

The responsibilities of medical students : a sermon preached in the chapel of Guy's Hospital, on Sunday, March 4th / by F. Maurice.

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THE
RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEDICAL STUDENTS.

A SERMON

PREACHED

IN THE CHAPEL OF GUY'S HOSPITAL,

ON SUNDAY, MARCH 4TH.

BY THE

REV. F. MAURICE, A. M.

CHAPLAIN TO THE HOSPITAL.

LONDON :

DARTON AND CLARK, HOLBORN HILL ;

AND

S. HIGHLEY, 32, FLEET STREET.

1838.

RESPONSIBILITY OF MEDICAL ATTENDANCE

IN THE

IN THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

AND THOSE CONNECTED WITH GUY'S HOSPITAL

THE

BY

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. GREEN AND CO., BARTLETT'S BUILDINGS.

TO THE
MEDICAL STUDENTS

In the Metropolis,

AND ESPECIALLY
TO THOSE CONNECTED WITH GUY'S HOSPITAL,

THIS SERMON

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR FRIEND AND WELL-WISHER,

THE AUTHOR.

TO THE
FACULTY OF
MEDICAL STUDENTS

In the Hospital,

of a few Medical Students. I have been
the recipient of a number of
communications from the
TO THE FACULTY OF MEDICAL STUDENTS

of the Faculty of the
THIS SEMESTER
The Faculty of the

is hereby recommended.

AT THE FACULTY OF MEDICAL STUDENTS

THE AUTHOR

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS SERMON was preached at the request of a few Medical Students. It is now published, in compliance with the wishes of a considerably larger number, who were present at the delivery of it. The latter part of the Sermon, of which the Author had only notes, has been somewhat altered, and considerably enlarged.

GUY'S HOSPITAL,

March, 1838.

S E R M O N.

1 COR. XII. 4, 5, 6.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

ALMOST the first reflection which strikes us when we look out upon the natural world is, that everything lives for the good of something else. When we say The sun shines, we mean that all the world about us is the brighter and warmer for his presence. The fragrance of every flower goes forth to enrich the air and impart fragrance. The song of the birds we feel to be joyous, because it makes those who hear it joyous. When a thing has no more power to affect any other thing—when it has gone away into itself—then we say of it, “it is dead.” Something of it may still exist; there may be the dry relic of the flower or the tree, that once gave out odours or bare fruits, but the meaning of it is gone. This word “dead” is the only one that we can find for it.

If we look round upon the world of human creatures, it would seem as if all this were exactly reversed. The commonest saying among those who have lived long in the world, and boast of understanding it, is that each man is living for his own sake; that he is making use of his fellow-creatures only to serve his own ends. Experienced persons tell us that we are merely cheating ourselves, if we suppose a man to have any other purpose in his life than this. He may talk much about his fellow-creatures; he may even fancy that he has their interest at heart, but secretly he has himself in view in all that he does. It makes him happy to get their praise—to be accounted generous and benevolent—and, therefore he does many things for them: or, perhaps, he has been taught by religious men, that if he puts himself to some suffering here, he shall have more enjoyment hereafter; but, any way, the same motive governs him. It is himself that he is seeking to make happy; and he would rather that all creatures should perish, than that he should be disappointed of this aim. Such is the opinion which you have often heard, and it is one which could not be uttered with so much confidence by clever and sagacious men, if it had not some foundation.

We all feel that it has a foundation. Every man knows that there is something within him which says, “Please thyself;—live for thyself;—

be thine own God." Every man knows that he has obeyed this voice—that he is tempted to obey it continually. But he knows also that no man has been able to obey it fully. He may have made it the purpose and maxim of his life to regard himself first—his neighbours only for his own sake : but he has found it impossible to act according to this rule. Is it not impossible ? It is not in our power to choose that others shall not profit by our work. The man who spends money, must spend it upon others ; the man who uses his hands, must use them for others. The lawyer, if he acts as a lawyer at all, must act for his clients ; the physician, if he acts as a physician at all, must act for his patients. And when we see any person who is not doing any thing—who is not exerting any power for any other creature—we feel about him as we felt about the plant which had ceased to give out odours,—“ there is no meaning in him, he is as good as dead.”

Thus much then seems to be clear, that if any man is pursuing selfish ends, he is pursuing them not in conformity with the order in which he is placed, but in defiance of it. And if this be the case, and if men have these selfish inclinations, it becomes a most interesting and important point to ascertain what this order is which so thwarts and contradicts the tendencies of the persons for whom it is formed ? What is it, and who established it ? May we expect that it will at last

