations, however, are not permitted to suppose that God hath "cast off his people which he foreknew:" (*Rom.* xi. 1.) they are yet "beloved for the fathers' sakes." (*Rom.* xi. 28.) There are many promises respecting them, some of which may have received a "springing and germinant fulfilment," but of which we are led yet to expect a full accomplishment ; such as those respecting the pouring out of the Spirit upon them, (*Ezek.* xxxix. 29. *Zech.* xii. 10.) the removal of their blindness ; (*Rom.* xi. 25. *2 Cor.* iii. 14-16.) their return and search after God, (*Hosea* iii. 5.) humiliation for the rejection of Christ ; (*Zech.* xii. 10.) pardon of sin ; (*Is.* xlv. 22. *Rom.* xi. 27.) salvation ; (*Is.* lix. 20. comp. with *Rom.* xi. 26.) sanctification ; (*Ezek.* xxxvi. 25) joy occasioned by their conversion ; (*Is.* lxvi. 10.) restoration to their own land ; (*Is.* xi. 15, 16 ; xiv. 1-3 ; xxvii. 12, 13. *Jer.* xvi. 14, 15. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 24 ; xxxvii. 21, 25. xxxix. 25, 28. *Luke* xxi. 24.) gentiles assisting in their restoration ; *Is.* xlix. 22-23 ; lx. 10-14 ; lxi. 4-6.) submission of the gentiles to them ; (*Is.* lx. 11, 12, 14.) their future glory ; (*Is.* lxii. 3-4 ; *Zech.* ii. 5.) their prosperity ; (*Is.* lx. 6, 7, 9, 17 ; lxi. 4-6. *Hos.* xiv. 5, 6.) and the appearing of the Lord among them ; (*Zech.* xiv. 4.) to dwell in Zion (*Ezek.* xliii. 7, 9. *Zech.* ii. 11.) and reign over them.

(*Ezek.* xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24, 25.) Their conversion also is illustrated. (*Ezek.* xxxvii. 1-14. *Rom.* xi. 24.)*

II. The sin of Israel as a nation, though changed, is continued: idolatry was their prevailing sin; it has been succeeded by their rendering void the word of God through their traditions. 'There are three classes of Jews, as there were when Christ appeared amongst them: † (1) The Traditionists, called Rabbins, or Talmudists, who place the Talmud, (containing the Mishna, which they profess to have been delivered orally by God to Moses, and handed down through others till it was written, and the Gemara, or comment upon it,) on a level with the written law of Moses, and, in effect, far above it. ‡ These resemble the Pharisees, (*Matt.* xv. 3-6.) and much of the attention of the Rabbis is paid, I have been told, to trifling purifications, as of old. (*Matt.* xxiii. 13-26.) (2) The Liberals, or Free-thinkers, who would receive or reject truths of scripture as suited their views. These may be compared to the Sadducees. (3) The Scripturists, who reject tradition, and receive the written word only as authority. These are the Karaites, and bear a resemblance to the Essenes, who lived retired, and were remarkable for purity of life. They are despised by the other Jews, most probably on account of their attachment to the scriptures; and it is a Jewish saying, "If a Karaite Jew fall into a pit, let no one put down a ladder to him, to get him out."

* See Scripture Text Book. Dublin.

† It has been observed that there is a distinction of a similar kind among professing christians.

‡ This may be seen by the saying that "the Scriptures are like water, the Mishna like wine, and their Gemara like spiced wine."

The Talmud and the Jewish Prayer Book serve at once to evince and perpetuate the tendencies of the Jewish mind in the apostolic days, when Paul gave the admonition; "Neither give heed to Jewish fables." (*Titus* i. 14. See also 1 *Tim.* 1-4; iv. 7.)*

III. But while some may not profess Christ from motives which influenced those in the time of Christ, (*John* vii. 13; ix. 22; xii. 42, 43.) there are those who remain in error because they are not better instructed; and who, if the gospel were declared to them in meekness and love, might be like those in the days of Christ, of whom we read, that "the common people heard him gladly." The inquiry then arises, In what way should a Christian seek to convert a Jew? A knowledge of the Talmud and Jewish Prayer Book may doubtless serve to expose their errors, but a deeper work is needed; the head has not only to be convinced; the *name* of christian will not save; the heart must be converted. What then was the plan adopted by Christ and his apostles? While the vanity of a mere outward service was exposed, and woe was denounced against the Scribes and Pharisees who rejected Christ, the word of God was the great in-

* Among their absurd legends are the two following: "The bird, *Bar Juchne*, when its wings are extended, causes an eclipse of the sun." Some further remarks about this bird are too extravagant and nonsensical to be quoted, and would barely find a place in mere books of fiction. What may be expected to be the state of religion of such as have them contained in their received theological writings? Again, "Rabbi Bar Bar Channah, meeting with a fish on whose back sand gathers and rushes grow, got upon it, lighted a fire, and began to cook some food: the fish, feeling the heat, turned round; and they would have been drowned had not their vessel been near at hand." It is only from a desire that the hindrances in the way of the Jew may be better known, and efforts in their behalf increased, that these legends are alluded to.

strument used : they preached the gospel, and “showed *from the scriptures* that Jesus was Christ.” (See *Matt.* xi. 2-6, 21, 28 ; xxiii. 3-39. *Luke* iv. 16-22 ; xxiv. 25-27, 44, 45. *John* vii. 36-42. *Acts* i. 16 ; viii. 21-39 ; xviii. 24-28. *Rom.* i. 2 ; iv. 3 ; ix. 17 ; xi. 2 ; xiv. 4.) Every form of error has its antidote in “the word of God,” which is “the sword of the Spirit.” (See *Ps.* cxix. 130. *Matt.* xxii. 29. *Eph.* vi. 17.) Here, then, we have the example of Jesus and of inspired apostles directing us, when we would endeavour to bring a Jew to Christ, to use the scriptures. As Jesus, moreover, explained to the two disciples going to Emmaus, of “the things which were written in Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him ;” and in the next verse we read, “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures ;” so, one arguing with the Jew should *pray to the Lord, and look to him to convince and convert.* The great qualification for a teacher of others is that he be a child of God : that he know the human heart, from knowing his own, and the suitableness of God’s way of salvation as revealed in the Scripture, from personal experience of its power. This should be borne in mind in selecting ministers and scripture readers. A converted Jew may be more willingly listened to by a Jew, as a sincere convert from Romanism is by Romanists ; meanwhile there is no room for delay.