yield to us, and permit us to be as selfish as we please; or, on the other hand, are there any means whereby we may be brought into accord with it? In the chapter from which my text is taken, St. Paul is making answer to these questions—the only answer that ever has been, or ever can be given to them. He tells us what this order is, who set it up, by what means the heart of every man upon earth may be brought into consent and harmony with it. He tells us that there are not as many centres in the world as there are men, and each man his own centre; but that there is one centre round which all are meant to revolve, from which all derive their light and heat. He says we are all created to be members of one body, with one head; that, as in the natural body, there are many limbs related to each other, each affected by the movements and the sufferings of the other; so every single man in this world is related to his fellow man; so the acts and sufferings of every man shall affect those who surround him, those at a distance from him; yea, those who shall live generations after him. He says that all the parts of this body are contrived with wonderful skill, so that each shall supply life, and health, and strength to all the other parts. He says that no one member of this body, let it labour as hard as it will, can separate itself from the rest, or refuse the services of the rest; that the foot cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of thee,” that the

hand cannot say to the foot, "I have no need of thee." He says that the Eternal God has created this order, and upholds it; that Jesus Christ is the head of this body—who gives it its proportions, its coherency, its comeliness. He says that the Spirit of the Father and the Son—the Spirit of love, and peace, and order, is intended to dwell with men, to bring their hearts into conformity with this divine scheme and order—to teach them what is their own position in regard to it. He says, moreover, that all gifts and endowments, be they of what kind they may, which are intended for the benefit of mankind, are the gifts of this Spirit. He says that all professions, offices, orders, existing in society, which are for the good of mankind, are administered and superintended by the Lord of this body. He says, that he who ordained this whole wonderful system, works on the minds and spirits of those who will submit to it, that all the gifts which he has bestowed may be applied in those directions—may be consecrated to those purposes for which they were intended. "For there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

It may strike you, perhaps, when you read this chapter, that I have unwarrantably extended the meaning of it. You may think that St. Paul is espe-

cially and exclusively referring to certain powers, which were conferred upon certain persons in his day, and that it is impossible to deduce from his words any principle that can govern our circumstances or conduct. And, unquestionably, this Epistle, like every other, does refer to the conditions of the times in which it was written. It would be far less interesting and useful to us than it is, if it did not. As you would be sorry that any case in medical practice should be recorded without the most minute and peculiar circumstances relating to it; as it would be far less useful to you in other cases, if it were stripped of these particulars, so the books of the New Testament are left encompassed with all the characteristic incidents of the period in which they were composed, on purpose that they may serve for the more practical guidance of all future periods. So it is here. St. Paul had been asked by some members of the church at Corinth, to enlighten them as to the use of those gifts and powers which were entrusted to the first apostles at the day of Pentecost, and afterwards, in different degrees and measures, to different Christian congregations. He had heard of incorrect and disorderly practices which prevailed at Corinth, in reference to these gifts; he had observed that a very undue importance was attached to them, merely because they had been conferred in a sudden and remarkable manner. To answer these questions, and to correct these errors of practice and opinion, St. Paul

explained to them their whole position, as members of the church of Christ. Because all were members of one body, all cared for by its head; therefore he had invested certain persons with certain faculties and endowments for the good of the rest. At first these endowments were conferred upon those who were to be the witnesses and preachers of Christ's word. Such an arrangement was necessary, in order that the source of these powers, and their object, might be the more immediately understood and recognised. Again, they had been given at first with signs and wonders, which should arrest the attention of men, and compel them to feel that God was indeed interesting himself in the thoughts and feelings of his creatures. These peculiarities would not last. The powers of healing would belong to a distinct class—the powers of language would be cultivated by slow and painful processes,—not descend upon men in the likeness of cloven tongues, or amidst the sound of a rushing wind. But the truths which these signs had demonstrated would remain. These powers, in whomsoever they might dwell—in whatever manner they might be exercised, must still be regarded as trusts from God, to be used for the benefit of men, under a solemn sense of responsibility to Him—under a comfortable assurance that He will himself direct the employment of them.

Thus, St. Paul's words supply us with the ground upon which all addresses to the members of any pro-

fession, or to persons preparing for any profession, on their duties and responsibilities, must be built. There are but two principles upon which any persons can be addressed. The one is that selfish principle which confuses everything, darkens every thing, and, at last, most completely defeats itself. The other is that lofty, humane principle which St. Paul brings forward in this Epistle to the Corinthians, a principle which does not wage war with the order of things in which we are placed, but explains it, conspires with it,—a principle which wages war against nothing, but against that which makes us at war with God and man. It is the principle of speaking to men as members of one body, one family redeemed out of the position of selfish separate creatures, permitted if they will, to consider themselves “members of Christ, children of God, heirs of the kingdom of heaven.” To men having such titles, and they appertain to every member of Christ’s Church, we can speak cheerfully of duties and responsibilities, because we can tell them how the duty arises,—to whom they are responsible,—what strength they have to fulfil the duty, to meet the responsibility. I shall arrange what I have to say, respecting those which particularly appertain to medical students under three heads, which the words of St. Paul suggest. He speaks of gifts of different kinds; this will offer me an occasion for speaking of the duties and responsibilities connected with your peculiar *Studies*.

He speaks of different administrations or offices ; this will offer me an occasion for speaking of the duties and responsibilities connected with the *Practice* of your profession. He speaks of Divine operations, this will lead me to speak of the means whereby you are to gain continual help for fulfilling these and all other works which God may appoint for you.

I. The chapter from which I have been speaking to you, is concerned with all offices and occupations existing among men, which it is not disgraceful for a man to be engaged in. All these, it speaks of as ordained by God ; all these as having gifts appropriated to them by God. The most sublime of the writers in the Old Testament does not scruple to say, when he is talking of the different labours of the ploughman in the different seasons of the year, "For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." All the ancient nations believed this : they could not understand how the arts of tillage could ever have been imparted to man, but by some Divine communication, how they could be practised and improved without fresh supplies of Divine illumination. And it is a most vulgar wisdom which sets aside this faith of all people, and affects to ridicule it. It is a most vulgar religion which pretends to consider such notions as suggesting thoughts unworthy of God. Wherever there has been any great work done in the world, any great discovery made, there must

have been strange thoughts and processes of thought preceding that work and that discovery. And if God ordains the acts and movements of the meanest insect that he has formed, do you think it can be beneath him to interest himself in these thoughts and processes of thought, to superintend them, to guide them to their issue? A man must feel little what a wonderful thing this thinking is, what an awful thing it is if he believes it was suitable to the greatness of God, to create the earth, and all the animals that people it, and yet that it is beneath him to care for that which is transacted within the breast of a living man. It is the business then of every one, be the work which is assigned him as insignificant as it may, to consider that work, what it means, and how it may be accomplished, and to believe, that in all these thoughts and meditations, he has an invisible guide and teacher, and friend present with him. But especially does it become those to entertain this belief, who are called students, whose very business it is to think and to reflect, who know that whether they shall be useful or mischievous hereafter, depends upon their thinking wisely or unwisely now. And the duty and responsibility of students to assure themselves continually that this is the case, that they are not alone in their studies, but that there is one near them, who is able and willing to give them right habits of thinking, to make them earnest and reasonable men is in-

creased in proportion to the importance and dignity of the subjects upon which they are called to reflect. Now, surely there are not more than one or two classes of men at the most, who have higher and nobler themes to engage their attention than the medical student. A whole world of wonders and mysteries is daily brought under his notice—he must contemplate the strangest piece of mechanism in the world, one compared with which every other that men have ever looked upon, or shall look upon, is like a mere child's toy. If he sets about examining any one, the smallest portion of this machine, he is lost amidst the multitude of springs and valves, which seem necessary to its movements; and each of these portions is connected with each other portion, and new relations and affinities between the parts, are continually unfolding themselves to him, and the whole which they form, is more wonderful than all these parts. He has constant opportunities of observing this machinery, and taking it to pieces; and then, when he has done so, a new marvel is presented to him; he finds that all its nice contrivances, all its intricacies and complications, can serve no purpose whatever, unless there be something else present there, which he had no instruments for taking to pieces. There was that which set all this machinery in motion—there were powers within it, which enabled it to act and suffer; to receive from other things a

portion of themselves, to give to other things a portion of itself. He learns to feel the difference,—the greatest it is possible to express in human language,—the difference between life and death. I ask you whether it is not a solemn duty and responsibility for one who is brought into contact with such facts as these, to cherish a humble, reverent, wondering spirit? The more he wonders, the more he will desire, and delight to inquire:—Again, the more he inquires, the more he will wonder. He will find that there are some truths which cannot be explained, because they themselves explain all other things. He will find that he must either go on without understanding the things which he was meant to understand, or be content to acknowledge those truths, which pass his understanding. Thus, he will find it necessary to get rid of all shallow vain conceits and pretences of wisdom, in order that he may be really wise. And seeing that he cannot purge his heart of such vanities, by any efforts of his own; seeing that new broods of them will be ever starting into life, when a former brood has been destroyed; he must be continually seeking for the aid of that Teacher who has endowed him with all His powers, and who has promised, that they shall be blessings and not curses to him.

But besides these inquiries respecting the mechanism and powers of the human body, the medical student has to inquire into the causes of their

derangement and decay. Here again, a new region of wonders opens upon him. To the unhappy empiric, indeed, who, for the sake of pelf, trifles with the lives of God's creatures, there is no wonder at all in the origin or growth of a disease; he thinks what occurs so frequently, must be very plain; that a few chance observations of a few outward symptoms, are all that a man has need of, before he presumes to suggest remedies. For him, I say, there is no wonder. But the man who, with sincere purpose to discover the secret source of that which causes so much evident misery, and with good hope of benefitting not only his immediate patients, but many that are yet unborn, travels through the same region, must feel continually that he is going further and further away from mere shows and appearances. How often when we describe to you some local suffering, you ask about other feelings which seemed to us most entirely unconcerned with it, and refer both to some secret derangement of the powers of life! I would beseech you to feel the great responsibility which is laid upon you, by being permitted to engage in studies possessing this character, and involving this necessity. Of all men, you ought to be the least imposed upon, by the shapes and outsides of things. Of all men you ought the least to fancy that what is unseen, must be unreal. Of all men you ought the least to fancy that what is unseen can be accounted for, by what is seen. Of all men you