IV. A conversation suggested to me in part by a convert from Judaism may furnish hints for reasoning with a Jew.

Christian. Do you believe that Messiah is come,

or do you wait for him? *Jew.* I wait for him. *C.* How can you wait longer when it is written: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be?" (*Gen.* xlix. 10.) You acknowledge that by Shiloh is meant Messiah. Where is your king? Where your lawgiver? What is your opinion of *Isaiah* vii. 14? of *Isaiah* ix. 6, 7? of *Dan.* ix. 14-17? (other texts are in p. 277. ll. 22-25, and vol. 1. p. 76-78.) What atonement have you for your sins? *J.* 'The day of atonement; repentance; fastings, &c.' *C.* How do you reconcile this with *Levit.* xvii. 11? *J.* We expect Messiah's reign to be glorious. *C.* So it shall be, but your prophets shew that Christ should 'suffer,' and then 'enter into his glory.' How do you explain *Isa.* liii. 5, 8, 11, 12. *Zech.* xiii. 7? *J.* We are still in captivity. *C.* This was predicted; (*Deut.* xxviii. 64.) but the time of Israel's deliverance shall come. (*Jer.* xxiii. 5-8. *2 Cor.* iii. 13-17.) *J.* You change the covenant and the priesthood. *C.* Both changes were foreshown. (*Jer.* xxxi. 31-34. *Gen.* xiv. 18, and *Ps.* cx. 4, comp. with *Heb.* v. 6; vi. 20 to x. 34.) *J.* The warning in *Deut.* xiii. 1, 5, justifies us in rejecting Christ. *C.* 'A sign or a wonder' which God might permit to be wrought to deceive a people prone to idolatry, is not to be likened to the many and great miracles of Christ,—the very miracles which it was foretold the Messiah should work. (*Isa.* xxix. 18, 19; xxxv. 4-6; xlii. 7; comp. with *Matt.* xi. 2-6. *John* ix. 6, 7.) Again, idolatry is forbidden by Christ: (*Matt.* iv. 10.) in the scriptures a plurality

of Persons in the Godhead is set forth, (See texts in vol. 1, pp. 71-74, also *Ps. cx. i.*) and there is no idolatry in worshipping Christ who is one with God; (*Isa. ix. 6, 7.*) *J.* You have objects of worship in your churches. *C.* You will not find these where the pure gospel is upheld. '*J.* We regard the Scribes and Pharisees, who rejected Christ, as good men, and conclude that they had good reasons for doing so. *C.* On this ground how can you maintain the truth of the prophets? See also *Jer. xxvi. 11.* *J.* The Sanhedrim would not have crucified Jesus, had he been true. *C.* You must first prove the authority of this council. You cannot show from *Exod. xxiv. 1,* and *Numb. xi. 16,* that the appointment of the Seventy (of which scripture gives no trace from Moses' time to that of the Maccabees) was designed to be permanent, supreme, and preserved from error, or that the council which condemned Jesus Christ was not an unlawful assembly. The foundation, therefore, of your argument is removed.* Oh, seek to understand the truth; make it your constant and earnest prayer,—O Lord God, teach me if Jesus be the Messiah.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper, that love thee.” (*Ps. cxxii. 6.*)

I am,

Yours faithfully,

H. S.

* See for this and some other remarks, Dr. McCaul's "Old Paths," and Allen's "Modern Judaism."

LETTER L.

DUTY TO THE UNCONVERTED AT HOME.

PRESENT STATE OF SOCIETY.—THE EARTH AND NATIONS FLOURISH AND DECAY.—THE GLORY OF GOD TO BE SOUGHT.—HOME DISCIPLINE DEFECTIVE.—DANGER OF NEGLECT OF CLOSET DUTIES AMID CALLS FOR ACTIVE RELIGIOUS EXERTION.—PREVAILING COVETOUSNESS AND COMPETITION.—LOWER CLASSES, STATE OF.—INFIDELITY.—STATE OF CHILDREN AND OLDER BOYS.—CHEAP IMMORAL PUBLICATIONS, EXTENSIVE CIRCULATION OF.—CRUEL AND IMMORAL CONDUCT OF ENGLISHMEN IN DISTANT LANDS.—ITS EFFECT.—THE REMEDY FOR EXISTING EVILS.—ITS APPLICATION—EARNESTNESS DEMANDED.

Dear Friend,

The state of society demands the serious consideration of every reflecting mind. It presents a fearful amount of evil, and also, thanks be to God, much self-denying endeavour to glorify God, and advance the best interests of mankind. From time to time it assumes a new aspect. The earth we inhabit, and each particular nation and individual, give evidence of their transitory character. The existence of nations, like that of plants, is often suddenly brought to a close; but at the best, their history is, that they appear, thrive, flower, and decay: this earth itself gives much ground indeed for the expectation that

the present is its flowering time. Modern discoveries by human ingenuity and skill, and the disclosure of the earth's riches, may well draw the minds of many to this conclusion. A nation's time of flower is when it excels in the production of arts and sciences, and when luxury prevails: this precedes a fall. It was so with Greece and Rome. Is England to be an exception from the rule? The maturity of individuals in like manner is followed by decay. Well is it when the history of a nation or individual is marked by righteousness and zeal for the glory of God; such records remain to bless and guide succeeding generations.

Among the evils that mark the present age, one is the neglect of the exercise of salutary discipline at home, by parents and masters. How much depends on home! Hence are taken the scions to be planted throughout our land; on the throne, in the houses of parliament, in our mansions and cottages; also in the church, our army and navy, our law courts, our schools of medicine, our various departments of commerce and literature, our factories and workshops.

Again, the present state of society is not favourable to closet religion, meditation, prayer, and reading the scriptures. The danger of neglect of these essential duties has to be carefully guarded against, lest outward duties take from the care of the inner man,—the life of God in the soul. The "renewal of the Spirit day by day," must be sought, and the practical realization of the apostle's state: "The life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (*Gal.* ii. 20.)