should be most ready to admit, that of everything concerning which our senses report to us, there is a deep hidden ground, of which they take no cognizance. And if you feel it difficult, as indeed in a world where men are pursuing shadows and phantoms, and taking them for substances and realities, it is most difficult, to derive this benefit from your studies, then remember, that for the sake of those studies—if, for no higher reason—it is most needful that you should submit your minds to the guidance of Him who has formed both these, and that which they are to investigate ; and has promised to lead them into the secret fountains of knowledge and truth.

There is a most interesting branch of your studies, which leads you to investigate the properties of different animal and vegetable, and mineral substances, and the services they may render to man. If we heard for the first time that a connection existed between the life that is in us and that which is in plants and flowers,—that this connection has been established since the creation,—that it is possible for man to trace it out,—how we should be amazed ! What new and delightful trains of thought such an announcement would suggest to us ! But it is your privilege and your duty, as students, to renew this delight in your hearts every day. It is not necessary that the fountain of wonder and pleasure should be dried up, because you are employed in following out a

multitude of streams that flow from it : the fact which rejoices the first discoverer, remains fresh and living for every one who succeeds him, if he will not close his heart against it. But I pass over this and many other interesting topics, that I may allude to one which must very often be brought under the notice of those who are preparing for any branch of your profession. I spoke of the powers of life being deranged ; but in popular language — and I suppose, also, in medical language — we sometimes use that word — *deranged* — in another and more awful sense. We apply it not to the functions of the man, but to the man himself. We say, He is deranged, — his being is subverted. I would beseech you to think deeply of these words. The facts to which they point are in themselves so appalling, that for a moment they may absorb all your attention. But if, when you have a moment's leisure from the contemplation of the mere signs and symptoms of a mind overthrown, you ask yourselves what is implied in the very possibility of such a disaster, you will find that an amazing deep opens upon you. Insanity could not be, if there did not dwell in that mysterious body with which your studies are occupied, a mysterious person who calls it his, who rules it, who needs himself to be ruled. Such a person there must be in you and in me ; what he is your science does not tell us ; what he is we must in some way or other learn. For this person

must have all capacities of happiness and misery in him ; what he is, not what his circumstances are, must be the great question. To whom may he look up in his strength, and say, "Thou gavest me this strength?" To whom may he cry in his weakness, "Do thou uphold me?" To whom may he call, when he feels himself broken and maimed, "Do thou restore me?" "The depth saith, It is not in me; the sea ~~it~~ it is not with me." All nature declares that it can do something to compose or re-arrange the outward circumstances,—the dress of the man,—nothing to alter, or regenerate the man himself. All the things that surround him, are beneath him ; less grand, less wonderful than himself. But he needs one more mighty, more wonderful. These things are incapable of sympathising with him. But he cannot be content, unless he can find some one to care for him, to feel with him, as well as to superintend him. All these things are incapable of imparting to him any portion of their own life, or happiness. But he needs one, whom he may not only confess as a superior, and trust in as a friend ; but who is willing to confide in him, and communicate with him. Now the declaration of such a being, unto whom this man within us may look up, who has sympathised with him in his low estate, who makes him a partaker of his own spirit ; this is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy name into which you are baptized, is the name of this Being. The possession of that mighty Teacher who is with us,

to guide us in all our commonest thoughts and pursuits, but with us, most of all, to interpret those deeper feelings which concern our own inmost being,—with us to breathe into us a new life, to renew us, after the image of Him who created us—this is the mighty consequence of being brought nigh to this God in his blessed Son. See then, how your studies—by that which they teach you respecting other things, and by that which they teach you respecting yourselves—by the proofs which they give you of your power and of your weakness—by leading you into depths you cannot fathom—by making you feel that the profoundest deep of all, is that in which you yourselves are living and moving, and having your being—see how they bring you at last into contact with those mysteries of which you have heard since you were children, and which you must receive as little children, if you would enter into their meaning and their blessedness.

II. But it is more than time, that I should speak of the responsibilities connected, not with the studies, but with the practice of your profession.

It is a great and striking advantage which belongs to you, that these can scarcely be separated, even in thought. Your studies are a practice, your practice is a study. In order to make that comparison which I spoke of just now, between the living and the dead subject, you must have attended to the operations of life in actual men. In order to

understand anything concerning diseases, you must have attended to the sufferings of actual men. In order to enter at all into that most awful calamity, to which I last alluded, you must have seen men, whose minds were temporarily or permanently deranged. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten, that the position which you occupy now is different, in many important respects from that which you are destined to occupy hereafter. Now, you are visiting sick and dying men, mainly, that you may improve in knowledge; by and bye you must learn to feel, that all your improvements in knowledge, are chiefly precious, as they enable you the more usefully to visit sick and dying men. You are not dishonouring your fellow-creatures in the first case; you are not dishonouring science in the second. To understand the truth of things, to know the meaning of God in creation, especially in that most splendid creation, the human body, is a worthy object, to which the very highest pursuits may be content to minister; to confer the slightest benefit on a man—the child of God—is an object which the knowledge of an angel would not be degraded in promoting. But these two pursuits, each in itself so noble, each so necessary to the other, have their distinct privileges, their distinct responsibilities.

When I use language of this kind, and when I speak as I did before, of selfishness, as an utterly ineffectual, as well as an intrinsically bad principle;

you may fancy, perhaps, that I am urging you to disregard the outward and tangible advantages which result from the fulfilment of your vocation. Nothing is farther from my thoughts. I hope I should never impose a rule upon your profession, which I do not think applicable to my own; for, undoubtedly, we ought to set the example, of whatever disinterestedness we recommend to others. But as selfishness is a much deeper thing than the mere wish for money; so disinterestedness is a much deeper thing than the mere contempt or disregard of it. A man may be thoroughly selfish—selfish at heart—who is utterly indifferent about wealth; a man may be thoroughly disinterested, who thankfully receives it as a gift—though a perilous gift—from God. What I should wish you to feel is this:—By the order and design of God, we are placed in certain vocations for the good of mankind, and for His glory. To the fulfilment of this vocation, certain outward and material blessings are attached. If we faithfully depend upon Him, these will come to us at such times and in such measures as are best for us; if we keep them constantly before us as an object, we shall be restless and dissatisfied, incapable of pursuing one of those duties rightly, of which they are meant to be not so much the rewards as the needful supports and appliances.

This is the habit of feeling, which the members of a profession are especially bound to cultivate; which it is their especial privilege that they are able

to cultivate. In ordinary trades, though in themselves most honourable, and though they may be pursued in the most honourable spirit, for the most honourable ends, it is very difficult not to measure the labour done by its direct results. The profit from an article is so exactly proportionate to the quantity of time and work bestowed upon it, or if this be not the case, the change is produced, so entirely, by some temporary fashion or caprice, that persons constantly engaged in trade, must, unless they are very careful in observing their hearts, insensibly acquire the habit of trying the worth of everything by its market value. But who can ever ascertain the pecuniary equivalent for that kind of labour which your profession calls upon you to put forth? Who can say, what amount of the wealth of this world is to be weighed against so much of silent meditation, and minute watching, and anxious fear, and patient kindness? The attempt is impossible: no schemes are so utterly preposterous, as those which pretend, in such cases, to adjust the quantity of reward to the quantity of labour. We may no doubt complain of this as a calamity. We may murmur, at the great inequalities in the circumstances of different men, not distinguished from each other, so far as we can perceive, by their intellectual or moral qualities; but we may also—and I believe if we are reasonable men we shall—hail this condition of things as one of our highest blessings and privileges.

It instructs us continually, that the highest qualities must have higher blessings attached to them, than any which our fellow-creatures can bestow; cases of wise and benevolent men struggling on in poverty, and not losing their zeal and hope; cases of successful imposture and quackery; cases of true science and real industry, acquiring dignity and reputation: all contain this lesson. The poor man had something better than wealth to support him; the impostor had thoughts of reckless murders to torment him, for which no wealth could compensate; the man of prosperous honesty obtained money, because he had sought what is higher.

But, after all, the best school for learning the real value of those rewards, for which some are content to sacrifice themselves and God, is that into which your practice itself introduces you. It is one thing to be told from a pulpit, that "the rich man fadeth away in his ways;" that the soul of a man, who has lived in things which he can see and handle, is left in dreary vacancy, when he thinks that he is about to see and handle no longer, that then he confesses his need of something else—though what that is, it is now too late to ask; it is quite another thing, to have these words realized continually before your eyes, to witness the very spectacles which they feebly strive to describe. Oh, consider the responsibility which the sight of them brings with it! It is not a light thing to see a

fellow-creature looking into your face, and asking in unutterable agony, whether you cannot give him a week—a day more of life ; whether he must leave all that he has delighted in ; whether he may not at least have a little while for considering, where now he is to transfer all his thoughts and desires, and affections. Such looks should not depart out of the memory, at least not out of the heart, for assuredly they will meet us again on our own death beds, and at the day of revelation. Assuredly, we are permitted to see them, that each man may consider deeply with himself, “ This man is not of another race from myself ; whither he is going, I must go ; what he cannot carry with him, will leave me ; if there be something which he is crying after, from the lowest depths of being, to appease its wants, that is something, which I too must have,—or, be wretched for ever !”