The calls for benevolent exertion at home and abroad are many and loud: there is more activity, bustle, and excitement, as well in prosecuting plans of spiritual usefulness, as, in advancing secular interests. Since the apostles' days, there was never so much missionary effort. There is also great cause for thankfulness that the endeavour has been made to merge many differences, to meet in love, and to combine in works of charity. On the other hand, *covetousness* and *worldliness* notoriously mark the present age. Speculation abounds. Ingenuity is taxed to the utmost to increase wealth. Accelerated speed seems to be deemed necessary in every department. In trade each is seeking to outvie and outstrip his fellows. Some watching the share-market, aim at making a bound to wealth. Charity gives way before the efforts of competition: men are striving for this world's goods as earnestly as if their happiness in the world to come depended upon, or at least was connected with, their secular success in this, and what numbers may be "drowned in destruction and perdition!" (1 *Tim.* vi. 6-10.)

If the state of the lower classes be considered, and it be borne in mind that this land, when compared with many others, is peculiarly favoured with opportunities of imparting religious knowledge in its purity, a painful scene presents itself. It is a lamentable fact that 'amongst the men who are ministering to the convenience and luxury of others in mechanical employments, some of which require great skill, and others power, multitudes have renounced or are renouncing faith in Christianity, regarding it as a forgery, and religion as priestcraft.' How earnestly should each

ask, Is a part of this guilt springing from my own neglect of duty? In parts of our crowded cities what numbers are growing up, who, in many cases for want of instruction, are unconscious of the responsibilities of their position or their dependance upon God. The sinful state of the young calls for exertion on the part of believers.* It may well cause no surprise that when they have lived a few years longer in vice and neglect of God, and arrived at the age of sixteen or seventeen, they should cast off any restraints to which they may have unwillingly submitted, and become the leaders in rebellion and insurrection.

Another fruitful source of evil is the Press, when in the hands of evil agents. Much alas! is printed, the avowed object of which is to inflame the passions, and instigate men to disrespect and set at naught such as are in authority: in other publications this is done insidiously; and these, whether penny periodicals or larger books of fiction, are often the more dangerous.†

The issue of books of an immoral and injurious tendency is greater than many may imagine,‡—books of the Jack Sheppard class, in which deeds of rapine and bloodshed raise men into the heroes, and purity and holiness are not the graces which mark the heroines. It was calculated that in one year upwards of

* It is stated that in one year the committals to prison in our land, were 1,300,000, and one quarter of those committed were under twelve years of age; which, allowing that many may have been committed more than once, gives a fearful proof of the amount of youthful transgression.

† The remarks on this subject in a small volume, "The Vices," by Rev. H. Beecher, are very valuable.

‡ Statements on this subject are contained in "The perilous nature of the Penny Periodical Press," by Charles Knight, Fleet Street.

28,000,000 of immoral publications went forth from the press, exceeding the total issue of five of the principal Bible and Religious Tract Societies, and some seventy religious periodicals. Besides and beyond these are the French novels and immodest French prints, which once might be obtained only by stealth, but now are openly exposed: these are poisonous influences which operate unseen. An injurious book may be met with and perused in secret, and its contaminating sentiments pollute and influence the mind. The parent, the instructor, must sow the seed of truth early, and preoccupy the mind therewith. Telling is not sufficient, there must be precept upon precept. Let the dangers that are in the world be gradually unfolded. Well is it when the seed is sown in tears of affectionate earnest consciousness of the guilt and consequences of transgression against God. Above all, let this duty, and every act of it, be begun, continued, and ended in prayer. "For how can man cut down a pestilence?" God only can. If youth, under such circumstances, be left to itself, a parent desiring to admonish his child, may find his mind a nest of young and nimble vipers.

Again, the extent to which *Sabbath breaking* and *drunkenness* are carried, demands the serious consideration of all who love God, and would lead men from sin to holiness, and from the power of Satan unto God. These have been before alluded to. I will add that the number of public-houses and beerhouses has been calculated to be 90,000, in our land, and may now be greater;* and present temptation to early

* Statements on this subject, are contained in "the perilous nature of the Penny Periodical Press," by Mr. Charles Knight, Fleet-street.

depravity, misery in families, obscenity and vice.

Nor do the consequences of crime terminate in the transgressor, nor in the country in which he lives: what affects us affects our Colonies: and, must it not be added, more or less, the world? Every one who goes forth to another country bears with him either the habits and the notions of the infidel, to poison and defile his fellow-creatures, or the life and faith of Christ to advance the gospel. How well calculated is it to unnerve christian energy, while it should only stimulate it afresh, to hear of the acts of debauchery and murder committed by the crews of our vessels! Again, what so injurious to the gospel, as to send forth unprincipled men, visiting not for fair and honest traffic, but to rob the ignorant; and,—more godless than the heathen, and deserving to be classed with them or to be degraded lower,—driving them from their territories, and, without remorse, exterminating those of the same race with themselves. Who that reflects for a moment, can wonder that the painful tidings should occasionally reach us, of native chiefs visiting such crimes on the missionaries and teachers of the gospel, resembling as they do in colour and language those who have landed on their shores only to rob and defile them; and that they should desire to free themselves of whatever bears the christian name.* O, England! who so savage as thy bold and freeborn sons, whom thou sufferest to grow up uninstructed in

* The anecdote is a painful one of a native North American Indian Chief, who, when a missionary would have preached the gospel in his land, on consulting with his tribe, decided upon rejecting the religion of the white man, on account of the injuries received from the white man.

the truth of the gospel at home, and sendest forth in swarms to pollute those in distant lands !

Looking, then, at the diseased state in which we are lying, is the question of the prophet asked? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" Thanks be to God, there is a remedy,—all-efficacious: *i. e.* the Gospel of the blessed God. There is a Physician. How earnestly, then, should the mind be exercised to discover, and the energy put forth to carry out, plans for applying this remedy to the multitudes that are perishing in their sins.