If the words of the preacher, when he talks of death, carry but a dull and drowsy sound to the ears of most men, how much feebler is the echo of his voice, when he speaks of *sin*. The first, men own to be a reality, though it is one which they choose not to contemplate, the other seems to most of them a mere abstraction. But you will see the effects of this abstraction, of this imaginary thing ; you will see what it can do with forms and countenances, which the eye loved to look upon ; you will see the decay and corruption of that which was most beautiful ; and you will hear words

which will tell you, that the misery without is only the sign of a deeper misery within. You will read, written with the finger of God himself, upon his own exquisite workmanship,—“The end of these things is death.” My brethren, is there no responsibility in being called to such scenes as these?—Will you rid yourselves of this responsibility, by a few words of passing compassion to the sufferers, or by calling them the victims of miserable circumstances? Their circumstances were, no doubt, most calamitous; for they encountered persons, who had yielded to the evil in their own hearts, and were eager to call out evil in all other hearts. But we lie to our own consciences, if we do not own that the evil itself was within, that the root of bitterness was there, and that all outward occasions and accidents, did but assist it to send forth buds and blossoms, and fruit. We lie to our own conscience, if we do not acknowledge that the same evil is within us, and is incapable of being permanently controlled, far less really extirpated, by any calculations of expediency, or fear of consequences. We lie to our own consciences, if we do not ask how we may make the tree good, that the fruit may be good; how we may purify the heart, so that it shall send forth streams not of corruption, but of health and life.

The responsibilities of which I have spoken, arise from the consideration that the persons whom you visit, are of the same flesh and blood with

yourselves, that you are sharers in their propensities and temptations. But this is not all which even such cases teach you. The poor worldly man who feels that death must tear from him all that was precious to him, feels that he had a right to a possession, with which he would not have parted ; the poor creature, who feels that sin has the dominion over her body and spirit, feels that she had another Master, to whom she was bound, and whom she might have obeyed. You cannot doubt the language in which these feelings are expressed. It is not taught language—cant language ; it is the sincere utterance of a heart, which is compelled by death and despair, to speak out the true thing which it has long hidden and kept down within it. Here, then, are testimonies, issuing from the very lowest pit into which humanity can sink, of its grandeur and glory. Yes ! you will see your fellow-creatures stripped of all the disguises in which they have showed themselves off in the world ; exhibiting themselves to you as they actually are ; you will see them in the furiousness of passion, in the depth of pride and pettiness ; and yet I tell you that, you shall never see a man or a woman who does not exhibit some token of belonging to a race which God created in his own image.

How many will you meet with, who would give worlds to believe that they are not immortal ; and yet the truth, the certainty of immortality

comes upon them in that hour with an appalling evidence, before which all sophisms of the intellect, all feelings of indifference, all habits of scorn are scattered to the winds. How many will you see, who actually persuade themselves that they can in some way or other give a sop to death, that they can hold him at a distance with their shrivelled arms. It is a melancholy and ignominious delusion, yet it shows how deep the assurance is in man, that death is not meant to be his lord, that he ought to be able to trample upon it. How many will you see to whom the thought of God is the most frightful and overwhelming of all thoughts, which they would give worlds to banish from them; and yet if you ask why the vision of Him is so terrific, you will find that it is because a voice within them proclaims him to be a God of Love, with whom they can have no sympathy, because they are utterly unloving.

My brethren, here is a high responsibility indeed. To learn that you carry about with you a corrupt nature, which is leading you continually to deeper degradation,—this is most important. But to learn in this strange manner, from these unexpected and indubitable witnesses, that you come of a royal parentage, that you are connected with an Almighty friend—that you are meant to enjoy an eternal life in the knowledge of Him—this is more wonderful and precious still. When you hear us speaking of a flesh that is not subject

to the law of God, neither indeed can be,—and of an inner man who delights in the law of God, but feels weak and incapable of conforming to it; when we tell you, that Jesus Christ came into the world to claim fellowship with this inner man—when we tell you, that he being in flesh of man, suffered death, and that he rose again, and that he permits us by baptism to claim union with him, as our risen Head, and enables us by faith to put off the old man with its affections and lusts, and to put on the new man, which is made after God in righteousness, and pure holiness—when we use such words as these, they seem at first like strange riddles, incomprehensible dreams. But are they not rather the solution of those practical riddles, those inexplicable dreams, with which your daily experience brings you acquainted? Are not they the only key to those mysteries, which you are compelled to observe in your intercourse with others, and which, if you look earnestly, you find to be only the counterparts of mysteries as great within yourselves?

I may seem to have wandered from the purpose which I proposed to myself, in this part of my discourse. I may seem to have been speaking rather of the good which you yourselves may derive from the practice of your profession, than of the services which you owe to your fellow-men. But, in leading you to reflect upon the bonds which connect you with them, upon the evil tendencies which you

share with them, upon the glorious privileges and hopes which you share with them, upon the certainty that the first will predominate in every man who depends upon himself, upon the certainty that the other will be realized by every one who claims fellowship with the Lord of men, I have, in fact, been laying the only safe foundation for an appeal to you respecting your professional duties. I might have spoken to you, of the dreadful obligation which you contract to God, by taking upon you the office of watching over the lives of his creatures. I might have endeavoured to awaken you to sympathy with the miseries which you must every day witness. But though I could not exaggerate the awfulness of that obligation, I might very easily lead you into an exaggerated, unprofitable state of mind with respect to it. The man who carries about with him no other thought but this — “There is a debt which he owes, and which he must discharge, will soon become dissatisfied in himself—cold and heartless towards others. He will try to pay his debt, but it will be in mere outward services, which carry with them no real blessing, which obtain no gratitude; for that which men really crave after, the gentleness, the kindness, the sympathy, is utterly wanting. It is almost impossible again to think too deeply of the calamities under which men are groaning, in this world of death. But it is quite possible to call forth a sentiment of compassion for those

sufferings, which would be too delicate for use while it lasted, and would be quite unable to sustain itself against the hardening effects of familiarity with the scenes that awakened it. If you would unite all that is wholesome in both these feelings,—if you would convert them into calm, settled habits of mind, understand and embrace the truth, which St. Paul is expounding in my text. Believe that an administration is committed to you by the Lord of men for the good of men ; believe that every creature with whom you are brought into contact, is connected with him by the same bond that unites him to you ; believe that to make him conscious of that bond, to relieve him out of his misery and ignorance, that Lord thought it not too great an ignominy to bear his flesh, to die his death ; believe that He would now use you as His instruments, to awaken in his creatures the feeling, that there is a care and tenderness exercised in their behalf, of which they never dreamed ; believe that, in proportion as you show kindness, and care, and tenderness to them yourselves,—in proportion as you deal honestly with them, making them feel that you dare not lie to them, because they are members of the same body with you,—you will be the means of inspiring this conviction, and by inspiring it, of lifting your brethren out of selfishness and despair into confidence and hope, into respect for themselves, into an acknowledgment of God—believe that for

this end you need not become preachers, (though on many occasions, doubtless, you will be led to speak words in the ears of sick and dying men, which will strike the more deeply, because they were not expected from you), but that while you are acting out your own peculiar and appointed task, you will be following Christ, and benefiting the souls as well as the bodies of your fellow-men, far more than if you assumed to yourself any function which he has not assigned you; believe that, if his life upon earth was meant as a guide or pattern to us, who are sent with a message of peace to the hearts and consciences of our brethren, it was not less meant as a pattern to you, who are commissioned to heal their bodies; believe that, when he assumed a dominion over the secret powers of human life, when he stanchd the fountains of human disease, when he quelled the fury of the madman, he was as much honouring and hallowing the work of the physician, as he was honouring and hallowing the work of the Evangelist, when he opened his lips and said,—“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

III. You will acknowledge, I think, that hitherto I have not been enforcing upon you any duties which are not directly connected with the practice and the studies of your profession; I have been merely urging you to reflect upon the nature

of those studies and that practice. If certain truths, which you have been wont to call theological, have been thrust upon your notice, you will allow that they seem to be suggested by the facts which occupy you in your chambers, by the scenes which you witness in the sick-room ; and instead of accusing me of leading you into an unprofessional line of thought, you will begin to ask yourselves whether the voice of the preacher and the words of the Inspired Book are not guide-posts to principles which lie at the foundation of all that you think, and speak, and do. And if, at the conclusion of this discourse, I address you upon a set of duties different in kind from any to which I have yet alluded, I am still not withdrawing you a step from those which your science and your patients require of you ; I am only showing you how you may obtain the energy and the freedom necessary for performing them.

Men engaged in active labours, for the good of their fellow-creatures, often find it exceedingly difficult to understand the grounds upon which we urge them, to cultivate those habits, and attend to those services, which are technically, perhaps not very happily, distinguished as religious. They ask whether God has not given them an important work to perform, and whether they are not likely to please him better, by discharging it faithfully, than by occupying themselves in acts of devotion to Him ? They ask, whether it is not

acting more in the spirit of Christ's commands, more in imitation of his example, to be doing deeds of mercy, than to be offering sacrifices. I do not think these questions are always fairly met by those to whom they are addressed. I fear, that we are sometimes guilty of confusing men's minds respecting the nature of their obligations to God, and even of converting religion, which should be the great instrument for overthrowing selfishness into a means of encouraging it. But, I think, that the remarks which I made just now, respecting the kind of blessings which it is your privilege and your duty to impart to those whom you visit, may, perhaps, assist in extricating you from the difficulty. If, to attend the bed-side of a patient, were merely a mechanical act, or, if nothing more were required of you, than that you should give sound advice, I do not know that I could establish any very clear connexion between your ordinary tasks and those exercises of which I am now speaking. But it is degrading the dignity of your profession to think this. Your consciences tell you, that more, much more than this is required of those who are brought into constant experience of the woes of humanity—you feel that the kindness and sympathy, and sincerity, of which I was discoursing, under my last head, are as much demanded of you as scientific knowledge itself; and you feel that these qualities cannot be acquired at the moment,—cannot be got up for exhibition at the bed-side; you feel that the