It has been remarked that the spontaneous effort to provide for spiritual wants is far less than the interest we have in the matter. It is not so with what is needed to supply our physical wants, as food and raiment. The sense of hunger is equal to the need of bread; and no enactment is required to insure a sufficient quantity of bakers. The case is different when the appetite is less than the need; how much more so when if the supply of food be diminished, the desire for it is lessened! So it is found with the aliment for the soul, though the reverse be the case with regard to aliment for the body. Either the gospel has to be sent forth to supply the spiritual wants of the masses, or we must wait till their desire for the gospel be awakened. The only true way is the former: nature does not go out in quest of christianity; but christianity has to knock at the door of nature. It must be aggressive: and measures should be adopted and carried out for offering the blessings of

christianity to all. It was so in the beginning of the spread of the gospel : it is so now with missionary effort : it must be so with effort at home, or we should be adopting different measures from those which the gospel points out to us. (See *Luke* xiv. 23.) Where faithful ministers of religion are multiplied, vice and infidelity, by the grace of God, give way. There are also other appliances. Lay helpers, district visitors, scripture readers, may go forth among them ; visit their houses ; read the word of God ; tell them of their peril through sin, and unfold to them the unsearchable riches of Christ.* Open-air preaching reaches some whom vice or poverty or other causes keep from public worship. Ministers have Christ for their example. (*Matt.* v. 1, &c.)

Many errors respecting the duty of christian aggressive effort arise from the thought that virtue is utility, and that virtues and vices pass into each other by insensible gradations. Hence Popery is maintained : but such efforts should be met. Among the Societies to be encouraged for remedying the evils in question are the Bible Society, Society for Irish Church Missions, City Mission, Society for the Suppression of Vice, &c. May our selfishness and indifference be cast off and overcome !

* Lord Shaftesbury, in whose labours every lover of mankind must rejoice, in an address on the subject of the "Ragged Church Union," recommended a different style of preaching for the purpose here alluded to. Many, he remarked, abstain from attending places of public worship for reasons which they are not, perhaps, able to define. The old doctrine, he said, should of course be preached, but in a new style, less tedious and lecture-like than the ordinary sermons, more after the model of teaching adopted among the early christians.

I would, in conclusion, urge the following considerations.

(1.) While efforts are made to convert the heathen abroad, let the responsibility of our own people, born in a christian land, awaken earnestness for their conversion.

(2.) There is an inferior motive which might be expected to urge some to exertion. The ministry of the gospel is not only a more gracious, but also a less expensive machinery, than the cumbrous one of police, prisons, and places for convicts. It is said that if the evils now existing be not met, the mass of the poor and degraded may soon form half of our population, and raise its brawny arm against those in authority, and display the desolating might of its rude violence and energy.

(3.) The gospel of Christ can alone overcome the alienation of the spirit, and bring salvation.

(4.) The elements of good and evil appear to be retreating into their separate spheres, as preparing for a mighty encounter. Romanism is earnest in her aggressive measures, with her places of worship, her convents, friars, and sisters of mercy. Infidelity and a spirit of lawlessness are unceasingly at work. Let us attend to the call, "Who is on the Lord's side?" and "come forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Let us send the gospel; "sow beside all waters;" "be instant in season and out of season."

I am

Yours faithfully,

H. S.

LETTER LI.

ON THE USE OF TALENTS.

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DUE IMPROVEMENT OF HIS TALENTS.—IMPORTANT INQUIRY.—MAN A STEWARD FOR GOD, NOT A PROPRIETOR.—A TENTH GIVEN BY ABRAHAM, JACOB, AND THE ISRAELITES.—DEMAND FOR EFFORT GREATER NOW.—PARABLE OF THE TALENTS ;—OF THE TEN PIECES OF MONEY.—AMOUNT AND VALUE OF TALENTS VARYING ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD.—TALENTS TO BE USED FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT ;—GROWTH IN LIKENESS TO GOD, IN HIS PERFECTIONS, JUSTICE, ETC.—TALENT OF SECULAR KNOWLEDGE TO BE SANCTIFIED.—PRAYER, AND READING THE SCRIPTURES.—THE TALENT OF GRACE ;—JOY ;—AFFLICTION ;—MEMORY, AND INGENUITY.—ANECDOTE OF DR. CÆSAR MALAN.

Dear Friend,

Man is dependent upon God : in Him he lives, and moves, and has his being. He is, however, gifted by God with various talents, by the possession of which, while he may enjoy privileges, he incurs responsibilities ; since a day is coming when he shall render an account of the use he shall have made of them. It must, then, be acknowledged to be of the greatest moment that he should acquire a knowledge of the way in which he ought to occupy his talents. The

questions, What shall I do to be saved? How shall I best serve God? How can I use my talents so as most effectually to do good in my generation? should be put to himself with the solemnity and consideration which their importance demands: and, as his duty is made known, he should set himself to practice it habitually, while life and power remain.

Scripture shows man that he is not holding the place of a proprietor, but of a steward. He has sold himself to Satan; Christ has redeemed him with a price; and the believer is thus addressed in the gospel; "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's."* Again, the apostle Paul writes, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." †

The believer, then, and all he has and is are the property of God. A question may arise, Is there any fixed proportion of a person's property which he is required to render to God? Certainly there has been no abrogation of the right to devote a tenth to the Lord. ‡ It cannot be said that this had its origin in the time of Moses: the way in which the giving of the tenth of the spoil to Melchisedec by Abraham is named; § and the vow of Jacob, || would seem to indicate that men had some intimation that this was a right proportion. At the least, the christian must acknowledge that while property remains, as before,

* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

+ Rom. xii. 1, &c.

‡ Levit. xxvii. 32. Numb. xviii. 21.

§ Gen. xiv. 20.

|| Gen. xxviii. 22.

the gift of the Lord, and is still intrusted to him with the command, "Occupy till I come," his obligation to "honour the Lord with his substance, and with the first-fruits of all his increase," is greater than that of the Jew;* and that the calls for money to aid the works of God are greatly increased in the present day, when missionary effort is added to that of evangelization at home, and the "field" for exertion is literally the "world." If deliverance from Egypt gave the Lord an additional claim to what the Jew possessed; how much more strongly is the claim on christians founded on deliverance from sin through Christ: and if the Egyptians felt that Joseph had a perfectly just claim on their services, and on a fifth of their increase for the king, their lives being preserved from famine;† assuredly the christian will see that had the Lord required a fifth of his increase, he would be just, and the remainder would be only a gift, for that he has nothing which he has not received.

In the parable of the talents, our blessed Lord represents his disciples as servants, whose master intrusts them with a portion of his property, which they are required to improve during his absence; one has five talents, another has two, and another one. The duty of improving them, and the way in which the servants are severally received by their master, when called, on his return, to give account of their stewardship, are plainly recorded. We are, moreover, clearly informed that men shall receive

* Prov. iii. 9, 10. Exod. xxii. 29; xxiii. 19; xxxiv. 26. Deut. xxvi. 2, &c. Mal. iii, 10, &c. + Gen. xlvii. 13-26.

according as their work shall be : and yet, in the present day, many 'do not so much require to be instructed in moral truth, as in religious obligation. They are no strangers to the broad distinction between right and wrong, holiness and ungodliness ; they commonly acknowledge them in words, while they practically confound them.' Multitudes seem to assign no meaning to the parables of the talents and of the ten pounds, or else to think they have no application to themselves. But man's indifference or misconception by no means exonerates him from his responsibility, nor does it in the least nullify the divine law. By the one parable we are reminded that the Lord, in his infinite wisdom and justice, gives his servants according to their several ability ; that he knows the exact amount intrusted to each ; and that his approbation is not vouchsafed according to the amount of fruit produced by their labour, but according to their improvement of their talents. The servant who, having received two talents, gained other two, is addressed in the same words of approbation with him who, having five, gained other five. By the other parable, the diligent labourer is encouraged by the mention made of the greater degree of honour which was conferred on the servant whose pound had gained ten pounds. To him it was said, "Have thou authority over ten cities ;" while to another, whose pound had gained five pounds, it was said, "Have thou authority over five cities." The unprofitable servant, in either case, had the talent taken from him ; and in the former parable an awful sentence is pronounced ; "Cast ye the unprofitable

servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." *

In enumerating the talents which are intrusted to us, we may notice, 1st, *those which we have to use for our personal improvement.* We have to seek continually to advance in holiness and likeness to God, setting before us such of his perfections as are imitable by his creatures, and seeking the Spirit's power. Truth and faithfulness, justice and mercy, mark his character, and we have to acquire and reflect these graces. We are not to imitate men in their dealings, but study the scriptures, and learn from them how we should act. Justice in dealing is so rare as to require especial remark. The anecdote of the honest gardeners' boy, who showed the bruised side of a melon to one who asked the price of it, may serve to remind us that when we buy or sell we should deal with another as we would that he should deal with us; never evading enquiries, but being forward in stating defects in what we sell, as truly as we would another should do to us in what we purchase. One who buys and sells should act as in the sight of God, knowing that, let the customs of the world be what they may, he is called upon to preserve a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man in trafficking, as carefully as in his ordinary conversation. Trade is an honourable pursuit when just and moderate gains are only desired, and when to get an honest living, and devote as much as possible to God, is the aim and practice; but when embellishment is aimed at, exciting the envy of others, and the rule, "look not every

* Matt. xxv. 14-30. Luke xix. 12-27.

man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," is forgotten duty to God and our neighbour are lost sight of in the eager desire to promote self-interest, and every stage of advancement becomes a curse instead of a blessing.

(2.) I might dwell, had I space, on other graces, and show that truth, faithfulness and mercy, every grace, ought to breathe through the christian's daily conduct: but I must proceed to make a few remarks upon the use of means of advancement *in secular knowledge*. In this case, as in the former, when self-interest is the motive, the desire of knowledge is idolatrous, and no blessing can be expected. The Lord is a jealous God, and demands of his creatures that his glory should be the end of their every pursuit. From the earliest dawn of reason to the end of life, every endeavour to improve our faculties should have this as its object. This sanctifies them. Thus sanctified the due improvement of opportunities of acquiring knowledge suited to our station is safe, and conducive to the glory of God: except it be thus sanctified, it may only feed the pride that is natural to us, and become also a curse to us. Were there no higher attainment, none which must of necessity be acquired, there might be some reason for the effort made to give as high a grade of education as possible. to the lower classes, but for those who take the scripture for their guide, and who compare what is said about worldly and heavenly wisdom with what is said about the knowledge of God, of Christ, and of our own state, secular knowledge assumes its proper subordinate place. Do those who, with good inten-

tions, are seeking to raise men above their proper sphere in intellectual attainments, sufficiently consider that they are placing them in a situation in which "not many are called,"* neither is their present happiness increased: a desire for a higher situation than that in which God has placed them is naturally excited; and this engenders discontent. Men lose sight of what are to be considered real attainments, viz: christian knowledge and dispositions, and count those as having no knowledge who may possess these except they be learned in the wisdom of this world. The apostle, who counted all his advantages as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, names one lesson which he had learned, "I have learned," he said, "in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound," &c.† This is a lesson which fits for this life, and for that which is to come. The cry now is, that, 'head, heart, and hand, must all be educated.' Let them be, but let the glory of God be really the end, and moderation the measure; and let the future good of man be consulted before his temporal interest. If equal care be bestowed on each, that which is seen to promote present interest will naturally take the lead; the head will be diligently instructed; the hand will be guided by skill; and the school of design will produce works which gratify the taste. What is wonderful and surprising in science, and beautiful and attractive in art may abound, but the heart, the education of which produces results of a different character, of infinitely

* 1 Cor. 1. 26. † Phil. 4. 12.

greater, because of abiding value, requiring a higher aid than that of man's natural endowments, may assuredly be expected to receive less and less attention.

(3.) Among the talents, also, which man has especially to use, ever remembering his accountability for their due improvement, the means of grace demand especial mention. He is exhorted to repent and believe the gospel; to pray for the Spirit, relying on the promise of his aid; and when he feels the work of the Spirit in his heart, his continual endeavour should be to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." His great necessity is the favour of God and eternal life: his aim, to glorify God: his way, Christ, who "is made unto him wisdom, righteousness and sanctification, and redemption;"* his strength, the grace of God. I will not dwell now on the great essential duties of prayer and the study of God's Word, having already done so: I would however remark here, respecting prayer, that its fruits are great indeed, and liberally vouchsafed. Dr. Gutzlaff, who was twenty years or more in China, speaks of persons coming from distant provinces and placing themselves under the missionaries for instruction, whose coming they could not ascribe to any human instrumentality, but to the answer of God to their supplications at their frequent prayer-meetings: and it is often seen that prayer is attended with important results, when organization is lifeless and ineffectual.