man who merely presents counterfeits of them, is an impostor and hypocrite, far less to be esteemed than he who honestly shows forth the indifference or unkindness that are in him. It is necessary then, that these should form the very substance of your characters, that they should be worked into your very selves. But now consider how this can come to pass. Can you trust to the ordinary influences of society to do it? Do not you know perfectly, that these influences are adverse to the cultivation of such a character; that they tend to form in us habits of confirmed selfishness? Can you trust to the mere sight of pain and suffering to do it? Have we not said already, that the repetition of these sights deadens the impression, which they at first produced? Can you trust, then, to your belief and recognition of the principles which I have been endeavouring to assert,—to your conviction that the Spirit of God has indeed endowed you with all your gifts and powers; that the Lord of man has appointed you to administer these gifts for the good of men? But do you not feel that commerce with the world is continually corroding these convictions, changing them from practical realities into mere formal phrases, and that if they be honestly held, they must imply something more, they must imply the desire and necessity of seeking continual help from that Spirit, of holding intercourse with that Lord? Do you not feel that all gifts, all administrations,

must be profitless, unless there were also operations of God to renew our minds and characters, and form them into the likeness of his own ?

But you wonder that God should require of you acts of prayer and praise. My brethren, ask your own hearts if they do not require these acts. I cannot think of a fellow-creature merely as the author of certain gifts and blessings to me ; I cannot think of him merely as making certain provisions and arrangements for me. The moment I believe he is the source of these blessings, the author of these arrangements, that moment I desire to know what he is, and desire to think of him as a person in himself ; I desire to commune with him, to contemplate his character, to enter into the feelings in which these kind acts to me originated. Unless I can do this, I feel that I shall never really preserve a recollection of his benefits ; I shall never feel any relationship to him ; I shall never connect him with others as well as myself ; I shall care for him only for my own sake. This is the case with us in reference to our fellow-men ; and is it not still more emphatically the case with us in reference to the Most High God ? If we believe Him to be the source of every blessing to us, the Ordainer of every scheme of life for us, we must carry our thoughts beyond these gifts, beyond that scheme of life, to Himself. We must desire to enter into holy and awful intercourse with him. We must desire to think of him, and to utter our

thoughts to him as a distinct Being. We must desire to adore, and wonder, and worship.

Here, then, is the meaning of all the offices and ordinances of Christianity. All those ordinances are built upon the idea, that an actual communion has been established between God and man; that it is possible for man to express his sorrows and his wants to God; that it is possible for God to communicate his own life, his own character to men. This is the meaning of prayer, this is the meaning of the teachings of the commissioned minister of Christ, this, above all, is the meaning of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Of the deep mystery which is involved in all these ordinances, and especially in the last, I will say no more than this, that, were there no mystery, every reasonable man would feel that it was not the thing he was seeking after, the thing he was wanting. He wants something which shall bring him into intercourse and fellowship with the invisible and eternal God, and the man who says that there is no mystery in such a fellowship, is not worth listening to; he is mocking and deceiving us, because he has first delighted to mock and deceive himself. You cannot be staggered at mysteries in this highest region; you are encountered with them at every turn in the region of your own experience. You will only ask, "Would any other than this suffice me? Can I live without this?" Can there be any other way into the

presence of Him who is perfect love, but through Him with whom he is perfectly well pleased? Will anything less than a participation of his substance, of his life, of that love which overcame death and sin and selfishness, enable me to do his meanest work here on earth, enable me to behold his glory in heaven?

Do not suppose that I am limiting the operations of God on the hearts and minds of men to these ordinances; I am urging you to take the privileges which they offer you, because I am sure, they interpret to us all His other operations, because they enable us to feel His presence, to hear His voice in all the common events and accidents of life; in sickness and in health, in the daily pleasures and the daily crosses of life; in the wonders of nature, in the wonders of our own frame, in the sufferings of our fellow-men, in the acts which we are permitted to do for the relief of them. The persons whom I ordinarily address from this place, are men who have neither science nor a profession; they have this only, they are men carrying about with them the signs of Adam's curse, the marks of suffering and death. Yet I am bound to look upon them as the objects of God's love—I am bound to tell them, that all the privileges of the kingdom of Christ are theirs, I am bound to believe that they are as able to enter into the deepest mysteries as the wisest man upon earth; I am certain that they may, if they will, know God and love Him,

and dwell with Him for ever. In these ordinances, you will learn to feel yourselves one with these poor creatures; you will learn to feel that what you possess in common with them is more precious and permanent than that which separates you from them; you will learn that you and they and all God's creatures, have desires, which nothing but God can satisfy; you will learn to love them and to care for them, as sharers of the same glory with yourselves, you will rejoice to meet them in the last day, when all other voices shall be silent; but when this one shall be heard, by every true and faithful man, "*Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*"

THE END.