(4.) The talent which is most effectual of all is "*grace.*" It is grace that must attend the motive when a plan of usefulness is designed, influence us

* 1 Cor. 1.30.

while carrying it on and ; accompany us in completing it. Without it, human means are unavailing ; worship is superficial ; and effort for the glory of God languid and temporary. It recommends the gospel : The people wondered at the *gracious* words, or words of grace, that proceeded out of the mouth of Jesus.* It gives wings to prayer, untiring strength to labour, patience in tribulation, gladness to suffer all things for Christ's sake, victory over carnal and worldly things, and joy in heavenly and spiritual things.

(5.) *Joy* is a talent. It is often selfishly possessed without improvement, and deservedly withdrawn from us. But if the elation and buoyancy of spirit which it imparts were used in animating us to fresh exertion, we should not have so often to lament our want of it. The same may be said of every happy emotion of mind.

(6.) *Affliction* is a talent, accompanied, when improved, with blessed effects.

(7.) *Memory* and *ingenuity* are talents. How different the account which will be rendered of memory used in retaining, and ingenuity in communicating information which may serve a christian purpose ; and of memory used in retaining, and ingenuity in relating what is opposed to God and our neighbour. I cannot refrain from mentioning here an occurrence named by Dr. Cæsar Malan. He taught the young in his school that they were accountable to God for the due improvement of their talents, but discouraged emulation. When the inspector, visiting the school, heard this, he doubted whether youth could make

* Luke iv. 22.

progress under such a system ; but was moved to tears by what he heard. On asking the head boy if he did not feel proud : "By no means," he said ; "God has given me a good memory ; I only feel shame that I have not made better use of it." Then, on asking the lowest boy, if he were not ashamed of his position, "No," he replied, "God has given me only a very defective memory, and other boys excel me ; but I pray that God may give me a better memory."

I must conclude for the present.

Believe me to be,

Yours faithfully,

H. S.

LETTER LII.

ON THE USE OF TALENTS, CONTINUED.

TALENTS TO BE USED FOR THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE GOOD OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.—DUTY TO REMOVE ERROR.—POPERY.—TALENT OF RICHES.—INFLUENCE OF PERSONS IN AUTHORITY, PHYSICIANS, EDITORS OF NEWSPAPERS, PUBLISHERS, BOOKSELLERS, ETC.—SINGING, ETC.—INFLUENCE OF LOWER CLASSES.—MORRISON, CAREY, HUNT, HARLAN PAGE.—LEARNING.—IDIOSYNCRASY.—SABBATH-SCHOOL TEACHERS.—PRINCIPALS OF COLLEGES, AND MASTERS OF SCHOOLS.—ANECDOTES, SHOWING THE EFFECTS OF EARNESTNESS.—DISTRIBUTION OF BIBLES, RELIGIOUS BOOKS, AND TRACTS.—CORRESPONDENCE.—CONVERSATION WITH TRAVELLERS.—CONCLUSION.

Dear Friend,

Having, in a former letter, spoken of the necessity of attending to personal faith and holiness, I desire to urge you to the duty of using your talents in a continued endeavour to glorify God,—the one great object of a believer's desire,—doing good in his day and generation. The removal of man's blindness is one great object: Popery and infidelity, are great causes of man's blindness. The early letters of this work refer to the latter; and the former has been in some measure noticed; but I feel I

should be neglecting my duty were I not to add a few words now that a letter on the use of talents affords me an opportunity. Let me then urge you, if you have any doubts on the subject, to read some scriptural exposition of popish doctrine which refers to the simple word of God; and you will see how superficial Romish error is, and how unable to stand this test; especially if you consult the text in the original.*

* I have referred, in page 273, to some Publications: I would add one, containing a few pages, intitled, "Vital Questions for Roman Catholics." "Cases of Conscience, by Pascal the Younger," has also been strongly recommended to me: therein the way in which purity of morals is tampered with, is shown from the canonized writings of Alphonso de Liguori. I referred in page 272 to a text from which an argument is drawn against the reading of the scriptures, by a misinterpretation of the sacred text. In 2 *Pet.* iii. 16, the words, "in which" (ἐν οἷς) cannot, by the construction, refer to the "epistles" of Paul, (ἐπιστολαῖς) but refer to "these things," τούτων, i. e. events before alluded to. (see verses 1, 15, 17, 18.) I add a few remarks to supply in some measure the want of them in Letter *xlvi.*

IN ARTICLE XIII. of the Council of Trent, the authority of Tradition is unlimited, and therefore equal to Scripture. (See *Matt.* xv. 3-6.)

ARTICLE XIV.—The slightest knowledge of the writings of the fathers, shows the emptiness of the boast of *unanimity*. To give an instance, 'in *Matt.* xvi. 18, the word πέτρος, rendered Peter, is understood by the most eminent lexicographers to signify *a piece of a rock, a stone*; and is thus distinguished, as Passow observes, from the word translated in verse 18, 'rock;' this is in the Greek, πέτρα, 'a large mass of rock;' while πέτρος is a *single stone*. Peter showed that he was united to Christ, as a branch to the vine, by the confession of his faith. Three of the fathers, Hilary, Cyril, and Chrysostom, understood the *confession of Christ* by Peter, or his firm faith, to be the rock. Augustine understood 'rock' to mean *Christ*, saying, "Petra erat Christus, super quod fundamentum etiam ædificatus est Petrus;" as though Christ said, "Non me ædificabo super te, sed te ædificabo super me." Origen makes *every disciple of Christ*, the rock. (See Jewell's reply to Harding, quoted in Stanford's "Handbook to Popery," p. 248.) How can the doctrine that *the fathers are unanimous*, or that *the church was built on Peter*, be maintained in the face of these facts, when there are *three opinions of the fathers opposed to the latter doctrine, and to each other?*

ARTICLE XV.—Penance, one of the so-called sacraments of the Church of Rome, is connected with *confession*; and it is well to notice that in the text (*James* v. 16.) which is quoted in support of this

Having in a former letter alluded to some talents which we should occupy, for the purpose of self-im-

doctrine, the confession is to be made *one to another*, (*ἀλλήλοις*) and the word in the Roman Catholic (Douay) version, rendered 'saved' is *ἰαθῆτε*, 'healed.' A convert from Romanism, who has given evidence of his sincerity, has told me that a Romanist may go through the forms of confession, penance, receiving the consecrated wafer, and absolution, without ever once thinking of God; and that he had done so.

ARTICLE XVI.—The decrees of the Council of Trent, relating to the Depravity of man, and to Justification, are in accordance with the subtle genius of Romanism; primitive truth is covered with successive incrustations of error. The doctrine of grace given *ex opere operato*, and the exception of the mother of Jesus, corrupt the former; and the way in which works are mixed up with faith, together with the doctrine of works of supererogation, destroy the simplicity of the latter. The word *δωρεάν* rendered "freely" in *Rom.* iii. 24, is used in *Matt.* x. 8, where it must mean a *gift* of a power which man is altogether destitute of by nature; and in *John* xv. 25; where it is rendered "*without a cause.*" The doctrine of justification by works is the refuge of the natural man, whether heathen, Jew, or professing christian. (*Rom.* ix. 30, to x. 13.) Dr. McCaul observes, that "Rabbinism is Jewish Popery, and Popery is Gentile Rabbinism."

ARTICLE XIX.—A Romish writer of note, Cardinal Bellarmine, states (Tom. i. c. 4, *De Purgatorio*) that there are *five difficulties* in *1 Cor.* iii. 10-15, quoted in support of the doctrine of Purgatory:—1. What is to be understood by builders? 2. gold, silver, &c.? 3. the day of the Lord? 4. the fire of which it is said, that in the day of the Lord it shall prove every man's work? 5. the fire by which it is said he shall be saved, yet so as by fire? And then he enumerates the *contradictory opinions* regarding each of the above named difficulties, by Augustine, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact, Ecumenius, Jerome, Anselm, Thomas, Dionysius the Carthusian, Lyra, Cajetan, Gregory, Ambrose, Tertullian, &c., &c., &c.

ARTICLE XXI.—After *Acts* i. 14, where Mary, the mother of Jesus, is named, (*not first* before the apostles, or the other women, but *after* them) as being with the rest,—*praying, not prayed to,—no mention is made of her throughout the Acts of the Apostles, or the Epistles.* Had it been the design of the Lord that she should be honoured as she is by Romanists, should we not have had some intimation of it? Would Paul have been silent? Would Peter? (*See Col.* ii. 18, &c.)

ARTICLE XXIII.—One ground for the doctrine of the Supremacy of Peter, is *Matthew* xvi. 19. Amongst twelve or any number of persons engaged in a great work, one or more are ever found to surpass others in energy or zeal, and to take the lead. Peter opened the kingdom of heaven to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and to the gentiles at the baptism of Cornelius, but what more can be shown to be purported by the words? That the power of binding and loosing,—given

provement: I proceed to mention such as we ought to *use for the benefit of our fellow-creatures.*

(1.) *Riches.* The improvement of these is urged in a former letter.* It is said of Cecil, that, on hearing that one of his flock had become suddenly rich, he called upon him, and said; "I hear you are in danger:" and on the remark being received with surprise, he added, "I hear you are rich; and if the Gospel be true, you are in danger."† To avoid the temptation to self-indulgence or vanity which worldly possessions afford, it may be found well, after laying aside a certain proportion dedicated to the Lord, to see what more can be spared, after providing for necessary expenses; and, having fixed upon the charitable works to be aided by it, to dispose of it accordingly when received. We should not give according as others do, but take the Gospel for our rule, asking of God, "Lord what wouldest thou have me to give?" and ever observe self-denying economy in our personal expenses. Liberality reflects, no less than it confers, happiness; as the enjoyment of the truly liberal expands in proportion to the objects of his benevolence.

(2.) *Influence.* There is no one who has not much of this talent. It acts insensibly but powerfully; as successive drops of water wear a stone. It varies according to rank, station, money, learning, &c. A king, a judge, a magistrate, all who are in situations

also to the rest in common with him,—gave no authority to the Pope to pretend to apostolical 'power, jurisdiction, and authority over all persons and things, both in spirituals and temporals,' may be seen from the way in which Peter acted when he might have exercised such power. (*See Acts viii. 21, 24.; xvi. 31, &c.*)

* Letter 29, on Liberality. + See Mark, x. 22-24. Tim. vi. 6-10.

of authority have great influence to use.* The remark of a judge, when trying some boatmen at Stafford Assizes, "These men have no Sabbath!" led to the establishment of a Boatman's Pastoral-Aid Society, which occasioned a great diminution of traffic along the Trent and Mersey Canal on the Sabbath. A layman's efforts for God in this way are wont to receive more attention than those of a minister.

A Physician has a talent to use; he can 'drop from time to time a word in season, when visiting his patients, and point them to the alone Physician of souls and Orderer of events,' at a time when the heart is especially prepared to receive the seeds of truth.

Editors of Newspapers have a greater talent to account for than many of them may be aware of. The insensible effect of reading a newspaper from day to day is allowed to be very powerful. *All who publish* have a talent of a like kind. *Booksellers; all who sell Prints, Music, or Statues,*† incur very great responsibility. It is their duty to deny themselves the gain or popularity derived from pandering to the carnal or worldly appetite; and, making a bold stand,—but nothing more than the gospel demands,—purify their establishments from every thing which has an evil tendency; and seek to do good by exposing for sale what is in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. *Excellence in any art or science* is also a talent: it attracts admiration, and thereby gives influence. The *ability to sing, play on instruments of music, or draw*

* Mr. Wilberforce set Members of Parliament a good example in setting apart, at times, a day for fasting (or, when he thought good, of more than ordinary abstinence) and prayer for guidance in difficult questions before the House.

† See vol ii. p. 135-137.

well, all give power to excite to good or evil. 'He who composes the national airs, songs, or ballads of a people, may have a greater influence on them than they who train them in schools.'

Nor is influence confined to the higher or middle classes ; the servant's conduct affects the master, as the history of Naaman shows. Neither is it limited to age. It is touching to hear a venerable father say, "I will follow the example of my son" in acts of benevolence. God, who is wont to hide from the wise and prudent what he reveals to babes, often raises men to offices of greatest usefulness, who are undistinguished by birth or station, as regards this world. Morrison, who translated the scriptures into the language of the Chinese,—a people exceeding probably in number a third of the population of the globe,—was once a last-maker; and Carey, once a shoemaker, translated them into about thirty languages. The inhabitants of the Feejee Islands were enabled to read the scriptures in their own tongue by the labours of Hunt, once a plough-boy. It is said of Harlan Page, who was in a humble station, that a hundred persons, some of whom became ministers, owed their conversion to his instrumentality.

(3.) *Learning.* Moses and Paul show how this can be laid at the Lord's feet, the worldly advantages which might be attained by it foregone, and the lot of "suffering affliction with the people of God" preferred. How can learning be better used by a child of God, than by devotion of it to the life of a missionary? The gospel can really receive no honour from man; but in men's eyes it is honoured when

the wise in this world, and the mighty, and the noble, through grace, use their best influence to promote it; and God honours this devotion. Again, in this labour the poor may help effectually. The simple, uneducated, pious man, who knows the scriptures, and whose heart is warmed and influenced by the love of Christ, is often a more effectual sabbath-school teacher than the most learned theologian. In instructing his fellows, moreover, he may set forth the love and power of the gospel in such a winning way, as powerfully to draw sinners to the Saviour. The poor can feel and show christian sympathy, humanity, and love: these graces need not worldly learning to warm them, or prompt to their active exercise. They can, by grace, console in sorrow, point to the Saviour, warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, cheer the bed of languishing, by directing to Him who can make all our bed in our sickness.

(4.) The *Principal of a college*, or *Master of a school*, of whatever grade the pupils may be, has a talent of great power. He knows not what may be the calling of the youths intrusted to him: some may become ministers of religion, and be sent forth to teach others the way of salvation. Oh, then, how diligently should he see to it that the instruction he gives be after the pure gospel. The salvation of thousands may follow the education of one child. Prayer should be offered for schools. A reformation is required in schools: Satan, the prince of this world, has doubtless corrupted, and is seeking to corrupt, more and more, both the doctrines and the precepts of the gospel. Attention has been turned to a reform-

ation of doctrine ; but, although I alluded to this subject in a former letter, I would ask, Is not a reformation of morals needed ? Is the state of the young giving evidence that the training is such as scripture inculcates ? Let the attention of christians, and especially parents and schoolmasters, be turned seriously to this matter, with a view to adopt measures for educating in a scriptural manner. Heads of colleges and schools are either little conscious of the practices which corrupt the youths under their care ; or, being so, in too many instances take little pains to stay them.

(5.) The *distribution of Bibles and Tracts*. This is a great means of usefulness. In Hartley's "Researches in the Levant," mention is made of a Jew, who traced his conversion to the gift of a Hebrew New Testament, by an unknown person, when walking in the street. W. Wilberforce traced his conversion to a copy of Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul;" he wrote the "Practical View of Christianity;" to this book Legh Richmond traced his beginning to preach Christ: he wrote, among other works, the "Dairyman's Daughter," which has been productive of spiritual good to many. A tract or book may be put into a letter ; or given to a servant at a friend's house. Bibles should be placed in every room, as the honoured book, and in hotels.

(6.) Men vary much also in *their peculiar dispositions*, and have thereby different talents. This variety is seen among the apostles : one was more energetic and full of zeal, another full of love ; and this is observable among christians now. Each is accountable to

God for the due use of his own faculties of mind and body; and charity should be exercised by each, in his thoughts respecting others.

(7.) *Correspondence.* This is a powerful talent. Let no letter be written without prayer that the Lord will enable to write what is profitable, and bless it. It is said of Luther, that over the beginning of each letter he wrote "JESUS."

(8.) *Travelling.* Opportunities continually offer themselves of conversing with fellow-travellers, on foot or otherwise, and offering a Tract. Miss Helen Plumptre, in her letters, names a profitable conversation with a fellow-traveller by railway.

(9.) *Almsgiving.* *A Petitioner for alms* is a listener, and no opportunity should be lost of instructing such in the way of salvation.

There is great neglect of effort on such occasions as these, as the remark, sometimes made, testifies; "No one ever told me this before."

And now let me intreat you, (1.) *Give yourself wholly to God.* (2.) Remember, they whom you would benefit, whether your relations or friends, neighbours or acquaintances, or the children who twine round your heart, are sinners; not a little depraved, but, by nature, "dead in trespasses and sins." (3.) Expect the lot of Christ's followers, *i. e.* to have a cross to bear in following him. (4.) Be contented with your sphere of usefulness. (5.) Be in earnest. An anecdote of a blacksmith is instructive. When he was living in sin, perhaps in avowed infidelity, a friend earnestly desired his conversion; and, one day he was influenced by a constraining wish to reason

with him, as he had probably often done before. On reaching his shop all his arguments were forgotten; and he could only earnestly say a few words, such as these; "I cannot bear to see you lost;" and hasten away. But God who honours what we *desire in the heart*, spoke for him: the blacksmith, was struck with his earnestness, followed him, and listened patiently to the gospel message. Once again, it is said that a gentleman, who had often sought to draw his brother to Christ, and lent him tracts, &c.; on meeting with the words in *Matt: xvii. 21*, appointed a day for fasting and prayer, seeking of God his brother's conversion. His brother that day took up a tract, "The Sinner's Friend," and became an altered man. (6.) *The time is short, therefore redeem it*; lose no opportunity of doing good: while doing so, fight against any sinful rising of pride; and seek ever to feel and confess that you are an "unprofitable servant." (*Luke xvii. 10.*)

Farewell;

I am,

Yours faithfully,

H. S.



On the whole, the book is a valuable one, and I hope it will be read by all who are interested in the subject. It is a book which will help to clear up many of the doubts and difficulties which are connected with the subject. It is a book which will help to show the truth of the Christian religion, and the truth of the Christian religion is the truth which is the foundation of all our hopes and fears. It is a book which will help to show the truth of the Christian religion, and the truth of the Christian religion is the truth which is the foundation of all our hopes and fears.

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